

John 17:10
so then let
us follow
after things
which make
for peace,
and things
whereby
we may
edify one
another.



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

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24
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CHRIST AUTHORIZES THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

by Jim Stauffer

We have spent the last two weeks discussing Christ's love for the church and how He designed it to be a functional body.

Since He desires a functional body and has been made head over all things to the church and has all authority in heaven and on earth, it behooves us to hear what He says about the worship of the church (**Eph. 1:22; Mat. 28:18**).

During the ministry of Christ He makes a very powerful statement about paying close attention to His words. **Matt. 7:21** *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.* **22** *"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'"* **23** *"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'* It is with this in mind we call our attention to what He has said about these things.

Please realize the New Testament is the revealed will of Jesus Christ designed to govern the new covenant He effected with His death, burial and resurrection (**John 16:13; Heb. 9:15**).

To instruct the church in His plan for it, He established offices to be filled by those qualified to know and to lead this effort (**Eph. 4:11-16**).

Now when we hear what the apostolic writers have to say about the work and worship of the church we must choose between what Christ has revealed to them or what men have spoken regarding the matter.

Jesus instituted The Lord's Supper in **Matt. 26:26-29**. Paul explains, *For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.* (**1 Cor. 11:26**). Later in **Acts 20:7**, we learn they did so on the first day of the week. Paul delayed his departure on that occasion to allow him to meet with the brethren as they assembled to observe The Lord's Supper. From this we know it is to be done

every first day since they did not choose any specific first day of the week. What made the day special is the fact Jesus was resurrected on the first day of the week. We must remain as specific in our conduct as the apostle was in his teaching.

Paul teaches us the specifics of worship in song. We are to be *speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord*; (**Eph. 5:19**). The thing in the command that is used to make melody to the Lord is the heart. Thus we learn from the apostolic writers we are to sing songs of worship to the King, Jesus Christ. Nothing further is needed. Thus we do NOT use mechanical instruments of music in this worship.

Paul teaches us, *to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.* (**1 Tim. 2:8**)

As already cited, Paul explains in **Eph. 4:11-16**, there are placed in the church evangelists and teachers who lead the congregation in study of the word of God. Paul did this on many occasions as he travelled and preached the gospel. He commanded Timothy to do the same as he became a gospel preacher. The purpose of God in eternity for the church was to provide such (**Eph. 3:10; 2 Tim. 4:1-4**).

In **1 Cor. 16:1,2** and further in **2 Cor. chapters 8 & 9**, Paul teaches us we are to make a weekly contribution on the first day of the week when we come together. There are guidelines presented for this giving. Those guidelines are different than under the Old Testament. They do not include tithing. What they do include is to *....put aside and save, as he may prosper....* and *....purpose in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

As a result when we congregate on the first day of the week, we sing songs of praise to the Lord and God in heaven. We observe the Lord's Supper each first day of the week to proclaim His death until He comes. We study His word and lift holy hands in prayer. We also give of our means as He has said we should.

This is the sum total of our worship each week. The reason we start and stop our worship at this point is because that is what Jesus authorized. We do not go beyond what He has taught or add to His word (**2 Joh. 9; Rev. 22:18,19**). We have learned from Old Testament examples that He is displeased when we add our personal thoughts and ideas to His commands (**Lev. 10:1,2; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6**)

JOHN THE BAPTIST

"Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, There comes one after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:6-8).

John the Baptist was not a weak, easily swayed, inconsequential man. In garb reminiscent of OT prophets (**2 Kings 1:8**), he confidently said he would give way to the one to come—the Messiah. John's dress was not a fashion statement; rather, judgment is coming. A slave would tie the master's shoestrings; John said he was unworthy even for this honor. Rather than denigration of himself, John sought in every way to elevate Jesus. Moving from his plea for repentance and baptism, both indicators of hearts for the kingdom, the one coming after John would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Jesus was not simply one prophet among many; He was the ultimate revelation of the Father's will for the salvation of all. His advent ushered in the coming of the Holy Spirit; the application of the Spirit will vary often throughout the NT.

What did John do? He baptized with water. What did Jesus do? He baptized with the Holy Spirit. The prophet Joel said the Spirit would be poured out on all flesh (**Joel 2:28-32**). The apostles of Christ were to receive the power of God—the power of the Holy Spirit, as they went into all the world as the Lord's ambassadors (**read John 14, 15, 16**). The power of God came on Jesus' apostles on Pentecost; they were to take no thought for what they would say; the Spirit gave them utterance (**Mark 9:1; Acts 1:5; Acts 2:1-4**). Later, through the laying on of the apostle's hands, others were enabled by the Spirit's power to continue to participate in God's good work of preaching and confirming His word. Was the giving and reception of the Spirit ever arbitrary or capricious? No. *"But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills" (1 Corinthians 12:11)*. Revealed, understandable truth was revealed by the Spirit (**Ephesians 3:1-5**). Then and now, those who belong to Christ have the Spirit of Christ (**Romans 8**).

John the Baptist was later recognized by Jesus as a great man. Still, John knew, and accepted the fact that

he would yield to Jesus. John knew he would decrease as Jesus would increase (**John 3:27-30**). **Ezekiel** prophesied: *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you will keep my judgments and do them" (36:26-27)*.

These words were spoken to Israel—people who needed to repent. They could again live in the land because they would have a new heart. God was making repentance meaningful, He was making salvation possible. Soon His Son came, ushering in the age of the Holy Spirit of God. **Isaiah** said: *"The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him" (11:2)*. Isaiah said a messenger was coming. That messenger, John the Baptist, appeared in the wilderness. John said one more powerful than he, was coming. Jesus came; He was baptized; the Father said *"This is my Son."* Jesus said: *"The kingdom has arrived."*

If what Mark says doesn't wake us up, what will?

Randy Harshbarger

The Failure of Creeds

"But there are so many creeds, all claiming to be right, that I should not know which to take. They were all made by learned men, and if they can not agree on the kind of a creed, how am I to decide which is right?" says one. It is a matter of great moment and of much relief that, aside from all these conflicting, clashing, and erring creeds, there is one book that all parties concede is right. They all agree that the Bible is right - that it came from God. They all further agree that it contains the law of God - that the law of the Lord is perfect. The only wonder is, that man ever attempted to make any other creed or law for the Church. Such an undertaking could not have commenced without two wicked assumptions:

1. That the law of God, as set forth in the Bible, is not sufficient or is a failure.
2. That the insufficiency or failure can be remedied by weak, erring, and uninspired men.

No man of intelligence will affirm, in plain terms, that the Bible is not sufficient for the government of the saints; or that man - uninspired man - can make a creed that will serve a better purpose than the Bible. Still such affirmations are implied in every attempt made by uninspired men to make a creed. If you admit, as all are bound to do, that the law of God is in the Bible; that nothing may be added to it, nothing taken from it, and that no part of it may be changed, there is not an excuse in the world for making another law. The law of God in the Bible is the law, the divine law, the supreme law, in the kingdom of God; and it is a

reasonable movement to attempt to get up another constitution, law, name, body, or officers, apart from the constitution, law, name, body, and officers as found in the Bible.

But the matter now in hand is to find a safe course to pursue. Can this be done? All admit the Bible is right. All admit that the law of God in the Bible is right. All admit that those who follow the Bible honestly and faithfully, in faith and practice, will be saved. All admit that wherever any creed differs from the Bible is wrong. Then it is infallibly safe to take the Bible and follow it. When men undertake to prove that a human creed is a good one, they argue that it is like the Bible. If a creed like the Bible is a good one, why will not the Bible itself do? If the Bible will not serve the purpose - is insufficient and a failure - a creed like it would be equally insufficient. When men make a creed to do what the Bible would not do, they should certainly make it different from the Bible, or it would serve no better purpose than the Bible itself.

by Benjamin Franklin

(note: Benjamin Franklin was a nineteenth century gospel preacher, not to be confused with our eighteenth century "founding father.") **Taken from the Beacon Electronic Edition 5/23/17**

We Are Brethren

Mark McCrary

"So Abram said to Lot, 'Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren.' **(Genesis 13:8)**

A problem arose in **Genesis 13** between Abram and his nephew Lot. As the two prosperous men travelled with one another, their large herds began having trouble sharing resources. The herdsmen, charged with taking care of their respective flocks, began to argue with one another.

The solution to the problem, for Abram, was simple. He appealed to their most fundamental connection: family. The fact they were brethren meant they should have fond feelings for one another, be agreeable with one another, desire the very best for one another and be willing to work with one another, giving the other the benefit of the doubt.

The lessons of family love are the very first ones we learn in life, and they are crucial to unity in the Lord's church. In the New Testament, the love between brethren in Christ finds its basis in love learned from family (the fact we call one another "brother" and "sister" should have given that away). It is a warm, accepting, tender and sacrificial love. John wrote in **1 John 3:14**, *"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer..."* Paul wrote in **Romans 12:10**, *"Be kindly affectionate to one*

another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another..." He also wrote in **1 Corinthians 1:10**, *"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."* Why are these verses understandable and relatable? Because "we are brethren."

In the midst of our disagreements and even conflicts with brethren, we would do well to remember we are more than mere acquaintances. Because God is the Father of all those in Christ, we are universally brothers and sisters with one another. Conflicts among Christians come when brethren put aside this family love and embrace carnal thoughts and motivation. That's the reason why of all sins listed the New Testament, division and strife are consistently and resoundingly condemned (**Romans 16:17-18; 14:19; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 4:2-3; Colossians 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:13; 2 Timothy 2:14-16; etc.**).

Love for one another, Jesus Himself taught in **John 13:35**, is to be the defining trait among His people. In a masterful stroke of genius, Satan has used our greatest tool of unity—a love for God's truth—as the greatest weapon against us! But, all the grandstanding for truth we are capable of mustering does no good if we do not treat one another as brethren. When we gossip, judge and plot against one another, we may call ourselves Christians, but our actions reveal our hearts, and our hearts say otherwise. Sadly, brethren who say they love truth often fall for this timeless ploy, and the church is not the better off.

This is not to say that Christians do not disagree with one another, and sometimes strongly so. It is to say that even in those disagreements, brotherly love is to reign. The divine DNA code of **1 Corinthians 13:1-8** has rewritten our being. We don't view our brethren in conflict as enemies to be vanquished, but brothers to be pitied and helped. We don't view our brethren in strife as those from which to walk away, but those to embrace and help. Too many brethren and churches forget this—and will one day have to answer for it. We are brethren, and God expects us to act accordingly.

Let's apply this to our lives.

**~via Applying God's Word; Louisville, Kentucky;
Taken from Market Street Messenger**

Being much concerned about the rise of denominations in the church, John Wesley tells of a dream he had. In the dream, he was ushered to the gates of Hell. There he asked, "Are there any Presbyterians here?" "Yes!", came the answer. Then he asked, "Are there any Baptists? Any Episcopalians? Any Methodists?" The answer was Yes! each time. Much distressed, Wesley was then ushered to the gates of Heaven. There he asked the same question, and the answer was No! No? To this, Wesley asked, "Who then is inside?" The answer came back, "There are only Christians here!" (**1 Cor. 1:10-17**)

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

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

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Elders: Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

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BILL MILLER - TEACHER
WEDNESDAY**

**ISLAM VS. CHRISTIANITY
JIM STAUFFER - TEACHER**

**SUNDAY SERMON: THERE IS
NONE LIKE GOD**



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