

Hebrews 13:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

Analysis

For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. This verse references the Day of Atonement ritual (Leviticus 16:27) where the bodies of the sin offering animals—the bull and goat—were burned outside the camp after their blood was brought into the Holy of Holies. The Greek word for "sanctuary" (τὰ ἅγια, τὰ ἅγια) specifically refers to the holy place or sacred precincts, emphasizing the blood's destination in the most sacred space.

The phrase "burned without the camp" (κατακαιό exō tēs parembolēs, κατακαιώ ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς) is theologically significant. The sin offering's body was considered defiled because it bore the people's sins symbolically. Being burned outside the camp meant removal from the holy community—the offering was treated as unclean and expelled. This parallels Christ's crucifixion outside Jerusalem's gates (Hebrews 13:12), where He bore our sins and was treated as cursed (Galatians 3:13).

The author uses this typology to demonstrate Christ's superior sacrifice. Just as the high priest entered the Most Holy Place with blood while the bodies burned outside, Jesus' blood entered the heavenly sanctuary while His body suffered outside the city. The completeness of this offering—blood for atonement, body for removal of sin—fulfilled and transcended the Old Covenant pattern. This verse

prepares readers to embrace Christ's reproach by going to Him "outside the camp" (Hebrews 13:13).

Historical Context

The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) was Israel's most solemn holy day, detailed in Leviticus 16. Once yearly, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place to make atonement for himself, the priesthood, and all Israel. Two goats were selected: one sacrificed as a sin offering with blood sprinkled on the mercy seat, the other sent into the wilderness as the scapegoat bearing the people's sins symbolically.

The bull (for the high priest's sins) and the goat (for the people's sins) whose blood entered the sanctuary had their bodies carried outside the camp and completely burned—hides, flesh, and refuse (Leviticus 16:27). In Israel's wilderness period, 'outside the camp' meant beyond the sacred community's boundaries where God's presence dwelt. Later, when Israel settled in Canaan, this principle continued with offerings burned outside Jerusalem.

The Hebrews' audience, likely Jewish Christians facing pressure to return to Judaism, needed to understand that Christ's death fulfilled and replaced the entire sacrificial system. His crucifixion outside Jerusalem's walls wasn't accidental but fulfilled this typology—He was the ultimate sin offering, bearing God's people's sins and suffering the penalty of separation. The first-century Jewish Christians who identified with Christ were themselves going 'outside the camp' of institutional Judaism, facing ostracism and persecution for their faith.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does understanding the sin offering's complete removal 'outside the camp' deepen our appreciation for Christ's substitutionary atonement?
2. What does it mean practically to go to Jesus 'outside the camp,' bearing His reproach in our contemporary context?
3. How does the pattern of blood entering the sanctuary while bodies burn outside illustrate both the heavenly and earthly aspects of Christ's work?
4. In what ways does the Old Testament sacrificial system's incompleteness point us to the superior, once-for-all sacrifice of Christ?
5. How should the reality that Christ was treated as sin-bearing and expelled motivate our willingness to suffer rejection for His sake?

Interlinear Text

ὧν γὰρ εἰσφέρεται ζῷων τὸ αἷμα περὶ ἀμαρτίας εἰς
whose For is brought beasts G3588 blood for sin into
G3739 G1063 G1533 G2226 G129 G4012 G266 G1519

τὰ ἄγια διὰ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως τούτων τὰ σώματα
the sanctuary by the high priest of those the bodies
G3588 G39 G1223 G3588 G749 G5130 G3588 G4983

κατακαίεται ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς
are burned without the camp
G2618 G1854 G3588 G3925

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 16:27 (Sin): And the bullock for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung.

Exodus 29:14 (Sin): But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, shalt thou burn with fire without the camp: it is a sin offering.

Leviticus 9:11 (Parallel theme): And the flesh and the hide he burnt with fire without the camp.

Numbers 19:3 (Parallel theme): And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest, that he may bring her forth without the camp, and one shall slay her before his face:

Leviticus 6:30 (Sin): And no sin offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the fire.

Leviticus 9:9 (Blood): And the sons of Aaron brought the blood unto him: and he dipped his finger in the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar, and poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar:

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