

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

FAITHFUL CHURCHES OF CHRIST WORSHIP GOD IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

David P. Brown

INTRODUCTION

Jesus taught the Samaritan woman:

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23, 24—Italics mine, DPB).

As infallibly recorded by the inspired apostle John, our Lord's words establish the importance of our study. However, as we begin this study there are other important matters we must assume that the readers know. Some of them are: (1) the existence of God the Father (Gen. 1:1; Eph. 4:6; Heb. 11:6; (2) the deity of Jesus Christ—the Only Begotten Son of God (John 1:1, 2, 14; 3:16; 8:24; Eph. 4:5; Heb. 1:2ff); and (3) the Bible is the Holy Spirit inspired, infallible, inerrant, final, and complete revelation of God to man (John 12:48; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Jam. 1:25; Heb. 4:12). In this study, therefore, we are not necessarily interested in proving any of the matters listed in the preceding sentence. However, the **“instruction in righteousness”** that the Bible alone offers regarding worship is of the utmost concern to us in this study, or any other study of spiritual and moral matters (Psa. 119:172, Ecc. 12:3; John 8:31,32; 17:17; 12:48).

From John 4:24, please notice that worshipping God **“in spirit and in truth”** is a **“must”**—that is, it is imperative that we worship God **“in spirit and in truth.”** In other words, if our worship is to be acceptable to God it **MUST** be **“in spirit and in truth.”** Otherwise, our worship is vain (empty, pointless). As Jesus said of some of the Jews' worship while He walked the earth: **“But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”** (Mat. 15:9).

The first time we come across the word *worship* in the Bible is in connection with Abraham's offering of Isaac as an act of worship to God. Of this matter, Moses recorded: **“Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship and come again to you”** (Gen. 22:4, 5). Of course, this was not the first time anyone had worshipped God. The first account of man worshipping God is found in Moses' inspired record of the brothers, Cain and Abel, worshipping Him (Gen. 4:3, 4).

WORSHIP UNDER THE OLD TESTAMENT

In John 4:20-24, Jesus and the Samaritan woman discussed the worship of God. The Jews and the Samaritans differed regarding where one ought to worship. Jesus clearly pointed out that during the Mosaical Age the Jews were correct in worshipping God in the Jerusalem temple. However, Jesus pointed out that the time was coming when in the worship of God the location would not be important. Our Lord

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
August 3, 1917–October 10, 2001

Editorial...

SEASON'S GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY 2022

We are constantly reminded of all those who support *CFTF*. We are, therefore, thanking you for your continued support and praying that God will richly bless you in your faithful service to Him. We also request that you remember us in our efforts to propagate the gospel and defend the faith. As I have said and written on many occasions over the years, we do not know how much longer we will be physically able to do this work, but we intend to engage in it as long as the Lord permits.

The late bro. Ira Y. Rice, Jr. started *CFTF* over fifty years ago to identify, expose, and refute error, and those who teach it. Whether it is doctrine that looses men from what God in His Word binds on them, or doctrines that bind on us what the Bible does not, without fear or favor, whether from friend or foe, we continue to engage in the same. However, as we continue in the same, we also plead for those brethren in error to repent of whatever their error is, come out of it, and return to the truth of God's Word.

Time is uncertain and brief and we do not know how much longer we will continue in the flesh or when the Lord will return to judge the world in righteousness at the end of time. Thus, the words of the old gospel hymn written by Jeannie Wilson, "Hold To God's Unchanging Hand," should be taken to heart. In part it reads:

*Time is filled with swift transition,
Naught of earth unmoved can stand,
Build your hopes on things eternal,
Hold to God's unchanging hand.*

*Trust in Him who will not leave you,
Whatsoever years may bring,
If by earthly friends forsaken
Still more closely to Him cling.*

*When your journey is completed,
If to God you have been true,
Fair and bright the home in glory
Your enraptured soul will view*

Refrain:

*Hold to God's unchanging hand,
Hold to God's unchanging hand;
Build your hopes on things eternal,
Hold to God's unchanging hand;*

We close with the following scripture:

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil (Ecc. 12:13, 14).

—David P. Brown, Editor

REMEMBERING OUR BROTHER IN THE LORD

BENARD KAGAGA

When the news came that bro. Benard Kagaga had died, we were surprised and greatly saddened. Bro. Kagaga had posted on Facebook that he had entered the hospital because of chest pains, but his health declined rapidly.

Following his death, we learned he was being treated for tuberculosis. He had undergone about five months of treatment with one month remaining at the time of his demise. The doctors reported that the immediate cause of his death was an enlarged liver that caused his kidneys to fail, resulting in cardiac arrest on Saturday, November 27. Although the doctors were able to get his heart started again, they determined he



Benard Okoo Kagaga
(1976-2021)

was brain dead. Having worked with him for 17 hours following his cardiac arrest he was pronounced dead on Sunday afternoon, November 28.

The burial service took place on December 15 with a memorial service scheduled for December 25.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Benard's dear wife, Dorothy, and their children. Our condolences are also extended to his brother in the flesh and in the Lord, Veroon Wasonga, along with the rest of Benard's family and friends, including the many brethren who are mourning his loss.

—Editor



PROCLAIMING AND DEFENDING THE GOSPEL

After much study, brother Benard Kagaga was converted from the Roman Catholic Church in 1994. From that point forward, till the end of his busy and faithful life, he worked tirelessly to teach the Gospel to as many as he could reach.

Since his conversion, he and his brethren, one of which is his brother in the flesh and the Lord, Veroon Wasonga, have baptized hundreds and established many churches of Christ in Kenya, East Africa. He has done this through his work with the Kalamindi Church of Christ, his home congregation. These churches are within Nyanza province, Western Province, Nairobi province, and Rift valley province.

Bro. Kagaga started a school of preaching in 2008 in Ndhiwa. This he did because of his desire to see the gospel spread far and wide through men who are properly trained to preach and defend the pure gospel of Christ (2 Tim. 2:2). He realized that many churches were and are being influenced by liberal (those who loose people from what God in His Word binds on them) churches such as the Nairobi Great Commission school, a school heavily influenced by Abilene Christian University (ACU). (See the March 2020 issue of *CFTF* for more information concerning the inroads of liberalism in that part of the world.)

Benard was not only concerned about getting the gos-

pel to those who had never heard it, but he was also greatly concerned about apostasy among the saints in Western Kenya. He did much to keep the churches of Christ and preachers of that area sound in the faith. Besides opposing those false brethren who teach the "social gospel" and fellowship denominations, he earnestly and boldly contended for the faith regarding such errors as "antism" (doctrines binding on brethren what the New Testament does not bind), brought into that area by Keith Sharp. He recognized and opposed David (Dave) Miller's error on the re-evaluation and reaffirmation of elders of which false doctrine Miller has never repented. Furthermore, brother Kagaga recognized the errors coming out of the Bear Valley Bible Institute through a school in Kisumu near Ndhiwa. Also he recognized and opposed the erroneous doctrine that permits Christian family members to engage in acts of fellowship with erring family members after Christian fellowship has been scripturally withdrawn from them.

Benard was willing to sacrifice whatever was required of him to be faithful to the Lord. In Benard's dying moments, his mind was on the work of spreading and defending the gospel. To his brother, Veroon Wasonga, he said, "The work must continue." Our prayers to God are also to that end.

—Editor

(Continued From Page 1)

emphasized that God is Spirit and, therefore, He must be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

To make sure that we remain in the context of John 4:20-24, we must realize that Jesus is contrasting the worship of God under the Old Testament with the coming worship of God in the Christian dispensation by members of His church.

To offer acceptable worship to God under the Old Testament, the Jews (as was the case with Abraham and the patriarchs in the Patriarchal Age) were required to worship God from the heart (Deu. 6:4-7; Isa. 1:10-18) as God's Word directed them (Deu. 5:32, 33). Thus, we logically must conclude that Christian worship under the teaching of the New Testament is to be different from superior to that done by those under the Old Testament. Further, we are forced to the conclusion that worshipping God **"in spirit and in truth"** involves far more than worshipping from the heart according to Old Testament directions.

Without fear of successful contradiction, we affirm that the New Testament system applied properly to one's whole life leads to the highest spiritual level possible for one to live in this world. Thus, worship as a part of the Christian system is the most spiritual form of worship possible for man while he abides in the flesh. This, the Old Testament could not and was never meant to do. The inspired writer of the Hebrews epistle labored to point out that the Law of Moses was a system steeped in "carnal" ordinances (Heb. 9:1-10)—(1) a physical structure, (2) special priesthood, (3) clothing for priests, (4) lamp stands, (5) burning incense, (6) mechanical instruments of music, (7) feast days, (8) and animal and meal sacrifices. These appealed to the physical senses of man. Notice that under the Old Testament physical ordinances were temporary. They lasted until **"the time of reformation"** (Heb. 9:9-10). This occurred with the coming of the New Testament.

As it does to the Christians daily conduct, New Testament worship gives great emphasis to the spiritual nature of man. Consider the following: (1) God's temple is now spiritual (the church), composed of Christians only and the only Christians (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:19-22); (2) All Christians are priests (1 Pet. 2:5, 9); (3) Christians prayers are as sweet incense (Rev. 5:8); (4) Their heart strings are struck in the worship of God as they teach one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16); (5) Christians observe the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:17-34); and (6) Spiritual sacrifice in the acts of worship are given great emphasis (Heb. 13:15).

As Jesus declared, the new worship of the Christian Age is more in harmony with the essence and, thus, the nature of God—**"God is Spirit."** Again, the design of New Testament worship relates and gives greater emphasis to man's spiritual nature—that which is real and abiding and not in carnal

type and shadow (Heb. 10:1). Thus, to the Samaritan woman Jesus spoke of a worship to come that was more in keeping with truth and reality (John 1:17; Gal. 5:22-25; Phi. 4:8, 9). Remember, God seeks those worshippers who worship Him in spirit and truth. Thus, we appeal to New Testament authority for the worship of the New Testament church (Acts 2:42; Col. 3:17). As God is Spirit, we emphasize the meaning of spiritual words that our spirits will be in harmony with His New Testament worship does not emphasize how things look, or sound, or feel, but gives great emphasis to the state of mind formed by one's correct understanding of God's Word. Assuredly, Christians can worship God anywhere and anytime, with true spiritual worship (Acts 16:25).

WORSHIP DEFINED

Let us now make sure we understand what the word *worship* means. Worship is not something that only takes place in the mind, but it also requires certain actions. In other words, when worship God, what are we to be thinking and doing? Since we are under the authority of Jesus Christ as it is manifested in the Words of His New Testament, in order to answer the preceding question we will note the meaning of the original Greek words of the New Testament pertaining to worship (Mat. 28:18; Col. 3:17; John 12:48).

THE MEANING OF *PROSKUNEO* (TO WORSHIP) IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Consulting any reputable Greek lexicon, we learn that the Greek word most frequently translated "worship" is *proskuneo*. It is translated "worship" or "worshipped" 60 times in the New Testament.

The number in the following quote is the number for the Greek word appearing in the dictionary portion of *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*. Of *proskuneo* Strong wrote:

4352 *PROSKUNEO* (59): *kuneo* = to kiss + *pros* = toward; literally, to blow a kiss. Hence, *proskuneo* means to show a literal, physical gesture of acquaintance, friendship, or affection. *Proskuneo* is usually translated "worship," which means much more than a physical gesture.

To further understand the significance of *proskuneo* please consider the following information. In the New Testament, *proskuneo* is always translated "worship." According to *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*, the word specifically means:

...to kiss the hand to (towards) one, in token of reverence among the Orientals, esp. the Persians, to fall upon the knees and touch the ground with the forehead as an expression of profound reverence in the NT by kneeling or prostration to do homage (to one) or make obeisance, whether in order to express respect or to make supplication. It is used of homage shown to men and beings of superior rank—(1) to the Jewish high priests; (2) to God; (3) to Christ; (4) to heavenly beings; (5) to demons.

William Tyndale was the first scholar to translate the Greek New Testament into English. He chose to use the English verb "to worship" to translate the Greek *proskuneo*

(to bow down). Tyndale employed the English “worship” as equivalent to the Greek “bow down.” When we read “to worship” in the English Bible, we must think “to show homage or obeisance” to God, a person of authority, or to false gods. Thus, the worshipper’s devotion, adoration, and praise of God that begins in the mind of the worshiper is manifest in the acts of worship authorized by the New Testament (Col. 3:17).

In the New Testament, when *proskuneo* referred to the Lord, it meant bowing down before His majesty. Bowing down as a physical posture was a metaphor for submitting to His sovereign will and desire.

Again, in consulting the Greek lexicons, we learn *proskuneo* referred to worshipping the Father or the Son, by the disciples or the twenty-four elders before the throne of the Almighty (Rev. 5:14; 19:4). It was used regularly in the Greek aorist tense. The aorist tense expressed pointed or punctiliar action (in contrast to linear or ongoing action), implying that worshipping was considered a decisive or resolute moment of obedience or submission in the worshiper’s relation to the Father or the Son of God.

There are two exceptions to this procedure. Jesus used the present tense (describing linear or ongoing action) when talking to the Samaritan woman (John 4) to refer to the worship that was currently taking place while they were discussing the matter. The other exception was when Jesus used the future tense to refer to action that was yet to take place in their lives.

IS “ALL OF LIFE IS WORSHIP?”

Some have erroneously taught “except for sin, all of one’s life is worship.” They have appealed to versions of the Bible that have translated the Greek word *latreia* in Romans 12:1 into the English word *worship*. In Romans 12:1, 2 Paul wrote:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The *ASV* (1901) has “**spiritual service**” rather than “**reasonable service**,” but the translators of the *KJV*, *NKJV*, *21st Century KJV*, and *ASV* translate *latreia* into our English word *service* not *worship*. Thus, they would have Paul teaching that offering our bodies to be living sacrifices is our “reasonable or spiritual worship” rather than “**service**.”

To translate *latreia* into “worship” rather than “**service**” in Romans 12:1 lacks consistency with the use of the Hebrew word for worship *shachah* in the Old Testament and the Greek word for worship *proskuneo* in the New Testament.

The Greek word translated “**reasonable**” was *logikos*

meaning “rational.” The word rendered “**service**” was *latreia* referring to the activities of the priests in taking care of their temple duties. Therefore, “**reasonable service**” identified the obedient posture of believers as their rational response to the Lord’s incredible mercy and grace. To translate *latreia* with “worship” is a very bad rendering.¹

Textually, the translation is more accurate as “**service**.” What Paul is teaching is this: Christians are to live surrendered sacrificial lives as the authority of Christ teaches citizens of His kingdom to live (Col. 3:17). Thus, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit Paul used the word *latreia* here, rather than *proskuneo*. The faithful Christian life was not devoted as was the Mosaical system to carnal animal sacrifices and offerings, but the Christians very body is surrendered in all things to God through faithful adherence to Christ via the gospel system. And, it is importance to realize that the apostle did not call such “worship” but “*reasonable service*.”

Thus, we conclude that all of the Christian’s life is service to God (Col. 3:17) but, for the reasons already studied, not all that a Christian does is worship to Him. Abraham was not worshipping God as he made preparation to go where the Lord told him, or as he traveled to the place where God told him to go. Abraham, himself said, to the young men, after arriving in the general area of where God had told him to go to make the specified sacrifice, wait here and we will go yonder and worship and return again to you (Gen. 22:5).

Again, Christians worship of God is composed of specific New Testament authorized acts of homage offered from the heart to God. One is not worshipping God when he is mowing his lawn, playing golf, fishing, or using the rest room. But such would be the case if “except for sin, all that a Christian does is worship.” The absurdity of such things being considered as worship ought to be readily seen. And they are easily seen by anyone that can see through a barrel with both ends knocked out. Thus, we see no need for further elaboration on refuting this silly and false doctrine.

TO SUMMARIZE

Worship is an active verb (worshipping) in the New Testament rather than a noun (worship service). It referred to pointed events in the lives of believers when they bowed in homage and obeisance to the Lord in acts of worship authorized by the New Testament, thereby expressing their resolute submission to His sovereign will in their lives in these specific acts designed to show the same.

We may conclude that the worship demanded by God of man and revealed by Jesus in His conversation with the Samaritan women is this:

1. Acceptable worship must originate in our inward man (spirit, heart).
2. Acceptable worship must be directed as acts of homage to God.

3. The Truth of the New Testament of Christ must guide us in these acts or avenues of worship so that we may be on the highest possibly spiritual level (Col. 3:16, 17).

4. Worship, therefore, denotes reverence toward and homage from the heart paid to God in certain acts of worship taught in the New Testament.

VAIN WORSHIP

Being that the Old Testament was written for our learning (Rom. 15:4), we will note certain examples of worship offered to God found in the Old Testament, which worship He did not receive. In noting said examples, we will emphasize why God would not accept the same.

Our first example of worship we have previously referenced. But now we will study it in more detail. This Old Testament account of worship is that of Cain and Abel, sons of Adam and Eve. It is found in Genesis 4:1-7.

Abel was a shepherd and Cain a farmer (“**tiller of the ground**”). Each brother worshipped God. But their worship of God differed. Abel brought the firstlings of his flock and offered them as a burnt offering to God, but Cain brought fruits of the ground. God “**had respect unto**” Abel and his offering, but unto Cain and his offering He “**had not respect.**” Cain was angry with God’s acceptance of Abel’s offering and His rejection of his own. Why was Cain’s offering (worship) not acceptable to God? Did Cain understand what God desired of the worshippers in expressing their homage to Him? The writer of Hebrews tells us that it was “**By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh**” (Heb. 11:4). Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Thus, to act by faith is to act according to the teaching of God’s Word. Abel complied with the Will of heaven in his worship to God as God’s Word had instructed him, but Cain did not. Thus, God respected Abel’s offering because Abel obeyed His commands. If God had respect for Abel’s offering without telling either brother what He expected of them, then His respect would have been for Abel rather than the offering. The text does not tell us when, but by implication we know that at some point preceding the offering of their sacrifices, God had directly or indirectly instructed Cain and Abel as to what He expected them to do when they worshipped Him. The answer to our question regarding whether Cain knew or did not know what God required of him in his worship of God is yes—Cain knew as well as Abel what God required of him when he worshiped God. Abel was obedient, but Cain was disobedient. As a result, Abel’s offering was accepted, and Cain’s was rejected (Heb. 11:4).

Our second example of vain worship is recorded in Leviticus 10: 1, 2. Nadab and Abihu were sons of Aaron, the High Priest of God. They, therefore, were members of the

tribe of Levi. According to the Law of Moses they had certain responsibilities for the tabernacle as well as conducting certain acts of worship to God for the people of Israel. On one occasion Nadab and Abihu took their censers and offered “**strange fire**” unto God (a strange thing was an unauthorized thing—it was strange to the teaching of God in the Law of Moses). As a consequence to their unauthorized action, God destroyed them with fire sent from heaven. The Scriptures state that they “**died before the Lord.**” God had given them instructions as to where to obtain fire for this specific worship of Him. In getting the fire from an unauthorized source, the two brothers sinned. While some things may seem insignificant to us, any deviation from the prescribed worship set out in the Words of the Bible is, evidently, highly significant to God. Indeed, it is a serious matter to approach God. Therefore, we must approach Him only on His terms. Obviously from this account of Nadab and Abihu, we learn that God will accept only that worship from us which he has authorized, such authorization being revealed only in His Word.

Our third example of unacceptable worship to God is found in the conduct of King Saul (1 Sam. 13:1-14). After two years of being king, he attacked a garrison of Philistines with 3,000 men. But the Philistines gathered an army of 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and “**people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude**” and pitched for battle. The Israelite soldiers recognized their terrible situation, and the divine record tells us that they hid in caves, thickets, rocks, high places, and pits from the Philistines. Because of these sad events Samuel had instructed Saul to wait 7 days for him in Gilgal where and when Samuel would offer a sacrifice to God. Samuel was late in coming to Gilgal. And Saul panicked when he saw the people scattering from him. He, therefore, took it upon himself to offer a burnt offering and peace offering to God. As he finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel arrived. Recognizing what Saul had done Samuel asked him, “**What hast thou done?**” In answer to Samuel’s question Saul said:

I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; therefore said I, “The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord”: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

However, God was not interested Saul’s sacrifice. He was interested in Saul conducting himself according to His Will. He desired Saul’s obedience. In response to Saul, Samuel replied: “**Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which He commanded thee.**” Samuel then informed Saul of the consequences of his disobedience—God would take the kingdom from Saul and give it to a man “**after His own heart.**” From this divinely given example we learn that God is not inter-

ested only in sacrifice, but, more importantly, obedience to His Will.

Our next example of vain worship is again from the life Saul. It is found in 1 Samuel 15:1-31. The record reveals that God commanded Saul to: **“Go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.”** The reason God ordered their annihilation is found in verse 2. The Amalekites had laid in wait for Israel as they left Egypt (Exodus 17:8-16). God had, therefore promised, **“The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”** In his war with the Amalekites, Saul’s army numbered 200,000 footmen and 10,000 men of Judah. Saul destroyed all the Amalekites except for one person namely, Agag, the king of the Amalekites. Saul also brought back alive to Israel the best of the Amalekites’ livestock. However, God had commanded Saul to: **“Go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.”** Thus, God told Samuel: **“It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments.”** But Saul told Samuel, **“I have performed the commandment of the Lord.”** Saul’s false statement teaches us to what extent one may go in deceiving himself into thinking he has done God’s Will when he knows he has not obeyed all that God commanded him to do. Samuel summed up God’s anger with Saul when he declared:

Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry” (verses 22, 23).

From these examples from the Old Testament, it is obvious that God will not allow anyone or anything to take the place of one’s obedience to His Will. And this certainly applies to man’s worship of God. Whether men in the past were under the laws of Patriarchy or Moses, or today under Christ’s Law, proof of one’s proper love for, and faith in God and His Will has always been obedience to the same (Ecc. 12:13; John 14:15; Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 2:3-5; 5:2, 3). There is simply no substitute for obedience.

NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP

Paul declares that every thing we say and do must be authorized by Jesus Christ (Col. 3:17). In other words, since we are to **“walk by faith and not by sight,”** and faith comes by hearing the Word of God, then to walk by faith is to live our lives in the way the New Testament of Christ tells us to live them (Mat. 28:18; John 14:6; 2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17). Of course, this includes the worship of Christians in the Lord’s church.

When we examine all the New Testament has to say

regarding the worship of the Lord’s church, we conclude that in the first day of the week worship assembly singing, praying, preaching, contributing of our means and partaking of the Lord’s Supper are the only acts of Worship in which Christians are to engage. Notice that two of these acts are limited to the first day of the week worship assemblies of the saints. They are: contributing of our means and the observance of the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2). However, regarding the use of our money, it must be pointed out that there is New Testament authorization for using our funds as we have opportunity to help others throughout the week (2 Cor. 8, 9; Gal. 6:10).

The direct statements, examples, and implications of the New Testament authorize no other acts of worship by which the Lord’s church is to worship God. Let us, therefore, study the five acts or avenues of worship ordained by God in the last Will and Testament of His Son.

PREACHING

When Paul assembled to worship God with the church in the city of Troas, he preached to them (Acts 20:7). The *American Standard Version* (1901) says Paul **“discoursed”** with them. The meaning of the Greek word translated **“discoursed”** is this: as Paul taught them he answered their questions and even argued the case of God with them in his presentation of the Truth of the Gospel. In setting out the Truth of God properly, the preacher must reason with the people (Tit. 1:3; Isa. 1:18f; Jer. 30, 31; Mat. 3:1-12). We are to prove all things and hold fast that which is good (1 The. 5:21). And, in teaching the people, he certainly may and should answer their questions (1 Pet. 3:15). Publicly and daily for two years Paul **“reasoned”** in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9). If he did this daily (and he did), and the first day of the week is a day (and it is), then he also did this kind of preaching on the first day of the week (and the divine record explicitly says he did—Acts 20:7). This Paul also did at Corinth while he worked with Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:4, 7, 11). Thus, we learn the nature of the study of the Bible as an act of homage paid to God in the worship assemblies of the saints.

GIVING OF OUR MEANS

In 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2, we read an apostolic order from the apostle Paul to the churches. In it he declares that Christians are to lay by in store of their means as they have been prospered during the preceding week so they could, on the first day of the week in the worship assemblies, cheerfully and without grudging contribute of their means to the work of the Lord (2 Cor. 9:7). We also learn from 2 Corinthians 8:8 that Christians giving of their means prove the sincerity of their love for the Lord. Furthermore, in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, we are taught that Christians are authorized to give more than their normal amount (as they have been prospered) when a special opportunity avails itself such as the occasion recorded in the chapters of the previous sentence. And, from Galatians 6:10, we learn that as opportunities avail them-

selves from day to day, each Christian is authorized to give whatever is necessary and right to alleviate the suffering and needs of others which giving is also beyond what is normally given on the first day of every week.

The previous passages touch on the giving done by Christians. And it should be noted that the giving of 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2 pertains to giving of our means as an act of worship in the worship assemblies of the Lord's church on the first day of the week. It is an order with which we must comply if our worship is going to be complete and acceptable to God. Indeed, we sin if we refuse to comply with this divine mandate governing our giving of our means to God on the first day of the week.

PRAYER

The purpose of the parable given in Luke 18 is revealed to us in the first verse of the chapter **“that men ought always to pray, and not faint.”** Paul declared that Christians are to **“pray without ceasing”** (1 The. 5:17). Paul and Christ were teaching the same thing. What is it they were teaching? Answer: We should realize our complete dependence on God. In doing so, we should routinely and with regularity engage in prayer to God to express our thanksgiving for His care for us and to ask for help in time of need as set out in the model prayer given by Jesus to help guide us in praying correctly (Mat. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4; Heb. 4:16). Thus, prayer is an integral part of Christian living.

In view of the fact that all prayers in the very nature of the case, whether private or public, are acts of worship, certainly we are going to engage in prayer in the assemblies of Christians convened for the purpose of worshipping God. We should, therefore, be aware of our authority from God to pray to the Father (our aim) and only to the Father. The imperative is to pray readily and routinely. The action is worship with each Christian participating, our attitude (in spirit) of having our minds set upon the Father and the authority for our prayer (in truth—John 17: 17; Col. 3:17). Thus, there are special responsibilities incumbent upon those who lead us in prayer in the public assemblies of worship. It should go without saying that only faithful men who know what they are doing should be called upon to lead the assembly in prayer. Therefore, the men who lead the assembly of worshippers in prayer should (must) be taught and trained regarding the Scriptural teaching about prayer before they are called upon to lead the assembly in prayer, or, for that matter, in any other act of worship. This training involves their understanding of speaking so as everyone can hear what they are praying. For how can they lead others in prayer when they cannot be understood by all of the worshippers and how can anyone say “amen” to the prayer when it is finished if they do not know what the leader of the prayer said? To ask the previous question is to answer it. Those who lead in prayer will have been taught what an appropriate public prayer is and the pur-

pose for it. They will have learned, prior to their leading the assembly in prayer, that prayers are not sermons to the congregation, and they are not designed to cover all the private matters of the leader or every intimate need of every member of the church. If prayer leaders would follow the model prayer in general and the prayers of thanksgiving by Christ for the bread and the fruit of the vine when He instituted the Lord's Supper, as well as when to pray for special matters, the worship assembly would be edified. But when brethren pray a disorganized rambling prayer covering every thing from “Dan to Beersheba” and offer thanksgiving for everything but the bread and fruit of the vine when observing the Lord's Supper, and like spiritual catastrophes, the result is anything but edifying. If nothing else will work, knowing that we are authorized to write notes to help us in speaking what needs to be said in teaching God's Word to the people, then surely we can see the Biblical authorization to write ourselves notes to remind ourselves of what ought to be said when we lead the church in speaking to God. May God help us to be better prepared in speaking soberly and reverently to the Great “I AM,” He who was, is and ever shall be the only True and Living God—Our Heavenly Father.

SINGING

When one considers the totality of the information regarding music given in the New Testament whereby God is worshipped, the only kind of music found is singing and the only kinds of songs to be used are psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Remember in our worship of God (as is true regarding every aspect of our lives) we are to do only what is authorized by the New Testament (Col. 3:17). Thus, and again, singing is the only kind of music authorized by God whereby we are to worship Him. Divine authority limits our choices of the kind of music we may employ in our worship to God. Thus, since we have no authority from our King to use mechanical instruments of music, or humming, or whistling, or clapping, or stamping of feet, or snapping of fingers, or the human voice sounding like mechanical instruments of music or any other kind of music, then we do not employ such things in our worship to God. This is the way that is right and cannot be wrong. To do otherwise is to act without the authority of Jesus Christ, our King, and, therefore, to act presumptuously. It was Jesus who said, **“If ye love me, you will keep my commandments”** (John 14:15; *ASV*, 1901).

Furthermore, every member of the worship assembly is to participate in the worship of God. That being the case, if it could be proven from the Scriptures (which one cannot successfully do) that some other kind of music was authorized to worship God, every member of that assembly must use a mechanical instrument of music in order to worship God acceptably. Indeed, every member of the assembly convened to worship God must sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). No one can worship God acceptably by proxy and that includes someone singing, praying, and giving of their means, and so on for

someone else.

ATTEMPTS TO JUSTIFY MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD

In their efforts to justify the use of mechanical instruments of music in the worship of God, many have come up with all sorts of sophistry. At this place in our study, we give attention to some of the major efforts to justify unscriptural music in the worship of God.

“The Bible Does Not Forbid Mechanical Instruments Of Music”

In building the great ark ordered by God, Noah used only Gopher wood. Why did he do that? Answer: Because God in authorizing the ark specified Gopher wood and no other kind of wood. Thus, since He was silent regarding any other kind of wood, Noah knew to use only Gopher wood, because God had specified it and no other (Gen. 6:14). Gopher wood was included in the ark because God authorized it. All other woods were excluded because they were not authorized. For the same reason that Noah only used Gopher wood in the ark (God specified it), we only use singing in our worship to God.

“David used mechanical instruments of music in his worship of God”

Indeed, David did use mechanical instruments in worship to God. But he also had more than one wife, kept the Sabbath, approached God through the Levitical Priesthood, and many other things he did that are no part of the teaching of the New Testament. We are under the authority of Jesus Christ, not David or Moses (Mat: 28:18). To use David as our authority is contrary to the teaching of Jesus Christ (Col. 3:17). Of a truth, while David lived and served God under the authority of the Law of Moses, he would not have countenanced anyone using him as authority to do anything in one’s approach to God.

“We should use our talents for God”

My late maternal grandmother was a member of the Lord’s church and an expert at crocheting. From the time I stood at her knee until the infirmities of age robbed her of her ability, I was amazed as I watched her hands move so rapidly that I could not follow the needles at work. We continue to possess many of her fine works, bedspreads, and the like. Should she have been allowed to crochet in the worship assembly of the saints as an act of worship to God? If the premise that we should be allowed to use our talents in our worship to God is true, then my grandmother could have done crocheting as an act of worship to God, and He would have been pleased. Furthermore, we would have sinned if we had prohibited her from so doing. Indeed, if consistent in the application of such a premise (which such persons rarely if ever are), it would be proper for the carpenter, the plumber, the surgeon, and so on to use their talents to worship God. But the premise is false. We are to do only what

is authorized in the New Testament in our worship to God. Anything else is sin.

“It makes us feel good”

If our likes, dislikes, and feelings are to be the source of authority for what we do or do not do in worship, then what will be kept out of worship? And who could have the authority to keep out anything? Indeed, who would regulate it at all? Saul of Tarsus was involved in all sorts of sins because, as he said of that time in his life, **“I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did...”** (Acts 26:9, 10). Indeed, when the saints were put to death Saul **“gave his voice against them”**—he voted to kill them (Acts 26:10). Only when we do things in the name of Jesus of Nazareth—and that includes acts of worship—are we pleasing to God.

“If mechanical instruments of music are in heaven, then why not the church”

This argument, such as it is, is based on an assumption, that there are literal earthly harps in heaven. Those who make this argument refer to Revelation 8:5; 14:2 and 15:2 with the preconceived idea (another assumption) that everything done in heaven is acceptable to God and thus approved by Him on earth. Of course, in heaven there is neither giving or taking in marriage. Does this mean that it should be the same on earth (Luke 20:34-36)? Per their false premise, they are forced to argue for no marriage on earth. They further assume that spirit beings (angels) have material earthly harps. The truth is this, said scriptures are figurative. The harps stand for the singing. Let them read the whole of the previously cited verses in their context and see for themselves that the harps stand for voices of those who are singing. But again, if they are consistent with their false premise, the only mechanical music for which they have found authority are harps—and how many of them limit themselves to harps? It would mean that each worshipper must play on a literal harp. Now, where is the denominational church that does this? Again, we must have New Testament authority for all we believe and practice and nothing more or less.

“Mechanical instruments of music are only aids to singing”

This argument comes from a lack of understanding of how the Bible authorizes anyone to do anything. It also confuses matters of obligation with optional matters as well as the difference in aids and additions. Furthermore, it does not recognize the difference in specific terms and general terms. Moreover, it does not realize that with every obligation that God places on man, there are different options from which we may choose to discharge the obligation.

In the case of the music whereby we worship God, we have already noted that it is singing that we are obligated to do when it comes to the kind of music the New Testa-

ment authorizes Christians to use in their worship of God (Eph. 5:19). We will be so bold as to say that anything that helps us sing is an aid to us in the discharging of our obligation to sing. Any mechanical instrument of music may be played without anyone singing along with it. It is another kind of music—a kind not authorized by the New Testament for Christians to use in worship to God. Song books, pitch pipes, tuning forks, microphones, baptisteries, buildings, lighting, heating and air conditioning, classrooms, and so on are aids that help us in discharging certain Biblical obligations placed upon us by God’s authoritative word. Mechanical instruments of music and other unauthorized music are not aids to us as we discharge our obligation to sing—they are other kinds of music—kinds of music not authorized by the New Testament for Christians to use to worship God.

If one can understand that there are different modes or kinds of transportation, one should be able to understand that there are different kinds of music. If I were to tell you to walk from Houston, Texas to Memphis, Tennessee and I will give you \$5,000. I would not be obligated to give the \$5,000 to you if you walked half of the way specified and then rode the rest of the way. The reason being is this—you did not walk all the way. And walking was the specified kind of transportation in which you were obligated to engage in order to receive the \$5,000. You walked part of the way and rode the rest of the way. On the other hand, if you walked half of the way and bought a walking stick to help or aid you in walking the rest of the way, you would have continued to use the mode of transportation specified in the agreement, which kind of transportation is necessary for you to engage in if you are to get the \$5,000. The walking stick helped you do only what I specified for you to do in the kind of traveling (walking) you must do in order for you to receive the money.

As the riding in our illustration is not walking, so playing on a mechanical instrument of music is not singing. We must do only what is authorized in the New Testament.

“The Greek word *psallo* authorizes mechanical instruments of music in the worship of God.”

This argument is based on the fact that the “**making melody**” of Ephesians 5:19 translates a form of the Greek word *psallo*. This argument does not consider mechanical instruments of music in the area of options but declares that such are demanded in the worship by the definition of the Greek word *psallo*. Is this the case? Let us see if it is. It is true that in the etymology of (the history of the development of the word) *psallo* that it means “to pluck, pull or twang the strings of a mechanical instrument.” However, if there was any merit to this argument (which there is not) the only kind of mechanical music one would be authorized to employ in worship would be mechanical stringed instruments. Well, there goes the organ and everything else that does not make music by the plucking or twanging strings.

However, *psallo* has other meanings besides those previ-

ously noted. It means to pluck the hair, the beard, to twang a carpenter’s line as well as plucking the strings of a mechanical musical instrument. By the first century A. D., Thayer, in his Greek lexicon, says the word had come to mean sing.

It is important to understand that in Ephesians 5:19 *psallo* is not the only word in the verse. One cannot tell from the definition of *psallo* or the translation of it (“**making melody**”) what strings are plucked and where the melody is made. One must read the entire sentence to get the complete thought. And it does not take a direct revelation from heaven by the Holy Spirit for anyone who can read about 5th grade level of English to understand the verse to say that the strings that are plucked are those of the heart or inward man, or spirit—that is where the melody is made. Indeed, that is exactly what the verse states—“**singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.**” There is, therefore, no authority whatsoever found for mechanical instruments of music in the form of the Greek word *psallo* found in Ephesians 5:19.

THE LORD’S SUPPER

The institution of the Lord’s Supper is found in Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:15-20. The apostle Paul refers to the institution of it in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29. From the previously noted Scriptures we learn that the Supper was: (1) instituted after the observance of the Jewish Passover Feast; (2) what the elements comprising the Supper are as well as what they represent; (3) that it would be observed in the kingdom by its citizens who, in observing it, who would eat it; (4) how to observe it; (5) what it is not; and, (6) that it proclaims the death of Christ until He comes again. However, from the preceding verses no certain day to observe it is found. But the previous Scriptures are not all the New Testament has to teach regarding the Lord’s Supper.

In Acts 20:7 we read “**And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.**” In the preceding verse, we have an account of a certain action of the church in Troas. It relates what the church did on every first day of each week (for so the Greek declares). They “**came together**” for a certain purpose—“**to break bread.**” Does anyone seriously think that the church in Troas came together on the first day of each week to sit around and literally break bread into pieces? Of course, they did not. “**To break bread**” is what grammarians call a synecdoche. A synecdoche is where a part of anything stands for the whole thing or the whole thing stands for a part of it. The expression “**To break bread**” in Acts 20:7 simply stands for at least the whole of the Lord’s Supper or possibly the whole first day of the week worship in which Christians engaged. This first day of the week worship was decidedly different from any worship assembly on any other day of the week because the Lord’s Supper was observed in the first day of the week

worship assemblies.

Certainly, Paul was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem, but he waited seven days to be with the church (Acts 20:16). It was the apostle Paul who had taught the Gospel to these brethren. Thus, he had taught them about the worship of the church, and this would mean that he had taught them about the Lord's Supper and when to observe it. Therefore, Paul knew that the faithful brethren would assemble on the first day of the week and, thus, though in a rush to get to Jerusalem, he waited for the first day of the week assembly of the church in Troas. In that assembly he, too, worshipped with and preached to them.

When we see that: (1) Paul commanded that the routine contribution of our means is to be collected on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1,2); (2) the church at Troas assembled on the first day of the week; (3) the apostle Paul waited seven days to assemble with and participate in the first day of the week worship assembly in Troas, then (4) we see this account of the action of the church in Troas along with the information from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and 1 Corinthians 11, becomes an example (pattern) that, as far as the time to observe the Lord's Supper is concerned, is authoritative and (5) we are, therefore, authorized to partake of the Lord's Supper only on the first day of every week because (6) that is the only time we have plainly set out in the New Testament designating the time and place to observe it. Thus, (7) when we have the authority to do something, but not the

explicit time, and so on to do it, and we also have the account of an apostolic approved action of the church doing it at a certain time, (8) we understand that the account of that action is an example (pattern) that must be followed to fully obey the specific thing we are obligated to do. To partake of the Lord's Supper on any other day other than the first day of the week is to sin. Why is this the case? Answer: Because we have no authority to partake of it on any other day than the first day of the every week. Please remember that the New Testament authorizes by direct statements, examples, and implication. It authorizes in no other way.

CONCLUSION

In this brief study we have attempted to set out only what the New Testament teaches and authorizes about the worship of Christians today. We hope that this brief study will cause the reader to seriously consider the worship of God to be done in a serious, sober, and Scriptural manner. Let us be determined not to allow anyone to lead us away from the authoritative Scriptures that not only lead us to Christ but teach us all about the Lord's church in its organization, work and, yes, its worship of God.

End Note

¹John Hubley, "Should Feelings Drive Our Devotion To God? Romans 12:1ff.," *Mindheart Foundation*, May 2003. All rights reserved.

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MUSINGS FROM THE LATE BENARD KAGAGA

WHY DO WE PREACH THE GOSPEL?

There are so many things we cannot separate for God has joined them together. One of these is preaching and salvation of man. God commanded us to "**Go**" (Mark 16:15-16) out preaching the soul saving gospel of our Lord to whoever will obey His power to save (Rom. 1:16-17), but the question is why do we preach the gospel? This is asked because many folks have missed the focus for this.

We preach the gospel of our Lord Jesus to declare the Good News. As the Apostle Paul said, "**How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!**" (Rom. 10:15b), that is declaring the plan of salvation to mankind and creating the hope of being with God in heaven when the Lord will come for His kingdom "**Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.**" (1 Cor. 15:24).

Also, as we go out preaching the gospel, we need to declare the Lord as John did when he said, "**Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.**" (John 1:29b). It was and is "**good news**" that Christ died for all (Heb. 4:15), was buried, and resurrected (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

We preach the gospel to present the truth. It is sad to see denominational bodies saying they are preaching the truth. It cannot be true that they do, for it is only faithful churches of Christ that preach the soul saving gospel. As Paul said, "**... the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth**" (1 Tim. 3:15). So the creator has loosed the method of preaching and has bound the message—TRUTH (John 8:31-32) and God's "**word is truth**" (John 17:17).

We preach the gospel to inform the listeners of salvation. Thus, the word of truth must be preached (Rom. 10:15a). The word of truth must be heard. As Paul said, "**how shall they hear without a preacher?**" (Rom. 10:14c). The Word of truth must be heeded (Jam. 1:18-25).

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We preach to show the consequence of sin, for a sinner must be convicted of his sins (Acts. 2:37; 4:2; 7:54). Sin is the only thing that can separate one from God (Isa. 59:1-2). Thus, those lost in sin must see the ugliness of their separation from God and know assuredly that no man will change the truth (Eze. 18:4; Rom. 6:23) and no sin will go unnoticed and punished (Rev. 21:27). So, sinners must repent of their sins (Acts 17:30).

We preach the gospel of our Lord to produce faith as the apostle Paul said in his letter to the Romans, “...**faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**” (Rom. 10:17). We do not preach the stories of men. Therefore, man needs the Word of God to produce faith (Acts 15:7; Rom. 10:17). Everyone must be taught by God (John 6:45-46), for without God’s Word no true faith can exist (Rom. 10:13-17).

We preach the gospel to condemn error and rebuke the erring. We are not to tolerate sin (Gal. 2:5). After hearing that the Word of God condemns sin, no one can find security in their sins (Acts 2:37). Repentance comes after God’s Word has exposed and rebuked sin (1 Tim. 5:20; Tit. 2:15; Eph. 5:10-11).

God designed preaching as a means of reaching the lost

world. Are you preaching the sound words of Christ to a sin cursed world?

Bernard Kagaga on Church Apostasy

The blood bought body of Christ is being defiled at the rapist’s hands. She is being plundered by false doctrine and ravaged by unauthorized practices (Col. 3:17). If you are one of those brethren whose feathers get ruffled over “negative” sermons and name calling for the purpose of refuting error and exposing false teachers, your hands are as guilty of the spiritual seduction of the Lord’s beloved bride as the most active and aggressive “change agent” among us. As you stand silently “on the other side” [except for criticizing those who care enough to correct (Rev. 3:19)]. The most precious and divine institution is being literally torn asunder. As you stand on the fence remember the words of Obadiah, “**Thou wast as some of them**” (Obadiah 11). You are guilty by proxy! Brethren, God forbid! “**Let the redeemed of the Lord say so**” (Psa. 107:2).

—Deceased