

## *First Things First (Worship)*

David Halbrook

The less people know of any activity, the less likely they are to participate, and without knowing the basics, they cannot participate correctly. Fewer people today worship God because they do not know the “first things” of worship.

**Worship is God’s idea, not man’s** Man, including the church, did not invent the practice of worship. Learn about the worship of Abel, Cain, Israel, and Christians in Scripture and see that worship begins with God, not man.

**God seeks worship in spirit (John 4:23)** Worship that is from man’s spirit is sincere and thoughtful. The purpose of all true worship can be understood. For example, the purpose of the Lord’s Supper is to remember Jesus’ death (Lk.22:19). There is no mystery in that. It is a simple memorial.

**God expects and seeks worship in truth** God expects man to let His word define true worship (Jn. 4:23; 17:17). Truth has not changed since the apostles’ preached and neither has true worship. Neither truth nor true worship develops from a Catholic or Protestant tradition.

Are you interested in learning more about worship? How may we help? Contact us with your comments or questions.

Editor’s Note: The women at the Samaritan well knew the Jews worshiped differently than her people did and was willing to talk about those differences (Jn. 4:20). Use our *Arkansas Weekly* article to bring the subject of worship to the mind of someone you know or will meet. Maybe they will know about modern differences and want to learn more.

### Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

Pray for: Ed & Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Novela Puckett, Noleka Hopper, Samuel Southall, others with ongoing trials, and new Christians among us.

*Join us each Sunday at 10AM (classes), 10:45AM, & 5PM and Wednesday at 7PM.*

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# The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*  
church of Christ--Quail Valley

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## *Do You Have A Wedding Garment?*

Brett Hogland

When we read the parable of the wedding feast (Matt. 22:1-14), we find one who attended the feast not dressed in a wedding garment. The outcome of this event was for him to be bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness. Why was the King angry at this guest? After all, He did invite the guest to come. Was the King unfair?

Looking more closely at this parable, we see that many were invited to the wedding feast, but they refused to come to the feast. Therefore, the King sent servants again unto them and they still would not come. We see some of those invited were not content with just not attending, for they "treated them (the servants) spitefully, and killed them." Then the King destroyed them and said, "The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy."

Those invited should have been waiting, preparing for this very feast, but they were not. These should have known, but they refused the knowledge that would have saved them. Subsequently, the King invited any and all who would come to the feast; even those who were ignorant of His blessing. The Kings servants invited all they could find to come to the feast.

When the King entered He found some guest were dressed appropriately, yet one guest was not properly dressed. The outcome of this was to earn the King's wrath.

This tells us that we must be found dressed properly for the coming wedding feast. However, what does in mean to be properly dressed? To be dressed properly, we must change those things about ourselves that are not in conformance with the King's wishes. If we attempt to join His wedding party, but change nothing about our condition, we stand to inherit the King's wrath as well. The apostle Paul referred to the good news of our being invited to the feast and our need to change our garment in the letter to Romans. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in

Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. (Rom. 8:1) Paul soon concludes: So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Rom. 8:8) This tells us, if we have accepted the invitation of Christ, we are free to enter (no longer condemned) if we change our garment (fleshly or worldly conduct) for a proper garment (Spiritual or Godly conduct).

Jesus also mentions this, when telling the adulterous woman "neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." (John 8:11) She would be free, if she would "sin no more." As He went on to say, I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. (John 8:12) If we wish to accept the invitation of our Lord, we must not keep wearing the garment stained with sin, but we must put on the garment of light. Thus we will, as Jesus told the adulterous woman, "go and sin no more."

If we desire to accept the invitation of our Lord, we must change or conform our life (garment) to what the King wishes us to wear. We should not deceive ourselves into thinking He will accept whatever we wish to give Him.

When the apostle Paul wrote to Christians, he reminded them time and again to have this change in our lives. He tells those in Rome: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that ...perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:2) He also tells those at Ephesus, they "should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk... and be renewed in the spirit of your mind..." (Eph. 4:17-24; cf. Col. 3:1-4). The apostle Peter also says, "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind...not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance." (I Peter 1:13-21)

The message of the gospel is consistent throughout the scriptures.

The necessity of changing our garment is not what many are teaching. This is "no wonder! For Satan transforms himself into an angel of light" (II Cor. 11:14), and he does not want you to change your garment. Remember, it was he who said to Eve, "You shall not surely die." (Gen. 3:4).

However, God's word teaches us otherwise. When we study the doctrine of Christ, it's all about repentance (Mark 2:7). If one truly repents, then he no longer dwells in the condition he repents of. Change of mind is necessarily required to be repentant. This is the beginning of our change into our 'wedding garment'.

When our Lord returns, will you be asked, "Why are you not in a proper wedding garment?" Remember, "many are called, but few are chosen." (Matt. 22:14).

## *What's A Mother To Do?*

*David Halbrook*

*"I have got a child now that I wasn't planning to have. . . I still don't know if, or what, I am going to tell Jayde when the time comes."* Thus the predicament of Stacy Dow of Perth, Scotland, who is suing a hospital because her daughter Jayde, now 4, was not aborted along with her twin (*Christianity Today*, Feb 2006, p23). There are so many things wrong with this, I hardly know where to start or end, but I'll limit myself to the space that this column allows.

What could Stacy tell her daughter? What words could bring comfort and healing to Jayde's mind when, or if, she realizes that her own mommy decided to kill both she and her sister? What could bring peace to the mind of a daughter who learns that the only reason that she has life, is because a hospital's mistake foiled the plans of her mommy? This seems to be a dead-end road, but it isn't. Three well-known, yet rarely spoken words, could begin to bring order and healing to this family. No, not "I love you," for Mommy's actions betray those words. "I was wrong" would be the place to start. Even the seemingly irreversible damage done to this home, could be countered, if a daughter would hear her mother confess "I was wrong."

I wonder if Solomon knew about his sibling whom he never met, the child who was the product of David and Bathsheba's adultery (2 Sam. 12:14). If he did, what do you think that he was told? Judging by David's genuine repentance, seen in 2 Samuel 12 and throughout the Psalms, Solomon would have been told "Son, my sin has brought heartache to God and this family for which I am deeply sorry. But, if you and I will serve God faithfully, we can all be with God some day, along with your sibling that you never met." If only Jayde could hear similar words, Stacy would not have to live a life covering her tracks or carrying the burden of the past, and Jayde could hope to meet her sister some day.

There is probably nothing that we can do for Stacy or Jayde, but there are lessons that we can learn. When the law of the father and mother has its roots in the law of the Lord, wisdom and righteousness will decorate the life of that family, out-sparkling the most beautiful golden necklaces that money can buy (Prov. 1:8-9; 31:10; Eph. 6:4). But sin is a reproach to any home. Parents, guide your children to speak, dress, recreate, work, watch, and listen to those things which are honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praise-worthy. If you have done wrong in the past, then admit it to your children. By this, you will not have the weight of worry like Stacy Dow-- you'll have "the peace of God" and "the God of peace" (Phil. 4:7-9).