

How to Set Up a New Testament Church in your Home

**If the Church of Christ does not exist in your community, you should start now
Worshipping in your home and asking others to come meet with you. As Jesus said**

**Luke 14: 21 ... Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in
hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.**

**The Church of Christ is not a building ... the Church of Christ is the people of
Christ who have come to Christ biblically in the appointed way.**

The Church of Christ is not a denomination,

it is the one true fellowship you read about in Romans 16:16

**John 17:20-21 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe
on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, [*art*] in
me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that
thou hast sent me.**

**I Corinthians 1:10-18 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus
Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and [*that*] there be no divisions among
you; but [*that*] ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same
judgment. 11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them
[*which are of the house*] of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now
this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of
Cephas; and I of Christ. 13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were
ye baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but
Crispus and Gaius; 15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.
16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I
baptized any other. 17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel:
not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.
18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us
which are saved it is the power of God.**

The subject is division, which leads to denominations, which leads to unbelief.

**I Corinthians 3:4-6 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I [*am*] of
Apollos; are ye not carnal? 5 Who then is Paul, and who [*is*] Apollos, but
ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6 I have
planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.**

If the Church in its true form exists where you live, check them out and see if that fellowship works for you ... on the other hand if there is not a Bible believing faithful congregation in your area ...

or if you just don't fit: as an example Jesus saves all kinds of people, we have a biker with a bunch of tattoos off in east Texas and he stopped attending because he is rejected wherever he goes ... if you have stopped assembling for any reason or there is no faithful Church of Christ in your area ... you certainly do not want to join yourself to false teachers ... then you have the responsibility to begin worshiping God properly yourself and thereby establishing the Church in your home

Jesus did not commission us to go into all the world and build gothic cathedrals or church buildings ...

Most Congregations of the Churches of Christ are small country Churches with little or no staff and part-time preachers or Elders who do the preaching and teaching.

Church buildings are a handy convenience for some medium to large congregations

The building is an absolute necessity for large and big "mega-churches" ...

But that is not who we are reaching out to as we follow the Great Commission with our 21 World Wide Radio broadcasts and our 6 national broadcasts, as we follow the Great Commission: Jesus said cf:

Mark 16:15-16 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

The vast majority of people we reach with our World Wide Radio broadcasts are not found in affluent America but rather in Africa, India, China and other 3rd world countries and it is to these great masses we primarily direct this lesson ...

So do as Jesus said: bring in to your home, house, hut, shack, tent or igloo "the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." Ask such people, they'll come. All people should worship God, the poor, maimed, halt and the blind need God

Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some [*is*]; but exhorting [*one another*]: ...

You must approach God reverently:

Hebrews 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

Reverence here is from “aidos” having the idea of downcast, bashfulness, modesty towards God, awe, shamefacedness

James 4:7-10 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse [*your*] hands, [*ye*] sinners; and purify [*your*] hearts, [*ye*] double minded. 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and [*your*] joy to heaviness. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up

Worship is not a light show rock and roll wild party, worship is reverently coming before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords not our buddy or pal ...

When God revealed Himself no one jumped around, nor were they entertained ... the reaction of everyone was reverence fear and awe ... when people realized they were in the presence of God they do not run and grab center stage and turn the spotlight on themselves but rather they turn the spotlight on God.

When people realize they are in the presence of God they do not turn the volume up they get reverently quiet ... such as when we take the Lord's Supper ... When people realize who God is, they tremble and fall prostrate before Him.

Genesis 17:1-3 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I [*am*] the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. 2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. 3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, 4 As for me, behold, my covenant [*is*] with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations

Isaiah 6: 1-6 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another,

and said, Holy, holy, holy, [*is*] the LORD of hosts: the whole earth [*is*] full of his glory. 4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 Then said I, Woe [*is*] me! for I am undone; because I [*am*] a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts

Daniel 10:7-9 And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. 8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. 9 Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

You might say: Preacher “that’s the God of the Old Testament ...

Jesus is all peace and love” O REALLY ? So, Jesus is a different Lord ?

Have you forgotten about the about the apostle John who ate the Last Supper leaning on Jesus’ breast like a “bosom buddy”? That’s pretty close and familiar:

John 13:23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

That same disciple John “fell at his feet as dead” when he saw the exhaled resurrected Christ.

Revelation 1:17-18 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: 18 I [*am*] he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

John 4:23-24 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God [*is*] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [*him*] in spirit and in truth.

Acts 2:37-47 Now when they heard [*this*], they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men [*and*] brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all

that are afar off, [*even*] as many as the Lord our God shall call. 40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. 41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added [*unto them*] about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all [*men*], as every man had need. 46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

On one hand the Church of Christ is a sleeping giant, there are almost no limits on its potential to again conquer the World for Jesus Christ and this little congregation proves the fact that God can do anything with absolutely nothing cf:

I Corinthians 1:26-27 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, [*are called*]: 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen

On the other hand, the American Church of Christ is much like the passengers in first class on the Titanic when: far below decks water was just beginning to flood in to the steorage compartments. ...

Today all still looks fabulous among the affluent and the high and mighty as they brag about changing Churches of Christ ... the band continues to play with the spellbinding light show and dazzling entertainment at the enormous Hills ...

What a Legacy ... they clap to their hands to their hearts content as they sing ...

Before the judgment day who will ever remembers the one lone brother, a true saint that they continue to dis-fellowship because he's got that "old time religion" and he dared to stand against their change movement ...

On the Titanic the affluent in first class danced, chatted and partied down never dreaming the waiters were delivering their last meal.

It was the same before the fall of the Roman Empire, things looked very good and prosperous in Rome when England could no longer be held and the Roman Legions were withdrawing back to the European continent.

Today in Bible colleges they rejoice in their innovations as they dabble in the affairs of the brotherhood haply proclaiming themselves to be “professors” and “post-modern, mystic, pantheists haply situated in the Churches of Christ” Shame on you Randy ... this question would I ask you “professor” what exactly does it take to get a Twiddle DD today ... how many ungodly souls have you personally disciplined and led to Christ ... or have you just preyed upon the unsuspecting children ... asleep parents have entrusted to your care for a Godly education.

Jeremiah 6:16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where [*is*] the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk [*therein*].

Isaiah 8:20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, [*it is*] because [*there is*] no light in them.

II Timothy 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also

Are we seeing a glimpse of our future when we look at the deserted, beautiful, great gothic Protestant and Catholic cathedrals in Europe? Magnificent beautiful buildings with no people, most deserted, some in decay and falling down in ruin.

Others of the more grand and opulent are tourist traps to be visited like museums, viewed but no longer used. The Church loses its power and vitality when its people view the Church as a building rather than an Greek Word ek-klessia a called out group fellowship of brethren. This is the summary of original primitive worship:

Acts 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

There is great diversity in today's Churches of Christ. Some mega congregations are extremely rich and powerful with many members; So was the Church of the Laodiceans cf:

Revelation 3:14-19 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would

thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and [*thaf*] the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

But on the other hand a great many are struggling congregations just getting by who hire a preacher and his staff ... pay the note on the building ... and the words evangelism world missions and missionaries are forgotten or ignored ...

A brother let's call him "Buzzy" sent me a letter saying I want every penny of my money spent on World Wide Preaching ...

Most Churches of Christ are small simple country congregations who have part time preachers or no preachers ... If you can't afford a preacher contact us and we will send you free of charge DVD's to play at your assembly and you can become one of our many satellite autonomous independent congregations.

The Priesthood of the Believer

Each and every one of you listening can practice the first century biblical teaching of the priesthood of the believers cf:

I Peter 2:5-9 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Ye also, as living stones ... This is a figure of speech for the spiritual temple of God. Just as Christ is the living stone, so also are the Christians. And why "living"? Because the Lord is the living One, and the life-giving One, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

We as members of Christ's spiritual body, are called Christians and we partake of the same nature as their Lord. We too are "living stones," endowed with a measure of the Spirit which shall raise us up from the dead at the last day.

Are built up a spiritual house ... It is important to note that house here bears the idea of a temple. Jesus himself used the word in that same sense when he declared, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthew 23:38).

In this statement, Peter gave the same teaching that Paul gave, who said, "Ye are a temple of God" (1 Corinthians 3:16f), and "being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 3:20)

I Peter 2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. (cf: Isaiah 28:16 & Ephesians 2:19-22)

Behold I lay in Zion ... Zion is the poetic name for Jerusalem; Isaiah prophecy is that: The laying of this precious cornerstone in Zion for a foundation signifies that the Church of Christ, the new temple of God, was to begin in Jerusalem just as it did on Pentecost in 30AD .

A chief corner stone ... It was the stone at the extremity of the angle which controls the design of the building in this case the temple. In the church, Christ is both the foundation stone (1 Corinthians 3:11) and the cornerstone.

Back to the clause in verse 6 "And he that believeth on him shall not be confounded or put to shame ... the view here is the eternal shame which attaches to the Jewish nation for the rejection of the Messiah, the shame being: the very Christ whom they contemptuously rejected was chosen by God to be the head of the new Israel; and the Father gave him "a name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9). On the other hand, steadfastness, fidelity to Christ and being faithful brings honor and glory to the believer, since he partakes of the honor and glory of Christ Himself.

I Peter 2:7 Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, (cf: Psalm 118:22, Matthew 21:42 & Acts 4:11).

The stone which the builders disallowed or rejected, the same is made the head of the corner ... It should be pointed out that this famous line is founded upon an actual event. In the building of Solomon's temple, the first stone that came down from the quarry was very remarkably shaped, having been marked and cut at the quarry. The builders of the temple did not know what to do with it, and it was dragged to a place apart and became finally hidden by debris and rubbish. "It was afterward found to be that on which the completeness of the structure depended, the chief corner stone where the two walls met and were bonded together

I Peter 2:8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. (cf: Isaiah 8:13-17 & Romans 9:33)

A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence ... Peter putting these two passages from the Psalms and Isaiah together, is exactly as Paul did in Romans.

Peter was present no doubt and heard the Lord Jesus Christ himself put the two passages together in exactly the same manner cf:

Luke 20:17-18 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? 18 Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Therefore, neither Peter nor Paul was dependent upon the other, their teachings, as in the case of all the sacred writers, goes back to Christ himself, the fountain source of the entire New Testament.

I Peter 2:9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

But ye *are* a chosen generation ... at the very right time in history Christ came ...

Galatians 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

I Peter 2:9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

“ ... a royal priesthood ...” Priests teach, pray and offer sacrifice for the people

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [*which is*] your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [*is*] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

“ ... an holy nation, Christ established a government and a Holy Nation when He established His Church for the prophet says Cf:

Isaiah 9:6-7 6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of [*his*] government and peace [*there shall be*] no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

a peculiar people ...” anyone who is in Christ is a new creature and can’t help being peculiar in comparison to what they use to be like.

Here are repeated one after another all of the glorious titles which once belonged exclusively to the old Israel, the Hebrews, the children of Abraham; but here Peter trumpeted the bestowal of all those titles upon the new Israel, now no longer restricted to those of Abrahamic descent, but available to Jew and Gentile alike "in Christ Jesus."

In Christ, the Law of Moses ended; and the gospel began.

In Christ, the Old Testament culminated; and the New Testament began.

In Christ, all history split into B.C. and A.D.

In Christ, the wicked find their doom, and the saints find their salvation.

In Christ, the old Israel perished, and the new Israel the Church of Christ began.

In Christ, the infinite past and the infinite future met.

In Christ, God and humanity came together.

In Christ, God's humiliation and man's glory united.

In Christ, the destiny of every man is turns ... which way do you choose to go?

Those on the right entering his joy forever, and those on the left departing from his presence forever cf: Matthew 25:31ff

Appeal to our Radio Audience Set Up a New Testament Church in your own Home

We have 21 International Radio broadcasts and 6 National broadcasts blanketing the entire world’s population 7 times each Sunday. Our internet website counter proves we have helped establish over eight Thousands internet House churches, or “Churches of Christ” in the “homes of brethren in the United States, and World Wide. Each week they assemble together and get their preaching and advanced bible study by our extensive internet library.

If we have that many on the internet ... let your mind wander and imagine how many there are this Lord’s day assembling around radios all over the world listing to our 21 international and six national broadcasts.

We know there are 1 million Radios with hand turn generators in Africa in little villages who can now only receive our station's signal and broadcast because Gene Scott bought them before he crooked ...

Acts 2:46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

House to house ... indicates that there had been no abolition of private property,

Some are in China, where brethren are not yet free to worship as they please. Some congregations are in Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and other nations under the ISIS and the Moslem boot of oppression. These brethren face penalty of death for their faith or even if their singing is overheard. Often they are called "Family Churches". This term is used to describe an independent assembly of Christians who gather in a home.

Sometimes this occurs because the group is small, and a home is the most appropriate place to gather. Sometimes it is because the group is a member of an underground Church of Christ dedicated to the simple restoration of original primitive Christianity. These simple brethren are otherwise banned from meeting, as in China, North Korea and all the Islamic states.

House churches was one of the patterns in the first century especially after persecution by the Jews in the first century and then the persecution by the Roman Government developed under Nero in 64 AD.

House Churches were not the exclusive primitive model because the brethren also meet in the Temple beside houses to house ... and in one case a school cf:

Acts 5:19-20 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, 5:20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

... the angel of the Lord ... This is another of the supernatural wonders that attended the inception of Christianity. In the very nature of things, the new faith could never have been established without the providence of God.

... all the words of this Life ... This means all the words relative to the eternal life in Jesus Christ. A similar meaning is in

John 6:68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

Acts 5:42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

In the Temple they evangelized and brought into fellowship brethren in their houses.

Acts 19:8-10 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

If Paul established a church in Ephesus by "reasoning and persuading concerning the kingdom of God," then what must be the relationship of the kingdom of God and the church? There is only one conclusion, and that is that the kingdom of God and the church are one and the same.

Paul taught in one school house or building cf:

Acts 19:9 But when some were hardened, and believed not, but spoke evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. 19:10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Paul previously had wanted to preach in Asia but was forbidden (Acts 16:6); now it was different, and tremendous success attended his efforts.

In the first century most people in the cosmopolitan Roman empire lived in 3 to 5 story apartments above an "in-sul-ae" which were small street front shops, surrounding a center courtyard many of which made up a city block.

The rich lived in "dom-as" houses which were again built around a center courtyard or atrium which acted as a reception and living area.

Breakfast and lunch were generally light meals purchased at street front shops which were the fast food or McDonald's of the first few centuries AD.

Dinner was the main meal which was served at a tri-clin-ium which was 3 couches arranged around a square table.

Christians typically met in homes, because of persecution until the Edict of Milan in 313 AD. Rome did not allow the erection of public church buildings. Clement of Alexandria, an early church father, wrote of worshipping in a house. Peter's house in Capernaum was converted into a house Church in the 1ST century

The Dura-Europos church, was a private house in Dura-Europos in Syria. This Church was excavated in the 1930s and was found to be used as a Christian meeting place in AD 232, with one small room serving as a baptistry.

At many points throughout history up till today, various Christian groups worshipped in homes, often due to persecution by the state church or the civil government.

The Assembly of Christians to Worship is clearly taught in Scripture cf:

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

And there was a bunch of them, 3,000 converted on Pentecost in Acts 2 and 5,000 who were converted to Christ in Acts 3 ...

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

This verse is a recurring theme in Hebrews. Again and again, Hebrews stresses the maintenance of an enthusiastic morale in the hearts of the faithful. The apostles taught that if one member of the body suffers, or is honored, all the others are likewise affected (1 Corinthians 12:26ff).

10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

... the assembling of ourselves together ... is a reference to the Lord's day worship of Christians, the regular Sunday services of congregations of believers. This was set in motion by the apostles, honored by disciples in all ages, and fully recognized as a sacred obligation for all Christians. The Hebrew writer made this a formal commandment regarding our worship or church attendance. The size of the group does not matter. Prior to Hebrews faithful and regular church attendance was a distinctive characteristic of the original faith in Christ.

Jesus and the Disciples meet in the Upper Room

Mark 14:15 And he will show you a large upper room furnished *and* prepared: there make ready for us.

These were preparations necessary to the observance of the feast.

Luke 22:12 And he shall show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

Acts 1:13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother* of James.

The Apostles continued to meet in that upper room and homes cf:

Acts 2:46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

Acts 12:12-14 And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

... where many were gathered ... This cannot mean that the entire Jerusalem church were gathered in a single residence, but that the place mentioned was one among many such gatherings throughout the city.

Acts 12:13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

The scene that emerges here is one of affluence, if not wealth. Mary's was a house large enough to contain a gathering for prayer meeting, having a courtyard and a gate attended by a servant.

Acts 12:14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

It is of interest that class distinctions did not exist in the primitive church. This serving girl was as happy to see Peter and, in her joy, she forgot to open the gate.

Acts 20:7 And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. **20:8** And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

Upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread ... This emphatically states the purpose of faithful Christian assemblies on Sundays throughout history, that purpose being for the observance of the Lord's supper.

Today 99% of "Christians" assemble on Sunday or "the first day of the week" but they do not do what the original Church did ... break bread ... partake of the Lord's Supper.

Acts 21:8-10 And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was *one* of the seven; and abode with him. **21:9** And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. **21:10** And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

Acts 28:16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was allowed to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

Acts 28:30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, **28:31** Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

Two whole years ... Luke had just revealed that no charges of any kind had been received from Judaea. Any case before the emperor which was not prosecuted in two years was judged to be defaulted, this indicates an air of expectancy that the release might come any day.

His own hired house ... we see Paul's financial ability to hire a house. Luke may very well have been wealthy; or Paul himself, might have inherited wealth. The extreme and unusual courtesy extended to Paul could not have come about except, through the favorable report from the governor Festus.

Received all that came in unto him ... Paul preached to all comers. Soon there were "saints in Caesar's household." The Jews intended to stop Paul's preaching,

keeping him imprisoned two years without charges, his imprisonment actually helped the gospel.

Preaching the kingdom of God ... This is a synonym for Christianity. Many New Testament passages use "church" and "kingdom" interchangeably

With all confidence (or boldness), no man forbidding him. Safe from any efforts to assassinate him, Paul preached fearlessly and boldly to all who came near; and, in addition to those who came to him, he had a new prospect every three hours, every time the guard was changed.

This brings us to the end of this magnificent sacred history. "The narrative ends as it does, because it has caught up with history, and at the moment there was nothing more to report."

Romans 16:3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: 16:4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles 16:5 Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house. Salute my well beloved Ep-a'ene-tus, who is the first fruits of Achaia unto Christ.

It is likely that Ep-aenet-us was converted by Prisca and Aquila, and that for this reason his name is mentioned here after their names. It is even surmised that he was a tentmaker, worked in Aquila's shop, and thus came to Rome with this couple. Paul would thus know him intimately, and "my beloved" would fit exactly.

I Corinthians 16:19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

And the church that is in their house ... they were of sufficient wealth and generosity to provide a meeting place for Christians in their residence, a thing they did both in Rome and at Ephesus.

Colossians 4:15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

Philemon 1:2 And to *our* beloved Apph-ia, and Arch-ippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in thy house:

The church in their house was one of many household churches so characteristic of the apostolic age of the church.

II John 1:10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed:

Today, no less than when John wrote, there are false religious teachers who should be treated exactly as John recommended.

There were also Large Group Public Meetings:

Acts 20:20 *And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,

From house to house ... This phase of the Christian ministry is despised by some, even some churches, who rank their "personal worker" rather low on their ecclesiastical totem poles

So there is obviously no one perfect model for all situations except the Model Jesus gave us that size and place does not matter cf:

Matthew 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

This is one of God's most precious promises. Providential care on the part of God for his church is always available. The smallness of the church or its relative insignificance in the community is not a determining factor in God's concern for its peace and welfare. Two or three faithful disciples are enough to claim the Father's blessing.

I Corinthians 14:16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understands not what thou sayest?

The 5 Fold Worship of the Church **Worshiping God is our duty: cf:**

John 4:23-24 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. **4:24** God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

Lord's Supper:

Acts 20:7 And upon the first [*day*] of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

Is an solemn act of worship in memory of the sacrifice of Christ in which we partake each and every Lord's Day or Sunday (first day of the week Acts 20:7). The purpose of the Lord's Supper is described by Christ:

The original Passover was but a shadow of the perfect sacrifice to come in which the blood of the lamb was placed on the door posts and lintils of their houses, Christ would have us figuratively put the blood of the Lamb on the door posts and lintils of our lives ...

Exodus 12:1-15 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2 This month [*shall be*] unto you the beginning of months: it [*shall be*] the first month of the year to you. 3 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth [*day*] of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of [*their*] fathers, a lamb for an house: 4 And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take [*it*] according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take [*it*] out from the sheep, or from the goats: 6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. 7 And they shall take of the blood, and strike [*it*] on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. 8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; [*and*] with bitter [*herbs*] they shall eat it. 9 Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast [*with*] fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. 10 And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. 11 And thus shall ye eat it; [*with*] your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it [*is*] the LORD'S passover. 12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I [*am*] the LORD. 13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye [*are*]: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy [*you*], when I smite the land of Egypt. 14 And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. 15 Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.

Exodus 12:22-27 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip [*it*] in the blood that [*is*] in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that [*is*] in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. 23 For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite [*you*]. 24 And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. 25 And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. 26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? 27 That ye shall say, It [*is*] the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

Exodus 12:29-30 And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that [*was*] in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. 30 And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for [*there was*] not a house where [*there was*] not one dead.

Matthew 26:17-30 Now the first [*day*] of the [*feast of*] unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? 18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. 19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. 20 Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. 21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. 22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? 23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth [*his*] hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. 24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. 25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said. 26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed [*it*], and brake [*it*], and gave [*it*] to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave [*it*] to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. 30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Mark 14:15-26 And he will shew you a large upper room furnished [*and*] prepared: there make ready for us. 16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. 17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. 18 And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me. 19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, [*/s*] it I? and another [*said,*][*/s*] it I? 20 And he answered and said unto them, [*/t is*] one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish. 21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born. 22 And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake [*/t*], and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. 23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave [*/t*] to them: and they all drank of it. 24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. 25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God. 26 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

I Corinthians 11:23-32 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the [*same*] night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake [*/t*], and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.^s 25 After the same manner also [*he took*] the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink [*/t*], in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink [*this*] cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of [*that*] bread, and drink of [*that*] cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many [*are*] weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Preaching:

Mark 16:15-16 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

I Corinthians 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

THE GLORY OF THE CROSS

All of the value judgments of people were nailed to the cross of Christ. People glorify the arrogant, proud, mighty and successful, but Christ was patient, meek, humble and submissive. A crucified Saviour was simply beyond the boundaries of human imagination.

II Timothy 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

The things which thou hast heard ...

This expression undoubtedly refers to the entire series of sermons and lessons which the disciple had heard from the mouth of his teacher during all their association from the day when they first met.

Among many witnesses ...

This is not a reference to the people who heard Timothy confess Christ, nor to the witnesses of his being ordained to the ministry (in any exclusive sense), but it is a reference to all the many thousands encountered upon the mission fields where Paul and Timothy had proclaimed the gospel.

II Timothy 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned [*them*];

It is true of all men who have the good fortune to come from godly homes, that the teaching and example of Christian parents is a priceless advantage; but such parents always teach their children that the authority is not in themselves but in the word of the Lord.

Still, there was powerful motivation for Timothy in that three generations of his family had accepted Scriptural authority, consenting to walk in the light of it; and in this probably lies the reason for Paul's appeal here.

II Timothy 4:5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

Fulfill thy ministry ...

Spain observed that the word "fulfill" here means "the same as the word Paul used in 2 Tim. 4:17 where Paul speaks of proclaiming the word FULLY." To fulfill one's ministry is to be faithful and loyal to all of its obligations, not to stint the service, nor abridge the message, nor to shrink from giving the full measure of fidelity and devotion.

Singing:

Matt. 26:30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

The singing of a hymn is significant. Singing, and not instrumental music, was always associated with Christ and the apostles. The presumption with which people have loaded the worship of Christ with their own devices is reprehensible. The New Testament affords no example of such innovations, but repeated references to singing are recorded (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19,; 5:19,).

I Cor. 14:15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

What is it then? ...

McGarvey understood this is idiomatic for "What is the conclusion of the argument?" ⁶⁷ We might state the argument as this: "Therefore, let's have no more of this tongue business in the songs and prayers; let everything be done in a language everybody can understand."

Eph. 5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

Singing ...

The meaning of this term is to produce music vocally; and regardless of ancient meanings attributed to the word [Greek: psallo], rendered "making melody" used here in conjunction with it, no translator has ever rendered this verb any other way. God's command for Christians is that they should sing, and if playing instruments of music is an acceptable part of divine worship, it is difficult to understand why it would not have been so stated in this place. Arguments from the ancient meaning of [Greek: psallo] are, as F. F. Bruce declared, "irrelevant to the question of instrumental music, one way or the other."

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs ...

It would appear that "spiritual" in this verse is the modifier of all that may be properly used in Christian assemblies. By their nature of being in the Old Testament, psalms are surely spiritual, and "hymns" are so by definition; but, as for any song so used, it must likewise be spiritual. Significantly not even all singing is permissible in Christian worship.

What is the bearing of this passage on the use of instrumental music in Christian worship? The answer is this: By the apostolical injunction "to sing," thus commanding a special kind of music, all other kinds are eliminated.

Heb. 2:12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

A choice of words by the author of Hebrews gives grounds for a very significant deduction, as pointed out by Bruce:

Our author uses the word [Greek: ekklesia] for congregation (the Hebrew of Psa. 22:22 has [qahal]). The employment of this word is a synonymous parallelism with "brethren" in a Christian context indicates that those whom the Son of God is pleased to call his brethren are the members of his church.

The dramatic meaning of this will not be lost in the good and honest heart.

James 5:13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms

Any cheerful? ... let him sing praise ...

Singing, from the earliest New Testament times, was used by the church for the purpose of sanctifying times of emotion, whether joyful or sorrowful. As Harper pointed out, "Christian singing is supposed to be the medium of the light and joyful as well as more serious sentiments."

Notice in the old worship in the Temple the Jews played instruments of music until the sacrifice and after the sacrifice they sang only. The same was true in history. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us cf.

I Corinthians 5:7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

The same was true in the original Church, they sang only and instruments of music were not introduced into the Church until Bonafice of Rome did so after 600 AD in the Catholic Church.

II Chronicles 29:25-30 And he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for [so was] the commandment of the LORD by his prophets. 26 And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. 27 And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering

began, the song of the LORD began [*also*] with the trumpets, and with the instruments [*ordained*] by David king of Israel. 28 And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: [*and*] all [*this continued*] until the burnt offering was finished. 29 And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped. 30 Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.

For the commandment was of Jehovah by his prophets

(2 Chronicles 29:25). This is the passage in the O.T. which is supposed to justify the use of mechanical instruments of music in the ancient worship of the Jews; but it should be observed that the commandment which is here said to have come from God is not specifically identified in this key sentence; and the Syriac and Arabic versions in this place do not support what is written here. Both those versions make the commandment which came of God through his prophets applicable exclusively to the order that the Levites should praise God; And the Hebrew text certainly supports such a rendition.^{F8} Note that there is a distinction made in this very passage between the instruments of David (2 Chronicles 29:26) and the song of Jehovah (2 Chronicles 29:27).

The importance of this is emphasized by the apparent contradiction which the ASV and other current versions make in this passage with the prophet Amos. The passage has no bearing whatever upon the question of the use of such instruments in Christian worship; but an investigation of it is important because the Word of God does not contradict itself; and if this passage stands as it appears here, what about the passages in Amos? This writer holds the passages in Amos to be correct, and this one to be mistranslated here.

The position which we have taken on this is very strongly supported by the fact that the Orthodox Hebrew religion has never allowed instruments of music in their worship; and, presumably, they know the Hebrew a lot better than modern critics.

Praying:

Acts 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Luke 11:1-13 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. 2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. 3 Give us day by day our daily bread. 4 And

forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. 5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? 7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. 8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. 9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. 10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if [*he ask*] a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? 12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall [*your*] heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him

He was praying ...

Prayer was a characteristic habit of the Lord Jesus Christ; and no prayerless person has any kinship whatever with the Saviour. "That man is a brute, a monster, who never prays, never gives glory to his Maker, nor owns his dependence upon him."

Lord, teach us to pray ...

"This itself is a good prayer, and a very needful one; for it is a hard thing to pray well."

Father ...

Harrison commented that:

(Here) Jesus uses a child's word for Father, which appears also in Rom. 8:15. It is used by modern Hebrews within the family circle, and implies familiarity based on love.

Hallowed be thy name ...

The first concern in every prayer should be the honor and glory of God.

Thy kingdom come ...

Later in this same chapter, Jesus said, "Then is the kingdom of God come upon you" (Luke 11:20); and from this it is mandatory to see a double meaning in "come." There was a sense in which the kingdom had already "come upon" the people of that day; and yet this petition has respect to something future.

Our daily bread ...

This indicates that basic necessities alone are proper objects of petition from the Father. This prayer shows that the Christian should be content with a simple life-style.

Forgive us our sins ...

presupposes that all Christians shall be continually guilty of falling short of God's will, a fact which some find hard to admit. As an example of this, Childer's explained the popularity of Matthew's account of the Lord's prayer by the reference to his use of "debts" instead of "sins," saying, "We who believe strongly that Christians do not commit sins and remain Christians sometimes avoid this form of the prayer!"

LESSONS FROM THE PRAYER

- 1. Prayers should be short.**
- 2. They should be concerned first with the honor and glory of God.**
- 3. Human needs are basically three: (a) bread (with all related things included), (b) forgiveness, and (c) deliverance from temptation.**
- 4. As indicated by the word "Father," this is a prayer to be prayed by members of God's family.**
- 5. Long, bombastic prayers and vain repetitions are sinful.**
- 6. This teaches that even Christians are presumed to be, in a sense, sinful, that is, not totally free of wrongdoing.**
- 7. The very highest priority belongs to God's kingdom.**
- 8. Temptation should be as much dreaded and as carefully avoided as sin itself.**
- 9. If Christians hope to be forgiven, they must also forgive.**

Giving:

I Corinthians 16:1-2 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. **16:2** Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

The proposed beneficiaries of this collection were the poor Christians in Jerusalem; and Paul had busied himself extensively in the advocacy and promotion of this gathering of funds for their relief.

II Corinthaiana 9:6-9 But this / say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. **9:7** Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. **9:8** And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work: **9:9** (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

Giving as an exhibition of trust in God's promise to bless the giver is as exalted as any other motive taught in the word of God.

WHY GIVE?

GOD OWNS THE WORLD AND EVERYTHING IN IT.

ALL PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY CHRISTIANS, ARE THEMSELVES THE PROPERTY OF GOD.

ALL PEOPLE ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD AS STEWARDS OF HIS WEALTH.

THE PROPER MOTIVATION IN GIVING IS DETERMINATIVE. The great gift of Ananias and Sapphira was rejected because it was motivated by selfishness; and the gift of the widow's mites, though exceedingly small, was praised by Jesus because of her true devotion.

GOD HIMSELF IS A MOTIVE. He so loved the world that "he gave" (John 3:16)

CHRIST IS A MOTIVE. "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift."

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS A MOTIVE. The church is truly the bride of Christ (Revelation 21:9), the spiritual body of the Redeemer himself (Ephesians 1:22,23); and what is done to the church is done to Christ.

THE WORLD IS ANOTHER MOTIVE. All of the sin, pain and sorrow; all of the defeat, doubt and despair; and all of the sad groanings of miserable humanity are reasons why people should give.

I MYSELF AM A MOTIVE. Back in 2 Cor. 8:14, Paul warned the Corinthians that there could come a time when their "want" might require the generous help of others; and every Christian should take this possibility seriously.

GIFTS TO CHRIST ARE SAVED; ALL ELSE IS LOST. People need to be reminded that giving to the church is giving to Christ. The glory and praise of men can be received by giving to other things, but the New Testament commands people to "give glory to God in the church" (Ephesians 3:21). Some who give vast sums to civic and social organizations and to political and fraternal orders, while neglecting the church, should lay this to heart.

PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD, A MOTIVE. "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"

PEOPLE LOVE CHEERFUL GIVERS. In this very verse, Paul made the fact of God's loving a cheerful giver a means of motivating the Corinthians.

"GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER." Has there ever been a human being who could decide that he does not wish to be loved of God?

Malachi 3:7-12 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept *them*. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 3:9 Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation. 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall* not *be room* enough *to receive it*. 3:11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your

sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. 3:12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

Wherein shall we return.?

This is the same old Pharisaical spirit as in Mal. 1:6, etc., throughout the prophecy. They do not acknowledge their offense; they consider that they are righteous and need no repentance.

CONCERNING THE TITHE

God had commanded it to be given, not because God needed to receive it, but because men needed to pay it.

The curse...

Again, note the definite article. It is indicative of the end of relationship with God. It is that which followed the final and judicial hardening visited by God upon incorrigible sinners.

There shall not be room enough to receive it...

This carries the meaning that, God's gifts will overflow the capacity of his children to receive them.

“The notable thing about this entire description of the manifestation of God's favor is that the only blessings mentioned are of a material character.”^{F25} It would seem that God decided to meet the people on their own level. Since they do not appreciate anything except material prosperity, that also would be revealed to them as a blessing from God and from God only. Let them return to God, and he would bestow upon them material prosperity.

The question of God's giving material blessings to Christians in the present times is also related to what is revealed here. Although, the blessings of the New Testament include primarily the spiritual and holy blessings of a renewed fellowship with God, material blessings are also positively included.

This is a summary of promises of blessing, showing that God's blessing would include everything necessary for a wholesome and happy environment of the people of God, provided only, that they would respond to his love by obeying his commandments, honoring his name, and giving to him their praise, thanksgiving and offerings as he had commanded them.

Isa. 62:1-4 has a description of such times:

"The nations shall see thy righteousness ... thou shalt be a crown of beauty in the land of Jehovah ... thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken ... nor Desolate: but thou shalt be called My-delight-is-in-her, and thy land, Beulah."

By no imaginative accommodation may such promises be applied to fleshly Israel in the land of Palestine. What is surely in view here is the righteousness and peace of the new covenant people who will come to the foreground in the New Testament. The certainty of this lies in this very passage from Isaiah which also contains the prophecy of the "new name," which can be none other than the name Christian (Isaiah 62:2).

Sources: KJV, theWord.com, Coffman's, McGarvey & B W Johnson, Commentaries