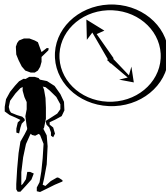


THE BATTLE CREEK BULLETIN

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Time of Assembly

Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.

Worship 10:00 a.m.

Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

Virtual Worship vs. Coming Together

By Dwight Bouvette

This past month the Coronavirus has brought us all new challenges. One of those challenges is our worship to God. I have heard congregations cancelling worship services, to splitting up worship services, to having virtual worship services, none of which I see in the N.T. scriptures.

Jesus states in John 4:23-24 that true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth then further states those who worship Him “MUST” worship in spirit and truth. We worship God on His terms, terms found in the N.T. scriptures. Let’s look into His word.

Let’s read Acts 2:36-47. 36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” 37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” 38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” 40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” 41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to

house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

In these passages we see the beginning of the church. Now I believe I can say this without going into a deep study that there are 5 articles of worship. Preaching, teaching, singing, prayer, Lords Supper, giving. Of the 5, preaching, singing, and prayer can be done any day, any time and by each of us. Of the 5, the other two articles of worship have been more defined with qualifications. Those two being “partaking of the Lords Supper and our giving.”

Qualification #1

The first day of the week (Acts 20:7) for the Lords Supper. 1 Cor. 16:1-2 for our giving.

Qualification #2

The church “Christians” came together (Acts 20:7).

1 Cor. 11:17-33 for the Lords Supper

Qualification #3

Gathered in one place, that is to say “location” (Acts 20:8; 1 Cor.11:20).

In matters of “Virtual Worship,” how will we abide in the N.T. teachings by engaging in virtual worship? First of all, bible study, prayer, and singing can be done virtually as well as in a small setting or large setting group. Just as in Matt. 28:19 it says to GO and make disciples. They could go by foot, camel, ship, etc. We must also “GO,” but we are given the option of how to go.

As for the studying, prayer, and singing forms of worship we also are at liberty to do these things how we want as long as we stay within the boundaries of the scripture.

Studying must be done anytime and anywhere by any means. Virtually, in person, over the phone, etc. (2 Tim.2:15; 2 Pet. 3:18; Rom. 10:17).

Singing praises to God can be done anyplace, with anyone, on any day. Together, virtually, individually, group setting, in our home, etc. (Col. 3:16; Acts 16:25; James 5:13) as long as we sing to God as the bible prescribes.

Praying to God can be done anyplace, with anyone, on any day, hopefully every day. Together, individually, virtually, over the phone, etc. (James 5:13; Acts 2:42; 1 Thess. 5:17; 1 Tim. 2:8) as long as we pray to God according to His will.

The question lies, can we virtually give or partake of the Lords Supper? What does the scriptures say? Virtually, are we assembled as they were assembled in the N.T. law? Virtually, even knowing this technology was not around in the first century, does not give us liberty to give or partake this way. The bible gives us the way and time to do these articles of worship and we are not at liberty to add or take away from the direction given.

If this were a scriptural way of worship, what would be wrong whether we worship this way once or all the time? I believe the scriptures teach us that the coming together as a church, a family of God to worship Him collectively brings great value to the church. We can see this in the book of Hebrews 10. If it is alright to worship virtually as a church, how would the elders be able to oversee the flock (1 Peter 5:1-2)? How would we be accountable to each other (1 Cor. 5:4-5)? How would we build each other up (Hebrews 10:24-25)? You see, there is credence in coming together as a church. Worshipping together physically. This is how they did it in the first century, isn't it? Col. 3:17 says that: "*Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to Him through the Father.*"

Remembering His Resurrection Annually?

By Richard Thetford

The calendar reads "Easter Sunday." As a result, many people throughout the world will be attending the "church of their choice" to remember the resurrection of Jesus. It won't be the "normal" service, but rather a "special" service of remembering the resurrection of our Lord that no doubt will include different plays, skits, and dramas. The world calls this day "Easter Sunday," the day of our Lord's resurrection from the grave. But is it really?

I don't recall reading anywhere in the Bible of the day nor the special celebration of the resurrection mentioned. Yet many "good intentioned people," honestly believing that they are commemorating the resurrection of Christ, celebrate this "holy day" having no biblical authority whatsoever for the practice. Because of tradition, most people today believe that Easter has always been observed from apostolic times and is authorized in the scriptures. But how could they get such an idea?

There is an unfortunate translation in the King James Version of the New Testament which has, perhaps, led some astray. The Greek, *pascha*, is translated by the word, "Easter" in [Acts 12:4](#). This same word is properly translated in other versions and in every other passage where it is used in the King James Version, as *Passover*. Undoubtedly it was mistranslated here in Acts. And even if the word was properly translated, there is still no authority here for the observance of anything. That is why Easter, as we know it, is celebrated without proper Bible authority. The text of [Acts 12:4](#) was in regard to the apostle Peter when he was put into prison during the days of Unleavened Bread or Passover as the NKJV, ASV, NASV, & NIV indicates. It is obvious that this passage of scripture is referring to the seven-day Passover festival. There is no place indicated in the New Testament that a *yearly* celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ was ever practiced. Yet today, thousands of people remember Him only this one day per

year and they make it a grand festival.

WHERE DID EASTER COME FROM ANYWAY?

The word "Easter" is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word *Eostre*, the name of the goddess of Spring. Sacrifices were offered in her honor at the first full moon that came at the time of the vernal equinox. By the 8th century, the term came to be applied to the anniversary of Christ's resurrection [ISBE, Vol 2, page 6]. There has been much controversy about the time of this celebration. The Jewish Christians and Gentiles could not agree on a set date. But as time passed an increasing number of people celebrated the anniversary of the resurrection on the first day of the week annually. By the 7th century the practice of religious groups had become universally uniform. The agreed upon time is now the first Sunday following the full moon that comes on or after the vernal equinox and that date was set as March 21st. This is why there is a variation in Easter dates from March 22nd through April 25th. There has even been talk among the different religions as setting the date permanently on one Sunday between March 21st and April 25th.

THE PROPER REMEMBRANCE OF JESUS

I've filled you in on the history of this word "Easter" so that you will understand that it originated as a pagan holiday festival and later became a yearly festival to remember the resurrection of Christ among different religious groups across the world.

The Lord's church does not celebrate Easter. Members of the Lord's church celebrate the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ on the first day of every week as we are instructed in the New Testament. We can turn to the book of Acts and read: "*Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread*" ([Acts 20:7](#)). We have an approved example from this text that lets every Christian know when one is to partake of the emblems which represent Christ's shed body for us. It says the first day of the week. It does not say "The first day of the week, once a year!" In [I Corinthians 11:23-29](#), we can further understand the significance of this memorial feast that we partake of weekly. We learn that it represents the body and blood of Jesus and it says: "*For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.*" Again, how often should a Christian eat the bread and drink the cup? The first day of the week! There are many religious denominations out there today that do not partake of the Lord's Supper once per week. Some will do it bi-monthly, others monthly, still others just once or twice per year. Any individual that is striving to do "*all the oracles of God*" ([I Peter 4:11](#)), must understand that God sets the standard (rules) that we must go by today - not man ([Acts 5:29](#)). The New Testament is our standard. I urge you to examine the Bible, and then look at what you may be practicing in your religion, and then determine whether it is from God or from man.

Good Faith Desire

By Sam Stinson

"For, 'Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.' But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls" ([Hebrews 10:37-39](#)).

A certain store trains its worker in how to deal with customers. That worker is instructed by the company to have a "good faith" desire to do what is right and approved: "If a client comes into the office to have work done but they clearly have their hearts set in violating ethical behavior and refuse to back down, hand them back their documents and refuse to cooperate. This has nothing to do with the law per se but our standing as a company. When the client says, 'I know what is right but I believe this other action is okay to do' it is our 'good faith' desire to do what is ethical and approved. It is our loyalty to our employer and our government which makes us unwilling to cooperate. We might lose a sale, but we retain our integrity."

The same principle is true with regards to spiritual truth. The Bible tells disciples to have a "good faith" desire to avoid what is sinful and to do what is approved in God's sight. The Hebrews writer speaks, quoting the prophet Habakkuk, that when the carnal, wicked man comes, the one who is righteous in God's sight will endure, living by faith ([Hebrews 10:37-38](#)). If, however, that person shrinks back and does not remain faithful when tested, that soul is destroyed ([Hebrews 10:39](#)). Faith justifies a disciple but faithlessness destroys that same disciple. If we act against what is taught in the Bible and say, "I know what the Bible teaches, but I believe this breach of faith is permissible" it is our "good faith" desire that is compromised, leading us to be destroyed. If we personally prohibit something that is clearly permitted in the Bible and we say, "I know what the Bible teaches, but I don't like that this is permissible so I will personally make a law against it" also then we are not acting in a "good faith" desire. Our loyalty to God allows us to control our desire and actions. This is why the righteous shall live by faith. If it is important in the conducting of this world's business, how much more important with regard to keeping God's word by faith? There, a violation may lead to termination and arrest. Here, in God's presence, we could be condemned to eternity away from him. Let us take this to heart and keep burning the fire of a "good faith" desire in our Lord and be justified. Let us not be like those who backslide and are destroyed but like those who have faith and preserve their souls.