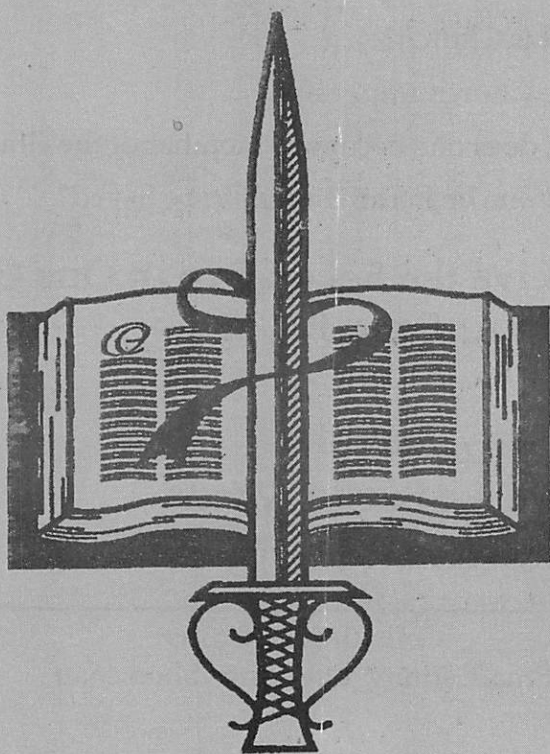


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EDITORIAL

What Does the Bible Teach?

Baptism is not for little children

For so many years people have been taught to get their babies baptized. Bible believing parents therefore take their little babies to a religious ceremony where they get their infants sprinkle with water which they call "baptism". Should parents get their babies baptized? Is it a requirement of God or a commandment of man (Matt. 15:9)? What does the Bible teach?

In the first place, the word baptism does not mean sprinkle. It is a word derived from the Greek word "baptisma", which means burial or immersion. Speaking to those who were already Scripturally baptized, the Bible at Romans 6:3, 4 says, "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death....." Again, in Colossians 2:12 we read, "buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." Sprinkling of water, therefore, is not baptism at all, Biblically speaking, it is a doctrine of man.

Further, the Bible teaches that those who, after hearing the Good News or the Gospel of Christ, believe in Him with all their heart and repent of all wrong and confess Him to be the Son of God must be baptized, for the forgiveness of sins and to be saved from sin. Christ, as we read in Mark 16:16, had taught, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved..." Acts 2:38 teaches, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of

Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...." Infants, babies, can't believe, can't repent and can't confess. It would be absurd to expect such from little children.

In the 8th chapter of the book of Acts in the Bible we read about eunuch. Philip, a preacher, had preached Jesus to eunuch. After hearing about Jesus and His Gospel, eunuch wanted to be baptized. And as they came to a place where there was enough water, eunuch said to Philip, "See, here is water, What hinders me from being baptized? Philip asked eunuch, if he really believed in Christ with all his heart? Then after eunuch confessed Christ to be the Son of God, the record says, "And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him." (Acts 8:35-38). There are several other passages in the Bible where we read of numerous people being baptized, but they were all adults, older people, people who were old enough and were capable to make their own decision to be baptized after believing in Christ.

But why then people later began to teach that infants ought to be baptized? This teaching, many years after the death of the apostles of Christ, grew out of the belief of some who began to teach that babies are born with sin in them, and if any of them dies without baptism, since the Bible teaches one must be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), then that child or the soul of that baby will go to hell.

But the Bible does not teach this. It was a man-made belief or doctrine. The Bible at Ezekiel chapter 18 and verse 20 declares, "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself." Should it read any more plainer to make the point? Also, Christ told His disciples not to forbid those who were bringing their little children to Him, and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Now if those little children were lost in their sin, which they had inherited from Adam, as some believe, then Christ did not know this, because He told His disciples that "of such is the kingdom of heaven." in fact, at another place Jesus said to His disciples: "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3). Now why Christ was asking them to try to become like little children, if

they wanted to go to heaven, if little children are sinful??

So the reader can see how foolish it is to believe and teach that little children are born with sin in them. The truth of the matter is that little children have no sin in them, they are as pure and sinless as Adam and Eve were when they were created by God. (Genesis 1:26, 27). Adam and Eve were not created by God as little babies, but were created as full grown man and woman. They were intelligent, rational; they were able to differentiate between right and wrong, too, they were able to choose to do or not to do a certain thing. They became sinners, when they, both personally and individually, chose to disobey God's command. (Genesis 2:16, 17; 3:1-13).

What is Sin? Sin is not like the colour of eyes or skin that one may inherit from a physical parent. Sin is personally and individually committed. Listen to what the Bible says: Romans 3:23 says "All have sinned....." Observe the active verb "have sinned." At 1 John 3:4, we read: "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." Sin is personally committed, not inherited from another individual.

Biblically speaking, therefore, when a baby is born, that baby is absolutely without any sin. He does not have the capability to understand right from wrong or the consequences of disobedience. Sure, after some time, at an early age, a child may begin to understand obedience to parental commands, but the concept of God and of obedience to Him, and the laws concerning sin and its consequences are beyond the mental capabilities of a little child. However, when the baby grows and become of a mature age—when the little child is able to know right from wrong; is able to make personal decisions; and is able to choose to obey God or to disobey Him; when he or she is accountable to God—from that point onward, God holds that person responsible for every action he/she does.

Through the years many people have tried to twist the Scriptures to teach the erroneous doctrine of inherited sin; that babies are born sinners. Some do go to Psalm 51:5 to justify their error. But this is not really what that passage teach. Let us see what king David said over there. First, he said, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity." Now who had brought him forth? His mother! So he was talking there about his mother who was in iniquity when she had brought him forth. Again, notice, next he

said, "And in sin my mother conceived me." Who had conceived David? His mother! Who was in sin? His mother! David was not yet even born!! This statement is parallel to someone saying, "in anger my mother beat me." Who was angry there? Obviously, the mother, not the child.

I hope you can see what we have tried to learn from this editorial written from the Biblical perspective. I hope too, that those who believe that they have been baptized, but yet have been sprinkled when they were babies, and therefore were not really baptized Scripturally, will seriously think on these things and decide to do what the Bible, God's word teaches, remembering that Christ has taught that to saved one must both believe and be baptized (Mk. 16:16). If you think I can help you in any way in this matter, I will be happy to hear from you.

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

J.C. CHOATE

A few people in the world today might never have heard the name, Jesus Christ. Most have. Yet many who have heard of Him are confused and do not know who He really is. Millions believe in Him, but millions more do not. *Who is Jesus Christ?*

Jesus Christ existed with God in the beginning. Hebrews 1:3 describes Him as being the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His Person. John 1:1, calling Him "the Word", says that He was *with* God in the beginning, and that *He was God*. *This means that He is one of the Persons of the Godhead, along with God and the Holy Spirit.* God is described as being eternal, having no beginning and no end, so the same is true of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 63:16). He is said to be the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8), the beginning of the creation of God (not that He was created by God, but that He was involved in initiating the creation of all things) (Revelation 3:14), the First and the Last (Revelation 22:13).

Jesus Christ was the Creator of all things. In Genesis 1:1, we read that *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* The Hebrew word for God is the plural form, which includes the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit. In Genesis 1:26 God said, *"Let us make man in our image...."* Paul further

explained in Colossians 1:16,17, speaking of Jesus Christ, *"All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."*

Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary through the power of God, having no earthly father. His unique birth was prophesied many centuries before by the prophet Isaiah: *"Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive; and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."* In Matthew 1:20,21 it was said *"... that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."* From these verses we can see that Jesus was born miraculously, that He was more than just a man.

Jesus Christ was the Son of God, having emptied Himself of the rights and powers inherent in the Godhead as the Word, and subjecting Himself to God as Father, becoming a brother to humans by His physical birth (Philippians 2:3-8). He came into the world to save man from his sins. We read in John 3:16,17, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son ... that the world through Him might be saved,"* Christ Himself said, *"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10).

Jesus Christ performed miracles to prove that He was the Son of God. John wrote concerning His miracles, *"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples ... these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God..."* (John 20:30,31).

Jesus Christ died on the cross so that all who believe in Him might be saved and have the hope of eternal life. We read the words of the apostle Paul, *"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you ... that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures"* (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

Jesus Christ promised to save the obedient in His family, which he called "My church" (Matthew 16:18). He died for this body of people, and all those who are washed in His blood are saved and added to His church. It is called His body, of which He is the Head. It is also described as His bride, wearing His name. (Ephesians 5:23,25; Acts 2:47; Ephesians 3:15; Acts 4:12).

Jesus Christ is the second person in the Godhead (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) (Matthew 28:19,20). There is one God, one Lord (Christ), and one Spirit (the Holy Spirit) (Ephesians 4:1-6). Because of His willingness to die for the sins of the world, Christ has been given all authority in heaven and on the earth (Matthew 28:18). He is presently sitting at the right hand of the Father, reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15). One day He will come again to take His people, the church, to heaven where they will dwell forevermore.

Jesus promised, *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ... I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also"* (John 14:1-3).

Do you believe in Christ? He warned in John 8:24, *"...if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."*

If we do believe in Him, we will obey Him (Mark 16:16), if we love Him we will obey Him (John 14:15) and will remain faithful to Him until death (Revelation 2:10).

In Accordance With God's Word

CECIL MAY

The Bible says women are to keep silent in the church and not to speak; but in our congregations women teach and exhort one another in song, confess Christ, ask and answer questions in Bible classes, teach ladies classes and even preach on ladies days. Some ask where the consistency is in all of that. They challenge why fully qualified people are prohibited from full participation in worship just because they are women.

The answer to these concerns is best found in a study of two passages of Scripture, one in 1 Corinthians 14 and the other in 1 Timothy 2.

1 Corinthians 14

• **In the Church.** The 1 Corinthians passage speaks of conduct in the assembly, when "the whole church comes together" (1 Corinthians 14:23 esv). Indeed, the primary meaning of "ecclesia,"

the word usually translated "church," is "assembly." It is translated "assembly" three times in Acts 19:32, 39 and 41.

First Corinthians 14:33-35 reads: "As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church."

"Keep silent in the churches" means "keep silent in the assemblies." This is not instruction just for a special situation in Corinth. It is the apostolically approved practice in all of the churches.

- **"Keep Silent."** The command for women to "keep silent in the churches" is worded almost the same as the command to tongue-speakers: "But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church" (1 Corinthians 14:28).

Those who had been given the gift of tongues had the liberty to use their gift but not in the assembly. Its use in the assembly, in the absence of an interpreter, could not edify the assembly. Similarly, women are commanded to keep silent, not everywhere but in the assemblies. No one, to my knowledge, thinks the Scripture is so absolute as to forbid singing along with the congregation.

In the same assembly, one who prays is instructed to do so in an understandable manner, so the rest of the congregation can make it their prayer by saying, "Amen" (1 Corinthians 14:16). The practice in many congregations where many—men and women—say "Amen" to the preaching and the prayers is here authorized.

Some maintain there is no such thing in the Bible as a person leading prayer. However that certainly seems to be what is presupposed here.

Some who argue that women should be allowed to pray in the assembly seem to forget that those who are present when such prayers are prayed and who make them their prayers by assenting, whether tacitly or verbally, have prayed in the assembly. Women pray regularly and properly in every assembly of the saints.

What seems to be forbidden in 1 Corinthians 14 is speaking out as opposed to speaking in concert with the rest of the congregation. That surely would include women preaching,

reading scripture, testifying, having a speaking part in a drama presentation, singing a solo, or leading prayer in the assembly. Asking a question out loud is the apostle's own illustration of the kind of speaking forbidden in the assembly (1 Corinthians 14:35).

- **"Be in Submission."** One of the biblical roles God wants women to fill is that of submission. Women are to submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1). Instead of speaking publicly in the assembly, women are to "be in submission" (1 Corinthians 14:34). Instead of exercising leadership in matters of teaching and prayer, they are to "learn quietly with all submissiveness" (1 Timothy 2:11).

Submission is not slavery, and it does not imply inferiority. Christ submitted always to the will of the Father (John 6:38); but He was equal to the Father in essence, and in the Godhood (Philippians 2:5-11).

Submission of a wife to her husband, or of a woman to her teachers and leaders in the church, or for that matter of a congregation to its elders, like Christ's submission to the Father, is voluntary submission. That is not to say God has not commanded it or that consequences are not to be faced for disobedience to God's command, but God has not placed in the husband's hand any means with which to enforce his leadership. The wife decides to obey God, respect her husband and submit.

Both women and men are created in God's image (Genesis 1:26). Both sin and need redemption by the blood of Christ (Romans 3:23). They are heirs together of the grace of life (1 Peter 3:7). When by faith they are baptized into Christ, they clothe themselves in Christ in whom there is neither male nor female (Galatians 3:28).

That does not erase specific role assignments Scripture elsewhere makes, but it certainly refutes any notions of inequality or inferiority.

- **"As the Law Also Says."** Women's submission, Paul notes, is in accordance with what the Law says (1 Corinthians 14:34). Although it is not known what, if any, specific Mosaic law is being referenced, the Old Testament as a whole reinforces the principle of male spiritual leadership.

Man was created first (Genesis 2:7). Woman was created for man (v. 18). After they both sinned, God said to the woman, "Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (3:17).

The patriarchs were all men. Moses, Joshua and Caleb were men. Priests and high priests had to be men. The kings of Judah were men. The major and minor prophets were men.

Even the rare exceptions emphasize the exceptional nature of their cases. Of the 15 judges, only Deborah was a female, and she shamed Barak for being unwilling to lead the people unless she went with him (Judges 4:4-9).

- **"Ask Their Husbands at Home."** The specific instruction, "If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home" (1 Corinthians 14:35), surely does not preclude asking a brother or a friend or asking on the way home. It does say they are to ask later, someplace else, not in the assembly.

- **Summary.** The admonition to women in this passage is generally not to speak out in the assembly in such a way as to be heard individually.

This passage speaks specifically of the assembly when the whole church comes together (1 Corinthians 14:23, 28). Normally that is when the church assembles to partake of the Lord's Supper (11:20); but it is likely applicable whenever it is the intention to bring the whole church together into an assembly for mutual edification and worship.

1 Timothy 2

- **"In Every Place."** Bible classes, teen devotionals and small group Bible studies are not intended to be the whole church come together. They are not the assembly, but Paul addresses these situations in 1 Timothy 2:8-15. The passage reads: "I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control."

The context of this passage is not the assembly, but prayer (1 Timothy 2:1) and teaching (v. 12) "in every place" (v. 8). What the passage prohibits, it prohibits everywhere. It cannot be used to justify prayer and teaching by women even in private settings.

Women are to dress respectfully and modestly everywhere, not just in the assembly. A Christian woman is to express her submissive spirit by her quiet and modest demeanor everywhere and at all times.

Unlike in 1 Corinthians 14, nothing suggests application only when the whole church is assembled. "Church" or "assembly" is not mentioned. Everywhere women worship, pray and teach the things of God; they are not to lead or teach authoritatively over men.

- **Men Pray.** "Men," in this passage, is from the Greek word "*aner*," which specifically means men as adult males, distinct from women. Another word, "*anthropos*," used far more frequently, means "man" as "mankind," including both men and women.

In the first seven verses of 1 Timothy 2, Paul uses "*anthropos*" ("mankind") four times: pray for all men (v. 1); God desires all men to be saved (v. 4); there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (twice in v. 5).

Of course, Jesus was "*aner*," but Paul here calls Him "*anthropos*" because He is mediator for all people, both men and women.

Seeing Paul's care in the use of these words, he evidently meant to say what he said. In 1 Timothy 2:8 he calls upon men, "*aner*," to pray.

- **Men ... Women.** In addition to using the specific word for "males," beginning at 1 Timothy 2:8 the passage contrasts what "men" are to do with what "women" are to do. Men are to pray and not to display anger or a quarrelsome spirit.

Women are to dress modestly, emphasizing good deeds more than outward adornment. They are to learn in silence with all submission, and they are not permitted to teach or have authority over men.

- **"Likewise Also."** "I desire then that in every place the men should pray ... likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel" (1 Timothy 2:8-9).

Some maintain that "likewise" here means, "Men pray; likewise women pray." However, both the grammar of the sentence and

the context are against that. The passage is contrasting what men do and what women do; and the contrast is, "Men pray; women learn quietly, remain quiet."

The verb that begins the section is, "I desire." First Timothy 2:8 reads: "I desire then that in every place the men should pray." Then in verse 9 the verb to be supplied is not, "Likewise that women should pray," but "Likewise I desire that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel."

Most commentaries, if they comment on the point at all, are in agreement with that. One is of particular interest: *The Interpreters Bible* in its "Exposition" states that the whole passage is sub-Christian and is to be ignored, but in the "Exegesis" states, "Since the explicit statement of verse 8 is that (only) men shall pray, i.e., read the public prayers, and since the insistence of the paragraph is that women must remain silent in the church, it is scarcely possible to suppose that the author meant to say, 'I desire also the women to pray in modest apparel,' etc."

They do not believe one has to follow it, but they do generally understand what it says.

- **Remain Quiet.** The word translated "keep silent" in 1 Corinthians 14, meaning "do not speak out," is not used in 1 Timothy 2. In 1 Timothy Paul tells women to "remain quiet" (v. 12), using the same word as in 1 Timothy 2:2: "that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life."

What is forbidden in this context is not speaking but exercising leadership. The forbidden opposite of "remain quiet" is teaching or exercising authority over men (v. 12).

- **"I Do Not Permit a Woman to Teach."** In the letter to Titus, Paul commands the older women to teach what is good and so train the younger women (Titus 2:3-4). Obviously then all teaching is not forbidden to women. The passage says, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man" (1 Timothy 2:12). "Over a man" goes with both "teach" and "exercise authority."

A mixed class of men and women should be taught by a man. A woman in that class may ask questions (this is not the assembly). She may respond to questions; she may make pertinent comments. In the process, she may even teach something to all present, including any men, but she is not to take over the class. Authoritative teaching is forbidden. In this situation,

authoritative teaching means being the teacher for the class. It is standing before the class and conducting the class. It is what Paul commanded Titus to do in Titus 2:15: "Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority."

Women are commanded to teach other women. They may certainly teach their children and other people's children.

There are private circumstances where women may teach men as Priscilla and Aquila did Apollos.

Many women have taught me things, inviting me to their home to converse over a cup of coffee and a piece of pie, sometimes visiting quietly with me in the foyer after a sermon, and sometimes writing me a note. In no case were they rude, bossy or threatening. Nor were they taking over a class and teaching it in my stead.

A woman may sit with an unbelieving man and an open Bible and show him the passages that can lead him to Christ or in similar fashion may correct a mistaken preacher. Undoubtedly there are more preachers who need to be shown the way of the Lord more perfectly than there are women equipped to help their husbands correct them. But women are not to teach the class when men are among those to be taught.

Why?

Some have asked, "Why do we require a woman with a college degree to sit and listen to an ignorant farmer stumble through a class she is far more qualified to teach?"

She may indeed know more. I say "may" because many Christians with little formal education know a great deal of Bible, and a college degree is no guarantee in itself that its possessor, whether man or woman, knows anything worthwhile, but in a given case, she may.

Whoever is teaching needs to know his subject. But on the authority of God, it needs to be a man. A woman is to be praised who finds unobtrusive and submissive ways to help make things happen when no competent male leadership is available. In one assembly a man, who knew no music and could not carry a tune, stood before the congregation and called out the number. Then a lady began the song from her seat as the rest of the congregation, mostly women, joined in.

God made us. He knows how we operate best. He loves us and tells us only what is best for us. These passages are a part

of the revelation God has made of Himself and of His will. Therefore they need to be followed.

Why did God give this commandment? I do not know beyond what He has said. Man was created first. Woman was deceived and sinned first. The first sin occurred when man, with his eyes wide open, followed the leadership of his wife instead of exercising the leadership role God gave him.

The role of submission is not a demeaning role. Properly accepted and lived, it is the only path to true greatness.

If the Whole Church Comes Together: **A STUDY OF WORSHIP**

JAY LOCKHART

Worship is one of the most important things we do. After all, God is seeking true worshipers (John 4:23), and we are privileged to worship Him (Matthew 4:10). Yet worship may also be one of the most difficult things we do.

Most of us have received little training in how to worship. We learned to worship by observing those around us. Additionally, worship requires concentration, and many things—our wandering thoughts, a crying child, an emergency vehicle passing the building with its siren blaring—interrupt our thought processes. Add to this the fact that we have a tendency to think that worship is for us. How often we have heard someone say as they left worship, “I didn’t get much out of the service today because I didn’t care for the song selection,” or “The prayer was not meaningful,” or “The sermon was too long.” For these and perhaps other reasons, worship is important but difficult. How can we worship more effectively? Let me ask four questions.

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

The most common Old Testament word for worship is *shachah* which means “to bow down.” This may refer to a position of the body or an attitude of the heart. The most used New Testament word for worship is *proskuneo* which means “to kiss (the hand) toward” and carries the idea of reverence or respect. Our English word for worship comes from the Anglo-Saxon word meaning “worthship.” Worship, then, is “declaring the worth of another through humble acts of reverence or submission.”

WHOM DO WE WORSHIP?

Of course we answer, "We worship God." And that is the right answer. When John fell in worship at the feet of the angel who revealed the message of Revelation 22 to him, the angel said, "Do not do that. ... Worship God" (v. 9). So we worship God.

The worship of God that I have in mind here is in church. I use "in church" in the sense in which Paul uses it in 1 Corinthians 14. The apostle speaks of "in the church" (v. 19), "in church" (v. 28), "in all the churches" (v. 33), "in the churches" (v. 34), and "in church" (v. 35). What he means by "in church" is explained by Paul in verse 23 where he says, "if the whole church comes together in one place." Because the context of 1 Corinthians 14 is worship (see chapters 11, 12 and 16); for Paul "in church" is when the whole church comes together for the intended purpose of worship. The "in church" meeting is unique in that there is nothing else we do that is quite like it. "In church" is not a youth devotional, a Bible class, a time of family devotion or even a church fellowship dinner. "In church" can only happen if we intend for it to take place. In this article, think of worship in the context of the coming together of the church for worship.

HOW ARE WE TO WORSHIP?

In John 4:24, Jesus says, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." Surely we can all agree that to worship God in truth is to follow God's instructions about worship. God's Word is truth (John 17:17), and we are to worship in the way the Word of God teaches us. To worship in spirit must mean that worship comes from the humble hearts of Christians. Therefore, in worship we are to do the things that God says we are to do and do them in the way God says we must. Acceptable worship is not doing the right things by simply going through the motions, nor is worship sincerely doing what God has not authorized. Worship means to do the right things in the right way. A question therefore arises: What are the right things?

In answer, what does the New Testament (the truth) teach us about worship, and how did the first century church worship? From the New Testament and from church history, we know that the early church taught the word of the Lord, prayed, sang, ate the Lord's Supper upon the first day of the week, and gave of their money to support the cause of Christ.

I have some concerns about the church today and its worship. My concerns about worship are not about style (whether we sing old or new songs, whether we use song books or not, or the order of the service), but my concerns are about substance (what we do as worship).

Some have advocated and practiced taking the Lord's Supper on some day other than the first day of the week. Through the years we have recognized that Jesus said in instituting the Lord's Supper, "Do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19 NKJV). We have understood that the early disciples came together "on the first day of the week ... to break bread" (literally "the bread" to indicate this is no common meal) (Acts 20:7). Because no indication is in the Scripture that they partook of the Supper at any other time, the issue was settled for us.

Another concern is that some have indicated that instrumental music in worship is a matter of opinion or custom. Yet we all recognize the New Testament authorizes singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). Because singing is a specific kind of music, we in the church have believed that vocal music is all that God authorizes in the worship of the church. However, those who teach that the Supper may be taken on a day other than the Lord's day and that instrumental music is optional will say, "The Bible doesn't say not to do these things."

People do not reason this way in any area of life except in religion. Suppose you send a child into a store to buy a bottle of milk, and he comes back with milk and 10 candy bars. Is he justified by saying, "You didn't say not to buy candy." When you send a child to buy milk, do you have to name everything else in the store and tell him not to get that? Of course not! When you tell him what to get, that eliminates everything else. When God tells us what to do, He doesn't have to name everything else in the world and tell us not to do that. What God says includes what He says and excludes everything else. When the Bible teaches us what is to be done, the instruction includes the thing to be done and anything necessary to carry out what is to be done such as, providing a place to assemble or to baptize or a song to sing. But changing what is in Scripture or adding to what is taught is excluded. With this understanding, we can worship in spirit and truth.

WHY ARE WE TO WORSHIP?

In Hebrews chapter 10, the writer says that Christ has opened the way into heaven for the children of God so that we may boldly approach God (v. 19). Then follows a threefold admonition with each exhortation beginning with "let us."

First, the writer says, "let us draw near" (Hebrews 10:22). Draw near to whom? To God. The writer has just said the way into heaven is open. Draw near for what purpose? To praise God for who He is, what He has done, what He is doing, and what He yet will do. In song and prayer, we praise. In sermon, we praise by teaching His Word. In the Supper, we praise God's unspeakable gift. In giving, we praise God for every blessing.

Second, the Hebrew writer says, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope" (10:23). What is our confession? Isn't it "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"? And because of who He is and my relationship to Him as a child of God, I have hope. So in worship, I remember Jesus. As I sing of Him, I remember. As I pray through Christ, I remember. As I give, I remember. As I commune in the Supper, I remember. As I preach the gospel, I remember.

Third, the writer of Hebrews says, "let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works" (10:24). Then in verse 25 he says, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." We assemble (the whole church comes together with the intention of worship), and we praise God. We remember Jesus Christ; we encourage one another. Notice that the emphasis here is upon God, Christ and others rather than ourselves. Nothing is said here about what I like, what I get out of it, or what is meaningful to me. The emphasis is upon others. If we centre our attention upon ourselves, we will often go away from worship without feeling we got very much, and we will be open to innovations of human origin.

However, when we assemble as the church for worship, if we will give ourselves to doing just what God has asked us to do in the way God has asked us to do it, if we will enthusiastically participate in praising God, remembering Christ, and encouraging others, if we will remember that worship is not primarily for us, then we will worship God in spirit and truth, God will be glorified, the church will be edified, the lost will be evangelized, and we will be transformed as we receive from worship what God intends.

UNCLEAR SOUNDS

ALVIN JENNINGS

Whether intentionally or through carelessness, we as Christians have often sent out unclear sounds as to who we are and Whom we serve.

We are all engaged in a battle for truth and for principles of right, but unfortunately sometimes we forget that the fight is against the devil's tricks in a world of spiritual powers. We have carelessly laid aside our belt of truth and the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. From time to time our ears have become dulled to the point we do not hear the trumpet call of Jesus signaling us to arise and put on the armor to serve and fight (Ephesians 6:10-18).

The church, His church, should be an army of soldiers who never give up or give in, men and women who are always ready through prayer to stand for Jesus. We are not enlisted in this warfare to please ourselves or even to please our friends and loved ones.

THE CHURCH IS DIFFERENT

Unclear sounds have gone out from us, leaving us confused and wondering about who we are and how we serve and worship. The church of Christ is different because (1) it sings *a cappella* in worship; (2) it observes the Lord's Supper each Sunday; (3) it teaches baptism is essential to receive remission of sins; (4) it teaches that supernatural gifts of the Spirit (tongues, etc.) can no longer be practiced; and (5) it teaches that the Bible is its final and only expression of the authority of Jesus Christ.

THE UNCLEAR SOUND OF MUSIC

When mechanical instruments of music are used in song services of praise and worship, a clear concept in our minds as to who we are and what we stand for has been violated. We wonder why we practice in one room what we disallow in another or why we invite advocates of another type of worship to speak in our pulpits. It is for this inconsistency that we apologize. We may know that the kind of music we use reaches far beyond our personal preferences. What we may like to hear has little or nothing to do with the reasons for our being different in our worship music. Paul said if his purpose was to please people (himself included) he would not pretend to be a servant of Christ (Galatians 1:10).

THE REASONS

But why is it that we do not use mechanical instruments when we worship? Here is a brief answer for your consideration, and study.

- (1) Worship is to be in truth as well as in spirit (John 4:20-24). God has told Christians how to worship.
- (2) God expects obedience; Jesus Christ has all authority as head over all things to the church (Ephesians 1:22-23).
- (3) We are under the New Covenant (New Testament), not the Old Covenant (Colossians 2:14). In the Old Covenant, God's people worshiped in many ways: with animal sacrifice, incense, harps and trumpets, dancing before God, observing the Sabbath day (Saturday), refraining from eating certain foods, practicing compulsory circumcision as a religious rite, to name a few. All of the elements from the old Mosaic Law were abolished, taken out of the way, and nailed to the cross. A new and better law of Christ was then established.
- (4) We are not at liberty to change, substitute or add to what God has specifically commanded for Christians' worship (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). The New Testament specified singing in Christian worship.
- (5) Harps in heaven are no more intended for our worship today than other things spoken of in figurative language in the book of Revelation such as the banishment of marriage, angels, horses, dragons, golden censers, the temple, incense, etc. (Matthew 22:30).
- (6) The voice of church history affirms that the early church only sang *a cappella*; a Latin term that actually means "in the likeness of the church." The Greek Orthodox Church has never used instruments, and Baptist, Presbyterian, Brethren, Lutheran and Methodist scholars have opposed them. Instrumental music has always been a serious issue since its first introduction into Christian worship during the sixth century to the 10th century.
- (7) Debates have raged and church divisions have occurred when instruments of music are introduced, including among churches of Christ.

A CONCLUDING APPEAL AND PRAYER

Pray on these matters as you search the scriptures, and study the practices of the first-century Christians, and refrain from using mechanical instruments when singing praises to God, lest we fall into the disfavor of Jesus, further embarrassment among our friends, and divisions within the body of Christ. As Paul said; if his purpose was to please people (himself included) he would not attempt to be a servant of Christ (Galatians 1:10).

Handling Accurately The **WORD OF TRUTH**

JIMMY JIVIDEN

The last two letters Paul wrote were to his son in the gospel, Timothy. Paul trusted Timothy and sent him to Ephesus to help correct some false teachings. He encouraged him to "fight the good fight." The purpose of the first letter was "that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15).

His second letter focused on how this was to be done. He reminded Timothy that what his mother and grandmother had taught him from his youth was inspired and adequate for the task, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

He also gave this sobering and important admonition on how to use the Scriptures: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

These passages affirm three things about Scripture. First, they are the standard of authority for all things that pertain to life and godliness. Second, they are inspired of God and adequate to guide the church. Third, they are to be diligently studied and handled accurately. This last passage about "handling accurately the word of truth" needs to be understood better. How are we to use the Word of God? There are many conflicting answers.

There was a scene in the movie *The Exorcist* that portrayed the Bible as a holy charm to resist the power of demons. The Bible is not a magic charm, nor is it like Moses' rod that he used to work miracles. It is easy to think the Bible so holy that it would be wrong to discard a worn out copy. One might think: "How could something so powerful and precious be thrown into the trash or burned in a fire?" We must remember that it is paper and ink. It is the message of the Bible that is holy.

The Bible is not a decoration to be placed on the coffee table and used to press flowers and preserve clippings. There is nothing spiritual in displaying a Bible that has rarely been used. It is sad to find a collection of Bibles that have been left at the church building while their owners never realize they are lost. The Bible should be read and

studied. Notes should be in the margins. Words should be underlined to show their importance. Pages should be soiled from use.

The Bible is not only a record of the ancient history of the Hebrews, but it also reveals how God dealt with His people in ages past. It is more than the recorded history of people, places and events. The Bible is about how God saved the world by giving His only Son to die for lost mankind. A far greater need is to know and believe the message of the Bible than to know the geography, chronology and culture of ancient nations. There is a far greater need to obey the teachings of the Bible than to know the languages in which they are written.

The Bible is more than a rule book containing the do's and don'ts of life. Certainly it contains commandments to be obeyed and punishment for those who refuse to obey. But the major purpose of the Bible is to reveal to sinful man that God sent His Son to save a world ignorant of God, lost in sin and without hope.

The Bible is the inspired, complete revelation of God's redeeming grace and His will for those who will accept it. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, it reveals Jesus as the Son of God and affirms the church as the kingdom of God. It tells its readers the will of the Lord and motivates those who obey it.

The Bible is holy; its message is holy. Because of its contents, it should not be mutilated or used in a disrespectful way. It is good to see the Bible in a home. It reflects the values of its owner. The test comes in whether it is being used.

The Bible contains the history of Israel, the preaching of the prophets, the origin of man, the rise and fall of nations. It contains rules and regulations, causes and consequences, warnings and promises. But the reason it is so important is that it contains the will of God. The basic message, however, is how God extended His grace, Jesus atoned for sin, and the Holy Spirit revealed God's will. It is the source of our faith. It defines the love of God. It is the stimulator of our hope.

It is the Holy Bible and should be handled with care and reverence.

"WHY DID MY SAVIOUR COME TO EARTH?"

ANDREW D. ERWIN

In 1892 J.G. Dailey wrote a gospel song now found in most

hymnals titled, "Why Did My Saviour Come to Earth?" Some men remember this song as the first one they ever chose to lead in congregational worship. For others, this song might inspire fond memories of worshipping the Master alongside cherished loved ones of yesteryear. Some people are also reminded of the love and devotion with which this hymn was joyfully given to God from the hearts of a faithful few whose faith has now become sight.

For our present study, this song will serve as a foundation from which we hope to build a better appreciation of the love shown to man from the heavenly places.

The Universal Offer of Reconciliation

The primary reason Christ came to earth was to reconcile a lost and dying people to God. This reconciliation provides man with renewed fellowship with God, redemption and all spiritual blessings. Our Saviour did not come to reconcile only one certain race or people, but every race and all nations (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47). Paul wrote: "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation ... that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross" (Ephesians 2:13-17 NKJV).

Again Paul wrote, "and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself ... whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Colossians 1:20). Clearly, our Saviour came to earth to establish a universal reconciliation to God by which all men could be saved. A Calvinistic teacher would no doubt be up in arms about that thought. He would most likely claim, "Not so! Our Saviour came to save His people from their sins and none other."

Such an argument may be based upon the angel's statement to Joseph in Matthew 1:21, "He will save His people from their sins." However, the great mistake made by such understandings is the failure to recognize the difference between passages teaching us who **will** be saved and passages teaching us who **can** be saved. What the angel told Joseph was true then, and every word of it is still true today. But we must realize that the angel was not attempting to enlighten Joseph of the souls who could be reconciled; he was telling Joseph of the souls who would be reconciled (i.e. "His people").

To understand who can be reconciled, we must focus on

passages revealing that truth. One such passage is the inclusive statement of our Lord found in Luke 19:10: "for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Yet another is found in Hebrews 2:9: "He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone." Some believe the previous passage is a hyperbole to be likened to 1 Timothy 6:10 and the root of all evil. However, this cannot be so, because in 1 Timothy 4:10 we see the same principle taught in Hebrews 2:9 made even clearer, "For to this end we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe." We learn that our Saviour came to earth to be the Saviour of all men (those who **can** be saved), especially of those who believe (those who **will** be saved).

From this principle one can see the great tragedy of life and even the burden of preaching the gospel—to know that everyone could be saved, because this is why our Saviour came, and to know that many more will be lost than will obey (Matthew 7:13-14).

Who are those who will be reconciled? We know from Divine revelation that those who were faithful under the first covenant while it was in effect will be redeemed (Hebrews 9:15) as well as those who obey the word of Christ (5:8-9), which will be the final standard of judgment (John 12:48). Truly these are "His people," the very ones the angel referred to in Matthew 1:21.

As for those who choose not to obey, although Christ died for them, because of their disobedience they will ultimately be lost (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).

The Means of Reconciliation

Upon drawing the conclusion that our Saviour came to earth to offer the opportunity of universal reconciliation with God, we must seek to understand how this opportunity has come to pass.

It is the result of the three-fold sacrifice of Christ. We have already learned from Paul that this reconciliation can come only via the cross. However, further study reveals that His death was only one aspect of our Lord's sacrifice. For Jesus to die that cruel death, He first had to leave the splendor of heaven (Philippians 2:5-8); second, He had to take on the form of a servant (Hebrews 2:17). He did so by being the Son of God and the Son of man. After these two sacrifices were made by our Lord, He offered the ultimate sacrifice by being crucified and slain at the hands of wicked men (Acts 2:23).

Why did the Lord Jesus come to earth? To minister and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

The Terms of Reconciliation

Jesus came to die for us and thus to reconcile us to His Father; He also came to preach the gospel and make His plan known. Just as the offer is from God, so are the terms. As part of His coming, Jesus revealed the terms.

The gospel serves as the terms of reconciliation. The good news is the doctrine that must be obeyed from our hearts (Romans 6:17). By obeying this gospel, one becomes reconciled to God through the cross of Christ.

It would be futile to try to sever the gospel from the cross or from the reconciliation being offered. The gospel makes known to us the offer as well as the terms of the offer. Without knowing about a plan of hope and redemption and how to accept such grace, the offer itself would be useless. Would this not nullify the death of Jesus? Why would He offer Himself without making known both the offer and also the terms?

When Jesus returned to Nazareth, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath and proclaimed, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind; To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19).

Again He made His intentions known to those who sought Him while He was in a desert place by saying, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent" (Luke 4:43).

Lastly, during the mockery of His trial, Jesus made known to Pilate His reason for coming: "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (John 18:37).

In casually reading these verses, we see that preaching the gospel involves the preaching of the kingdom, the preaching of repentance, and the preaching of the truth. One cannot be reconciled to God without repenting, obeying the truth, and entering His kingdom. These are His terms. This is why our Saviour came—to make known His Father's blessed will (John 5:30).

The Good Life

What does all this mean to us? It simply means that we can enjoy the good life! He stated in John 10:10, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

In reconciling us to God, He promises not only to give us an eternal life with Him in heaven, but He also promises to give us a real, true, abundant life here on earth. Our Saviour came to earth to make something marvelous and wonderfully useful out of people who would otherwise be lost and destitute of hope.

"TRAIN UP A CHILD"

LEWIS G. HALE

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). This is a very familiar Scripture and is often used to prove that some parents failed in their duty when some of their offspring goes astray. Misconduct of a child may mean that a parent has failed in duty, but not always. The general rule is that we do not depart from our training. Any other result must be regarded as exceptional.

Parents must not discount the value of early training. Many parents excuse the lack of such molding by claiming the child is too young for it. Of course, they brag about how smart their children are, and at the same time protest they are too young to be trained in right conduct! A child can be very cute while misbehaving. He may be young, but he picks up on it quickly when the parent or grandparent cannot conceal his amusement at such capers. He may not yet have learned to talk or walk, but he reads your "body language" quite well.

Our children are not computers that can be programed, with the output as a foregone conclusion. God allows us to make choices, good or bad. Sadly, we are very wilful and often make bad choices.

Most of us see the words, *"When he is old, he will not depart from it"*, but overlook the stipulation "train". Many parents do a lot of talking and little training. We must *tell* children what they need to know. But, we must do more. We need to provide *experiences* which *put into practice* what we *tell* them. They need to be *trained* to act right and also *trained* to feel right. When our correct knowledge and our emotions run parallel, we will do right.

Let's *train* our children.



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