

SEEKERS

Bible Study Course

Lesson Seven

TRUE WORSHIP

A Christian enjoys a special relationship with God. Having been added to the body of Christ at baptism, each member becomes part of a large family-the church.

Everyone who has obeyed the gospel is part of that spiritual family for which Christ died. As individuals, each of us can alone, all by ourselves. We can also worship Him together as a family at home. We are free to sing praises and offer up prayers to Him any time of the day, any day of the week. It is not necessary to go to God through a priest or other designated and ordained person. We can freely worship any time, any place.

But God has set aside the first day of the week (Sunday) as the time for the church to meet. In fact, it was the first day of the week when 3,000 souls were baptized for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38-41) and were added to the church (Acts 2:47).

From that day nearly two thousands years ago until now, Christians have met upon the first day of the week to worship God: to remember Jesus' death on the cross for our sins, to study God's word, to pray, to give part of our money or goods back to God, and to sing. We will discuss each of these after a look at the nature of true worship. Consider carefully the Scriptures quoted below.

The Nature of True Worship

"Now therefore, fear the Lord, put away the gods which your River and in Egypt. Serve the

"Only fear the Lord, and serve consider what great things He has

"But the hour is coming, and worship the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23,24).



serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and fathers served on the other side of the Lord" (Joshua 24:14).

Him in truth with all your heart; for done for you (1 Samuel 12:24).

now is, when the true worshippers will

"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him (Colossians 3:17).

The first three Bible passages quoted above are all very similar to each other. All three used the word *truth*. Worship, if it is to be correct, must be *according to truth*. We must do those things (and *only* those things) that God has commanded.

The fourth verse cited also makes this point. Whatever we do *in deed* (including worship) and whatever we do *in word* (teach) must be in the name of Jesus, which means by His authority.

If God does not authorize the worship we give Him, then it is not *true* worship must also be "with all your heart" or "in sincerity" or "in spirit". Worship that is without love cannot to Almighty God. He would be insulted just as He was by those of old who offered Him their worship but said, "*Oh, what a weariness*" (Malachi 1:13).

The Lord's Supper

When the church was established in the first century, the disciples met on the first day of the week to *break bread* (Acts 20:7; 2:42). That phrase refers to the Lord's Supper, a memorial to what Jesus did for us on the cross.

Paul reminded the Corinthians of its purpose. "*For I received from the Lord that which I also*

delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.

“In the same manner He also took the cup after supper. Saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes” (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

The **unleavened bread** used in this remembrance represents the body of our Saviour who was crucified for our sins. The **fruit of the vine** represents the blood that was shed for us. Each first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1Corinthians 11:23-33) we gather together around His table to remember the sacrifice of Jesus.

Giving

“For you know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9).

God loves “a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7), and one of our privileges as Christians is to give back to God some of what He has blessed us with. Paul commanded brethren to give on the first days of the week as they had been prospered (1 Corinthians 16:1,2).

Continuing in the Apostle’s Doctrine

When the three thousands were baptized on the day of Pentecost, they knew their sins were forgiven, but they needed to learn the teachings of the new kingdom. Therefore, the apostles taught them the things that had been revealed to them by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:42). Whether they spoke or wrote through inspiration, their words were Truth, the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13). Like the Bereans, we should search the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11) to make sure that we are being taught the Truth. We also need to study God’s Word so that we may grow spiritually (1 Peter 2:2).

Prayer

Paul says that we are to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Each Christian should approach the Father through Jesus many times every day (as well as in the assembly on the first day of the week); God must continually be in our thoughts and in our hearts. We thank Him for His greatness and His gracious salvation, knowing from His word how much He loves us. We may also make requests of God, but they should not be for purely selfish things (James 4:3).

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6,7).

Singing

Christians also have the responsibility to speak to one another.

“In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16).

The New Testament authorized us to sing to God and one another; it never tells us to use instruments of music to accompany that singing. Remember, we are to do **only that which Jesus authorizes** (Colossians 3:17). There is no record where either He or His disciples ever sang spiritual songs with musical accompaniment.

The Sin of Jeroboam

A man named Jeroboam changed the way God said to worship (1 Kings 12:25-33). The decision caused him and the people to sin “a great sin” (2 Kings 17:21). By his example we see that no one has the right to add to what God has commanded for worship; no one has the right to

take anything away, either. We must be content to worship as God has commanded us.

God Hates Idolatry

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in untighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them.

“For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen”

(Romans 1:18-25)