



The Voice of Truth

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“To The Spirits in Prison” by Jimmy Pettigrew

“But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: (being) ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear:

16 having a good conscience; that, wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame who revile your good manner to life in Christ.

17 For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing.

18 Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

19 in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison,

20 that aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water:

21 which also after a true likeness doth now save you, (even) baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ;

22 who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him” **(1 Peter 3:15-22 ASV)**.

Peter was acquainted with the possibility of apostasy, having himself on one occasion denied the Lord three times. Peter had once refused to suffer for Christ and he strongly warns those to whom he now writes to endure suffering and persecution and remain loyal to the Lord. Later Peter wrote, “but if (a man suffer) as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name” **(1 Peter 4:16)**. If we suffer for righteousness we are like Christ for Christ suffered for righteousness.

Peter goes on and says that Christ was put to death in the flesh but he was made alive by the spirit. By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison. These passages are used by false teachers in an attempt to teach the doctrine of a “second chance” for salvation. Three major questions must be answered in reference to understanding the truth projected in these passages: **(a)** how was the preaching done? **(b)** To whom was the preaching done? **(c)** When was the preaching done?

How was the preaching done? Well, **verse 18** says “in the spirit,” and **verse 19** says “in which also he went and preached.” Therefore, the preaching was done in the spirit. Noah, as well as Abraham, David, Jeremiah, Daniel and others, bore witness to Him by one and the same spirit. The Holy men of old spoke the word of the Lord by the Spirit of the Lord. Jesus, by the same Spirit, preached to the antediluvians that were doomed to destruction unless they accepted. The same Spirit which quickened (made alive) Christ **(vs. 18)** made possible His powerful preaching through Noah, “a preacher of righteousness” **(2 Peter 2:5)**.

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To whom was the preaching done? Look at **verse 19**, which says, “preached unto the spirits in prison.” They are called spirits because they were in a disembodied state when Peter wrote; and they were in prison under restraint as wicked beings. The term “in prison” is used to denote the state or condition of those spirits which because of disobedience await condemnation at the last days. I want you to notice these passages; For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (**2 Peter 2:4**). Peter states that these rebellious angels were cast “down to hell.” The word “hell” is not gehenna, but from tartarus, the temporary waiting place of the wicked in the realm of Hades (**Luke 16:23-26**). Peter tells us that they are in “chains of darkness”, that is, they are imprisoned in darkness as if by chains. Also notice **Jude 6**; “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” Jude tells that these disobedient angels are in chains, just like Peter, “under darkness.” until when? “The judgment of the great day.”

Again, it should be renowned that Peter does not announce that these who were the objects of this preaching were in a disembodied condition and in prison when the preaching was done; such was their state when he penned this letter. The time in which such lived in the flesh, and the time when this preaching was done is plainly declared in the context of the passages.

When was the preaching done? “That aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water” (**1 Peter 3:20**). What could be clearer? These “spirits” (disembodied in prison) were once in the flesh (lived while the ark was a preparing); they were once upon a time “disobedient; (wicked persons)” “while the ark was a preparing;” and during this time Christ preached them. Christ, in the person of Noah, preached to the antediluvians during the time in which the ark was being built; and these, having rejected this preaching, died in disobedience, and were under restraint, confined, in the spirit realm when Peter penned this letter.

Like those in Noah’s day, the time of our redemption can also pass. There is no second change. For the passages which Peter penned do not say that Jesus preached the gospel with a call for the dead spirits to be saved; Jesus taught that the lost cannot “cross over” and escape their torments (**Luke 16**). “And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this (cometh judgment)” (**Hebrews 9:27**). “Now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (**2 Corinthians 6:2**). There is no hope for a second change after death!

"Dynamic Worship"

By Jonathan L. Perz

A sign advertising a local church’s worship service read “Two DYNAMIC Worship Services.” While it is not uncommon nowadays to see such words used to describe a worship service, should such even be a consideration for our worship to God?

Does God want “dynamic worship” or does He seek spiritual and true worship? The Lord directly answers this question when He says, “But the hour is coming and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (**John 4:23-24**).

“Dynamic worship” is obviously being advertised in contrast or comparison to some other kind of worship. Typically, those who desire “dynamic worship” are tired of what they consider boring, dull or “old-fashioned” worship. They want energetic, contemporary wor-

ship that they can relate to. They want exhilarating worship that is in keeping with the times. They want emotion filled worship that appeals to them. They want uplifting worship that makes them feel good. So, local churches are making changes to provide such worship for their worshipers. The problem with this is two-fold.

First, such worship is worshiper-oriented, not God-oriented. Is not our worship for God and to God? Why then are we innovating our worship to God to meet the desires of the worshiper? Should not the worshiper's concern be for the desires of God (cf. **1 Thess. 4:1**)? Are not God's ways of worship satisfying enough for us? Are not the approved methods of worship demonstrated by the first century Christians good enough for us? Are we not to imitate them (cf. **1 Cor. 11:1**)?

Second, such worship might engage a man's spirit, but it fails in regard to truth. Is not God's word truth (**John 17:17**)? Should not God's word be our authority in all spiritual matters, to include worship (cf. **Col. 3:16-17**)? Should not our worship then resemble and conform to first century worship? It can be confirmed that apostolic worship was approved worship, spiritual worship and truthful worship (cf. **Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 1:21; 11:23-27; 16:1-2; Eph. 5:19**). Can we prove that "dynamic" worship rises to that mark established by the Lord (**1 Thess. 5:21**)?

You see, we can have spiritual and truthful worship that is "dynamic." However, not all "dynamic worship" is in spirit and truth (cf. **Rom. 8:8**). The dynamics of worship are not based on externals that appeal to the flesh. The dynamics of worship are based on internals that appeal to the spirit and truth. Thus, when worshipers emphasize spirit and truth in their hearts, the dynamics will be where God expects them to be.

Most who desire "dynamic worship" would argue that their worship is in spirit and in truth. If such is true, then why not simply advertise your worship as such? Can there be any higher type of worship than true worship? *Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com*

Preaching the Truth By Richard J. Sims, Jr.

A good number of years ago a preacher went into a town where there was no New Testament church. He preached in a house of worship, then in the market place of the city. Soon the religious leaders of the city heard him and invited him to address them. They thought if his religious claims seemed meritorious to them, they would fellowship him. But to their dismay and confusion, he preached that they were wrong and that he was right: that their worship was not acceptable to the God of heaven. He preached that the church to which he belonged was the only true church of the living God.

Such a preacher! Don't you know he hurt their feelings? Evidently they were sincere. Surely he could have made a nice talk and gotten away without causing any discord! When he was finished with his sermon some mocked him, some wanted to hear him again, and some believed.

What was said in this sermon that received such a mixed reception? Here, read it for yourself:

"I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined

the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (**Acts 17:22-31-KJV**).

Now, I suppose he could have changed his sermon so that no one would have found any reason to mock, but that would have meant not preaching the resurrection of Christ. Furthermore, fewer might have been interested in hearing him again and it could be that none would have believed.

I am convinced that preaching with boldness and confidence produces Christians who are bold and confident, who make up churches that are bold and confident. Soft preaching produces soft Christians, who make up soft churches.

Brethren, I ask you also to be found "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me... that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel... that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (**Ephesians 6:18-20**).

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17