

“WE THE PEOPLE” OF GOD, #3

INTRODUCTION

In previous lessons, we have identified ourselves as the “People of God” because we are His children (Rom. 9:26). We last pointed out that AS People of God we are to be concerned about (1) The ONE church of the NT; (2) WORSHIP in that church; and (3) The WAY OF SALVATION into that one church. At this time we shall consider the second of these concerns, dealing with “Acceptable Worship” in that one body, the church of Jesus Christ which began on Pentecost day as recorded in Acts 2 of the New Testament.

DISCUSSION

I. WE FIRST CONSIDER WORSHIP IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

A. Worship was practiced in the **Patriarchal Age**, which basically consisted of making offerings to God.

1. Cain and Abel are examples of this. Gen. 4:1-7
2. Noah, after the flood, built an altar to worship God. Gen. 8:20
3. Abraham built his altar for worship. Gen. 12:1-8; 22:1-13 (explain)

B. Worship was also practiced in the **Mosaical Age**, which consisted of offerings animal sacrifices and observing special days and events.

1. Worship was at the tabernacle in the wilderness and the temple in the city of Jerusalem. John 4:19-24; Acts 8:27
2. Nadab and Abihu are an example of corrupt worship. Lev. 10:1-3

II. WE NEXT CONSIDER SOME FALSE CONCEPTS OF WORSHIP TODAY.

A. One false concept is that any way one chooses to worship is acceptable to God.

1. **Ignorant** worship of **idols** is contrary to God. Exo. 32:1-8, 21; Acts 17:22,23,30
2. **Vain** worship according to men's commandments is wrong. Matt. 15:9; Col. 2:20-23
3. **Angel** worship is also condemned. Col. 2:18; Rev. 19:9-10; 22:7-9
4. **Apostle** worship is also forbidden. Acts 10:24-26; 14:8-15 (comment)

B. Another false concept of worship is that “everything we do in life (except sin) is worship,” and ALL good things are on a par with religious activities.

1. This is false, for Abraham **went** to Moriah, to **worship** there, so there is a clear distinction. Gen. 22:1-13 (explain)
2. The Ethiopian eunuch was **traveling** home (not worship) from Jerusalem where had been **to** worship (2 distinct acts). Acts 8:27
3. If this doctrine be true, a man playing golf on Sunday morning would be worshiping God just as much as his wife in the church assembly.

C. Yet another false concept of worship is the denominational and liberal practice of “spiritual entertainment” for young people.

1. Some “churches” build stages in large edifices, begin with a lively tune or song to set the stage for a worship atmosphere, then bring out the band with the playing of loud instruments which creates loud vocal approval by the many young folks gathered there.
2. Participants leave happy, with a feeling of spiritual contentment, looking forward to the next concert.

The largest religious movement in the state of Colorado is known as the “FLATIRON COMMUNITY CHURCH”. It began in 1997 and is spreading all over the state. There is one near Denver that has around 100 “pastors” and directors, with only 5 elders. It has a membership of 10,000, with Sunday's attendance as much as 17,000, meeting in an old Wal-Mart facility. It has a casual atmosphere, and appeals largely to young people. It's services consist of a rock-concert of secular and Christian-Rock, which keeps the young people yelling. Regarding same-sex marriages, the preaching Pastor says that all one has to do is to SAY he believes what Jesus taught about one man and one woman in marriage, but same-sex marriages, and gay people are welcome to part of the movement, and trans-gender folks are welcome. The sad part of this is the fact that I HAVE A GRANDSON WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE MOVEMENT.

III. NEXT, WE CONSIDER WORSHIP FOR THE CHRISTIAN AGE.

A. As we think positively, we are mainly concerned in this lesson about worship that is **acceptable** to God. 1 Pet. 2:5

1. The Greek word for worship is *proskuneo*, which simply means “paying homage, veneration or adoration” to God.
2. Jesus set forth the **elements** of acceptable worship in John 4:19-24
 - a. God is the **object** of proper worship. John 4:23-24; Rev. 22:9
 - b. The **attitude** of proper worship is the proper spirit. John 4:24
 - c. The **standard** of proper worship is truth—God's word, which tells us what to do in worship. John 4:24; 17:17

B. As we examine the **actions** of acceptable worship, we shall at the same time point out the element of the spirit, or **heart** of man that is involved in each action.

Acts 2:42, 47 “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers...Praising God.”

1. First, there is the action of **preaching and hearing** the word of God. Acts 2:42; 20:7; cf Luke 8:15 (explain)
2. Second, there is the action of **fellowship** in giving and receiving. Acts 2:42.
 - a. Some believe this merely refers to “association” or togetherness of believers, in their common meals, etc.
 - b. However, fellowship, in this context, appears to be an action of worship in honoring and serving God in giving. Phil. 1:5; 4:15f; 2 Cor. 9:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2 (explain)
3. Third, there is the action of **breaking of bread** or the Lord's Supper. Cf Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-26, cf v. 27-30 (explain)
4. Fourth, there is the action of **prayer** in the church. Acts 2:42; 12:5; cf 1 Cor. 14:15-16 (explain)
5. Fifth, there is the action of **praising God** in song. Acts 2:47
 - a. True, praise can be given to God in word, doctrine or in prayer.
 - b. However, the practice of praising God in song is from the Greek word *humneo*, which means “sing to the praise of” (VINE, p. 480). cf Acts 16:25; Heb. 2:12; 13:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16

V. FINALLY, WE CONSIDER SOME PERVERSIONS OF MEN IN THESE ACTIONS.

- A. In the matter of **preaching**, some preach the doctrines of men rather than the teaching of the apostles. Matt. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:37; 2 John 9; 1 Pet. 4:11
- B. In the matter of **giving**, some practice tithing, or the raising of funds through raffles and money raising schemes.
- C. In the matter of **breaking of bread** (communion), some practice what is called “closed communion”, while some use intoxicating wine while claiming that it literally becomes the blood of Jesus upon the prayer by their “priests”, and many observe a communion only on special occasions, holidays, or monthly.
- D. In the matter of **prayers**, some offer prayers to Jesus, to “saints”, to Mary the mother of Jesus, or to one of the apostles.
- E. In the matter of **praising God in song**, many religious bodies add the use of mechanical music to their singing, or instead of it, or allow only special groups to do the singing in concert style.
 - 1. All passages in the New Testament speaking of singing in the church refer to singing only—never to the use of adding mechanical music.
 - 2. The church is to practice **only** “CONGREGATIONAL SINGING”, with **only** music coming from the heart through the lips. Heb. 13:15

CONCLUSION

Acceptable worship comes from those who have **accepted** the word of God in obedience to the gospel in faith, repentance, confession of faith and immersion in water. Acts 10:34-35. Mark 16:15-16