

# THE ORIGINAL WORSHIP

**Jno.4:19-24**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. In the previous lesson in this series our topic was The Original Church, which we read about and find identified in the Bible, especially the N.T. Scriptures, our present rule of faith and practice, wherein we learn that it is the church:
  - a. Belonging to Jesus Christ because:
    - (1) He built it.
    - (2) He purchased it with his own blood.
    - (3) He is the head of it.
    - (4) He is the Savior of it.
    - (5) It is his spiritual body containing all the saved of which he has only one.
  - b. Which had its beginning in Jerusalem on the 1<sup>st</sup> Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, where the saving gospel of Jesus Christ was first preached, believed and obeyed, by which obedient believers were saved and then added to the church by the Lord himself.
  - c. Made up of all people who have believed and obeyed the gospel and been saved by it; thus it is the body of the saved – saved people.
2. Having identified the original church, we are now ready to consider The Original Worship, i.e., the original worship of that original church; for these saved believers in different localities of the world were taught to unite in local churches, all of the same faith and order, for work and worship.
3. Worship of God is required, both individually and collectively, Mt.4:10; Rev.19:10; 22:8,9; Ac.17:25; Psa.122:1; Ac.2:41,42; 20:7.
4. Our plan for developing our topic is as follows:
  - a. Definition of terms.
  - b. Noting the evidence that there is such a thing as vain, ignorant, idolatrous, unacceptable worship Vs true, acceptable worship.
  - c. The divinely authorized object and items of worship of the local church identified – thus the original worship of the original church in the local sense.

- d. What the original worship of the original church in the local sense did not include, or things excluded, being without divine authority.

## II. DISCUSSION

### A. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. A study of the word “worship” reveals that it is a corruption of the early form “worth-ship,” and applies to that which is deemed worthy of the highest esteem. And one’s first loyalty, first love, first devotion, and one’s feeling of joy and sense of spiritual well-being are centered in the object which one worships.
2. In the O.T. the word worship is from the Hebrew word SHACHAH – shaw-khaw’, which mean “to bow self down” or “do obeisance”.
3. In the N.T. the word worship is from the Gr. term PROSKUNEO – pros-koo-neh’-o, meaning:
  - a. Thayer: “to kiss the hand to (towards) one, in token of reverence”
  - b. W.E.Vine: “to make obeisance, do reverence to (from PROS, towards, and KUNEO, to kiss).” “it is used of an act of homage or reverence, to revere, stressing the feeling of awe or devotion.”
  - c. Strong: “do reverence to, adore”.
  - d. Webster’s Dict: “to adore or pay divine honors to as deity; to reverence with supreme respect and veneration.”
  - e. Perhaps the best simple definition for worship is, “the **expression** of the adoration of one’s heart.”
4. “Worship” then is a **feeling** of respect or reverence or devotion, a **frame of heart or mind, and attitude** expressed in an act or acts.
  - a. And an **act** of worship is an act proceeding from, or the result of that feeling – an act involving devotion, honor, praise and homage and exhibiting a humble and contrite spirit.
    - (1) Note what the scriptures say about this: Psa.51:16,17; 34:18; 2Chr.7:14; Cf. Lk.18:9-14; Mt.5:3.
  - b. Thus singing is not worship in the strict sense; but it may be an expression of worship, and is, when singing praises to God.
  - c. Eating unleavened bread and drinking grape juice is not worship in the strict sense. But when we do this “in remembrance of Christ,” as he directed us to do so, that is worship.

5. However, we must remember that **ALL** overt or observable worship has **some form**, involves **some object and some item or items**.
  - a. The feelings of awe, reverence, devotion and praise to its object is expressed some way, in some form; and that form will take some pattern.
  - b. Moreover, no order, fixed or varied will make spiritual worship; it takes more than mere form or orderliness to do that.
  - c. Anytime the form is substituted for the worship; that is, when the act or acts are there, but the proper feeling, frame of heart or attitude is missing – that act or those acts become a hollow, vain shell, whatever the act.
6. Therefore from the definitions of worship given from these sources, we see at least four things which must be present before anything can be properly considered the original, acceptable worship of the church:
  - a. Man must respect and adore God in his worship.
  - b. That respect and veneration must be expressed from the heart.
  - c. That worship is expressed in a single act or in a plurality of acts or items of worship.
  - d. This rules out mere overt acts, or worship by rote, or mechanical repetition, or lip service without the heart being in it. Cf. Mt.15:7,8; 6:7,8.

**B. ACCORDING TO THE N.T. SCRIPTURES THERE IS SUCH A THING AS VAIN, IGNORANT, IDOLATROUS, UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP VS TRUE, ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP.**

1. Vain, unacceptable worship identified.
  - a. Mt.15:7-9 – heart not in it, and/or it is after the doctrines and commandments of men, or both.
  - b. Col.2:20-23 – “Will-worship;” – “self-devised worship;” – “worship according to one’s own will;” “subject to ordinances...after the commandments and doctrines of men.”
    - (1) NASV: “These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement, and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgences.”
    - (2) It is “will-worship” – not revealed worship.
    - (3) Of the human will, not of the divine will.

- c. Ac.17:22,23, these idolaters were very religious (v.22), but were ignorant worshippers (v.23). Cf. Ac.14:11-15.
  - d. Col.2:18, a warning against being beguiled or robbed of our reward in self-imposed humility and worshipping of angels.
  - e. Cf. Rom.10:1-3.
  - f. Idolatry was not and is not limited to the 1<sup>st</sup> century. Cf. Col.3:5; 2Tim.3:1-5.
  - g. Not one of these is acceptable to God!
2. Worship of God in spirit and in truth is required, Jno.4:23,24.
- a. In spirit (from the heart), Mt.15:8; Rom.6:16,17; Col.3:22,23.
  - b. In truth (according to God's word, his written word, the revealed faith, the N.T. order of things), Jno.17:17; Jude 3; 2Jno.9; Col.3:17.
  - c. As priests of God offering up spiritual sacrifices in a spiritual service unto God through Jesus Christ, 1Pet.2:5; Rom.12:1,2; Heb.13:15.
3. Since the N.T. Scriptures speak of vain, ignorant, idolatrous, unacceptable worship Vs true, acceptable worship of God, we know there must be such a thing as a divinely authorized worship for N.T. churches, which, of course, would be the original worship.

**C. THE DIVINELY AUTHORIZED OBJECT AND ITEMS OF WORSHIP OF THE LOCAL CHURCH IDENTIFIED – THUS THE ORIGINAL WORSHIP OF THE ORIGINAL CHURCH IN THE LOCAL SENSE.**

1. The original divinely authorized worship:
- a. Has God, the Father, as its object, not men or angels, or the devil.
    - (1) Mt.4:9,10; Rev.19:10: 22:8,9; Cf. Ac.10:25,26; 14:11-15.
    - (2) Jno.4:23, "For the Father seeketh such to worship him"
  - b. Was to be in spirit and in truth (Jno.4:23,24) previously explained.
  - c. Had divinely authorized items as follows, as they followed in the apostle's doctrine, Ac.2:40-42.
2. The Lord's Supper is a divinely authorized item of the original worship of the original church in the local sense, Ac.2:42 – "and in breaking of bread", or the Lord's supper.
- a. It was observed in remembrance of Jesus, Lk.22:19,20; 1Cor.11:23-25.

- b. It was observed to show or proclaim the Lord's death till he comes again, 1Cor.11:26.
  - c. It was observed on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week, Ac.20:7. (That means every 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week. Cf. Exo.20:8) Not Thursday night!
  - d. The elements of the Lord's supper were the bread (unleavened bread) and the cup (the fruit of the vine, grape juice; the fruit of the grape), Mt.26:17,26-28; Mk.14:1,22-25; Lk.22:1,7,8,15-20.
    - (1) It was unleavened bread, for Jesus and his disciples were eating the feast of "the Passover, and of unleavened bread," (Mk.14:1) when Jesus instituted the Lord's supper.
    - (2) And during this feast the Jews were not permitted to have any leaven in their houses, Exo.12:15,19.
  - e. It was observed by baptized believers in the kingdom or the church, that is, in the assembly of the saints, Mt.26:29; Lk.22:29,30; 1Cor.11:18,20,33,34.
3. Prayer is another divinely authorized item of the original worship of the original church in the local sense, Ac.2:42 – "and in prayers"; 1Tim.2:1-6.
- a. In the original worship prayer was to be addressed to God, the Father, as per Jesus' instructions, Mt.6:9.
    - (1) Jesus himself is an example, Jno.17:1-5; Mt.26:39,42; Lk.6:12.
  - b. In the original worship prayer was to be offered to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ, as our one and only mediator between us and God, and as the one who ever liveth to make intercession for us, Jno.14:13; Rom.8:34; 1Tim.2:5; Heb.7:25.
  - c. In the original worship prayer was to be asked in faith, nothing wavering, and according to God's revealed will, Jas.1:5-8; 1Tim.2:8; 1Jno.3:22; 5:14,15; Cf. Prov.28:9; Jno.9:31; 1Pet.3:12.
  - d. To be heard and forgiven the petitioner must first be penitent and willing to forgive his debtors, Mt.6:11,12,14,15; Lk.17:3-5; Mt.18:23-35; Cf. Psa.66:18.
4. Vocal music or singing is another divinely authorized item of the original worship of the original church in the local sense.

- a. There are only two kinds of music made by man: Vocal and instrumental or mechanical.
  - b. Question: Which was divinely authorized in the original worship of the original church in the local sense? Vocal? Or mechanical instrumental? Or both?
  - c. Remember the original N.T. church was to be governed by the authority of Christ according to the N.T. scriptures, as revealed by and bound by the Spirit-filled, Spirit-guided apostles of Christ, giving us no authority to add to, take from, or substitute for.
    - (1) Mt.16:18,19; 18:18; 2Cor.5:17-20; Jno.1:17; Col.3:17.
    - (2) Jno.14:26; 15:26,27; 16:5-7,13-15; 17:8,18,20,21.
    - (3) Mt.28:18-20; Jno.20:19-23; Lk.24:44-49; Ac.1:1-8; 2:1-4.
    - (4) 1Jno.1:1-3.
    - (5) 1Cor.4:6; 1Pet.4:11; Rev.22:18,19; 2Jno.9.
    - (6) Cf. The command to build the Ark, Gen.6.
  - d. Vocal music is the only music divinely authorized in the N.T. scriptures, Eph.5:19; Col.3:16.
    - (1) Of all other N.T. passages pertaining to music to be used by Christians in worshipping God, there are only 8, and all 8 of them refer to vocal music only: Mt.26:30; Mk.14:26; Ac.16:25; Rom.15:9; 1Cor.14:15 (twice); Heb.2:11,12; 13:15; Jas.5:13.
    - (2) In these passages, vocal music? Yes! Mechanical instrumental music? No!
  - e. So you see, God made the choice as to the kind of music to be used in worship offered unto Him in the original N.T. church, just as he did in choosing the wood for the Ark Noah was to build!
    - (1) Who are we to assume authority to change it?
5. Laying by in store or giving of their material means is another divinely authorized item of the original worship of the original church in the local sense, Ac.2:42 – “and fellowship”
- a. The term “fellowship defined – from the Gr. KOINONIA.
    - (1) Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the N.T. gives three different meanings depending on the context:
      - “1. the share which one has in anything, participation.
      - “2. intercourse, fellowship, intimacy.

- “3. a benefaction jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution”
- (2) W.E. Vine, Expository, Dict. of N.T. Words:
    - “(a) communion, fellowship, sharing in common.
    - “(b) that which is the outcome of fellowship, a contribution”
- b. Application as per Ac.2:42: “And fellowship”
- (1) Giving of their means, their material prosperity, was an act of spiritual worship and service, and when they followed the apostle’s doctrine by contributing as directed into the common treasury of the Lord’s church, they were having fellowship in spiritual matters.
  - (2) In this series of lessons on the original worship of the original church, the word “fellowship” of Ac.2:42 has reference to the act of sharing things in common, or the giving that supplied the funds for doing the divinely ordained work of the original church, to be discussed in another lesson in the series.
  - (3) There is much more N.T. teaching on giving than on both the Lord’s supper and baptism combined. That must tell us something about the problems possibly associated with this duty.
- c. In fulfilling this duty as a part of the original worship of the original church, they were taught:
- (1) To give regularly, or to lay by in store, on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week (of every week) as they were prospered, 1Cor.16:1,2—thus giving was to be done personally and proportionately.
  - (2) To give liberally or generously, not sparingly, 2Cor.9:6; 2Cor.8:7: “see that ye abound in this grace also”
  - (3) To give willingly, voluntarily, or with a willing mind, not grudgingly, or of necessity, or under compulsion, or not as of extortion; for God loveth a cheerful giver, 2Cor.8:11,12; 2Cor.9:5-7.
  - (4) To give purposefully – “every man according as he purposeth in his heart,” 2Cor.9:7.
  - (5) To give confidently – “and God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all

sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work,” 2Cor.9:8.

- d. Thus God’s plan for giving as a part of the original worship in the original church in the local sense to support the work of the local church established:
  - (1) Who was obligated to do it – each individual member.
  - (2) The time for it – the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week.
  - (3) The way, the manner and the means of doing it.
- e. God’s plan for this in the original worship of the original N.T. church in the local sense did not include nor authorize the O.T. plan of tithing as a system of giving. But remember this:
  - (1) Tithing as an acceptable plan of giving did not begin with the law of Moses.
    - (a) Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek 400 years before the law of Moses was given, Gen.14:19,20.
    - (b) Jacob, before the law was given, vowed to give a tenth unto God, Gen.28:20-22.
    - (c) Somehow they knew to do this before the written law of Moses! Ever wonder how of why??
  - (2) The Law of Moses, a written law, the 1<sup>st</sup> Covenant, included the command to tithe, Num.18:20-24; Deut.12:6; 14:22.
    - (a) When they failed to give a tenth they were charged with robbing God, Mal.3:8.
  - (3) Though the N.T. plan for giving teaches liberality and bountifully as prospered, does this mean:
    - (a) That it is saying we are to give, or that we should give, less, and in some cases much less, than a tenth of our income?
    - (b) Do you think that those Jews converted to Christ understood that this meant that they should now start giving less, even much less, than a tenth of their income to the Lord?
  - (4) Remember this: The O.T. was written for our learning and for our admonition (Rom.15:4; 1Cor.10:11).
    - (a) From it we learn how liberal God wanted men to be in giving of their prosperity. If not, why not?

- (b) Have we truly learned this lesson on giving when it comes to determining what it means to give liberally?
  - (5) Have you ever read of any of God's people in any age of the world ever being required to give less than a tenth of their material prosperity, and at the same time meeting the approval of God?
  - (6) Brethren, do you think it just might be possible that we may have developed the wrong attitude toward our money, and have jumped to the erroneous conclusion that the N.T. teaching on giving automatically means we are to give less than 10% because it does not specifically say give a tenth?
  - (7) I realize there is this difference between the Law of Moses and the N.T. on this matter: It was strictly a legal system in one sense of the word and it specified a certain amount to be given; while we are under an honor system of giving under the N.T. system. We determine the amount. But it must be based on some scriptural principle to guide us! What is that principle? Do we get some idea from the O.T.
    - (a) But does that automatically say we are to give less than they did? Or even less than God's people did before the Law of Moses was given?
    - (b) No more than it says we are to give more than they did!
- 6. Finally, to the matter of teaching as an item of worship, the original church, in the local sense was said to continue "in the apostle's doctrine (teaching, R.V.)" according to Ac.2:42.
  - a. The apostles of Christ were given authority as the ambassadors of Jesus Christ (2Cor.5:17-20):
    - (1) To bind on earth what is first bound in heaven, and to loose on earth on earth what is first loosed in heaven, Mt.16:19; 18:18;
    - (2) Mt.28:18-20; Mk.16:15,16; Lk.24:44-49.
    - (3) Jno.20:22,23.
  - b. This was done both privately and publicly in and as a part of the worship of the local church.
    - (1) Teaching in sermonic form was not only a distinctive but an extremely important part of the original worship

of the original church in the local sense as the continued in the apostle's doctrine.

(2) When Paul visited the church at Troas, he preached to them in their 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week assembly, Ac.20:7.

(3) And 1Cor.14 shows that the sermonic form of teaching was a prominent part of the worship of the 1<sup>st</sup> century church as they continued in the apostle's doctrine.

c. As to the identity and source of the apostle's doctrine or teaching:

(1) It did not originate with them and was not their own.

(a) Cf. Jno.7:16 where Jesus says, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." Cf. Deut.18:18,19; Jno.12:48-49.

(b) Even so, the apostle's teaching was not their own, but his that sent them, Jno.17:8,18; Mt.28:18-20

(2) It was the doctrine of Christ which they preached, Ac.13:12; Gal.1:23; Eph.1:20; which came to them by revelation, Gal.1:11,12; Eph.3:1-5; Jno.16:13-15.

(3) It is only called theirs because they preached it, Ac.5:28.

#### **D. WHAT THE ORIGINAL WORSHIP OF THE ORIGINAL CHURCH IN THE LOCAL SENSE DID NOT INCLUDE, OR WHAT WAS EXCLUDED, BEING WITHOUT DIVINE AUTHORITY.**

1. Mechanical instrumental music.
2. Burning of incense.
3. Praying to the saints or to Mary the mother of Jesus.
4. Praise in dance.
5. Women preachers.
6. Worship of angels.
7. Various types of entertainment which appeal to the flesh.
8. Worshippers as spectators rather than as participators.

#### **III. CONCLUSION**

1. Through the years, from early in church history down to the present, there have been and continue to be deviations from the original, human innovations, which faithful brethren have had to oppose, because of which great spiritual battles have raged and continue to do so.
2. And our work is not finished; the battle rages on; faithful brethren must continue to engage the enemy, the innovator; it is not a work that is left up

to the preachers to the exclusion of the members – it is the work of each of us; each Christian.

3. In order to refute all of these and attempt to bring us back to the original, we have identified the original worship by going back to the original record and have:

- a. Defined the term “worship”.
  - b. Noted that according to the N.T. Scriptures there is such a thing as vain, ignorant, idolatrous, unacceptable worship Vs true, acceptable worship, the later being the original worship of the original church in the local sense.
  - c. Identified the object of the original worship as God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - d. Identified, listed and discussed the items of the original worship as follows:
    - (1) The Lord’s Supper or the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week – every week.
    - (2) Prayer to God in the name of Jesus Christ.
    - (3) Praise to God in song, or vocal music, and or “speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”
    - (4) Giving or laying by in store on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week in the treasury of the local church.
    - (5) Teaching by continuing in the apostle’s doctrine.
    - (6) Notes some of the things the original worship did not include, being excluded because without divine authority.
3. Remember 2Jno9; 1Cor.4:6; 1Pet.4:11; Rev.22:18,19.