

New Covenant Worship IV

Outside the Camp

- ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.
- ⁹ Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them.
- ¹⁰ We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat.
- ¹¹ For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp.
- ¹² So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.
- ¹³ Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured.
- ¹⁴ For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.
- ¹⁵ Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name."

Hebrews 13:8-15

Jerusalem, Jerusalem

TWO WORDS: “CHRISTIAN.” “ZIONISM.” They are fine words. A **Christian** is, of course, someone who follows Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Bible. They have been born again and love to worship God. **Zionism** is that political expression of the Jewish people that communicates a longing for their homeland, made so acute by 2,000 years of the prejudice, persecution, and discrimination they have endured in all the lands they have been scattered. It is a *political* ideology that communicates that the Jews have an historic, moral right to live in the land of their forefathers.

First given to the Jewish people by the LORD, after the conquest and ever since, this land has been a Babylonian province, an Assyrian province, a Greek province, a Roman province, a Byzantine province, a Caliphate district, an Ottoman district, and a geopolitical entity under British rule. Until the Palestinians—prodded by Arab, Islamic, anti-Israel governments—have tried to do in recent years, no other nation has staked a claim upon this land, let alone treated it like a fatherland or established independent rule in this place since the temple was destroyed nearly 2,000 years

ago. I believe the basic premise of political Zionism is good and correct.

But put the two words together and we have something very different. **Christian Zionism** is a theological, *an eschatological movement* that believes the return of the Jews to the Holy Land in the form of the State of Israel in 1948 was fulfillment of biblical prophecy. It presupposes some very specific things about the people and the land. Things which are, needless to say, very much not agreed upon by many, many Christians. Yet, anyone who disagrees is labelled a bible-denying anti-Semite.

Dealing with the nation of Israel and its land has been a particularly difficult thing for Christians. How are we to think about these things? Some have blamed the Jews for all the problems we face today, beginning with the idea that they alone killed Jesus. Others have taken the side of the nation at every turn. No matter what they do to others, Israel cannot be politically wrong—by definition. There has been some degree of this in our nation's politics for 200 years, and we see it evidenced in a love for the land of Canaan and the city of Jerusalem that goes beyond living history to a kind of sacramentalism that necessarily attaches

a blessing to anyone going on a pilgrimage to the place today.

Our dear brother Baruch Maoz, a Jew, a man who fought in the Six-Days War for his country, but most importantly a Christian writes:

Christian Zionism is sub-Christian because it ignores moral considerations, and because it identifies a political platform with the Gospel ... The fawning, spineless adoration of Israel and of all things Jewish is decidedly sub-Christian; it runs against the grain of biblical revelation ... it disenfranchises the Palestinians by assuming that the negation of their national aspirations is a necessary aspect of the Christian faith; it weds the Gospel to politics and confirms Israel in her sin instead of calling her to grace through faith and repentance ... It is, rather, a fascination, largely borne on the grounds of eschatological speculations that change every time the events of the world take a new turn ... I am a Zionist. I am a Christian and I am a Zionist [because I am a Jew].

But I am not a Christian Zionist ... My duties to God override those to my people.¹

Let me begin the biblical content of this sermon by taking our minds to a famous conversation in the Gospel of John. One day, the Lord Jesus came upon a Samaritan woman sitting by a well. After telling her all about her sinful life, the woman perceived that she was talking to a prophet. So she abruptly changes the subject, hoping he'll stop prying. (It was making her very uncomfortable you know). “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” (Hey, when confronted with your sin, what better way to avoid the topic than to talk theology)!

“Jesus said to her, ‘Women, believe me the time is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father’” (John 4:20-21). He then adds, “The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.”

¹ Baruch Maoz, “Christian Zionism is Wrong,” Facebook (Oct 1, 2013), <https://www.facebook.com/bmaoz/posts/10201433438851280>. This is a short but informative little piece on this movement by Baruch, and some of what I said above the quote is taken from this article.

What has Jesus done? Has he changed the subject, moving from “where” to “who”? Or is it possible that he is still on point and “in spirit and truth” is related to [the where of worship](#)? What we can say for sure is that Zionism is about a place, and Jesus is talking about a place. Both places are [Jerusalem](#).

Jesus Christ is the Same

Our passage in Hebrews is also about Jerusalem, though it uses some very interesting terminology for it. But it actually begins with this same Jesus. In a verse that is not a proverb, but may reflect something of an early creed or hymn we read, “[Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever](#)” ([Heb 13:8](#)). We need to ask two questions of this. [What is its meaning?](#) [Why is it here?](#)

Different people have taken it in different ways. Some have taken it as an [ontological statement on the divine nature](#). In other words, it is telling you something about the inner being of God. This was popular in the 3rd and 4th centuries, which were ripe with Christological heresies that bore very bad fruit. Basically, the orthodox Fathers used it

to teach that Jesus is **immutable** (a fancy word for unchangeable) in his essence (**Origen**), and therefore One with the Father (**Athanasius**).² **John Owen** takes this route too, saying that it refers to Christ's divine person in his office as Son.³

Sadly, immutability and its derivative called impassibility (God experiences no changing "passions") have become flashpoints in recent days, dividing brothers even when they agree on almost every finer point within the doctrines, even when they actually confess the same language in their Confession of Faith. Absolutely insanity. The hyperbole out there is that this is the most important thing we can ever know in life. And of course, that means you have to believe what I tell you it means.

Clearly, **God** does not change. But how? That is where the disagreement lies. Some want to say that he does not change in any sense whatsoever. Any kind of change at all would make him less than God. This conception relies heavily upon the Greek pagan philosophy of Aristotle's

² See the discussion in **Philip Edgcumbe Hughes**, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 570.

³ **John Owen**, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ed. W. H. Goold, vol. 24, Works of John Owen (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1854), 427.

Unmoved Mover. If you deny this, some act like you pretty much aren't even a Christian. Others want to say that there can be some sense in which God changes while still confessing that he is “without body, parts, or passions.” (Of course, there are other views of “God” that get into some very strange ideas, moving towards pagan panentheism and pantheism, where God is in everything or God is everything, and since everything changes, God changes with it, making him Pure Flux, Constant Change, and Utter Process.

Unfortunately, when you start with the assumption that this verse is a dogmatic polemic against some heresy, it can take you to some pretty strange places. For example, **Gregory of Nazianzus** wants to use this verse to say that it is distinguishing between the two natures of Christ so that “yesterday” and “today” are his humanity and “forever” is his deity.”⁴ **Cyril** gets even stranger. As he battles with the Nestorian heretics who carve up the two natures of Christ at every turn he writes:

⁴ *Fourth Oration*. See Hughes, *ibid*.

How then could he be the same in the past when he had not yet assumed generation according to the flesh? ... It is of Jesus Christ and not just of the Word⁵ that the text affirms that he is the same today, yesterday and forever, but how could the human nature possess immutability and unaltered identity when it is subject to movement and, above all, to that movement that made it pass from nothingness to being and to life?... In virtue of the union with flesh that is proper to him, it is still he himself who is described as existing yesterday and as preexistent (ON THE INCARNATION).

It almost sounds like Cyril teaches an eternal human body of Christ ... and he was as orthodox a Father as you get! But if you are [lost here](#), that is partially the point I want to make. When we start getting ourselves into such deeply philosophical phases of speculation that people who spend scores of hours on this single topic have a hard time even

⁵ What makes this comment about the Word appropriate, but even stranger, is that Cyril has commented on just this from this same passage saying, “The natural properties of the Word who came forth from the Father were maintained even when he became flesh. It is foolish therefore to dare to introduce a breach. For the Lord Jesus Christ is one and through him the Father created all things. He is composed of human properties and of others that are above the human, yielding a kind of middle term. He is, in fact, a mediator between God and humankind, according to the Scriptures, God by nature even when incarnate, truly, not purely man like us, remaining what he was even when he had become flesh. For it is written, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” ON THE INCARNATION 709.

understanding what you are saying, maybe you are saying way too much.

But Cyril *is* on to *something* good. He is right. Notice that it does not say, “The Word.” It certainly doesn’t say, “The divine nature,” or even “God.” **The words he uses are key** to interpreting the verse correctly. It says, “*Jesus Christ is the same...*” This is truly remarkable. Why? Because “Jesus Christ,” properly speaking, is the name of the God-man, *after* the incarnation. This is probably why Gregory wants to say that yesterday and today are about the incarnation. He has a hard time conceiving of Jesus Christ in the OT other than in type and prophecy.

But surely, this is talking about Jesus pre-incarnate, no? The Apostles don’t seem to have a problem talking this way. Jude says that “**Jesus**” saved a people out of Egypt” (**Jude 5**). Paul says that the Egyptians put “**Christ**” to the test (**1Co 10:9**).⁶ they don’t explain how that could be. They just say it. Jesus was there! We want to immediately try to

⁶ Both of these passages demonstrate just how hard it has been for Christians after the Bible was written to accept that Jesus was really in the OT, which is why we find textual variants in both of them. The Jude 5 variant replaces the original “Jesus” with “Lord” (*kurios*), because it is easier to swallow that “the Lord” saved a people out of Egypt. Likewise, they substituted the original “Christ” with either “Lord” (*kurios*) or “God” (*theos*), because it is easier to swallow that they tempted God rather than Christ. On the original reading see Metzger’s *Textual Commentary on the Greek NT*.

understand how that could be, and we end up tying ourselves up in knots where the Bible, quite frankly, sees only a straight pristine line in need of no untying whatsoever.

Owen noticed something from earlier in the letter. Quoting **Ps 102:25-27** it said of the Son (Hebrews called him “Son” there; see **Heb 1:2, 5, 8**), “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out ... like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end” (**Heb 1:10-12**). This sounds very similar to our verse.

This is clearly talking about the **eternality** of the Son, not just him after the incarnation as Gregory says of our verse. He always was. There was never a time when he was not. He is not a created being.⁷ It is also talking about the idea of **decay**. The material universe is in a state of entropy (it is wearing out). Job says, “**We are of yesterday, and know nothing**” (**Job 8:9**). But Jesus is not like this. He does not decay. He does not “grow old.” He does not lose his mind.

⁷ The Bible simply does not say if this “eternality” is atemporal or temporal, though it should be pointed out that an Aristotelian/Thomistic view of immutability demands atemporality.

He does not wear out. He most certainly does not die or cease to exist. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Given that these two passages are at the beginning and end of Hebrews, they parallel one another in meaning. So we use the first to interpret the second. Yet, whereas the first called him The Son, the second calls him Jesus Christ. He is telling you something about Jesus' divine nature in his existence prior to the incarnation. He is not like you, even though as a man he is like you. But the name Jesus Christ tells you more.

Now finally, we are able to get to the real reason why this verse is here. For if he has already stated this much about Jesus in the first chapter, then surely our verse is now a building block to something more that is meant to help you here at the end in this section on obedience. There is something immanently practical in mind in calling him Jesus and in referring to the fact that he is the same yesterday, today, and forever. This brings us to the context.⁸

⁸ It is worth mentioning Calvin in a note here. In reading him on this, it seems that Calvin is at least wanting to take the context into consideration. And yet, he can't seem to extricate himself entirely from the philosophy of it all (I don't know if he should or not, to be honest, but it leads him to make some strange statements of his own. He wants to say that this is about Christ as the object of our religious knowledge, because he has always been and always will be the Sovereign. But this ironically leads him away, at least in what he doesn't say, from the real application of this verse which, as we will see, is really about Jesus never leaving us in the midst

Returning to the Law

The verse finds itself smack dab in the middle of a list of **several commands**, many of which we looked at last time. These commands are ethical and concern how you treat your neighbor. We saw that they each have at their heart the idea to love your brother, who is identified as the stranger, the needy, the spouse, the church, the leadership, and even yourself.

We did not look at one command last time, and it is the command that immediately follows this amazing statement about the Lord Jesus. “**Do not be led away by diverse and**

of our Christian walk with him. Calvin makes no real mention of this.

“Now as he is dealing with the Jews, he teaches them that Christ had ever possessed the same sovereignty which he holds at this day; *The same*, he says, *yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*. By which words he intimates that Christ, who was then made known in the world, had reigned from the beginning of the world, and that it is not possible to advance farther when we come to him. Yesterday then comprehends the whole time of the Old Testament; and that no one might expect a sudden change after a short time, as the promulgation of the Gospel was then but recent, he declares that Christ had been lately revealed for this very end, that the knowledge of him might continue the same for ever.

It hence appears that the Apostle is not speaking of the eternal existence of Christ, but of that knowledge of him which was possessed by the godly in all ages, and was the perpetual foundation of the Church. It is indeed certain that Christ existed before he manifested his power; but the question is, what is the subject of the Apostle. Then I say he refers to quality, so to speak, and not to essence; for it is not the question, whether he was from eternity with the Father, but what was the knowledge which men had of him. But the manifestation of Christ as to its external form and appearance, was indeed different under the Law from what it is now; yet there is no reason why the Apostle could not say truly and properly that Christ, as regarded by the faithful, is always the same.”

strange teachings” (Heb 13:9). The first thing to say is that the command here is to “not be lead away.” You are commanded to stand firm on the teachings of God’s word. Therefore, we need to think about God’s word.

Sola Scriptura

The Reformation took a stand here with a teaching that is called *sola scriptura* or Scriptura Alone. It both affirms something and denies something. It affirms, as the Confession teaches, that “The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience” (LBC 1.1). These are actually the very first words of the Confession of Faith, which shows you their importance. Sola Scriptura is that important to Protestants.

It does not deny that there aren’t other things that are true in this world or helpful for many things. But the Bible alone is sufficient, certain, and infallible *for salvation, faith, and obedience*. Therefore, it denies that anything other than the Bible can bind the conscience with regard to these things. That includes creeds, councils, Fathers, Puritans,

Reformers, our favorite modern pastors, your own pastor, yourself, or even angels from heaven. We have got to love God's word first—not second, because through it we come to know about him.⁹

So we stand firm and are not lead astray by remembering, believing, and holding fast to what the Apostles and the Prophets and the Poets of the Bible taught us. But Hebrews isn't making a blanket statement about all

⁹ **Going Deeper: Sola Scriptura and Today's Reformation.** Rome and the Orthodox claim that *sola scriptura* is both impossible and unbiblical, thereby being both self-defeating and ridiculous. It is impossible because you have to interpret the Bible, but as soon as you interpret the Bible, you are moving away from the Bible to the individual, which is the opposite of *sola scriptura*. Therefore, it is impossible. Therefore, better to have the church speak rather than the lone Christian who interprets it however he wants for himself. *Sola scriptura* does not rule out the help of tradition (the Bible itself speaks favorably of tradition), or experience, or reason. But Luther pointed out that tradition, creeds, and councils have often contradicted each other. Our experiences often fool us. Reason is not capable of knowing all things, and it perverts many things it does know because of sin. Rome and the East are actually stuck in the same boat, they just baptize it to make it appear holy.

What true *sola scriptura* is about at the heart, I believe, is an inner impulse that can't necessarily be measured outwardly. Some men talk about it, but don't really believe it. The impulse is, when you have a controversy that springs up, what is your first thought? Is it to go to your private interpretation? Is it to go running to the corner of your favorite theologian from the past? Is it to cite "tradition" or your Confession of Faith? Or is it an honest, sincere desire to understand what God's word has said on the matter? The Confession of Faith itself says, "The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved" (1.10). Sadly, the Reformed world of 2016 is moving quickly away from these precious words in too many controversies, as they turn the Confession itself, traditions of the past, and pet theologians into the very thing the Reformers gave their lives to give us: a first-love for God's Holy Word and his Son, the tools to rightly interpret what it says, and the desire to be honest with its conclusions whatever they may be.

truth contained in the word, even though it could if it wanted to. Rather, it has a particular form of “**diverse and strange teachings**” in mind. **What are they?** This question gets at the heart of the entire chapter, which takes us into the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Food Laws and Sacrifices

These teachings appear to be **related** to the **Jewish laws regarding food**. **Vs. 9** goes on to say, “... for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them.” This is returning to a main theme of the book and helps us begin to understand why our verse about Jesus is here.

The theme is the old covenant. The old covenant order had many requirements about food. There were clean and unclean foods. There were specific dietary restrictions for various things like vows or occupations. There were regulations about how to administer food at the time of sacrifices. And so on. He seems to have these last in mind as we see in **vs. 10**, “**We have an altar from which those who**

serve the tent (skené) have no right to eat.” The “tent” is the word for the tabernacle of the OT. Those who serve it are the priests. Hence, laws about eating sacrificial foods.

We are not exactly sure what the contemporary situation may have been with these Hebrew Christians. We do know that the OT sacrifices such as the guilt offering, the sin offering, and the grain offering were all eaten by priests (and his family) and/or the offerer of the sacrifice as ceremonial communal meals.¹⁰ Importantly and curiously, they had to be eaten in the courtyard (Lev 6:16, 26, etc.). You have to eat the meal “inside the camp” as it were. So were the NT Christians doing something similar near the temple or a synagogue or even in their churches? Speculations abound as to whether he is talking about the Lord’s Supper or some Jewish equivalent meal that was somehow tempting these Christians.¹¹ Whatever it was, the point is, this food that they are taking is not benefiting them

¹⁰ See “Offerings and Sacrifices,” in Walter A. Elwell and Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996). And a good non-scholarly summary: “Question: ‘What were the various sacrifices in the Old Testament?’” *Got Questions?org*, <http://www.gotquestions.org/Old-Testament-sacrifices.html>, last accessed 9-25-2016.

¹¹ See Harold W. Attridge and Helmut Koester, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 394-96.

as they think. Their thinking about the place of worship is all messed up.

The Place of Worship

The Place of Eating

How? Well, it has to do with what I just said was curious: The OT sacrifices were often **consumed near the altar in the courtyard**. This is curious because it takes us full circle back to **the place of worship**. These were kinds of little covenant meals that reminded Israel of its covenant with God. So they were taken in the sacred space.

It also leads us onward to the remaining comments of our passage. “**We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat.**” Here now we think about the word “altar.” They have an altar. We have an altar. He is clearly referencing OT ideas of eating food around the tabernacle altar in the wilderness and comparing this to us.

When he says, “**They have no right to eat,**” he is probably alluding to the various kinds of unclean people like lepers or lay people who were not allowed to eat certain

sacrificial food (cf. **Lev 22:1-16**) until they became ceremonially clean. Yet, he is making the opposite point. He isn't saying that *we* (Christians) have no right to eat from *their* (OT Jewish ceremonial sacrificial) food. He is saying that **they have no right to eat from our food!** If the unclean person is the one not allowed to eat, then who has become unclean? If only clean persons are allowed to eat the food, then who is it that is now clean? Do you see how he is flipping the old covenant on its head? The unbelieving priest is now unclean, and the Christian—even if he is a leper or a layman or a Gentile or a eunuch—is clean! Does not this tell us at least something about the nature of God's people that we brought up at the beginning of the sermon?

The Food We Eat

He is saying that we Christians have a ceremonial food. **What does our food do?** It is a food that is “good for the heart” and “strengthens with grace.” This is good news. It reminds me of the Psalm, “You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth and wine to gladden the

heart of man ... and bread to strengthen man's heart" (Ps 104:14-15).

But *what* is our food? Is it not Christ himself? "I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad" (Ps 16:8-9). "Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy Name" (Ps 33:20-21). So Jesus said, "I am the Manna come down from heaven." "I am the Bread of Life." "I give the Living Water" he told the woman at the well. "Christ alone our souls will feed, He is our meat and drink indeed. Faith lives upon no other" (Martin Luther). And is this not appropriate for the subject at hand? Who is at the right hand of David if not Christ? And who is Christ if not the Lamb of God?

What is that Lamb, but the sacrifice who takes away our sin. We feast upon this Lamb who is in heaven, who has made intercession for us through his sacrificial death. He is our sacramental meal. This begins to recapture the vast differences between the old covenants and the new covenant that we have seen throughout Hebrews. Though there is similarity of type (lamb to Lamb, altar to Altar, tabernacle

to Tabernacle, priest to Priest, etc.), the new covenant has brought about vast changes for us.

These vast changes include the food we eat in worship. We feast upon God's holy Word incarnate through his holy words. We even continue to have fellowship meals, love feasts, the the Lord's Supper.¹² It isn't like God suddenly hates food or something and that all is now spirit as we turn into modern day Gnostics who hate the material universe. But we no longer sacrifice and eat animals, because the Lord Jesus is the Sacrificial Animal upon whom we feast. This starts to say something about the temporary form of the old covenant that we will see here again in a moment.

Our Day of Atonement: A Change of Place and Food

But there is something else that has changed, and we alluded to it a moment ago. [Where do we eat our food?](#) We

¹² This is not meant to demean the Lord's Supper in any way, which is a form of the holy word in that it is the good news of the Gospel. Some have taken [Heb 13:9](#) as teaching that the very early church had already developed a similar view of the Supper that Rome later developed, and that Hebrews is appalled at this. This is complete speculation, though it cannot be ruled out, since we just don't know what they were eating and thinking as they ate. We Reformed believe that there is a mysterious union between Christ and the Supper that we take, and that when it is taken by faith ("faith feeds"), he uses it in spiritual ways to strengthen us and make us glad. But we are not talking about this sacramental supper here. We are talking about Christ himself, who is after all the End to which the Supper points.

need to ask, “Where is our altar?” Hebrews now says, “For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp” (Heb 13:11). He refers specifically to **the Day of Atonement** ritual, specifically Lev 16:27, “And the bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall be carried outside the camp.”

We need to understand this ritual in order to see the profound point he is making about change in the midst of a Jesus who does not change. **This was one sacrifice that no one was allowed to eat ...** except for the LORD enthroned between the cherubim over the ark of the covenant inside the camp. He is the one who accepts the atonement as the King of Israel as he consumes the sacrificial meal.

In the ritual, three main animals were used: two goats and a ram. The ram was to make atonement for Aaron, and one of the goats atoned for the people. When he killed both animals, the blood was sprinkled all over the tent, atoning for the entire sanctuary, thereby making the entire place clean and renewed as God’s sacred space. The fat was left for the LORD who consumed it at the altar (25). The dead

animals were then taken out of the camp where their skins and flesh were burned with fire (27). Meanwhile, the people were to abstain from food (29).¹³ They were not to eat any of the sacrifice.

After this, and this is very important, the priest **laid hands** on the head of the living goat and they sent it out into the wilderness to *Azazel outside the camp!*¹⁴ The Jews considered Azazel to be the chief instigator of the Genesis 6 event,¹⁵ who ended up being cast away into the wilderness where he resides as the chief Watcher over the demons of

¹³ This is strongly implied, though not explicit. The text does not say anything about the inside of the animal being given to anyone for consumption as it usually does. However, it does say that the people were to “deny themselves.” Targum Pseudo-Jonathan interprets this as “abstaining from food.”

¹⁴ “Azazel” (ESV) is the transliteration of a word (*z’zl*) that is confusing to scholars. Sometimes translated as “scapegoat” or literally “the goat that goes out,” this makes nonsense of **Lev 16:26** which would then literally read, “**And he who lets the goat go to the goat that goes out.**”

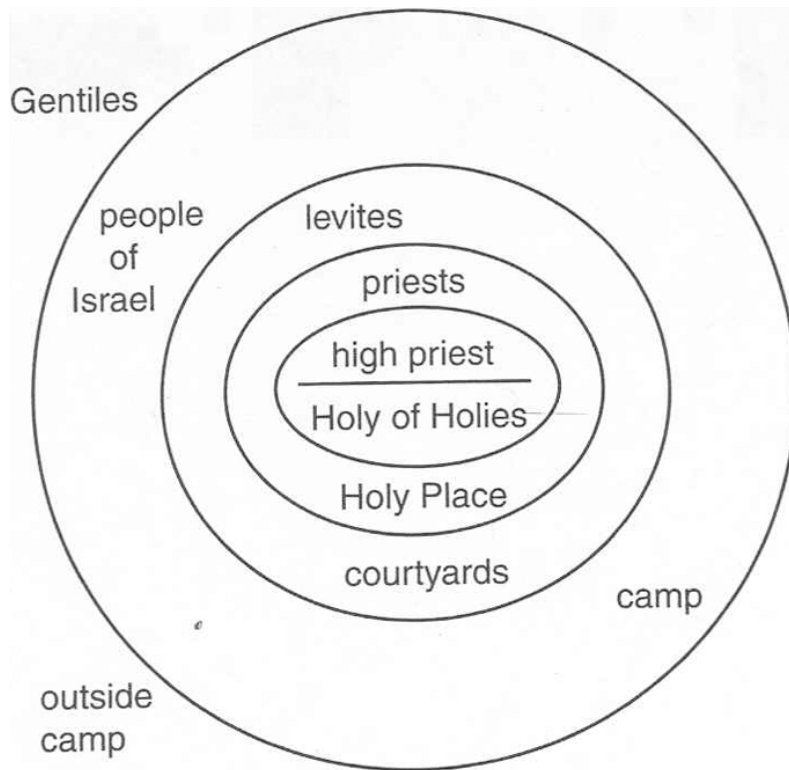
¹⁵ “**You see what Azaz’el has done; how he has taught all forms of oppression upon the earth. And they revealed eternal secretes which are performed in heaven and which man learned. ... and lay together with them—with those women—and defiled themselves, and revealed to them every kind of sin. As for the women, they gave birth to giants...**” (**1En 9:6, 8-9**). “**And in interpretation concerning ‘Azaz’el and the angels who came to the daughters of man and sired themselves giants. And concerning ‘Azaz’el is written [text unreadable] to love injustice and to let him inherit evil for all his age [text unreadable] of the judgments and the judgment of the council of [text unreadable]**” (**4Q180.7-10**). One scholar writes, “*Demonology. The chief of the fallen angels is Azazel (ApocAbr 13:6). His power is over the earth, because he has chosen it for his dwelling place (13:7f.; 14:6). However, his power is limited (13:10) since God does not permit him to tempt all the righteous (13:11). For example, he cannot seduce Abraham (13:14), and he has no power over the body of the righteous (13:10).*” **R. Rubinkiewicz**, “Apocalypse of Abraham: A New Translation and Introduction,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1 (New York; London: Yale University Press, 1983), 684.

the desert (i.e. the satyrs, the goat-demons).¹⁶ Hence, a goat goes out to the Old Goat! The thinking here isn't that Azazel gets a goat sacrifice for himself. That wouldn't make any sense. Besides, the goat doesn't actually get sacrificed. He wanders out alive to Azazel. Rather, the idea is that **the sin which was in the camp** is transferred out to the place where it belongs, outside the camp. The thought would be, **"Since that evil Azazel loves sin so profoundly, here, let him have all of ours!"** It is sort of like taking all of your trash to the dump where it belongs. Meanwhile, the camp itself is purified and set apart as holy once more by the blood of the other goat.¹⁷ So again, the main point is that God is reclaiming his sacred space inside the camp (the following diagram demonstrates the idea).¹⁸

¹⁶ "Bind Azaz'el hand and foot (and) throw him into the darkness!" And he made a hole in the desert which was in Duda'el and cast him there" (1En 10:4).

¹⁷ OT scholar Michael Heiser has a *NakedBible* podcast on Leviticus 16 that is very helpful here: <http://www.nakedbiblepodcast.com/naked-bible-76-leviticus-16/>.

¹⁸ From John H. Walton, "Equilibrium and the Sacred Compass: The Structure of Leviticus," *BBR* 11.2 (2001): 300 [293-304]. http://www.nakedbiblepodcast.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Walton_LeviticusSacredSpace.pdf.



The stunning implication now occurs to us as we read the next part of Hebrews. It applies this ritual act of sending the goat out to Azazel to Jesus Christ. **Hebrews 13:12**, “So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.” Then the next verse, “Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured” (13). What he is saying is a spectacular reversal of the old covenant, and simultaneous defeat of Satan. Yet, Jesus is the same.

First, notice how “outside the camp” is now parallel to “outside the gate.” The gate refers to the city of **Jerusalem**.

Yes, he is talking about Jerusalem. He wants to make it clear that he not only has the wilderness experience in mind, but its later more permanent manifestation of the temple at Jerusalem. “Gate” a way to say this, for it is nothing if not the City of Gates (the gates: Zion Gate, Dung Gate, Gate of Mercy, Lion’s Gate, Herod’s Gate, Damascus Gate, The New Gate, Jaffa Gate).

But then why would he call **Jerusalem a camp**? Because that’s what they thought back then. We read in the Dead Sea Scrolls, “Jerusalem is the holy camp, it is the place which He has chosen from among all the tribes of Israel, since Jerusalem is the head of the camps of Israel.”¹⁹ Jerusalem is, of course, where the temple was built, and this became the more permanent tabernacle. Thus they said, “And we think that the temple is the place of the tent of meeting, and Jerusalem is the camp; and outside the camp is outside of Jerusalem; it is the camp of their cities.”²⁰ The evil is outside

¹⁹ 4QMMT = 4Q397 Frag 6-13.3-4. Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, “The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition (translations)” (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1997–1998), 799. See the discussion in Peter Walker, “Jerusalem in Hebrews 13:9–14 and the Dating of the Epistle,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 45, no. 1 (1994): 44.

²⁰ 4QMMT = 4Q394 Frags 3-7 Col. II.16-18. *Ibid.*, 793.

of Jerusalem, perhaps just outside in the Gehenna Valley and so on.

This again brings us back to our discussion of Jerusalem, the temple, and the place of worship. Hebrews is not just interested in the Levitical story. It is trying to tell the Christians, people still (most likely) living at a time when there is a real temple in Jerusalem, something vitally important. He is telling them what Jesus told the woman, but he is explaining it in a very powerful way to them. How so?

Remember, Jesus was actually **crucified** outside of Jerusalem. This is where Golgotha, “the place of the skull” was located, certainly off the temple mount, but also outside of the then walled off city. Jesus died on Golgotha, the place of the skull, outside the city walls. And it was a victory over evil, as the skull represents death and perhaps also demonic entities.²¹

²¹ **Going Deeper: Goliath and Golgotha.** I was recently made aware of a theory that Golgotha (“place of the skull”) was named after Goliath, after David chopped off his head and brought it back as a trophy to show the Jebusites in Jerusalem (**ISA 17:54**). Now, the Church Fathers knew a tradition that the body of Adam was buried here, and so the “skull” refers to Adam’s. This seems pretty unlikely, but it does show the precedent that the “skull” in the name Golgotha is a human skull rather than a geographical feature. After a little research, I found some archeologists willing to discuss the Goliath idea.

It is rooted in **Jeremiah 31:39** who speaks of a place near Jerusalem called “Go’ata” (variously translated as Goah or Goatha; or literally *g’tb*). The LXX translates this as “choice stones” (GK:

So the city is what was regarded as the camp. Therefore, it was the holy place. It was the place of the priests. It was the place of sacrifices. Outside the camp is where the sin is, where the sin goes, where the demons and their leader reside (demons love those “waterless places” of wilderness Jesus said; **Matt 12:43**). But Jesus is fulfillment of the Day of Atonement. He is not only the sacrifice. He is also the goat that goes outside the camp to Azazel. Yet he is not one or the other. He is both simultaneously. Lamb of God goes outside the camp to be devoured the forces of darkness and

eklektion lithon). It translates a different Hebrew phrase in **Ezra 5:8** with the exact same two Greek words. In Hebrew those words are “stones of Gelal” (*eben gelal* or literally: stones, huge stone). This huge stone with no vowels is simply *gll*. So *gll* and *g'th* may be the same thought/place. But *gll* also happens to be the root form of a skull (which is *glglt*; see the wiki on “Calvary”). Goliath is *glyt*. He is from Gath which is simply *gt*. Golgotha (which is Aramaic) is *gglt*.

The idea is that when David brought the skull the place where it was placed was then known as “Mount Goliath” (*gl glyt*; *gl* or *gol* is the Aramaic for a mountain), or “heap of Goliath” (the Hebrew *gl* or *gal* means a “heap,” meaning that they placed a heap of stones as a memorial of David’s victory over the giant). This starts getting confused with the “choice stones,” that is Ezra’s *gll* and Jeremiah’s *g'th*. But they are all talking about the same place so that in the NT it becomes Golgotha (*glgtha*), the place of the skull. Whose skull? Goliath’s.

This would have one more fascinating meaning, given that Goliath is a remnant of the Rephaim giants who were regarded as the offspring of those like Azazel, who himself becomes the chief of the desert demons. Demons being the disembodied spirits of giants like Goliath.

Other’s more recently have noticed this too. For example, “while Golgotha is derived from the Hebrew word for skull, this Aramaic name resonates with vocalic sounds reminiscent of the name of Goliath of Gath. Indeed, Golgotha and Goliath of Gath have a similar sound. David, we are told, was a prophet (Acts 2:29–30). The text reporting David’s delivery of the head of the giant to Jerusalem seems to have seen in David’s triumph over Goliath an even greater triumph of the Son of David that was to come” (Warren Austin Gage, *There Is No Greater Love: How Jesus Is Greater than All Who Came before Him* (Fort Lauderdale: St. Andrews House, 2013), 65–66).

death, *and* the sacrificial goat that leaves the camp is also slaughtered on the altar.

Therefore, the place where he went is where our altar is. He is our altar. Not Jerusalem. Not the temple. It is on that old unclean place that he went. But do you see what this means? It means the utter reversal of the old covenant. If the place where the sacrificial blood is sprinkled becomes the atoning for cleanness, then he has made the unclean “outside the camp” clean. Meanwhile, it was those in Jerusalem who killed him with “dirty hands.” Jerusalem has become unclean. Outside the camp is where you went if you were unclean. Not any longer. It is completely flipped on its head.

Peter Walker explains in his fascinating article on this passage, “The biblical tradition makes it clear that this place for the disposal of carcasses was polluted or ‘unholy.’”²² But this has implications for the once holy city. As F.F. Bruce says, “In Jesus the old values had been reversed. What was formerly sacred was now unhallowed, because Jesus had been expelled from it; what was formerly unhallowed was now sacred, because Jesus was there.”²³ Basically, Jesus’

²² Peter Walker, “Jerusalem in Hebrews 13:9–14 and the Dating of the Epistle,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 45, no. 1 (1994): 45–46.

²³ Cited in Walker, 46.

death, because he is the spotless lamb sacrifice, has desecrated the city of Jerusalem. Does this tell us about something like Christian Zionism vs. biblical Christianity?

Hebrews is drawing your thoughts “away from a religious interest in Jerusalem by alerting them to the impermanent (οὐ μένουσαν) and transient nature of that city. As an object of religious hope it will disappoint; not so ‘the city that is to come’. This transient, earthly city [is] not to be part of [your] fundamental identity ... The Temple at the heart of the city is defunct; the city itself through Jesus’ death has been defiled; the earthly Jerusalem in comparison with the heavenly has been diminished.”²⁴

This is why it says, “For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come” (Heb 13:14), just as Abraham did. Why do people fawn over that which has been desecrated? That is grotesque and macabre. Why do people insist on living in the shadows, when Jesus the Light of the World has died for their sin? I don’t understand this.

If you want to have your sins taken away, you go outside that camp into the wilderness where you will find Jesus, defeating the Azazel, conquering death, making you

²⁴ Walker, 47.

clean. If you want to be made fit for God's presence, you likewise go outside the camp to where altar there, where the sacrifice was offered, which now makes you his holy sacred space! You realize that suddenly, the whole space outside that city is where cleanliness occurs. The realm of the Gentiles! We can come to him. Jews can out too. Whoever hears may come to him and eat with him, feasting upon the Great Sacrifice Offering of God.

But you can't stay in the types and shadows and love the dark things that are passing away. What is your first love? Outside the camp is a representation of the "heavenly Jerusalem" where Jesus is now enthroned forever. It isn't perishing. It is eternal. Isn't it interesting that it was King Yahweh, enthroned above the cherubim, who accepted the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement, and at his death and resurrection, Jesus becomes enthroned at the right hand of God? The Day of Atonement is all about enthronement—in both Testaments.

But all of this change is why we need to know that Jesus does not change. If the world has literally been flipped upside down by the coming of Jesus Christ, then we need to know that this is not arbitrary, not capricious, and is actually

of *his* own choosing. Jesus is the one who accepted the earlier offering. Jesus is now the one who has offered it once for all. The same Jesus Christ does not change, even if the covenants, both of which he put in place, have. And this Jesus leads you to the Father in heaven who does not change with shifting shadows, but is always the same. Both are our One True God. And we come to know this by the Spirit who likewise does not change with the wind, but rather he is the wind and he blows as he pleases.

Worshiping Jesus Christ Who Does Not Change and Will Not Leave You

If Jesus has not changed, but the place and the food of our worship has, then we can trust that our worship is pleasing to him. This would have been a profoundly important point in a world where the temple in Jerusalem still stood and the Jews were trying to convince Christians to return to or reinvent the ancient food laws. Our worship begins in the right place, with the right priest, with the right food. Therefore we conclude, “**Through him then let us**

continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of lips that acknowledge his Name” (15).

“When you go over the Jordan and live in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to inherit ... to the place that the LORD your God will chose, to make his Name dwell there, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices” (Deut 12:10-11), Moses told the people in that day. Now, the Name is outside the camp at God’s choosing. Jesus is the Name of God.

Jesus—Ya Saves.

Christ—Messiah. The Anointed One.

He is the Same, yesterday, today and forever—“who is and who was and who is to come” (Rev 1:4).

This is why he accepts such worship. He is the end of it all. But our worship is also **our obedience**, and it is Jesus’s sameness in the midst of such massive difference that he will, as it says in vs. 5, to “never leave you nor forsake you.” This important statement is related to the “sameness” of Jesus Christ and finishes off our study today. Long ago **Peter Lombard** noticed a connection between the unchanging

Jesus and vs. 5 saying that yesterday he did not fail to help Joshua, today he helps you, and he will continue to help his faithful people forever without cessation.²⁵ We need his help in obeying him. We need his Spirit. We need to know that when we fail, he will not leave us. Vs. 5 and vs. 8 are the gospel anchors of Christ for our obedience during the storms of life.

May Jesus Christ give you the strength by his unchanging power, unchanging will, glorious coming in the flesh, and better covenant to receive the power to obey him and glorify him in all things. Then you will worship him in Spirit and in Truth, for he has made a better way outside the camp of Israel.

²⁵ Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, Hebrews, 570.