

Sent: Wednesday, January 11, 2017 7:44 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Hebrews 10:19-39

Interesting that our first MOB study for 2017, covering Hebrews 10:19-39, just happened to include some important "resolutions" that the author of the book of Hebrews urged believers to adopt! Could serve as appropriate "new year's resolutions" for us as well! It is also interesting that he referred to the "inauguration" of a "new and living way"! All of which seem very relevant to us as we move forward in what could be a very historic and memorable year!

The "therefore, brethren" of Hebrews 10:19 can be viewed as a kind of turning point in the book of Hebrews. The prior chapters have established the theological foundation for moving on! Christ has come into the world to offer Himself as the "once for all," all-sufficient sacrifice for sin! The veil of the temple has been "torn in two" (Matt. 27:51) and we can now "have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus"--direct access to God, who was once unapproachable under the Levitical system! A "new and living way has been inaugurated through the veil..." and we have a great High Priest over the house of God"!

But, as Hagner writes, "theology without application is merely an intellectual exercise, and application without theology lacks foundation to motivate and energize"! So, application is vital and expected! And, in view of what Christ has accomplished for us, we now need to respond with full commitment from our hearts! Hebrews 10:22-25 urges three things:

1--"Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance with faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water!" (God, through the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek. 36:26-28) had long ago promised that this would be possible one day, when He would "give us a new heart, and put a new Spirit within us...and cause us to walk in His statutes...so that we would be His people, and He would be our God!")

2--"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful!" (Begins with knowing clearly what and why we believe! Our "credo"!)

3--Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near!" (Fellowship and Bible studies, like MOB, provide an ideal context in which this kind of encouragement can happen!)

These three "resolutions" exemplify the three great virtues cited in I Corinthians 13--faith, hope, and love! Someone has pointed out that the first two, faith and hope, will be fulfilled and perfectly realized in heaven--but that love, the God-like virtue, is everlasting!

The author of Hebrews recognized that many of his readers were facing persecution and other difficult hardships, which would only increase in the days ahead, and so issued a solemn warning against any "turning back"! And he ends his narrative with an encouraging affirmation of their walk with the Lord, urging them to "persevere"--to "keep on keeping on"--and reminding them that it would be worth it all!

He closes the text with words from Habakkuk 2:4, picked up by Paul in Romans 1:17, and later by Martin Luther: "The righteous man (the just!) shall live by faith!" And so, this is another important understanding, and resolution we can remind ourselves of, as believers in 2017! And we'll be learning more about what it really means to live by faith as we head on to Hebrews 11, the great chapter on "faith," in the weeks ahead!

Happy New Year, men!

Lowell