

THE
TRUTH
ABOUT
CHRISTIAN
WORSHIP



MICHAEL JAMES EKPERIKPE

THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

By Michael James Ekperikpe

THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

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All glory, honour and thanksgiving belong to God Almighty, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

Without His grace, mercy, and the illumination of His Word, this work would not exist.

I also acknowledge every brother and sister who has prayed, studied, and given feedback as these lessons were prepared. Your hunger for truth and faithful worship has spurred me on.

May the Lord use this material to draw hearts closer to Him, to deepen true worship, and to strengthen the Church for His glory alone.

***Ps. 115:1** Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Your name give glory, because of Your mercy, because of Your truth.*

Michael James Ekperikpe

Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

This book is the second book in the series '**The Truth About the Christian Church**', containing 27 lessons.

It is a study guide designed to help believers understand, practise and live out worship that is pleasing to God.

The lessons trace worship from its biblical foundation to its daily expression. They cover key themes such as the heart of the worshipper, giving, thanksgiving, praise, the role of Scripture, and the believer's responsibility in both the Church and the world. Each lesson is structured to be clear, practical, and applicable for personal study, small groups, and teaching in the local church.

What you will find in this book:

- * **Scripture-centred teaching:** Every lesson is built on the Word of God, with key texts for reading and reflection.
- * **Simple structure:** Each lesson includes a lead text, memory verse, introduction,

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objective, presentation, evaluation questions, and a closing prayer.

- * **Practical application:** The goal is not just knowledge, but transformed lives that worship God in spirit and truth.

This material is written for anyone who desires to grow in their understanding of God and to worship Him faithfully – whether you are new in the faith or have walked with the Lord for many years.

May these lessons draw you closer to Christ and equip you to worship Him with your whole life.

Michael James Ekperikpe

Evangelist and Team Lead, READ AND REAP
MISSION

Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

ABOUT THE SERIES

THE BOOK SERIES: ‘THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH’

As mentioned in the previous section, this book is the second book in the series **‘The Truth About the Christian Church’**.

The series has been written to rescue God’s lambs from deadly “viruses” - wrong teachings that kill faith, joy and dominion.

Every book answers one big question, with the Word of Christ as the only oracle (1 Pet. 4:11).

The four books in the Series are:

Book 1: The Truth About the Christian Church

Who is the Church? Not a physical building, not an organization, but the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). This book removes ignorance about identity, purpose, and authority of believers.

Book 2: The Truth About Christian Worship

How does the King want us to worship now? Not by sight, but in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24). This book updates us from Old Covenant ritual to New Covenant lifestyle.

ABOUT THE SERIES

Book 3: The Truth About Christian Tradition

Which traditions build faith, and which traditions make the Word of God of no effect (Mark 7:13)? This book tests some of the “we have always done it this way” traditions against Scripture.

Book 4: The Truth About Christian Unity

Why can the Body not be divided? Christ prayed “that they may be one” (John 17:21). This book shows how truth, love, and the Spirit keep us one in Him.

Who Are These Books For?

For lambs, young believers, and every child of God who wants milk before meat (1 Pet. 2:2). Written in simple English so the least can read, understand, and obey.

The Goal

That ignorance may die, truth may live, and every believer may worship God in spirit and truth, rule with Christ, and glorify the Father forever.

John 8:32 (KJV) *Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

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The Meaning of Worship in Scripture

Text

Luke 10:25-26 ²⁵And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

²⁶He said to him, “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?”

Memory Verse

2 Tim. 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Introduction

To understand worship, we need to understand the words behind it. Hermeneutics is the study of how to interpret Scripture. When we look at the original Hebrew and Greek words for “worship” we see that it means more than singing or bowing. It is about serving God with our whole life.

God is Spirit, and He seeks those who worship Him in Spirit and truth. True worship affects every part of life – our work, our family, and how we treat others. As the Bible says, “Whatever you do,

CHAPTER 1

do it all for the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). The prophets also made this clear: God desires obedience and mercy more than sacrifices alone (Micah 6:6-8; Ps. 50:8-15, 23).

Objective

To look at the main Hebrew and Greek words translated “worship” and see what they teach us about how God wants to be worshipped.

Presentation

1. Hebrew Words for Worship

‘Abad’ – To Serve

This word primarily means “to serve” and carries the idea of total loyalty to God’s will.

Abraham’s life is an example of this kind of devoted service (Gen. 14:4; 15:13; Deut. 11:13-14). Where true worship happens, it leads to practical service for the good of others.

‘Hishtachavah’ – To Bow Down

This word means “to bow down” or “to do obeisance”, often in the context of prayer and sacrifice (Gen. 19:1-2; 22:5-7; 33:1-3). It expresses humility before God.

CHAPTER 1

‘Saghad’ – To Prostrate

This word means “to fall prostrate” (Isa. 44:15,17; Dan. 2:46). It was often used when people bowed before visible objects, but the heart of worship is always directed to God alone.

2. Greek Words for Worship

‘Latreuo’ – To Render Sacred Service

This means to serve God in a way that is approved by Him through Scripture. (Luke 1:74-75; 2:37; 4:8; Rom. 9:4). It is worship expressed in obedience and service.

‘Proskuneo’ – To Bow and Pay Homage

Similar to the Hebrew, ‘Hishtachavah’, this means to bow down, worship, or pay homage (Matt. 18:26).

This is the word used when Satan asked Christ to worship him (Matt. 4:8-9), and in Revelation for the worship of the beast (Rev. 13:4, 15-17; 14:9-11).

‘Eusebeo’ – To Revere Godly

This means to venerate, revere, or give godly devotion (Acts 17:23).

Godly devotion becomes credible when it is shown in obedience to His Word. As Samuel said, “To obey is better than sacrifice.” (1 Sam. 15:22)

CHAPTER 1

‘Threskeuo’ – Religious Practice

This word refers to a form of worship, whether directed to the true God or a false one (Acts 26:5; Col. 2:18).

‘Sebomai’ – To Venerate, Revere

This means to worship and revere God. The noun, ‘sebasma’, refers to the one who is worshipped.

Conclusion

True worship combines reverence for God with service to Him and others. It is not limited to rituals. It is a life of obedience, service, and devotion to God as He has revealed Himself in Scripture.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What is the benefit of studying hermeneutics?

- * It helps us correctly to understand and apply Scripture so that we can obey God.

2 Tim. 2:15 *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

CHAPTER 1

2 Tim. 3:16 *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

2. What is the difference between “worship” and “service”?

- * In Scripture, the two are closely linked. “Worship” often means bowing, revering, and honouring God. “Service” means living out that worship in obedience and practical devotion to God and others. True worship always results in service.

Matt. 4:10 *For it is written ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’*

Rom. 12:1 (NIV) *... Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.*

1 Sam. 15:22 *To obey is better than sacrifice.*

3. Give one Hebrew and one Greek word for worship.

- * Hebrew: ‘Hishtachavah’ – to bow down, to do obeisance (Gen. 22:5).
- * Greek: ‘Proskuneo’ – to bow down, to pay homage (Matt. 2:2).

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4. According to 1 Sam. 15:22, how does obedience connect to worship?

- * God values obedience more than outward sacrifices. True worship is shown by doing what God commands, not just by religious acts.

1 Sam. 15:22 (NIV) *Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.*

Prayer

Lord, open our eyes to understand Your word.
Teach us to worship You in spirit and truth, and to show that worship in obedience and service every day. Amen.

The Purpose of Worship

Text

Heb. 9:11-14 *¹¹ But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹² Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

Memory Verse

Heb. 9:14 *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

Worship is not aimless. God commands us to worship Him for our good, not for His need. Whether we worship or not does not change who God is. He is all-powerful, everywhere, all of the time.

God calls us to worship because it involves offering and service that ultimately benefits us. In true worship, we depend on God and we also learn to depend on and serve one another. Worship connects us to God and connects us to each other.

Objective

To see how, through worship:

- (1) Humanity is brought into fellowship with God.
- (2) We find satisfaction and security.
- (3) We express our dependence on God.
- (4) We receive reward for faithful service, now and in eternity.

Presentation

1. Worship Unites Us With God

When Mary asked how she could bear a child as a virgin, the angel answered: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.” (Luke 1:34-35)

When our spirit yields to God’s Spirit in worship, we enter into close fellowship with Him.

The Bible says, “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.” (Rom. 8:16)

“Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?” (John 10:34 (KJV))

This does not make us divine, but it means we are adopted as God’s children, with God as our Father (John 4:23-24; 2 Cor. 6:14-18). It is only in the Spirit that this relationship is formed and strengthened. “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” (1 Cor. 15:50)

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2. Worship Satisfies and Secures Us

God designed us to find life, growth, and security in worship. Paul warned against turning away from Christ, saying we must “hold firmly to the Head, from whom the whole body ... grows as God causes it to grow.” (Col. 2:18-19)

Joshua understood this when he told Israel, “Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve ... but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” (Josh. 24:15)

A life of worship unites us with God and with other believers. It secures us in Him and leads to a life of peace and purpose without regret.

3. Worship Expresses Our Dependence on God

To worship Jehovah is to work for Him and with Him. “For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.” (1 Cor. 3:9)

Worshippers show loyalty to the one they regard as God (1 Cor. 8:5-6). A good synonym for worship is “service”, because it means saying and doing what God would say and do if He were physically present among us.

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But this service must aim at the good of others. If it does not benefit people, it is not worthy of God's reward. "If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?" (1 John 3:17-19; 4:20-21)

True worship reflects God's heart for people (Micah 6:6-8).

4. Worship Opens the Way to Reward

In worship and service, we build hope for a future reward. "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain." (1 Cor. 15:58)

Conclusion

God does not need our worship. But we need to worship Him. We cannot live well for even a moment without staying connected to God through Christ. That connection is kept alive through worship. Knowing this, should we not make worship of the only true God our priority? Yes.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. How can worshipping God be a means of security to the worshippers?

- * Worship keeps us connected to God, who is our refuge and strength. As we stay in Him, He guards and sustains us.

Ps. 91:1 *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

Ps. 145:18 *The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.*

2. State two reasons why you cannot be satisfied when you fail to worship God.

- (1) We were made to know and enjoy God.

Without Him, there is an emptiness nothing else can fill.

Ps. 42:1-2 ¹ *As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God.* ² *My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?*

These words were reflected by Augustine who said, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”

CHAPTER 2

- (2) Without worship, we lose direction and growth in Christ.

Jer. 2:13 *For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns - broken cisterns that can hold no water.*

Col. 2:19 *...and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.*

3. Why should God reward or pay those who worship Him?

- * God rewards worship and service not because He owes us, but because He is faithful and just. He honours those who serve Him with a sincere heart.

Heb. 6:10 *For God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

1 Cor. 15:58 *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

CHAPTER 2

4. “Worship” is a means of merging God with man. Explain.

- * Through worship, our spirit connects with God’s Spirit. We become His children and share in His life. This is not us becoming God, but being adopted into His family and living in fellowship with Him.

Rom. 8:16 *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*

1 Cor. 6:17 *But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.*

Luke 3:15 *And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.”*

Prayer

Father, thank You for the privilege of worship. Help me to live every day in a way that reflects a true worshipper of You. May my life point my neighbours to You. Amen.

Introduction to Christian Worship

Text

John 4:20-24 ²⁰“Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” ²¹Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Memory Verse

Matt. 15:9 ‘And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’

Introduction

In Chapter 1 we defined worship in general terms. Now we focus on Christian worship, the worship of the only true God.

CHAPTER 3

There are many so-called gods in the world (1 Cor. 8:5-6), so we need to be clear on what makes Christian worship different. In the New Testament, Christ established a covenant where we worship God “by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). Jesus put it plainly: “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth.” (John 4:24)

This means Christian worship is not about outward rituals or location. It happens through God’s word, which is spirit (John 6:63), engaging our inward person. “Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.” (2 Cor. 4:16)

Because many spirits operate in the world (1 John 4:1), it is vital that we understand true worship. Christian worship is life-wide. It is what we think in our heart, speak with our mouth, and do with our hands for the good of others, done in the awareness of God’s love in Christ.

Whatever we think, say, and do that brings good to our neighbour in God’s love is worship. God cannot reward anything that was not offered to Him in this way. That is why Jesus said, “Be

perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matt. 5:48)

Objective

To highlight practical ways in which Christian worship is defined and lived out every day.

Presentation

1. Christian Worship is an Exchange of Offerings

God first gave us His Son, Jesus Christ, God’s Word made flesh (John 1:1, 14). In response, we offer ourselves back to Him in word and deed: “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.” (Col. 3:17)

Worship under Christ gives us power to do good for others in His love (2 Cor. 5:14; Phil. 2:13; 4:13). Before Christ, worshippers mainly watched God act. Now we participate with Him. Worship fails when it makes us afraid to do good (Jam. 4:17), or when it is mixed with greed and pride (1 Tim. 6:17-19; 2 Tim. 3:1-7).

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We must also keep the difference between worship and respect clear. We respect leaders, but we worship God alone. Peter refused worship from Cornelius (Acts 10:25-26), and the angel refused it from John (Rev. 22:8-9). Christ alone is the Head of the Church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 4:15), and He alone has authority to fulfil God's law (Matt. 5:38-44).

2. Christian Worship is a Lifestyle that Fulfils Scripture

Worshippers live by faith and walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-25). Their lives show that God is still governing through His word. The ceremonial laws of Leviticus pointed forward to moral and spiritual realities fulfilled in Christ's love (John 13:34-35; Heb. 7:11-15).

The grace of Christ is not another legal system. "For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (John 1:17)

As children of the New Covenant, we are "covenant children of God" (Heb. 8:10-13).

3. Christian Worship Brings a Good Reward from God

Following human traditions in worship leads to empty religion and no reward from God (Matt. 15:9; 7:21-23). True reward comes from worshipping God as He directs, not from observing man-made ordinances (Col. 2:18-19).

Sometimes reward comes through obedience to godly leadership (Heb. 13:7-8; 2 Cor. 7:15; Phil. 2:29). God meets the needs of His people, even when leaders are imperfect, because His care never fails (Deut. 13:1-3; 32:49-51). God's power has no limit and no expiry. He rewards His worshippers in His time.

4. Christian Worship Maintains Our God-Given Role Over Creation

We are called to reflect God's righteousness on earth (Matt. 5:48). When we think, speak, and act with God's love in mind for the good of others, we glorify God. This is worship, and it is why God calls us "gods" in the sense of His representatives (John 10:34-35).

5. Christian Worship Glorifies the Holy Spirit

Obedience to God's Spirit glorifies Him. Peter warned that anyone who speaks for God must speak "as one speaking the very words of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). True worship is always backed by Scripture and a life that matches it.

Conclusion

When we make worship of God central to daily life, we position ourselves for success in every venture. More importantly, our lives become a credible witness that draws others to Christ. May God's grace and love enable us to live in this way. In Jesus's name, Amen.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. In what way can worship of God result in receiving a bad reward?
 - * When we follow human rules instead of God's word, our worship is empty and God does not reward it.

Matt. 15:7-9⁷ *"Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:*⁸ *'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honour*

CHAPTER 3

Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. ⁹ And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ”

Matt. 7:21-23 ²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’

²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practise lawlessness!’ ”

2. Give at least two definitions for worship as you just learned.
 - (1) An exchange of offerings - God gave us Christ, and we respond with our lives in word and deed (Col. 3:17).
 - (2) A life lived in faith and obedience that fulfils Scripture and glorifies God (Gal. 5:22-25; John 13:34-35).

CHAPTER 3

3. How will worshipping God sincerely make us higher than other creatures before God?

- * Sincere worship aligns us with God's Spirit, making us His children and representatives on earth.

John 10:34-36 ³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods?"' ³⁵ If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), ³⁶ do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God?'"

Ps. 82:6 I said, "You are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High."

Rom. 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

4. How is worship an exchange of offering?

- * God gave His Son for us. We respond by offering our lives, words, and actions back to Him in service and gratitude.

Rom. 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your

CHAPTER 3

bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

1 Cor. 10:31 *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

5. Acceptable worship is said to be of spirit.

Why?

- * Because God Himself is Spirit, and only our inward person, renewed by His Word, can truly engage with Him.

John 4:24 *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth.*

John 6:63 *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*

Prayer

Father, thank You for calling us to true worship.
Give us fresh zeal to do what is good and pleasing
to You, so that our lives may reflect Your
righteousness on earth. In Jesus's name, Amen.

Varieties of Christian Worship

Text

Rev. 22:8-12 ⁸ Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹ Then he said to me, “See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

¹⁰ And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. ¹¹ He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still. ¹² And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”

Memory Verse

Rev. 22:9-10 ⁹ Then he said to me, “See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.” ¹⁰ And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.”

CHAPTER 4

Introduction

To worship the only true God, as Jesus revealed, we need clear teaching and encouragement from one another. God designed us to depend on each other individually and as a body. That is why He tells us not to neglect meeting together, so that we can share His word and stay consistent in true worship (Heb. 10:25).

But we must also be careful. Not every gathering that uses Jesus's name is truly worshipping God. Jesus warned, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father." (Matt. 7:21-23)

John tells us to "test the spirits to see whether they are from God" (1 John 4:1). Paul adds, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil." (1 Thess. 5:21-22 (KJV))

He also says "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge." (1 Cor. 14:29)

In other words, they should weigh carefully what is said.

CHAPTER 4

Objective

To highlight two varieties of Christian worship: individual and corporate, and to show how worship in the heart must be expressed through our hands.

Presentation

1. Individual Worship

Those who worship God in Spirit and truth are people God has saved from their old way of life into the life of God (Eph. 4:17-18). The Spirit of God leads them into a lifestyle that proves they belong to Christ (Rom. 8:9, 14).

Salvation is personal, not collective. The Bible speaks of individuals being saved, not groups:

Gal. 6:4-5 *But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For each one shall bear his own load.*

Phil. 2:12 ... *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

When two or three believers gather, God's presence and reward for service are promised (Matt. 18:20). But the true place of worship is in the spirit, in line with the New Covenant: "God is

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spirit, and true worshippers must worship Him in Spirit and truth.” (John 4:23-24)

Christians experience God’s presence anywhere and everywhere because of holy living (Heb. 12:14). Corporate worship is only acceptable to God when individual worshippers live holy lives. “Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does His will, He hears him.” (John 9:31)

We often hear of “family and community deliverance”, but the Bible never speaks of “family and community salvation of the soul”. Salvation is individual. “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.” (Eze. 18:20)

2. Corporate Worship

Worship cannot be limited to one place, because God is Spirit and cannot be confined (Ps. 139:7-12; John 4:23-24). The upright lives of individual believers make the assembly God’s dwelling place in the Spirit (Eph. 2:17-22).

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Therefore corporate worship depends on the worship of individuals for God's acceptance. Be careful of ministries that promise family or community salvation. When your soul is saved through God's word in Christ, your body is sanctified too. "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you." (John 15:3)

3. Worship from the Heart to the Hand

Worship in the heart is good, but it is incomplete without action. "What does it profit, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?" (Jam. 2:14)

(See also 1 John 3:17-19; 4:20-21; Job 29:15-16).

God enjoys worship from the heart, but He designed it so that mankind also benefits. Humanity is God's supreme concern (Heb. 2:5-8). So true worship must include service to others to receive God's full acceptance and reward (Luke 12:16-21; 16:12).

Conclusion

Do not worry about where to worship God. Worry about why and how you worship Him. God is omnipresent and sees everywhere. He rewards accordingly. Also ask yourself: what is the evident impact of my worship? That is where the credibility of divine approval shows.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. Which are the two types of Christian worship discussed in this chapter?

- * Individual worship and corporate worship.

Individual:

Phil. 2:12 ... Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Corporate:

Heb. 10:24-25 ²⁴ *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,* ²⁵ *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

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2. One type of Christian worship is dependent upon the other for divine acceptance. Which one is that?

- * Corporate worship depends on the holiness and sincerity of individual worshippers.

John 9:31 *Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does His will, He hears him.*

Eph. 2:21 *In whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.*

3. If worship can take place anywhere, what is the spiritual benefit of building halls?

- * Buildings are not required for God's presence, but they provide a place for believers to gather, encourage one another, and share God's word consistently.

Heb. 10:25 *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another.*

Matt. 18:20 *For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*

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4. Worship with the heart is good, but not perfected without its evidence at the hand. Explain.

- * True worship involves both inward devotion and outward action. If our heart worship does not lead to love and service for others, it is incomplete.

Jam. 2:17 *Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

1 John 3:17 *But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?*

Prayer

Father, thank You for the privilege of worship. Give us grace to worship You in Spirit and truth, both individually and together. May our worship have real impact on those around us. Amen.

The Worshipper of the God of Heaven

Text

John 4:20-24 ²⁰“Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” ²¹Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth.”

Memory Verse

Rev. 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Introduction

The worshipper does not get to invent how to worship the only true God. If he does, he ends up

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worshipping himself. To be acceptable to God, the worshipper must share the same Spirit with the One he worships.

The worshipper is God's contact person to a world that needs His blessing. Unbelievers look for help and hope, and God often meets them through His people. At the same time, God works through worshippers to bring care and provision to those who are hurting. So who exactly is the worshipper?

Objective

To see the worshipper of the only true God as: a priest and worker, a truly spiritual person, a benefactor and partner with God, and a co-lender with God.

Presentation

1. The Worshipper as Priest and Worker

The worshipper belongs to Jesus, the King, as a priest and worker (1 Pet. 2:9). The church is the new, spiritual Israel (Gal. 6:16). Just as Israel had priests, so Christ's kingdom has worshippers who serve as His priests and chaplains.

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There is no difference between a “church worker” and a “church member”. If you worship God, you serve God. “... And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?” (1 Cor. 4:7)

2. The Worshipper as a Truly Spiritual Person

The word the worshipper receives from God is spirit and life (John 6:63). That word makes him a spiritual person, led by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:9, 14; 1 John 4:1, 5-6).

Words from any other source bring a different spirit, the spirit of falsehood or deception. True worshippers are known by the Spirit they carry.

3. The Worshipper as Benefactor and Partner with God

Before we believed, we were only recipients of God’s grace, sustained through the service of His people (Eph. 2:10, 19). Now we are agents of His blessing to others (1 Cor. 3:9; Gal. 2:20).

We do not just receive from God. We become channels through which He reaches others.

4. The Worshipper as a Co-Lender with God

When we meet the needs of others in Jesus's name, we are lending to God Himself (Prov. 19:17). God pays back, and He pays with interest (Luke 6:38; 16:10-12). This is why Scripture tells us to notice the materially poor and make friends with them (Jam. 2:5). Investing in them is investing in God's kingdom.

Conclusion

Under the old covenant, priests were mediators who served God and the people. Today, God will not ask us directly for food, clothes, or shelter (of which He has no need), but He asks us to give to Him through people made in His image – to those for whom Jesus died who are in need. That is how the priests of this age serve.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. Mention two attributes of the worshipper of the only true God.
 - (1) He is a priest and worker in Christ's kingdom (1 Pet. 2:9).
 - (2) He is a truly spiritual person, led and shaped by God's word and Spirit (Rom. 8:14).

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2. Why is the worshipper a lender also?

- * Because when we meet the needs of others in Jesus's name, we are lending to God, and He promises to repay.

Prov. 19:17 *He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will pay back what he has given.*

Luke 6:38 *Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.*

3. When God calls us to worship Him, what is that call in real terms?

- * It is a call to live as priests and partners with Him, offering our lives, serving others, and being channels of His blessing.

Rom. 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

1 Cor. 3:9 *For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.*

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4. Where should the materially rich person go to invest?

- * Among the materially poor and needy, because investing there is investing in God's kingdom and He will reward it.

Jam. 2:5 *Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?*

Matt. 25:40 *And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'*

Prayer

Father, make us true worshippers whose lives make Your will clear to our generation. Let our worship have real impact, so that others see You through us. Amen.

The Temple and Altar of Worship

Text

Eph. 2:17-22 ¹⁷And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²²in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Memory Verse

2 Chr. 6:18 But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!

Introduction

Under the Old Testament, priests served in a physical temple according to a pattern that pointed forward to a greater reality (Col. 2:16-17).

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That temple was a shadow. The true and permanent sanctuary is not made with hands. It is the place where Christ, our High Priest, now ministers (Heb. 8:1-2, 5; 9:11, 23-24; 11:10). The old temple had rules for worship that pointed to an eternal reality, which was opened up when Christ's body was broken (Heb. 9:1, 8; 10:19-22). So the question is: where does God dwell as His temple today?

Objective

To see that the Christian is God's dwelling place on earth, and that the heart is God's altar for sacrifice.

Presentation

1. The Believer's Body is God's Temple

Our partnership with God begins when we offer our bodies to Him (Rom. 12:1-2). Jesus made this clear when He spoke of His body as the true temple God had foreshadowed (John 2:18-21).

All Christians, both individually and collectively, are called God's building (1 Cor. 3:9) and the body of Christ (Col. 1:18, 24; Eph. 4:15). The only

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offering God consistently asks for is our bodies, given back to Him in worship.

2. The Believer's Heart is God's Altar

An altar is where sacrifice happens. Without an altar, nothing offered to God is received. Since God gives life to His worshippers through the heart, He tells us to guard it carefully (Prov. 4:23).

The heart is also where the battle is fought. Sin defiles us to death through the heart (Mark 7:17-23), but God cleanses us to life through His word (Col. 3:15-16). "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you." (John 15:3)

When the heart is clean, the person is truly clean.

Conclusion

Eph. 2:20-22 says that we are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ as the cornerstone. The prophets predicted that the Messiah would come (1 Pet. 1:10-12). The apostles proclaimed that He had come. Their ministry was to prove that Jesus is the Christ.

But Christ's ministry was never meant to be followed in a merely physical way. His earthly

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appearance was to provide holy blood and water (2 Cor. 5:16). His temple and altar must be of the same spiritual nature as He is (John 18:36; 4:23-24). God does not dwell in man-made temples and altars, because that would reduce Him to an idol (Acts 17:16, 24-25).

Solomon himself said the temple was not built to contain God (2 Chr. 6:18).

God must be worshipped everywhere (Ps. 139:7-12).

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. Why does God refuse to live in man-made temples?

- * Because God is Spirit and cannot be confined to a building. He dwells in people, not in structures made by human hands.

Acts 7:48-50 ⁴⁸ *However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: ⁴⁹ ‘Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the Lord, Or what is the place of My rest? ⁵⁰ Has My hand not made all these things?’*

1 Cor. 3:16 *Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*

2. The temple is a building. What does God use as building materials?

- * God builds His spiritual temple with living believers, joined together in Christ.

1 Pet. 2:5 *You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

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Eph. 2:21 *In whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.*

3. How are we built upon the apostles and prophets of God as our foundation?

- * The prophets foretold Christ's coming, and the apostles proclaimed that He had come. Their testimony about Jesus is the foundation on which we stand.

Eph. 2:20 *Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.*

2 Pet. 1:19 *And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.*

4. For the devil to "devour us" (1 Pet. 5:8) where does he target?

- * The devil targets the heart, because from the heart flow our thoughts, words, and actions.

Matt. 15:19 *Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the*

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kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Prov. 4:23 *Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.*

Prayer

Father, thank You for making us Your dwelling place. Make our bodies pure for You, and make our hearts an altar where Your Spirit works freely. Amen.

Some Bible Characters Who Worshipped God

Text

Heb. 12:1-6 ¹ Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

³ For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. ⁴ You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. ⁵ And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

“My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; ⁶ For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.”

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Memory Verse

Rom. 15:4 *For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

Introduction

In this lesson we look at ten Bible characters who worshipped God, with what we have learned about worship in mind. Worship is anything we think, say, and do to benefit others, done with the awareness of God's love in Christ.

Since loving God means keeping His commands (John 14:15), anything done in obedience to His word is worship to Him. These lives show us what that looks like in practice.

Objective

To look at ten characters in Scripture who pleased God - in other words they gave Him true worship.

Presentation

1. Abel and Noah

Abel's sacrifice pleased God because it came from faith (Heb. 11:4).

Noah and his household were found righteous in their generation because Noah acted on God's word and built the ark (Heb. 11:7).

2. Abraham and Moses

Abraham was called God's friend and the father of faith because he obeyed and trusted God (Heb. 11:8-19; Gen. 18:1-5).

Moses is a picture of Christ. He gave up privilege to deliver God's people and trusted God through the wilderness (Heb. 11:24-29).

3. Joshua and Nehemiah

Joshua led Israel to take Jericho by faith (Heb. 11:30; Josh. 6:13-25).

Nehemiah pleased God as governor by serving selflessly and rebuilding Jerusalem's walls without exploiting the people (Neh. 5:1-19).

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4. John the Baptist and Jesus

John lived with boldness, simplicity, and selflessness. He pointed everyone to Christ and refused to take glory for himself (Mark 6:14-20; John 3:25-36).

Jesus depended on the Father in everything. His life was a constant act of faith and obedience (John 7:12-18).

5. Paul and Timothy

Paul became “all things to all people” so that some might be saved. His whole life following his conversion on the road to Damascus was dedicated to the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

Timothy, like Paul, made the work of the Gospel his priority. He served faithfully alongside Paul (Phil. 2:19-24).

Conclusion

A true worshipper of God walks in three things: holiness, hospitality, and humility toward God-ordained authority (Jam. 1:27; Rom. 13:1-7).

When we practise these, it brings blessing to us and to our neighbours.

CHAPTER 7

Worshippers of the God of heaven are defenders of His people with Him. In other words, we are God's co-workers (1 Cor. 3:9).

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What makes any activity worship of the only true God?

- * When it is thought, spoken, and done in obedience to God's word and for the good of others, with the awareness of God's love in Christ.

John 14:15 *If you love Me, keep My commandments.*

1 Cor. 10:31 *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

2. What is the target of the worshipper of the only true God?

- * The target is to benefit others and bring glory to God by living out His love and commands.

Matt. 5:16 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

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1 Cor. 3:9 *For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.*

3. What is the difference between the faith of Christ and other faiths?

- * The faith of Christ is faith that leads to obedience, love, and service to God and others. It is based on God's word and Spirit, not on human rules or self-effort.
- * Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Jam. 2:17 *Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

John 1:17 *For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

4. Even if the love of God does not manifest, His worshippers are still accepted. True or False? Why?

- * False. God's love must show in action. Worship without love and obedience is empty.

1 John 4:20 *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who*

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*does not love his brother whom he has seen,
how can he love God whom he has not seen?*

Matt. 15:8 *These people draw near to Me with
their mouth, and honour Me with their lips,
but their heart is far from Me.*

Prayer

Father, thank You for the examples of faithful men and women in Your word. Give us grace to live lives of holiness, hospitality, and humility, so that we leave a legacy of faith for our children and our neighbours. Amen.

Acceptable Season, Place, and Day of Worship

Text

Gal. 4:9-11 ⁹But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? ¹⁰You observe days and months and seasons and years. ¹¹I am afraid for you, lest I have laboured for you in vain.

Memory Verse

Rom. 14:5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

Introduction

When it comes to worshipping the only true God, there is no such thing as “in season” or “out of season”. God sets boundaries for many things in life, but not for worship. He asks for our unlimited worship - for our good, not His need.

Worship is unlimited. Not like “Mobile Unlimited”, but truly without limits of time, place, or calendar.

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Objective

By the end of this lesson we will see:

- (1) What replaces the old system of holy days, places, and seasons under Moses.
- (2) Why God does not condemn anyone based on day, place, or season of worship.
- (3) Why dividing from others over these things has no divine approval and comes from Satan.

Presentation

1. The Christian Era Does Not Run on Holy Days, Places, or Seasons

We live in the era of Spirit and truth, not in a system of days, weeks, years, seasons, and places.

Under the New Testament, the Lord instituted the following for worship:

- (i) the Lord's Supper: "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19);
- (ii) baptism (Matt. 28:19);
- (iii) preaching the word, prayer, singing, giving, fellowship (Acts 2:42, Eph. 5:19, 1 Cor. 16:2).

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There are no appointed holy days, seasons, or calendar. Paul warns the Galatians, “You observe days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid for you, lest I have laboured for you in vain.” (Gal. 4:10-11)

God made these things optional in this dispensation. But we should choose times, places, and days that allow as many people as possible to encounter the God of love we worship (Rom. 14:5). The focus is on people, not on rituals.

2. There Are No Holy Days, Seasons, or Places to Violate Under Jesus

Christ is the end of condemnation from the old system. He took condemnation for us, and He will not condemn His followers now (Rom. 8:1-2; 10:4).

Rom. 8:1-2 ¹ *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*

Rom. 10:4 *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

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Under the New Covenant, the old Levitical rules about place and ritual do not apply anymore (Heb. 9:8-9). Therefore, making days, seasons, and places into rules ignores the price Jesus paid to establish grace and truth (Lev. 29:19-20; Matt. 5:38-45). We no longer keep the Mosaic feasts (Lev. 23) because the substance is here. Christ is the substance:

Col. 2:16-17 ¹⁶ *So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, ¹⁷ which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.*

3. Christ came to 'Fulfil the Law'

Matt. 5:17 *Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them.*

'Fulfil' does not mean 'annul', it means 'bring to its intended purpose', to complete, to bring to reality what was only a shadow before.

In other words, the feasts were not erased. They pointed forward to Christ, and He brought them to their reality.

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The seven feasts are a prophetic pattern. The first four were fulfilled literally at Christ's first coming, and the last three (Trumpets, Atonement and the Feast of Ingathering) are tied to His return and final judgment.

But whilst the reality of the last three is - at the time of writing - yet future, we do not observe the shadows to get there. We have the substance now.

The final harvest, the last trumpet, the last great day – they are coming, but we wait for them in Christ, without the need to rehearse the shadow.

Having said that, we must understand that there are still “things to come”, and that there will be “signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars” for which we are told to watch. Moreover, we should understand the calendar of Scripture and the purpose and meaning of the feasts, both those fulfilled and those to come. We do not know how the fulfilment of the “things to come” will play out, but we should be prepared, taking up “the whole armour of God” that we “may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Eph. 6:13).

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It is worth noting here that the words of Isa. 66:23 (“And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the Lord”) do not imply the reinstatement of the ‘earthly sanctuary’ (temple). This would be putting the shadow back after the substance has come. The new heavens and earth have no temple (Rev. 21:22). We have the reality now in Christ, and we shall have it fully then.

4. Dividing Over Days, Places, and Seasons Is Not of Christ

Anyone who divides from others over the Levitical calendar of worship days, places, or seasons is not standing in the truth of Christ (1 Cor. 11:19; Rom. 14:19). Making fellowship dependent on keeping or not keeping a biblical feast is to step outside of the Gospel.

No physical building we construct today can guarantee acceptable worship. What matters is the intent behind it and the needs of people being met (Heb. 8:3-6).

The Levitical system lost its purpose because its blessings were earthly and could not cross into

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eternity. They had no lasting value, compared to the salvation we have in Christ (Eph. 1:3; 1 Cor. 15:19). The Holy Spirit does not work through keeping old regulations.

Further it should be noted that the patterns we use to run meetings are not a new law system or doctrine. They are just tools to help the body gather and be edified. The old system was different. It was a full law with priests, sacrifices, and a physical temple. But it was limited. It could not cleanse conscience (Heb. 9:9), and it provided no covering for presumptuous sin (Num. 15:30-31). That is why Heb. 8:13 says it was obsolete and ready to vanish away.

Two signs of an earthly ('carnal') sanctuary are:

- (1) It is built as a special place for God's presence (Acts 17:24).
- (2) It restricts who can enter based on rules of holiness.

There are pulpits today that have been set up with false consecration. Be careful. God reveals one Shepherd over one flock (John 10:16).

Conclusion

God is not silent on how He wants to be worshipped – He has been very specific: in Spirit and truth, through Christ, not through shadows.

Because God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere present, nothing should limit Him to one place, day, or season in our relationship with Him (Ps. 139:7-12).

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What should determine the choice of any place, day, or season for corporate worship?
 - * Allowing the most people to encounter God's love and to be built up. It should be practical and people-focused, not ritual-focused.

Heb. 10:24 *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.*

Rom. 14:5 *One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.*

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2. In making any day, place, or season ritually mandatory, what happens to the grace found in Christ?

* It undermines grace. Turning optional practices into rules ignores what Christ accomplished and puts people back under law.

Gal. 5:4 *You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.*

Rom. 10:4 *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

3. Which Bible passages tells us that it is never God's will ceremonially to select worship days, seasons, and places?

* Gal. 4:9-11 and Rom. 14:5-6 make this clear.

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4. If worship is not accepted based on days, seasons, and places, on what basis is it accepted?

- * Worship is accepted when it is offered in Spirit and truth, from a heart of faith and obedience, for the good of others.

John 4:24 *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth.*

Heb. 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

Prayer

Father, thank You for setting us free from ritual and rule. Let the way we meet, when we meet, and where we meet never become a tool for division. Keep us united as children of the same Father. Amen.

Hear O Israel – The Lord Our God is One

Text

Deut. 6:4-5 *⁴Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! ⁵You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*

Mark 12:28-34 *²⁸Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?” ²⁹Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. ³¹And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”*

³²So the scribe said to Him, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. ³³And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbour as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

1 Cor. 8:6 *For us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.*

Isa. 45:5-7 (NIV) ⁵ *I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, ⁶ so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting people may know there is none besides me. I am the Lord, and there is no other. ⁷ I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things.*

Isa. 45:12 (NIV) *It is I who made the earth and created mankind on it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshalled their starry hosts.*

Isa. 45:15-25 (NIV) ¹⁵ *Truly you are a God who has been hiding himself, the God and Saviour of Israel. ¹⁶ All the makers of idols will be put to shame and disgraced; they will go off into disgrace together.*

¹⁷ *But Israel will be saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation; you will never be put to shame or disgraced, to ages everlasting. ¹⁸ For this is what the Lord says—he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made*

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the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited—he says: “I am the Lord, and there is no other.”¹⁹ I have not spoken in secret, from somewhere in a land of darkness; I have not said to Jacob’s descendants, ‘Seek me in vain.’ I, the Lord, speak the truth; I declare what is right.

²⁰ Gather together and come; assemble, you fugitives from the nations. Ignorant are those who carry about idols of wood, who pray to gods that cannot save. ²¹ Declare what is to be, present it—let them take counsel together. Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Saviour; there is none but me.

²² Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.

²³ By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked:

Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear. ²⁴ They will say of me, ‘In the Lord alone are deliverance and strength.’”

All who have raged against him will come to him and be put to shame. ²⁵ But all the descendants of Israel will find deliverance in the Lord and will make their boast in him.

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Memory Verse ('The Shema')

Deut. 6:4 *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God,
the Lord is one!*

Introduction

Every debate about the Godhead starts here. Jesus Himself called 'The Shema' (Deut. 6:4) the first and greatest commandment (Mark 12:29). If we get "God is One" wrong, everything else gets twisted. The Shema was not meant to be a trivia verse. It was Israel's daily confession in a world full of many gods.

Objective

To establish from Scripture that God is One, explain the meaning of "one" in its Hebrew context, and show how Father, Son, and Spirit are the one God without confusion.

Presentation

1. What "One" Means in the Shema

a) The Hebrew word is 'echad' – unity, not solitary isolation. It is used for one cluster of grapes (Num. 13:23), one people (Gen. 11:6).

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b) Israel was surrounded by polytheism. The Shema was a line in the sand: Jehovah alone is God.

c) This is monotheism, not modalism or tritheism. One God, not three gods.

2. The New Testament Affirms the Same One God

a) Jesus quotes the Shema and agrees with the scribe: “You are right ... there is no one else besides Him” (Mark 12:32).

b) Paul: “There is no God but one ... for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live” (1 Cor. 8:4-6).

c) The New Testament does not introduce a new god. It reveals the identity of the one God more fully.

3. Father, Son, and Spirit as the One God

a) God the Father

God is called the Father by Moses in Deut. 32:6, and by Jesus in John 6:27:

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Deut. 32:6 *Is this the way you repay the Lord, you foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?*

John 6:27 *Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.*

In the Old Testament the Lord (YHWH, “the Father”) is the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 1:4), He is Our Redeemer (Isa. 41:14), He inhabits eternity (Isa. 57:15). He is God, and there is no other (Isa. 45:5).

In the New Testament, we learn through Jesus that “God is Spirit” (John 4:24) and “God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). He dwells in the unapproachable light (1 Tim. 6:16), “the only true God” (John 17:3).

God forms the light and creates darkness (Isa. 45:7). He created Jacob and formed Israel (Isa. 43:1). He is the “King of glory” (Ps. 24:10). He does not change (Mal. 3:6).

b) God the Son

The Son is called God (John 1:1, John 20:28). He is “the Lord of Glory” (1 Cor. 2:8, Jam. 2:1). He is

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“the Word” and “the Word of God” (Rev. 19:13, and John 1:1-4):

John 1:1-4 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*

He is the light of the world (John 8:12).

The Father forms the light (Gen. 1:3), creates darkness (Isa. 45:17), and divides the light from the darkness (Gen. 1:4). The Son is the light that we could see and touch (John 1:14); the Son is manifested so that the Father can make that same separation in us (1 John 3:8).

The Son is the vehicle by which light and dark are to be separated: He is the vine, and the Father is the vinedresser (John 15:1). He bears witness to the truth (John 18:37).

The Father is the ‘Creator’; the Son, whilst existing from the beginning, is ‘created’ as the Son of Man. The Father has ‘made’ him as the Son of Man: He was made a little lower than the angels (Heb. 2:7), made “perfect through

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sufferings” (Heb. 2:10). The Father has sanctified the Son (John 10:36). He is “formed”, the first and last God that is “formed”:

Isa. 43:10 *“You are My witnesses,” says the Lord, “And My servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me”.*

The worlds are made for the Son who will inherit all things and who is the ‘end’ (purpose / mission) – a sinless world, a world of light only. In Christ there is eternal life. We are called “out of darkness into His marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9).

The Father builds the temple, the Son is the foundation stone of the spiritual temple. The one who builds the temple is greater than the temple; “he who builds all things is God” (Heb. 3:4).

The Son compared His crucifixion to Moses lifting up the snake in the wilderness:

John 3:14 *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.*

The event to which He alluded is described in Num. 21:8-9:

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Num. 21:8-9⁸ *Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.”*⁹ *So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.*

The children of Israel were not healed by the bronze serpent, they were healed by the Lord. The bronze serpent was the ‘visible sign’ that they trusted for healing, but the healing was of the Lord. The serpent became a stumbling block for them, an idol which they worshipped by burning incense to it (2 Ki. 18:4). Hezekiah destroyed it because the object designed to point Israel to the Lord, the Creator, had become an idol competing with the Lord.

We know that all things that happened to the children of Israel in the wilderness are for our warning (1 Cor. 10:11). When we put our faith in Christ as Son, the object of our worship is still the Father, as Creator. As we were taught in Matt. 6:9-13, we pray to and worship Our Father in heaven.

“For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

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We believe in the name of Jesus (meaning “He will save”), and we obey Jesus’s commands, trusting him for our salvation, and honouring Him, but our worship is directed to His Father and our Father.

We are “sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ” (Jude 1). God grafts us into the tree, God translates us into the kingdom.

We come to the Father through Jesus; we, “as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2:5).

Note that, as Peter bears witness in this important speech in Acts 3, made after Peter and John healed a lame man, Jesus is the Prophet promised by Moses in Deut. 18:18:

Acts 3:12-23 ¹²When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had

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decided to let him go. ¹⁴ You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. ¹⁶ By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

¹⁷ Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. ¹⁸ But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. ¹⁹ Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, ²⁰ and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. ²¹ Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. ²² For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. ²³ Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.'"

Just as Jesus testified to the woman at the well that He was the one that would “teach us all things” (John 4:26), Peter is saying that Jesus is

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the fulfilment of God's promise in Deut. 18:18, to raise up a prophet who would speak God's words. Anyone who will not hear and obey that prophet will be "required of him".

Deut. 18:15-19 ¹⁵ *The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear,* ¹⁶ *according to all you desired of the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.'* ¹⁷ *"And the Lord said to me: 'What they have spoken is good. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. ¹⁹ And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him."*

What does He mean by "I will require it of him"? Peter says the man that does not obey will be 'cut off'. The passage from Deut. 18 above echoes the contract made between Jacob and Laban in Gen. 30:25-43, which relates the story of how Jacob 'provides for his house' from Laban's flocks. Jacob is the hired shepherd whose wages are to be all of the blemished goats and lambs. Jacob

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says “every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the lambs, will be considered stolen, if it is with me” (Gen. 30:33).

In other words, Laban (whose name means “white”) is going to keep all of the unblemished flocks, but give all of the blemished flocks to Jacob. By what might in some sense be considered ‘sleight of hand’ (putting ‘peeled rods’ of poplar etc before the strong animals when they were drinking), Jacob ‘siphoned off’ the strong flocks for himself, but left the weak animals to Laban. Thus did Jacob appropriate Laban’s flocks. But note that the weak are the white ones, the unblemished ones, the ones “unspotted by the flesh”. The strong are many but blemished. In Isa. 53:12 God says that He will divide His suffering servant “a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong.” Those who are Christ’s are not blemished. The ‘strong one’ gets the blemished; God chooses “the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty” (1 Cor. 1:27).

God tells us in Deut. 18:19 that whoever does not obey Christ – all the disobedient (“blemished”) -

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shall be required of Christ. God only wants the unblemished in the kingdom of His dear Son. Those outside the kingdom God judges (1 Cor. 5:13).

Our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son:

1 John 1:2-3² *The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*

The Father put all things into the Son's hands and the Son acts as God. Just as the name "Israel" (who is "formed" – Isa. 43:1) means 'He will rule as God', so the Son rules as God. The model is similar to that of Joseph, who is 'second-in-command' to Pharaoh (Gen. 41:40). Pharaoh says to Joseph: "Only I, sitting on my throne, will have a rank higher than yours."

The Son is at the right hand of God (Mark 16:19, Acts 7:56, Heb. 1:3). He has authority to forgive

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sins (Mark 2:5-7, 1 John 2:1) and makes intercession for us (Rom. 8:34).

Note that in the Bible, ‘the right hand’ denotes the ‘place of authority, power, and favour’ (see for example Ps. 48:10).

The Father effectively tells the Son to take the position of full authority until everything is put under His feet, at which point he will hand the kingdom back (1 Cor. 15:25-28). Note verse 27: “But when He says ‘all things are put under Him,’ it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted” – God is still supreme.

The plan of redemption being carried out by the Father, through the Son, is as follows:

(1) Eternity past: One God, Spirit, “YHWH”, No flesh.

(2) Incarnation: that One God sanctifies and manifests Himself as the Son of God in order to redeem us (Isa. 41:14, John 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16).

(3) Now: that Man, Jesus, is seated at the right hand (meaning He has all authority - Matt 28:18). He is making intercession for us, ruling and putting enemies down. He is still under the Father’s authority.

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(4) Eternity future: When the job is done, the Son - the flesh, the Mediator role - delivers everything back. And “God may be all in all” again, i.e. God the Creator.

*Isa. 43:10 ...Before Me there was no God formed,
Nor shall there be after Me.*

Jesus represents God in the flesh, “the Word made flesh”. But while in flesh He was a servant in total subjection to the Father (John 5:19), sent by the Father. He prayed to the Father (John 17). He could of Himself do nothing (John 5:30); the words He spoke were not His words but the Father’s (John 12:49); he obeyed the Father unto death (John 14:31).

The ‘right hand’ picture (Ps. 110) shows us the relationship between Father and Son during the time of redemption.

The Father is the Lord of the Old Testament, God. He sanctified Himself in a Son-role to save us. He now reigns as that Son at the right hand of power. When all is restored, the Son gives the kingdom back so that the ONE God – the Creator - can be “all in all”.

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There are not two gods. There is ONE god, who sanctified Himself as the Son in the flesh, did the work, and is bringing us back to Himself.

The Son is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person (Heb. 1:3), and is called God by the Father:

Heb. 1:8 *But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*

In the Son dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9). All things were created through Him and for Him.

In Revelation, the Son is revealed to be the “King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords” (Rev. 19:16), the same as God in 1 Tim. 6:15-16: “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honour and everlasting power.”

He “searches the minds and hearts.. and will give to each one of us according to our works” (Rev. 2:23). The judge in the Old Testament and the

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judge of Revelation are the same: vengeance belongs to the Lord (Deut. 32:35, Rom. 12:19).

Jesus does not change. He is the same yesterday, and today and forever (Heb. 13:8).

We wait for His appearing – “the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good” (Tit. 2:13-14).

c) God the Spirit

“God is Spirit” (John 4:24), and that Spirit is holy, and that Spirit is Christ’s, and that Spirit is the Father’s. “The Lord is that Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:17).

The great gift of salvation is the gift of Christ’s Spirit dwelling in us.

Note that Paul uses these expressions interchangeably to describe this indwelling:

- * “Spirit of God in you”.
- * “God dwells in you”.
- * “Christ dwells in you”.
- * “Christ in you, the hope of glory”.

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They all reference the same Spirit dwelling in us.

The Spirit is personal, not a force. Jesus calls Him “the Spirit of Truth”, but also “the Helper” or “Comforter” (depending on translation). He comes in person, bearing witness as well as the disciples. As the “Helper” in this world He is also in subjection in so far as He speaks what he hears:

1 John 16:12-15 ¹² *“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.”*

John 14:25-26 ²⁵ *“These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”*

John 15:26-27 ²⁶ *“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of*

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Me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”

The Father sent the Son. The Son prayed, and the Father and Son together send the Spirit. But it is still the ONE Spirit of God (Eph. 4:4).

d) God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit are ONE

The distinction is in person, not essence.

There is one true God, the Creator, who eternally exists as the Father, the “invisible God”, dwelling in unapproachable light (1 Tim. 6:16), who is manifested as His Son, Jesus Christ, and lives in believers by His Spirit.

He formed the light, He is light, and He is separating light from darkness in us right now.

Manifested in the flesh, Jesus is the image of the Father (John 17:3):

John 17:3 *And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9) and we can see the Father

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through Him (John 14:9). He fully reveals the Father, and is fully submitted in will to the Father. The Father works through the Son: “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself” (2 Cor. 5:19).

The Spirit is not the Son (John 16:13-14); He is the Helper who dwells in us and guides us to all truth.

John 16:13-14 ¹³ *However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.* ¹⁴ *He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.*

The Son glorifies the Father, the Spirit glorifies the Son. But all are called God, and all are One.

To obey Christ as we must, we pray to and worship the Father, the Creator, in spirit and truth.

The Father wills, the Son obeys, the Spirit applies. One will, one purpose, one God.

Eph. 4:4-6 ⁴ *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;* ⁵ *one Lord, one faith, one baptism;* ⁶ *one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

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Isa. 43:10 “You are My witnesses,” says the LORD,
“And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may
know and believe Me, And understand that I am He.
Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there
be after Me.”

4. Why This Matters Practically

- a) Worship: We worship one God through Christ in the Spirit.
- b) Stability: If God is one, His purpose and character do not contradict.
- c) Evangelism: We can answer Muslims, Jews, and sceptics clearly without backing into tritheism.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What does the Hebrew word ‘echad’ teach us about God’s oneness?
 - * ‘Echad’ means a compound unity, not solitary isolation. It is used for one cluster of grapes (Num. 13:23) and one people (Gen. 11:6). The Shema teaches that Jehovah alone is God, but it does not rule out a unity of persons within that one God.

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2. How does Jesus affirm the Shema in Mark 12:29-32?
 - * Jesus quotes Deut. 6:4 word for word: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” He calls it the first and greatest commandment. When the scribe agrees and says “there is no one else besides Him”, Jesus tells him he is not far from the kingdom (Mark 12:32-34). Jesus affirms that the one God of Israel is the God He came to reveal.
3. Give one verse that shows God the Father, one that shows God the Son, and one that shows God the Spirit.
 - * God the Father: “God the Father has set his seal on him.” (John 6:27)
 - * God the Son: “The Word was God.” (John 1:1) Also Thomas says to Jesus, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28)
 - * God the Spirit: Acts 5:3-4 – Lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God. Also 2 Cor. 3:17, “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

4. Why is it important to hold both “God is one” and “Father, Son, Spirit” together?
- * If you drop “God is one,” you fall into tritheism – three gods. If you drop “Father, Son, Spirit,” you fall into modalism – one person wearing three masks. Holding both keeps us faithful to Scripture: one God in essence, three persons in relationship, the Father above all. We worship the Father by His Spirit in the name of the Son.

Prayer

Lord, You are one. Help me to know You as You have revealed Yourself - Father, Son, and Spirit - without dividing You or confusing You. Let this truth shape my worship and my witness. Amen.

The Portrait of the Holy Spirit (Part I)

Text

Matt. 12:30-32 ³⁰ *He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. ³¹ Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. ³² Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.*

Memory Verse

Eph. 4:30 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

Introduction

Whatever comes from God and shares His substance is God. If a president can represent himself through a vice president, then God can represent himself on earth through His Son Jesus and His Spirit - the Holy Spirit.

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If $A = B$ and $B = C$, then $A = C$. God is Spirit (John 4:24). That Spirit is holy. So, God is the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force. He is a Person who teaches us how to worship God.

Objective

To understand the personal qualities of the Holy Spirit and how He manifests, so we see Him as our able teacher of worship.

Presentation

1. The Holy Spirit Has Personal Qualities

The Holy Spirit is a Person with a mind, will, and feelings.

He has a mind: "...For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. 2:10)

His mind intercedes for us: "Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God." (Rom. 8:2)

He teaches: "... the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things..." (John 14:26).

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He testifies and speaks: “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” (Rom. 8:16)

He spoke through the prophets: “For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Pet. 1:21)

He comforts and guides: “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever.” (John 14:16 (NIV))

“Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go near and overtake this chariot.’” (Acts 8:29)

He has feelings:

He can be grieved (Eph. 4:30).

He can be lied to (Acts 5:3).

He can be blasphemed (Matt. 12:31-32).

He has a will: “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.” (1 Cor. 12:11)

2. Clarifying His Manifestation

The Holy Spirit works in a representative capacity. He is invisible, working in the spiritual realm,

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speaking for Jesus and dwelling in believers through God's word and conscience (Rom. 8:9, 14; John 16:13). Because He does not have a visible, fixed form, some get confused about His personality. In the Old Testament He is mentioned only three times by name. In the New Testament, 86 times, always connected to making Jesus's followers holy.

We do not need a physical form to know something is real. We do not see wind or wisdom, but we experience their effects. Scripture describes the Spirit's manifestations in different ways: a dove (Matt. 3:16), fire (Acts 2:3), wind (John 3:8), water (John 7:38-39), a seal (Eph. 1:13). These describe how He works, not His personality.

Conclusion

For God, who is Spirit, to adopt us as children, it had to happen through His Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the go-between in all our dealings with God. He testifies of the Father and the Son, and makes God's wisdom understandable to us (Rom. 8:9, 14). He is the teacher who shows us how to worship God in Spirit and truth.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. Mention any three features that show the Holy Spirit is a Person.
 - (1) He has a mind and intercedes for us (Rom. 8:27).
 - (2) He teaches, speaks, and testifies (John 14:26; Rom. 8:16).
 - (3) He has a will and chooses how to distribute gifts (1 Cor. 12:11).
2. What shows that the Holy Spirit has feelings?
 - * He can be grieved (Eph. 4:30), lied to (Acts 5:3), and blasphemed against (Matt. 12:31-32).
3. In what three forms does Scripture show the Spirit's manifestations?
 - (1) A dove at Jesus's baptism (Matt. 3:16).
 - (2) Fire at Pentecost (Acts 2:3-4).
 - (3) Wind and breath (John 3:8; John 20:22).
 - * Other forms include water and a seal (John 7:38-39; Eph. 1:13).

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4. In what capacity does the Spirit work in this era under Christ?

- * He works in a representative capacity, invisible, dwelling in believers, teaching, guiding, and bearing witness to Jesus.

John 16:13: *However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*

Rom. 8:16 *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*

Prayer

Father, thank You for giving us Your Holy Spirit. Keep us from arguing just to win points, and help us rely on Your Spirit to win souls. Teach us to worship You in Spirit and truth. Amen.

The Portrait of the Holy Spirit (Part II)

Text

1 Cor. 12:4-6 ⁴*There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.*

Memory Verse

Luke 1:35 *And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."*

Introduction

If the Spirit of God acts like God, He deserves the honour due to God. To ridicule the Spirit is to ridicule the God who sent Him. The Holy Spirit is an executive member in heaven's government, far above all created things.

When God finally restores creation, the Son and the Spirit will return to be in the Father eternally, just as before, so that God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

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1 Cor. 15:24-28 ²⁴Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. ²⁷For “He has put all things under His feet.” But when He says “all things are put under Him”, it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. ²⁸Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

Objectives

- (1) To understand how the Holy Spirit is identified through His functions, relationship, and status in the Godhead.
- (2) To understand that the Holy Spirit is the ‘earnest’ (deposit / guarantee) of our salvation.
- (3) To know that to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit all you have to do is ask (in a spirit of humility and repentance, not pride).

Presentation

1. The Spirit's Relationship with the Father and the Son

The Holy Spirit is an executive member of the Godhead (2 Cor. 13:14). He is called “the finger of God” through whom God created and sustains the universe (Luke 11:20; Gen. 1:2).

He shares the same attributes as the Father and Son: all-powerful, everywhere present, all-knowing (Ps. 139:7-10; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; Matt. 28:19). He is the Spirit of God who is holy - hence, the Holy Spirit.

He is not independent of God, but He is distinct from the Father and the Son. He works in our minds, will, and actions to enable true worship. It is a mystery: the Spirit is one with God, yet distinct from Him.

He is also called the Spirit of Christ.

Rom. 8:9 *You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.*

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Jesus said that the Spirit would speak not of his own accord, but only what he hears.

John 16:13 *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*

Whether we call Him the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, or the Holy Spirit, there is no essential difference. Their goal is the same: to redeem God's creation (Rom. 8:18-25).

Rom. 8:18-25 ¹⁸ *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* ¹⁹ *For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.*

²⁰ *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;* ²¹ *because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

²² *For we know that the whole creation groans and labours with birth pangs together until now.* ²³ *Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves,*

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eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

²⁴For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

2. Identity According to His Functions

He is the Spirit of Christ because:

(1) He is sent by Jesus.

John 14:26 *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

(2) He gives new life.

The new life of Christ flows through the Spirit.

Believers are baptized by Christ in the Holy Spirit:

Acts 1:4-5 *And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; ⁵for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”*

(3) He glorifies Christ.

John 16:14 *He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.*

His job is to make people worship Christ by following His teaching.

(4) He makes Christ real to us.

The Spirit makes Christ and His atoning love real in believers. If you are born again, you are both “in Christ” and “in the Spirit”, because both dwell in you (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:9).

3. The Holy Spirit is the Seal of Our Salvation: Ask and You Shall Receive

How do you receive the Holy Spirit?

You ask the Father for Him! Keep asking, seeking, knocking.

Luke 11:9-13 ⁹“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? ¹²Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³If

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you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

Salvation is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8-9); the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is our ‘seal’, the Father’s gift to us and the ‘earnest’ (pledge or guarantee) of our salvation.

Eph. 1:13-14 ¹³ *In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*

The Greek word for ‘guarantee’ is ‘arrabon’, meaning a part payment in advance for security.

Christ stands at the door of our heart and knocks (Rev. 3:20).

It is the job of the Holy Spirit to build Christ’s Church, the assembly.

As with all things of God, there is an order to salvation (Rom. 11:25). Thus no-one comes to Christ unless the Father draws him (John 6:44), but anyone who comes to Christ, He will accept (John 6:37). If you are reading this book and do

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not have Christ's Spirit, the chances are the Father is drawing you to come to Christ.

Note that all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved (Rom. 10:13). Furthermore, it is not the Father's wish that any should perish:

2 Pet. 3:9 *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

So if you are unsure, do not hesitate, ask! The Father wants us to ask, He draws us to ask. But He will not force us to ask.

Ask in a spirit of contrition and with an expectation of receiving:

Isa. 55:6-7 ⁶Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. ⁷Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

Isa. 57:15 *For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and*

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humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

Jam. 1:6-8 ⁶But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Turn to Jesus Christ, seek, and you will find! He and the Father will come to you and dwell with you, and you will be cleansed from the inside out.

Conclusion

When God replaced the old covenant with the new one through Jesus and the apostles, He made sure the Spirit would be present to guard the truth. The Spirit prevents Satan from diluting the Gospel with lies.

All who turn to the Lord with genuine repentance will receive the Holy Spirit, and they will be changed. Those who are indwelt by the Spirit can be recognised by how they live.

Knock on the door, and it will be opened to you. You will receive the Holy Spirit, our seal until redemption.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. With regards to creation, how do the members of the Godhead relate?
 - * The Father creates by the Son and through the Spirit.
 - * The Spirit is called “the finger of God” who moved over the waters at creation (Gen. 1:2).
 - * All three are involved in creating and sustaining the universe.
2. Give two descriptions of the Holy Spirit in His relationship with the Father and the Son.
 - (1) He is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9).
 - (2) He is one with God yet distinct from Him, working to reveal the Father and Son to us (John 16:13).
3. Why is the Holy Spirit identified as the Spirit of Christ?
 - * Because He is sent by Jesus (John 14:26), He glorifies Christ (John 16:14), and He makes the life of Christ real in believers. Where Christ is, the Spirit is.

4. How does the Holy Spirit glorify Christ?
- * He makes Christ known, teaches His words, and enables believers to live like Him.
 - * He points people to Christ, not to Himself, and helps them worship Christ in Spirit and truth (John 16:13-14).

Prayer

Father, thank You for revealing Yourself to us through Your Spirit. Make us clear in our understanding so that Satan's lies cannot distort our fellowship with You. Let Your Spirit make Christ real in us today. Amen.

The Portrait of the Holy Spirit (Part III)

Text

John 14:15-21 ¹⁵ “If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever - ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. ²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

Memory Verse

John 14:16 “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.”

Introduction

Jesus knows exactly what we need for encouragement, comfort, and power. The gift He

gives is his Spirit, the Holy Spirit, whom He calls our Advocate.

When we do not know what to say or how to stand, the Spirit speaks for us before the Father. Thank God for this indescribable gift.

Objective

To understand how the Holy Spirit is identified through His status in the Godhead and His functions.

Presentation

1. The Spirit is Another Comforter

If Jesus had not sent someone to teach, guide, and stand with His children as they face a hostile world, who would do it? That someone is the Holy Spirit - another Comforter.

The Greek wording for “Comforter” is ‘parakletos’. It literally means someone called alongside to help, especially in legal matters. In ancient courts, a person could bring one or two influential friends to stand with them and defend them. Those friends were called ‘parakletoi’ in Greek, ‘advocati’ in Latin.

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That is the role that Jesus played for His disciples while He was with them. That is why they were sad when He said He was leaving. The Holy Spirit now does invisibly what Jesus did visibly - He is another Comforter with us.

Note that the Greek word for ‘another’ is ‘allos’, meaning “another of the same kind”. It is not ‘heteros’, which would mean “another of a different kind”. Jesus is saying “I have been your ‘parakletos’ while with you. When I go, the Father will send you the same kind of Helper, but in the Spirit.” John tells us in the same chapter who that “another Helper” is:

John 14:18 *“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

Another Comforter is Jesus coming back, but not in the flesh, in the Spirit. Jesus in the flesh was God’s presence, localized, visible, limited to one body. Jesus in the Spirit is God’s presence unlimited, invisible, able to dwell in all believers at once. The Spirit is the presence of Christ.

Jesus was the Comforter with the disciples in the flesh. When He went to the Father, He sent

Himself in the Spirit to dwell in them. The same presence, now indwelling instead of external.

2. How is Christ in Us?

“Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27) happens through the Holy Spirit. He puts the life, nature, virtues, and heart of Christ in the believer.

John 17:26 *“And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”*

3. What Does The Spirit Offer?

Nothing outside of Christ and His teaching. The Spirit’s job is to form us into the likeness of Christ. He is also our ‘earnest’, our guarantee of redemption.

4. Heaven and Earth Working Together

In heaven, Jesus is our ‘parakletos’, defending us against the accuser (Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1).

Heb. 7:25 *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

1 John 2:1 *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

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On earth, the Holy Spirit is our ‘parakletos’, silencing the enemies of the church and comforting us (John 14:18).

John 14:18 *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*

Christ comes to individual believers by His Spirit now.

Heb. 9:28 *So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*

He stands at the door of our hearts and knocks, seeking a relationship with each and every one of us:

Rev. 3:20 *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*

Jesus in the flesh was an example to follow. Jesus in the Spirit is a life to be lived. While in the flesh He was not omnipresent. Now in the Spirit He is with every believer everywhere.

Someone put it this way: through the Spirit, Christ has become the Soul of our souls, the Spirit of

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our spirits, the Truth of our minds, the Love of our hearts, and the Desire of our wills.

Jesus, like David, prepared the material - the teachings - for God's spiritual temple. The Holy Spirit, like Solomon, builds the temple - the Church - with that material. Christ was sent to do something **for us**. The Holy Spirit was sent to do something **in us**.

Conclusion

The comfort Christ gave while on earth continues through the Holy Spirit. He is another Comforter who carries on the ministry of Christ's teaching. Our part is to submit to Him as our divine Light.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What is the Latin word for Comforter?
 - * The Latin word is 'advocatus'.
 - * The Greek 'parakletos' is translated "Advocate" or "Comforter" in John 14:16.

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2. Looking at our legal system today, how can you illustrate the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives?
 - * Like a defence attorney who stands with you in court, the Holy Spirit stands with us. He speaks for us, defends us, guides us on what to say, and comforts us when we are accused or afraid. He is our Advocate before God and in the battles which we face daily.
3. How is it possible for Christ to be in heaven and on earth simultaneously on our behalf?
 - * Christ is in heaven as our Advocate before the Father (1 John 2:1). On earth, He is present in us through the Holy Spirit (John 14:17, 20). So He represents us in heaven and lives in us on earth at the same time.
4. Why is the Holy Spirit called “another Comforter”?
 - * Because He does for us now what Jesus did for His disciples while He was with them - teaching, guiding, comforting, and defending. He is “Christ in us”, with the same mission and heart as Jesus.

5. Has God put comfort in you for your neighbours by His Spirit? How are you sure?
- * Yes, if you have the Spirit, you have the Comforter in you. You know it by the fruit: you find yourself able to encourage, strengthen, and comfort others, even when you are weak (2 Cor. 1:3-4). The Spirit in you overflows to others.

Prayer

Father, thank You for Your word. Renew our partnership with You in redeeming Your creation. Give us fresh commitment to obey You and to walk with Your Spirit, so that we grow in the knowledge of spiritual things. Amen.

The Portrait of the Holy Spirit (Part IV)

Text

Luke 24:44-49 ⁴⁴ Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

⁴⁶ Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ And you are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

Memory Verse

Luke 24:49 “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

Introduction

The Christian faith is a kingdom, and no kingdom runs without power. The one who brings both the starting power and the daily power of Christ's kingdom is the Holy Spirit.

The power that keeps believers going in Jesus's kingdom comes from Him. That is why He is indispensable in everything we do as Christians.

Objective

To understand how the Holy Spirit is identified through His functions.

Presentation

1. He is the Holy Spirit of Promise

His coming fulfils prophecy. He brings grace and power to bless believers (Joel 2:28; Eze. 36:27).

Joel 2:28 *And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.*

Eze. 36:27 *I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.*

Jesus called Him “the Promise of the Father” (Luke 24:49), which we receive by faith (Gal. 3:14). Everything God promised for our empowerment and renewal is released through the Spirit.

2. He is the Spirit of Truth

He is the true interpreter of Jesus - His life and His word. Just as the Word became flesh to reveal the Father, the Spirit now makes Jesus real in us so that He is glorified through changed lives.

“He will guide you into all the truth.” (John 16:13)

3. He is the Spirit of Grace and Life

God preserves our physical lives by His grace through His Spirit. He also anoints us for sanctification, gives patience in trials, and empowers us for service (Heb.10:29; Zech. 12:10).

Preserving both natural and spiritual life is the Spirit’s work (Rom. 8:2).

Rom. 8:2 *The law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.*

4. He is the Spirit of Adoption

He puts in us the deep assurance that we are God's children and share in His nature (Rom. 8:15).

He is the regenerating Spirit. This was not emphasized in the Old Testament, except as a future promise for when the Messiah would come (Jer. 31:34; 1 Pet. 1:10-12).

The Israelites desperately needed Him. Moses even wished that all of God's people were prophets and had the Spirit (Num. 11:29).

In the Old Testament the Spirit raised up workers and speakers:

- * Joseph, for administration (Gen. 41:38-40).
- * Bezalel, for craftsmanship (Ex. 35:30-31).
- * Samson, for deliverance (Judges 13:24-25).

He also raised prophets by resting on them, taking hold of them, filling them, moving them, and speaking through them (Eze. 8:1-3; Isa. 6:1-6; Rev. 1:10; Acts 22:7).

Conclusion

The mission of raising children for God - living proof that Christ's teaching is real - rests with the

Holy Spirit. He releases grace and truth to believers so that we can obey.

A life lived in the flesh without the Spirit's leading is sinful and dead. The more familiar we become with loving material wealth, the less familiar we become with loving Christ, whom the Spirit preaches.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. Give two descriptions of God's Spirit from this lesson and why He is described that way.
 - (1) Spirit of Promise – Because His coming fulfils prophecy and He brings the grace and power God promised to believers (Luke 24:49; Joel 2:28).
 - (2) Spirit of Truth – Because He interprets Jesus and His word to us, guiding us into all truth (John 16:13).
2. Mention two workers the Holy Spirit raised for God in the Old Testament.
 - (1) Joseph, for administration in Egypt (Gen. 41:38-40).

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(2) Bezalel, for skilled craftsmanship in building the tabernacle (Ex. 35:30-31).

Samson is another example, for deliverance (Judges 13:24-25).

3. Why was an outpouring of the Spirit needed for the people?

- * Because without the Spirit, the people kept falling into idolatry and sin. Moses lamented that the Lord had not put His Spirit upon them (Num. 11:29). The Spirit was needed to raise leaders, workers, and prophets, and to create a people who could obey God from the heart.

4. As Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to glorify Him, who was sent to glorify the Father initially?

- * Jesus Christ. He said, "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do." (John 17:4)
- * Jesus came to reveal and glorify the Father, and now the Spirit comes to glorify Jesus.

5. Only those who live in the Spirit can glorify God. Are you one of them? How can you show it?

- * Yes, if you have received Christ, you have the Spirit (Rom. 8:9). You show it by walking in

step with the Spirit - producing the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:22-23). A life that reflects Jesus glorifies God.

6. God still desires to speak to your generation.
Can He use you? How are you sure?

- * Yes. If you are willing and submitted to the Spirit, God can use you. You are sure because the Spirit who raised prophets and workers in the Old Testament is the same Spirit in you today. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses.” (Acts 1:8)

Prayer

Father, thank You for sending Your Spirit to live in us. Make us sensitive to His leading so we live lives that glorify You. Use us to speak to our generation and to raise others for Your kingdom. Amen.

Praying as Talking Back to God

Text

Matt. 6:5-8 ⁵“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ⁶But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. ⁷And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”

Memory Verse

1 Thess. 5:17 *Pray without ceasing.*

Introduction

One way in which we fellowship with God is through prayer. In fellowship, we exchange with God. In prayer, we exchange words with our Maker.

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We talk back to Him by reminding Him of what He has said about Himself - what we have believed and trusted as the reason He should act for us against Satan's destructive plans.

We also think of others when we pray. That is intercession (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

Acceptable prayer for us as Christians is limited to what Christ taught about the Father, as passed down by His first witnesses (1 John 1-4).

Objective

To see that prayer is talking and appealing to God for our good and for the good of others through intercession.

Presentation

1. Prayer is Talking or Making an Appeal

Because Christ lives in us through His word, everything about us - our thoughts, words, and actions – is seen in heaven and will be rewarded (2 Cor. 5:10).

2 Cor. 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive*

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the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

In prayer, we think about God as revealed in Christ and talk to Him. Without that, it is not based on true faith (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6).

Talking back to God means drawing conclusions from His word and giving those as reasons He should act or not act for us and our neighbours. That is what the early Christians did in Acts 4:23-31. They took God's word and prayed it back to Him. See also Isa. 41:21.

2. Prayer is Appealing to God for Ourselves And Others

We pray to express dependence on God. That is faith (Mark 11:22).

We do not pray to inform God of our needs. He already knows and is able to provide before we ask (Matt. 6:8).

Prayer is also how we push back against the devil's attempts to destabilize our neighbourhood (1 Tim. 2:1-3).

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When we pray for others - even our enemies - we end up blessing ourselves (Matt. 7:12). That is the golden rule in practice.

Our real enemies are not human. People are simply horses that Satan rides to attack us. We should target the rider, not the horse. We do not attack people; we deal with the one working behind them (Luke 9:51-56).

It is not Christian to ask God to kill the people Satan uses against us. They are ignorant agents. Christ our Head does not want that (Matt. 5:43-48). We leave vengeance to God and pray for their eyes to open.

Conclusion

Everything God has given us - singing, praying, giving, sharing His Word, and other edifying practices - is meant to keep us close to Him. They are also sources of reward that we should not ignore, even if they seem small or hidden.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What did God say to us that we should talk back to Him in prayer?
 - * God gave us His promises and word about who He is and what He does. We talk back by reminding Him of those promises and asking Him to act according to them, as the early church did in Acts 4:24-30. We base our prayers on what He has already said.
2. Is prayer restricted to vocal or spoken words? Yes or No? Why?
 - * No. Prayer is talking to God, and that includes thoughts and the posture of the heart, not just spoken words. God sees the mind and heart (2 Cor. 5:10). “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17), means a constant attitude of dependence, not just constant talking.
3. Why do we say our physical enemy is like a horse?
 - * Because humans are not our real enemy. Satan is. People often act as instruments that Satan rides to attack us. That is why Jesus said to love and pray for our enemies (Matt.

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5:44). We deal with the rider, not the horse (Eph. 6:12).

4. Why does Jesus forbid us from asking for the death of our physical enemies?

- * Because Christ came to save, not to destroy (Luke 9:56). Asking for their death is asking God to act like the devil. Jesus commands us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us, so that we reflect the Father's heart (Matt. 5:44-48).

Prayer

Father, thank You for Your word. Help us to use the authority You have given us in Christ to pray boldly, basing our requests on Your word. Make us faithful to pray for others and to stand against the enemy, not people. Amen.

Varieties of Christian Prayer and Posture

Text

Matt. 6:9-13 ⁹*In this manner, therefore, pray:*
Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.
¹⁰*Your kingdom come. Your will be done*
On earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹*Give us this day*
our daily bread. ¹²*And forgive us our debts, As we*
forgive our debtors. ¹³*And do not lead us into*
temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the
glory forever. Amen.

Memory Verse

Matt. 6:5 *And when you pray, you shall not be like*
the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in
the synagogues and on the corners of the streets,
that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to
you, they have their reward.

Introduction

How we pray matters, because prayer uses words that carry weight in the heavenly places. The early disciples saw this and asked Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1).

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Effective prayer is not about using lots of words or spending long hours (Matt. 6:7). It is not about appearing nude, prostrating, or rolling on the floor either.

Real prayer flows from knowing Christ's teaching and praying in line with His words. Godly living and compassion also matter. God does not hear prayer from people who ignore righteousness and mercy (John 9:31; Isa. 58:5-12).

Objective

To see the two main varieties of Christian prayer and the acceptable posture.

Presentation

1. Varieties of Christian Prayer

There are two main types: corporate prayer and individual prayer.

(1) Corporate Prayer

This is prayer done together as a group. It has two forms:

(i) Corporate Vocal

Everyone prays aloud together based on the

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points given by the leader. Example: Acts 4:23-31, where the whole group lifted their voices to God.

(ii) Candidate or Delegate Vocal

One person is appointed to lead while others agree with an “Amen.” Example: 1 Cor. 14:16-17.

Guidelines for corporate prayer:

- * Use a language that everyone understands, so that people can agree (1 Cor. 14:16-17).
- * Keep order and decency. God’s acceptance does not depend on how long you pray for or on how many words you use (Matt. 6:7-8).
- * Members should follow the appointed leader without interrupting or competing.

(2) Individual Prayer

This is prayer done alone. Unlike corporate prayer, there is no strict scriptural order for it - except that it should be modest and done for God’s glory and your good (Col. 3:17).

You choose the place and length. Jesus often went alone to pray (Luke 6:12; Heb. 5:7). That freedom is for personal prayer.

2. Posture of Prayer in Scripture

Apart from not appearing nude, Scripture does not give one required posture. Prayer is a spiritual exercise (Eph. 5:18).

Posture can vary - standing, kneeling, sitting, hands raised, eyes closed - whatever helps focus. In corporate settings, follow what the leader directs and obey them (1 Thess. 5:12-13).

The Bible talks a lot about clothing in relation to worship and prayer:

- * 1 Tim. 2:9-10 tells women to dress modestly and with decency in worship.
- * Ex. 20:26 and Ex. 28:42-43 gave priests instructions to be covered when approaching the altar so that they would not “uncover nakedness”.

The consistent biblical pattern is modesty and reverence. The approach is one of respect, humility, and not treating holy things casually.

Conclusion

“Order is the first law of heaven.” I agree. That is why Scripture gives clear direction on how to order public worship (1 Cor. 14:26, 40).

The early disciples cared enough to ask Jesus to teach them how to pray well (Luke 11:1). We should care just as much.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What are the features of a collective or congregational prayer?
 - * Everyone prays together, either aloud as a group or through one leader with others agreeing “Amen”.
 - * It uses a language that everyone understands.
 - * It follows order and decency, without competing or dragging on (Matt. 6:7-8; 1 Cor. 14:40).
2. According to 1 Cor. 14:40, what two things should be observable during corporate worship?
 - * Everything should be done decently and in order.
 - * That means no chaos, confusion, or competition - just clear, edifying worship.

3. In the candidate vocal type of corporate praying, what important element must be considered?
 - * The congregation must understand what is being said so that they can agree with “Amen”. If people do not understand, the prayer is not edifying (1 Cor. 14:16-17).
4. What is the Scripturally acceptable prayer posture?
 - * Scripture does not prescribe one posture. The key is reverence and order. Do not appear nude, but beyond that, posture depends on the context and the leader’s direction (1 Thess. 5:12-13). The heart matters more than the position.

Prayer

Father, thank You for teaching us how to pray. Give us wisdom to order our hearts and our assemblies so that our prayers honour You and build up others. Let us never pray for show, but always for truth. Amen.

How Christian Prayers Are Answered by God

Text

2 Cor. 6:1-2 ¹ *We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ² For He says: “In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you.”*

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Memory Verse

Rom. 10:12-13 ¹² *For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*

Introduction

It is a joy to receive from God what you have asked Him for. Abel prayed and God answered him, and Scripture says that he is still speaking to this day (Heb. 11:4).

If we do not get what we expect, it does not mean that we are sinning. Our Father knows everything

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and always wants what is best for us in the end (Jer. 29:11; Jam. 1:2-4). He knows our needs before we ask (Matt. 6:8). So we trust Him to release the blessing at the right time, when we are ready for it.

Objective

To see from Scripture five ways in which God may answer our prayers.

Presentation

1. We May Get Exactly What We Asked For

Sometimes God gives us the very thing we requested. For example Jonah prayed from inside the fish for a second chance, promised to obey, and God commanded the fish to vomit him out right at Nineveh (Jon. 2:1-10).

2. We May Get More Than We Asked For

Solomon asked for wisdom to govern God's people. Because it lined up with God's will, God gave him wisdom and wealth and honour (1 Ki. 3:9-13; 1 John 5:14). When your request matches His purpose, He often adds more.

3. We May Get an Exchange for What We Asked For

Moses and Aaron asked to enter the promised land, but God said no to that request. Instead, He gave them something better: He forgave them so they could enter the true, heavenly promised land (Heb. 11:10, 39-40).

God denied them Canaan so that He could give them Christ. Sometimes “no” is really a “better yes” (Deut. 32:48-52).

4. We May Be Asked to Keep Praying, Believing, and Waiting

Jesus told the story of the persistent widow in Luke 18:1-8 to show that we should never give up. We are told to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17). Some answers come only after persistence and trust are developed in us.

5. We May Get “No”

Sometimes God says no because what we have asked will not glorify Him or help us (Jam. 4:1-6). He sees the full picture. A “no” from a loving Father is still an answer, and it is for our good.

Conclusion

Every prayer that is in line with God's will in Christ is answered immediately in heaven. The answer may not show up on earth right away.

If it does not, it is because we are waiting for God's fullness of time, not because He denied us or because we sinned. Trust the timing. He knows what He is doing.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. Mention three ways in which God may answer our prayers.
 - (1) Yes, exactly what we asked – like Jonah getting a second chance (Jon. 2:10).
 - (2) More than we asked – like Solomon receiving wisdom plus wealth (1 Ki. 3:13).
 - (3) An exchange – like Moses and Aaron being denied Canaan but welcomed into the heavenly promised land (Heb. 11:40).

Other ways include “wait” and “no”.

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2. When do we say a prayer is according to God's will?
 - * When it lines up with Scripture and with the purpose of Christ. Prayers based on God's Word and for His glory fit this category.

***1 John 5:14** Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*
3. Why did God refuse Moses and Aaron entry into the Promised Land?
 - * Because of their disobedience at Meribah (Deut. 32:51-52). But the deeper reason was redemptive: God was preparing them for the true promised land, where they would enter by grace through Christ (Heb. 11:39-40).
4. In order that we persist in prayer, what does God do with answers to some of our prayers?
 - * He sometimes delays the answer so that we keep praying, believing, and trusting Him (Luke 18:1-8). The delay builds persistence, faith, and maturity in us.

Prayer

Father, thank You for Your Word. Give us grace to trust You even when the answer is wait or no.

Help us to pray according to Your will and to rest in Your unfailing care. This is true worship. Amen.

Determinants to Favourable Answers to Prayers

Text

Isa. 52:5-12 ⁵ *“And Now therefore, what have I here,” says the Lord, “That My people are taken away for nothing? Those who rule over them make them wail,” says the Lord, “And My name is blasphemed continually every day.*

⁶ *Therefore My people shall know My name; Therefore they shall know in that day that I am He who speaks: ‘Behold, it is I.’ ”*

⁷ *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns!”*

⁸ *Your watchmen shall lift up their voices, with their voices they shall sing together; for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord brings back Zion.*

⁹ *Break forth into joy, sing together, you waste places of Jerusalem! For the Lord has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem.*

¹⁰ *The Lord has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.*

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¹¹ Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her, be clean, you who bear the vessels of the Lord.

¹² For you shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.

Memory Verse

John 9:31 *Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does His will, He hears him.*

Introduction

Prayer is not a bribe to get God to do what you want. He has more resources than any request we could make.

God does not answer some people and ignore others because the first group “lobbied” Him better. Timing also matters. God’s fullness of time is His call, not ours.

When God delays, He is often teaching persistence and discipleship.

Objective

To know five key elements that a Christian’s

prayer must have in order to receive a favourable answer from God.

Presentation

1. Doubtlessness: Faith Without Wavering

Doubt in your heart limits the power of God in your prayer. It blocks answers. God expects us to come to His throne of grace with confidence and boldness (Mark 11:23-24; Heb. 4:15-16).

He already knows what you need (Matt. 6:8). Therefore come believing that He hears and is able.

2. Persistence

When God does not answer right away, it is often to draw you closer and make you more dependent. It keeps you sober and seeking Him (Luke 18:6-7; 1 Thess. 5:17).

God also looks at *why* you are asking. A wrong motive kills the prayer (Jam. 4:3).

3. Holiness, Hospitality, and Humility

Purity of heart is non-negotiable because God is holy (1 Pet. 1:14-16; Heb. 12:14). That inward holiness must show outwardly: obedience to

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Christ's teaching, respect for God-ordained authority, and hospitality to others (Rom. 13:1-7; Jam. 1:27). God listens to the godly person who does His will (John 9:31).

4. Fullness of Time

God's patience is not forgetfulness (2 Pet. 3:9). He is not slow. He is working things out in the right order. If He promised it, He will bring it at the right time.

"He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it."
(1 Thess. 5:24)

5. Motive

There must be a godly reason behind your prayer. God moves when your request lines up with His purpose and glory (Jam. 4:3).

If it is for selfish gain, do not expect an answer.

Conclusion

In prayer, remember who you are: a son or daughter of the King. Do not approach God like a beggar. You are making declarations and announcements based on His word, like preaching.

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God is your Helper (Heb. 13:5-6). He expects you to receive help from Him so that you can go and help others, just as Jesus did (Acts 10:38; John 17:18).

Stop asking God to send you helpers. Ask Him to make you a helper to the helpless. If you become an agent of help, you will be helped. May God bless you with this knowledge in Christ.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. How many helpers do we have in the world?
Who?
 - * One. God alone is our Helper. “The Lord *is* my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” (Heb. 13:6)
2. People may be instruments, but God is the source. If God delays the answer to our request, He does not deny us and will not let us die before the answer. Discuss.
 - * A delay is not a denial. God’s delay is for your good - for maturity, persistence, and the right timing. He will not let you perish before the answer comes, because He is faithful (1 Thess. 5:24). The answer is waiting for His fullness of time.
3. Why do we need persistence in our dealing with God?
 - * Persistence keeps us close to God, builds faith, and reveals our motives. It also aligns with Jesus’s teaching in Luke 18:1-8. God uses delay to deepen dependence and make us ready for the answer.

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4. If our wickedness neither harms God nor our righteousness benefits Him in heaven, why does He bother to correct us?
 - * Because He loves us. Correction is for our good, not His. He disciplines us so that we can share in His holiness and live the life that we are made for (Heb. 12:10-11). Sin destroys us, so He corrects us to bring us back to life.
5. How do we examine ourselves to ascertain that we are fit to be called His children?
 - * Check your faith, motive, obedience, and love. Are you trusting God without doubt? Is your request for His glory? Are you walking in holiness and hospitality? Do you love and obey Christ's teaching? That is the evidence of sonship (1 John 2:3-6).

Prayer

Father, thank You for teaching us how to pray in a way that gets answers. Make our prayers pure, persistent, and full of faith. Let everything we ask be for Your glory and the good of others. Make us true worshippers. Amen.

God as the Greatest Giver

Text

Acts 17:16, 22-25 ¹⁶ Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.

²² Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; ²³ for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: ²⁴ God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. ²⁵ Nor is He worshipped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.

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Memory Verse

Acts 17:24-25 ²⁴ *God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. ²⁵ Nor is He worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.*

Introduction

God's love for us moved Him to give us Jesus for our salvation. Before that, He was already meeting our material needs through creation.

Even an enemy can give something as a trap. But you cannot truly love without giving.

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

If we want to love like God, it is not just about doing services. It is about having a heart that looks for opportunities to meet needs, no matter what life throws at us.

Objective

To see how Jehovah demonstrates His love toward us and the characteristics of that love.

Presentation

1. How God Demonstrates His Love for Us

(1) He gave creation for our material wellbeing. Everything we need for life - air, food, water, the earth itself - was given before we ever asked. This is love built into the way He made things (Eph. 1:3-4; Acts 17:25).

(2) He gave Jesus for our spiritual wellbeing. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). Again, we never asked. He gave because love demanded it.

2. Characteristics of God's Gift of Love

(1) It is good and pleasing. Everything God made was called "good" (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). His gift in Christ is also good and acceptable to Him (Rom. 8:32; Eph. 5:2).

(2) It is indescribable. No words can fully capture it. "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" (2 Cor. 9:15)

(3) It is need-oriented.

God gives what we actually need. Jesus came at the right time, for our exact need (Gal. 4:4-5).

(4) It is priceless.

We were not redeemed with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19). You cannot put a price on it.

(5) It is inventive.

It was the first of its kind. No one else thought to redeem the world in this way (Eph. 1:3-4; 5:12).

(6) It is freely given, not forced.

God chose us in love before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4-5). He gives out of love, not obligation.

Conclusion

A giving God is a reigning God. If we are like Him, we will arm ourselves with the same spirit - giving to meet the needs of others for His sake. When we do, we reign with Him (1 Cor. 3:9).

Let us ask for grace to let His heart of generosity shape ours, so that we can live out His love in every situation.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. If a materially rich person only keeps friends who are rich like himself, does he have any opportunity to demonstrate God's love? How?
 - * Yes, but he would be missing most of it. God's love reaches down to meet real need, not just to relate with equals.
 - * To demonstrate God's love, we should look for the needy, the poor, and the helpless, and give without expecting anything back. Love is proven in giving to those who cannot repay (Luke 14:12-14).
2. How does the gift of the Bible demonstrate His love for us?
 - * The Bible is God speaking to us. It reveals who He is, what He has done in Christ, and how we can live and be saved. It is a need-meeting gift - giving us truth, direction, correction, and hope. It shows that He does not leave us in the dark but communicates so that we can know and follow Him (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

3. If a person lived alone all their life without seeing another person, is the preaching of Jesus still for them? Yes or No? Why?
- * The preaching of Jesus is for every person God has made, even if they never see another human. God's love and salvation are for the individual. If that person hears and believes, Jesus is for them. God's gift of salvation is not limited by location or relationships (John 3:16; Acts 17:24-25).

Prayer

Father, thank You for Your generosity to us in every way. Teach us to imitate You by giving freely to meet the needs around us. Let Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, starting with us. Amen.

My Body as the First and Compulsory Offering

Text

Rom. 12:1-2 *¹I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Memory Verse

Gal. 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

Introduction

As a Christian you are both alive and dead. You are alive in the world, but you are not *of* the world.

Your spirit is alive by God's will, but your fleshly will is dead. That means that you are led by the Holy Spirit instead of by your old desires. This

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happens when you willingly surrender to God's word and let His Spirit over-ride your inborn tendencies (Rom. 8:16; Rev. 3:20).

God does not confine Himself to church buildings. He never lived there. He lives in people.

Objective

To see that the Christian is the purified vessel that carries God as His priest and prophet, replacing the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament.

Presentation

1. God Dwells Within Us

Just as God revealed Himself through Christ Jesus (John 14:6), He now chooses to reveal Himself through Christians who carry His life and message. Christ prayed that we would be one in Him and the Father:

John 17:20-21 ²⁰ *"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they all may be one, as You, Father are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."*

The Christian life is the life of God Himself (Eph. 4:17-18; Rom. 8:28-29). When people see you, they should see Him.

2. The Living Christian Replaces Dead Animal Sacrifices

Under Moses, animals were sacrificed to bring relief and atonement (Lev. 7:8; Lev. 1:4). Now, our self-sacrifice - our life of service - shows mercy, which God prefers over ritual (Matt. 12:7; Hos. 6:6).

In the Old Testament, people laid hands on the animal to show that it represented them (Lev. 1:4). Today, that is symbolic of personal salvation. You present yourself as the offering (Phil. 2:12).

3. The Living God Indwells the Christian

God's treasure - His life and presence - dwells in us (2 Cor. 4:7).

We are the temple of God and His Spirit dwells in us (1 Cor. 3:16).

We are God's building, His dwelling place (Eph. 2:20-22). He lives in us to work through us for the world.

4. The Christian is God's Priest and Prophet

A prophet speaks God's words to people (Deut. 18:18-19). You are a royal priesthood, called to declare God's praises (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 5:9-10).

That means that you carry His presence and speak His word to a world that does not know Him.

Conclusion

God is Spirit, but He wants to work in the physical world. He does that through your body.

No other offering can replace this one. The first thing He asks is your surrender - your heart and body, purified by His word, as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1).

Let Him have it.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. The Christian is both a living and dead person. How?
 - * You are alive to God in your spirit, but dead to the old self and its desires. “I have been crucified with Christ... it is no longer I who live” (Gal. 2:20). You live in the world, but you are led by the Spirit, not by the flesh (Rom. 8:16).
2. How can God’s word become flesh again in our day?
 - * Through us. Just as Jesus was the Word made flesh (John 1:14), we now carry that Word in our bodies. When we live out Christ’s teaching and let Him live in us, His word becomes visible again to the world.
3. God is invisible. How, then, can physical beings house Him?
 - * Because He indwells us by His Spirit. Our bodies become His temple (1 Cor. 3:16). As we walk, talk, and serve, people encounter Him through us. We are His visible presence on earth.

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4. According to Deut. 18:18-19, how can we define a prophet?

- * A prophet is someone who God raises up to speak His words.

Deut. 18:18-19 ¹⁸*I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.* ¹⁹*And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.*

- * A prophet carries and delivers God's message.

5. But do you believe you are God's prophet to the unbelievers? Why?

- * Yes. If you are in Christ, you are part of His body and a member of the royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9). That means you are called to speak His word and show His life to unbelievers so they can know Him.

Prayer

Father, thank You for choosing to dwell in me.
Purify my body and heart to be a worthy home for
You. Give me grace to live as a living sacrifice,
carrying Your presence and speaking Your word to
my generation. Amen.

A Giver Under the Old Covenant

Text

Deut. 16:16-17 ¹⁶“Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed. ¹⁷Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you.”

Memory Verse

Deut. 16:16 “Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed.”

Introduction

Before Israel became a nation, God had already shown patterns of giving, through creation and through His dealings with Abraham, Isaac, and

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Jacob. The first biblical mention of tithing, by Abraham, is in Gen. 14:20.

How did giving work under national Israel, during the time of Moses's law?

As we will see below, God commanded that material gifts must be brought when coming before Him.

“Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year ... none shall appear before Me empty.”
(Ex. 23:14-15)

His command applied to Israelite men aged 20 and above who had received land as inheritance. Women, children, slaves, the handicapped, and foreigners were exempt. The expectation was that gifts should be given by men who had land and ability.

Objective

To appreciate that all giving under the Old Covenant was a welfare program for the poor - orphans, widows, strangers, the handicapped, priests - and that it was compulsory.

Presentation

1. All Forms of Giving Were Welfare Programs

Tithes were for the Levites who had no land (Num. 18:21-24).

The Levites then gave a tenth of that to the priests (Num. 18:25-29).

Tithes were also for orphans, widows, and strangers every third year (Deut. 14:22-29; 26:12-15).

Other offerings had the same purpose of mercy and relief:

- * Fellowship offerings (Lev. 3:1-17; 19:5).
- * Guilt offerings (Lev. 5:1-6:7).
- * Grain offerings (Lev. 2).
- * Drink offerings (Num. 15:5, 10).
- * Wave offerings (Lev. 23:10-11, 15-17).

Only burnt and sin offerings were for atonement (Lev. 1:3-9; 4:1-12). The rest were practical care for people.

2. Law Controlled Giving, Not Grace

Under the law, it was a must: “Three times a year all your males shall appear... and they shall not

appear before the Lord empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you.” (Deut. 16:16-17)

Only men aged 20 and above who were numbered were required to bring a gift. (Num. 14:29; Ex. 12:37).

Nowhere else in Scripture is material giving made a condition for coming before God (Acts 17:24-25; Micah 6:6-8). God knew that He had given these men land. If they were not lazy, they could produce something to help the needy. The offering was not for God’s need, He does not need anything (Acts 17:25). It was for people.

3. Some Giving, Like Tithing, Was Regulated

Tithe means “one out of ten”. Giving more or less was a violation under the law. Today, giving under grace is not driven by law or threat.

Mal. 3:8-10 ⁸ “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings.” ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. ¹⁰ Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in

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this,” Says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”

The above words, taken from Malachi 3, were spoken to Israel under the law. Under Christ, giving is need-oriented and flexible:

- * Firstfruit and harvest were seasonal, but Gal. 4:9-11 shows that binding yourself to seasons is not the way under grace.
- * Tithing belongs to the law, fixed at 10%.
- * Giving under grace is for welfare, to meet real needs (Gal. 6:2, 9-10).

All giving was meant to be God’s welfare system (Deut. 15:4, 11). The approach just changed:

- * Moses would say: If you have ten shirts, give one (Mal. 3:10-11).
- * John the Baptist would say: If you have two shirts, give one (Luke 3:10-11).
- * Paul would say: As you have opportunity, do good to all (Gal. 6:10).

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If your brother needs \$5,000 and you have \$20,000, grace says help him. Under the law, you would need \$50,000 before you would give \$5,000 as a tithe.

Grace looks for problems to solve. The law looks for faults to punish.

Hebrews 7 uses Abraham's tithe to Melchizedek to show that Christ's priesthood is superior to Levi's. The point is superiority, not tithing (Heb. 7:4, 7, 9-10). Jesus told people to keep the law while it was still in force (Matt. 23:23; Mark 1:44). But He came to inaugurate a new covenant (Heb. 7:12; 8:6-8, 13; Matt. 26:28).

The law of Moses is good and spiritual when used to benefit people (Rom. 7). But practising the law today is living under the law of sin and death (Rom. 7; Gal. 4:21-26). Living under the law of Christ is living under the law of the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2).

His mission is to help and pray for others, even enemies (Gal. 6:2). We hope for the heavenly land to come, not just the earthly one (Heb. 2:5; 2 Cor. 4:16-18). All Scripture is inspired for our good (2 Tim. 3:16), but the part that secures our eternal

welfare is the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:1-4; John 17:13-21).

Conclusion

Giving under the old covenant was law, regulated, and tied to land and season. Giving under grace is free, need-driven, and aimed at love. The goal never changed: care for people. The method did.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. Between proportionate giving and regulated giving, which one has Jesus's endorsement?
 - * Proportionate, need-oriented giving. Jesus praised the widow who gave all she had (Luke 21:1-4), and He taught love and mercy over fixed rules (Matt. 12:7). Regulated giving belongs to the law. Under grace, giving responds to need (Gal. 6:10).
2. If God was still using the first covenant to govern His people's spiritual life, would our text apply to everybody? Why?
 - * No. Deut. 16:16-17 applied only to Israelite men aged 20 and above with land. Women, children, slaves, foreigners, and the

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handicapped were exempt. The law had specific boundaries.

3. Reading Lev. 24:19-20 next to Matt. 5:38-42, would you still say that Jesus fulfilled the law of Moses for us so that we keep practising it?
 - * No. Jesus fulfilled the law so that we would not have to live under it. Lev. 24:19-20 says “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth”; Jesus says “do not resist an evil person ... turn the other cheek” (Matt. 5:38-42). He ended the old system and brought a new one of grace and love (Heb. 8:13; Rom. 10:4).

Prayer

Father, thank You for showing us the difference between law and grace. Give us grace to follow Jesus’s teaching as handed down by the apostles. Help us to give freely, to meet real needs, and to worship You in Spirit and truth. Amen.

The Giver Under the New Covenant

Text

2 Cor. 8:1-5 ¹Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: ²that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. ³For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, ⁴imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. ⁵And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.

2 Cor. 8:12 For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.

Memory Verse

Luke 3:68 Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.

Introduction

Every government needs a constitution to regulate its people. When it is outdated, you do not patch it forever - you replace it with something better.

When a person is saved, they do not change their face. They change their fate through faith in Christ. They do not change race; they change realm. They do not change their name; they make a name by living differently.

Giving did not disappear under the New Covenant. What changed is the approach. The method got an upgrade to reveal a deeper meaning and meet a greater need.

Objective

To see how giving under the New Covenant, led by the Holy Spirit, is distinct from giving under the law of Moses.

Presentation

1. Giving Under the New Covenant is Proportionate

You give according to your income and the real needs around you (2 Cor. 8:12; 1 John 3:17-19).

No material gift was required for ritual purposes anymore. When the tabernacle was built, Moses had to stop the people because they had brought more than enough (Ex. 36:4-7). That system had its place.

The Church's work now is spiritual. Christ is not accessed physically (2 Cor. 5:16). We gather to share spiritual gifts and teaching (Heb. 10:25), not to manage material possessions that anyone can have at any time.

2. New Testament Giving is Mercy-Driven All the Way

Every act of giving under grace is a relief offering.

Under the old covenant, you could eat in another's field but not take food home (Deut. 23:24-25). Farmers were not to harvest the edges of their fields, so orphans, widows, and strangers could glean (Deut. 24:19-21; Lev. 19:9-10).

But Christ raised the bar. Acts of charity now carry greater weight because He endorsed them (Heb. 2:1-4).

Later teachers of the law started treating charity as though it could atone for sin, which is not the

case. That is why Jesus had to correct them: “Be careful not to practise your righteousness before others to be seen by them ... your Father sees what is done in secret” (Matt. 6:2-4).

Conclusion

Under Moses, giving was regulated, compulsory, and tied to land and law.

Under Christ, giving is free, proportionate, and driven by love and mercy. The goal is still to care for people. But now it is the Spirit who leads, not the letter of the law.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. Besides giving proportionately, what else distinguishes New Testament giving?
 - * It is led by the Spirit, not the law. It is voluntary, mercy-driven, and focused on real needs. It is not for ritual, not for show, and not to earn favour (Matt. 6:2-4).

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2. In what way is giving under the first covenant different from that of the new covenant?
 - * Old covenant: Regulated by law, fixed amounts, tied to land and season, compulsory for men 20+ with inheritance.
 - * New covenant: Proportionate to income, led by love, flexible, focused on welfare and mercy (Gal. 6:10; 2 Cor. 8:12).
3. According to Numbers 7:7-9, what should be the yardstick of any giving?
 - * Ability and need. The Levites were given carts and oxen according to the work they had to do. Giving is not one-size-fits-all. It should match the need and the giver's capacity.
4. Why should individual or optional material giving be more encouraged than corporate and / or regulated material giving?
 - * Because it keeps giving personal, heartfelt, and need-based. Regulated giving can become ritual and mechanical. Optional giving allows the Spirit to lead and makes sure help actually reaches the people who need it (2 Cor. 9:7).

5. Should giving meant for fellowship be used to help a stranded person before then? Why?

- * Yes. Meeting a real, urgent need comes first. Jesus put mercy above ritual (Matt. 12:7). If someone is stranded, helping them is worship. The point of giving is love in action, not keeping money locked for a future meeting.

Prayer

Father, thank You for bringing us under the new covenant of grace. Teach us to give as You lead - freely, proportionately, and with love. Let our giving always be an act of mercy that reflects Your heart. Amen.

Giving as a Friendship Evangelism Strategy

Text

1 Sam. 30:7-20 ⁷Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And Abiathar brought the ephod to David. ⁸So David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?" And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all." ⁹So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him, and came to the Brook Besor, where those stayed who were left behind. ¹⁰But David pursued, he and four hundred men; for two hundred stayed behind, who were so weary that they could not cross the Brook Besor. ¹¹Then they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David; and they gave him bread and he ate, and they let him drink water. ¹²And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. So when he had eaten, his strength came back to him; for he had eaten no bread nor drunk water for three days and three nights. ¹³Then David said to him, "To whom do you belong, and where are you from?" And he said, "I am a young man from Egypt, servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind,

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because three days ago I fell sick. ¹⁴ We made an invasion of the southern area of the Cherethites, in the territory which belongs to Judah, and of the southern area of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire.”

¹⁵ And David said to him, “Can you take me down to this troop?”

So he said, “Swear to me by God that you will neither kill me nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will take you down to this troop.”

¹⁶ And when he had brought him down, there they were, spread out over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil which they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. ¹⁷ Then David attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day. Not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled. ¹⁸ So David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued his two wives. ¹⁹ And nothing of theirs was lacking, either small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything which they had taken from them; David recovered all. ²⁰ Then David took all the flocks and herds they had driven before those other livestock, and said, “This is David’s spoil.”

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Memory Verse

1 Cor. 9:22 *To the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*

Introduction

The story in 1 Sam. 30 shows why David did not kill the Egyptian whom he found abandoned in the field. He was hungry, sick, and left behind by the Amalekites. David fed him instead of taking revenge.

That one act of kindness opened the door for David to recover everything the raiders had stolen - his family, his people's families, and all their goods.

I call this “friendship evangelism”: using kindness and generosity to build a bridge so God can work.

Objective

To see that vengeance belongs to the Lord. If we let Him fight for us, His victory for us will always be complete and full of blessing.

Presentation

1. Vengeance Belongs to The Lord

When we let God handle our enemies, we get total victory, as did David. Instead of paying back evil, we pray for our enemies' peace and wellbeing. When opportunity comes, we act on that prayer. That is how we empower God to deal with them (Rom. 12:17-21; 1 Pet. 3:9-12).

If we do not listen to the Holy Spirit and act like David, we risk destroying what God wanted to preserve. We become judges with evil thoughts instead of agents of His mercy.

2. God is Always Exalted and His People Rejoice in the End

Because David responded with the love of Christ, God used it to glorify Himself even among enemies.

The result was not just victory, it was joy and reunion in David's camp. David recovered everything, nothing was missing (1 Sam. 30:19-20).

It is right to say God recovered all for David. Patience and obedience finished their work.

3. The Blessing is Wrapped in Emptying Yourself

Start greeting that person you have called an enemy. Start doing good to them. That is how you make room for God to start gathering your blessings (Matt. 5:43-48).

Whatever happens, count it all joy (Jam. 1:2). God uses it to shape you and set you up for what He wants to do.

Conclusion

Friendship evangelism is not manipulation. It is love that refuses to repay evil with evil. When you empty yourself and act in kindness, you give God room to fight, to restore, and to be glorified.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. According to the lesson, what do you understand as ‘friendship evangelism’?
 - * It is using acts of kindness, generosity, and friendship to build trust and create an opening for God to work. Like David feeding the Egyptian, you meet a person’s need first so that God can bring restoration and salvation.
2. In relation to the Egyptian in our lesson, why did David not miss his blessing?
 - * Because he obeyed the Spirit and showed mercy instead of revenge. If he had killed the Egyptian, he would have lost the guide who led him to the Amalekites’ camp. His kindness became the key to total recovery.
3. Between the visible human being and invisible Satan, who is the real enemy?
 - * Satan is the real enemy (Eph. 6:12). People are often instruments he uses. That is why Jesus told us to love and pray for our enemies - we are fighting a spiritual battle, not just a human one.

4. In banishing Satan or his visible agent, which one will solve our lingering problem(s)?
 - * Banishing Satan. Dealing with the human agent without addressing the spiritual source just brings the problem back in another form. When we overcome evil with good and let God fight, He deals with both the root and the fruit (Rom. 12:21).

Prayer

Father, thank You for showing us a better way than revenge. Give us patience and a heart like Christ's. Help us to overcome evil with good so You can fight for us, restore what is lost, and be glorified in our lives. Amen.

The Reasons for Praising and Thanking God

Text

Ps. 113:1-9 ¹⁶ Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord, Praise the name of the Lord! ² Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore! ³ From the rising of the sun to its going down the Lord's name is to be praised.

⁴ The Lord is high above all nations, His glory above the heavens. ⁵ Who is like the Lord our God, Who dwells on high, ⁶ Who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth?

⁷ He raises the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the ash heap, ⁸ that He may seat him with princes - with the princes of His people. ⁹ He grants the barren woman a home, like a joyful mother of children.

Praise the Lord!

Memory Verse

Ps. 113:5-6 ⁵ Who is like the Lord our God, Who dwells on high, ⁶ Who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth?

Introduction

To praise God is to express appreciation and love for Him in the way He accepts (Ps. 69:30).

The Greek word ‘hymnos’ and the Hebrew ‘halal’ - where we get “hymn” and “hallelujah” - both mean raising songs of praise and thanksgiving to God.

It is more than music. It is a response of the heart.

Objective

To appreciate why we praise God and when He wants us to do it.

Presentation

1. God is the Perfect Model for Life

In everything, God has shown Himself as the perfect example for how to live successfully from now into eternity (Matt. 5:43-48).

Our first assignment is to become like Him, as Christ taught (Rom. 8:28-30).

When we look like Him, we become too strong for our adversary, Satan. Living like God is our best defence.

2. He is Our Creator and the Provider of Everything We Need

Before He brought us into existence, He had already prepared everything we would need for life (Ps. 135:3; 1 Chr. 16:25-26).

We did not create the air we breathe, the food we eat, or the earth we stand on. He did. That alone is reason to praise.

3. In Distress, He is Our Healer and Sustainer

God is the reason we can have confidence when life falls apart. He delivers, He heals, He sustains (Ps.107:20; Heb. 13:5-6; 1 Cor. 10:13; Ps. 46:1). When you have no strength left, He is still there. That is worth thanking Him for.

4. The Recommended Time for Praise and Thanksgiving

Under the New Covenant, praise is not limited to certain seasons or festivals. It is every moment, because it is done in the Spirit, which never stops (Acts 2:46-47; Phil. 4:4-7).

We are to be full of praise and thanksgiving always. Not just when things are good. Always.

Conclusion

Praising and thanking God, in words and in actions, is how we acknowledge His daily care for us. He commands the morning for us (Job 38:12), and gives us access to each new day.

We do not even know all the ways in which He is blessing us. But we can be thankful all of the time anyway.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. Give three reasons why God deserves our thanksgiving.
 - (1) He is perfect and our model for life. He shows us how to live and be victorious (Matt. 5:48; Rom. 8:29).
 - (2) He created us and provided everything we need. Life, air, food, and earth were ready before we arrived (Ps. 135:3).
 - (3) He heals and sustains us in distress. He is our help when we are weak (Ps. 107:20; Heb. 13:6).

2. Why are there no longer seasons of thanksgiving?
 - * Under the New Covenant, praise and thanksgiving are not limited to festivals or set seasons. We live in the Spirit, and the Spirit does not take breaks (Acts 2:46-47; Phil. 4:4). So thanksgiving is now a continuous lifestyle.
3. What three benefits do we derive from being thankful to God?
 - (1) It keeps our hearts focused on Him.
Thankfulness shifts us from worry to trust (Phil. 4:6-7).
 - (2) It strengthens us against the enemy. A thankful heart is hard for Satan to discourage.
 - (3) It aligns us with God's will. "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thess. 5:18 (NIV))

Prayer

Father, thank You for who You are and for everything You do for us daily. Teach us to praise You in every season, in every moment, for every reason we see and even for the ones we do not see. Keep our hearts full of gratitude. Amen.

Separating Thanksgiving from Revelry

Text

Gal. 5:19-21 ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practise such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Memory Verse

2 Pet. 1:5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge.

Introduction

What is revelry?

In the New Testament, the Greek word means a noisy, drunken night procession. Think of half-drunk people parading through the streets with torches and music to honour a pagan god,

stopping at houses of friends. It is basically the ancient version of a wild carnival.

When people were converted to Christ in the early Church, they were told to leave that lifestyle behind (1 Pet. 4:1-5). True worship does not look like that.

Objective

To know that praising and thanking God should teach our neighbours godliness. It should bring both them and us to a place of sober reflection on the life Christ taught us (Eph. 4:17-21).

Presentation

1. Self-Control is Needed During Praise

Without self-control as a fruit of the Spirit, corporate worship can slide into revelry.

True worship is what you think in your heart, say with your mouth, and do with your hands, all with Christ's teaching in mind. It is aimed at the good of your neighbour and the glory of God.

It does not matter the day, season, place, or time. If it is done in line with Christ, it is worship, and God rewards it.

Worshiping the true God means working with Him and for Him. That work deserves a reward.

Raising songs of thanksgiving is “worship in praise.” But it is not limited to singing. It includes doing and saying what God would do and say if He were in your place. When you live like that, you are acting on His behalf, and He notices. He rewards it (Heb. 11:4; Prov. 19:17).

2. The New Testament Pattern of Praise

“Worship in acapella” is singing without instruments. That is the New Testament pattern. Praise now is spiritual - songs from the heart and the fruit of our lips as a sacrifice (Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15).

About a tenth of the Bible is songs, with Psalms leading the way. But it is evil to let people fall into “religious rascality” in the name of praising God.

3. A Warning for Our Youths and Our Practice

Youths are the most vulnerable here. When instruments and noise become the focus, sober reflection gets lost.

I heard a church leader say, “Do not stop playing so my anointing does not stop flowing.” Where

did that come from? He was yoking our youths with something that is not in Christ.

It is holiness and service that meet needs that attract God's Spirit, not instruments. Elisha asked for a harpist in 2 Ki. 3:14-15 because of the culture then. Harpists do not bring down the Holy Spirit in this era. What releases the Spirit now is obeying the teaching of Christ as delivered by the apostles (Acts 2:36-38).

Here is the problem. Many youths now learn instruments as a business. Some churches treat musicians as more important for "church growth" than people who study and teach Scripture. They get paid per service, sometimes playing multiple services a week.

There is money in it, sure. But there is a bigger reward in sharing virtues and truth. Watch and see which one actually builds people.

Conclusion

Thanksgiving to God must stay distinct from revelry. True praise is sober, God-centred, and focused on building people up. Do not trade that for noise and performance.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. In your own words, what is revelry?
 - * Revelry is noisy, drunken, uncontrolled behaviour - like a wild street party done to honour something other than God. It is the opposite of sober, Spirit-led worship.
2. Have you seen anything like revelry or carousing in your fellowship?
 - * That depends on your situation. The key check is: does the gathering produce self-control, sobriety, and a focus on Christ? If it is just noise, performance, and distraction, it is drifting toward revelry.
3. Does the New Testament recommended anything other than a spirit of sobriety?
 - * No. The New Testament repeatedly calls us to sobriety, self-control, and sober-mindedness (1 Pet. 1:13; 4:7; 5:8; Titus 2:12). Praise should reflect that.

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4. Youths who spend their time studying God's Word and teaching are not encouraged in the same way that those playing instruments are. True or False? Why?
 - * True, in many places. It is a problem. Churches often give more attention and pay to musicians than to those who teach Scripture. But God's order is different. It is the Word taught and obeyed that releases the Spirit (Acts 2:38).
5. According to our lesson, which practice somewhat recruits our youths into "religious rascality"?
 - * Making instruments and performance the centre of worship, and treating musicians as indispensable for church growth. It turns worship into a business and distracts from sober reflection and the Word.

Prayer

Father, thank You for Your Word. Keep us from mixing true worship with revelry. Raise up leaders who value Your truth above performance. Help our youths to love Your Word and live soberly for You. May our praise always bring glory to You and good to our neighbours. Amen.

Praising God As A Christian

Text

Acts 11:22-26 *²² Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. ²³ When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. ²⁴ For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.*

²⁵ Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. ²⁶ And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

Memory Verse

1 Pet. 4:16 *Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.*

Introduction

Christians live by God's redeeming power and His enabling grace. They are people who have decided to follow Jesus no matter what (Matt. 16:24).

To praise God as a Christian means that everything you think, say, and do is shaped by what Christ teaches. It is how you show love to Him (John 14:15; Luke 6:46).

The word 'Christian' comes from the Greek word 'Christianos', meaning 'a follower of Christ'. It appears only three times in the New Testament: in Acts 11:26, Acts 26:28, and in 1 Pet. 4:16. It was first used in Antioch of Syria (see the lead text above). Even King Agrippa used it in around AD 58, so it was well known early on.

The name started with unbelievers as a way to single out believers. But Scripture shows that it became a God-ordained identity.

Objective

To appreciate that praising God as a Christian means praising Him with the knowledge of

Christ's teaching, and doing it with the expectation of a good reward.

Presentation

1. Christians Do All Things - Including Praise - in Christ's Name (Col. 3:17)

Col. 3:17 *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.*

To do something in Christ's name means you have His authorization. That authorization comes from His inspired teaching, which is meant to educate and discipline us for life (2 Tim. 3:16-17; John 17:17; 2 Pet. 1:21).

What brings God praise goes beyond singing with your lips. It is a living faith that works (Jam. 2:17, 21-26). If your life does not match your song, God is not impressed.

2. It is Praise From People Who Have Been Converted

A Christian must repent and live as a born-again person. Why? Because it is not just your direct praise that matters. Your life also causes others

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to praise God through the good they see in you (Matt. 5:16).

The life you live is the main praise. Singing is only a small part of that.

Christians live to demonstrate who they are called to be: the chosen, believers in the Lord, brothers and disciples, the faithful, slaves of God, holy ones, and those who call on the name of the Lord (Col. 3:12; Acts 5:14; 6:3; 9:2; Rom. 6:22).

When you live like that, your life itself becomes worship.

Conclusion

Praising God as a Christian is not about performance. It is about living under Christ's authority and letting your life point others to Him. That is the praise that God receives and rewards.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. How can praise given to God differ from other praises?
 - * Praise to God is based on truth and His character, and it is done in Christ's name (Col. 3:17). Other praise is often flattery, self-focused, or tied to human achievement. God's praise comes from a life aligned with His Word.
2. If a Christian is not a Christian in deed, can God receive his praise and give him a positive reward?
 - * No. God looks at the heart and the life behind the praise. If someone claims Christ but does not live by His teaching, their praise is empty (Matt. 7:21-23; Jam. 2:17). God rewards faith that works.

3. If not for lip praise, can praise be given to God through other means? Yes or No? If yes, what are they?
- * Yes.
 - A changed life that shows mercy, honesty, and love (Matt. 5:16).
 - Obedience to Christ's teaching (John 14:15).
 - Service to others that meets real needs (Heb. 13:16).
 - Enduring suffering for Christ's sake (1 Pet. 4:16).
 - * All of these praise God more loudly than words alone.

Prayer

Father, thank You for calling us Christians. Give us grace to live in a way that truly praises You. Help us to trust Your promises and depend on You daily, so our lives become a living offering of thanksgiving. Amen.

Thanking God for The Secular Government

Text

Romans 13:1-17 *¹Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ²Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.*

³For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. ⁴For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practises evil. ⁵Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake.

⁶For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. ⁷Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

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Memory Verse

Rom. 13:3 (NIV) *For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended.*

Introduction

To govern means to guide and direct through authorized institutions. Where there is no law, there is no order. Where there is no order, there is no government. And where there is no government, society breaks down.

Government is a blessing when both the leaders and the people live by fair rules. The government of heaven, extended to earth through Christ and His Church, is the perfect model for every secular government.

Objective

To see the blessings that come with having government, and what is lost when there is anarchy.

Presentation

1. Government is a Unifying Force

People can only pool their resources - human and natural - effectively under a central system called government.

That is how you get harmony in daily life and in business, so that everyone can benefit.

Gen. 11:1-9 shows what happens when people unite against God.

But when government functions under God's order, it creates stability for work, trade, and community life.

2. Government Provides the Blessing of Restraint

With government in place, people with evil intentions can be restrained. That authority exists for the good of peace-loving people.

That is why God tells us to pray for the government in power (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

Have you been praying sincerely for your federal, state, and local leaders, or have you been speaking against them instead? Prayer gives God room to work through them.

3. Government Brings the Blessing of Promotion and Empowerment

When law and order are enforced, those who do good are protected and promoted (Rom. 13:3).

Civil authorities are allowed by God to distribute material resources fairly through laws that meet real needs. In the same way, the Church is placed by God to share spiritual resources - the more important, eternal ones - through Christ's teaching (Eph. 1:13-14; 2:17-19; 3:6).

Anyone in the world who does not trust what Jesus teaches is poor in the truest sense. That is the "poverty in spirit" Jesus mentioned in Matt. 5:3. That is the real hunger Scripture talks about (Matt. 5:6).

Conclusion

Government is not perfect, but it is a gift from God to keep society from collapsing into chaos. When it functions well, it restrains evil, promotes good, and creates room for both material and spiritual life to flourish. That is why we thank God for it.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. Considering the effects of anarchy and governance, what are two merits of a government?
 - (1) Unity and coordination. Government allows people to pool resources and work together for common good.
 - (2) Restraint of evil. Government holds back those with harmful intentions so that peace-loving people can live safely (Rom. 13:4).
2. What makes an individual a part of an extant government?
 - * Living under its laws, participating in its civic life, and submitting to its authority, as long as it does not contradict God's commands (Rom. 13:1-2). You are part of it by being a resident and subject to its rule.
3. Who are the givers of power to those in authority after God?
 - * The people. God establishes authority, but He works through people to place leaders in power. That is why we are told to pray for them and respect their office. (Rom. 13:1; 1 Pet. 2:13-14).

4. Why should we pray for our government?
- * Because prayer invites God to guide leaders so that we can live peaceful and godly lives. (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Praying for government is obeying God and caring for the good of everyone under that government.

Prayer

Father, thank You for the gift of government. Give us a spirit of loyalty and teach us to pray consistently for our leaders at every level. Remind us that no authority exists apart from Your permission. Help us to live as good citizens and faithful disciples of Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Amen.

Thanksgiving for Daily Upkeep

Text

Matt. 6:25-34 ²⁵ *Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?* ²⁶ *Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?* ²⁷ *Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?*

²⁸ *So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;* ²⁹ *and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.* ³⁰ *Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*

³¹ *Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'* ³² *For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.* ³³ *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.* ³⁴ *Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*

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Memory Verse

1 Thess. 5:23-24 (NIV) ²³ *May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* ²⁴ *The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.*

Introduction

When pagans worry, it opens the door for more sinful ideas. That is because the one who lives in them – Satan - uses worry to push them toward wrongdoing (Eph. 2:1-2; Rom. 1:30).

We are different. Jesus lives in us through the Holy Spirit. He is our guarantee that God is faithful. He said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” (Heb. 13:5)

Objective

To see why we should thank God for the daily grace of life, for our upkeep, and for everything that concerns us.

Presentation

1. Our Physical Life is a Reason for Praise

It is God's grace in Christ that gets us into each new day, often through the ministry of angels (Heb. 1:14).

He has been doing this from the start. He began the work of securing and sustaining us in our mother's womb, through birth, and now He has perfected it by bringing us into the kingdom of His Son (Phil. 1:6; Col. 1:12-14). Praise God for that.

2. He Keeps Everything That Concerns Us

No amount of praise can fully cover how God cares for all that concerns us.

Think of it:

- * Family: husbands, wives, children, relatives.
- * Spiritual family: pastors, other Christians, your mind, will, and attitude.
- * Work and life: your job, shop, workshop, safety in travel - for you and everyone connected to you, physically and spiritually.

The list never ends. He is involved in all of it.

3. Respond with Songs and Prayers of Thanksgiving

Singing! Singing!! Singing!!!

Prayers of thanksgiving.

This is the right response to a God who protects and sustains daily.

Conclusion

Use this time to sing spiritual songs to the glory of God, our Protector and Sustainer. To Him be all glory, power, dominion, majesty, and honour now and forever. Amen! Amen!! Amen!!!

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. Why does worry lead to sin, according to the introduction?
 - * When pagans worry, it gives Satan room to plant more sinful ideas in their minds (Eph. 2:1-2; Rom 1:30). Worry disconnects them from God's care and opens them to destructive thoughts. For believers, Christ in us is the guarantee that we do not have to live like that (Heb. 13:5).

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2. Give two reasons from the lesson why our physical life itself is worth praising God for.
 - (1) He gives us each new day through His grace and the ministry of angels (Heb. 1:14).
 - (2) He has sustained us from the womb to now and brought us into His kingdom (Phil. 1:6; Col. 1:12-14). Our very existence and preservation are His work.
3. What are three areas of “all that concerns us” that God keeps, according to (2) above?
 - (1) Family relationships – spouse, children, relatives.
 - (2) Spiritual life – pastors, other believers, and our own mind and will.
 - (3) Work and daily activities – jobs, businesses, travel, and safety for us and our partners.
4. Why is singing and prayer the right response to God’s daily upkeep?
 - * Because thanksgiving acknowledges that He is the source. Singing and prayer shift our focus from worry to trust, and they give Him the glory He deserves for protecting and sustaining us daily.

5. True or False: We can thank God too much for His care.
- * False. No amount of praise and thanksgiving can match what He has done. We should keep thanking Him without limit.

Prayer

Father, thank You for keeping me alive today and for taking care of everything that concerns me. Forgive me for the times I worry instead of trusting You. Help me to live with a heart full of thanksgiving, singing and praying to You daily. To You alone be all glory now and forever. Amen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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He is the Founder and Team Lead of READ AND REAP BIBLE ENTERPRISES (a.k.a. READ AND REAP MISSION), a discipleship and mercy ministry inaugurated on 23rd April 2019. The mission provides Bibles, books, school fees and spiritual care to orphans and vulnerable children across Nigeria.

His life message is simple: The Church is not a place we go; she is a people we become.

ABOUT THE BOOK

THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRISTIAN WORSHIP exposes wrong teachings about worship, and restores Christ's pattern.

Are you worshipping God, or just doing religious activities?

Many lambs are faithful, but tired. They pray, sing, give, attend every service, yet something feels dry. That 'something' is ignorance. Wrong teaching about worship is a virus that makes us worship in vain (Mark 7:7).

If your worship feels like duty instead of joy, this book will set you free.

Inside you will learn:

- 1 the purpose of worship: we are co-workers and priests to relieve the world;
- 2 where we worship now: the true sanctuary is invisible and eternal, not a physical building;
- 3 how to worship in spirit and truth daily;
- 4 what to reject: for example Old Covenant 'shadows' that have become idolatry and witchcraft today.

God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. (John 4:24)

