



Chalmette Church of Christ

March 1st, 2015

When God Rejects Our Worship

By: Matthew Carver

We must faithfully live the life enjoined upon us by Jesus the Christ and His noble ambassadors. The Spirit of Christ must permeate the life of His professed followers.

Amongst the people of God, worship has always been of high and solemn importance. Great emphasis has been placed on ensuring that our worship is in accordance with the divine mandates as delivered within the pages of the New Testament. We are thoroughly familiar with the fact that, under the New Covenant, praise and worship is described as "the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Heb. 13:15). Further, we find admonitions given by the Holy Spirit through Paul: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:18-19).

In the past, contentions arose over the meaning of the Greek term psallo that is translated "making melody" in Ephesians 5:19. It was contended that the word implied the use of an instrument other than the human voice, thereby permitting worshippers (laboring under the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus) to employ the melodious tones of the piano and the organ, which find such ready and frequent acceptance in most all denominations today. However, all reputable Greek lexicographers, with one voice, report that by the time of Christ and His apostles, the term psallo had come to mean simply "to pluck, pull out, to cause to vibrate by touching, to twang; in the NT, to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song" (Thayer, p.675, 1967). Hence, upon considering the text with this understanding, we find that that which is to be plucked or twanged is the human heart and that it is to be done during the singing of praise. We find a similar reference in Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Moreover, during our worship we know that it is right and proper to pray to our Holy Father and to commemorate the sacrifice and death of His only Begotten Son through the elements of the unleavened loaf and fruit of the vine (Acts 20:7). These we teach and practice; and, we take great comfort in knowing that we worship God in accordance to His divine standards. However, there have been occasions throughout the history of God's people when, in fact, God has rejected the worship he prescribed. Let us examine such an occasion in the book of Isaiah so that we might find the root cause of such rejection; and, in order to guard ourselves against a similar fate.

Through the prophet Isaiah (1:11-14), our Creator spoke these words: "To what purpose [is] the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; [it is] iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear [them]."

An analysis of this passage reveals these findings:

1) We note that the people of God during this time were bringing a "multitude" of sacrifices. Hence, we understand from this that they were not slack in the Law's requirement of offering sacrifice unto God on a regular and consistent basis. In this respect, the Israelites were in total compliance with the Law.

2) We find within these offerings the image of the "fat of fed beasts." This description is indicative of the fact that the worshippers were indeed bringing the best of the flocks to Jehovah for offering. Once more, this placed them in harmony with the divinely enjoined precepts of the Law.

3) We note that the priests were still faithful in their offering of incense, and yet it was an abomination unto God. Only the priests were permitted to offer incense upon the sacrifices, which emphasizes the fact that even the priesthood of holy and righteous men devoted to the pursuit of serving Jehovah in His Temple were corrupted by the rampant wickedness that prevailed amongst the people of God.

4) The observance of the various appointed feasts and religious days were wearisome to God to the extent that He hated them and considered these occasions troublesome. However, from this description we realize once more that the Israelites were faithful in their external observances of the requirements of the Law.

In view of these facts, we are left with the image of an indignant God who despised and therefore rejected the worship offered unto Him by His people. However, when viewing the actions of the Israelites, we must concede that the sacrifices offered and the religious days observed were all in accordance with the very laws that had been divinely prescribed by God Himself. Therefore, knowing that the external forms of worship were not to be faulted, we must seek the reason behind God's rejection elsewhere.

Note the context of this passage (Isa. 1:11-14):

1) First, we find Jehovah lamenting the rebellion of the Israelite people whom He had nourished and brought up as children: "...I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me" (Isa. 1:2). This people had become a "...sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters..." (Isa. 1:4). It was even said of them that they had "forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward." Be mindful that these charges were laid against them in spite of the fact that they had remained faithful in their observance of the worship of God as the Mosaic Law had directed.

2) The people were characterized by God in saying "your hands are full of blood" (Isa. 1:15). The rulers of the people were "rebellious, and companions of thieves" (Isa. 1:23). Moreover, "every one loveth bribes, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them."

For these transgressions and failures, the worship offered in accordance with the dictates of the Law was decisively rejected. Hence, the lesson is plainly understood. Although our forms of worship may harmonize perfectly with the divine Will, there is still that which must be done to make such acceptable. We must faithfully live the life enjoined upon us by Jesus the Christ and His noble ambassadors. We must not be full of love and light and life on only one day a week. The Spirit of Christ must permeate the life of His professed followers. Recall the inspired admonition: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9).

What was the divine remedy for the people of God whose scriptural worship was so castigated? Hear the words of the prophet once more: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. ... If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken [it]" (Isa. 1:16-17, 19-20).

News & Notes

- Mark will be making his annual trip to Budapest this year and will be leaving on May 21st and returning on June 8th. Keep him in your prayers during his time of travel for a safe trip there and back.
- Vacation Bible School will be on June 15-18. Brandon Britton and his crew will be coming down to help us conduct our VBS this year. This is his 3rd time helping us!
- Please keep Jim Danner in your prayers at this time. He has been sick and is now home from the hospital. Also keep those mentioned this past week in your prayers as well.
- Our Spring Gospel Meeting will be on April 5-9. Mark Reynolds will be our guest speaker! Make plans to attend each night and also invite others.
- The MSOP Lectureship will begin on March 29th. Mark and several others will be leaving on Monday, March 30th. If you would like to go, please see Mark for more details.
- Please keep Alice Riley, Margo Rodney, and Malcolm Vazquez in your prayers at this time as they are each battling different illnesses.

March Birthdays & Anniversaries

13– Marlene Vazquez

14-Ashleigh Towle

22-Anthony Smith



Prayer List



**Alice Riley
Clifford Markum
Sherry Towle
Margo Rodney
Ella Gillard
Krisztian Montague
Addrean Jenkins
Gloria Smiles
Joel James
Ryker Amaya
Gary Huettmann
Carol Calix
Marie Pennington**

***All of our brethren scattered across
the United States & our troops in
Iraq**



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Services of The Church
Sunday

Bible Classes 9:00 am

AM Worship 10:00 am

PM Worship 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 pm

Elders

Mark Lance 504-250-8492

J. V. Russell 504-277-0251

Charles Whitley 504-277-4717

Butch Snyder 504-682-0051

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Scott Russell 504-232-4120

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