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Founder: Christ – Mt. 16:18

Place: Jerusalem – Isa. 2:1-3, Acts 2:5

Time: A.D. 33 – Dan. 2:44, Acts 2

Head: Christ – Eph. 1:22

Organization:

Christ as head – Eph. 5:23

Elders oversee local church –
Heb. 13:17, Titus 1:5

Deacons as servants –
Acts 6:1-6, 1 Tim. 3:8-13

Members compose body –
Col. 1:2

Name (group):

Church of God – Eph. 3:15

Body of Christ – Eph. 1:22-23

Churches of Christ – Rm. 16:16

Bride of Christ – Rm. 7:4

Name (individuals):

Disciples – John 15:8

Saints – Rm. 1:7

Brethren – Lk. 8:21

Children of God – Gal. 4:26

Christian – Acts 11:25-26

Creed: Jesus/Bible – Acts 8:37

Rule of Faith & Practice:

Word of God – 2 Tim. 3:16-17

Worship: Jn. 4:24

Sing – Eph. 5:19

Pray – Acts 2:42; 1 Thes. 5:17

Teach – Acts 5:42

Communion – 1 Cor. 1:23-26

Contribute – 1 Cor. 16:1-2

Mission: Save Souls – 1 Tim. 4:16

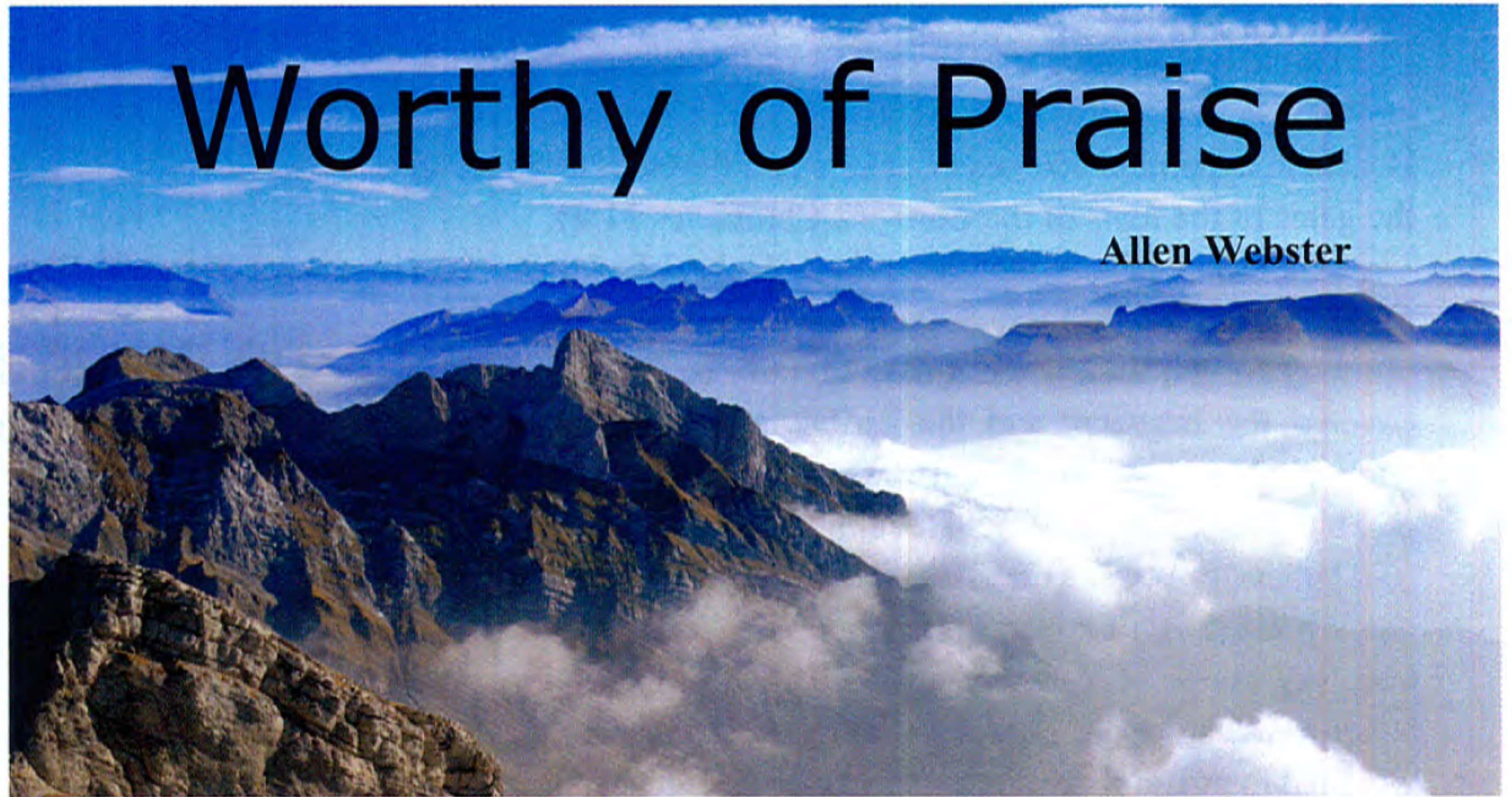
Warning: Be Faithful – 2 John 9

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Worthy of Praise

Allen Webster



The preacher may make us laugh and the songs may make us weep.

The fellowship may warm our souls and the communion may give us chill bumps. But if God does not enjoy the hour, the service failed. The goal of worship is to make God “high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour” (Deuteronomy 26:19). “Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely” (Psalm 147:1).

A hymn that was likely composed in the Talmudic period expresses our sentiment:

If my lips could sing as many songs as there are waves in the sea;
If my tongue could sing as many hymns as there are ocean billows;
If my mouth filled the whole firmament with praise;
If my face shone like the sun and moon together;
If my hands were to hover in the sky like powerful eagles
And my feet ran across mountains as swiftly as the deer;
All that would not be enough to pay you fitting tribute,
O Lord my God.

If we had the tongues of angels, we could not praise God as He deserves to be praised. If we were born speaking praises and had breath to never cease, we could never adequately exalt His name in this life. If every rock could speak, it would praise God. If the stars could sing, their song would be in His honor. If the animals could write, their words would form new praises for their Creator. The very stones would praise Him if the need arose, and a thousand legions of angels would leap to do His will. “Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein (Psalm 69:34).





Worthy of Praise

Continued from page 1

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT PRAISING GOD?

The word *praise* (in various forms) is used 268 times in Scripture. In Old Testament times, God's people took praising Him seriously. Leah rejoiced at the birth of a son and cried, "Now will I praise the Lord" (Genesis 29:35). So she named the boy, "Praise" (Judah).

David organized a whole section of the Levites "to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel" (1 Chronicles 16:4). Hezekiah appointed courses of priests and Levites "to praise in the gates of the tents of the Lord" (2 Chronicles 31:2).

After nine silent months, when Zacharias' tongue was finally loosed his first words were praise to God (Luke 1:64). We long for the time when it may literally be said, "His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise" (Habakkuk 3:3). So much praise went up, that God was said to inhabit "the praises of Israel" (Psalm 22:3).

When Jesus was born, both exalted angels and lowly shepherds praised His Father (Luke 2:13, 20). When He died, the very sky above Him bowed its head in reverent submission. Wherever Jesus went between these events, it seems that men were led to praise Jehovah (e.g., Luke 18:43). It seems no accident, therefore, that Jesus came from Judah, the tribe whose very name means "praise" (Genesis 49:10).

Ever since Jesus ascended to the Father, His followers have been "continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (Luke 24:53; cf. Ephesians 3:20–21). The early church praised God and had favor with the people (Acts 2:47). In a beautiful prophecy, the church is said to have walls called, "Salvation," and gates, "Praise" (Isaiah 60:18).

Christians are to "think on" praise (Philippians 4:8), since we have been adopted "to the praise of the glory of his grace" (Ephesians 1:5–6; cf. Jeremiah 13:11). Our very purpose in life is to show forth the praises of God (1 Peter 2:9; cf. Isaiah 43:21). God clothes His people with the "the garment of praise" (Isaiah 61:3).

WHEN SHOULD GOD BE PRAISED?

God deserves to be praised every day (Psalm 145:2). One praised Him twice a day—in the morning and in the evening (1 Chronicles 23:30). Another praised Him seven times a day (Psalm 119:164). A third topped them all: "From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised" (Psalm 113:3). But another's ambition was even greater: "I . . . will yet praise thee more and more" (Psalm 71:14). Paul and Silas sang praises unto God "at midnight" (Acts 16:25). More to the point of this study, He deserves to be praised on the Lord's day—Sunday (Acts 20:7)—in public worship: "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Hebrews 2:12). We should not forsake His worship (Hebrews 10:25).

WHY SHOULD WE PRAISE GOD?

We should praise God for who He is. Young people sing a song that goes: "I will call on the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies" (2 Samuel 22:4). Those who have learned of Jehovah agree: "For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: he also is to be feared above all gods" (1 Chronicles 16:25). A wise man wondered, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exodus 15:11). We praise God for His power (Psalm 21:13). We praise the Lord for the beauty of His holiness (2 Chronicles 20:21) and for His goodness and mercy (Ezra 3:11; Jeremiah 33:11).

The very purpose of life might be summed up: Show forth the praises of God (1 Peter 2:9).

We should praise God for what He has done. "Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness" (Psalm 150:2).

He has made us: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psalm 139:14).

He has delivered us (Exodus 15:1–11; 2 Samuel 22:49–50; Jeremiah 20:13). When Israel's children learned that God had heard their cry and had sent a deliverer (Moses), they "bowed their heads and worshipped" (Exodus 4:31). When Moses learned that God kept "mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin," he "made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped" (Exodus 34:7–8). Worship, distilled, is thanksgiving for salvation (Psalm 69:30–32; 71:8, 14; 86:5, 15; 92:1–8; 95:1–7; 100:4; 150:6).

He has blessed us. When we take time to count our blessings (James 1:17), it makes us worshipful. It is an unthankful heart that shuns worship. When the eldest servant of Abraham's house played matchmaker for young Isaac, he devised a plan to determine which girl the Lord approved. When the sign was given, with a thankful heart he "bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord" (Genesis. 24:26, 48, 52).

He has given us His truth (Psalm 138:2). "In God I will praise his word" (Psalm 56:4). "I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth" (Isaiah 25:1).

He has answered our prayers (Psalm 118:21).

So, "praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people" (Romans 15:11). Yea, "let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord" (Psalm 150:6). "Therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually" (Hebrews 13:15).

Join us Sunday as we exalt the name of the Lord!



Don't Blame the Monkeys

Three monkeys sat in a coconut tree,
Discussing things as they ought to be.
Said one to the other, "Now listen you two,
There's a certain rumor that can't be true,

That man descended from our noble race.
The very idea is a disgrace.
No monkey ever deserted his wife, starved
her babies, and ruined her life.

And you have never known a mother monk
To leave her babies with others to bunk,
Or pass them on from one to another,
Till they hardly know who is their mother.

And another thing you never see.
A monk build a fence around a coconut tree,
And let the coconuts go to waste,
Forbidding all other monks to taste.

There is another thing a monk won't do:
Go out at night and get on a stew,
Or use a gun or club or a knife
To take another monkey's life.

Yes man descended, the ornery cuss,
But brother, he didn't descend from us!

—Author Unknown (from Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet)

"Let us do good unto all men . . ." —Galatians 6:10

Do I have to go to church?

- ▶ Do you have to hug your little children?
- ▶ Do you have to remember your wife's birthday?
- ▶ Do you have to call when you're late coming home from work?
- ▶ Do you have to buy Christmas gifts for your family?
- ▶ Do you have to attend ball games and band functions in which your children are involved?
- ▶ Do you have to attend the funeral of a close friend or loved one?
- ▶ Do you have to say, "I love you" when you love someone? —Steve Higginbotham

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." —Psalm 122:1



Some Headlines We'd Like to See This Year

Crime Wave Plummets as Nation Turns to God

Millions turn to Jesus; Huge crowds on Sundays

Elected Officials Turn Salaries Over to Poor

"They need it more than we do," says wealthy senator.

Pornography Stores and Movies Close in Record Numbers

"People aren't interested anymore," complains adult bookstore owner.

Drug Dealers Seek Honest Occupations

"So many people have quit, there's no money in it anymore," complains a former drug lord.

Peace Comes to the Middle East

Terrorist attacks ease as peace reigns.

Nationwide Trend: Teenagers Stop Smoking

Tobacco companies complain of record losses.

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

—Galatians 5:22–23

Preacher on the Loose

The preacher was wired for sound with a lapel mike, and as he preached, he moved briskly about the platform, jerking the mike cord as he went. Then he moved to one side, getting wound up in the cord and nearly tripping before jerking it again. After several circles and jerks, a little girl in the third pew leaned toward her mother and whispered, "If he gets loose, will he hurt us?" —David L. Roper, "Kids of the Kingdom"

Well said: "All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen." —Ralph Waldo Emerson

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine . . ." —Proverbs 17:22

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The HOME PAGE

"I'm Sorry"

Want the key to a lasting marriage? Try apologizing to your spouse! A study of 7,950 Americans conducted by pollsters Zogby for ThePearlOutlet.com found that having a willingness to apologize strengthens a couple's bond.

"The secret of a lasting marriage is being prepared to accept that the other person has an equally valid viewpoint and being willing to apologize because you love them and want them to be happy," says Andrea Marshall, a marital therapist and author.

Married folks are also far more likely than singles to apologize first when they feel they're just partly to blame for an argument. Why? People who are dating often believe if a relationship isn't perfect you should just move on, but those in a marriage have realized the perfect relationship doesn't happen overnight. —Marriage Partnership

"Go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend."
—Proverbs 6:3

The Perfect Man



A panel of women debated on what they thought was a perfect man. You would have thought they would have decided upon some actor or athlete or even a wealthy tycoon. They decided that the perfect man was MR. POTATO HEAD.

They gave four reasons: He's tan, he's cute, he knows the importance of accessorizing, and if he looks at another girl you can rearrange his face.

—Guy McGraw

"A merry heart doeth good." —Proverbs 17:22

The Best Gift



A man came home from work late again, tired and irritated, to find his five-year-old son waiting for him at the door. "Daddy, may I ask you a question?"

"Yeah, sure. What is it?" replied the father.

"Daddy, how much money do you make an hour?"

"That's none of your business! What makes you ask such a thing?" the father said angrily.

"I just wanted to know. Please tell me. How much do you make an hour?" pleaded the little boy.

"If you must know, I make \$20 an hour."

Looking up, the boy said, "Daddy, may I borrow \$9 please?"

The father was furious. "If the only reason you wanted to know how much money I make is just so you can borrow some, then you march yourself straight to your room and go to bed. Think about why you're being selfish. I work long, hard hours every day, and don't have time for such childish games."

The boy quietly went to his room and shut the door. The father sat down and got madder about his son's questioning. How dare he ask such questions only to get some money! After an hour, he calmed down and started to think he might have been too hard on his son. Maybe there was something he really needed to buy with that \$9. He didn't ask for money often.

The father went to his son's room and opened the door. "Are you asleep, son?" he asked.

"No, Daddy, I'm awake," replied the boy.

"I've been thinking. Maybe I was too hard on you earlier," said the father. "It's been a long day, and I took my aggravations out on you. Here's the \$9 you asked for."

The boy sat up straight, beaming. "Oh, thank you, Daddy!" he said.

Then, reaching under his pillow, he pulled out some crumpled bills. He counted the money and then looked up at his father.

"Why did you want more money if you already had some?" the father asked.

"Because I didn't have enough, but now I do," the little boy replied.

"Daddy, I have \$20 now! Can I buy an hour of your time?"

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "The only gift is a portion of thyself."

—Author Unknown, quoted by David Sargent, Mobile, Alabama in *Living Water*

"Redeeming the time . . ." —Ephesians 5:16

Communication Is Key

A woman went to court and told the judge she wanted a divorce. "Do you have any grounds!" the judge asked.

"Just two acres," she said.

"That's not it, lady. I mean do you have a grudge!"

"No, we park the car in front of the house."

The judge was frustrated: "Does your husband beat you up!"

She replied, "No, I get up before he does."

"Then why do you want a divorce?" the judge asked.

"Because," she confessed, "we just don't seem to be able to communicate."



For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to

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What is a religious cult?



Variations among the thousands of religious cults today make a precise definition difficult. When people think of cults, they often think of belief in reincarnation, UFOs, bizarre sexual practices, or strange dietary practices, but these are not the primary marks of a cult. While each has unique characteristics, there are common characteristics found among cults that claim to be “Christian.” Two primary traits are a claim of inspiration beyond the Bible and a dethroning of Jesus Christ.

Almost always, a cult gathers around a specific leader or that leader’s interpretation of Scripture. This devotion to a charismatic leader affects attitudes toward the Bible and Jesus. Virtually all cults supplement, and in reality supplant, Scripture by elevating their leader’s teachings above Scripture. If pressed about contradictions and faults in their writings, they generally demean the Bible’s inspiration and accuracy.

Not only do the cults reject reliance on the Bible alone, they also generally do not treat Jesus as the Messiah. They may acknowledge Him as a great teacher or a great man, but not as the “only begotten Son” of God (John 3:16). Cults reject Jesus’ statement: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). Some cult leaders, such as Jim Jones, have claimed to be Christ. Sun Myung Moon claimed to be the Messiah for the twentieth century, sent by God to complete the failed mission of Jesus.

A secondary characteristic usually found in the cults is mind control of their converts. By taking away the free will of their converts, or “brainwashing” them, they maintain control and are better able to promote their anti-Christ agendas. The cults advance this mind control by rigorously controlling every waking moment of the members’ time. They consider the regimented life a reflection of devotion to the leader.

In addition, cults usually cut off members from the outside world and normal family relations, lest they be drawn away from the cult. This isolation from the world helps fuel paranoia and adds to the peer pressure necessary for keeping the members in line. They may consider nonmembers the agents of Satan, ignorant, and untrustworthy.

It does matter what one believes in the realm of religion. Many think that as long as one is sincere, any belief is right. Rejection of Christ and the Bible, however, leads to eternal destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:8). The gospel revealed in the Bible saves (Romans 1:16), and must be obeyed (Hebrews 5:9). —Bob Prichard, P. O. Box 3071, Oxford, AL 36203

To ask a Bible question or view previously answered questions, go to www.HouseToHouse.com.

Bible Quiz



Send us your answers (address on front). We’ll grade and return all entries, and randomly select one to receive a Bible, New Testament cassettes, or Bible Dictionary.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Questions Taken from the King James Version

Starts with the Letter “D”

Find answers in Genesis 2:15; 8:11; 30:21; 37:5, 17; Exodus 10:21; Deuteronomy 1:1–5; Judges 4:4; 16:13–18, 23; Psalm 84:10; Proverbs 20:1; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Daniel 3:5; 6:16; John 10:7; 11:16; Acts 13:22; 19:24–26, 35; 22:5–8; 24:24; Romans 1:14; 1 Timothy 3:10; 2 Timothy 4:10; 1 Peter 5:8 (Matthew 4:1); 3 John 9; Revelation 12:3 (not in order).

1. _____ A god of the Philistines
2. _____ City near where Saul of Tarsus saw the Lord
3. _____ Prophet thrown into lions’ den
4. _____ The ninth of the ten plagues on the Egyptians
5. _____ King of Israel; man after God’s own heart
6. _____ A church office under the elders
7. _____ Female judge of Israel
8. _____ Woman who tempted Samson
9. _____ Forsook Paul because he loved the world
10. _____ Silversmith who led a persecution against Paul
11. _____ Last book of Moses; means “second law”
12. _____ Adversary of man; tempted Jesus
13. _____ Goddess worshipped by Ephesians
14. _____ Another name for Thomas, the apostle
15. _____ Jacob’s daughter by Leah
16. _____ Loved to have preeminence; opposed John
17. _____ Bird that brought back an olive leaf to Noah
18. _____ Joseph had these, which angered his brothers
19. _____ Felix’s wife; heard Paul concerning the faith
20. _____ Type of musical instrument in Daniel’s day
21. _____ Place where Joseph was found by his brethren
22. Jesus said, “I am the _____ of the sheep.”
23. “I had rather be a _____ in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.”
24. John saw “a great red _____, having seven heads.”
25. Adam had to _____ and keep the Garden of Eden.
26. “Then shall the _____ return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”
27. “Wine is a mocker, strong _____ is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”
28. “I am a _____ both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.”

Answers to Last Issue: *Starts with the Letter I:* 1. Ichabod (1 Samuel 4:21); 2. Inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16); 3. Idle (Matthew 12:36); 4. Idolatry (Colossians 3:5); 5. Ignorance (Acts 17:30); 6. Ill (Romans 13:10); 7. Image (Genesis 1:26); 8. Imagination (Genesis 6:5); 9. Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14); 10. Impossible (Luke 1:37); 11. Increase (1 Corinthians 3:6); 12. Imagine (Psalm 2:1); 13. Infidel (1 Timothy 5:8); 14. Inheritance (1 Peter 1:4); 15. Iniquity (2 Timothy 2:19); 16. Inn (Luke 2:7); 17. Isaac (Acts 7:8); 18. Isaiah (2 Kings 20:11).



Keynotes of Philemon – 2 Peter

Reviewing key words, verses, phrases, and messages from the New Testament books refreshes our memory (2 Peter 1:12) and helps us to find key ideas as we read.

Book – Philemon

Key Word – Receive
Key Verses – Philemon 1:9; 1:15–17
Message – The gospel’s transforming power

Book – Hebrews

Key Word – Better
Key Verse – Hebrews 8:6
Message – Christ’s superiority

Book – James

Key Words – Faith; Works
Key Verses – James 2:21–26
Message – Faith shown by works

Book – 1 Peter

Key Words – Suffering; Hope
Key Verses – 1 Peter 3:15; 3:21
Message – Suffering patiently and joyously to God’s glory

Book – 2 Peter

Key Word – Knowledge
Key Verses – 2 Peter 1:3–4
Message – The word of Christ is the source of life and godliness

Source – Frank J. Dunn, *Know Your Bible* (Frank and Yvonne Dunn Publications, 1997), 430–648

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- ▶ How Shall the Young Secure Their Hearts? —Neal Pollard
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- I have a prayer request: _____
- I have a Bible question: _____
- I want to know more about what God requires for salvation. Please have someone schedule a personal visit with me.

I want to learn more about the Bible!

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- I would like a daily Bible reading schedule.

TRACTS:

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- NEW! Jesus Never Watched Sheep, But He is the Good Shepherd.**
- The Amazing History of Instrumental Music in Worship** (Part 2). The early history of instrumental music in the Baptist and Methodist churches; some key Scriptural principles.
- Heaven Is Four Steps from Any Place on Earth** (Part 3).
- How Men Can Stay Faithful to Their Wives**
- In the Shadow of the Cross**
- The Devil Loves to Fish in Troubled Waters**
- Hands That Shed Innocent Blood**
- In Pursuit of Enthusiasm.** Has life lost its zest for you?
- How to Be the Best Giver in Your Congregation**
- A Baptism in New Testament Times**
An analysis of a clear-cut case study of a controversial topic.
- A Lying Tongue.** One of the seven things God hates.
- Friends.** Youth/Young Adult **Simon Says**
- A Decent Devil?** **A Christian TV Guide**
- Back issues of *House to House/Heart to Heart*

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The Cross from Seven Viewpoints



From the viewpoint of Judas, it was about silver. Judas was a thief and a traitor (John 12:4–6; 13:28–29). He made a deal with the Jewish leaders to sell Jesus for the “goodly price” of thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12–13; Matthew 26:15).

From the viewpoint of the Pharisees, it was about silence. The Jewish leaders knew that the world was going after Jesus (John 12:19), and they were afraid that the whole world would believe on Him (John 11:48). When they could not stump Him or snare Him with their questions (Matthew 22:15–17, 35), they decided to silence Him by slaying Him (Matthew 26:3–4). As you know, even this didn’t work. He rose three days later, and His apostles boldly preached His resurrection (Acts 2; 4:18–30, 33; 5:17–29, 40–42; 17:6).

From the viewpoint of Pilate, it was about self-preservation. Although Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent (Luke 23:4; Matthew 27:24), he caved in to Jewish pressure to crucify Jesus (John 19:12–13; Mark 15:15). He sacrificed Jesus in an effort to save himself (John 12:25).

From the viewpoint of the Roman soldiers, it was about sport. The Roman soldiers brought Jesus into the common hall and mocked Him (Matthew 27:27–31; Luke 23:11; John 19:2–3). At the foot of His cross, they cast lots for His wardrobe as they watched Him struggle in pain (Matthew 27:34–35).

From the viewpoint of the Father, it was about substitution. In His grace, God sent Jesus to taste death for us by taking our place on the cross (Hebrews 2:9; Romans 5:8–10; Isaiah 53:5, 11; 1 Peter 2:21; John 3:16; 1 John 4:9–10).

From the viewpoint of the Son, it was about submission. Although the cross meant shame and suffering, Jesus submitted to the Father’s will and went to the cross (Matthew 26:39, 53; Hebrews 5:7–9; 12:2; Philippians 2:8–9).

From the viewpoint of the saints, it was about salvation. The early Christians saw the cross, and the blood shed there, as the means of their salvation (Matthew 26:28; Acts 20:28; Romans 5:9–10; 6:3–4; 1 Corinthians 1:18–24; 6:19–20; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18–20; Revelation 1:5; 7:14). —Wade Webster, Southaven, Mississippi

“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” —Galatians 6:14



A Model for the Church

In the basement of America’s largest home, the Biltmore House in Asheville, North Carolina, you can see a model of the structure. The model was completed first, as a guide to build the home. In Barcelona, Spain, you can visit the still unfinished Sagrada Familia Church. They have been working on it for fifty years. They will show you a model of what the building will look like when it is finished.

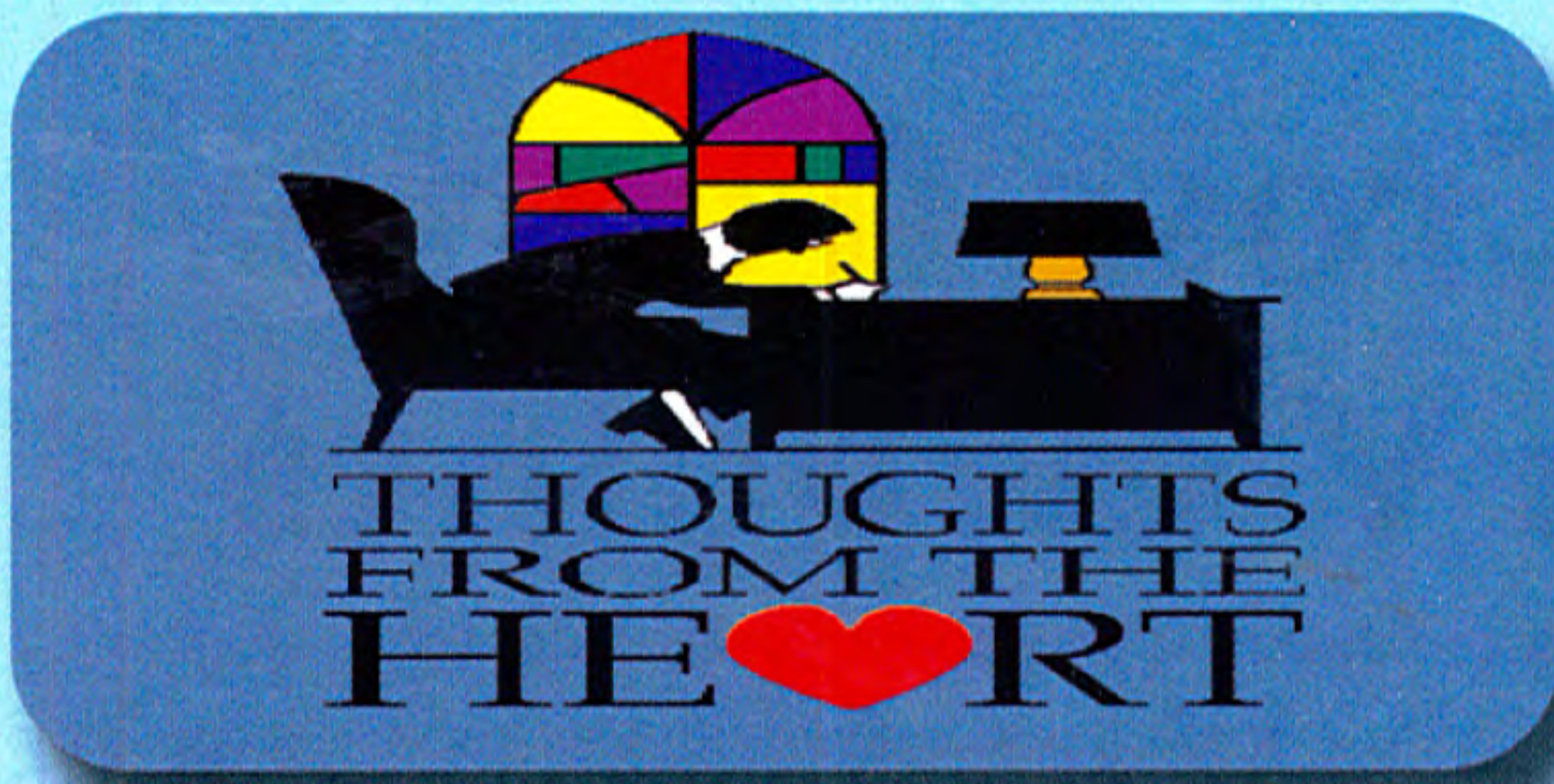


We all need patterns, and we must follow the right pattern. The Bible gives us a model for building Christ’s church. The New Testament is the right pattern. Members of the church of Christ refuse to accept any human creed in religion. We seek to plant New Testament churches throughout the world, after the New Testament pattern. We refuse any uninspired man’s statement, or system of statements, as our rule in religion. Articles of Religion, Confessions of Faith, Disciplines, Church Manuals, and Creeds formulated by men are thus rejected. The Word of God alone is our standard.

This is the only safe path because “all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Peter says that God gave us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3); therefore, when we speak, we are to “speak as the oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11).

If we want to be pleasing to God, we need to follow His model. —adapted from Garland Elkins, Memphis, Tennessee

“See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern . . .” —Hebrews 8:5



What's So Great about Following Jesus?

The word *Christian* means a follower of the Christ (Acts 11:26).

Some view the Christian life as one that is unduly restricted, without any real freedom, and with no joy or pleasure. Agrippa for instance admitted that he was almost persuaded to become a Christian but declined (Acts 26:28). Such a notion is wrong because it clashes with the teaching of the New Testament. The truth is, Jesus gives life real meaning and purpose!

Many employers attract potential employees by listing the benefits package their workers receive. Well, what about serving Jesus? Does it have a built-in benefits package? It does, indeed.

Those who faithfully follow Jesus have the best and most meaningful life in the world.

Christians are people who enjoy the best quality of life on earth! The life of a child of God is better than one built on material wealth (Isaiah 55:2). All spiritual blessings in Christ (Ephesians 1:3) beat unstable material riches any day. And the Christian's life of walking in the light is far better than a life of darkness (1 John 1:6-7).

Christians enjoy the abundant life in the Christ, who is our Good Shepherd (John 10:10-11). Following Jesus is not just a good way to live. Neither is the Christian life one of the best ways to live. No, being a Christ-following person is the absolute best life in every way! You cannot be a better person than Jesus Christ makes you through His gospel (2 Timothy 3:17).

"Come and see" (John 1:39).

—Roger Campbell, Cleveland, Tennessee

