

NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP

(English)

by

J.C. Choate

**Published by:
World Evangelism Publications
Winona, Mississippi**

InDesign Layout: Shane Fisher

Postal Address:

World Evangelism
P.O. Box 72
Winona, MS 38967

Phone number:

662-283-1192

Email:

Betty Choate - choate@worldevangelism.org
Jerry Bates - jerry@worldevangelism.org
Shane & Emily Fisher - worldevangelism1962@gmail.com

Websites:

www.worldevangelismlibrary.org
www.gospelgazette.com
www.worldevangelism.org
www.worldevangelismmedia.com

Printed by:

World Evangelism Publications
Winona, MS 38967

INTRODUCTION

The Christian is to worship God. Surely all would agree with this. The big question at this point, however, would be: How should one worship? To answer that question obviously it would be necessary for us to go to the New Testament. That is what we attempt to do in the following lessons. If you will come along and study with us, surely we will be able to determine the kind of worship God requires of each of us.

God has given us his word and in that word he has revealed his will. This is true whether he is talking to us about the plan of salvation, the church, the Christian life, or worship. Since he has given the same word to all, and that word reveals the same will to one and all, and since the Lord is dealing with the same disease (the disease of sin), with only one remedy for that disease (the gospel of Christ), and since he saves all through obedience to that gospel, adding the obedient to his church, and since all Christians in turn are asked to worship him, it would seem logical that he would ask all to worship in the same way—and indeed he does.

There should be but one worship in the world today and that should be the kind the Lord has revealed in his word. There might be many places to worship but all who worship regardless of where they might meet should be worshipping in the same way. In other words, if one went to one place of worship then he would find them worshipping a certain way at that place. On going to another place of worship, he would find them worshipping the same way, and so on with all of the other places of worship around the world. But that is not true in our day. One group worships one way and another group worships yet another way, and so on. Who is right in this case and who is wrong? Once more this is where the scripture comes in. We may know exactly the type of worship that God wants by going to his word. Once we know what he requires of us then we must abide by it. Furthermore, whether we find one or many who are worshipping the Lord contrary to his will then we must label them as false worshipers. For instance, we read in Acts 17 where the people of Athens were worshipping but they were doing so in ignorance. Again, the Lord said it was possible to worship in vain as a result of following the doctrines and commandments of men. This being true, we state again that there is a right way and a wrong way of worship. Our purpose in these lessons is to learn the right way, the one true way of worship, and then to pattern our worship after that. Only then can we have confidence that we are worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

J.C. Choate
Church of Christ
Winona, Mississippi
January 23, 1982

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Lesson One: The Meaning of Worship.....	5
Lesson Two: The Worshiper.....	8
Lesson Three: The Object of Our Worship.....	12
Lesson Four: Kinds of Worship.....	15
Lesson Five: Worship of Early Christians.....	18
Lesson Six: The Day of Worship.....	22
Lesson Seven: The Pattern of Worship.....	25
Lesson Eight: Bible Study.....	29
Lesson Nine: Prayer.....	33
Lesson Ten: Singing.....	37
Lesson Eleven: The Lord's Supper.....	41
Lesson Twelve: Giving.....	45
Lesson Thirteen: Attending the Assemblies.....	49

LESSON ONE

THE MEANING OF WORSHIP

The word worship as used in the Bible means to serve, praise, honor, glorify, and to reverence. For it to be meaningful, it must be rendered by one intelligent being to another as stipulated by the one being worshiped. But let us take a little closer look.

1. We worship by serving.

In this case the word serve means to minister, obey, work, worship, etc. The Bible pictures a child of God as a servant, with the Lord being his Master. Paul described himself again and again as a servant. He said, "*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.*" (Romans 1:1). Peter and James did likewise in 2 Peter 1:1 and James 1:1. What did they mean by this? They meant that they were now serving the Lord, having given their all to him. We are to do likewise. Paul exhorted, "*But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life*" (Romans 6:22).

To see what kind of service the Lord wants, then let us notice the following verses of Scriptures: "*Serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews*" (Acts 20:19). "*Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another*" (Romans 14: 16-19). "*Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.*" (Romans 12:11).

Concerning our service, Paul writes, "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*" (Romans 12:1). "*With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.*" (Ephesians 6:7). The Lord speaking to the church at Thyatira, said: "*I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first*" (Revelation 2:19).

We often times speak of the worship service. This is correct in that we are doing service unto the Lord. In another sense, all our lives are spent in service to God, and in this way we spend our lives in worship to him. How could we ever hope to worship the Lord either on Sunday, or through our life, if we failed to obey and serve him?

2. We worship the Lord by praising Him.

When Paul and Silas were in prison, the record says, "*And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God; and the prisoners heard them*" (Acts 16:25). Speaking of how the Lord has blessed us, and of our duty toward him, Paul writes, "*That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ*" (Ephesians 1:12). We read again, "*By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name*" (Hebrews 13:15). Peter says, "*that the genuineness of your faith, being*

much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7). “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, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen” (1 Peter 4:11).

We are to praise the Lord daily in all of our actions, in all that we do and say, but especially when we come together on the Lord’s Day for worship, we do so for the specific purpose of praising the Lord. We praise Him to begin with by our presence, for the correct motive in being there, and then in that which we do while there. Our hearts are to be humbled, and through our study, prayers, singing, giving, and partaking of the Lord’s Supper, we are to praise Him. How could we praise Him if we refuse to do so?

3. We worship the Lord by honoring Him.

Christ said, *“That all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him” (John 5:23).* Paul wrote, *“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.” (1 Timothy 1:17).*

It is the Lord who has saved us, who blesses us, who gives us the hope of a better life, and it is the Lord that is to receive our honor.

4. We worship the Lord by glorifying Him.

To glorify means to exalt, to honor, to praise. This is in keeping with our theme concerning the meaning of worship. But let us again notice some scriptures that set forth this idea: *“That you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 15:6).* *“For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:20).* *“Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter” (1 Peter 4:16).*

It should be our desire in life to point to God, to magnify him, to exalt and glorify his name, rather than to take any credit for ourselves. In comparison to him, we are nothing. Our purpose in gathering on the Lord’s Day is to focus all attention on him and thus to worship.

5. We worship the Lord by showing reverence.

God is our maker and Christ is our savior. We are to respect them. We are to hear them. We are to obey them. We are to humble ourselves before them. We are to reverence them. The psalmist said in the long ago, *“Holy and reverend is His name.” (Psalm 111:9).* Then the Hebrews writer said, *“Wherefore we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Hebrews 12:28).*

It is only when we love the Lord, humble ourselves before him in obedience, and

with thankful hearts to come to him, that we can really and truly pour out our hearts and souls to the Lord in worship and praise. It is then that we can truly appreciate what Paul meant when he said, “*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father through Him*” (Colossians 3:17).

So many go to worship only out of habit or because of the insistence of someone. Many just go through the routine of worship, but never actually worship. These are the people who have never discovered the meaning of worship and consequently never get anything from it.

In the future, when we worship, let it be done in all seriousness, in all sincerity, with a pure heart, and thanksgiving, going before the Lord to his honor and glory both for now and forever more. When we learn to worship him with meaning, we will want to worship him, and therefore it will mean something to us and to him that is being worshiped.

QUESTIONS

1. Give the subject of the lesson.
2. Define the word “worship.”
3. For it to be meaningful, how must it be rendered?
4. What does the word serve mean?
5. How is a child of God a servant?
6. Were Paul, Peter, and James servants?
7. What kind of service does the Lord want?
8. List some verses of Scripture on this.
9. Why do we often speak of worship as being a worship service?
10. Can we worship the Lord acceptably apart from obedience?
11. Discuss some verses of scripture that teach that we are to praise the Lord.
12. How can we praise Him?
13. Is it possible to honor the Father without honoring the Son?
14. Why is the Lord to be honored?
15. Tell what the word “glorify” means.
16. What should our desire in life be?
17. Explain the purpose of our assembling on the Lord’s Day for worship.
18. Who is our Maker? Who is our Savior?
19. How are we to respond to them?
20. Whose name should be reverend?
21. Quote Colossians 3:17.
22. How do the majority of people worship?
23. In what way should we approach worship?

LESSON TWO

THE WORSHIPER

Of all of God's creation, there is just one that can worship him and that is man. God created man not with just a body but with a soul and an intellect. With intelligence: then man is able to make decisions. He can therefore decide to worship his Creator or he can decide that he will not. When man chooses to worship God then it is that he is truly praised and honored.

Man is basically a worshipful being. He is going to worship something or someone. He has always done this and will always do so as long as time shall stand. In both the past and present man has been known to bow down to every imaginable thing. This includes the moon, the stars, stones, rivers, and every form of nature. He has also bowed to all sorts of man-made images made out of stone, wood, and metal. But if man is to worship then he needs to be pointed to the God that made him and encouraged to worship him. Actually, God seeks such to worship Him.

Jesus taught, "*But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth*" (John 4:23,24). So it is not enough for a person to worship, but if his worship is to be acceptable then it must be directed to the right one and it must be done in spirit and in truth. Let us think on what this implies and necessitates.

1. All may know of the true and living God—all of creation points to a Maker. This is inescapable, and all intelligent human beings, when accepting the facts of the case, will be forced to come to this conclusion. Of course we know that the one true and living God is this creator. (Genesis 1:1).

2. If God is the Creator of all things, and would have man to obey Him, then surely He has revealed His will to man. And He has. He has done this through the Bible. We are told that things that are written concerning Christ have been written that we might believe. (John 20:30, 31). Furthermore, all Scriptures have been given by the inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

3. Since God has spoken, and it has been recorded and made available through the pages of the Bible, then it is possible for man to come in contact with it, learn it, and obey it. Christ commanded the apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15,16). Not only so, but those who are hungry and thirsty for the righteousness of God shall be filled (Matthew 5:6). Again, we are told that those who have a desire to receive the Lord that he will give them the power or the opportunity to become sons of God (John 1:12).

4. Once one reads and studies the word of God, then faith is produced in his

heart. (Romans 10:17). From knowledge and faith, then he is led to obey the commands of the Lord that brings salvation (Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30; Hebrews 11:6).

5. Through obedience he is saved and added to the Lord's church where he is now a Christian (Acts 2:47; Acts 11:26).

6. As a member of the church and as a Christian then one is prepared to worship the Lord as he has directed. Before this time one could not scripturally worship. We read, "*Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him*" (John 9:31). Note, two conditions were laid down before one could hope to be heard of the Lord: First, he had to be a worshiper of God, and second, of course, based on the fact that he was a doer of the Lord's word. This amounts to that of being in the proper relationship with God, or the son and Father relationship, or being a Christian and member of the Lord's church.

7. As a Christian and a member of the Lord's church, there is still the necessity of worshiping God in spirit and in truth for the worship to be accepted. That means that the worship then must be engaged in the right frame of mind. That is, it must be done from the heart, in all humility, in all sincerity and reverence. Such would require purity of heart, and concentration of one's thoughts on what he is engaging in. The worshiper cannot coldly and formally go through worship without any thought of what he is doing. This would be mockery. Then finally, the worship should be engaged in all truth. This means that it should be in harmony with the teaching of God's word. Now the question is what has the Lord taught? As we continue our studies we are going to find that this includes Bible Study, Prayer, Singing, The Lord's Supper, and Giving. Furthermore, it would require that it be on the day that the Lord has stipulated. Now it makes no difference how sincere an individual might be unless his worship is according to the truth then it is all in vain. Again, even if one follows the Lord's teaching to the letter when it comes to the acts of worship, if his worship is not in spirit or with the understanding, then it is in vain. God has specified how he wants the individual to worship him and it must be complied with explicitly.

8. The worshiper has to be in the right place (the Lord's church), engaging in the acts of worship that the Lord has specified, and with the right people, for his worship to be acceptable.

Fellowship here is very important. The true Christian cannot worship with the various denominational churches or other religious organizations, because their worship is quite different from that which has just been described. The true Christian, and member of the Lord's church, cannot worship God scripturally on Saturday. He cannot worship with those who study according to the creeds of men, who sing with mechanical music, who pray for all "churches," who do not have the Lord's Supper

every Sunday, and who's "tithes and offering" are given to promote error. Paul said, "*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them*" (Ephesians 5:11). John wrote, concerning false teachers: "*For he who bids him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds*" (2 John 11).

9. The worshiper himself—although the worshiper is not perfect, that does not give him the license to live as he pleases. If he is to worship the Lord then he should rid himself of all of his bad habits and practices (James 5:17), and strive to approach the Lord in worship with a pure heart, a clean body, and a humble spirit.

What kind of worshiper are you? When do you worship? How often do you worship? Why do you worship? Who do you worship? There are many worshipers, but few true worshipers. The majority either worship the wrong one or worship in the wrong way. Be sure that if you are going to worship that it is directed to the right one and in the right way and that you are the kind of person that the Lord would want to worship him.

QUESTIONS

1. Who is the only one of all of God's creation who can worship his Creator?
2. How did God create man?
3. What is man able to decide?
4. When is God really honored?
5. What is man basically?
6. List some of the things that man has worshiped in the past.
7. Who does God seek to worship him?
8. Read John 4:23,24 and explain it.
9. Who points to God?
10. Quote Genesis 1:1.
11. Has God revealed his will to man?
12. How has he done this?
13. Read John 20:30,31 and 2 Timothy 3:16,17.
14. Why does God want man to know his will?
15. Is it possible for man to know his will?
16. Who will the Lord give power to become children of God?
17. How is faith produced in one's heart?
18. Through what is one saved?
19. Who is prepared to worship the Lord?
20. Does God hear sinners? Why not?
21. What is one's proper relationship with God?

22. What does it mean to worship in spirit and in truth?
23. Where must an individual be to worship the Lord?
24. Why is fellowship so important?
25. List some things that a true Christian cannot practice.
26. How must the worshiper approach the Lord?
27. Are there many true worshipers?

LESSON THREE

THE OBJECT OF OUR WORSHIP

Since the creation, man has worshiped everything under the sun, and even the sun itself. There are millions of gods and goddesses around the world. Fabulous temples have been built by their devotees, and yet the majority of men seem unhappy with their religion. Why? What is wrong?

The thing that is wrong is that the masses of the people have not yet come to believe in the one and true living God. Christ points to him, when he says, "*God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:24). God then is to be the object of man's worship. Only when he learns this and directs his worship to Him can he find the peace and comfort of soul that he has so long searched for.

In this lesson we want to find out who God is and why we should worship Him.

1. God is the Creator of all things.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). It might be argued that the Bible is saying this, but what proof is there otherwise? Just look around and see what God has created. The earth and all things therein serves as ample proof for God's existence. Something cannot come from nothing, therefore someone had to create it. David said, "*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork*" (Psalm 19:1). Who can dispute that? Who will dispute it?

God created man and woman in His own image. "*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him: male and female created He them*" (Genesis 1:26,27). "*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul*" (Genesis 2:7).

2. God sent His Son Jesus to save man from his sins.

Concerning the purpose of the Lord's coming, we read, "*For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world might be saved through Him*" (John 3:16,17). Paul wrote, "*But God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:8). Again he says, "*For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*" (1 Timothy 2:3,4). As to our salvation, he writes, "*For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast*" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

3. God has blessed us with all blessings, physically and spiritually.

James writes, "*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Fa-*

ther of lights, with whom there is no variation, nor shadow of turning” (James 1:17). Paul says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3).

4. There is one true and living God.

In speaking of the oneness of God, Paul declared, “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:6). He continues, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 2:5).

5. God is a Spirit.

We have already read in John 4:24 where it is plainly stated that God is Spirit. In other words, God is not flesh and blood. He is not physical. He is not material. When we therefore learn that he is Spirit then we can understand Him better inasmuch as we will think of him as being on another plane and not on the level of man.

6. God is love.

John declares, “He that loves not knows not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” (1 John 4:8-11). He says therefore that if we do not have any love then we cannot know God for God has revealed himself through love.

7. God is living today.

Peter confessed Christ as the Son of the living God. (Matthew 16:16). Paul talks about the church of the living God. (1 Timothy 3:15). Again, he speaks of those who turned away from their idols to obey and serve the true and living God (1 Thessalonians 1:9). Some have declared God dead, but they are the ones who are dead spiritually. God lives. Christ taught, “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Matthew 22:32).

8. With God all things are possible.

When Jesus talked to the people about who could be saved, he said, “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26).

9. There is none good but God.

“And Jesus said unto him, Why do you call Me good? There is none good but one, that is, God” (Mark 10:18).

10. No man has seen God.

John wrote, “No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him” (John 1:18).

We could go on and notice that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34,35), that he knows all works from the beginning of the world (Acts 15:18), that he will eventually judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ (Romans 2:16), that He can give

eternal life (1 John 5:11), etc.

The God we speak of knows all, sees all, hears all, is everywhere at the same time, is all powerful and without beginning or end. There is no one to be compared to him. He is the Creator of all else. He is the one that is to be worshiped, praised, honored, and glorified both now and forever more.

God wants our worship but He would never force us to pay homage to Him. Those who choose to do so though will be blessed accordingly.

However, He will not accept just any kind of worship. If we are going to worship Him then it must be on His terms and not ours. He has revealed the type of worship he wants in His word and we are going to see this in the lessons that follow.

QUESTIONS

1. What has man been known to worship?
2. Explain what is wrong with the religion of the majority of the people.
3. Quote John 4:24.
4. Who is to be the object of man's worship?
5. State Genesis 1:1.
6. Give some proofs for God's existence.
7. What declares the glory of God?
8. How did God create man and woman?
9. Why did God send His Son to earth?
10. Quote John 3:16,17.
11. Who died for us?
12. How are we saved?
13. Where does all of our blessings come from?
14. Read Ephesians 1:3.
15. What does Paul say about the oneness of God?
16. How would you describe God?
17. Explain "God is love."
18. Does God live today? In what way?
19. Are all things possible with God?
20. Who is good?
21. Has any man ever seen God?
22. Is God a respecter of persons?
23. Who will eventually judge the world?
24. Tell some of the characteristics of God.
25. What kind of worship does God want?

LESSON FOUR

KINDS OF WORSHIP

In going through the pages of the New Testament, we have three kinds of worship mentioned. In this lesson we will consider each one. We will do this to be reminded that there is more than one worship set forth in the Scriptures. We will likewise make a study of these different kinds of worship to discover which one the Lord would have us to engage in. And finally, we should allow this to convince us that just because people around us may be worshipping, this does not necessarily mean that their worship is acceptable to God.

1. The Scriptures speak of ignorant worship.

“Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshippers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there. Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, ‘‘What does this babbling want to say?’’ Others said, ‘‘He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,’’ because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, ‘‘May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak? For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean.’’ For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing. Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, ‘‘Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘‘For we are also His offspring.’’ Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising. Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead’’ (Acts 17:16-31).

Now you will observe that Paul encountered idolatrous worship in Athens. He denounces it by showing that it is being done in ignorance, and then he proceeds to preach to them of the true and living God.

Why were they worshiping idols? Why would anyone bow to idols? An idol is that which is made out of stone, wood or metal, but it is lifeless and spiritless. It can not see, hear, smell, speak, move, think, or bless. Even where such an object is supposedly representative of something else or of some individual, it is the idol that ultimately comes to be looked upon as being “god.”

But only those who are ignorant of the God of heaven would bow in worship to an idol or to any thing whether it be of nature or some human being living or dead.

Today, as then, men continue to worship idols around the world. But why? The problem remains the same—ignorance, pure and simple. No intelligent and informed person is going to worship an idol or image, whether apart from Christianity or within what is called Christianity.

2. The Scriptures speak of vain worship.

Christ said, “*But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*” (Matthew 15:9). Again He said, “*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. 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?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’*” (Matthew 7:21-23).

It is still publicly taught that the Lord’s people may worship in different ways, and as long as they are honest and sincere in it, then their worship will be accepted of God. This is not true. One’s worship is in vain when it is according to the doctrines and commandments of men. The word vain means empty, to no avail, useless. In other words, such worship will not be accepted of the Lord.

Just because a group of people meet “in the name of Christ” that does not mean their worship will be acceptable. In the first place, if they are meeting as members of a denominational church, then they are not meeting in the name of Christ but in the name of their denomination. In the next place as a denomination their worship will be conducted according to that organization. The Lord says that a lot of people are going to stand before him on the day of judgment and they are going to remind him of all they have done, but because they have not obeyed his will, and they are not members of his family, then he will denounce them and reject them.

If your worship is according to the teachings of men, that is, you are doing things in worship that you cannot find in God’s word, then your worship is vain and there fore will not be accepted of the Lord. So it is time to investigate your situation.

3. The Scriptures speak of true worship.

Christ said concerning worship, “*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship Him in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:24).

Let us now notice a few things here. First, God is to be the object of our worship as we have already studied in a previous lesson. Second, those that worship him must do so on the Lord's terms. No one is going to be forced to worship God, but those who choose to do so must do so on the Lord's terms instead of the worship being on his terms or that of others. Third, the worship must be done in spirit and in truth. Now what does that mean? It simply means that our worship must be in spirit, that is, with sincerity, understanding, and humility. As far as the truth is concerned, it means that our worship must be done according to the things that are written in the Scriptures. Now isn't that simple? But to some it is too simple. They want to go through all kinds of rituals, formalities, ceremonies, and so on, but that is not what the Lord wants. He wants his people to worship him from their hearts as he has commanded. He will settle for no more and no less.

This is the kind of worship taught in the New Testament, and as we continue with our studies, we are going to see that this is how the early Christians worshiped and this is how we must worship. When we all do so then we will all worship alike and the Lord will accept our worship.

QUESTIONS

1. How many kinds of worship do we read about in the New Testament?
2. Give some reasons for studying this lesson.
3. What kind of city did Paul find Athens to be?
4. Describe the kind of worship the Athenians were engaging in.
5. What did Paul say about it?
6. List the various points of Paul's sermon.
7. Who did he point them to?
8. Why were they worshiping idols?
9. From what is an idol made?
10. Point out some of the things an idol cannot do.
11. Will one bow to an idol if he knows of the true and living God?
12. Are there any idolaters today?
13. Quote Matthew 15:9.
14. Read Matthew 7:21-23.
15. What is vain worship?
16. Is one's worship acceptable to God just because it is "in the name of Christ"?
17. What kind of worship does the Lord want?
18. Who is to be the object of our worship?
19. Would the Lord force anyone to worship him?
20. On whose terms is the worship to be engaged in?
21. Explain the meaning of worshiping God in spirit and in truth.

LESSON FIVE

WORSHIP OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

It is very interesting to note how people worship, where they worship, when they worship, what they do in worship, etc. Of course we know today there are many churches and most of them have different ways of worship. Why the difference? Should there be any difference? How can we know whether we are worshipping the Lord as he would have us to? One of the best ways to find out is to go to the scriptures and see how the early Christians worshiped.

After the church had been established on the day of Pentecost, the record says, *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”* (Acts 2:42). These disciples or Christians continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine or teaching. What did they do? Although all of the acts of worship are not listed, three are. They consist of fellowship or giving, breaking of bread or the Lord’s Supper, and prayers.

Later on we have Paul on a trip, and passing through Troas, he stopped off long enough to worship with the local Christians. We read the following report: *“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight”* (Acts 20:7). We will notice here that the day of worship was the first day of the week. Evidently Paul had arrived on Monday, but to have the opportunity to worship with them then he stayed on through the week, and even bypassing Saturday, in order that the first day of the week might come around and that he could worship with the Lord’s people on the day that the Lord had appointed. Furthermore, it says that this was the day on which the disciples or Christians came together to break bread or to partake of the Lord’s Supper. Finally, Paul used this occasion to preach to them and afterward went on his way.

In 1 Corinthians 10 and 11 we have Paul writing to his Corinthian brethren about the importance of the Lord’s Supper. Let us note: *“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.”* (1 Corinthians 11:23-30). Now let us list some of the main points

made here:

1. Paul received this of the Lord.
2. He speaks of the bread representing the body of Christ and the cup representing his blood.
3. That it was to be partaken of in remembrance of the body and blood of Christ.
4. In so doing, they would shew forth the Lord's death till he come.
5. Those eating and drinking of it unworthily, not being faithful to the Lord, would eat and drink damnation to themselves.
6. Before partaking of it then they should examine themselves to see what their spiritual condition was. Of course the idea was that if they weren't prepared to partake of the Lord's Supper, because of sin in their lives, then they should make matters right with God and then go ahead and partake of the Lord's Supper. It might be pointed out that although one should not partake of the Supper if he is not living as he should, neither can he live as he should and not participate in the Lord's Supper. Therefore, whatever is in one's life that should not be there, then it should be removed and then the individual is in position to partake of the Supper as a faithful Christian.
7. The Lord's people are not to engage in closed communion inasmuch as Paul says that each one should examine himself before partaking of it. God can look on the heart, but we as members of the church cannot. Therefore, we have no right to judge a man, but it is the duty of an individual to consider his own case in light of what the Bible teaches.

Also in 1 Corinthians 11 Paul condemns the Corinthians for making a feast out of the Lord's Supper, and thereby making a mockery of it. He points out to them that they have their own houses to eat and to drink in and that when they come together for worship it should not be for the purpose of eating and drinking to be filled physically. The same would be true today. Christians are to meet in all seriousness to worship. They are to partake of the bread and the cup only to remember the body and the blood of Christ, and nothing more.

Then on turning over to 1 Corinthians 16:1,2 we have the same writer dealing with the subject of giving. He writes: "*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do you. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*" Again, he writes, "*But this I say, He sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver*" (2 Corinthians 9:6,7). So according to these the Lord's people, were definitely expected to give. We also learn these things:

1. They were to do it on the first day of the week.
2. All Christians were to give.
3. They were to give according to what they had to give.
4. Their giving was to be according to the way they had prospered. No where does the New Testament teach tithing and no where is the amount that is to be given set as being so much.
5. They were to give as they had purposed or determined in their hearts beforehand.
6. They were not to give grudgingly or of necessity, feeling that they were being forced to do so.
7. Rather they were to give cheerfully inasmuch as God loves a cheerful giver or one that wants to give and is happy to give.

There are several references made to singing in the New Testament, and there is one of where Paul and Silas sang praises to God while in prison (Acts 16:25), but there is no example of where a congregation of the Lord's people gathered on the first day of the week to sing. Nevertheless, the inspired writers commanded Christians to sing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), and so that is another act of worship that Christians of the first century engaged in.

Now putting all of this together, we find that the Lord's people gathered each first day of the week to pray, study, sing, partake of the Lord's Supper, and to give. We do not read of anything else. In the various secular writings that have been preserved from this period of time, they tell the same story. So we know what Christians did in that age to worship the Lord. Should we not do the same?

QUESTIONS

1. Do most churches worship alike?
2. How can we know if we are worshiping the Lord as he would have us to?
3. What happened after the church was established on the day of Pentecost?
4. Quote Acts 2:42.
5. What did the disciples continue in?
6. Are all acts of worship listed here?
7. Why did Paul stop over in Troas for a few days?
8. What does Acts 20:7 say?
9. On what day of the week did the Christians meet?
10. Mention some of the things they did.
11. Who were the Corinthians?
12. What had Paul received of the Lord?

13. Why were they to partake of the bread and the cup?
14. What did this show?
15. How may one partake of it unworthily?
16. Explain, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat."
17. Can one eat and drink damnation to himself?
18. Is it possible to be a faithful Christian and not partake of the Lord's Supper?
19. Are the Lord's people to engage in closed communion? If not, why not?
20. Why did Paul condemn the Corinthians for the way they were partaking of the Lord's Supper?
21. Read 1 Corinthians 16:1,2.
22. On what day were the Christians to lay by in store?
23. How many were to give?
24. What were they to give?
25. State the amount they were to give.
26. Quote 2 Corinthians 9:6,7.
27. What kind of giver does the Lord love?
28. List the five acts of worship.

LESSON SIX

THE DAY OF WORSHIP

In the New Testament we not only have the importance of worship set forth, but we are also told on which day the Lord expects his people to assemble to worship. Which day is this?

There are those who teach that the Sabbath day is still binding upon man as the day of worship. Could this be true? Not if the law was taken out of the way, and it was according to 2 Corinthians 3; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 9:16,17 and Hebrews 10:9. It is argued though that Paul met with the Jews on the Sabbath day. This may be true, but nowhere does it state or indicate that he ever met for worship. Rather, he met with them to have an opportunity to teach them God's will.

If the Sabbath day then is not the day of worship, then which day is? As we turn through the pages of the New Testament we have more than one Scripture reference that answers this question. First of all, we will take an example of a group of New Testament Christians that have assembled for worship and we will see on what day they chose to assemble. For instance, when Paul was traveling through the city of Troas, the record says that he stopped off there for a few days in order that he might have the opportunity of meeting with the local Christians for worship. Now let us notice the reading itself: "*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight*" (Acts 20:7). Please observe that Acts 20:6 says that he dwelt in Troas seven days. That meant that he was also there on the Sabbath day or on Saturday, but the record does not say that he met with the Christians on this day, but rather on the first day of the week, or the first day after the Sabbath day. Now what would be the significance of that? The significance would be that he did not tarry to worship on the Sabbath day, but rather to be there to worship on the day that the Lord had appointed for worship and that was the first day of the week.

What is the first day of the week anyway? Well, under the law the Sabbath day was the seventh day of the week. That means that if the Sabbath day was the seventh day of the week, and there are only seven days in each week, then immediately after the Sabbath day would come the first day of the week, the second day of the week, and so on. Of course in modern times we call it Sunday and Sunday is listed as the first day of the week.

Why the first day of the week? Well, under the Law of Moses the day of worship was the Sabbath day or the last day of the week. Under the law of Christ the day of worship is Sunday or the first day of the week. That means that the Lord no longer comes last but first (Matthew 6:33).

But continuing, let us notice in the second place that the apostle Paul instructs his Corinthian brethren as to the day they should give of their means. Let us read: *“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come”* (1 Corinthians 16:1,2). But why was this day chosen as the day for them to give as they had been prospered? Because this was the day of worship and since they would be together for that then it would be an ideal time for them also to give of their means. Now surely if the day of worship had been the Sabbath day then Paul would not have asked them to assemble again on the very next day to give their contribution. On the other hand, those today who teach that the day of worship is Saturday, do they return again on Sunday to obey God’s command concerning giving? If not, then why not?

Later on John spoke of the first day of the week as being the Lord’s day. He said, *“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day”* (Revelation 1:10). It is true that in one sense that every day is the Lord’s but John must have been speaking of this day in a special way. The Lord’s day here would refer to the day of worship or the first day of the week. Otherwise, why would he have called it the Lord’s day?

But why is the first day of the week so important? Apart from the fact, as already pointed out, it is suggestive of a change in laws and that the Lord now is to come first, there are several other reasons as to why it is important.

1. Christ was resurrected on the first day of the week.

On the morning of the Lord’s resurrection, the record says, *“Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb”* (Matthew 28:1). A little later that day, we read, *“Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you”* (John 20:19).

2. Jesus appeared before the disciples again on the first day of the week. Not only did Jesus come forth from the grave on the first day of the week, and appeared to His disciples later in the same day, but now once more it is interesting to note that He again appears to them on the first day of the week. It says, *“And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you”* (John 20:26). If Jesus appeared to His disciples on the first day of the week, and then eight days later re-appeared, on what day would the second visit be made? The first day of the week, of course. Why do the Scriptures call this to our attention again and again? Because it was going to be a very important day under the law of Christ. It was going to be the day of worship.

3. The church had its beginning on the first day of the week (Acts 2).

The day of Pentecost came fifty days after the Passover and the day the Lord was resurrected from the grave. So if the Lord was resurrected on the first day of the week and then Pentecost came fifty days later, then what day would Pentecost come on? The first day of the week.

But what is so important about the day of Pentecost? In this case it is important to the extent that it came on the first day of the week and it was on this day that the Lord's church was established. Not only that, but many important things happened on this day for the first time, and all of these things tend to place more emphasis on this particular day. For instance, the Holy Spirit came on this day, the first gospel sermon in fact was preached on this day, the first obedient souls were saved and added to the church on this day. Therefore, the day on which these things occurred cannot be overlooked.

Surely by now we are convinced that the Lord has chosen the first day of the week as being the day for his people to assemble on and to worship. With the example of the early Christians meeting on this day, and then their being commanded to meet on this day to give, this should take away any doubts that might have once existed. Remember, the Lord is to come first in worship and in all other things. That is why each first day of the week Christians are to assemble to worship and to remember him who died for them and who arose for them on the first day of the week.

QUESTIONS

1. Is the day of worship important?
2. Has the Lord set aside a day on which he expects his people to worship?
3. Could the Sabbath day still be binding?
4. What does 2 Corinthians 3; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 9:16,17; 10:9; and Luke 24:44 teach?
5. Why did Paul assemble on the Sabbath day with the Jews?
6. On what day did the Christians assemble in Acts 20:7?
7. If the Sabbath day was the day of worship then why didn't the disciples meet on this day instead of the first day of the week?
8. What is the first day of the week?
9. Why was the first day of the week chosen as the day of worship?
10. Give the day the Corinthian Christians were to meet to give as they had been prospered.
11. Explain the meaning of "the Lord's day."
12. Why is the first day of the week so important?
13. On what day was Jesus resurrected from the grave?
14. What day did Pentecost come on?
15. Mention some things that happened on the day of Pentecost.

LESSON SEVEN

THE PATTERN OF WORSHIP

In the religious world today there are many kinds of worship. The Catholics have their own unique way and of course the many Protestant churches have numerous patterns they follow. That means that you could spend weeks and weeks going to places where the different worship services vary. Why is this? Is this the way the Lord intended it to be?

The Bible teaches that there is but one church and it belongs to the Lord. (Ephesians 4:4; Matthew 16:18). The pattern for the church is in the New Testament. This being true, and since it is the church of the Lord that is commanded to worship, then the pattern would be the same.

In order to find out how the Lord would have his people to worship today then we must go back to the New Testament. There is no other way to know. By going to it we may discover exactly what the Lord would have us to do in worship. It reveals the following things:

1. God is the One to be worshiped.

When being tempted by the devil, Christ said, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve." (Matthew 4:10).

2. The day of worship is to be the first day of the week.

The disciples were commanded to meet on the first day of the week to lay by in store: "*Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come*" (1 Corinthians 16:2).

3. Christians are to worship the Lord.

We have examples of this: "*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*" (Acts 2:42). "*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight*" (Acts 20:7).

4. We are told how we must worship.

Christ said, "*But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*" (John 4:23,24).

5. The five items of worship are clearly set forth.

These include Bible study (2 Timothy 2:15), prayer (Acts 2:42), singing (Ephesians 5:19), the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-28), and giving (2 Corinthians 9:6,7). These are the only acts of worship that we read about in the New Testament. Therefore we must limit ourselves to these.

6. We are told that we must be faithful in attending the assemblies

for worship.

The Hebrew writer said, “*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is: but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching*” (Hebrews 10:25).

7. The way of worship is simple and to the point.

It is not difficult for anyone to engage in. Rather all are invited to participate.

8. The whole worship program is based on the teachings of the Lord’s word.

We speak only as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11). Nothing is done without a thus says the Lord. The church of Christ is peculiar in that it follows the New Testament pattern of worship. Therefore we do not have certain things in worship that other groups have. For instance, we do not have these:

1. We do not have mechanical music. The New Testament clearly teaches that we are to sing praises to God. Paul says, “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:19). We’ll say more about this in the lesson on singing.

2. We do not have closed communion. Rather, Paul wrote the Corinthians, “*But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*” (1 Corinthians 11:28).

3. We do not practice tithing. Again, Paul wrote that Christians should give as they have prospered. (1 Corinthians 16:2).

4. We do not have collections on days other than the Lord’s day. Many groups have one collection or more every time they meet whether it is on the first day of the week or not. But Christians are commanded to give on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:2).

5. We do not have choirs and special singing groups to sing in worship. The Scriptures teach that each individual Christian must sing and therefore we have congregational singing only. Paul said, “*What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also*” (1 Corinthians 14:14,15).

6. We do not have special days of worship like Easter, Christmas, etc. Paul warned his Galatian brethren, “*You observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.*” (Galatians 4:10,11).

7. We do not have the Lord’s Supper only once a month, every three months, or once a year. We have the Lord’s Supper every Sunday or every first day of the week. We read of where the early Christians did this. (Acts 20:7). Which first day of the week? Who has been given the authority to say which one? There is a first day in

every week and that is how often we are to gather to partake of it. We meet to partake of the Lord's Supper as often as we meet to give, to study, etc.

8. We do not go through any formalities, rituals, and traditions to worship the Lord. Peter said, "knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers" (1 Peter 1:18). Paul adds, "*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ*" (Colossians 2:8).

9. We do not follow after the doctrines and commandments of men. The apostle wrote, "*Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men.?"*" (Colossians 2:20-22).

10. We do not follow the Old Testament law in our worship. Many go to the law for such things as the sabbath, tithing, mechanical music, etc., but this is a misuse of that portion of Scripture. The law is no longer binding (2 Corinthians 3; Hebrews 10:9; John 1:17).

Therefore we are to follow the New Testament all the way without addition, subtraction, or substitution. (Revelation 22:18,19; Galatians 1:7-9). It completely furnishes man to every good work (2 Timothy 3:16,17). All things that pertain to life and godliness are contained within its pages. (2 Peter 1:3).

If all people would return to this pattern for worship, as well as all other things that they say and do in the name of religion, then, we could have unity. Surely the Lord has not commanded me to worship one way and you another. Rather, he would have all of us to worship alike. We all will worship alike when we follow the one true pattern that he has given.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is it that there are different ways of worship?
2. How many churches do we read about in the Bible?
3. Who does the church belong to?
4. Where do we find the pattern for the church?
5. What would be the pattern for worship?
6. Who is the one to be worshiped?
7. Give the day of worship.
8. Tell who is to worship the Lord.
9. How must we worship?
10. List the five items of worship.

11. Why do we not use mechanical music in worship?
12. What is closed communion?
13. How often should we take up a collection?
14. What is wrong with choirs and special singing groups in worship?
15. Why do we not have special days like Christmas and Easter?
16. How often do Christians partake of the Lord's Supper?
17. What are doctrines and commandments of men?
18. Do the Lord's people follow the Old Testament as a law?
19. How is the New Testament to be dealt with?
20. It is possible to have unity in religion? How?

LESSON EIGHT

BIBLE STUDY

One of the five acts of worship recorded in the New Testament is Bible Study. We have it not only commanded but examples of where the early Christians met for study in connection with their worship to the Lord.

Bible Study may be engaged in at any time by one individual or more, but just here we are thinking of it in the sense that it is to specifically be engaged in on the first day of the week as a part of the worship service. In so doing, the Lord speaks to us through his word.

This part of worship may be entered into through reading and studying the Scriptures themselves or by hearing someone preach from God's word. In Acts 20:7 we have Paul preaching to his brethren in Troas on the occasion of their coming together for worship. In Acts 17:10-12, we read, "*Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men*" Christ taught, "*Search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me*" (John 5:39).

Paul exhorted the young preacher Timothy, "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (2 Timothy 2:15). Christ said, "*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled*" (Matthew 5:6). Again he said, "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God*" (Matthew 4:4).

It is very important that we not only study but that we study the right thing. The same goes for the preaching or teaching that we hear. The apostle Paul says, "*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (Romans 10:17). That means then that if we hear error that we will believe error, and especially so if we do not investigate it. But if we hear truth then we will naturally come to believe the truth.

God has spoken today and he has spoken to us through His Son Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 1:1,2). On the mount of transfiguration, God himself said, concerning Jesus, "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!*" (Matthew 17:5). Christ, however, spoke the word of God. "Jesus answered and said to him, "*If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me*" (John 14:23,24). Then this word was recorded: "*And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing*

you may have life in His name" (John 20:30,31). Furthermore, all Scriptures are given by the inspiration of God and completely furnish man unto every good work, being the perfect law of liberty (2 Timothy 3:16,17; James 1:25).

Seeing the foregoing is true, then there are many reasons why we should assemble on the Lord's Day to study God's word:

1. **We should do it because it is God's word** (Hebrews 13:7; 1 Peter 1:23; Ephesians 6:17). How wonderful it is that the Lord has not left us in darkness but revealed his will to us.

2. **We should want to know God's will more perfectly** (Acts 13:7). Therefore it is up to us to study to learn. The Lord has given us intelligent minds and we can all read and study to know the will of the Lord for ourselves.

3. **We should want to study lest we be deceived** (Ephesians 4:14; Ephesians 5:6; James 1:22). There is so much being taught in the name of Christianity. How may we know whether it is the truth or not? By comparing that which we hear with the word of God. John exhorted that we should try the spirits or preachers to see if they are of God or not. (1 John 4:1). There is no need for anyone to be deceived provided he will continue to investigate God's word.

4. **We should want to study so we can learn God's will to the extent that we can teach others.** Paul said, "*Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you*" (1 Timothy 4:16). Concerning the early Christians, the record says, "*Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word*" (Acts 8:4).

In continuing with our study, I would like for us to go back now to 2 Timothy 2: 15 where Paul says that we should study to rightly divide the word of truth. Now in our studies we should learn to do just that. That is, we will find that the Bible is divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament. We will also learn that the Old Testament contains the Patriarchal and Mosaic laws, both of which are no longer binding, and the New Testament contains the law of Christ. Another way of putting it, the Old Testament section deals with people before the death of Christ. That is why then one is old and one is new. But where are we? Quite naturally, since we live on this side of the cross, then we live under the law of Christ as recorded in the New Testament. (Hebrews 9:16,17; Hebrews 10:9).

Then the question comes if we believe the Old Testament to be the word of God. The answer would be definitely yes. However, as a law it is no longer binding on us or anyone else. Then why study the Old Testament? For several reasons:

1. To learn of the creation and the beginning of things.
2. To learn of the history of man and how God dealt with him.

3. Because Paul says that it was written for our example (1 Corinthians 10:6). As a matter of fact, it contains many examples.

4. Inasmuch as there are many principles in it that are as true today as they were when they were given, but they have nothing to do with a law.

5. That we might see that we live under a better law and have greater hope. (John 1:17).

Now to help us study God's word more effectively, and to properly divide the word, then here are some rules for our Bible Study:

1. Read the text several times.
2. Read also the context.
3. Who is the speaker?
4. To whom is he speaking?
5. When was it spoken?
6. Is it figurative or literal language?
7. Is it a command?
8. Does it pertain to our salvation?

Also, these tools may help you with your Bible Study: Different translations, a Bible dictionary, a Bible concordance, commentaries, etc. But above all, read and study the Bible itself with prayer. Many people know a great deal about the Bible but very little of its contents.

When you and I do as the Lord has asked us to do and we assemble with the saints each first day of the week to study, then we are going to gain a Bible knowledge that will help us to grow and to develop as Christians. If all would do this then the church would be stronger and perhaps we could convince our religious friends that it is God's word that saves us and unites us.

QUESTIONS

1. Who may engage in Bible Study?
2. How may we hear God's word?
3. Why were the Bereans more noble than those of Thessalonica?
4. What did Christ say in John 5:39?
5. Quote 2 Timothy 2:15.
6. Who did Christ say would be blessed and filled?
7. Can man live by bread alone?
8. How does faith come?
9. What will happen if we hear error?
10. In what manner does God speak to man today?

11. Why have the teachings of Jesus been written down?
12. Read 2 Timothy 3:16,17 and James 1:25.
13. List some reasons why we are to assemble to study.
14. What does it mean to rightly divide the word?
15. List the three laws recorded in the Bible.
16. Which law do we live under?
17. Does the Old Testament contain the word of God?
18. Why are we to study the Old Testament?
19. Give some rules for Bible Study.
20. What are some other tools for Bible Study?
21. How will a Bible knowledge help us?

LESSON NINE

PRAYER

Another act of New Testament worship is that of prayer. When the early Christians assembled for worship this was one of the things they engaged in. Right after the church had been established, the record says, “*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*” (Acts 2:42). Notice, “and in prayers,” indicating the emphasis that was placed upon this part of the worship.

The word prayer means intercession, mediation, supplication, or simply that of speaking or talking to the Lord. It is not only to be a part of our worship service, but it is also to be a part of our daily life. Paul writes, “*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints*” (Ephesians 6:18). Again he says, “*Pray without ceasing*” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This simply means that one should always have the spirit of prayer.

As we consider this all important subject, then let us list some major points:

1. **Prayer is in the main reserved for Christians or children of God.**

This does not mean that a non-Christian cannot pray, should not pray, but the scriptures make it clear that prayer is a privilege and blessing that belongs to the Christian. We read, “*Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him.*” (John 9:31). Now observe the conditions stated in order for the Lord to hear one’s prayer—he must be a worshiper of God and one who is a doer of the Lord’s will. Who is this? A Christian, of course. Besides, for what could a sinner pray? He couldn’t pray that the Lord might forgive him of his sins because Christ said that one must believe and be baptized to be saved. (Mark 16:16). He couldn’t pray for faith because the Scriptures have been given to produce that (John 20:30,31; Romans 10:17). Neither could he pray for something else as a sinner.

As we turn through the New Testament and read the many passages of Scripture that deal with prayer then we will observe that they all are directed to the Christian. The Christian is God’s child as a result of obedience (Galatians 3:26,27), and therefore may rightfully call upon God as his Father (Romans 8:15). If everyone had access to the Father through prayer, including both sinner and saint, then what advantage would the Christian have over the sinner? So you can surely see that the Christian has the distinct privilege of prayer and this is one of the spiritual blessings of being a Christian (Ephesians 1:3).

We have the widespread practice today of the sinner praying for the forgiveness of his sins and thereby becoming a Christian. However, this is not supported by the word of God but is merely the teaching of men.

2. **Our prayers are to be directed to God through Jesus Christ.**

God is the Father and he is the giver of all blessings. It is only right that we should call upon him for help as well as to thank him for the blessings he has already bestowed upon us. However, we cannot go to God directly inasmuch as sin has come between us. On the other hand, that does not mean that we must look to some man, regardless of his status in life, to intercede for us. Instead, Jesus is our reconciliator, our mediator, our advocate, through whom we are to approach the throne of grace. Listen to God's word: "*My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*" (1 John 5:1,2). Again, "*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*" (1 Timothy 2:5). Therefore we should always pray in the name of, or by the authority of, Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18).

3. We should pray in spirit and in truth.

We have noticed in previous lessons that the Lord has said that we must worship God in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24). Since prayer is a part of worship, and the daily Christian life, then our prayers must be in spirit and in truth. Paul wrote the Corinthians, "*For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding*" (1 Corinthians 14:14,15). That means then that our prayers must be with the understanding, that our minds must be on what we are saying, and that we are to be humble and sincere in them. Furthermore, our prayers must be in harmony with the scriptures. That is, we are not to ask the Lord to do that which would be opposed to his will. Christ said on one occasion, when some of his disciples had made a foolish request. "*But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"*" (Matthew 20:22). "*Again He said, "It is written again, You shall not tempt the Lord your God."*" (Matthew 4:7).

This is one reason why we cannot use what is called the "Lord's Prayer." (Matthew 6:9-13). It would not be in harmony with the Lord's will for us to pray for the kingdom to come inasmuch as it has already come (Hebrews 12:28).

4. The contents of our prayers are dearly set forth in the Scriptures.

We should pray prayers of thanksgiving. "*Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*" (Philippians 4:6).

We should pray in time of need. "*Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church*" (Acts 12:5).

We should pray for the leaders of the country. (Romans 13).

We should pray for one another. "*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another-*

er, that you may be healed. The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16).

We should pray for the sick. “*Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church: and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him*” (James 5:14,15).

And on and on we could go listing the many verses of Scripture that speak of the various things and individuals that we should pray for. This would include the church, our families, the lost, and so on.

5. The Scriptures also give some warnings on prayer.

Christ says, “*And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him*” (Matthew 6:5-8). Again, he warns, “*For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*” (Matthew 6:14,15).

So in conclusion, prayer is a big subject whether we consider it as a part of our worship services or in everyday life. But as Christians we have the privilege to call upon God in both instances. Not only so, but the Lord expects it. As far as worship is concerned though, Christians can not any more stay at home to have their prayers than they can stay at home and give of their money or partake of the Lord’s Supper. Christians who will assemble for worship will pray at home. But people who will not assemble for worship will not pray at home either. Even if they do, it is to no avail until they learn to be faithful to the Lord.

Pray in faith—ask and ye shall receive. Prayer is powerful.

QUESTIONS

1. Define the word prayer.
2. What role is it to play in our lives?
3. How often are we to pray?
4. For whom is prayer reserved?
5. Read and explain John 9:31.
6. For what could a sinner pray?
7. Who is a Christian?
8. Who may approach God in prayer?

9. Can a sinner be saved through prayer?
10. Through whom are we to pray to God?
11. What has Jesus become to us?
12. Explain the meaning of praying }n spirit and in truth.
13. Is it possible for us to tempt the Lord through our prayers?
14. What is the “Lord’s Prayer”?
15. Why can’t we use this prayer?
16. Mention some of the things for which we should pray.
17. Who are some of the ones for whom we should pray?
18. Give some of the Lord’s warnings on prayer.
19. Can Christians stay at home and have their prayers instead of attending the assemblies?
20. How should we pray?

LESSON TEN

SINGING

The Christian religion is a singing religion. Singing is another one of the acts of worship recorded in the New Testament. In this brief study, we want to take a close look at this very important part of worship.

First of all, we want to notice the various verses of scripture that deal with this subject:

1. *“And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives”* (Matthew 26:30).

2. *“But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them”* (Acts 16:25).

3. *“And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: “For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name.”* (Romans 15:9).

4. *“... I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also”* (1 Corinthians 14:15).

5. *“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”* (Ephesians 5:19).

6. *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”* (Colossians 3:16).

7. *“Saying: “I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You”* (Hebrews 2:12).

8. *“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms”* (James 5:13).

9. *“And they sung a new song...”* (Revelation 5:9).

10. *“And they sung as it were a new song before the throne ...”* (Revelation 14:3).

11. *“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb...”* (Revelation 15:3).

Now in all of the pages of the New Testament, these are the only verses that deal with the subject of singing. It would appear then that it is quite clear as to what the Lord wants in this respect. Anything more or less would not be in keeping with his word.

To most religious people singing suggests music and music suggests mechanical music. Therefore, the majority of the religious groups have mechanical music' to accompany their singing. But while all can agree that the New Testament teaches that we should have singing in our worship services, all cannot agree that mechanical music should also be included. But what does the Bible say? Does it teach singing only or that mechanical music is also to be used in worship? Is it possible to worship without me-

chanical music? Is it possible to worship with it? Is it possible to do either? Let us see.

We will notice first of all that there are two kinds of music known to man: vocal and mechanical. Vocal music is produced by the vocal cords of a human being. It therefore comes from within the individual. It is alive. It comes from God's own creation. Therefore it has been said that the most beautiful music in all the world comes from the blending of the sounds that comes from human voices. Mechanical music is just the opposite. It is mechanical. The instrument has been made by man. It is cold, lifeless, spiritless, and heartless. And the only reason that it makes sounds is because someone beats on it, plucks its strings, or blows into it, depending on the type of instrument it is. God did not make it as such, but rather it is an invention of man. It is a substitute. Now which would God prefer? The Hebrew writer says, "*By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name*" (Hebrews 13:15).

Well known religious leaders through the years have not advocated mechanical music in worship, but singing as the Bible teaches. Let us observe some of their statements:

1. John Wesley: "I have no objection to instruments of music, in our chapels, provided they are neither heard or seen." (Clarke's Commentary, Vol. IV, p. 686).

2. John Calvin: "Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Baptists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews." (John Calvin's Commentary, Thirty-third Psalm).

3. Martin Luther: He called it "the organ an ensign of Baal." (McClintock and Strong's Encyclopedia, Music, Vol. VI, p. 762).

4. Adam Clarke: "Music as a science, I esteem and admire: but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity." (Clarke's Commentary, Vol. IV, p. 686).

There are many other Bible scholars who have likewise spoken out against mechanical instruments of music in worship. But where did it all begin? With the Catholic Church, and inasmuch as the denominations have come out of the Catholic Church then the majority have brought their mechanical music with them.

Many of the denominational people try to justify mechanical music as follows:

1. They say that David used it. That may be true but we must remember that David lived under one law and we live under another. We cannot do what David did just because he did it. If so we will have to go back to Jerusalem once a year to offer

animal sacrifices, etc. Remember those that go back to David for mechanical music only return to him for that, and perhaps a few other things, but they don't want all that David had. But read John 1:17; 2 Corinthians 3; Hebrews 10:9, etc.

2. They say that it doesn't say not to have them. But it doesn't say not to have a lot of things in worship. It does say though what to have, and it does say to sing. (Ephesians 5:19). That eliminates the other.

3. They say that there is nothing wrong with it/ There may not be anything wrong with having mechanical music in the home, in weddings, for entertainment, etc but for worship it is different. It would be wrong to add it to the worship when the Lord did not command it. (Revelation 22:18,19).

4. They say that it aids our worship. Then why didn't the Lord command it? But I suggest to you that it is not an aid but it actually becomes a part of the worship when used. This is not in keeping with the scriptures.

5. They say that there will be music in heaven. The Scriptures do not teach mechanical music in heaven. Even if it did, that wouldn't justify using it. There will be many things in heaven we cannot have in worship now.

6. They say that they like it. Well, I like cake and soft drink, but does that mean that I can have it in worship? The question is not, do we like it, but does the Lord want it?

So when we gather on the Lord's day for worship we are to praise the Lord through our singing. This is to be done in spirit and in truth. Therefore, we must sing with understanding and in all sincerity. We are also to sing according to the scriptures, and that means praising the Lord through vocal music. Not only so, but the songs themselves are to be scriptural and spiritual in content.

The Bible teaches congregational singing. That is, we are all to blend our voices in the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Through these songs we praise God, teach one another, and edify and encourage one another to be faithful to the Lord. How wonderful it is to sing such songs, unfettered by the noises and disturbances of mechanical instruments, but with reverence, peace, and serenity of our souls to lift our voices in common praise to the God of heaven. What could be more fitting? What could be more inspirational? This is what God wants.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the Christian religion?
2. Read some of the verses from the New Testament that teach singing.
3. Do any of these verses teach mechanical music?
4. List the two kinds of music.

5. What is vocal music?
6. Explain the meaning of mechanical music.
7. How does God want us to praise him?
8. Give the names of some well known religious leaders who have condemned mechanical music in worship.
9. Where did mechanical music in worship begin?
10. What are some of the arguments that are used to try to justify the use of mechanical music in worship?
11. Why can't we go back to David for mechanical music in worship?
12. What eliminates mechanical music in worship?
13. Can we have mechanical music in the home?
14. Does this justify it in worship?
15. Read Revelation 22:18,19.
16. Will there be mechanical music in heaven?
17. Would the Lord approve of something being brought into worship on the basis that we like it?
18. What kind of singing does the Lord want?
19. Define congregational singing.
20. Give some reasons for singing.

LESSON ELEVEN

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Still another act of worship is the Lord's Supper, Christ knew that man was very forgetful. Therefore, he wanted to leave something behind that would help him to remember. This memorial then is known as the Lord's Supper.

Before going further, let us first see how it was instituted. Turn with me now to Matthew 26:26-28: *“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”* Please notice how simple it was to be. Christ pointed out that the bread would represent his body and therefore should be partaken of in the remembrance of his body. Then he said that the cup, or fruit of the vine, would represent his blood and should be partaken of in remembrance of his blood. In other words, Christ did not want his disciples to forget the sacrifice that would be paid for them upon the cross, and therefore in partaking of the bread and cup every Lord's Day in remembrance of his body and blood then it would ever be fresh on their minds.

Turning over to 1 Corinthians 11:20-29, Paul writes the Corinthian brethren: *“Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you. For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.”* Now in the beginning Paul rebuked the Corinthian brethren for the way in which they were dealing with the Lord's Supper. Instead of partaking of it in the manner the Lord had prescribed, they had turned it into a feast where they were eating to be filled and drinking to become drunk. This was not intended at all. Rather, he goes on to show them the real purpose of it and the manner in which they should partake. Paul also reminds them he received all of this information from the Lord and goes on to make his point, which

were these:

1. The Lord instituted this supper on the night in which he was betrayed.
2. He pointed out that the bread was to remind them of the body that was broken for them.
3. He likewise took the cup and shows how they should partake of it in remembrance of his blood.
4. As often as it is partaken of it shows forth the Lord's death till he comes again.
5. Those who would partake of this supper unworthily would be guilty of the body and blood of Christ.
6. Each one should examine himself and then partake of it.
7. Those who would eat unworthily would eat and drink damnation to their souls.

So these are the main points that he makes and we would do well to study them carefully.

As we continue our study, there are a number of things that we want to notice:

1. The Lord is not teaching that only one cup can be used. Sometimes whole groups of people conclude that only one cup can be used in partaking of the Lord's Supper, and therefore the whole group of them end up in drinking out of the same cup. Well, the Lord was not emphasizing the container but the contents in the container. Now whether it is in one or more makes little difference so long as you partake of it in remembrance of the blood of Christ. One time a man was visiting with a congregation that believed in having only one cup, so when it was passed to him then he drank all of the fruit of the vine within it. Then they objected that he had drunk it all and what would the rest of the congregation do? He reminded them that the Lord said, "Drink ye all of it." This only illustrates how people can be misled on something as simple as a cup. Although it would not be unscriptural to use one cup, however, for health purposes, and other reasons, it would be better to use individual cups.

2. Besides remembering the body and blood of Christ in partaking of the Lord's Supper, it is a reminder to one and all that here are a people who believe in the Lord's second coming. If this were not the case then they would not be partaking of it.

3. The partaking of the Lord's Supper is a period of time in which each one has an opportunity to reflect over the past week of his life, or the last several weeks if he has not been faithful in his attendance, and thus examine himself to see what his spiritual condition is. If he finds that he is living as faithful to the Lord as possible, then it is only natural that he should go ahead and partake of the Lord's Supper. However, if he finds that there are sins in his life then he should first of all repent of them and make the necessary corrections and then he is ready to

partake of the Lord's Supper, but not until.

4. If one fails to examine himself and goes on and partakes of the Supper in spite of his unworthy condition, then instead of eating and drinking to be eternally saved, he is eating and drinking damnation to himself. Of course none of us is worthy in that we all sin. However, the Lord knew that we were not perfect and so when we do our best then that is as good as we can do, and therefore on this basis we are encouraged to partake of it. But if an individual purposely, carelessly, or negligently sins, then he is not prepared to partake of the Lord's Supper. He will not be any more lost because of partaking of it other than the fact that he is deceiving himself and others into thinking that he is all right. But the Lord knows, and he should correct his life so that he might partake of it spiritually and scripturally.

5. We are not to have closed communion, and therefore refuse to allow all but a certain number to partake of it. The Scriptures put it on the basis that we examine ourselves. Should an individual, who is not a member of the church, partake of it, then don't get excited; when he learns the truth then he will obey God. If we refuse to allow him to partake of it then he may never obey God.

In conclusion, we read in Acts 20:7 where the early Christians met on the first day of the week to partake of the bread. Therefore, we are to do the same. But which first day of the week? Each first day of the week. Who has given you or me or anyone else the authority to set a particular first day of the week as being the Lord's Day, on which we are to partake of the Lord's Supper? No one has. Therefore, let's leave it as God left it, with his people assembling on the first day of the week to worship and this includes the Lord's Supper.

QUESTIONS

1. Who instituted the Lord's Supper?
2. Read Matthew 26:26-28.
3. Why partake of the bread?
4. What does the fruit of the vine represent?
5. How often were the disciples to partake of it?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 11:20-29.
7. What were the Corinthians doing with the Lord's Supper?
8. How did Paul deal with this matter?
9. Where did Paul receive his information on the Lord's Supper?
10. Explain how the Lord's death could be shown forth till he comes again through partaking of the Lord's Supper.
11. What would happen if they partook of it unworthily?

12. Does the Scriptures teach the use of one cup only?
13. Is the emphasis on the container or the contents in the container?
14. How does the Lord's Supper relate to the second coming of Christ?
15. Explain how the Lord's Supper can be a personal blessing to each Christian who partakes of it.
16. Does the Lord expect one to be perfect before partaking of it?
17. Should one partake of it if he is purposely sinning?
18. Can we tell any individual that he cannot partake of the Lord's Supper?
19. On what day of the week should Christians meet to partake of the Lord's Supper?
20. Has the Lord given anyone the authority to set a particular first day of the week to eat the Lord's Supper?

LESSON TWELVE

GIVING

Finally, we come to the last act of New Testament worship and it is that of giving. If the Bible teaches anything, then it is this. Yet, most people are very ignorant of this subject. Therefore, we want to see what the Scriptures say about it. We'll begin by noticing some key passages of Scripture.

Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 16:1,2: "*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: 2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come*" Now before we go further, let us analyze these verses to get the points that he is making:

1. **This giving was to be done on the first day of the week.** Why? Being the day that Christians meet for worship then this was the time chosen in which the collection would be taken. But what about other days? Nothing is said about other days. As far as this command is concerned then it is specified that it is to be done on the first day of the week. Now various religious groups have a collection or more every time they meet, even if there are times that they meet every day. However, as far as this particular act is concerned then it must come at the time specified if we are going to abide by the scriptures. Churches of Christ therefore meet each first day of the week and this is when the members are expected to give.

2. **All of the Christians were expected to give.** Of course this was provided they had been prospered during the week before. The Lord does not expect his people to give if they have not earned anything. However, he does expect them to give if they are able to do so, and to refuse to do so is a sin.

3. **They were to lay by in store according to what they had.** In that time that could have meant vegetables, livestock or whatever they might have had. It could have also meant money. Today we usually give money since most people turn much of that which they have into cash or else work to earn financially each week. But it would depend on the place, the people, and the situation, whether the contribution might be given in terms of money or various commodities.

4. **They were to give as they had been prospered.** That is, they were to give according to their earnings. But how much of their earnings? That would be up to them and the same is still true today. The New Testament does not teach tithing or that we should give one tenth. Rather, we should no doubt give more than a tenth inasmuch as we live under a much better law than the Jews lived under and they gave a tenth. But if we have a better law, better promises and greater hope, then why

shouldn't we give more? I notice here in Asia that everyone wants to give but usually it is a small amount. In some cases this may be as much as a person can give, but in all probability, all could give much more than they do. I also notice that the people of Asia have money for cinema, tobacco, and many other things. I realize that these people are of the world, but if they have money for these things, then what do you do with your money? You may also be using some of it on such things or on similar things. Yes, even here we can do much more than we are doing. The Lord said that we should give as we have been prospered. You know what you have been prospered and you know how much you should give. But in all probability it should be in terms of giving paper money instead of coins. In some cases, some of you may be able to give a good bit more of that paper money than you might think. Of course I can't tell you what you should give, and neither can you tell me, but the Lord knows that we should give, and therefore it is time for us to begin to give more. Don't you agree?

5. They were to go on and give so that there might not have to be any gatherings on his arrival. In other words, if they would follow his exhortation then on his arrival everything would have already been taken care of and he could proceed to take care of the need that was at hand. The same is true today. If we will give as the Lord intended that we should then we will have the necessary funds to go on with the Lord's work. Now out in the religious world most churches do not follow this teaching and therefore they are constantly begging for money. Instead of giving themselves, then they go out into the world to beg for help. Some of them sell magazines or books. Some of them have some kind of bazaar. Some of them put on some form of entertainment. But the Lord has commanded his people to give of their means that the needs of the church might be cared for. This is the Lord's way of doing things and as far as he is concerned it cannot be improved on.

Now let us proceed to notice another text that deals with giving. It is found in 2 Corinthians 9:6,7: "*But this I say, He who sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver.*" Now observe these following points:

1. He says that we will reap according to the way we have sown. If we sow a little then we'll reap a little. But if we sow much then we shall reap much. Now this is true in farming, in business, and in all walks of life. It is also true in the Lord's work. The more we put into it the more we'll get out of it. The reason a lot of people never get anything out of it is because they never put anything into it. You can't just keep taking from the church without ever giving to it. I am afraid most of us don't believe the Lord enough to take him at his word. But we should try him. If we would

I am confident that we would find that it is true that the more we give then the more we will receive.

2. **He says that each one should give as he has purposed in his heart.** Before coming to worship we ought to have already made up our minds as to how much we are going to give. That is what he is talking about. Don't wait until it is time to give and then to fumble around and to try to come up with something to put in the collection plate. But know what you are going to give, based on what you are able to give, and then give.

3. **He says that one should not give grudgingly.** That is, you should not feel forced or compelled to give. If you give, when you really didn't want to do so, and you had preferred to keep it for something else, then your giving is in vain as far as you are concerned and as far as the Lord is concerned.

4. **He says that one should not give because he feels that it is necessary to give.** The Lord is not trying to force you into a situation where you feel that you have to give. Certainly not.

5. **Rather, he says that God loves a cheerful giver.** How does he want you to give? He wants you to give cheerfully, because you want to, and you are happy to be able to do so. This is the kind of givers we ought to be always.

Now in closing, we should remember that the Lord Himself said, "*It is more blessed to give than to receive*" (Acts 20:35). I am afraid though that many of us have turned that around to make it read, "It is more blessed to receive than to give." Why? Because so many of us are covetous, stingy, selfish, and therefore we rob God of that which rightfully belongs to him. May God help us to wake up and to begin to return a portion of that which we have to him which in reality already belongs to him. We will never be the kind of Christians we ought to be until we learn how to scripturally give.

QUESTIONS

1. Does the Bible teach giving?
2. Do most people give as they should?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 16:1,2.
4. Give the day on which Christians are to assemble to lay by in store.
5. What about other days?
6. How often do the various denominational groups take up a contribution?
7. Are all Christians expected to give?
8. What if some are not able to give?
9. Does the Lord expect his people to give if they have not prospered during the past week?

10. Does he expect them to give if they have prospered during the past week?
11. What are they to give?
12. How much are they to give?
13. Does the New Testament teach tithing?
14. Why should we give more than a tenth?
15. Do people usually have enough money for the things they want?
16. Why don't we have more for the Lord?
17. Explain why Christians are to give?
18. How do most religious groups raise money for their needs?
19. Is this what the Lord wants his people to do?
20. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6,7.
21. Explain the principle of sowing and reaping.
22. Why is it that more of us do not reap more?
23. What does it mean to give as we have purposed?
24. Does the Lord want us to give grudgingly or of necessity? Explain.
25. What kind of a giver does the Lord love?
26. Who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive?"
27. Describe most Christians when it comes to giving.

LESSON THIRTEEN

ATTENDING THE ASSEMBLIES

One of the saddest mistakes a Christian can make is that of failing to attend the assemblies of the church. How can one ever hope to be faithful to the Lord if he does not respect him enough to meet with the other brethren for worship? The point is, he cannot be faithful under such conditions.

Many of the denominational people only attend two worship services a year and that is Christmas and Easter, neither of which are taught in God's word. But there are just a whole lot of people who are deceiving themselves into thinking that this is all that is necessary to please the Lord. Who do they think the Lord is? But getting closer to home, a lot of members of the church seldom ever attend worship. They offer one excuse after the other. It is their work that prevents their attendance or it is the distance involved. It is this, and that, and something else. But the question is: Will the Lord accept these excuses? Here these individuals are claiming to be Christians but they never attend worship. On the other hand, they can go on with what they want to do, they can go to their work regardless of the distance, and so on.

Some of those who fail to attend usually come up with this remark: "But I have my prayers at home." That would be fine if that was all the Lord required. However, he has specifically asked that his people assemble on the first day of the week. In doing so, they are not only to pray, but study, sing, partake of the Lord's Supper, and give of their means. Now to those who try to worship by themselves at home, to whom do they give their contribution? What about the Lord's Supper? No, I am sure that most of these individuals never get any further than prayer in their worship to the Lord, if they get that far. But they need to be taught that there is more to worship than simply praying to God.

It is true that there are times when Christians may be providentially hindered, such as being sick, and other things that would make it impossible for them to attend worship services. In this case, one doesn't have to offer an excuse for not being present but rather he has a reason. Furthermore, the Lord will accept a reason for one's absence, but he will not accept an excuse.

But now let us notice what the word of God itself says about attending the assemblies. The Hebrew writer says, "*Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful*

looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” (Hebrews 10:23-27). Now let’s get these main points:

1. We should be faithful inasmuch as we are dealing with one who will be faithful in dealing with us.

2. We should continue always in good works in dealing with one another.

3. We must not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. Some were at that time, and some forsake the assemblies today, but this is not the Lord’s will.

4. We should exhort one another or encourage each other to attend the assemblies as we see the day approaching, that is, the Lord’s Day, the day of worship. This is to suggest that we are to prepare ourselves for it. We have a whole week to do this, every week.

5. We should remember that if we sin willfully after learning the truth, then there is no more sacrifice for us, and nothing to look forward to but judgment and damnation. That is, if we purposely fail to attend the assemblies and to do the things that we know that we should, then how can the Lord save us when we have rejected him? Therefore, we will be lost if we continue to live like this.

All of this is to say that the Lord expects us to attend the assemblies of the church, and it is serious business, and dangerous business, if we fail to. But why has he asked us to do so? Why attend the assemblies? There are many reasons for this. Let us notice some of them:

1. Because we are taught to do so both by command and example. We have already read in Hebrews 10:25 where we are warned not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. Then we read in Acts 2:42 how the early Christians met to worship, and in Acts 20:7 where Paul and the Christians in Troas met on the first day of the week for worship. So we should do likewise.

2. We are to attend the assemblies to worship God. Christ tells us in John 4:23,24 that God is seeking after true worshipers and that God is a spirit and that we should worship him in spirit and in truth.

3. The Lord would have us to attend the assemblies so that we might remember him in partaking of the Lord’s Supper. Paul, in referring to the institution of the Lord’s Supper, shows that the bread is to be partaken of in remembrance of the body of Christ and the cup is to be partaken of in remembrance of the blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:24,25). How can we remember the Lord in the way that he wants to be remembered unless we assemble on each first day of the week to do this?

4. We are to assemble in order that we might give of our means as we have been prospered. Once more in going back to 1 Corinthians 16:2 we have Paul saying that we should assemble on the first day of the week that we may give as we have been prospered.

What happens to our contribution when we fail to attend? Of course we could bring it the next Lord's Day, and we should if we have been absent because of sickness, etc., but most of those who fail to attend also miss the opportunity to give, and not only so, but continue to miss again and again without feeling any responsibility in this respect.

5. The Lord has promised to be with us in the assemblies. Listen to his promise: "*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*" (Matthew 18:20). This alone should cause us to want to attend every worship service of the church because the Lord has said that he would be there. Wouldn't we want to attend if the Prime Minister were going to be present, or some other important person? But here is the Lord himself saying that he would meet with us—not just once, but every time. Surely we wouldn't want to fail, to keep this all important appointment when he has said that he would be there.

6. We should want to be present for every meeting because of the example that we are setting. We have families, loved ones, friends, and the people of the world in general, that are watching us. They are looking to us for an example to follow, for guidance. We need to realize this and strive to lead them in the right direction. Their salvation may depend on our actions more than you realize. Paul wrote the Thessalonians: "*And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe*" (1 Thessalonians 1:6,7). Can we be such an example that when people follow us that in reality they will be following Christ? We should. We must. Plan now to attend every assembly—get there on time, be quite and reverent and truly worship the Lord.

7. We are to attend the assemblies for fellowship and spiritual growth, individually and collectively. If the members of the church never assemble then how can the church ever amount to anything in that particular community or city? Without meetings the members cannot know one another, they cannot know their strength, they cannot plan the work, they cannot help one another, and they cannot encourage one another. In other words, much of the work of the church, its strength, its accomplishments, etc., depend heavily on the assemblies. Actually, without such then the church would soon die out. That is why you always read in the New Testament of the church meeting and wherever

Paul and the other brethren went, they always met with the local congregations. We are told that even in times of persecution that the members of the church still found opportunities and ways to meet. It is likewise just as important today that we meet on a regular basis to worship the Lord and to carry on his work.

And so these are but a few of the reasons why we should attend the assemblies of the church. But note that our attendance shouldn't be based on the idea that we can go

once a month or just occasionally, but rather we should go every first day of the week or whenever the church sees fit to meet. The Scriptures say, “*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together*” (Hebrews 10:25) This would include all of the assemblies that we are able to attend. May the Lord help us to put more emphasis on worship in our own lives so that we might truly be faithful to him in attending the assemblies of the church. If we will be faithful to him in this way then we will be faithful to him otherwise.

QUESTIONS

1. What is one of the saddest mistakes that the Christian can make?
2. Can a Christian be faithful and not attend the assemblies of the church?
3. What two services do most denominational people attend during the year?
4. List some excuses that Christians use for not attending worship.
5. Is it possible for a Christian to have his worship at home instead of meeting with the local church?
6. Would a true Christian want to do this?
7. When may a Christian be excused from worship?
8. Explain what it means to be providentially hindered.
9. Read Hebrews 10:23-27.
10. Why should we be faithful to the Lord?
11. What does it mean to forsake the assemblies?
12. How can Christians remind each other of the worship services?
13. What is the day approaching in Hebrews 10:25?
14. Tell what will happen to those who willfully sin.
15. Give some reasons for attending the assemblies of the church.
16. Mention two examples of early Christians meeting for worship.
17. What is the real purpose for attending worship.
18. Can we remember Christ as he commanded if we fail to attend?
19. What should we do about our giving if we have to miss some Lord’s day period of worship?
20. Who has said he would be with us in our assemblies?
21. When will the Lord be with us?
22. Discuss the importance of one’s example in relation to worship.
23. What depends on our assemblies?