

HEBREWS 10.24-PAROXYSM

It is most unusual to come across in Aramaic and in the Greek NT also the word “paroxysm” nowhere else used in the bible but in 2 contexts. That in Acts 15.39 describes anger seriously over-pitched and beyond what the situation requires. The Hebrew writer in 10.24 deftly uses the selfsame word. If this writer should indeed as Tertullian insists be Barnabas he would have especial reason to cite this irregular tone of the Christian temper whereas the apostle Paul whose credit with the Hebrews was ebbing away would have equal and understandable reason to conceal the reference. Luke in Acts 15 makes reference to the Paul v Barnabas spat quite explicitly. This letter undoubtedly reads in the light of Acts 15 showing how we may learn from an overheated dispute and breach in fellowship.

“Let us breathe hard as in deep affection by stimulation [**GRC AR**]-enticing coaxing and stirring up-exciting desire”-unto a paroxysm of love. This word **PAROXYSM** is **used by Luke in the Greek of Acts 15.39 of the strife (sharp contention) between Paul and Barnabas- whilst in Hebrews 10.24 it is used in the Greek to great effect of saints “in strife” to encourage.**

The author of Hebrews is turning a word *used of rage* (in his own bitter experience Acts 15) into one the Christian should use in the contest to care and be kind. There is *evidence* in this context equally in the Aramaic of Hebrews 10.24 **ܩܘܪܓܐ GURGA**[provocation] with Acts 15.39 **ܠܘܒܐ HARINA** [controversy]& parallel Greek text of an old crisis of friendship. (1) This reference enhances the case for Barnabas’ authorship of the letter. (2) His familiarity with the LXX as one who completed Levitical training in Alexandria is also of significance. (3) As the much loved “Encourager” watching events at Jerusalem who better –indeed who else was there- to console the Hebrew nation? He, as Acts 15.39 records, was not sympathetic to the heavy chastisement Paul meted out to Mark. That distrust broke the partnership occasioned as it was by over frank words and a bullish attitude. Understandably Barnabas exhorts against paroxysm and “ill-tempered treatment of others”. Paul’s gentler mind had to await his appeal for Mark during his 63-4 imprisonment at Rome.

Do not “**divorce**” or “leave” as one might breach marriage but “**ask for**” or “**look for**” [**ܐܐܘܪܐ**] each other as you see the day of the Lord –of bride & bridegroom-draw nearer. He is encouraging the equivalent of “family orientation” in the church-such intimacy as goes with public good manners and considerate relationships-that positivity that enquires of others’ relationships.

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To the glory of the Lord

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