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# Words of Truth

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## Hebrews 10:34

By: Brian A. Yeager

If you will recall, it is implied that there was a plurality of individuals involved in writing this letter (Hebrews 5:11-6:3, Hebrews 6:9, Hebrews 6:11, Hebrews 8:1, and Hebrews 13:18). After writing about the saints suffering through reproaches and afflictions (Hebrews 10:32-33), one of the penmen of this letter then wrote this personal note: *“For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance”* (Hebrews 10:34).

The word translated “bonds” [δεσμόν] means: “a band, i.e. ligament (of the body) or shackle (of a prisoner); figuratively, an impediment or disability: — band, bond, chain, string” (Strong’s # 1199). With that definition and the most common usage of the word (i.e. Acts 16:26, Acts 20:23, Acts 22:30, Acts 23:29, Acts 26:29, Acts 26:31, II Timothy 2:9, etc.); it is most likely this is in reference to imprisonment. It could also mean physical ailments. The word translated “string” in Mark 7:35 was in reference to a physical ailment. Regarding a woman who *“had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years”* (Luke 13:10-17), the same Greek word was used and translated as “bond” (Luke 13:16). Whether it was imprisonment or physical ailments, the point is that the saints were willing to look after this fellow Christian that was suffering a genuine physical need.

Since imprisonment is the mostly likely meaning of this individual being in bonds, many conclude that we are reading the writings of the Apostle Paul. That may be the case. However, the narrow-mindedness of that conclusion is troubling to me. Was Paul the only Christian in the first century that was put in prison? NO! The Apostles were imprisoned (Acts 5:18). An unknown number of Christians were put into prisons (Acts 8:1-3). Silas was imprisoned with Paul (Acts 16:16-40). Jason was arrested (Acts 17:1-9). That is not a complete list, but it is evidence that we could be reading the words of many individuals. That is also assuming this is talking about a saint being imprisoned. If it is talking about some Christian who had been ill in some manner, who knows the number of possibilities that could arise from that. The point we need to focus on is the compassion shown by the saints addressed in this letter to another Christian that had a genuine need.

The word “compassion” brings up a clear teaching on the overall subject matter of helping truly needy saints. Notice: *“For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his*

*brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” ( I John 3:11-18).*

The aid these brethren offered was referred to as “the spoiling of your goods.” This is similar to when Paul said he robbed other churches to do service for the saints in Corinth (II Corinthians 11:8). So, what does all of that mean? It shows that the recipient of this aid would have rather not needed it. This Christian did not want to burden others. When Paul was in prison, brethren from Philippi similarly cared for Paul (Philippians 1:7; 2:25-30). Included in their aid for Paul was financial support (Philippians 4:10-19). If you read that account, you find Paul saying, “*Not because I desire a gift*” (Philippians 4:17). Whether desired or not, it is comforting to know that true saints will help when such help is needed.

Having said all of that, the greatest teaching that explains Hebrews 10:34 is found here: “*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matthew 25:31-46).*