

OUTSIDE THE CAMP:

Hebrews 13:13.

“Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach.”

There can be no doubt that this particular passage has been used by many to air their grievances and start their own breakaway movement. If we were able to obtain a complete record of how many divisive groups had employed this verse over the years we would be amazed. It has been and still is a great favorite of “come out” movements, when usually it’s some Diotrefes who desires to head up some new party. Their **“going forth”** in most cases has not been **“unto Him,”** but rather to win the people over to their party. Our greatest problem has always been, stubbornly doing it, and “going our own way.”

He gave them the desires of their hearts and sent leanness to their souls. All we like sheep have gone astray, and even after coming to the Lord we still seem to think that our ways are smarter than His. It saves us from having to spend time and energy asking Him what to do. It’s much easier to just do it and ask Him to bless it.

**In this next section we shall see a graphic incident
in the life of the church in the wilderness.**

It’s found in **Exodus 32:1**. “And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves unto Aaron and said unto him, up make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we don’t know what has become of him.”

The people were in a bitter and rebellious mood, determined to have Aaron make gods for them and return to Egypt. Unfortunately they had a leader in Aaron, who in the absence of Moses had no backbone. He was swayed by the people and went along with their plan to return to Egypt. Aaron was unlike Samuel, who when Israel wanted a king other than Jehovah, only consented to their demands at the express order of God.

This was the reason Moses pitched the Tabernacle outside the camp.

“And Moses took the Tabernacle and pitched it without the camp...and it came to pass that every one that sought the Lord went out to the Tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp”. **Exodus 33:7**.

There seems little doubt that the Apostle Paul had this occasion in mind when he was writing to the Hebrew Christians. Careful attention is necessary to understand why this drastic action was taken by Moses. They had built a golden calf and thrown off their allegiance to God and His mediator Moses. That the righteous wrath of God did not there and then cut them off is a cause of great wonderment until we see Moses the great

intercessor pleading on their behalf; as it was 3000 perished on that day. Time and again Moses stepped into the breach between them and the wrath of God. In so doing he foreshadowed the intercessory ministry of our great high priest and intercessor Jesus Christ.

**An afflicted people are an object of His grace. Exodus 2:24-25.
But a stiff-necked people must be humbled. Exodus 32:35.**

But now something new comes into view. Through intercession Moses averts the consuming wrath of God, but it did not preclude drastic action by God in a governmental way.

The nation was not consumed, but it was plagued. Exodus 32:10, 35.

How many lost their lives in the plague we are not told, but it was in addition to the 3000 that were slain by the Levites when Moses descended from the mount. **Exodus 32:28.**

This was in no way due to the failure of Moses prayers, but rather due to the lack of repentance on the part of the people. This is a timely warning! It's a neglected truth today! Repentance is not only for the unsaved, but for the saved as well. The first admonition to the seven churches is to remember, do, and repent. Is it because there is so little repentance amongst God's people that His chastening hand is laid so heavily upon us?

Vs 4a. "And when the people heard these evil tidings they mourned."

When the Lord is no longer in the midst of His people its high time to mourn. To mourn means to sorrow and lament. The threat that God would no longer be with them moved them to deep repentance. This a more hopeful sign than what we see in **Revelation 3:** where the Laodicean church is indifferent, content without Him, and quite proud of their accomplishments. There is little doubt that we are living in the Laodicean age where Christ is portrayed as standing outside the congregation trying to gain access, while they answer Him saying:

- I am rich
- I am increased with goods
- I have need of nothing

And the Lord's reply is;

- You are wretched
- You are miserable
- You are poor
- You are blind
- You are naked

Increased with goods, believing they have need of nothing Christ rebukes them, and then He counsels them to repent and buy gold, robes, and eye salve. The tragedy of deception is that when you are truly deceived you don't know it.

Vs 4b. "And no man put on his ornaments."

Outward adornment is out of keeping with true repentance and humility before the Lord. Adornment draws attention to self.

The more that true spirituality declines; the more ornamentation comes to the fore.

All around us Christian churches are putting on all the adornment that they can find, copy, or emulate. Holiness has been substituted for entertainment until we have life without intelligence, salvation without repentance, and our blindness is infinitely worse than physical, it's the spiritual darkness of mind and ears.

There is a competitive spirit that I'm certain God hates. Going forth unto him is not a single act that's done once for all at conversion, but it is a constant and habitual thing, it's an attitude of life. It's continually taking up your cross daily and following Him regardless of the cost.

Vs 6. "And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by mount Horeb."

Here we see Israel obeying the command of the Lord in Vs 5 stripping themselves of all ornamentation. And while they were doing this Moses took the Tabernacle and pitched it "without the camp," **afar off** from the camp so that those who truly sought the Lord had to make that journey.

The going forth of Moses outside the camp was a remarkable one. He was bowing to God's righteous decision that as long as Israel was stiff-necked He could not dwell among them. Yet this going forth was an act of faith, for without any direct or express command from God Moses took the tabernacle without the camp. He was a man of faith. He knew that God could no longer dwell in a place that was in rebellion and rejected Him by installing a golden calf in His place. Yet he trusted in God to show mercy to those who would truly repent and go out and seek after Him with all their hearts. All the while God is weighing up the people to see how genuine they were. This is a picture of a call to separation and holy living. The people that stripped themselves and sort after the Lord were not only spared, but were allowed to go out to the "meeting place".

Romans 5: 20. "For where sin abounds grace doth much more abound".

It's obvious that the Holy Spirit had this scripture in Exodus 33:7 in mind as we consider the typical significance of this incident in Hebrews 13: 13. Here we have a call to separation because of apostasy. It is a call to separation from the World and all its adornments. This scripture was addressed to a church that was going into apostasy. The warning is not against sectarianism, as was the case in Corinthians, or to the bondage of the Law (Galatians). But the believing Jews were enjoined to forsake the unbelieving nation who despised, rejected, and murdered God's Son. These scriptures are not

advocating that we forsake churches or companies of God's professing people where Christ is owned, worshipped and honored. To go without the camp is a vastly different thing than separating from God's own people for personal reasons. All who are dear to Christ should be dear to us. Rather it was corporate idolatry that made Jehovah refuse to continue in their midst. It was when the Lord Himself had been rejected, and not until then, that Moses pitched the tent outside the camp.

In Exodus 16: and 17: when the people murmured He never departed, but when the people rejected Him as sole Lord and Savior, then Ichabod. There are times to strengthen the things that remain, and times to depart.

A quote by Phillip Keller would seem to support the fore going.

“In large measure the problems of modern society are the result of God's people having never been taught by their leaders to take His commands seriously. To be a different and distinct people we must have His mind-set and His out-look on life to see life as Christ sees life with its transient values, wherein all that truly endures is of eternal worth”.

The terrible tragedy of the modern church is its easygoing complacency. Too many of its leaders are spiritually shallow thinkers with little or no convictions about anything. They take the fashionable, popular approach to most of the terrible problems of our decadent society and just go with the flow.

Simply amuse the masses, entertain the crowds, and be a producer of popular ideas and pop music that will pack the churches with worldly-wise worshippers. As long as the pulpit is popular and the crowds consider it to be “cool” to go to church our leaders have assured themselves God is pleased.

But Christ calls us to a distinct sort of life. It is one of personal love and loyalty to Him. It calls for sacrifice and service to others. It demands integrity within.

The only possible way in which Christ can ever truly command our attention is to have a living encounter with us from day to day in the secret sanctum of our souls. He has never changed over the thousands of years that He has communed with man”.