

EXAMPLES IN SCRIPTURES OF SOLEMN ASSEMBLIES

This institution is found in both the Old and New Testaments. When God's people were backslidden, judgment would come and a leader would rise up and call God's people to repentance.

The following list is taken from an article written by another author:

1. **Exodus 33:7.** (Moses) took a tabernacle and pitched it outside the camp, a distance from the sins of the people, and called on the Levites to sanctify themselves.
2. **I Samuel 7:5-6.** (Samuel) required all the people to pray and fast while confessing their sins.
3. **II Chronicles 15:9-15.** (Asa) called a Solemn Assembly in Jerusalem whereby the people entered into a covenant with the Lord to seek Him with their whole heart.
4. **II Chronicles 20:3-1.** (Jehoshaphat) called Judah to fast and seek the Lord when their enemies surrounded them. God supernaturally delivered His people.
5. **II Chronicles 23:16.** (Jehoiada) caused a covenant to be made between Himself and the people, to be the Lord's people. He then cleansed the land of sin.
6. **II Chronicles 29:5.** (Hezekiah) called for a Solemn Assembly. There were many days of worship and seeking God's favor and the celebrating of Passover.
7. **II Chronicles 34:31-33.** (Josiah) called upon the people to enter into a covenant with the Lord to walk in His ways.
8. **Ezra 8:21-23; 9:5-15.** (Ezra) proclaimed a fast which led to a public humiliation and putting away of sin.
9. **Nehemiah 8:1.** Again, an agreement was made to put away sin which they put in writing.
10. **Jonah 3:7.** (Ninevah) The king appointed a fast, in which they were to humble themselves, both people and animals.

"Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness."

James 4:9

The RICHES

OF GRACE

"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

Robert Reed
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Solemn Assembly

"Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders *and* all the inhabitants of the land *into* the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD."

Joel 1:14

+ Biblical Institution +

This Biblical institution is found throughout the entire Old Testament. The Solemn Assembly was a summons for Holy Business with God. It was an occasion for corporate repentance of God's covenant people. It was a time to seek the Lord's face and to confess sins. It was an opportunity to enter into God's Holy presence with prayer and fasting. The Solemn Assembly was a season to prepare one's heart for the promises and blessings of the Lord. The Solemn Assembly is a solemn responsibility for God's covenant people.

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast,
call a solemn assembly"

Joel 2:15



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*"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."*
Acts 16:31

The Solemn Assembly is mentioned about twenty times in Scripture in ten verses. It was an occasion of corporate repentance and confession of sin by God's people. That is, a self-examination and seeking God's favor. The Solemn Assembly was a time of restraint (**Lev. 23:36**). It was a time to deal with sin and do business with God. It was an occasion to seek God's favor and to avoid His judgment. As personal repentance is necessary for personal forgiveness, so corporate repentance is necessary for corporate forgiveness. In the Solemn Assembly there was fasting, praying, confession of sins, humility, turning to God, brokenness, and self-examination. It was a time to weep, and mourn over sin, "*Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.*" **James 4:9**

THE CAUSE FOR THE ASSEMBLY

In **Joel 1:13-20**, there is a call to a Solemn Assembly because of God's judgment on His people. The entire chapter describes the type of judgment that was upon the people. There was the locust plague that had destroyed the land and other calamities mentioned as well. The nation was devastated by divine intervention. **Chapter one and chapter two** describe the horrible judgment. The locust plague was just a foretaste of God's judgment upon the nations at the Lord's coming which is called the Day of the Lord (**chapters 1:15; 2:1,11**). In **chapter 1:8-20**, the people mourn because of God's judgment upon them. The party is over and all is gone. In **verses 12 and 16**, the people had lost their joyfulness in serving the Lord. In **verse 13**, worship had stopped, there were no daily sacrifice and no coming before the presence of God as He had commanded. Again, this chapter describes divine judgment because of the rebellion of the people. In **verse 16**, food is cut off from the people and thereby the loss of joy and gladness in the House of God. Then in **verse 17**, the land is dry, the barns are empty and broken down, and the beasts groan according to **verses 18-19** because they have no pasture. The beasts also cry for water because it is dried up. God had brought these curses because He was angry with His people and the only solution was repentance.

THE CALL TO THE ASSEMBLY

The Solemn Assembly was literally a sacred stoppage, that is, everything was to stop. Business as usual was to come to a halt for

assembling with God's people at God's House. In **chapter 1:12-13** and **chapter 2:15-17**, the leaders were to call the people to a Solemn Assembly. They were to sanctify or set apart this day. They were to fast and cry out to God over their sin and His judgment. One writer said, "The cry of Pentecost must precede the benediction of Pentecost." This was a time of corporate worship and confession of sin. The public assembly was for everyone according to **chapter 2:15-17**. That is, the priests, leaders, children, infants, and even the newly weds. All were to gather before the presence of the Lord. No one was to be left behind. There was a national crisis and so everyone was to attend the meeting. Fasting was commanded, but fasting is of no spiritual value if sin is not dealt with (**Isaiah 1:2-20; 58:1-14**). Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple reveals that outward plagues only reveal the plagues of the heart. In **Daniel chapter nine**, Daniel cries out unto God for revelation concerning the captivity of his people and confesses his sins and the sins of the people. May our Solemn Assemblies be a time to truly deal with sin in our lives.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS ASSEMBLY

In **Joel 2:13**, there is a list of blessings and promises (grace, mercy, kindness, and favor). In **verses 18-27**, we see God dwelling in the midst of His people and the land restored. There is peace, joy, and excitement among God's covenant people. They are spiritually and physically blessed by their God. Even the animals will be nourished and provided for on the land. God promised to restore all that had been lost or taken away in **verses 25-26**. The Lord also promised to dwell in the midst of His people in **verse 28**, "*And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.*" These promises extend beyond the Jews of the Old Testament unto Messiah at His first and second coming (**verses 28-32**). The Spirit of God once again will be poured out upon His people. If God's people desire God's blessings, they must be obedient to God's ways. Revival can only come to a desperate people. A quote by another author says, "A generation that knows not how to engage in corporate repentance is a generation that is at trouble with itself." Amen.