

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“. . . Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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BACK TO BIBLICAL PRAYER

Part Two

by Lee Moses

Back to Public Prayers Led by Holy Men

Women leading in worship is no longer all that novel an idea. Reports of women leading in worship, and in other areas in the Lord's church, began to surface in the 1970's. Of course, manmade denominations led the way in this departure from Scripture. Episcopal professor and "bishop" Charles Ellicott referred to female leadership in worship as being advocated by "some of the unnatural and unscriptural theories of modern times"—and that was in 1857! Fast forward to **our** modern times, to an "elder" of an institution claiming to be a "Church of Christ." This man asserts that the aforementioned institution "is poised to enter some very challenging times as God's Spirit leads us in new ministries and as we implement expanded roles for women in public worship. We will be enriched, as women of faith are encouraged to use their God-given gifts in ministry in this church family in new ways." Such reasoning is becoming more and more common, and more and more professed "churches of Christ" are placing women as prayer leaders and in other positions of leadership. Such reasoning can sound convincing, as following the Spirit, being enriched, and using God-given gifts for God are all desirable.

"Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture?" As Paul addressed the need for order in worship assemblies, he said, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law" (1 Corinthians 14:34). This prohibition was given in the context of leading in worship, of speaking before the congregation—this does not prohibit a

woman from participating in congregational singing. However, when it comes to speaking before the assembly, a woman is effectively told to say **nothing**. This would clearly exclude a woman from leading a public prayer.

The apostle Paul provided inspired instructions for the leading of public prayer:

I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting (1 Timothy 2:8).

This verse resumes Paul's discussion on public prayer that he began in verses 1-2. The phrase "every where" ("in every place," American Standard Version) means "in every place where the church assembles." The Jews had used the expression to mean "meeting place" or "place of prayer," and the Holy Spirit continued to use it to refer to places of assembling for worship (1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:8).¹ In verses 1-2, Paul had discussed **content** of public prayers; here he discusses who should **lead** public prayers. And he limits the leadership of public prayers to **men**; that is, to adult **males**. While the term "men" can be used in a sense inclusive of both males and females, the word used here does not have that inclusive sense. When the inclusive sense of "men" is desired, the Greek *anthrōpos* is normally used (compare with Matthew 7:12; Luke 2:15; 1 Timothy 2:4-5). Here in 1 Timothy 2:8, the Holy Spirit chose the Greek word *anēr* (pronounced ah-NAIR), which refers to **males**.

The basic meaning of this word is "a male person," and is used to show contrast to a woman.² Even in rare cases

when women are included in the meaning, the word is chosen for a reason. The word appears 214 times in the New Testament, and there are only **two** clear occasions in which the term includes females. One is Romans 4:8, "Blessed is the **man** to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (emphasis LM). Obviously, the blessing of forgiveness here spoken of is not limited to males. But why did Paul use this word? Paul used this word because he was quoting directly from the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Psalm 32:2, KJV), and in that translation *anēr* was used. So why did the translators use the word *anēr*? The Greek of the time would not have allowed *anēr* to be used inclusively of females.³ In all likelihood, *anēr* was chosen because the translators understood this "man" specifically as David, who wrote the 32nd psalm about his own forgiveness.

Another use of *anēr* that includes women is James 1:20, "For the wrath of **man** worketh not the righteousness of God" (emphasis LM). This does not make selfish human anger acceptable when a woman is guilty of it; the verse correctly applies to women just as to men. However, again, there is likely a logical reason why *anēr* was chosen rather than the more generic *anthrōpos*, perhaps to portray the impetuous, violent anger more common to the male of the species. Thayer describes this usage of *anēr*, "when persons of either sex are included, but named after the more important"; that is, when males are chiefly under consideration.⁴

So because *anēr* **sometimes** includes women, it must include women in 1 Timothy 2:8, right? Hardly. (1) As seen previously, the term almost always refers **only** to males, and when females are included, males are still chiefly under consideration. (2) The context must demand including women; however, the context of 1 Timothy 2:8 **will not allow** including women. The following verse discusses "women"

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using the opposite term of *anēr* (*gunē*). When these terms are used together in the same context, they are always used in distinction from one another (1 Timothy 2:12; 3:2, 12; 5:9; Titus 1:6; 2:5).⁵ (3) The original language includes the article (“the”), further stressing the distinction between what the men are told to do, and what the women are told to do. As the New King James Version renders the passage,

I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works (1 Timothy 2:8-10, emphases LM).

When Paul said, “I will...” (“I desire,” NKJV), he was not merely offering his personal view on the matter. He said, “I will **therefore**”; that is, based on the apostolic authority affirmed

for him in verse 7. As he proclaimed a few verses following his prohibition against women speaking in the worship assembly (1 Corinthians 14:34), “*If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord*” (verse 37).

Paul does not allow for just **any** man to lead prayer. He added that prayer leaders needed to be “*lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.*” Some have tried to misuse this passage to encourage swaying with hands in the air while praying. However, since this direction is given to **the men**, women would be excluded from the practice. And this passage was not intended to teach prayer posture—“The emphasis is upon holiness, not the position of the hands.”⁶ Paul does not allow for just any man to lead prayer, but one whose hands can be described as holy—a faithful Christian man. As Job lamented his sorry state, he added, “*Not for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure*” (Job 16:17). Proverbs 28:9 warns, “*He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.*” “*For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil*” (1 Peter 3:12). Some congregations will use unfaithful men to lead public prayers—men who regularly forsake the assembly, men publicly known for immorality—in an alleged effort to encourage them to faithfulness. But how could any congregation dare to do this, knowing that such will be an abomination to the Lord, and will turn His face against them? Some “Christian” colleges have even used members of denominations to lead prayers. A member of a denomination does not have Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23, 25)—a willful approach to the throne of God without Christ is beyond presumptuous (John 14:6, 14; Hebrews 4:14-16). The man leading prayers does not have to be sinlessly perfect, but he must stand as a forgiven child of God, pursuing “*holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*” (Hebrews 12:14).

There may be women just as holy as, and more capable of leading prayer than, any man in the congregation.

However, if we are going to get back to Biblical prayer, we must get back to public prayers led by holy men.

1 C.K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), p. 54.

2 Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich, *anēr*; in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Univ. Of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 79; Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *anēr*; in *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, Baker’s Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), BibleWorks, v.8.

3 Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *anēr*; in *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon: Founded Upon the Seventh Edition of Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1889), BibleWorks, v.8.

4 Joseph Thayer, *anēr*; in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (n.p.: n.p., 1889), BibleWorks, v.8.

5 George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), p. 128.

6 Peter Misselbrook, *Notes on the Greek New Testament*, Available <<http://www.misselbrook.org.uk/GNT/Week122.pdf>>.

REST

by Leland L. Reed

When did God rest? After His work was complete.

And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made (Genesis 2:2-3).

God speaks through Moses about rest that the Israelites could expect when they entered the promise land: *For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you. But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety* (Deuteronomy 12:9-10).

God had promised rest to the Israelites and He gave it to them: “*And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand*” (Joshua 21:44). The rest for the Israelites was a type of the true and final rest, which is eternal life in heaven.

“*Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a*

people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest" (Psalm 95:10-11). The Israelites wandered in the wilderness forty years because of unbelief. "Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief" (Hebrews 4:6).

We in the Christian dispensation look for a rest, we are not in that rest as Paul expresses, "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Romans 8:24-25).

We serve God in His kingdom the church in hope of reaching that eternal rest. "Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope" (1 Corinthians 9:10).

The writer of Hebrews address the rest that the Israelites were promised and why some were not permitted to enter. "Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest" (Hebrews 3:10-11). The rest referred to here is in the promise land, the land of Canaan.

But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief (Hebrews 3:17-19).

These Israelites that fell in the wilderness were in the physical family of Israel, just as we are the spiritual family of Israel, the church that Christ built: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16). Physical Israel was born physically into the family of physical Israel and we being born spiritually into spiritual Israel through baptism: "Being born

again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:23). As the scripture tells us we are created unto good works: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

That being the case are we in a place of rest or have we work to do for our Lord? "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Heb. 4:1). This indicates that we have a promise and that being something we have not attained, and also that we could come short. "For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day" (verse 8).

Why speak of "another day" if we are in that rest? The writer of Hebrews answers that question: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (verse 9). Who are the people of God spoken of here? This book was written to Hebrew Christians; therefore, Christians are the people of God.

"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his" (verse 10). God rested from His work of creation: "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made" (Genesis 2:2). We enter our rest when our work is done on this earth: "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (verse 11). We know he is talking to Christians because he says to enter into that rest, future, and not to fall in unbelief as the example he has used which was physical Israel.

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13). Who has rest? Those that are physically dead that died in the Lord. That is the only time we are to rest from our labor for the Lord.

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DOING NOTHING IS A SIN AGAINST GOD!

by Marvin L. Weir

The setting for our lesson is found in Numbers 32:1-33. The children of Reuben and the children of Gad sought their inheritance on the **safe** side of the river Jordan (verses 1-5). They had great herds of cattle and saw that the land they requested would suit their needs well. The tribes of Reuben and Gad remembered their cattle while quickly forgetting about the needs of their brethren. Moses cuts to the heart of the matter in replying to their request: "Shall your brethren go to the war, and shall ye sit here?" (verse 6). From this penetrating question of Moses, let us learn that:

All Of The Lord's People Should Have A Common Cause! There were twelve different tribes of Israel, but they were **all** brethren (verse 6). If one tribe faltered in their obligations and responsibilities all other tribes would be affected. God does not desire weak links with His people! One tribe not functioning as it should might very well jeopardize the rest of the tribes.

We owe our brethren today the help and support they need to defeat the Devil and his helpers. All faithful brethren will be interested and involved in whatever concerns the kingdom of God. How can one seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and do otherwise? (Matthew 6:33). As Paul stresses, "And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you" (1 Corinthians 12:21). God does not intend for there to be any "schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another" (verse 25). We must do what is necessary to get others and ourselves to Heaven!

Putting Self First Endangers The Lord's Work! The Reubenites and Gadites decided the land of Jazer and Gilead was just what **they** wanted. Never mind the other ten tribes—they could fend for themselves! A tremendous tool of Satan today is lack of involvement and unconcern among God's people. As long as my needs are met, as long as I am satisfied, as long as I am not disturbed, as long as I am willing to ignore—all is

okay! As a member of the **body** of Christ, I must be concerned and actively involved in the **body** of Christ. To do less is mere selfishness and puts the cause of Christ in danger.

Ignoring The Work At Hand Discourages Others! Moses said, *“And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which Jehovah hath given them?”* (Num. 32:7) God had given the Israelites a job to do. He expected His people to rally around and support one another in obeying His commands. There are many different ways we can discourage our brethren today. One way we do so is through our unbelief in failing to **do** what God would have us to do. Another way is by magnifying the difficulty of a task and indicating that what God has commanded will not be successful. Complacent indifference is a spiritual killer!

Seeking The Spiritual Best Interest Of Others Helps The Cause Of Christ! Did the tribes of Reuben and Gad care whether or not their brethren possessed the Promised Land? Do we care today if our brethren go to Heaven? Do we care if the Lord’s church has *“spot”* and *“wrinkle”* or do we strive to see that it is *“holy and without blemish”*? (Ephesians 5:27). To keep the church what Christ would have her to be, **truth** must be proclaimed and practiced!

Devotion To God’s Will Secures His Promises And Blessings! *“If ye will do this thing, if ye will arm yourselves to go before Jehovah to the war, and every armed man of you will pass over the Jordan before Jehovah, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him, and the land is subdued before Jehovah; then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless towards Jehovah, and towards Israel; and this land shall be unto you for a possession before Jehovah”* (Num. 32:20-22). One cannot expect to ignore God’s commands and inherit His promised blessings!

Doing Nothing Is A Sin Against God! The tribes of Reuben and Gad were to have their possession on the east side of Jordan provided they helped their brethren drive their enemies out of the Promised Land. Moses reminded them, *“But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against Jehovah; and be sure your sin will find you out”* (verse 23).

The principle is still intact today! The sin of idleness, neglect, or unconcern in the Lord’s kingdom will surely find us out. One who is a coward, indifferent, and enamored with worldliness and immorality will not escape the wrath of God. Brethren who seek to please men and man-made idols work for the Devil and not for Christ. Some brethren choose to not “take sides” and be unpopular and embroiled in controversy. But remember brethren, doing nothing is a sin against God!

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GOD’S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God’s commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

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