

THE
TRUTH
ABOUT
CHRISTIAN
UNITY



MICHAEL JAMES EKPERIKPE

THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRISTIAN UNITY

By Michael James Ekperikpe

THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRISTIAN UNITY

Copyright © 2026 by READ AND REAP BIBLE ENTERPRISES.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other, except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version®.

Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®.

Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used with permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations marked (KJV) are taken from the KING JAMES VERSION, public domain.

Published by:

READ AND REAP BIBLE ENTERPRISES

Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

CONTACT DETAILS FOR PUBLISHER

Address: 5 Aba Rd, Port Harcourt, Rivers State,
Nigeria 500102.

Email: readreapbscph@gmail.com.

Tel: +(234) 7053417736.

Website: readandreap.org.

First Edition: July 2026.

**For official free PDF download and updates, free
to share non-commercially, visit
www.thetruthaboutthechristianchurch.org**

© Michael Ekperikpe, 2026.

**For bulk purchases, ministry discounts, or
speaking engagements, contact
READ AND REAP MISSION.**

Email: readreapbscph@gmail.com.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To God the Father, through Jesus Christ the Author and Finisher of our faith, all praise.

Without His mercy, patience, and the teaching of the Holy Spirit, this book could not have been written.

My deep gratitude to every elder, teacher, and believer who tested these truths in the local church. Your hunger for sound doctrine and true worship has sharpened this work. May we all “come in the unity of the faith... to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13).

May the Lord use this material to build up His Church, to establish believers in truth, and to bring glory to Him 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 UNITY

This book is the fourth book in the series ‘**The Truth About the Christian Church**’, containing 16 chapters, each of which is termed “a virus”.

Book four is slightly different in approach from the first three books. Books 1 to 3 removed ignorance about Church, Worship, and Tradition. This book builds the house. Unity is the roof that covers all lambs so that the rain of division cannot enter.

Beloved lamb, if you have ever wept over the divisions in the Body of Christ, this book is for you.

We say “one Body” (1 Cor. 12:12). Yet we live like many bodies. Denomination vs denomination. Nation vs nation. Building vs building. Doctrine vs doctrine. Walls are everywhere.

But Christ prayed one prayer before He died: “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” (John 17:21)

If Jesus prayed it, it must be possible. If the Body is still broken, something is attacking it.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book names the attackers. We call them 16 Viruses of Unity, not because “Unity” is sick, but because viruses hide, spread, and kill without being seen. They are deadly teachings that break the Body of Christ. Satan’s main weapon is division. When lambs are ignorant, they fight each other over names, days, traditions, and ceremonies, instead of standing one in Christ (1 Cor. 1:10).

What is a Virus of Unity?

Any teaching, tradition, system, or mindset that breaks what Christ joined (Matt. 19:6). It may sound “spiritual”, it may look “biblical”, but its fruits are division, pride, and cold hearts.

Some Such Viruses That We Will Expose

- * Group salvation: our church or denomination or nation has it (Eze. 18:20).
- * Wrong headship: man ruling where Christ should rule (Col. 1:18).
- * Clergy vs laity: two classes in Christ’s Body (1. Pet. 2:9).
- * Denominational spirit: “I am of Paul”, “I am of Apollos” (1 Cor. 1:12).
- * Ceremonial idolatry and money: buildings, funds, fleecing (Eze. 34:2).

ABOUT THIS BOOK

- * Control and hierarchy: lordship instead of servant-leadership (Matt. 20:25).
- * Wrong gospel: preaching Moses, culture, or self, instead of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4).
- * Fear and threats: Heb. 6:6 used to chain, not to heal.
- * Human traditions: making void the word of God (Mark 7:13).
- * Competition: comparing, measuring, striving (2 Cor. 10:12).
- * Partiality: respect of persons (Jam. 2:1).
- * Secret sins in leaders: covering what should be judged (1 Cor. 5:6).
- * Dead orthodoxy: having a form of godliness, but denying its power (2 Tim. 3:5).
- * Offence and unforgiveness: root of bitterness (Heb. 12:15).
- * Lack of “remnant mindset”: forgetting that God saves individuals, not institutions (Rom. 11:5).

How to Read This Book

Do not read to judge others. Read with one question in mind: “Lord, is this virus in me?”

Ps. 139:23-24 ²³*Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties;*
²⁴*And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.*

ABOUT THIS BOOK

The purpose is not to attack people. The purpose is to expose viruses so that Christ can heal the Body (Eph. 4:16).

The goal is not perfect organization. The goal is Christ. When He is truly all, we are truly one: “Christ is all, and in all.” (Col. 3:11)

Lambs do not fight other lambs. Wolves do. So if your heart burns for unity, not for victory in arguments, then turn the page.

The Good Shepherd is calling His sheep by name (John 10:3). He is calling us out of systems that divide, into Himself who unites.

Shall we begin?

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 fourth 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.*

Viruses

Nomenclature Differences	1
Confusion of ‘Church Hall’ for ‘Church’	7
The Ownership Virus	13
Forceful Freedom from Poverty	17
Avarice for Leadership	21
Ignorance of the Gospel	26
Ignorance of King Jesus’s Constitution	36
Pitfalls of Scripture Interpretation (I).....	44
Pitfalls of Scripture Interpretation (II).....	49
Ignorance of New Covenant Worship Updates (I)....	64
Ignorance of New Covenant Worship Updates (II)...	72
Ignorance of New Covenant Worship Updates (III)..	80
Ignorance of New Covenant Worship Updates (IV) .	90
Ignorance of New Covenant Worship Updates (V) ..	98
The Mistake of Majoring in Minors	125
The Name of Jesus: “He Will Save” Crosses Every Language	133

Nomenclature Differences

“Nomenclature”: ‘a systematic way of naming things to show ownership’.

Introduction

This virus makes believers fight over church names and labels: “Methodist”, “Pentecostal”, “Baptist”, and so on.

But Jesus never gave His Church a brand name or denomination. Why? Because there is only ONE body, and He is the Head. There is one body, and one Spirit (Eph. 4:4).

In Nigeria, a name such as “Michael James” shows that Michael belongs to James. “Joseph John” belongs to John. But all believers belong to the SAME Owner: “the one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all” (Eph. 4:6). Names divide. Christ unites. His prayer is “that they all may be one” (John 17:21).

Objectives

By the end of this virus, every disciple will:

(1) Know what “nomenclature” means in this context: naming to show ownership.

(2) See that Jesus gave no brand name. He only gave relationship names.

(3) Understand that the Church is people, not a physical building. We are living stones, not signs (1 Pet. 2:5).

(4) Reject division by names. Stop saying “my church vs your church” and say “His Church” (Col. 1:18).

Presentation

1. What “Nomenclature” Means

“Nomenclature” means ‘a systematic way of naming things’. In the context of the Church, “nomenclature” shows ownership, like a name tag on clothes.

But Christ never said “Name my church ‘XYZ Denomination’.”

2. Scripture Uses Relationship Names, Not Brand Names

Jesus did not say “Methodist Church” or “He or She is ‘Pentecostal’”. The Bible gives relationship names:

(1) “The Church of God in Corinth” (1 Cor. 1:2).
We belong to God the Father.

VIRUS 1

(2) “Churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16).

We belong to Jesus the Son.

(3) “Temple of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:21-22).

We belong to the Holy Spirit.

All relationship names show that we belong to the Godhead. None separates us. Eph. 4:4-6 says “one body, and one Spirit... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all”.

3. The Church is People, Not a Place or Signboard

Col. 1:18 says “He is the head of the body, the church”. 1 Pet. 2:5 says “ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house”.

The church is not cement and roof. It is believers joined to Christ. You can remove the sign, but you cannot remove the people and still have Church.

4. How This Virus Attacks Unity

When we say “My church vs your church”, we cut what Jesus joined. Eph. 4:3 says “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit”.

Names make us think of different owners. But 1 Cor. 12:13 says “by one Spirit are we all baptized

into one body... and have been all made to drink into one Spirit”.

One Spirit, one body, one Owner.

Denominational names create fences where Christ removed walls (Eph. 2:14).

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What do we mean by “nomenclature” in this context?
 - * A system of naming things to show ownership. Like a name tag that says “belongs to”.
2. What brand name or denomination did Jesus give to His Church?
 - * None. He used relationship names: “Church of God” (1 Cor. 1:2), “Churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16), “Temple of the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22).
3. How many bodies does Christ have?
 - * One. Eph. 4:4 says “There is one body, and one Spirit”. Not many bodies for many names.

VIRUS 1

4. What is the Church according to the Bible?
 - * People, not a physical building. 1 Pet. 2:5 says that we are “living stones... a spiritual house.” We are the house.
5. How do “nomenclature” differences attack Christian unity?
 - * They make us say “we are different” because of names. It forgets that we all belong to one Lord, one Spirit, one God (Eph. 4:5-6).
6. Which verse shows that we all drink into one Spirit?
 - * 1 Cor. 12:13. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body... and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

Prayer

Father, in the name of Jesus, forgive us for dividing Your body with names and labels. Teach us to see every believer the way You do, as one body, one Spirit, one hope. Heal the virus of nomenclature in our hearts. Let us stop saying “my church” and start saying “Your Church, Lord.” Make us one, even as You, Father, and the Son are one. We belong to You: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Confusion of ‘Church Hall’ for ‘Church’

“Confusion”: ‘mixing two things that are not the same’.

Introduction

This virus makes believers think that the physical building with roof and chairs is “the Church”. But Jesus never called cement “Church”. He called PEOPLE “Church”. Matt. 16:18 says “I will build My church”.

The seed that grows the Church is God’s Word.
“The seed is the word of God.” (Luke 8:11)
Not bricks, not steel.

When a heart believes the Word, Jesus adds that person to His Church (Acts 2:47), writes their name in the Book of Life (Luke 10:20), and protects them (1 John 5:18). That can happen in a bus, house, train, or airplane. The hall is just shelter. The people are the Church.

Objectives

By the end of this virus, every learner will:

(1) Know what makes “the Church”: God’s Word and believing hearts, not physical buildings (Jam. 1:18).

(2) See the real role of Church halls: not “holy shrines”, but places of assembly providing shelter from the sun and rain.

(3) Reject idol thinking. Do not treat physical buildings as though God lives inside them (Acts 7:48).

(4) Understand that Jesus adds us, not buildings. He adds saved people to the Church (Acts 2:47).

Presentation

1. God’s Word Gives Birth To The Church, Not Physical Buildings

Luke 8:11: “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.”

Jam.1:18: “Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.”

The “seed” is the Gospel. The “ground” is the human heart. When the Word enters and faith comes, God gives birth to a child of His kingdom. That child and other children are the Church. No physical building is needed. Acts 2:41 says “they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about

three thousand souls.” Added to what? To the Church, not to a hall.

2. The Church Meets Anywhere That Believers Gather

Whether bus, house, train, airplane, it does not matter. Acts 2:46 says “they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house”.

Jesus sees the heart. When He sees commitment, He adds the person to the saved list. Acts 2:47 says “...the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” He also writes the name in His “Book of Life” (Luke 10:20) and starts protecting the person. 1 John 5:18 says “he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.”

3. A Church Hall or Cathedral is for Shelter, not Worship

Meeting shelters or Church halls must not be called “Church” or “God’s house”. Why? God does not live in physical buildings. Acts 7:48 says “howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands”. If we call the hall “Church”, God sees it as shrine for idols. That is dangerous.

VIRUS 2

So what is the hall for? Two things only:

- * A convenient and known place to gather for corporate worship.
- * Protection against the elements: wind, rain, snow and sun, so that saints do not faint under the Ukanafun sun.

That is all. It is a shed, not a sanctuary. The sanctuary is us. 1 Cor. 6:19 says: “your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit”.

4. Summary

The Church is the born-again people, born by the Word: Jam. 1:18.

The hall is a place in which to meet with a roof to protect the people from the sun and rain.

Do not confuse them. Worship God in Spirit (John 4:24), not in a physical building. The building can burn, but the Church will live forever because Jesus protects every name in His book.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What is the “seed” that gives birth to the Church?
 - * The Word of God. Luke 8:11 says “The seed is the word of God.” Not money, not bricks.
2. Can a person be added to the Church in a bus or house?
 - * Yes. Acts 2:47: “...the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” Location does not matter. Heart commitment does.
3. What are two uses of a church hall / cathedral?
 - * As a convenient place for corporate assembly.
 - * Protection against the sun and rain. It is a shelter, not “God’s house”.
4. Why must we not call the physical building “Church”?
 - * Because God does not live in physical buildings (Acts 7:48). Calling it “Church” makes it look like an idol shrine. The real Church is people (1 Pet. 2:5).

5. What does Jesus do when a person believes the Word?

- * Three things:
 - i. adds them to the Church (Acts 2:47);
 - ii. writes their name in the Book of Life (Luke 10:20);
 - iii. starts protecting them (1 John 5:18).

Prayer

Father, forgive us for calling physical buildings “Church” while Your Church is Your people.

Plant Your Word deep in our hearts and give us new birth.

Teach us not to call cement and roof Your temple, but to see every believer as Your temple. Let us use halls for shelter only, but worship You in spirit and truth.

Write our names clearly in Your Book of Life and keep us safe.

In Jesus’s name, the Builder of the true Church, Amen.

The Ownership Virus

Introduction

Acts 20:28 *Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

A sincere believer hears “This is my church. My ministry. My members.” Then he reads Acts 20:28 and get confused. Who bought him? The pastor or Jesus? If a man “owns” them, they run back to the world where at least ownership is honest.

Unless God Who bought us (His Church) with the priceless blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, decides to lease or sell us to another, or dies for someone else to inherit us, no one on earth is by any means qualified to own us.

Do you “own Church”? Please, renounce now that you know, because until now you have shown ignorance to the provision regarding this in God's word (see Acts 17:30-31).

Presentation

1. What Scripture Says

(1) God paid, God owns.

Acts 20:28 ...to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood.

(2) Christians are not property. They are blood-bought.

1 Pet. 1:18-19 (KJV) ...ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish.

(3) No man-ownership, only Christ-ownership.

1 Cor. 7:23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

(4) Now that we know, we renounce (Acts 17:30).

Acts 17:30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.

2. Why This Virus Scatters Lambs of Christ

(1) A lamb reads 1 Pet. 1:18 and it says “bought with blood”. The lamb thinks “I belong to Jesus”.

VIRUS 3

(2) His Pastor says “my members, my church”.
The lamb thinks “Wait, I have two owners?”
Confusion sets in (Matt. 6:24).

(3) The lamb leaves saying it is better to be “no
man’s member” than “two men’s property”
(Matt. 18:6).

3. The Bottom Line

Christian Unity says there is No Owner But
Christ. The Church is not a business. Believers
are not “members” of a man. We are members of
Christ (1 Cor. 12:27). God bought us with blood.
Unless God dies again for someone else to
inherit us, no pastor, bishop, or “ministry
founder” can own us. We must renounce it now
(Acts 17:30).

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. Who purchased the Church?
 - * God with His own blood (Acts 20:28).
2. What were we redeemed with?
 - * Not silver or gold, but with the precious
blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

VIRUS 3

3. What must we do now that we know the truth?
 - * Repent and renounce ownership (Acts 17:30).
4. Can a man own what Jesus bought with blood?
 - * No. Only God can lease or sell us.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, You bought us with blood. Forgive us for writing “Pastor’s Church” on what is Yours.

Break every chain of man-ownership. Let lambs know that they belong to You alone.

If I have called Your bride “my ministry”, I repent. She is Your Church.

Feed every blood-bought lamb. Amen.

Forceful Freedom from Poverty

Introduction

Many preachers today sell the Gospel as though it were “market goods”. They promise “instant wealth” if you sow seed. But Jesus never charged for miracles (Matt. 10:8). The Gospel is free because He paid for it. This virus makes money the master, not Jesus.

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the lamb will:

- (1) Know that the Gospel cannot be sold (2 Cor. 2:17).
- (2) Ask Jesus “what must I do?” not “what will You give me?” (Acts 22:10)
- (3) Rest in Christ’s riches even when their pocket is empty (Rev. 2:19).
- (4) Practise contentment and self-control (1 Tim. 6:6).

Presentation

1. See The Lie

Teaching: “Give money to get money. Seed becomes harvest.”

Truth: “Freely you have received. Freely give.”
(Matt 10:8)

Jesus healed, fed, delivered... no price tag.
Forceful money demands are not from Him.

2. Hear Jesus’s First Question

Paul asked (Acts 9:6 KJV): “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

In Luke 3:10 the people asked “What shall we do then?”

Followers ask for direction, not dollars. The challenge you face does not make you poor before Jesus.

3. Know Your True Riches

In Rev. 2:9, Jesus told the poor church in Smyrna: “I know your ... poverty (but you are rich)”.

You carry eternal treasure (2 Cor. 4:7). Finance is a challenge, not your identity. God is faithful, your bank account is not.

4. Walk in Contentment

Rom. 12:16 says “be content”.

1 Tim. 6:6-10 says “godliness with contentment is great gain”.

Love of money is the root of evil (1 Tim. 6:10).

Jesus takes care of sincere servants (Matt. 6:33).

We serve Him, not money.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What is “Forceful Freedom from Poverty”?
 - * Teaching that forces money from people by promising wealth for “seed.” It sells what Jesus gave us for free (Matt. 10:8; 2 Cor. 2:17).
2. Did Jesus take money before healing?
 - * No. “Freely you have received. Freely give.” (Matt. 10:8)
3. What did Paul ask Jesus after he was saved?
 - * “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 22:10). Not “what will You give me?”
4. Can a believer be poor and still rich?
 - * Yes. Rev. 2:19. We are rich because we have Christ, not cash.

VIRUS 4

5. What must every preacher and believer practise?

- * Contentment and self-control (Rom. 12:16; 1 Tim. 6:6). Trust in God's faithfulness.

Prayer

Father, in Jesus's name, forgive us for selling what You gave us for free.

Teach us to say: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

If we lack, remind us that we are rich in You. If we have, keep us content.

Protect every lamb from merchants. Let them hear only Your voice.

Jesus, we serve You, not money. You are faithful. Amen.

Avarice for Leadership

“Avarice”: ‘greedy hunger for position, title, power’.

Introduction

This virus makes leaders fight to stay in charge even when God and the people are saying “step down”.

It is the love of title, not service. Jesus warned against it in Matt. 20:25, saying in Matt. 20:26 (KJV): “whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister”.

God’s leaders do not grab position. They serve, “not by compulsion, but willingly... nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being ensamples to the flock” (1 Pet. 5:2-3).

Objectives

By the end of this virus, every learner will:

(1) Know servanthood is not shame; it is an honour to serve under godly leaders.

Heb. 5:4 *And no man takes this honour to himself.*

(2) Learn to honour rightly. Say “sir”, “senior” freely. It is Bible language, not slavery. “In honour giving preference to one another.” (Rom. 12:10)

(3) See leadership as imitation, not command. A leader does first, then calls others to follow. “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” (1 Cor. 11:1)

(4) Reject greed for position. Leaders who cling to the saddle when sheep cry “leave” are not led by God. God’s will is John 10:11 which states, “the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep”.

Presentation

1. Serving Under Others Is Not Defeat

It is not depravity, not shameful, not sinful. Phil. 2:3 says: “in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves”. If someone has shown themselves a “servant-leader” like Christ, it is wisdom to follow them. Even slaves in the New Testament led in some way (Eph. 6:5-6).

Every human leads somewhere. But we all serve under Christ: “you serve the Lord Christ” (Col. 3:24).

2. Leadership is God-Given and Has Levels

Heb. 5:4 says “no man takes this honour unto himself, but he who is called by God”.

God puts leaders in place (Rom. 13:1).

Levels exist: Christ → apostles → elders → sheep (1 Cor. 12:28). That is order, not pride.

3. A Real Leader Leads by Example, Not by Force

A ruler shouts commands. A leader lives it first.

Phil. 4:9 says “the things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do”.

Paul did not just preach “imitate Christ”. He lived it. “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” (1 Cor. 11:1)

4. Great Leaders Make Others Great

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (Matt.5:48 (KJV))

Leadership extends heaven to earth.

A great leader does not force himself on people.

He builds them up “for the perfecting of the saints” (Eph. 4:12 (KJV)).

Christ protects the sheep even when they give Him nothing back. He laid down His life for us while we were sinners (Rom. 5:8).

John 10:14 *I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.*

5. God Never Wants Leaders to Cling to Power When Sheep Cry Out

If the people God gave you are crying “leave”, and you still insist on staying, that is not God’s will. It is avarice.

Christ left heaven to serve (Phil. 2:7). Any leader who will not leave position for the sheep’s good is not following Him.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. Is it shameful to call another believer “sir” or “senior”?
 - * No. It is servanthood language (Rom. 13:7). Jesus washed feet but still called disciples “friends” (John 15:14). Honour is not pride.
2. What makes a man a true leader, not just a ruler?
 - * A ruler commands. A leader imitates Christ first, then says “follow me” (1 Cor. 11:1). He does, then teaches.

3. What should a leader do when the people he leads cry for him to leave?
 - * Obey God and leave. Clinging to position when sheep suffer is avarice, not service. God removed Saul when he disobeyed (1 Sam.15:23).

Prayer

Father, break avarice for position from our hearts. Make us servant-leaders like Jesus who came “to serve, and to give his life”. Teach us to honour those You set over us, and to step down when Your Spirit says “enough”. Let no man cling to the saddle when sheep cry out. Make us great by making others great, for Your glory. In Jesus’s name, Amen.

Ignorance of the Gospel

“Ignorance”: ‘not knowing, or knowing wrongly’.

Introduction

This virus makes believers think that the Gospel is a set of church rules, culture, or good behaviour. But the Gospel is a Person and an event. 1 Cor. 15:1-4 says “I declare unto you the gospel... how that Christ died for our sins... was buried, and rose again the third day”.

When we do not know the real Gospel, we preach Moses, culture, or ourselves instead of Christ. That is ignorance. The only remedy for ignorance is enlightenment, through Christ and His word.

John 8:12 “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

2 Tim. 2:15 Study to show yourself approved.

Objectives

By the end of this virus, every learner will:

VIRUS 6

- (1) Know the basic elements of the Gospel: Death, burial, resurrection, ascension, return (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 24-26).
- (2) See Christ as the only perfect model. Not Abraham, Moses, Elijah, John or Paul. Only Jesus lived sin free (1 Pet. 2:22).
- (3) Understand the Gospel's power in real life. It saves eternally, unites Jews and Gentiles, and shows God's love through our hands (1 John 3:17).
- (4) Keep unity without mixing error. We keep love, peace, unity (Eph. 4:3), but we do not cancel Christ's commands or call "culture" sin, or put stumbling blocks in the way of our brother (Rom. 14:13).

Presentation

1. What is The Gospel? Four Parts

1 Cor. 15:1-4, 24-26 state the four parts as follows:

(1) Death.

Christ died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3). That is how God forgives us (Isa. 53:5).

VIRUS 6

(2) Burial.

He was really dead and he was buried (1 Cor. 15:4). No fake death.

(3) Resurrection.

He rose on the third day (1 Cor. 15:4) and was seen by Cephas and others in turn (1 Cor. 15:5). The witnesses to His resurrection prove that He beat sin and death (Rom. 4:25).

(4) Ascension and Return.

He went to heaven in a real body (Acts 1:9). He is coming back in flesh and bone (Luke 24:39), not flesh and blood (1 Cor. 15:50).

He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. At the end, when He puts an end to all authority and power, He will deliver the kingdom to God the Father. The last enemy to be destroyed is death (1 Cor. 15:24-26).

Whilst living by His Spirit, believers are reigning with Him to be culminated when He returns.

That is it. Simple. 1 Cor. 1:18 says “the preaching of the cross is... the power of God”.

Anyone who says “too simple, too foolish” (1 Cor. 1:23) has no other remedy. Rejecting this equates to no salvation (Acts 4:12).

Acts 4:12 *Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*

2. Christ Is The Only Perfect Model

We do not preach Abraham, Moses, Elijah, John Baptist, or even Paul as the model. Why? They all sinned (Rom. 3:23).

Only Christ lived sin-free. Heb. 4:15 says that He was in all things “tempted as we are, yet without sin”.

So the Gospel is “preach Christ with His sin-free character”.

Follow Christ’s example. “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.” (1 Pet. 2:21)

God wants us to live as He would live among people:

1 John 2:6 *He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.*

3. The Gospel Enables Selfless Living

No-one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3). To confess and believe,

VIRUS 6

in accordance with Rom. 10:9-10, we must have the Spirit:

Rom. 10:9-10 ⁹ *If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

When we believe the Gospel, we are baptised with the Holy Spirit, and through the Spirit we are born again with a new heart to obey.

John 14:15-18 ¹⁵ *“If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷the 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. ¹⁸I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”*

2 Cor. 5:17 *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

The Spirit enables us to “keep His commandments”, to “keep the ordinances ... as I delivered them” (1 Cor. 1:2).

The Gospel unites us as one body, having broken down the middle wall of separation (Eph. 2:14). Jews and Greeks (Gentiles) were mixed in the assembly. The Gospel did not break them into “Jewish church” and “Greek church”. It taught them to live together in Christ’s love (Rom. 10:12, 2 Cor. 5:14-17).

But “administering the Gospel has no traditional approach”. Rom. 14:1-23 means that we do not fight over food, holy days, dress, as long as we do not break Christ’s commands: “the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17).

4. The Real Gospel is Love with Hands and Purity in Heart

1 John 3:17 (NIV) *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?*

If we preach the Gospel but have no pity, we are liars (1 John 1:6).

As James wrote: “pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit

orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world” (Jam. 1:27).

Rom. 13:1-7 says “honour authorities”. Holiness, hospitality, humility are the hallmark of a person following the true Gospel. And these should not be reserved only for believers. In 1 John 3:17-19, we are entreated to share love with all.

5. What about culture, food, dress, gender roles?

Christ has shown us “the Way” in which to walk. The Gospel:

- * Approves what is good: ordinances and behaviours that unite people (1 Cor. 11:7-16, Acts 13:1-3; Rom. 14:5-6). Jesus is not against culture unless it worships demons (1 Cor. 10:14, 1 Cor. 10:19-20; Acts 17:22-25).
- * Changes behaviours that are destructive, teaching us to drop sin and error.

We do not divide over food (Rom. 14:1-3, 1 Cor. 8:13), or worship days (Rom. 14:5-6).

Neither are we in bondage to “the elements”:

Gal. 4:8-10^a *Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no*

VIRUS 6

gods. ⁹ But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? ¹⁰ Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. ¹¹ I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

We let no one judge us “in food or in drink, or regarding a feast or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” (Col. 2:16-17).

But at the same time, we do not cancel Christ’s commands. 1 Cor. 11:7-16; 1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:11-15 are “commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37); they are not culture.

Further, we “flee idolatry” (1 Cor. 10:14). We steer well clear of anything that has any hint of paganism or worship of anyone but God. We do not follow the multitude to do evil (Ex. 23:2).

We pursue peace “till we all come in the unity of the faith” (Eph. 4:13), on the foundation Christ laid (1 Cor. 3:10-11), not on traditions of men that break His Word. We “contend earnestly for the faith that was once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3) and “pursue the things which make for

peace and the things by which one may edify another” (Rom. 14:19, see also 1 Pet. 3:10-12).

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What are the four basic parts of the Gospel?
 - * Death for sins, burial, resurrection on the third day, ascension and promised return (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 24-26).
2. Why do we preach Christ only as the model, not Moses or Paul?
 - * Only Christ lived without sin (Heb. 4:15). Moses, Paul, all men sinned (Rom. 3:23). We follow Christ: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” (1 Cor. 11:1)
3. Does the Gospel destroy all culture and tradition?
 - * No. It keeps good culture that unites (Acts 13:1-3; Rom. 14:5-6). But it destroys culture that worships demons (1 Cor. 10:19-20) or breaks Christ’s commands (1 Cor. 14:37).

4. How do I know if I really believe the Gospel?

* Two tests:

- i. Your heart is pure like Christ, loving one another fervently (1 Pet. 1:22, John 13:35).
- ii. Your hands show love (1 John 3:17). No pity equals no Gospel. "By their fruits you will know them." (Matt. 7:20)

Prayer

Father, deliver us from ignorance of the true Gospel. Burn '1 Cor. 15:3-4' into our hearts. Make Christ our only model, His death our only hope, His return our only future. Teach us to live as You would live among people. Let love flow from our hands and holiness from our hearts. Keep us united in truth, not divided by tradition. In Jesus's name, the Gospel Himself, Amen.

Ignorance of King Jesus's Constitution

“Ignorance”: ‘not knowing the King or His law’.

Introduction

Every kingdom has three things: a king, subjects, and a constitution / law. Jesus is the King: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” (Matt. 28:18)

We are His subjects. The new covenant (constitution) is in His blood: “For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” (Matt. 26:28)

This virus makes believers live by Moses's old law while claiming Jesus as King (Luke 6:46). That is analogous to using “pre-independence” British law to run Nigeria's 2026 government.

Heb. 8:13 uses the word “obsolete” and the phrase “ready to vanish away”:

Heb. 8:13 *In that He says, “A new covenant”, He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.*

Objectives

By the end of this virus, every Bible student will:

- (1) Know that Jesus is King now: King of kings, Commander-in-Chief (Rev. 9:16).
- (2) Understand the New Constitution: His blood, not Moses's law (Heb. 9:15-18, Heb. 9:23).
- (3) Reject mixing old and new. The Old covenant makes slaves. The New covenant equals freedom (Gal. 4:24-26; Mark 2:22).
- (4) Live as free subjects under King Jesus, not as slaves of men, but as priests under Christ (1 Cor. 7:23; Heb. 7:12).

Presentation

1. Jesus is King of God's Kingdom Now

At the Last Supper (Matt. 26:26-29), Jesus said that His shed blood is the blood "of the new covenant" and equates it with constitution. He is "Christ", the Anointed King to reign forever. "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever." (Heb. 1:8)

In heaven He is Commander-in-Chief: "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:11-16).

Every kingdom needs:

- * A King: King Jesus.
- * Subjects: all believers born again. “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.” (Jam. 1:18 (KJV))
- * A Constitution: the New Testament sealed by His blood. “A testament is of force after men are dead.” (Heb. 9:17)

2. Old covenant vs New covenant. Like Old Wineskin vs New Wine

Mark 2:21-22 ²¹ *No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; or else the new piece pulls away from the old, and the tear is made worse. ²² And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins.*

The old covenant was given through Moses at Sinai (Ex. 19:5). It was for Israel only. The book and the people were sprinkled by animal blood (Heb. 9:19). Judgment under the old covenant was “fracture for fracture”, “eye for eye”, “tooth for tooth” (Lev. 24:19-20).

The new covenant, given through Christ at Calvary, is written in His blood. “How much more shall the blood of Christ... cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb. 9:14)

The new covenant says “turn the other cheek” (Matt. 5:38-39).

Gal. 4:24-26 represents the two covenants by two women, Hagar and Sarah:

- * Hagar / Sinai, represents the old covenant, which makes children born as slaves. That is Jerusalem on earth.
- * Sarah / Above, represents the new covenant, which makes children born free. That is Jerusalem above, our mother.

You cannot sew new cloth on an old garment. It will tear. King Jesus cannot run His kingdom with Moses’s law and His blood together. One must go.

3. The Church, Kingdom of Christ, Body of Christ, Kingdom of Heaven

These four names represent the same thing: Us, believers under King Jesus.

We are the Church which is His body. Eph. 1:22-23 says, “gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body”.

We are the Church, citizens of the Kingdom of Christ. Col. 1:13 (KJV) says, “hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son”.

He bought us: 1 Cor. 6:20 says “ye are bought with a price”.

We are His private enterprise. No man can enslave us again: 1 Cor. 7:23 says “be not ye the servants of men”.

Nigeria has a President and a constitution. God’s kingdom has Christ and the New Testament. Same pattern, higher King.

4. The Old Constitution Created Division

The new constitution creates love and unity, where the old created division.

Saul, a Pharisee under the old covenant, persecuted Christians (Acts 9:1). Why? Because the old spirit hates the new spirit.

Until Christ arrested Saul on the Damascus road, he could not agree with believers. It is the

same today: anyone who says “Moses’s law still binds Christians” will fight those under Christ’s law.

Heb. 7:12 says “the priesthood being changed, ... there is also a change of the law”.

The old law said in Lev. 24:19-20: “as he has done, so shall it be done to him... eye for eye, tooth for tooth”.

King Jesus says in Matt. 5:39: “resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also”.

They are two opposite spirits. They cannot agree (2 Cor. 6:14).

5. We Are Now Priests Under King Jesus

As Heb. 7:11-14 explains, God changed the priesthood from Levi to Melchisedec / Christ. If there is a change in the priesthood, the law changes too.

We do not offer goats anymore. We are priests: “a royal priesthood” (1 Pet. 2:9).

We worship in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24), not with animal blood.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What are the three things every kingdom must have?
 - * A King: Jesus Christ.
 - * Subjects: believers born by the Word (Jam. 1:18).
 - * A Constitution: the New Testament sealed by His blood (Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:15).
2. Can we mix Moses's law with Christ's law in the Church?
 - * No. Mark 2:22 says that "new wine must be put into new wineskins".
 - * Gal. 4:24-26 represents the two covenants by two women. Old: Hagar (slavery), New: Sarah (freedom). Mix them and expect tear and fight.
3. What changed when Christ became High Priest?
 - * Heb. 7:12 says that "the law also" changed. Animal sacrifices ended. We now worship in spirit (John 4:24) as priests under Christ (Heb. 4:14).

4. How do I know that I am living under King Jesus's constitution?
- * You do not pay "eye for eye" (Matt. 5:39).
 - * You do not let men enslave you (1 Cor. 7:23).
 - * You worship in spirit, not by ritual (John 4:24).

Prayer

King Jesus, we bow before You, our eternal King. Forgive us for living by old covenants while You reign. Sprinkle us with Your blood and write Your New Constitution on our hearts. Make us free subjects, not slaves of men. Teach us to turn the other cheek and to worship in spirit. Let Your kingdom come, Your will be done in us, as in heaven. Amen.

Pitfalls of Scripture Interpretation (I)

“Pitfall”: ‘trap, mistake that makes us fall into error’.

Introduction

One of the biggest traps for preachers is “verse hunting”. We grab one verse and run, but we ignore who said it, to whom, where, when, and why. That is how cults are born.

2 Tim. 2:15 (KJV) *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

“Rightly dividing” requires us to know the context first. Context is king.

Objectives

By the end of Part I, every learner will:

(1) Ask five questions before teaching any verse:
Who? To Whom? Where? When? Why?

(2) Know who has authority today, Jesus or Moses?

“God... has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.” (Heb. 1:1-2)

(3) Distinguish between different audiences: baptism of fire for unbelievers (Matt. 3:12), baptism of Spirit for apostles / believers (Acts 1:5).

Presentation

1. There Are Five “Keys” To Context

The first two keys are presented in Virus 8. The remaining three keys are presented in Virus 9. The relevant Evaluation Questions & Answers and corresponding Prayer appear at the end of Virus 9.

2. Key 1: Encoder Status: “Who is Speaking?”

Who gave the speaker authority?

Example

“This is my beloved Son... hear ye him.” (Matt. 17:5)

Moses said in Lev. 24:20: “an eye for an eye”.

Jesus said in Matt. 5:38-39: “but I say unto you, resist not evil”.

Who do we obey today? We obey Jesus:

Heb. 3:3-6 ³*For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honour than the house.* ⁴*For*

every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. ⁵And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, ⁶but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

Moses was a servant. Christ is Son. The Son's word is more authoritative than a servant's word.

Acts 3:22-23 says: "...every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people".

Test: If Jesus contradicts Moses, we obey Jesus. He is the last Encoder, the Christ.

3. Key 2: Audience Analysis: "Who is Being Addressed?"

Misunderstanding the audience leads to error in the application.

(1) Baptism of Fire vs Baptism by the Spirit (Matt. 3:7-12 vs Acts 1:4-5).

Matt. 3:7-12 describes John seeing Pharisees and Sadducees - "O generation of vipers" (KJV) - coming to his baptism. Alongside "bring forth fruits meet for repentance" and "baptism with the Holy Spirit", he warned them about "baptism

of fire” and “chaff burned with unquenchable fire”, referring to “hell fire” for unbelievers.

By contrast, in Acts 1:5, Jesus was speaking to His apostles of things pertaining to the kingdom of God. He preached only the “baptism of the Holy Spirit”.

If we do not check the audience, we could think that “fire baptism” is for the Church. It is not. It is judgment for unrepentant sinners.

(2) Kingdom of Heaven vs Kingdom of God (Matt. 13:33 vs Luke 13:20).

Matthew wrote to Jews. Jews did not like saying “God” directly because “God is too holy”. So Matthew used “Kingdom of Heaven”.

Luke wrote to Theophilus / Gentiles (Luke 1:3). Gentiles had no problem with saying “God”.

So Luke used “Kingdom of God”.

Same kingdom. Different audience, different words. Context removes confusion.

(3) Works of Faith vs Works of the Law (Jam. 2:14-17 vs Rom. 3:20).

Paul wrote to Jews who trusted Moses’s Law for salvation. He wrote “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified” (Rom. 3:20).

VIRUS 8

James wrote to believers who said “I have faith” but did nothing. He wrote: “faith, if it hath not works, is dead” (Jam. 2:17).

Paul says “the law cannot save”. James says “real faith will work”. Both are true. Knowing the audience aids interpretation.

Pitfalls of Scripture Interpretation (II)

Know the Place, the Time, the Occasion: the three Application Questions.

Introduction

Dear Bible reader, after “Who and To Whom”, we must ask “Where? When? Why?” A verse from 1500 BC Sinai cannot run 2026 Port Harcourt church in the same way. That is mixing old wine with new wineskins (Mark 2:22). But “context” does not mean “cancel”; 2 Tim. 3:16 teaches us that “all scripture is profitable”. The law still reveals God’s heart and gives us a knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20).

2 Cor. 3:6 says: “the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life”. The “letter” here is reading Sinai’s covenant as if we are still Israel at the mountain. The “Spirit” is reading it through the lens of Christ who fulfilled it (Matt. 5:17).

We have the Holy Spirit to assist us and teach us all things (John 14:26).

It is helpful to understand that Scripture reveals three strands of law:

(1) Moral Law. This reflects God’s character, which does not change. “You shall not murder,

steal, lie..." (Ex. 20), sexual ethics (Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:26-27). This law is reaffirmed in the New Testament. Jesus and the apostles repeat it (Matt. 5:17-19; Rom. 13:9). It was not tied to Israel's land or to the temple.

We still call sin "sin" and we preach repentance (Acts 17:30).

(2) Civil / Judicial Law: Israel's National Laws.

Death penalties, property rules, cities of refuge (Num. 35). These governed Israel as a nation-state. The church is not a nation-state. So we do not stone adulterers (John 8:7). The principle of justice remains, but the penalty was for that covenant.

(3) Ceremonial Law. Sacrifices, priesthood, food rules, festivals (Lev. 11; Heb. 7:12). These are a "shadow of things to come but the substance is of Christ" (Col. 2:16-17).

Heb. 8:13 says "he hath made the first old". We do not sacrifice bulls because Jesus is the Lamb (John 1:29).

Given these three "strands", we can discern that a verse taken from the word spoken to 1500 BC Sinai must be read with reference to the following three questions to give context:

(1) Who was it given to? To Israel as nation, or to all mankind?

(2) What kind of law is it? Moral, civil, or ceremonial?

(3) What does the New Testament say? Has Christ fulfilled it, reaffirmed it, or set it aside (Matt. 5:17)?

Example: Food Laws (Lev. 11)

Take for example the food laws of Lev. 11. We know that they no longer apply physically. Paul said that the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking. He also said “I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean” (Rom. 14:14).

Jesus said, “Whatever enters a man ... cannot defile him, ...it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods” (Mark 7:18-19).

Jesus went on to say:

Mark 7:20-23 ²⁰... “What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. ²¹For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ²²thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride,

VIRUS 9

foolishness. ²³All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

If we no longer obey the food rules physically, what do they teach us spiritually?

- * Holiness: "Be separate": Lev. 20:26: "Ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people." Pigs, shellfish, eagles ate dead things / decay. God's people were not to look like the nations around them. "You belong to Me, not to Canaan."
- * Obedience in small things: God could have said "do not eat poison". Instead He gave detailed lists. Why? To train hearts to say "Yes, Lord" even when they did not understand. Deut. 8:3: "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word...". Food laws taught Israel: God's word trumps my appetite. His law trumps my lust.
- * Shadow of Christ: The animals pictured spiritual truths. Clean animals chew cud, an image of meditating on the Word – they discern God's heart through "every word". They eat grass, not dead things / decay (flesh). They have split hooves, an image of walking separately, and rightly dividing. "Unclean foods" point to things that corrupt the heart. Does this TV show, this friend, this habit defile me? That is Lev. 11, applied in Christ.

Rule of thumb: If the New Testament repeats it, we obey it. If Christ fulfilled it, we rest in Him. If it was Israel's national law, we learn the principle.

Context gives life, not loopholes.

Objectives

By the end of Part II, every disciple will:

(1) Check arena relevance. Paul preached in a different way to Jews and Greeks (Acts 13:16 vs Acts 17:22, 1 Cor. 9:19-23).

(2) Know the time / dispensation. The Law of Moses ended, the Law of Christ rules now (Gal. 6:2; John 1:17).

(3) Find occasion and purpose. Why did Paul write 1 Cor. 5:9? Because of fornication. His purpose was to correct sin.

(4) Domesticate first, then apply. Understand the original meaning, then apply to us (Rom.15:4).

Presentation

Keys 3, 4 and 5.

1. Key 3: Arena Relevance: "Where?"

Place changes approach. For example in Acts 13:14-21, Paul is in the Jewish synagogue in Antioch. He is talking to "Men of Israel, and ye

that fear God”. He starts with the patriarchs (“our fathers”), the dwelling in the land of Egypt, and the history of the children of Israel. They knew it.

In Acts 17:22-28, Paul is standing in the midst of Mars’ Hill, Athens: a Gentile audience. He starts with an inscription “To The Unknown God” and creation. Nothing about Abraham, “our fathers” or dwelling in Egypt.

Same Gospel. Different starting point. If we preach “Abraham” to people who do not know the Bible, we will lose them. Know the arena.

2. Key 4: Timing - “Which Dispensation?” - “When?”

In Deut. 18:15-19, God promised “a Prophet like Moses”, who is Christ.

Luke 9:35: “This is my beloved Son: hear him.”

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

We should keep in mind two different time periods:

(1) Time Period 1: The Law of Moses, referring to the old covenant / constitution: “an eye for an eye”, purging by animal blood (Heb. 9:13). This was preparatory. Gal. 3:24 says “the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ”.

If we obey Sinai law now without due consideration (without applying the three questions or the rule of thumb set out in the Introduction above), we get “a spirit of error” (1 John 4:1,6). We must separate the old covenant (Heb. 8:13) from the new covenant (Luke 22:20). The old becomes the example for our learning (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11). The new becomes our rule: “those things... in me, do” (Phil. 4:9).

(2) Time Period 2: The Law of Christ, referring to the new constitution: “turn the other cheek”, purging by His blood (Heb. 9:14). This is the current dispensation (Gal. 6:2): “bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ”.

Gal. 6:2 *Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

What is the Law of Christ?

It is what James terms “The Royal Law”:

Jam. 2.8 (KJV) *If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.*

It is what Jesus said after the Last Supper:

John 13:34 ³⁴ *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

In Gal. 6:2, quoted above, the word translated “burden” is the Greek word ‘baros’, meaning heavy load, crushing weight. Like grief, sickness, temptation, poverty, depression. The kind of load that breaks you if you carry it alone.

Paul says we should carry each other’s load; that is “the law of Christ”. Jesus carried our cross, so we carry each other’s heavy loads. When your sister is in tears, you do not say “bear your own burden”. You sit, pray, weep with her: “rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (Rom. 12:15).

That is Christ's law. No one survives the Christian life alone.

Three verses later, Paul says:

Gal. 6:5 *For each one shall bear his own load.*

Does he contradict himself?

No, they are two different burdens.

The Greek word used here is 'phortion', your backpack, the loading of a ship, the load you are meant to carry. Your own sins, your own calling, your own obedience, your own walk with God, "the good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

Paul says: I cannot repent for you. I cannot pray for you every day forever. I cannot stand before God for you. Each of us shall give an account of ourselves to God (Rom. 14:12). That backpack is yours. I can help carry the 'baros', but I cannot live your 'phortion':

- * 'Baros': "Sister, your grief is too heavy, let me help you carry it." (Law of Christ, Gal. 6:2)

- * ‘Phortion’: “Sister, I cannot read your Bible for you. You must feed yourself too.” (Personal duty, Gal. 6:5)

Jesus modelled both: He bore our ‘baros’ (“he hath borne our griefs” (Isa. 53:4)), but He also said “if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross” (Luke 9:23).

That cross is ‘phortion’.

If you see a brother drowning, do not quote Gal. 6:5 and walk away. That is law, not Christ. Jump in, bear his ‘baros’.

But also do not carry his ‘phortion’ for him. Do not do his repentance. Do not make him a baby forever (Heb. 5:12). Help him stand, then let him walk.

In Summary, ‘Time Period 2’, the Law of Christ, is love that carries and love that trains. Both are mercy.

3. Key 5: Occasion and Purpose “Why?”

‘Occasion’ finds for us the problem that forced the letter. ‘Purpose’ finds for us what the writer wanted to achieve.

Examples

(1) 1 Cor. 5:9: “I wrote to you in my epistle not to company with sexually immoral people.”

‘Occasion’ refers to sin in Corinth. ‘Purpose’ is to achieve purity of the Church.

(2) 1 Cor. 7:1: “Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me.” ‘Occasion’ here is about their questions. ‘Purpose’ answers them.

(3) Luke 15:1-2: “Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying...”

‘Occasion’ tells us that sinners came. ‘Purpose’ tells three parables of lost things (a sheep, a coin and the ‘Prodigal’ son) to show God’s love and the joy in heaven when one sinner repents.

(4) Matt. 23:2-3: “The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’s seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works.”

Why did Jesus say that if the law was about to change at the cross? First let us look the “when” and the “who”:

* When?

Jesus said this before His death, before resurrection, while the Old Covenant was still running (Heb. 9:17): “a testament is of force after men are dead”. The temple was still standing. Sacrifices were still happening. So He told Jews under Sinai: “Keep obeying the Torah as Moses gave it, even if the teachers are hypocrites”. Do not throw out God’s Word because of bad men.

* Who?

Look at Matt. 23:1: “Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples”. He was talking to Jews under the Law. He was not yet speaking to the church, the Body of Christ. The church began at Pentecost (Acts 2), after Jesus’s death and resurrection.

After resurrection, the apostles did not tell Gentiles to “go sit in Moses’s seat”. In Acts 15:29, the Jerusalem Council told them: “abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, from sexual immorality”. Not “keep Sabbath, food laws, circumcision”.

Why? Because Jesus fulfilled Moses’s seat. Now we sit under Christ’s seat (Eph. 1:20-22). We obey the Law of Christ, not the Law of Moses.

That said, the principle of Matt. 23:3 still stands: “do what they teach from Scripture, do not copy their hypocrisy”. That applies forever. If a pastor preaches “love your neighbour” (Lev. 19:18), we obey the verse. If he lives in adultery, we do not copy his lifestyle. Respect the Word, reject the hypocrisy.

Jesus did not change His mind. He kept His appointment. The law was not wrong. It was temporary, like scaffolding, until the Building which is Christ came (Gal. 3:24-25).

4. Domesticate, Apply

The key is ‘domesticate’ first, that is first understand the context and perspective of the original hearers. Then apply. Ask “what does King Jesus say to us now?”

2 Tim. 3:16-17 says: “All Scripture ... is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete...”.

Summary

Consider these five key questions before you teach any verse:

1. Who is speaking? Jesus or Moses?

VIRUS 9

2. To whom? Jews? Gentiles? Believers?
Unbelievers?
3. Where? Synagogue? Mars Hill? Your church assembly?
4. When? Law time or Grace time? (John 1:17)
 - * Has it been superseded by Christ? If yes, obey Christ.
5. Why is the Scripture included?
 - * Occasion? What problem is being addressed?
 - * Purpose? What did the writer want to achieve? 1 Cor. 11:2 says: “keep the ordinances”.
 - * Are we at liberty to choose (Rom. 14) or is there a specific command that we should follow (1 Cor. 14:37)?

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. Which five questions must I ask before teaching a verse?
 - * Who is speaking? To Whom? Where? When? Why?
2. Who has final authority if Moses and Jesus disagree?
 - * Jesus: “hear ye him” (Matt. 17:5).

3. Can “baptism of fire” (Matt. 3:11) be for believers today?
 - * No, John was speaking to Pharisees and Saducees (“O generation of vipers” - Matt. 3:7 (KJV)). Fire is hell fire for the unrepentant (Matt. 3:12). Believers get Spirit baptism (Acts 1:5).
4. Why does Matthew say “Kingdom of Heaven” but Luke says “Kingdom of God”?
 - * Audience. Matthew wrote to Jews who avoided saying “God”. Luke wrote to Gentiles. Same kingdom, different words.

Prayer

Father, deliver us from verse-hunting and wrong dividing. Give us wisdom to ask Who, To Whom, Where, When, Why before we speak. Seal our hearts to obey King Jesus above Moses. Teach us to separate old covenant from new so that we do not mix new wine and old wineskin. Let Your Word be life, not death. In Jesus’s name, the true Interpreter, Amen.

Ignorance of New Covenant Worship Updates (I)

“Ignorance”: ‘not knowing how King Jesus wants us to worship now’.

Introduction

This virus makes believers worship like Old Testament people while living in the New Testament time. They think worship is around a physical building, sacrifice, day, place, quantity. But Jesus mediates a new constitution, “a better covenant” (Heb. 8:6).

In the New Covenant, we do not worship by sight (physical building, drums, robes). We worship by faith (2 Cor. 5:7). That means worshipping in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24). God is Spirit (John 4:24), and He only accepts spirit worship. Anything not in spirit and truth is just noise, drawing near Him with the lips whilst the heart is far from Him (Matt. 15:8-9).

Objectives

By the end of this virus, every lamb will:

(1) Know that New Covenant worship is in spirit and truth - not sight, not location (John 4:23-24).

(2) See worship as a 24/7 lifestyle. Not a Sunday event, but every thought, word and deed.

(3) Understand the five marks of true worship: exchange, lifestyle, reward, dominion, glory.

(4) Reject Old Covenant limits. There is no restriction on place, time, day, quantity (Heb. 9:9-10).

Presentation

1. New Covenant Worship Is By Faith, Not By Sight

2 Cor. 5:7: *“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”*

John 4:23-24 ²³ *But 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.* ²⁴ *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*

The Spirit gives life (John 6:63). “The words that I speak to you are spirit and they are life.”

“Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17).

Jesus came to bear witness to the truth. Only those who are of the truth can hear His voice:

John 18:37 *Jesus answered, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”*

2. Why We Must Test Spirits In Worship

1 John 4:1 (NIV) *Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

Worship is “spirit to Spirit”. If the spirit behind it is not God’s Spirit, it is idolatry. Test: Does it obey the words of Christ?

Matt. 7:24 *Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.*

3. Five Marks of True Worship

(1) Exchange of offerings. We give service, He gives blessing. We sing, pray, preach, “present our bodies a living sacrifice” (Rom .12:1).

He gives mercy: “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” (Hos. 6:6, Matt. 12:7)

(2) Lifestyle that fulfils Scripture. Worship is not two hours on Sunday. It is a way of life. Grace

teaches us to “say No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, godly lives (Titus 2:11-12).

(3) Activity that attracts reward. God rewards every thought, word and deed done in Christ’s name. “You serve the Lord Christ.” (Col. 3:24)

(4) Maintains dominion over creatures (Gen. 1:26-28). God gave man dominion. Jesus won it back (Col. 2:15). Worship gives us power to rule, not to be ruled by sin or devils.

(5) Glorifies God’s Spirit. True worship glorifies God’s Spirit. False worship glorifies demons (1 Cor. 10:20).

4. The Worshipper Under the New Covenant

Rom. 12:3-8 ³For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. ⁴For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. ⁶Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; ⁷or ministry, let us use it in our

ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; ⁸ he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

1 Pet. 4:11 *If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies.*

We all have different gifts, but every worshipper is:

- * a priest (1 Pet. 2:9);
- * a worker (Eph. 2:10) and co-worker (2 Cor. 6:1, 1 Cor. 3:9);
- * a child of God, “receiving the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out ‘Abba, Father’” (Rom. 12:13);
- * an heir of God and “joint heir with Christ” (Rom. 12:17).

The term “oracles of God” references the words of God. Our teacher is Christ and if any man teaches, preaches or shares spiritual truth, they should anchor their message strictly in alignment with His teachings: “for One is your Teacher, the Christ” (Matt. 23:8).

“Teaching for doctrine the commandments of men” fails in this regard (Matt. 15:9).

If worship does not come from Christ's Word, Scripture is fulfilled negatively, resulting in no grace, no dominion.

5. Worship Under Grace Has No Limits, Unlike The Old Covenant

Matt. 12:6-7 *Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple. ⁷But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice', you would not have condemned the guiltless.*

Under the Old Covenant, sacrifices were at the temple, exactly as stipulated.

Under the New Covenant, there is no restriction on season, place, day or quantity. You do not wait to have ten cars before giving one to the needy. You worship everywhere: bus, train, house, farm, airplane. God is Spirit, everywhere.

6. Corporate Worship Depends On Private Worship

We exchange singing, praying, teaching, giving substance and our body first. God exchanged heaven and Jesus for us (John 3:16). If God rewards it, that proves it worshipped Him.

Private worship first, then corporate worship, which should not be forsaken (Heb. 10:25).

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. How does New Covenant worship differ from Old Covenant worship?
 - * New is by faith, in spirit and truth, anywhere (John 4:23-24). Old is by sight, at the temple, on set days, with animals (Heb. 9:1, 9).
2. What are the five marks of true worship?
 - * Exchange of offerings.
 - * Lifestyle fulfilling Scripture.
 - * Attracts God's reward.
 - * Maintains dominion (Gen. 1:26).
 - * Glorifies God's Spirit.
3. Who is the Oracle / Instructor for acceptable worship?
 - * Jesus Christ, Mediator of the New Covenant (Heb. 8:6). We must speak as His oracles (1 Pet. 4:11), not the commandments of men (Matt. 15:9).

4. Can I worship God without a church building?
 - * Yes. God is Spirit (John 4:24). Worship is having our heart and thoughts committed to Christ before we think, talk, do anything. Place does not limit Him.
5. What did Jesus say God wants more than sacrifice?
 - * Mercy (Matt. 12:7): “I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.” Old sacrifices fed the needy after burnt entrails. New worship shows mercy.

Prayer

Father, You are Spirit, so teach us to worship You in spirit and truth. Deliver us from sight-worship and ritual without heart.

Make us priests, workers, and co-workers with You. Let every thought, word, and deed be worship that attracts Your reward. Restore our dominion, so that we rule over sin and spirits through Christ.

We offer our bodies, our substance, our lives as living sacrifice. Receive our worship, O God, through Jesus Christ, Amen.

Ignorance of New Covenant Worship Updates (II)

“Ignorance”: ‘not knowing how worship changed under Christ’.

Introduction

This virus makes believers run the Old Covenant system under New Covenant grace. Moses’s regime focused on “keep the law”. The law exposes sin but does not solve our sin problem: “if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law” (Gal. 3:21).

No flesh will be justified by the deeds of the law, but rather, “by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20).

Christ’s regime focuses on “solving humanity’s sin problem” by grace. Under Christ, humanity’s problems are all solvable through grace.

The temple Solomon built was a picture (2 Chr. 6:9). But now the temple is us: “your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 6:19).

If we do not comprehend this update, we will idolize physical buildings (Acts 17:24) and worship in error, not in truth.

Worship under Christ is not law-keeping. It is problem-solving through spirit and truth.

Objectives

By the end of this virus, every Bible student will:

- (1) See the difference between Moses and Christ: Moses focuses on law to keep, Christ focuses on grace to solve problems (Rom. 5).
- (2) Know where God dwells now. Not in physical buildings, but in believers' bodies (1 Cor. 6:19).
- (3) Practise two daily worships: sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13:15) and prayer (1 Tim. 2:1).
- (4) Reject idol thinking. Any "god" localized in a physical building is an idol. God does not dwell in temples made with hands (Acts 17:24-25).

Presentation

1. Old Regime vs New Regime: Law vs Grace

Under Moses, the emphasis was on "keep the law". This gave us a knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20) but was not able to impart life (Gal. 3:21). Law finds sinners to punish. Law enables sin to be imputed (Rom 5:13).

Under Christ, the emphasis is on “love one another” and “solve humanity’s problems by grace”. Grace does not check if your tithe is exactly “one out of ten cars.” Grace gives relief.

Law looks for defaulters. Grace looks for the blind to heal, and teaches us not to be “puffed up on behalf of one against the other” (1 Cor. 4:6-7). “For who makes you differ from another? 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?”

Early Christians quoted Moses, the prophets and the Psalms to prove that Jesus is the Messiah (Luke 24:44; Acts 2:32-36). Our job today is to show that disobeying Jesus kills us, and separates us from God (Heb. 2:2-3).

The things that happened to the children of Israel in the wilderness “happened to them as examples and were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1 Cor. 10:11).

The goal is to rescue, not to condemn.

2. Where is God's Temple Now?

Solomon's temple (2 Chr. 6:9) was a blueprint. It was not built to house God, albeit the Lord consecrated it and put His Name there (1 Ki. 8:20, 1 Ki. 9:3). It was used for sacrifices to Him.

Under grace, God's dwelling place is our bodies (1 Cor. 6:19-20). God's altar is our hearts: "present your bodies a living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1-2).

We are "living stones ... built up a spiritual house... to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5). Jesus Christ is "...the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building ...grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2:20-22).

John 2:19-21 ¹⁹ *Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."* ²⁰ *Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"* ²¹ *But He was speaking of the temple of His body.*

If we think the meeting hall is "God's house", we will worship idols there. Why? Acts 17:24-25

says: “The God who made the world... does not live in temples built by human hands”. Any god localized is also idolized: “the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils” (1 Cor. 10:19-20 (NIV)).

3. Two Worship Updates Every Lamb Must Practise Daily

(1) Sacrifice of praise: singing from the heart.
“Through Jesus... let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise — the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.” (Heb. 13:15 (NIV))

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly... singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.” (Col 3:15-16 (NIV))

God commands singing. Obedience is worship. It attracts reward. If you cannot sing well, support those anointed to sing well. Both please God.

(2) Prayer / intercession: talking back to God.
God’s charge: “petitions, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings for all people” (1 Tim. 2:1-7 (NIV)).
John 9:31: “We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshipper of God, and does His will, He hears him.”

When God talks to us from heaven, we must talk back in prayer. That is worship. And He hears us when we obey Him.

4. Summary

Moses gave the law to expose sin (Rom. 3:20), the deserved retribution (“an eye for an eye”), and the terrible cost of atoning for sin (the blood of thousands of slaughtered animals, a “shadow” of Christ’s sacrifice). Christ gives grace to forgive sin: “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20).

The physical temple was the picture (shadow), not the dwelling. Believers, individually and collectively, are the temple (1 Cor. 6:19). Worship is praise from the lips (Heb. 13:15) and prayers from the heart (1 Tim. 2:1), not just Sunday attendance.

No physical building can hold God (Acts 17:24). But your body can, if clean.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What was the emphasis under Moses vs under Christ?
 - * Moses's regime focused on "keep the law", which shows us what sin is (Rom. 3:20) and what we deserve in recompense, but it does not solve our sin problem: "if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law" (Gal. 3:21).
 - * Christ's regime of grace solves humanity's sin problem (Rom. 5:20).
2. Where does God dwell under the New Covenant?
 - * In our bodies, not in physical buildings: "your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:19). The "temple of his body" (John 2:21).
3. Why is calling a physical building "God's house" dangerous?
 - * "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands." (Acts 17:24)
 - * Localizing God is idolatry (1 Cor. 10:19-20).

4. What are two daily worship updates under Christ?
 - * Sacrifice of praise, singing from the heart (Heb. 13:15).
 - * Prayer and intercession (1 Tim. 2:1). Both attract reward from God.

5. What was Solomon's temple for, and what is our body for now?
 - * Solomon's temple (2 Chr. 6:9) was for sacrifices to the Lord. The Lord put His Name there. Our body is the dwelling place of God (1 Cor. 6:19), an altar for living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1).

Prayer

Father, thank You for the update of grace through King Jesus. Deliver us from law-worship that kills. Teach us grace-worship that heals.

Save us from idolizing physical buildings. Let our bodies be Your temple and our hearts be Your altar. We offer You sacrifice of praise continually, and prayers for all men.

Make us worship in spirit and truth. Let Christ's peace rule our hearts as we solve problems by grace. Amen.

Ignorance of New Covenant Worship Updates (III)

“Ignorance”: ‘not knowing how to pray, teach, and preach under Christ’s update’.

Introduction

This virus makes believers pray wrong, teach wrong, and preach wrong. They think that prayer is only “give me, give me”. They think that any mouth can teach the Bible. But King Jesus gave updates.

God hears us when we talk back to Him in prayer (Jonah 2:1-10). He also commands those with the gift of teaching to teach and preach (Rom. 12:3-8). But prayer has five answers, teaching needs learners, and preaching wins unbelievers. If we ignore these updates, we will miss rewards and mislead lambs.

Jam. 3:1 *My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.*

Objectives

By the end of this virus, every Bible learner will:

- (1) Know the five ways in which God answers prayer: Yes, More, Exchange, Wait and No (2 Ki. 3:9-13; Deut. 3:23-27).
- (2) See prayer as worship. Intercession, giving thanks, praising more than asking (1 Tim. 2:1).
- (3) Know the difference between preaching and teaching. Preaching is spreading the Gospel to all. Teaching is in-depth exposition for learners (Luke 10:26).
- (4) Understand who should teach. Not illiterates or novices. Teachers need planning, curriculum, Spirit (2 Tim. 1:7).
- (5) Know the difference between men “merchandising the Word” and the legitimate teacher, worthy of his keep.

Presentation

1. Prayer Update: God Hears And Answers Prayers in One of Five Ways

God hears and answers believers when we talk back to Him. So do not be silent. Pray, intercede, thank, praise more than you ask. By so doing,

you miss nothing: “prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings” (1 Tim. 2:1).

How God answers:

(1) Yes, like Jonah. Jonah prayed from the fish’s belly and he was vomited onto dry land (Jonah 2:1-10). God heard and saved him.

(2) More than asked, like Solomon. Solomon asked for wisdom, God added riches and honour (2 Ki. 3:9-13).

(3) Exchange, for our good, like Moses (Deut. 3:23-27). Moses asked “let me enter Canaan physically”. God said no, but told Moses to go and see the whole land with his eyes. This was a better exchange. Instead of “temporary Canaan now”, he is promised “eternal Canaan with honour”.

(4) Wait. “Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” (Luke 18:1-8)

“In the fullness of time... God sent forth His Son.” (Gal. 4:4-5)

(5) No, for our good. Sometimes Jam. 4:3 applies: “you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures”. Sometimes the timing is

wrong, sometimes answering our prayer will not glorify God or add value to us. So God says “No” in love.

2. Teaching and Preaching Update: Both Are Worship, But Different

“Whatever you do... do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” (Col. 3:17)

Teaching and preaching are forms of worship. Obedience brings reward. “Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine... Take heed to yourself, and to the doctrine.” (1 Tim. 4:13,16)

Preaching vs Teaching

Preaching

Rom. 10:13-15 ¹³*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

¹⁴*How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?*

¹⁵*And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that*

preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Isa. 52:7 *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!"*

Preaching is spreading the glad tidings of the Gospel, publishing the name of the Lord, so that all have a chance to hear the Gospel, call on the Lord and be saved.

Preachers are evangelists, to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth and to win unbelievers to the fold.

Luke 10:1-2 *¹After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. ²Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest."*

Teaching

Luke 10:26 *He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"*

Teaching is revelation, nuanced interpretation and exposition.

“Search the scriptures... they testify of me.”
(John 5:39)

Jesus did not expect many to be teachers. A teacher needs learners. Teaching needs planning: curriculum → syllabus → lesson notes → behavioural objectives.

A teacher can preach, but a preacher without a teacher cannot meet believers' needs.

James warns:

***Jam. 3:1** My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.*

He did not say “let not many become preachers”.

3. “Merchandising the Word” vs “The Ox Treading Out the Corn”

***2 Cor. 2:17 (NIV)** Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those sent from God.*

Men who merchandise God's Word (2 Cor. 2:17) cannot also willingly obey Acts 1:8 (“ye shall be

witnesses unto me”), because their master is profit, not Christ.

“Ye shall be witnesses” requires surrender.

A witness obeys Christ first, even when the message costs him money or members.

A merchant obeys profit first, asking “What will I gain? Will this message sell?” To please men and “sell well”, sound doctrine is at risk of being edited. You cannot serve two masters (Matt. 6:24).

Note that “merchandising the Word” is different from “the ox treading corn whose mouth should not be muzzled” (1 Cor. 9:9). God commands His labourers be supported. But He condemns those who adulterate His Word for gain.

4. The Spirit Behind Worship

Teaching and preaching is not about what Satan can do. It is about what God in Christ can do through the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 1:7). “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” Separate the “Gospel of faith” from the “gospel of fear”. What Satan does only unveils fear. What Christ does unveils power.

5. Summary

Pray: talk back to God. Expect one of five answers: “Yes”, “More”, “Exchange”, “Wait”, or “No”.

Teach and preach: both worship (Col. 3:17), but teaching needs learners, Spirit and planning. Not every preacher is a teacher.

Preach Christ’s power, not Satan’s fear.

2 Tim. 1:7 *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*

Finally, let us all beware of teachers who “peddle the Word of God”, of which there are “many”, as 2 Cor. 2:17 warns.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What are the five ways God answers prayer?
 - * Yes, as with Jonah (Jonah 2:1-10).
 - * More than asked for, as with Solomon (2 Ki. 3:9-13).
 - * Exchange, as with Moses (Deut. 3:23-27).
 - * Wait (Luke 18:1-8).
 - * No. For timing or goodwill (Gal. 4:4-5; Jam. 4:3).

2. What is the difference between preaching and teaching?
 - * Preaching is evangelizing: spreading the good news of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Teaching is revelation, in-depth, for learners.
3. Who should not rush to become a teacher?
 - * Most of us. Not many people should be teachers (Jam. 3:1): “Let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive stricter judgment.”
 - * Teachers face stricter judgment because they handle God’s Word.
4. Is teaching / preaching worship?
 - * Yes. “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Col. 3:17)
Teaching / preaching His Word is sacrifice that attracts reward.
5. What spirit did God give us for ministry?
 - * A spirit of power, love and a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7).
 - * We preach Christ’s power, not Satan’s fear.

Prayer

Father, teach us to pray like children who talk back to You. Give us wisdom to accept Yes, More, Exchange, Wait or No from Your hand.

Make us faithful preachers to win souls, and careful teachers to build saints.

Deliver us from fear. Let the Holy Spirit teach through us, not Satan's fear. May every word we speak glorify You, and every lesson bring lambs to maturity. In Jesus's name, the Chief Teacher and Answerer of prayer, Amen.

Ignorance of New Covenant Worship Updates (IV)

“Ignorance”: ‘not knowing offerings, communion, and heart-worship under Christ’.

Introduction

This virus makes believers miss three worship updates: offerings for brethren, communion as peace, and heart as altar. After giving our bodies to God (Rom. 12:1), we give our substance to meet one another’s needs (Heb. 13:1-2). We also break bread to remember Christ’s death (1 Cor. 11:24). But God does not want ritual. He wants heart worship (John 4:23-24).

If we turn these into law and ritual, we lose unity and power. Christ re-purchased our dominion (Gen. 1:26). Worship in His name keeps it (Col. 1:16-18). The heart is the altar (Prov. 4:23). What comes from the heart in worship either blesses or defiles (Mark 7:20).

Objectives

By the end of this virus, every Bible student will:

(1) Know the two offerings. Our body as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1) and substance for brethren (Heb.13:1-2).

(2) See communion rightly. Not ritual, but peace and proclamation of Christ's death (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

(3) Understand heart-worship. God rewards motives, not just acts (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

(4) Reject ritual without love. True religion is purity of heart and relief for the needy (Jam. 1:27).

Presentation

1. Offerings Update: Body, Then Substance

“Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” (Rom. 12:1-2)

That is a compulsory offering.

After body comes substance: “Keep on loving one another... Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers.” (Heb. 13:1-2 (NIV))

A corporate offering should be ministered to those in real need (Acts 6:3-4). But if those in need have children or grandchildren, then the responsibility for caring for their elderly parent falls first to them (1 Tim. 5:3-8).

The Church leaders should stay free to preach, teach and pray as in the Jerusalem church: “We

will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4), and choose others within the assembly to minister to the needs of the poor.

2. Communion Update: Breaking of Bread - Peace and Proclamation

“The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” (1 Cor. 10:15-17 (NIV))

The bread represents the body of Christ, broken for us. The wine represents the blood of Christ, shed for us. Communion is given to those who confess Christ as Lord.

Jesus inaugurated communion at Passover, which was itself a memorial of fleshly deliverance from Egypt. Now it reminds us of greater deliverance: soul from sin on Calvary.

2 Cor. 13:5 (NIV) says: “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?”

Each of us should examine ourselves so that we do not eat or drink in an unworthy manner (1 Cor. 11:27). No man can “examine” another and

deem him fit. Why? Because if you are allowed into the assembly to hear preaching and teaching, you should be allowed to do the “practical” of it.

Communion is about continuous union with God in Christ who is our peace (Eph. 2:14).

It is not about ritual, it is about love and unity.

3. Worship Update: The Heart Is The Altar, Motives Matter

Worship in spirit and truth. The Spirit is the source of blissful life now and forever.

***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.*

The heart is the altar. “Keep thy heart with all diligence.” (Prov. 4:23)

God rewards intentions and motives of heart, not just acts: “...though I bestow all my goods... and have not love, it profits me nothing” (1 Cor. 13:1-3 (NIV)).

Love answers the question “Why do it?”
“For Christ’s love compels us... that those who

live should no longer live for themselves but for Him.” (2 Cor. 5:14-15 (NIV))

That which comes out from the heart in worship blesses a man if it agrees with the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:13). But that which comes out from the heart can also defile (Mark 7:14-23, Matt. 15:7-9).

Christian faith can be summarised as purity of heart and relief for the needy:

Jam. 1:27 *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

Micah 6:6-8 ⁶*With what shall I come before the Lord,
And bow myself before the High God?
Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings,
With calves a year old? ⁷Will the Lord be pleased
with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*

⁸*He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justly, to love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God.*

4. Freedom and Dominion Update

True worship is in spirit and truth everywhere. The worshipper is free, blessed and worships full-time. “As we have opportunity, let us do good to all.” (Gal. 6:10)

Man had dominion (Gen. 1:26-28), but dominion was lost. Christ re-purchased it “that in all things he may have the pre-eminence” (Col. 1:18).

Worshipping in His name and authority sustains this dominion.

If we refuse to hallow God through Christ in thought and word and deed, we surrender authority to Satan and demons. Worship is a merger of humanity with divinity. The sin-free leadership model of Christ guarantees divine acceptability. “He that cometh from heaven is above all.” (John 3:31)

5. Summary

We should offer our body (Rom. 12:1), then substance for brothers and strangers (Heb. 13:1-2). And break bread in love and unity to proclaim Christ’s death (1 Cor. 11:26), not by way of ritual.

Worship from the heart, not just with the lips (Matt. 15:8), motivated by Christ’s love (2 Cor.

5:14). The result: peace, unity, and dominion restored (Col. 1:20).

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What are the two compulsory offerings under the New Covenant?
 - * Our body as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2).
 - * Our substance for the needs of our brethren and of strangers (Heb. 13:1-2).
2. What does the breaking of bread / communion mean?
 - * 1 Cor. 11:24-26: communion “remembers Christ and proclaims His death till He comes”. The bread is the communion of His body; the wine is the communion of His blood (1 Cor. 10:16). It is practical preaching.
3. Who can “examine” another person before communion?
 - * No one can examine anyone else. “Examine yourselves.” (2 Cor. 13:5)
 - * If a person is allowed to hear preaching in the assembly, they should be allowed to partake of communion.

4. What does God reward most in worship?
 - * The intentions and motives of the heart (1 Cor. 13:1-3). God watches the heart (Prov. 4:23). Christ's love compels us (2 Cor. 5:14).
5. What is true religion according to James?
 - * **Jam. 1:27** *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

Prayer

Father, we offer our bodies as living sacrifices. Teach us to give our substance in love, not by compulsion. Let breaking of bread be peace and proclamation of Christ's death, not empty ritual. Search our hearts. Let Christ's love compel every thought, word, and work. Restore our dominion as we worship You in spirit and truth. Keep us pure in heart and merciful to the needy, through Jesus Christ our High Priest, Amen.

Ignorance of New Covenant Worship Updates (V)

“Ignorance”: ‘not knowing the true sanctuary, the meaning of idolatry, Christ’s oracle, or our co-worker role’.

Introduction

This virus makes believers worship like Old Covenant priests instead of New Covenant priests. Christ our High Priest entered into an invisible, eternal sanctuary, which the Lord erected and not man (Heb. 8:2). He gave His oracle (word) to the original Apostles (John 17:14). Worship must follow Christ’s directive or it is in vain (Mark 7:7).

Many still enforce Old Covenant shadows (Col. 2:17). That opens the door to idolatry, witchcraft, and principalities. But we are “the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16), co-workers with God (1 Cor. 3:9). Our job is to be “bridges” - priests bringing relief to the world (Matt. 25:31-46).

Objectives

By the end of this virus, every lamb will:

- (1) Know the true sanctuary into which Christ leads us, being both invisible and eternal (Heb. 12:22-24).
- (2) Follow Christ's oracle. The apostles gave us God's word (John 17:14), not Old Covenant law.
- (3) Understand what idolatry is, and that we should flee from it. Worship contrary to John 4:23-24 is idolatry. The Spirit guides us into all truth (John 16:13-14).
- (4) Understand how any hint of idolatry can stumble a new believer.
- (5) Understand their co-worker role. We are priests and benefactors to the world (1 Pet. 2:9; Prov. 19:17).

Presentation

1. The Sanctuary Update: Invisible and Eternal

The Old Covenant had an earthly temple. Under the New Covenant, Christ entered heaven (Heb. 9:24). He is our High Priest forever (Heb. 4:14).

Heb. 12:22-24 ²² *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly*

Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,²⁴ to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

We are priests led into an invisible, eternal sanctuary: “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” (1 Pet. 2:5).

Worship here demands perfect obedience. Only Christ can guarantee it because all spirits in heavenly places obey Him (Eph. 1:21).

2. The Oracle Update: The Apostles Gave Christ’s Directives

Christ gave God’s word to His original Apostles before He went to the Father (John 17:13-14).

We believe through the Apostles’ message contained in the New Testament. “I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one.” (John 17:20-21 (NIV))

We should test all worship by the Apostles' teaching. The Apostles' work was the testimony of Jesus.

- * "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."
(Rev. 19:9-10)
- * "For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet. 1:21 (NIV))
- * "We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us." (1 John 4:6)
- * "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me." (Matt. 10:40)

3. Idolatry Under the New Covenant (I): Keeping The Shadow When We Have The Substance

Ex. 20:3 *You shall have no other gods before Me.*

Deut. 4:19 *And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage.*

Isa. 42:8 *I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images.*

1 Sam. 15:23 *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.*

What is Idolatry? Idolatry is worshipping anyone or anything other than God. When we disobey God – that is, when we rebel against Him - what we are doing is “witchcraft” because we are giving our worship to powers and principalities (Eph. 6:12) other than God.

If we reject the commandment of God to keep our own tradition (Mark 7:9), that is idolatry.

If we love the things of this world, that is idolatry. We cannot love God and the world:

1 John 2:15-17 ¹⁵*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

Today the world idolizes many people and many things: from sports stars and rock stars to businessmen and billionaires, from cars and money to AI and tech. And of course, Self. We live in a “selfie” culture. Men are “lovers of their own selves” (2 Tim. 3:2).

But the Church is not the world, or at least it is not supposed to look like the world. It is supposed to be separate from the world.

One of the biggest idolatries in the Church is enforcing Old Covenant rules that God has rejected and made obsolete (Heb. 8:13).

This is dangerous. Why? Whatever God sets aside, Satan adopts immediately. Applying Old Covenant regulations now results in magical activities: witchcraft, necromancy. Principalities watch those old rules, God does not.

The Old Covenant was “the shadow”, Christ is “the substance” (Col. 2:16-17).

What do we mean by “shadow” and “substance”?

By way of example, Jesus is our Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7; John 1:29). The lambs killed in Egypt were the shadow, Christ is the substance. He

died outside the walls of Jerusalem (Heb. 13:11-13).

Luke 24:44 tells us that “all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me”. The substance is the fulfilment of the shadow written in Scripture. Heavenly things require a better sacrifice than the earthly copy (Heb. 9:23).

Note that some of the holy days have yet to be fulfilled. They are “shadows of things to come” (Col. 2:17), but Christ is the substance:

Col. 2:16-17 (KJV) ¹⁶ *Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: ¹⁷ which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [“substance” – NKJV] is of Christ.*

“We are complete in Christ, who is the head of all principality and power.” (Col. 2:9-10)

Therefore we should avoid “worshipping of angels”, albeit perhaps hitherto we have done so unknowingly:

Col. 2:18-19 (KJV) ¹⁸ *Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of*

angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹ And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

We should avoid turning to bondage under the “weak and beggarly elements”; we should not allow ourselves to be drawn into “observing days, and months and seasons and years” (Gal. 4:9-10).

At the same time 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. God said “be not dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the heathen are dismayed at them” (Jer. 10:2). Jesus said, “And what I say unto you I say unto you all, Watch” (Mark 13:37), and when we see the signs, “look up”. So whilst we are complete in Christ, we are still to take notice of the signs of heaven. We do not know how the fulfilment of the “things to come” will play out, but we should be prepared, “sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation” (1 Thess. 5:8). We must stand with a girdle of truth, a breastplate of righteousness,

and with feet shod with the “preparation of the gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:14-15).

4. Idolatry Under the New Covenant (II): Using “An Idol is Nothing” to Participate in Man-Made Feasts Stumbles New Born Lambs

Another potential source of idolatry is combining 1 Cor. 8:4 (“an idol is nothing in the world”) with a misinterpretation of 2 Col. 2:16-17 to allow mixing of the worship of God with feasts and festivals which are not Biblical. Note that the KJV translation of Col. 2:16-17 on the previous page translates the Greek word ‘heorte’ as ‘holyday’, clearly referencing the annual Mosaic feasts. But other translations, such as the NKJV version that follows, translate the word as ‘festival’:

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.

On the face of it, this translation could appear to leave us at liberty to adopt man-made feasts which are not in the Bible. But a feast which has received no mention in the Old Testament cannot possibly be a “shadow of things to

come”. This verse was only ever referencing the Ceremonial Law.

Over the last 1700 or so years, from the time of Constantine in the early fourth century, the Church has, through conquest and expansion, assimilated several man-made “holy days” and feasts from various traditions. Some of these feasts are shared with the world, with participation from believers and unbelievers alike.

Is participating in such “worldly” man-made feasts within the letter of the “law of liberty” (Jam. 1:25)? Certainly one could argue that it is, firstly on the basis that “all things are lawful” (1 Cor. 10:23) and secondly perhaps on the basis of “... by love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13).

But Jesus said to Peter “feed my lambs” (John 21:15). “Feed my sheep.” He said it not once, but three times.

Any “new lamb” trying to join today’s assembly with a clear conscience must themselves establish the legitimacy of these practices through Scripture. The Church is people, it is not an institution, and we must all give an account of ourselves to God. There is no group salvation.

We cannot trust any institution's interpretation of Scripture, we must follow Christ.

Starting at the end of the Book of Revelation, the “new lamb” reads the benchmark set out in Rev. 22:14-15:

Rev. 22:14-15 ¹⁴*Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.* ¹⁵*But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers **and idolaters, and whoever loves and practises a lie.***

It is clear that idolatry and lies are out.

“No lie is of the truth.” (1 John 2:21)

Truth and falsehood cannot be mixed. One serves Christ (John 18:37-38), the other serves Satan (John 8:44).

A lying spirit (1 Chr. 18:21) and the Spirit of Truth cannot be one and the same. Mixing them in worship is mixed worship.

Thus if the man-made feast that we seek to participate in is in any way based on an “untruth” or containing elements of “untruth”, we commit idolatry, attempting to worship God, whilst also worshipping Satan. Such worship cannot be “in truth” (John 4:24).

Is it idolatry to participate in man-made “holy days” which mix worldly tradition with worship? Mark 7:7 and the verses quoted from 1 John 2 above (“love not the world”) would suggest that it is at the very least, dangerous.

We know that everything that happened to the children of Israel in the Old Testament was for our example such that we could heed the warning and modify our behaviour accordingly (1 Cor. 10:6-11). One of the Old Testament errors is the feast that Jeroboam made. Specifically, he made a feast “on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart” (1 Ki. 18:33). The day was not commanded in Scripture. The judgment of Jeroboam for this and other sins was severe (1 Ki. 14:7-16). But is this relevant to us?

Jesus came to “bear witness to the truth”. He is our guide. We can look to Christ and ask:

- * Would Jesus Himself participate in man-made “holy days” if He was in my place in the Body?
- * In particular, does observing man-made “holy days” shared with the world put us at risk of worshipping other gods, albeit unknowingly?

Are we effectively forcing God to share His glory? The Lord said in Zeph. 1:5 that He would cut off those that swear by the Lord and by “Malcham”. Mixing worship of God with worship of another is a definite “no”.

- * What does it mean to partake “of the table of demons”?

Jesus warned twice in His letters to the churches not to eat food sacrificed to idols (Rev. 2:14, 20). Paul warns that the things Gentiles ‘sacrifice’ they ‘sacrifice’ to demons and not to God.

1 Cor. 10:20-21 ²⁰ *The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.* ²¹ *You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons.*

What is Paul talking about? We know from 1 Ti. 4:4-5 that as believers, our food is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer:

1 Ti. 4:4-5 *For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with*

thanksgiving; ⁵ for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

But non-believers not obeying 1 Ti. 4:4-5 are perhaps not ‘covered’ by the Word of God or prayer and therefore should we assume that their food is not being sanctified?

‘The Gentiles’ in 1 Cor. 10:20-21 refer to non-believers – ‘pagans’, ‘heathens’. They are of Belial not Christ (1 Cor. 6:14-16). What are they ‘sacrificing’?

From Strong’s Concordance (G2380), the verb ‘to sacrifice’ means ‘to kill, slay’. In the New Testament it is translated both as “sacrifice” and as “kill”, examples of the latter being John 10:10 and Acts 11:7 – “ ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ ”

Thus 1 Cor. 10:20 could be translated as:

“The things which the heathens kill they sacrifice to demons and not to God...”.

The words “and not to God” *could* imply that anything killed is sacrificed to someone – either to demons, or to God. As believers, our food is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer – it is therefore made holy, “sacrificed”

to God. As non-believers the food may not be sanctified and would therefore be sacrificed to demons – on ‘the altar of demons’. If so, when we partake in the same festivity (and ‘table’) as unbelievers, do we condone (partake of) the same altar? At the very least, it seems we may be mixing worship, the heathen to demons, and we to our Creator.

But, Paul asks, “what agreement has the temple of God with idols?” (2 Cor. 6:15).

Remember, we are looking here from the “new lamb” perspective, the new lamb who wants to worship in truth, and is trying to work out what that actually means. The same lamb that has read 1 Cor. 10:20 and Isa. 65:3, and cannot help but see a potential parallel between “sacrificing in gardens” and the neighbours’ weekend barbecue. They do not in any way claim to have knowledge, all they are doing is trying to work out whether it is OK to participate in the man-made “holy days”, and associated pagan traditions, which the church has assimilated over the last 1700 years.

As an aside here, if the implications of 1 Cor. 10:20 are that everything killed is indeed “sacrificed” to someone – either to God or to a demon, and Jesus was the “final sacrifice”, then that would perhaps beg the question of why believers want to “sacrifice” (kill flesh and / or eat it)?

Which sheep ever ate flesh?

Is this what is meant by walking as an enemy of the cross of Christ?

Phil. 3:18-19 ¹⁸ *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.*

David was described as a man after God’s own heart (Ac. 13:22). Likewise, we should seek to understand God’s heart in all things. God spent 40 years separating the children of Israel from the heathen that surrounded them. He said “Learn not the way of the heathen...” (Jer. 10:2), and “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.” (Isa. 52:11)

Paul quotes this when he says “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.” (2 Cor. 6:17)

When it comes to mixing our worship with pagan worship, God’s heart is plain to see – we are commanded not to jump in with both feet, but instead to “come out” (Rev. 18:4).

We should note also in this context that when the children of Israel lusted after “flesh” in the wilderness, God was very angry with them. God reveals His heart through the failings of the children of Israel in the wilderness, such failings being for our admonishment today (“Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.” (1 Cor. 10:6))

Nu. 11:4-5 *And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? ⁵We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers ...*

God gave them what they craved - flesh, but He was not pleased and the people that craved the flesh were buried, for our example:

Nu. 11:32-34 ³² *And the people stayed up all that day, all night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers); and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. ³³ But while the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was aroused against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very great plague. ³⁴ So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving.*

We should seek God's heart, which we know is for mercy, not sacrifice (Hos. 6:6), and for the knowledge of God rather than 'burnt offerings'. Does a 'burnt offering' mean the flesh that we eat, sacrificed to God – our 'meat' (flesh) which is 'sacrificed' to Him and sanctified by Him? If so does this actually please Him?

Hos. 6:6 *For I desire mercy and not sacrifice,
And the knowledge of God more than burnt
offerings.*

If we love God, we want to please Him and receive the love of the truth (2 Th. 2:10). We seek His heart, and do not choose the things in which He does not delight (Isa. 1:11, Prov. 6:16-19, Isa. 65:11-12, Isa. 66. 3-4).

- * Given the severe judgment of Jeroboam, do these feasts put us on the wide path to destruction (Matt. 7:13-14), in the territory of “lawlessness” and thus in danger of hearing the words that none of us wants to hear: “I never knew you, depart from Me.” (Matt. 7:23)?

The point here is not to answer all of these questions, because the lamb, who may well have much less than a mustard seed of faith and is still finding their “theological feet”, will almost certainly struggle to answer them. The point is to show what new lambs are up against when they find a ‘church’ that is flirting with paganism and departing from The Word. And then to ask, why does the Body put new lambs in a position of

having to answer all of these questions if they want to join the assembly?

A new lamb doubting the efficacy of the man-made “holy days” shared with the world has two choices:

- (1) Flee, or at least leave so that they, being considered weak in faith, are not accused of bringing “doubtful disputations” (Rom. 14:1) or of “dividing the brethren.” If they cannot reassure themselves as to the legitimacy of the various “worldly” feasts, they must find others of a similar mindset to fellowship with, or their fate will be to wander through internet chatrooms at the mercy of every wild beast (Eze. 34:6).
- (2) Go along with the crowd, not knowing whether this constitutes “following the multitude to do evil” (Ex. 23:2), but knowing for sure that “anything that is not of faith is sin” (Rom. 14:23). And joining the assembly but “missing out the bits that make the lamb uncomfortable” still condones the practices that make the lamb uncomfortable.

Jesus said “feed my lambs”.

He did not say “tie them in knots with so many hard questions about what constitutes ‘partaking of the table of demons’, or ‘a tradition voiding the word of God’, or ‘mixed worship’, or ‘being an enemy of the cross of Christ’, or, God forbid, ‘astonishing heaven’ (Jer. 2:11-13), that they walk out of the door as soon as they have entered, if indeed they ever dared to come through the door in the first place.”

Nor did he say “an idol is nothing” (Rev 2:14, 20) – as Paul said it may be “nothing in this world” (1 Cor. 8:4) but Jesus has made it very clear that it is not “nothing”.

Lambs are weak, they are young in the faith. Eating anything that has even a whiff of an idol’s temple stumbles them.

Paul warned us not to allow our liberty to become a stumbling block (a “cause of offence”) to those who are weak:

1 Cor. 8:9-13 (KJV) ⁹ But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak. ¹⁰ For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol’s temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be

emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; ¹¹ and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? ¹² But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. ¹³ Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

Today the Body of Christ is most definitely divided between those who exercise their liberty to partake in man-made “holy days”, those who definitely do not partake, and those who are “on the fence”, having no idea whether it is right to partake or not.

1 Ki. 18:21 (KJV) *And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.*

There are many “denominations”, and hundreds of online forums to which the lambs have fled, searching for truth.

“Flirting with the lines” - turning aside to the right or to the left - causes division, whether or not it is “lawful”. Hence anyone wishing to unite the Body must seriously consider how their walk

impacts any “new lamb” coming to the assembly for the first time.

Prov. 4:27 *Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.*

Deut. 5:32 *Therefore you shall be careful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.*

1 Cor. 8:13 (KJV) *Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.*

5. The Co-Worker Update: Priests Are Bridges and Benefactors

We are spiritual Israel: “Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even the Israel of God.” (Gal. 6:16 (NIV))

We are God’s co-workers (1 Cor. 3:9 (NIV)). God would feed, clothe and protect if He lived in the flesh. Now He does it through us. “Christ’s love compels us.” (2 Cor. 5:14-15)

Practically, a priest is like a bridge: unbelievers pass through us to Christ, and Christ’s relief passes through us to them (1 Pet. 2:9).

When we relieve the poor, we lend to God. He repays and increases. “Whoever is kind to the

poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them.”
(Prov. 19:17 (NIV))

“For I was hungry and you gave me food.” (Matt. 25:35)

In any event, we know that our actions do not go unnoticed. Our worship must be formidable so that we do not compromise before the heathens and principalities. “We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels.” (1 Cor. 4:9)

6. Summary

The sanctuary is now heaven, not a physical building (Heb. 8:2).

Worship must follow Christ’s oracle through His Apostles. “Thy word is truth.” (John 7:17)

The Old Covenant was a shadow. Enforcing it today is idolatry and witchcraft (Col. 2:17).

If we use our liberty in Christ such that new lambs have to answer hard questions simply to feel safe entering into the assembly, we stumble the lambs, and divide the Body.

To a lamb, the concept of mixed worship with all of its associated tradition looks very like “strange fire” (Lev. 10:1-2). The lamb may be wrong, the

fire may not be “strange”, but if there is enough “smoke” for the lamb to feel that their salvation hangs in the balance, the lamb is not going to stick around to argue doctrine or doubtful disputation. The lamb is simply going to run, and the Body is divided. This is not theory; it has already happened. The door has opened and the lambs have fled.

Jesus said to feed the lambs, not to stumble them. Worship should be pure for the sake of unity and peace, walking “neither to the right nor to the left.” We are co-workers and priests to relieve the world (Matt 25:40), but not to join it.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. Where is the true sanctuary now?
 - * Invisible and eternal in heaven (Heb. 8:2). Christ our High Priest led us there (Heb. 9:24). We are spiritual priests (1 Pet. 2:5).
2. What is “Christ’s oracle” for worship?
 - * God’s word given to the original Apostles (John 17:14). Their writings in the New Testament are our guide.

3. What happens if we enforce Old Covenant regulations today?
 - * It becomes idolatry and witchcraft. God rejected the Old Covenant (Heb. 8:13), so Satan adopts it. Principalities enforce those old rules, not God (Col. 2:16-17).
4. What does “co-worker with God” mean (1. Cor. 3:9)?
 - * God feeds, clothes, and relieves the needy through us.
 - * We are priests / bridges (1 Pet. 2:9). When we help the poor, we lend to God (Prov. 19:17) and He repays.
5. Why did Jesus die outside the walls of Jerusalem (Heb. 13:11-13)?
 - * With Old Covenant sin offerings, animal bodies were burned outside the camp. Jesus is the substance of that shadow. His blood entered the Most Holy Place, which is heaven.

Prayer

Father, thank You for Christ our High Priest who led us into true sanctuary. Teach us to worship in spirit and truth by Christ's oracle through His Apostles. Deliver us from enforcing old shadows. Let no idolatry or witchcraft find place in us. Make us faithful co-workers, and priests of relief. Let us lend to You through the poor, and repay us with increase. Keep us one as You and Christ are one In Jesus's name, Amen.

The Mistake of Majoring in Minors

“Majoring in minors”: ‘putting corporate worship, ceremonies, days above individual purity and Christ’.

Introduction

This virus makes believers run after group names, worship days, burials, weddings, and ceremonies while neglecting the heart. God gives no “group salvation” (Eze. 18:4, 20). He saves individuals.

Eze. 18:20 *The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child. The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them.*

Corporate worship only pleases God if individual worshippers are pure (John 9:31). Jesus watched a widow give (Mark 12:41-44). He sees motives, not crowd size.

When we major in observing days (Gal. 4:10), burials, bell-ringing for the dead, or “befitting burial”, we commit idolatry. Christ gave us eternal life (Rom. 6:23), not ceremonies.

Objectives

By the end of this virus, every believer will:

- (1) Prioritize individual worship. God saves persons, not groups (Eze. 18:20).
- (2) Reject observing days and months and seasons and years (Gal. 4:10). God is worshipped in spirit and truth daily (John 4:23-24).
- (3) Reject ceremonial idolatry, which is demon worship.
- (4) Value purity over show. God rewards heart motives, not crowd size (Mark 12:43-44).

Presentation

1. Update: Individual Worship Comes First

God does not offer “corporate salvation” (Eze. 18:4,20). “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Each person stands before God alone.

No group is pure if individuals are impure. “God heareth not sinners.” (John 9:31)

The purity of individual worshippers matters more than group name or logo. Do not give spiritual credit to “SDA”, “Catholic”,

“Pentecostal” or any name. God looks at the heart (1 Sam. 16:7).

In Mark 12:41-44, Jesus sat and watched givers. A poor widow gave two coins. “They all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.” (Mark 12:44)

He said she gave more than the rich. Why? She gave her all. He sees intention of heart, not the quantity. We share rewards given by God, not leaders.

Note also that Acts 16:31 (“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”) is not a magic formula for your family. It is a mission statement for your house. You believe, you preach. God calls each one.

2. Update: No “Holy Day” for Worship

Worship in spirit and truth is daily (John 4:23-24), not just on Saturday or Sunday.

God has forbidden “Old Covenant” worship with reference to the moon and the sun (New Moons and Sabbaths). The Galatians were being pulled back to Judaism and Paul warned them against this: “Ye observe days, and months, and seasons

and years. I am afraid for you...” (Gal. 4:10-11). Paul is speaking of going back to the Old Covenant calendar – Sabbaths, New Moons, Feast Days – as if keeping them makes you right with God. That is bondage, not gospel (Col. 2:16-17).

For matters of conscience, not Law, we have liberty. A believer may set a day “unto the Lord” for prayer. Another may regard all days alike. Neither is holier. God judges the heart, not the calendar. “One person esteems one day above another: another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.” (Rom. 14:5)

In summary, Galatians 4 warns against Old Covenant calendar bondage. Romans 14 protects calendar liberty under the New Covenant: You MAY keep a day unto the Lord if you wish.

God does not live in the calendar. He lives in believers (1 Cor. 6:19). Keep the temple holy, not the day.

3. Update: Ceremonies Can Become Idolatry

Barriers: burials, marriages, child thanksgiving, “first Sunday”, foundation laying.

1 Cor. 10:23 *All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.*

Just because civil law allows big burial does not mean it is wise.

Problem 1: Wasting family money / property to bury the dead. Jesus was buried simply, not in Nazareth, no mummification. Leadership must teach economic wisdom.

Problem 2: “Befitting burial”, church bell and choir for burying the body of a dead believer must not be seen to be a requirement for eternal life. Scripture does not teach that the dead hear the living (Ecc. 9:5-6; Ps. 115:17). Therefore funeral songs, bells, or choirs must never be done ‘to please the spirit of the dead’ or as a requirement for eternal life. That is idolatry (Deut. 18:11; Isa. 8:19).

Mark 9:4-5 shows Moses and Elijah alive with Christ by God’s power, not by human ritual. God’s word to Peter was, “hear Him”, Christ

alone. Jesus never promised a “befitting burial”. He promised eternal life (Rom. 6:23).

4. Summary

God saves individuals, not groups (Eze. 18:20).

Worship God daily in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24), not by Old Covenant calendar days (Gal. 4:10). Observing a day of personal devotion to the Lord is optional (Rom. 14:5-6).

Ceremonies are lawful but must be edifying (1 Cor. 10:23). Do not waste resources or worship the dead. Christ gave eternal life, not ceremonies (Rom. 6:23). Major in Christ, not minors.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. Does God save groups or individuals?

- * Individuals only (Eze. 18:20: “the soul that sinneth, it shall die”). There is no group salvation in Scripture.

2. Is Saturday or Sunday more holy for worship?

- * No day is holier than any other, every day is alike to God (Rom. 14.5). Worship is in spirit and truth daily (John 4:23-24).

3. Why is “befitting burial” with bell-ringing for the dead idolatry?
 - * Because it honours / tries to please the spirit of dead persons. Anything dedicated to spirits except the one true God is demon worship. The dead cannot enjoy songs. Glory belongs to God alone.
4. What should Christians do about expensive burials and weddings?
 - * “Everything is lawful but not everything is beneficial.” (1 Cor. 10:23)
 - * Consider economic status. Avoid waste. Jesus’s simple burial is our pattern. Save resources for the living and for the poor (Matt. 25:40).
5. What did Christ actually give us?
 - * Eternal life in Him (Rom. 6:23). Not ceremonies, not befitting burial, not holy days. Christ Himself.

Prayer

Father, forgive us for majoring in minors while neglecting Christ.

Teach us to keep our hearts pure first, because You save individuals.

Deliver us from worship by calendar. Help us to worship You in spirit and truth every day.

Deliver us from ceremonial idolatry: burials, lavish weddings, bell-ringing for the dead. Let glory be Yours alone.

Remind us that Christ gave eternal life, not ceremonies. Make us wise stewards of our resources.

In King Jesus's name, Amen.

The Name of Jesus: “He Will Save” Crosses Every Language

“Confusion”: ‘not knowing which “name” to use’.

*“At the Name of Jesus? Yeshua? Yehoshua?
Yahusha? Yahshua? Every Knee Will Bow.”*

Introduction

Rom. 10:13 *All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

The Lord made salvation simple. But in this day and age a new believer naturally searches online, where they are now faced with so many potential names to “call upon”, how can they know which one is correct?

There is a passage in Judges where the Ephraimites are trying to cross the Jordan (a Biblical metaphor for “salvation”). Any Ephraimite that cannot say “sh” in the word “Shibboleth” is killed:

Judges 12:6 *They would say to him, “Then say, ‘Shibboleth!’” And he would say, “Sibboleth,” for he could not pronounce it right. Then they would take him and kill him at the fords of the Jordan. There fell at that time forty-two thousand Ephraimites.*

VIRUS 16

The new lamb now has “sh?” or “not sh?” added to their list of ‘hard questions’.

“If I say ‘Jesus’ instead of ‘Yeshua’, am I calling on the wrong Lord?”

The answer is a most emphatic “No.”

In fact God gave us reassurance on this point through the inscription that Pilate wrote on the cross. Pilate wrote “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” in three languages: Hebrew, Greek and Latin (John 19:19-20). We know that “if we died with Him, we will also live with Him” (2 Tim. 2:11 (NIV)).

“Name confusion” is really a symptom of Virus 9: Human tradition (Mark 7:13). It builds a wall where God built a bridge. It dishonours Jesus’s death. The enemy’s trick is to make us think that salvation is in pronunciation, not in Person. When pronunciation matters, prayer is in doubt.

Actually as we will see, what matters is not the choice of language, but the state of our heart. We can get the right name with our lips, but our heart can be far from Him.

Having said all of the above, whilst the language does not matter, the meaning of the name

absolutely does matter. We should all understand the meaning behind “the Name which is above every name” (Phil. 2:9-11).

Objectives

By the end of this virus, every lamb will:

- (1) Understand the meaning of His name.
- (2) Understand that it is the state of our heart that matters, not the choice of language. “He will save” crosses every language barrier to save people out of every tribe and nation.
- (3) Understand that the most important thing is that we know Him in person.

Presentation

1. The Meaning Behind The Name

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those ***who believe in His name.***

1 John 3:23 And this is His commandment: that we should ***believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ*** and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

Acts 4:10-12 ¹⁰ Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that ***by the name of Jesus Christ of***

Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

¹¹ This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

¹² Neither is there salvation in any other: **for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.**

In Scripture, names have meanings. They are often introduced with an explanation, as with the sons of Jacob. In Genesis, each time one of the twelve sons of Jacob is born and named, their name is explained. The first four explanations are as follows:

Ge. 29:32-35 ³² So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, “The Lord has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me.” ³³ Then she conceived again and bore a son, and said, “Because the Lord has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also.” And she called his name Simeon. ³⁴ She conceived again and bore a son, and said, “Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.” Therefore his name was called Levi. ³⁵ And she conceived again and bore a son, and said,

“Now I will praise the Lord.” Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she stopped bearing.

The names express meaning or mission.

Unfortunately the meanings are “lost in translation” unless Scripture explicitly gives the meaning, as in the case of Jesus.

When the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him what name to give Mary’s son, he gave the explanation “he will save his people from their sins”:

Matt. 1:20-21 ²⁰ *But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. ²¹ And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

The Hebrew name of Jesus is given by יֵשׁוּעַ which is referenced as H3442 in Strong’s Concordance. It is transliterated as ‘Yeshuwa’ and pronounced ‘Yay-shoo ah’.

Sure enough, it means “He will save.” It is a shortened spelling of the earlier name given to the commander Joshua, who led the children of Israel into the promised land.

The longer name is given by Strongs H3091 (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ), pronounced “yeh-ho-Shoo-ah”. The longer form means “Jehovah-saved” or, as some interpret it “The Lord is Salvation”. It comes from H3068 meaning “Jehovah / Lord” and H3467 (“yasha”) meaning to save, get the victory, deliver.

2. Pilate Wrote “Jesus of Nazareth” In Three Languages And Put All Three On The Cross

John 19:19-20 ¹⁹ Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

²⁰ Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

Hebrew

- * Aramaic: ישוע מנצרת (or ישוע הנצרי)
- * Transliteration: *Yeshua Ha-Notsri*

Greek (Koine)

- * Koine: Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος
- * Transliteration: *lēsous ho Nazōraios*

Latin

- * Original Form: Iesus Nazarenus
- * Pronunciation: *Yay-sooz Nah-zah-ray-noos*

Knowing that if we died with Him, we will also live with Him (2 Tim. 2:11), it becomes clear that we do not have to speak Hebrew or use a Hebrew name to be saved. ‘Jesus’ is His legitimate Greek name transliterated into English. We should not worry about transliterations into other languages.

And in fact, as Acts 2:5-11 testifies, when the Spirit was poured out, men of every nation heard what was said about the wonderful works of God, each in their own tongue:

Acts 2:5-11 ⁵*And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. ⁶And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. ⁷Then they were all amazed and marvelled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? ⁸And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? ⁹Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.”*

Jesus draws all men to him (John 12:32), not just Hebrew speakers. One death, one name, many tongues.

In summary, as we have already seen, God is not careless with names. God Himself ensured that the name “JESUS” is in the bible, both in Matt. 1:21 and John 19:19-20.

3. Know the Person, Not Just The Name

Matt. 15:7-9⁷“Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ⁸‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honour Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. ⁹And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’”

Note that in the above quotation, the Lord was not saying that the people were drawing near with the wrong name. They had the right name, it was their heart that was far from Him.

The Name represents the Person including His character and His authority (Ex. 3:14-15). To know Him, we must know and love his character (Jer. 9:23-24), not just His name. And above all, we must obey Him. The worst words any of us can ever hear must surely be “depart from Me, you who practise lawlessness”:

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!’

4. The Antidote to The Name Virus

- (1) Teach the meaning of the name.
- (2) Kill the fear: nobody’s salvation is dependent on whether they can say ‘sh’ (Judges 12:6).
- (3) Unite the Body. Let Hebrew lambs say “Yeshua”, let English lambs say “Jesus”.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What does the name “Jesus” mean?
 - * “Jesus” means “The Lord saves” or “He will save” (Matt. 1:21). The angel gave the name, and the reason. The name is the mission.

2. Who does Jesus save?

- * “His people” (Matt. 1:21). That means all who believe on Him and turn from sin. He saves us from our sins, not just in our sins. He delivers us from sin’s power, penalty, and penalty’s shame (Rom. 6:14, 8:1).

3. Can any other name save us?

- * No. Acts 4:12 says “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Saints, angels, money, tradition, or religion cannot save. Only Jesus.

4. Why is it dangerous to change or hide the name Jesus?

- * Because if we hide the name, we hide the cure. The devils are afraid of that name (Luke 10:17). When we preach “God” or “Lord” but never “Jesus”, people do not know who to believe on. “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Rom. 10:13-14).

Phil. 2:9-11 ⁹Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those

under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

5. How do we use the name Jesus today?

- * In three ways, with reverence:
 - i. To be saved: we believe on Him and call on Him (Acts 16:31).
 - ii. To pray: we come to the Father in Jesus's name (John 14:13-14).
 - iii. To live: we do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus (Col. 3:17), and we never use it as a charm or curse.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, We thank You for the name Jesus. Thank You that You did not leave us in sin, but You sent Your Son to save us.

Lord Jesus, we call on Your name today. Forgive us for every time we treated Your name lightly. Wash us from our sins by Your blood. Make us Your people. Help us to honour Your name with our lips, our prayers, and our lives. Let no tradition, no fear, no shame stop us from calling on You. We pray this in the precious name of Jesus, Amen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Michael James Ekperikpe is a teacher, pastor and missionary strategist, passionate about restoring the Church to her biblical identity. He holds a B.A. (Religious Education) from the School of Religious Studies, Port Harcourt, an affiliate of St. Thomas-a-Becket University, Canterbury, United Kingdom.

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 UNITY diagnoses sixteen 'viruses' that are breaking the Body of Christ, causing brethren to fight over names, days and traditions, instead of standing one in Christ (1 Cor. 1:10).

Each virus exposes the lie, then gives Christ's update for healing. Examples include fighting over ceremonies whilst neglecting Christ; trusting in our church name instead of personal purity; and 'calendar worship': thinking one day of the week is holier than another.

This book is for lambs, pastors, and leaders who are tired of division. You will gain eyes to see, a heart to love beyond a logo, and tools to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

Jesus prayed it. Through Paul commanded it. The world is waiting to see it (John 17:21).

One flock, One Shepherd, One Body (Eph. 4:4-5).

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! (Ps. 133:1)

