

BIBLE CLASS NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES
TOGETHER, Hebrews 10:25 15.12.22

Dear brothers and sisters,

The apostle to the Hebrews from chapter 9-11 explains how the instructions given by God to Moses concerning the tabernacle and the sacrifices were types expressing the principles of the Law, but not the very image of them. For it is the life of Jesus Christ that is their true fulfilment. The apostle goes on to explain that the faith, hope and love were the principles applied by God in His plan of salvation of mankind. Notice in Hebrews 11:1, the apostle encourages the Jewish believers to apply these principles in their own lives. Note how, in this chapter, he says, "Let us in full assurance of faith" v.22; "Let us ... hold fast our hope" (elpis) and "Let us consider one another ... unto love." V.23-24. These three principles are expanded in the following three chapters: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for;" 11:1, 12:2 "Who for the joy that was set before him (our hope)" and 13:1 "Let brotherly love continue." Belief and baptism into the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit removes the barrier of alienation from God, Gen.3:15, and with boldness in the sense of assurance, believers can enter into the holiest, the presence of God, consequent upon our forgiveness of sins, by the blood of Jesus, (the sprinkled blood) upon the mercy seat Lev.16:14. The blood of Jesus is described as "a new and living way". Apparently, the Greek word for 'new' indicates 'freshly slain'. Christ is the new and living way for everyone that believes; and as the blood is the life, the life of Christ Jesus is valid for all who subsequently believe and are baptised. Although Jesus was slain, he was raised to life: a new life which cannot be destroyed because it is wholly given and totally dedicated to God., John 6:53-54. So that now he is the High Priest over the

house of God, the Greek is empathised a 'Great High priest'. The apostle writes of the confidence that true believers now have in that 'together' (let us). We can draw near with a true heart: a genuine heart; and it seems to speak of hearts beating in unison. "Let us (plural) enter with a true heart, or one heart and mind, and fulness of assurance", see 6:11, fulness of hope. Our hearts are to be sprinkled from an evil conscience, if they are not, our approach cannot be acceptable, see Matt.5:23 "Leave thy gift before the altar."

The apostle speaks of individual effort to provoke one another unto love and good works; stirring one another up and ensuring that love prevails in the brotherhood. We come then to the verse, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together."

The Hebrew believers seemed to be dissatisfied with the outcome of their new faith, perhaps they missed the time spent at the Temple and in the synagogues with their comfortable rituals. Some seem to have been dissatisfied with the gatherings of remembrance of the Lord Jesus. The apostle is anxious lest they forsake the assembling of themselves together to celebrate the sacrifice and raising to life of their saviour Jesus Christ. The words used for 'assembling ourselves together' is one word in Greek EPISUN-AGOGÉ, which means 'a gathering of persons'. The question was, Would those Jewish believers support or forsake the complete unified gathering? Or Just slide back into the old synagogue: that system of disunited ideas? The same word used here EPISUNAGOGÉ is used in 2 Thes.2:1, where, writing of the Second coming of Christ, the word is rendered "our gathering together unto him". If these Hebrews forsook the Christian assembly now, they would not be selected to be among that great assembly of the Lord Jesus at his appearing. Meanwhile there was a day approaching for the worshippers; it was to be a day of vengeance, for AD70 was approaching when Jerusalem, the Temple and Synagogue

worship would be wiped from the face of the land of Israel. So the exhortation was for Jewish Christians to strengthen their faith in true unity with Gentile believers, and not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. Jude, the brother of James, also saw the trend among the Jewish believers who, like the disciples at one point, thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear when Jesus was near to Jerusalem. The crucifixion of the Lord Jesus convinced some that he could not be the expected Messiah. But then the Lord Jesus rose from the sepulchre, having been certified dead by a Roman officer. Three days later it was announced that he was very much alive! The resulting 3,000 Jewish converts at Pentecost showed that belief and hope had been kindled again.

But though the witness to the Jews and later the Gentiles was highly successful, toward the end of Paul's ministry, doubts were being sown in the minds of the Jews, and Christ had not yet appeared. Paul was executed about AD59-60, and unfaithfulness was manifest again, as prophesied by Peter, Paul, James and Jude, who warned the believers that the Lord Jesus would intervene not to establish the Kingdom, but to bring about the destruction of Jerusalem and the unbelieving Jews; and to abolish the Jewish Commonwealth. Which he did by his divine authority over the power of Rome, whose armies invaded Judea and destroyed the Temple and Jerusalem, driving the Jews from the promised land. The apostle was aware of rising discontent among the Jewish Christians, as he warned them: "For if we sin wilfully, having understood the exact knowledge of the truth, there is no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment." For the Jews who had given up on the belief that Jesus was the Messiah. These are important things that should impress upon our minds, for there is no doubt that we are all subject to committing sin, through weakness or temporary forgetfulness. But when we realise our

failure, we can confess our sins to our Lord Jesus, as it is written: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

One of the reasons of our assembling together on the first day of the week, or at other times, is to refresh our minds of the responsibilities we have before God. The Truth is like so many other abilities we may have in life, if we do not use it we lose it! Coming together helps us to focus on our responsibilities toward God, towards His Son and towards one another.

Meeting one another regularly should help our memories and does far more than messages on WhatsApp. We used to have three meetings on First Day and two meetings in the week and were tuned into Scripture. The pandemic restricted this excellent practice to only one meeting a week. The pandemic has faded, and our God is stronger than this. Ought we not to try and return to at least two meetings. Because the Corinthians failed to appreciate their meetings on the First Day, they were failing to examine themselves; and for this cause, many were weak and spiritually sick and some were stumbling. A similar problem seems to have affected the Ephesian Ecclesia, for the apostle Paul gives us a clarion call: “Awake! You that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.”