

CHURCH: WHY BOTHER? (2)

Joe Slater

Last week we saw that we should “bother” with church because God is worthy of our worship. Here are some more good reasons:

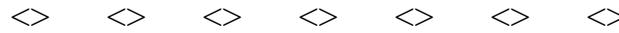
It is beneficial for you. God’s worthiness is only one side of the coin. “Bothering” with church also benefits you personally. By nature, we are beings who worship. Every known culture, ancient or modern, has some type of religion. In our ignorance, we may worship images of wood or stone (Acts 17:30). In our wickedness, we may worship pleasure (Philippians 3:19). In our stubbornness, we may even worship ourselves (2 Timothy 3:2). But since we are made in God’s image, true spiritual satisfaction can come only by worshiping the true and living God as He directs in His word, the Bible. Nothing else can even compare to the fulfillment that results from expressing our love toward God in worship in conjunction with fellow-Christians.

It is beneficial for your family. Your family also benefits when you “bother” with church. Most parents agree that their children need to learn about God and His word. They may not realize, though, that children also need parents who set the right example by studying and obeying God’s word themselves (and that certainly includes church attendance, Hebrews 10:25). “Sending” the children to Bible class and the assembly may be better than nothing, but bringing them is infinitely superior. Your family will be drawn closer by serving God together.

It is beneficial for the nation. *“Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people”* (Proverbs 14:34). For the good of your country, you ought to “bother” with church. God, who created the world, also controls the nations in it (Acts 17:26).

Wicked behavior by a vast majority of the population resulted in God’s destruction of Sodom, Gomorrah, and the surrounding area (Genesis 18-19). Let us not be so proud that we think it cannot happen to us! Despite our economic and military strength, we are not immune from divine judgment.

The apostle Paul referred to the church as *“the pillar and ground of the truth”* (1 Timothy 3:15). The truth which the church supports and upholds consists, in part, of God’s standards of morality and righteous living. In this age when the lines between right and wrong have been blurred or erased, thank God for the church which upholds Biblical truth!



Won in the Summer

National Geographic ran an article about the Alaskan bull moose. The males battle for dominance during the fall breeding season, literally going head-to-head, with antlers crunching together as they collide. Often the antlers, their only weapon, are broken. That ensures defeat. The heftiest moose with the largest and strongest antlers triumphs.

Therefore, the battle fought in the fall is really won during the summer, when the moose eat continually. The one that consumes the best diet for growing antlers and gaining weight will be the heavyweight in the fight. Those that eat inadequately sport weaker antlers and less bulk.

Spiritual battles await us. Satan will choose a season to attack. Will we be victorious, or will we fall? Much depends on what we do now – before the wars begin. Remember the bull moose principle: enduring faith, strength, and wisdom for trials are best developed before they are needed.

--Bruce Howell (via Jacksonville, AL)

Cain or Abel?

We do not know why Cain's sacrifice was not pleasing to God. Perhaps Cain did not give the best of his crops. Maybe he gave grudgingly. Whatever the case, Cain did not please God in his giving. God had warned Cain that sin was right at his door waiting to get him. Evidently, Cain didn't care, for he killed his brother in jealousy. Perhaps he had been planning his revenge on Abel for some time.

God told Cain that he must master the sin crouching at his door. He gives us the same warning. Peter says, "Be sober, be watchful; your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8).

How can we overcome Satan? We are to withstand steadfast in our faith (I Peter 5:9). Paul says we are to "take up the shield of faith, wherewith we shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the evil one" (Ephesians 6:16). We must be subject to God. If we resist the devil, he will flee from us. At the same time, we must draw near to God, and he will draw near to us (James 4:7, 8). We are to *"lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith"* (Hebrews 12:1,2). When we are caught by the devil, we must repent and turn from our evil (II Timothy 2:26).

Yes, God commands us to overcome Satan. It is possible through Jesus Christ. Will we be like Cain, who gave in to Satan? Or will we be like Abel, who was righteous before God? It is our choice.

--Donna Richmond Wittlif (Denver, CO)