

Reflections on Scripture

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DAWN CHRISTADELPHIANS

“SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS” MATT 6:23

OUR WORSHIP

We come together to worship the great God of Heaven and Earth, the Creator and Sustainer of all living things. We recall the words of the Lord when unacceptable worship had been offered: “I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me” (Lev. 10:3). There are examples in the Scriptures of unacceptable worship, such as the worship of Cain, who attempted to worship according to his own will, ignoring the will of his Creator. When his error was pointed out to him, his stubborn heart remained rebellious, and out of resentment he slew his brother. Jesus applied the word of God through Isaiah to those of his day whose worship was unacceptable: “In vain do they worship me” (Mark 7:6). Why was it vain worship? They offered the offerings commanded by the Law through Moses, but it was *how* they offered, not *what* they offered, which caused their worship to be unacceptable. Thus God says: “This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.” and we read that “God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” Therefore, we should always examine our hearts to see if our worship is “in spirit and in truth.”

Now Psalm 122:1 expresses the feelings of true worshippers: “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.” They were happy, willing to go and not feeling compelled, rather they were eagerly anticipating

the time to worship. If we do not experience the same feelings of happiness and willingness then we must look into our hearts, for something is wrong. Could it be we may have done what we ought not, feeling that we wish to hide from God, rather than to seek His Holy presence. But we can never hide from God. However, we can go to Him, and say: “I have sinned, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” Then there is forgiveness with God: “Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy” (Prov. 28:13).

So each week we make our preparations to go to the Ecclesia of the living God or if need be take the emblems on our own. But whatever the case we need to prepare, not rushing, but aiming to have a little time to quietly meditate upon that which we are about to do before the meeting starts and before taking the emblems. It is no light thing to seek the presence of the Almighty in whose hand our breath is, and who knows all our ways. Yet “the Lord looketh to such as be of a humble and contrite spirit.” What of the following aspects of worship?:

- We sing hymns of praise, but do we concentrate upon the words and mean what we sing?
- We read from the scriptures, but do we read it carefully and listen attentively.

- We unite in prayer. Do we remember that Solomon said: “God is in heaven, thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few” (Eccl. 5:2).
- We listen to an exhortation. Do we take the words to heart if need be to help us form a Godly character. Do we hear words that comfort, encourage and lead into the right paths of the Lord. Do the words heard provoke to resentment or provoke to love and good works.
- Next we approach the Memorial Feast and the time for sincere self examination. Do we truly appreciate all that the emblems represent and are thankful that we have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus?

The Lord our God loves the acceptable worship of His children. His true children love to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

And they long for the day to come that when in possession of everlasting life they will worship with great joy:

“For the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.”



Commandments of Christ

Pray to God always and faint not; pray with brevity and simplicity; pray secretly (Matt. 6.6,7; 7.7; 26.41; Eph. 6.18; Phil. 4.6; 1 Thess. 5.17; Heb. 4.16).

Prayer is a privilege; of vital importance and is the life blood of faith. Put simply prayer is an essential part of our daily life in Christ.

Jesus said “*men ought always to pray, and not to faint;*” thus we should engage in prayer in every situation and at all opportunities. Prayer must be a regular habit throughout the day. Daniel for example prayed three times during the day. But this is not to say that in all the myriad problems of life, comfort cannot be found through seeking God in prayer. Prayer is very personal, our daily needs and deepest worries, our praise, our meditations and our thanksgiving all find expression through daily prayer.

Yet we must beware of prayer becoming common place, earnestly avoiding the “vain repetitions” and “many words” that the Lord Jesus condemns.

Often prayer is imperfect: “*we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us.*” So in faith and reverent awe let us “*come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*”

ADAPTED



Jesus said:

"I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

The Temple of the Living God

*Thy glorious House, O Love Divine,
A beauteous house shalt be,
Built up of radiant living stones,
Chosen from earth by Thee.*

*From every age and every clime,
By trials fierce and long,
These stones are fashioned by Thy hands
To build a temple strong.*

*Through endless ages shall it stand
A monument sublime:
Time cannot change or bring decay
Unto this house of Thine.*

*Stones of this temple we would be,
O Architect Divine,
Therefore we humbly crave a place
Within Thy holy shrine.*

*That in Thy mystic fane so fair,
Effulgent by Thy grace
We may with all Thy "precious stones"
Find an abiding place.*

H. M. Scotton

SELF EXAMINATION

Questions to consider:

- Do I accept that my life is very brief and could end at any moment. In view of this am I making the best of my time in service to God?
- Do I live and order my life as if Christ could come at any moment?
- Do I read the Bible daily willingly with careful thought or is my daily reading rushed as if it were a duty that must be done?
- Do I seek the Kingdom of God as diligently as I work in my employment?

LUKE, who wrote our 3rd gospel, was described by Paul as "the beloved physician". (Colossians 4v14) He was a well-educated Greek doctor, and was evidently a kind and caring man.

He would have been trained in medicine, and would be following the principles first put forward by the Greek philosopher Hippocrates (about the 4th century BC) that illnesses can have a physical cause and were not simply, as the Pharisees believed, a judgment for the sins people had committed. (Refer to John Ch. 9v2-3)

The opening chapters of Luke are a unique record. It is most likely that he had been talking directly to Mary, the mother of Jesus, for her to have revealed to him the details concerning the births of John the Baptist and Jesus.

He records Elizabeth as having been "a daughter of Aaron", and as Mary was

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her cousin, it gives us a hint that Mary's mother and Elizabeth's mother were sisters, and that Mary was brought up as a Levite, although married to a man of Judah.

After the angel left her, Mary went "with haste" to Elizabeth's home in Judah—(her Levitical family home?) In matters of the Law, the young Jesus could have been well instructed.

Luke's care for women is shown in his records of the miracles of Jesus:

- Ch. 4 Simon's wife's mother, healed of a fever
- Ch. 7 The widow of Nain, whose only son (her only support) was restored to life to look after her
- Ch. 7 The penitent woman who washed Jesus's feet with tears and anointed them with ointment—and was forgiven her sins

- Ch. 8 The women who followed Jesus and cared for his needs
- Ch. 8 The "unclean" woman whose issue of blood was healed
- Ch. 8 Jesus' care for a 12 year old girl
- Ch. 10 Martha and Mary at home (Martha "careful and troubled")
- Ch. 13 A crippled woman, bent for 18 years, made straight
- Ch. 23 The women attending the crucifixion, and also the burial, and those who went to the tomb.

Then in Acts Ch. 1 he says the women were with the eleven apostles in an upper room, continuing in prayer and supplication, with Mary the mother of Jesus and her own family — his brethren. **Together!**

Sis D. Oakley

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

The Saints in their present condition are espoused, not married, to Christ. Marriage will be celebrated at his coming. Christ's Bride will compose all who at the Judgment are found to be after his own heart. Those who have not his spirit will be none of his. His Bride now loves him. Her love is to be gauged, not by sentimental protestation, but by her attitude towards him as her lord—by her efforts to please him, and the intensity of her longing for his presence. The Bride is now busily engaged in preparing

for the marriage—arraying herself "in fine linen, pure and bright" ("the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.")

Happy indeed will those be, who, at the Bridegroom's appearing, are found "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Great is Christ's love for his Bride. He died for her! He lives for her! As his own body, he nourishes and cherishes her!

Eve, like Adam, was a figure of one who was to come. How wonderful are the Deity's ways! First "that which

is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual." To fully perceive the beauty and significance of the type, it is necessary to transport ourselves to the Millennial Age—to the time when the marriage of the Lamb will have come. Commenting upon the subject, Paul exclaims: "This is a great mystery." But what a flood of light the Scriptures throw upon it! Consider the testimony: Christ and his bride united as "one flesh"—"My beloved is mine, and I am his."

(1886, A.T.J.)