

LESSON 11 - THE ELEMENTS OF WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) In seeking to better understand the church that Jesus built, we are looking at the worship of the church as revealed in the NT. In the last lesson, we looked at several facts about worship:
 - i) Worship must be done in spirit and in truth – **John 4:24**
 - ii) Worship must be for edification for the saints – **1 Cor 14:26**
 - iii) Worship must be done properly and in an orderly manner – **1 Cor 14:40**
- b) In determining what it means to worship God in spirit and in truth, we determined the following
 - i) To worship in spirit is to worship with our spirit, with our inner man, and with our hearts engaged
 - ii) To worship in truth means to worship according to God's will, the truth of His word, as revealed in scripture
- c) In this lesson we'll focus on the elements of worship that are to take place within the local church as revealed by the NT
 - i) The NT reveals certain activities that local churches were involved in during their assemblies that represented the "spiritual" and "truthful" worship Jesus said it must be
 - ii) We will also spend time focusing on the spiritual aspect of each of these acts of worship so as not to lose sight of their meaning

2) ACTIVITIES IN THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

- a) First, they observed the Lord's Supper
 - i) Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper in **Luke 22:14-20**

Question 1: In **Luke 22:14-20**, what two items did they partake of?

Question 2: Read **1 Cor 11:23-29**. What do we do as often as we partake of the supper? What must a man do as he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup?

- ii) What one does while partaking of the Lord's Supper has seldom been the main controversy. The main controversy has always been how often we must do so
- iii) Some churches do it annually, some quarterly, some monthly, and some on every first day of the week
- iv) In order to understand which of these is correct, we must remember Paul's words in **Col 3:17** that, "Whatever you do in word and deed, do all in the name of the Lord..."
- v) This means we must examine what we currently do and see if we're doing so by the authority of the Lord as opposed to the often used saying, "show me where the bible says not to"

Question 3: Read **Acts 20:7**. Using "necessary inference", what does this verse tell us that the church did when they gathered together on the first day of the week?

- vi) There are no examples that show us that the NT Christians partook of the Lord's Supper annually, quarterly, or monthly. But we do see an example in Acts 20:7 that on the first day of the week, the disciples came together to break bread
 - vii) In fact, a study of Acts 20:6 implies Paul waited the amount of time that he did so that he could partake of this memorial with them
 - viii) The Lord's Supper is one of the main reasons why we gather together on the first day of the week. If we're not partaking of it every first day of the week, why are we assembling?
- b) Second, they contributed monetarily to the work of the church
- i) The first century Christians were noted for their generosity with their material and financial possessions – **Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; 11:27-30**
 - ii) As powerful as these verses are, though, they do not tell us how often the Christians were to give or even if they were to do so regularly

Question 4: Read **1 Cor 16:1-2**. How often did Paul tell the Corinthians to put aside and save? How much were they to give?

Question 5: Read **1 Cor 4:17**. How do we know we are to put aside and save weekly as they did in Corinth?

- iii) There are other principles taught about our weekly giving. 1 Cor 16:2 reveals that we are to do so as we prosper. This is different the "tithing" specified by the Old Testament
 - iv) There must be a "readiness" present in order for it to be pleasing to God – **2 Cor 8:12**
 - v) Each person must do as he has purposed in his heart – **2 Cor 9:7**
 - vi) We must keep in mind the principle of sowing and reaping – **2 Cor 9:6, 8**
 - vii) The money collected is to be given to needy Christians and those who devote their lives to preaching the gospel – **2 Cor 11:8-9; Phil 4:10-18**
 - viii) What is ironic is that almost every church sees the weekly necessity of giving to the collection but do not see it in reference to the Lord's Supper
- c) Third, they listened to the word preached
- i) The first century Christians were also known for their attention to the word of God – **Acts 2:42**
 - ii) As ambassadors of Christ, the apostles words were taken very seriously – **1 Cor 14:37; 1 Thes 2:13**

Question 6: Read **Acts 20:7** again. After taking the Lord's Supper, what did Paul do in their assembly?

- iii) Because they took the words of the apostles so seriously, it shouldn't surprise us that they devoted a part of the worship to hearing God's word delivered through the Apostles
- d) Fourth and Fifth, they sang and prayed
 - i) Prayer was a regular part of 1st century worship, to which Christians were to understand and be encourage by so that they could utter an "amen" – **1 Cor 14:15-17**
 - ii) Prayer was especially apparent amongst the Christians during times of trouble – **Acts 12:5, 12; 16:25**
 - iii) Also when they were together, they devoted their time to singing praises to God – **Eph 5:19; Col 3:161**

Question 7: Read **Eph 5:19**. With what instrument are we to make melody?

Question 8: Read **Col 3:16**. In addition to singing with thankfulness to God, who else are we to sing to and what are we to do while singing?

- iv) Since worshipping with music is a "one another" task, if instruments were added, everyone would need one
- v) If we cannot add elements to the Lord's Supper, why can we add instruments to singing? Since we understand that the Lord's Supper is limited to bread and fruit of the wine, would not worshipping God with music be limited to singing?

3) ***THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THESE ACTIVITIES***

- a) Contrast the Lord's Supper with the OT sacrifices
 - i) The OT required elaborate rituals in offering various sacrifices, which certainly involved the physical senses (sight, sound, smell, touch)
 - ii) The Lord's Supper, a memorial of Christ's sacrifice, involves the mind more than the senses. It requires more meditation than physical action
 - iii) The Lord's Supper involves a time for reflection, self-examination which is more spiritual rather than physical
- b) Contrast NT giving with OT tithing
 - i) The OT required a specific amount (a tithe, or ten percent), which could easily be given in a mechanical manner
 - ii) Yet giving in the NT is based upon principles requiring careful thought and proper attitudes - as one prospered and purposed in their heart; cheerfully, without grudging obligation, etc.
- c) Contrast NT singing with OT music
 - i) Mechanical instruments were used in the OT to accompany praise to God

- ii) In NT worship, the instrument they used was the “heart”, not the “harp”, upon which they were to “make melody” - **Eph 5:19**

- d) Contrast other elements of worship. The OT required:
 - i) OT - A physical temple; NT - The temple is the people of God - **1 Cor 3:16-17; Eph 2:20-22**
 - ii) OT - Separate priesthood; NT - All Christians are priests - **1 Pet 2:5, 9**
 - iii) OT - Special garments; NT - They adorned themselves with Christ - **Gal 3:27; Col 3:5-14**
 - iv) OT - Burning of incense; NT - Their prayers were as incense - **Re 5:8**
 - v) OT - Elaborate ceremonies, special feast days; NT - Observance of feast days was a cause of concern - **Gal 4:10-11; Co 2:16,17**