

## Why We Worship the Way We Do

Hebrews 7:4-10

At Emmanuel we value freedom, grace, relationships, truth, and worship. It is more important that a person hear the Spirit of God than the preacher of God. We believe relationships are more important than religion. We worship in spirit and in truth, not in a sanctuary or with traditions. The Old Covenant religion was based on symbolism, priestly authority, and ritualism. This system of Hebrew worship—the sacrifices, the festivals, the offerings—are all fulfilled in Christ.

### I. Keeping a perspective on what is major helps drive good decision making.

*“Without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater”* (v.7). Melchizedek blesses Abram. The writer of Hebrews, in order to convince the Hebrew Christians that it is unnecessary to continue to observe Hebrew religious rituals, must show that Christ and His law are superior. The Jews considered Abraham their father and the most revered spiritual leader of the Jews. Yet Abraham pays tithes to Melchizedek and he who is greater blesses the one who is lesser. The Jews needed to be convinced that *they did not need Temple worship to be God-followers*. Christ is our High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek, and His word and His law rule us.

#### (A). Is what we are doing as a church promoting the values we cherish?

What rituals or traditions do we have that we find it difficult to let go? All traditions are not a bad thing, but we must ask ourselves if what we do promotes what we value.

#### (B). Are the values we cherish the values that are preeminent in the word of God?

It is one thing to make sure what you do is subordinate to what you value, but it is another matter entirely to ask the question, “Do we value all the right things?”

### II. If we lose sight of what is really important we will wind up serving without the Spirit.

Hebrews prepared the Hebrew Christians for the soon destruction of the Temple (A.D. 70). Our value system drives the way we live, serve, and worship. When the emphasis of our lives is placed on lesser things rather than the greater things of God, then five things occur.

- (A). Manipulation instead of freedom ... to keep the ministry sustained, one must manipulate others to give, serve and volunteer. The ministry becomes “volun-**told**-ism” for all.
- (B). Authoritarianism instead of servanthood ... Christian leaders must work hard to be seen as God’s vicars on earth. The pastor or leader is to be obeyed as God’s anointed.
- (C). Programs instead of discipleship ... the focus is placed on numerical growth rather than the deepening and strengthening of individuals’ personal relationship with Christ.
- (D). Selfishness instead of love ... instead of thinking in terms of others, it’s all about me.
- (E). Boastfulness instead of faithfulness ... *“Let us walk by the Spirit ... not becoming boastful, challenging one another, envying one another”* (Galatians 5:25-26).

### III. Lives based on valuable things continue strong when the world around us collapses.

Once again, to understand the importance of Hebrews 7, you must put yourself in the shoes of a first century Hebrew follower of Christ. He has lived his entire life worshipping at the Temple, following the calendar of religious festivals, and offering ritual sacrifices to God. In A.D. 70 God used the Romans to utterly destroy the Hebrew system of worship (Matt 24). *“I came to fulfill the law”* (Matt 5:17). In Jesus we have the preeminent Priest, who gives us the Royal Law *“love your neighbor as yourself”* (James 2:8). Let’s value this above all else.