

The First New Testament Church

How should this congregation be characterized? The church is made up of individual members. We are *“the body of Christ, and members individually”* (1 Cor. 12.27). How are we to behave? Interact with each other? Worship together? The best way to answer those questions is to turn our attention to the first congregation that was formed in the New Testament, the church in Jerusalem.

In Acts 2, the first congregation of the Lord’s church was formed when individuals were baptized in response to the preaching of Peter. In verse 41, they were *“baptized...and added to them.”* In verse 47, *“the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”* In between verses 41 and 47, we learn how this newly established church is characterized. In this article, we’ll focus on their worship.

Notice how their worship was described. They worshipped God sincerely. Verse 42 tells us that they *“continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”* The word translated as *“doctrine”* is a Greek word that means *“teaching.”* The phrase *“breaking of bread”* refers to the Lord’s Supper. This is a verse describing the worship of the church.

How did they worship? They *“continued steadfastly.”* It translates a Greek word that literally means, *“to endure forward.”* The concept is to be committed or devoted. They were committed to and fully devoted to the worship of the church. More specifically, the word described the idea of being fully engaged. These were not people who merely went through the motions. They were not playing on their phones during the sermon. They were not wondering what do to for lunch during the Lord’s Supper. They were not merely singing the words by rote. They were fully engaged in the worship of the church.

Our worship to God is to be fully engaged. You cannot express reverence and thanksgiving to God if you are only going through the motions. And worship to God that is not fully engaged is not pleasing to Him. To the children of Israel whose worship was not sincere, God said, *“I hate, I despise your feast days, and I do not savor your sacred assemblies”* (Amos 5.19). It is worship that is both sincere (spirit) and biblically sound (truth) that God desires (John 4.23).

How would you characterize our congregation? Do we *“continue steadfastly”* (Acts 2.42) in the worship of the church? CLP

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“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”
-Mark 16.15

July 7, 2024

MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS : 9:00 AM
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP: 9:50 AM
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP: 6:00 PM
WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS 7:00 PM

Musical Instruments In Worship

One of the most unique characteristics of the “Church of Christ” is that you will not find the use of musical instruments. Since most churches and denominations employ the use of pianos, organs, and even entire bands, many think it strange that we choose to worship God a cappella.

The members of the church are not opposed to musical instruments. Many love listening to music and even spiritual songs accompanied with an instrument. However, such are not permitted in the worship of the church for one reason. There is no authority. The New Testament from which we gain our religious authority does not contain any example, command or implication that first century Christians ever used musical instruments in worship.

It may not seem to be a grave matter to include musical instruments. After all, God frequently enjoyed the worship of His people with flutes, guitars, tambourines, and the like (Ps. 150.3-6). There is no doubt that God loves music. But He is also very specific about the kind of worship He allows. No doubt Nadab and Abihu thought it a small matter to offer an incense that God had not authorized (Lev. 10.1-3).

Our worship to God must be in *“spirit and in truth”* (John 4.23). We cannot add what God has not added (1 Cor. 4.6). CLP

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THE HOLINESS OF GOD

REVELATION 4:11

INTRODUCTION:

1. Through the vision of John, God is presented to us as holy.
2. Consider how the holiness of God is described.

I. FIVE WORDS

- A. Word #1: Place.
 1. **REVELATION 4.1:** *“a door standing open in heaven.”*
 2. Open (anoigo): Emphatic which implies wide open.
- B. Word #2: Person.
 1. **REVELATION 4.1:** *“And the first voice which I heard...”*
 2. Who was speaking to John? (Rev. 1.10,13; 2.8,18)
- C. Word #3: Proposal.
 1. **REVELATION 4.1:** *“Come up here”*
 2. Where was John called to go? (Isa. 57.15)
- D. Word #4: Picture. (Rev. 4.2-11)
- E. Word #5: Proclamation. (Rev. 4.11)

II. FOUR QUESTIONS

- A. Question #1: Where is God?
 1. He is seated on His throne. (Rev. 4.2ff)
 2. This emphasizes His transcendency. (Isa. 66.1; Ps. 11.4)
- B. Question #2: Who is God?
 1. God is *“holy, holy, holy”* (Rev. 4.8).
 2. God is the *“Lord God Almighty”* (Rev. 4.8)
- C. Question #3: When is God?
 1. **REVELATION 4.8:** *“Who was and is and is to come!”*
 2. God is not bound by time. (2 Pet. 3.10; Ps. 90.2)
- D. Question #4: What is God? (Rev. 4.11)

III. THREE WORDS OF APPLICATION

- A. Word #1: Motivation
 1. **ROMANS 12.1:** *“I beseech you therefore, brethren”*
 2. Jesus is pleading with us to be different. (John 16.14)
- B. Word #2: Identification.
 1. **ROMANS 12.1:** *“present your bodies a living sacrifice”*
 2. We are use our bodies to serve God. (Rom. 6.13)
- C. Word #3: Transformation. (Rev. 12.2)

CONCLUSION: 1 PETER 1.15,16: *“be holy in all your conduct”*

IN CHRIST ALONE

Are you looking for peace of mind? Are you searching for answers? Where can you find the path to eternal life? How can you access God? There is only one place where a relationship with God is possible. It is found in Christ alone.

Judaism was once the religion of God and the Jews the people of God. But no longer can the Jewish religion lead to our heavenly Father. To the Jews, Paul wrote that *“those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God”* (Rom. 9.8). Contextually, the children of the flesh were the Jews. As the gospel was preached, the Jewish leaders arrested and beat Peter and John for preaching Jesus. The Holy Spirit through Peter addressed these elders of Israel and said, *“nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”* (Acts 4.12). Paul was often accused of leading the Jews away from Judaism. Many claimed that *“you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses”* (Acts 21.21). In fact, it was the apostle Paul who wrote that *“every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places”* are found *“in Christ”* (Eph. 1.3). Salvation is not found through Judaism. It is found only in Christ.

The religion of Islam has grown in popularity and has been normalized by the entertainment industry and social media. It is the second largest religious in the world after Christianity. It comprises 25% of the religious population and boasts 1.8 million followers. They claim to trace their origin back to Ishmael, Abraham’s son (Gen. 16.1ff). But in whose lineage was the promise made? The promise of salvation comes not through the lineage of Ishmael, but through the lineage of Isaac (Gen. 17.18,19). In the New Testament, the inspired pen of Paul wrote that *“if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise”* (Gal. 3.29). Salvation is not found in the religion of Islam, but in Christ.

The world claims that we can serve God acceptably through whatever religion we choose. God never gave humanity multiple options to develop a relationship with Him. We cannot decide to serve God through either Judaism, Islam, or Christianity. There is only one option given. Only one path to God. Jesus Himself said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”* (John 14.6). In Christ alone we have peace (John 14.27). In Christ alone, we have access to the grace of God (Rom. 5.1,2). In Christ alone, are all spiritual blessings found (Eph. 1.3). If you want to have eternal life, you will not find it in Judaism or the religion of Islam. You will find in in Christ alone.