

EASY AS ABC

(Deut. 30:11-20)

Introduction:

1. The word that God has given us is not “too mysterious” for us, nor is it “too far off”. We have it from God that we may do it. The problem is when our “heart turns away” so that we do not hear (read = WILL not hear) and are “drawn away to worship other gods and serve them”.
2. It is a truism = the more things change, the more they stay the same. Our world looks very different than the one in the days of Moses, and yet religiously very little has changed.
3. Let us consider the music of the Christian System/Dispensation. So much confusion and so much disobedience, and yet the command of God is easy as ABC.

Discussion:

I. A is for Authority.

- A. God alone has all authority and He has given it to His Son (Matt. 28:18; 1 Tim. 6:15; 1 Cor. 15:25-27).
- B. Thus, God alone has the authority to determine how He will be worshipped.
 1. Worship = homage or reverence paid to a deity-Oxford Concise Dictionary.
 2. Worship = *proskuneo* = literally to “dog before”; *to prostrate oneself*; *to kiss the hand toward*-Thayer.
 3. Even the Old Testament word halleluiah = “shine light” upon “Yahweh”.
 4. Worship is all about the one being worshipped not about the worshipper. When it is about the worshipper it becomes self-worship, or as the Bible puts it “vain worship” (Matt. 15:8, 9; Is. 29:13).

II. B is for Beatitude.

- A. One must have the right heart in order to worship God in the right manner (John 4:24; Matt. 5:3-9; cp. v5 and 1 Cor. 14:32).
- B. We worship God according to His word not our likes or dislikes. The true heart desires nothing but to please God with obedient fulfillment of God’s will (John 4:23; 1 Pet. 5:5-7; Is. 57:15; Mic. 6:8).

III. C is for Command.

- A. God has always commanded the worship that He demands from His people (2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3).
- B. Eph. 5:19 = (Speaking to one another) (in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs) (singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord).
- C. Col. 3:17 = (teaching and admonishing one another) (in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs) (singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord).
- D. The command to God’s people in the New Testament is to sing from the heart to one another songs that will teach and admonish one another, and do all of this to the Lord.

IV. D is for Dispensation.

- A. There are two main categories of God’s laws: Moral (tied to God’s nature and thus unchangeable) and Positive (tied to God’s commands and thus changeable). How God will be worshipped is tied to God’s commands and has changed from dispensation to dispensation.
- B. God was worshipped in the patriarchal system differently than in the Mosaic or Christian; but always per His exact commands (Num. 10:1-3, 8; 1 Chron. 28:11-13, 19; Neh. 12:24, 31-36, 45, 46).
- C. The use of mechanical instruments of music and choirs were both aspects of the Old Law which has been done away with (Matt. 5:17, 18; Eph. 2:14-16).

V. E is for Example.

- A. Does God care if those who worship Him deviate from His word (Lev. 10:1-3)?
- B. Is it okay to violate God’s word if our heart is in the right place (2 Sam. 6:1-9)?

- C. The only examples in the New Testament are of assemblies of Christians singing to one another unaccompanied (Matt. 26:30; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9 = Ps. 18:49; 1 Cor. 14:15, 26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:17; Heb. 2:12 = Ps. 22:22; Jas. 5:13).
- D. What about Rev. 5:9; 14:3; 15:3? They speak of a vision John had of heaven. What the dead do in the third heaven is not a part of the Christian Dispensation; and more than likely figurative.

Conclusion:

- 1. God has given us His word, the question (as always) is will we apply ourselves to understand it; and ultimately will we obey it. Or, will we turn away to worship/serve other gods?
- 2. It starts with the heart. God is looking for those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23, 24).
- 3. Invitation.

MORE ON “EASY AS ABC”

- 1. Arguments used to justify the introduction of mechanical instruments of music into the worship of the church:
 - A. They used mechanical instruments in the Old Testament.
 - 1. There was also a levitical priesthood, animal sacrifices, mandatory tithing, etc. Do you want to keep that as well (Jas. 2:10; Heb. 10:26, 27)?
 - 2. That is true, but we are not under the Old Testament but the New Testament (Heb. 7:12; 8:7-13; Gal. 3:19-29).
 - B. It just makes the singing better, or helps us to sing.
 - 1. Makes the singing better for whom?
 - 2. Offering worship and presenting ourselves as living sacrifices is not about making things easier for us. If I find the unleavened bread too dry can I add some peanut butter and jelly to help me partake of the bread, and then some milk? Why not some stew with a chunk of unleavened bread to dip in the stew? That is how they might have eaten their meals back then (1 Cor. 11:20-34).
 - 3. Need to understand the rules concerning general commands and specific commands.
 - a. General commands allow all expedients that allow us to obey the command (cups, dishes, servers, song books, pitch pipes, song leader, pulpit, microphone, Bible classes, Bible class materials, et al).
 - b. Specific commands prohibit all other possible actions. We have been commanded to sing from the heart to one another words that teach and admonish one another. This would prohibit playing instruments, dancing, crowd surfing, et al.
 - C. It doesn't matter what we do, God will be pleased if we do it from the heart. Tell that to Nadab, Abihu, and Uzzah. Also, tell it to the church in Corinth that was chastised for the way they were partaking of the Lord's Supper and the way they were utilizing their miraculous spiritual gifts.
 - D. Consider again the fullness of Acts 2:41-47 (note Heb. 13:15 commentary on the praise we are to offer God) and the cautionary statements of Ex. 16:4 and Deut. 13:1-3 and 2 Thess. 2:11, 12.