

EXEGESIS OF JOHN 4:20-24: ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHOSEN  
GENERATION BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, LAGOS

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## ABSTRACT

Worship is one of the greatest pre-occupations of the contemporary Church, but unfortunately, it is also a frequent cause of division. True and acceptable worship is largely hindered by lack of or inadequate knowledge and understanding, wrong practices, wrong priorities, wrong perceptions about who God is and about one's relationship to Him. Worship is not our attempt to project our voices so that they will be heard in heaven. Neither is it a performance executed on the earthly stage for the benefit of a spectator God. It is certainly not something we do primarily for ourselves, as it were a kind of self-amusement or spiritual entertainment. Worshipping Church is part of the much larger congregation which includes patriarchs and prophets, saints and angels, because worship is the work of heaven. Hence, the methods the Church employs in its worship should exceed the scope of taste. This study therefore seeks to undertake a proper exegesis of John 4:20-24 with a view to explaining the main biblical principle of true and acceptable worship as prescribed by the Lord Jesus Christ. Whereas, some worship practices are based on claims of personal revelations, denominational traditions, values and beliefs and other contemporary notions, the researcher views that the insight provided by Jesus Christ in the text will help in providing the right perspective to worship, if it is properly and correctly interpreted. There is no dichotomy between a Christian's spiritual and social life; hence, as a gathering of true worshippers, the Church cannot continue to be indifferent or be compromising in responding to the social, cultural, economic, political and spiritual situation in Nigeria and more particularly, in the local community. True worship is, therefore, a total lifestyle and not just a worship activity.

## 5.2 Conclusion

The subject of worship has been largely reduced to some particular activities such as singing, attending Church services, visiting Prayer Mountains and giving of offerings. Whereas, these could be integral parts of worship, true worship connotes much more. Apart from the acts, there is also the way of worship that is acceptable to God. Jesus Christ underscores the need for a worshipper not just to worship God, but to do so in the manner acceptable to Him.

There is no dichotomy between a Christian's spiritual and social life; hence, as a gathering of true worshippers, the Church cannot continue to be indifferent or be compromising in responding to the social, cultural, economic, political and spiritual matters in Nigeria and more particularly, in the local community.

If Christians in The Chosen Generation Association profess to be worshippers of God in Spirit even truth, they ought to serve God with the totality of their lives in order to show forth the praises of the Father, who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. The member Churches in the Association need to cooperate together to fight "the battle of "gods" which true worship represents. The time has

come for the Churches to arise and shine to reflect God's glory as individuals units and more so, as a cooperative Association, in line with Stott's assertion that "the mission is our human response to the divine commission", in which Jesus calls his Church in every age to "go out into the lost and lonely world (as he did) in order to live and love, to witness and serve, like him and for him."<sup>175</sup> The mission of the Church, therefore, is the whole of Christian life which includes both evangelism and social responsibility inspired by the conviction that Christ sends Christians into the world as the Father sent him.<sup>176</sup>

### 5.3 Recommendations

In consideration of the findings of this study, the researcher makes the following recommendations which are considered germane to helping Christians and member Churches of the Association to fulfill their roles as worshippers of God in Spirit even truth in the Association and the society at large.

1. The Association should pursue the mission of the Church comprehensively. The Church exists for the purpose of worship, nurture, fellowship, evangelism and ministry. Worship is the natural expression of one's relationship with God, while nurture is for the building up of disciples in the Church.
2. The Church should emphasize the theology of the workplace in which members are made to see themselves primarily as worshippers of God and Christ's ambassadors who are called to serve in their workplaces for the advancement of God's kingdom on earth. This attitude will help greatly to

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<sup>175</sup> John Stott, 14.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

uplift those who genuinely work with integrity and thus prevent corruption and injustice that have bedeviled the Nigerian society. However, the Church should not focus on the pursuit of social justice at the expense of proclaiming divine justice, which is the gospel of the kingdom, as this is the main mission of the Church.

3. The programme, "Operation Daniel", of the Nigerian Baptist Convention in which Christians in politics are admonished and prayed for should be replicated at the Association level and expanded to include ministering to the less privileged such as the poor, orphans, widows, and prisoners
4. The Association should encourage members that have schools to run them as mission schools, not just as an academic citadel. Christian education should go together with discipleship with the aim of making true worshippers out of the beneficiaries; so that when these pupils and students graduate, they will become salt and light in their various communities. The Church's education services should focus on both children and adults.
5. The Association should organize conferences and seminars to alleviate socio-economic problems in the country, particularly in the local communities. The conferences and seminars could focus on health issues, job creation and information technology.
6. The Association must exercise discipline within the Churches. Member Churches should look inwards for necessary self-purging. The concept of Church discipline is gradually fading off in contemporary time. This has aided the growing trend of corruption and injustice in the society. Funds misappropriation, discrimination, and self-centeredness are reported amongst church people. Some politicians who are unjust in government affairs are often

welcomed in Church just to be praised for the “good works” undone or badly done in order to win their favour and get some financial donations to the Church. Discipline in the Church seeks the glory of God (2 Corinthians 6:14-711), the purity of the Church (1 Corinthians 5:6; 11:27) and the reclaiming of the offenders (1 Timothy 5:20).<sup>177</sup> Faithful execution of discipline will deter others from acts of sin and help to maintain good order of justice and righteousness in the Church.<sup>178</sup> When the Church fails to purge the congregation through discipline or when members are oblivious of the disciplinary action meted out to erring members, the efforts in pursuit of justice in the society will be fruitless. Hence, erring church members should be publicly rebuked with provisions for restoration in line with biblical injunctions.

7. The Association should decry social injustice by warning people who are “groping in the darkness of politics, commerce and social life to flee from the dangers of God’s judgment and eternal damnation” if they fail to repent.<sup>179</sup> Christians who are in politics should be encouraged and supported to submit bills that will promote equity, fairness and justice in governance. Church leaders should also intimate the members of their constitutional rights and the need to be law abiding citizens so as to have moral and legal standing to ask for their rights when they are unjustly treated by the government.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> E.P. Clowney. “Church”, *New Dictionary of Theology*. Eds Sinclair B.. 142-143.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> S. Akinwale Oloyede. “*The Church and Justice in a Corrupt Society*.” *Ogbomosho Journal of Theology*, Volume XIX, No. 1, 2014, 114.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

