

In Spirit and In Truth

Written by Ben Winslett

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God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. John 4:24

According to John 4, the Father SEEKS His children to worship Him in Spirit and Truth. That means it is His desire, not only receive worship, but also to receive the RIGHT kind of worship. Worship is not something to be invented out of blind zeal, but to be offered according to God's prescribed methods.

This is true in both worship covenants, called the Old Covenant and New Covenant.

No one would debate the specific nature of prescribed worship under the Old Covenant. Nor could anyone debate the horrific conditions that occurred in Israel when those specifications were ignored or disregarded for culture, personal preference, or popularity. The abandonment of God-prescribed worship led to all sorts of error including idol worship, yet the worst quite possibly being child sacrifice.

The New Covenant is no different. Just as God prescribed what actions were acceptable in worship in the Old Testament period, God has prescribed what is appropriate for worship in the New Testament period. God leaves nothing up to the imagination, but exhorts us often in His Word.

So what does God-prescribed, first century worship consist of?

The general make up of it is as follows. A congregation of grace touched sinners met as an assembly, with the anticipation of being joined by God Himself, the Holy Spirit. They met as families, unsegregated, often in homes but occasionally outside or even in a synagogue. The group would pray for one another and thank God for His mercies. They would lift their voices in praise of Jesus Christ, Who was slain for them as their Saviour. They would then listen as a God-called man presented them a lesson about Jesus Christ from the scriptures (which at that

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time consisted of the Old Testament and New Testament books as they were written). Initially, the speakers were Apostles but were eventually replaced by Elders as the primary teachers (such as Titus, Timothy, etc). Questions were often asked of the ministers. Sinners repented and were Baptized. Those Baptized were given seats at the Lord's Supper to partake of unleavened bread and wine. They would also wash one anothers' feet as an example of their submission and servitude, one to another.

That, my brother, is God-prescribed worship. All other additions are futile, unfruitful, unfilling perversions of that which Christ has made. Frankly, I am satisfied.