

Rom. 14:19
So then let
us follow
after things
which make
for peace,
and things
whereby we
may edify
one another.



John 8:32
And ye shall
know the
truth and the
truth shall
make you
free.

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27
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THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST (3)

by Jim Stauffer

As we discuss the doctrine or teaching of Christ, something that is very important is how we worship God and Christ.

In the Old Testament the repeated failing of Israel and Judah was their close association with their idolatrous neighbors. This was contrary to specific commands Moses relayed to them in **Deuteronomy Chapter 7**. They were forbidden to show them favor in the following ways. First they were to utterly destroy them as they took the land. Second, they were not to make any covenant with them. Third, they were not to intermarry with them at the risk of bringing the influence of idolatry among the people. Furthermore, they were to destroy all remnants of any worship they offered to their pagan deities. Now the obvious purpose of this was to enable them to retain their commitment to Jehovah.

But, what did Israel do? They failed to utterly destroy them; even covenanted with them on occasion; allowed their sons and daughters to intermarry with them and the result was a drifting from the prescribed worship of Jehovah into idolatry. The result of this was the deliverance of the wrath of God on Israel as she was led away to captivity by the Assyrians and Judah to Babylon.

Now consider how this same instruction would and should play out with us under the new covenant with Christ. Listen to Peter as he describes one converted to Christ, *"But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY."* (1 Peter 2:9-10) Does this not teach us to disallow the world influence over our lives much as Moses warned Israel?

We cannot make covenant with the world. Paul says God has, *delivered us out of the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love*

(Col. 1:13). That being the case we are under covenant with the King, Christ Jesus and must be governed by the Law of liberty (**Jas. 1:25 cf. John 8:32**). Making a covenant with the world today is identical to Israel making covenant with the neighboring idolatrous nations who were opposed to Jehovah.

While the New Testament does not forbid the marriage of a Christian to a non Christian, we can see the wisdom of choosing one who would support your faith in Christ. He is to be first in our lives. Devotion to His word and serving Him must come before all others. It therefore is at best unwise to commit to such a strong earthly relationship with someone who is not supportive of our commitment to the Lord. This was the very purpose of the instruction to Israel and must serve as a warning to us as well.

What is the point of such comparison? The point is as John says, in many ways, we must follow Jesus. *"Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."* (John 14:6) *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."* (John 14:15) *"Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; (2 John 1:9).*

If we are to worship God and Christ as they have requested, *...in spirit and truth.* (John 4:24), we must accept their instruction which is contained in God's revealed will, the Scriptures and reject all that comes outside those divine words.

Jesus promised to build His church, the kingdom (Mat. 16:18,19), and purchased it with His own blood at Calvary (Acts 20:28). He then sent the Holy Spirit to guide His chosen apostles into all truth (John 16:13) and they established His church on the first day of Pentecost following His resurrection (Acts 2:1-4, 38, 41, 47). Those facts demand we look at the church in the New Testament as that church and imitate their conduct in all matters such as worship.

The question then becomes, what did God say about how to worship Him. As we examine Scripture we

find the disciples meeting upon the first day of the week. Two of the acts of worship conducted on the first day of the week are keeping the feast, that is observing the Lord's Supper that Jesus instituted on the night before He was crucified (**Mat. 26:26-30**), and giving of their means to support the work of the local church (**1 Cor. 16:1,2**). We learn they kept the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week in **Acts 20:7**, where the apostle Paul also preached for them. Paul instructs both the Ephesian and Colossian churches to sing songs of praise to the Lord in congregational worship (**Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16**). And the instruction to offer prayers in worship is redundant throughout the churches in the first century.

The greatest disappointment among churches in the world today is the tendency to add to these things. To go, as John warns us not to, beyond or too far and fail to limit ourselves to what God has authorized.

A question to be considered is if I can decide to add things to the worship that please me more, then why can't every other person do the same? Where does this stop? As we now see in churches all over the land, it has no stopping point. Once we choose how to worship God according to our pleasure, we have begun to please ourselves and ceased to worship God. The problem began with the introduction of instrumental music to the worship. There was no instrumental worship in the churches in New Testament days. The instruction was to sing and there was never any instruction to play. The only instrument involved in our music to God is that of the heart as we are to *...make melody in the heart...* (**Eph. 5:19**). As a result of the willingness of men to add to the authorized worship of the New Testament church, we now see deviations we never imagined. Bands playing for entertainment, women preachers, acceptance of immoral lifestyles and on it goes. All because we took the first step to please ourselves instead of submitting to God and Christ. We have with that first step, opened the barn door and all the horses are now out.

It is reasonable to approach to worship from a Scriptural standpoint. It is the only way we stay within the doctrine or teaching of Christ.

Jump Start # 1941

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."*

My friend, Daron, last Sunday, gave some moving thoughts before the congregation took the Lord's Supper. He tearfully told the story of a time when his three year old daughter swallowed a marble. She was choking and couldn't breathe. Daron didn't know what to do. He was alone with the child. He held her in his arms and fervently prayed that she would not die in his

arms. The only thing he could think to do was to turn the child upside down and shake her. The marble came out and she lived. From that story, he told us about God allowing His Son to die for us.

That thought has stayed with me. I saw another lesson as well. Here was a parent who was doing everything he could think of to keep that child alive, and here was a God who was doing everything He could to make His Son die. Isaiah's prophecy about the death of Jesus says it pleased God to crush Him.

God did everything to make Jesus die. Think about that.

First, in prayers. Jesus prayed fervently in the garden. His prayer was so intense that sweat became blood. *"Let this cup pass from Me,"* was Jesus' plea. The answer was, "NO." There was no other way.

God was doing everything He could to make Jesus die.

Second, the lack of angels. Have you ever noticed that before? Angels announced the birth of Jesus. When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, angels came and ministered to Him. Angels are found throughout the life of Jesus. When He is resurrected, there are angels present. But for that short period of time, from the arrest, trials and crucifixion of Jesus, we do not read of angels. Jesus declared that He could summon legions of angels, but He didn't. They didn't come.

God did everything to make Jesus die.

Third, God separated Himself from Jesus. While on the cross, the sky grew dark, and there was a separation between Jesus and His Father. This was the first time in eternity that had happened. Jesus was truly on His own. It is one of the few times that Jesus calls His Father, "My God." Most times, it's "Father." Jesus didn't have God to help Him. No prayers answered in His favor. No angels sent. And no fellowship and support of His Father.

God did everything to make Jesus die.

And yet, there is still another thought running through all of this. God did everything to make You live. The "living" here is not a long life on this planet, but to live spiritually and eternally. Have you thought about that before?

God did everything to make you live.

First, there was Jesus. He was sent for you. He died so you could live. You are so valuable to God that He sent the best of Heaven to save you. God didn't send an angel. He didn't send some old prophet. He sent Jesus-pure, perfect and sinless. Faith in Jesus and obedience to His will changes your relationship with God. Sins forgiven, He adopts you into His family. You become one of his. You are his. You belong to God.

Second, God has given you His word to guide you and help you. We call that word, the Bible. It has been preserved all these years. Men have tried to destroy it,

yet it lives. Men have tried to discredit it, yet it lives. Translated into multiple languages. Available in many formats, even electronically, God's word reveals His heart. By reading it, following it and making it our life, our character changes. Our attitude changes. Our behavior changes. We become more and more like the Lord. We love instead of hate. We forgive instead of hold grudges. We serve instead of turning our backs. Holiness and righteousness becomes our goals.

God did everything to make you live.

Third, God hears us. Prayer really works. It works best when we are close to God and are doing what He says. God opens doors to us. God encourages us. God helps us. God is there for us. There is never a place and never a time that prayer doesn't fit. God is listening. God cares. He wants us to burden Him with the things that makes us anxious. He wants us to trust Him, believe Him and know that He is always there for us.

God is doing everything to make us live.

Fourth, God has surrounded us with amazing examples, help and support. We call that the church. It's a fellowship. It's a family. We don't fly solo with God. We need one another. They need us and we need them. We worship together. We grow closer together. We are there for one another. We are accountable to them. They can count on us and we can count on them. We pray for and with each other. We roll up our sleeves and work together. We pool our money and help the kingdom of God. We belong. We are loved. We are accepted. We are not alone in this journey. There are living examples all around us to show us what we need to become. There are those that we can talk to. There are those who are teaching us and leading us in the ways of God. God has set up this amazing system so that you can be with Him forever in Heaven.

God arranged this so we could have answers to our questions, encouragement through our dark periods and love and hope.

God did all that He could to make you live.

Have you thought about how much God has done for you? He really wants you to make it. He really wants you to live.

Roger Shouse

The End of It All!

No, I'm not talking about the "End of the World" but of the end of the article series on understanding the scriptures. The end of the series was the intent that YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES FOR YOURSELF. That was the purpose of the series. Nothing in it was hard to fathom, no magical secret to it all. IF THERE IS ANY SECRET TO BIBLE STUDY IT IS THIS - THERE IS NO SECRET! The end (PURPOSE) of Bible Study is simply this; a changed life and thus a changed destiny.

Even a simple and beneficial change does not come

easily. My dentist will tell you that the single most important habit for dental health is brushing your teeth. No big secret there. But to bring about better health it must have two aspects – frequency and consistency. Brushing your teeth once a week won't really help, much. That's not nearly frequent enough. It's much better to brush after breakfast and before bedtime every day, fourteen times as often. Then stick with it over time, that's consistency. Do this and you will reap great benefits.

It is exactly the same with Bible Study. You have to do it frequently and consistently in order for the rewards to show up in a changed life. It really doesn't matter whether you read 1/2 chapter a day or twelve chapters a day (which gets you through the New Testament monthly). What really matters is that you do it frequently and you do it consistently. If you do those two things then, no matter where you are starting out you will begin to see positive changes in your life the first month. Did you miss a day, everyone does, make sure you don't miss two!

After all, a changed destiny is worth it!

Cleveland Reddinger

The Other Services

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

Two preachers were talking. One said, "The elders where I preach decided to do away with Sunday evening services because only a handful attended." The other preacher asked, "What do the members think about this?" The first preacher replied, "Most of them don't know." Sad. Would you even know it if the church quit meeting Sunday evening or Wednesday night? What about Sunday morning Bible class? If you showed up for work one day out of four, would your boss consider you a faithful worker? Is it because worshiping the Lord, studying His word, and encouraging each other to good works are less important than secular activities? Is your bank account more important than your soul? *"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works" (Matthew 16:26-27). "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). "Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2).*

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

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We offer Correspondence Courses

OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-764-9170

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BIBLE CLASSES

SUNDAY MORNING

STUDY OF AUTHORITY

TEACHER - BILL MILLER

WEDNESDAY EVENING

THE BOOK OF JOB

TEACHER - JIM STAUFFER

SUNDAY SERMON: CARRYING OUT

GOD'S PLAN



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10