

Vain Worship

Dub McClish

Does God accept whatever kind of worship men may choose to offer to Him? If one is sincere and earnest in his religious activities, does he please God, even if he practiced things that are ordained of men rather than of God? Most of the world has been led to answer “yes” to these questions. What does the Bible say? Jesus said, “Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying...but in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the commandments of men” (Mat. 15:9). The Lord also said that our worship must not only be done sincerely, but “in truth” or according to the teaching of Truth, God’s Word (John 4:24; 17:17). It is apparent from such statements as these that not every religious act is pleasing to God just because it is religious, however sincerely it is practiced. It must be concluded that religious practices not ordained of God (not authorized in His Word) are worthless in God’s sight. This includes not only the savage, primitive practices of uncivilized tribes, but also the polished rituals practiced on Sunday mornings by millions of Americans who call themselves Christians. The former group often has as much Bible authority for its worship as does the latter.

In the New Testament, as one observes the beginning of the church and its development to maturity in the first century, a pattern of utter simplicity is seen in every phase of its existence. This is seen in its entrance requirements, its organization, the way it did its work and the work it was charged to do. This simplicity was especially seen in its worship of the true and living God. But men, ever believing they can improve upon God’s plans, were not content with this simplicity. So, through the centuries, God’s pattern of worship has been altered countless times by human innovations. Since human doctrines make our worship vain, we need to be continually called back to simple, Scriptural, New Testament worship.

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