

Does the following passage insist we should be attending a church on the weekend?

Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering (for He is faithful who promised), and let us consider one another to provoke to love and to good works, **not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together**, as the manner of some *is*, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He who despised Moses' Law died without mercy on *the word of two or three witnesses*. Heb 10:23-28

Please be assured that Scripture speaks of convocations for service and worship. The nation of Israel was obliged to appear before the Lord three times in a year, Deut.16:16, and the Jews assembled in their synagogues weekly, Acts 15:21. The Christians of the Acts and afterwards gathered in homes, Acts 16:5 and Paul's pastoral letters, 1Timothy and Titus, speak of conduct within these gatherings so assembling together for the ministry of God's Word, fellowship and support and is a good thing. But does Hebrews 10 endorse this good thing?

Some might question does this really matter? Since all accept that going to a church is a good thing, what difference does an understanding of Scripture make? Yes, it does matter that we accurately understand Scripture. The Word of God is the only guide for faith and practice and it is hoped that each reader cares a great deal about the correct handling of it. Any loose handling of God's Word is to be deplored, even if such loose handling appears to endorse something good. Yes, understanding Hebrews 10 correctly does matter.

The immediate context is about a certain Day approaching;

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for He is faithful who promised), and let us consider one another to provoke to love and to good works, **not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together**, as the manner of some *is*, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. Heb 10:23-25

Notice the word Day is capitalized and when we widen the immediate context we find some things relating to this Day, the Day which was approaching. Because this Day was approaching they were not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, which assembling is inseparable from that Day. Let us see this wider context;

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain **fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation**, which shall devour the adversaries. He who despised Moses' Law died without mercy on the word of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy of punishment, the one who has trampled the Son of God, and who has counted the blood of the covenant with which he was sanctified an unholy thing, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who has said, "**Vengeance** belongs to Me, I will repay, says the Lord." And again, "**The Lord shall judge His people**." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But call to memory the former days, in which (after you were illuminated) you endured a great fight of afflictions, indeed being exposed both by reproaches and afflictions, and while you became companions of those who lived so. For you both sympathized with my bonds and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that **you have in Heaven a better and an enduring substance**. Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great recompense of reward. For you have need of **patience**, so that after you have done the will of God you might **receive the promise**. For "yet a little while, and **He who shall come will come** and will not delay." Now, "the Just shall live by faith. But if he draws back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him." Heb 10:26-38

The Hebrews are warned not to discount their salvation, to sin willfully and they are reminded, with a backward glance to Israel's Exodus, of fiery judgment. Back then the Lord descended in the clouds with a trumpet (Ex.19) so perhaps the Day in Hebrews is the coming of the Lord when the same things would take place.

It was this Day which was fast approaching when Hebrews was written, when the Lord would take His vengeance and judge His people. I don't think that Day is any ordinary weekend day. This is The Day of the Lord, the Day culminating in the Lord's return. These Hebrew believers were not looking to the vengeance, but to the Judgment and their hope was tied to this earthly return of the Lord, and so they were to hold fast (Hebs.10:23) the truths they had acknowledged. This included the hope they held, they were not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. Hebrews is assuring them that the One coming will come and those who draw back will receive His displeasure.

This is the context of our text and no stretch of the imagination can include in it attendance at a building on a weekend. Now let us examine the original word which is translated the "assembling of ourselves together". The word used originally is "episynagoge" and this word only occurs in one other place and here is that first occurrence;

*Now we beseech you, my brothers, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you should not be soon shaken *in* mind or troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word or letter, as through us, as *if* the Day of Christ is at hand. 2Th 2:1-2*

Did you notice Thessalonians is also about the coming of the Lord; the DAY of Christ, not about Sunday or Saturday? Please read the rest of chapter 2 and note the antiChrist in Israel's Temple, and the Lord returning and destroying him. Paul was reminding the Thessalonians that certain things were to happen before their "gathering together" unto Him. Gathering together in 2Thess.2:1 and assembling of ourselves in Hebrews 10:25 are the same word. Neither passage is about any week day.

Reading 1Thess.4:13-5-10 we see that the gathering together unto Him is the meeting in the clouds, what is called the "rapture", that great hope of the Acts period. The believers, both the dead and living ones, would be taken up to the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. This is what Paul wrote about in 2Thess.2:1 where he joined the coming of the Lord and their gathering together unto Him. The Day was the Lord's day and the gathering together was the meeting in the clouds. This has nothing to do with Saturday or Sunday. This is the very same context of Hebrews 10.

Paul urged the Thessalonians not to fear that the Day had passed but the "rapture", the meeting in the clouds, was still in view. Similarly, in Hebs.10 the readers were urged not to turn back, to retain their faith and not to forsake the assembling of themselves together; the "rapture" the meeting in the clouds. The Hebrews were not to forsake the hope they held. Paul did not write the Hebrew believers were to go to a church building on the weekend.

Now going to a church on the weekend might be a good thing, but it is a grave concern when Christians in leadership, still use Hebs.10 out of context to suit traditions and maybe inflict control on the believers.

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