

**HEBREWS 51
(Hebrews 13:14-25)**

**Paul's Closing Thoughts in Hebrews
By Ron Harvey
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INTRODUCTION

You will remember that in the book of Exodus we saw the building of the tabernacle. And the tabernacle was furnished with all the religious furniture and utensils. And the tabernacle was the central focus of that religion called Judaism. All the tribes of Israel pitched their tents around the tabernacle. And the tabernacle was the hub around which the Jews revolved day after day. This was the time which God set aside to be the time of the Law.

Gal.3:19 – God added the law until the seed should come.

It was a glorious time in some respects for Israel. God crossed them over into Canaan. God gave them victories over enemies. God blessed their harvests. It was a time where God showered them with his attention.

But it was also an inglorious time for Israel. The law was glorious. But their sin was inglorious. God's precepts were beautiful, but their hearts were ugly. This was a time set aside for magnifying the holiness of God. But it also pointed out the un-holiness of man.

The sin of the people was wholly exposed by the law. Moses didn't even get down from the mountain before the people were engaged in idolatry and sexual perversion. And under the bright light of God's law the sins of Israel were magnified and exposed for 1500 years.

The glory years of Israel were short. The Judges period under Joshua was perhaps the most glorious. God gave them the land and gave them victory over the "ite" nations. But even in these years, there was a cycle of disobedience, discipline and repentance.

And then the people demanded a king. They did not want God to be their king. They wanted a king like the other nations. So, God gave them a king. And for a few years there was some glory yet in Israel. The reign of Saul was glorious for a time. But then, Saul sinned and the kingdom was taken from him. The reign of David was perhaps the most glorious time for Israel. David was a king after God's own heart. And though he was imperfect, he was nevertheless a righteous king. And Israel expanded its holdings greatly under David.

But after David's death the bent of the kingdom was always toward evil. There was some glory yet under Solomon, but at the end of Solomon's reign the glory was fading fast. The kingdom of Israel soon divided into north and south and was engaged in civil war for the rest of its days.

The northern kingdom was carried off into captivity first, leaving only the southern kingdom of Judah. Then soon after, the southern kingdom was carried away.

Where is the glory in all of this for Israel? The history of Israel is not a testament to man's righteousness under the law. It is a testament to the utter hopelessness of man under the law. For fifteen hundred years the Jews proved that the law does not save. The Jews were an object lesson in the foolishness of legalism; the foolishness of self-righteousness and the utter hopelessness of relying on rituals for salvation. The Jews were an object lesson in the blackness of the human heart.

The book of Hebrews dismantles the tabernacle piece by piece. It takes it apart and shows that Christ is much better than all of that. The one who brought the blueprint for the tabernacle – Moses – is carried away. Jesus is better than Moses. The ones who ministered in the tabernacle – the priests – are carried away. Jesus is better than the priests. The veil that closed off the holy of holies is taken down. It is damaged goods. The mercy seat has been replaced with a throne in heaven. All of the furniture of the tabernacle that pictured Christ is taken down and carted off – Christ is better.

And we saw last week that even the Jewish altar, the most sacred of religious artifacts is taken down, because we have an altar. That is, believers in Christ have an altar that makes the Jewish altar a relic of times past.

We have an altar. (v.10)

Our altar is the cross of Jesus Christ. The cross of Christ is the place where the true sacrifice was made for sins. The cross of Christ is the altar where the blood of the sacrifice was poured out. The cross of Christ is our altar and the book of Hebrews finally carts off the Jewish altar in the last chapter and the old Jewish system of religion is done away.

Hasn't this been the message of Hebrews? Judaism is done away.

We also saw last time that Jesus was taken outside the camp and crucified. The Jews said, "Take him outside our gates and kill him. We don't want anything to do with this man. And so, they expelled God from their city. And they locked the gates behind them. And they locked Jesus out. In effect they turned Jesus over to the world.

"Here world, you take this man, we don't want him."

And they turned Jesus over to the Roman soldiers.

In the old days, the days of Judaism, God was found in the camp. God chose to set up residence over the tabernacle and in the holy of holies. But now, they have driven him outside the camp. And God is no longer found in Israel.

But this was always the plan of God. When God came to Abraham he said, "In thee all nations of the world will be blessed." It was never God's intent to save one nation. It was God's purpose to save all nations. And so it was necessary for Jesus to die outside the camp.

And now, if anyone is to come to Jesus, you don't look for him within the camp of Israel, but you go somewhere else. Where do you go to find Christ? You go outside the camp.

Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp. (v.13)

It is useless to look for him within the confines of Judaism. You must leave the gates of Judaism and find him outside the camp. This is the message of Hebrews.

“In saying that Jesus suffered without the gate, plain intimation was given that God had done with, abandoned Judaism as such. In bidding Hebrew believers to go forth unto Christ “without the camp,” the Holy Spirit signified they must now turn their backs upon the temple and its service.”

A. W. Pink

For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

1. The Christian has no city on earth which is the center of Divine worship as was the case with Judaism.

The Jews made Jerusalem their grand city. And they boasted of their city. But it was not to continue. Jesus told the woman at the well that the place of worship was no longer an issue. And to prove that the old city, Jerusalem, was no longer the place, within a few short years from the writing of Hebrews, Jerusalem was destroyed.

Roman Catholicism should take note of this verse. Christianity is not centered in an earthly city. Roman Catholicism has judaized Christianity to the hilt. And Roman Catholicism says that the dictates of God come through one city – the Vatican. Not so says the book of Hebrews.

2. No city on earth can supply the Christian with the things which are his ultimate aim.

You remember the example of Abraham, how he looked for a heavenly city. There is nothing on earth that warrants our ultimate attention. We look for a hope that is eternal in the heavens. As Christians, we renounce the world and we look for that heavenly city.

Now perhaps the Jews would have one final objection to Christianity. You remember that not all the offerings in Judaism were sin offerings. Sometimes they brought peace offerings which were actually offerings of thanksgiving to God. They were not intended to atone for sin, but rather, to thank God for blessings. But now that the Jewish altar is torn down, what sacrifices do we as Christians bring to God? Why, we bring the offerings of praise and thanksgiving. We bring the offering of good deeds and benevolence toward others. And we honor God by being respectful and subject to those who presently have the rule over us in the churches.