

## Practice of worshiping apart from the Temple?

Keep in mind that the synagogues were set up by God's people to keep Israel and Judah separated from each other. In 1 Kings 12:16-33, King Jeroboam, king of Israel, didn't want his people to go to the Temple in Jerusalem to worship because they may turn to the king of Judah, King Rehoboam, when Israel was divided. In light of scriptures, this was a perversion by Satan to keep God's people divided. The practice of worshiping apart from God's instruction began at this time. The temples in high places were replaced with synagogues... and now we practice the same thing with church buildings.

Jesus did not go to the synagogue to recognize and confirm their practice but to preach the truth and lead them out of religion to follow Him. John the Baptist, the son of a High Priest, stayed as far away from religion as possible. He was to make straight the path to Jesus for God's people... of whom were the Jews at that time.

Jesus spoke of going to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles. Jesus commanded His disciples to "Go" which meant to go to God's people of whom were the Jews. Paul was called to go to the Gentiles even though the door was opened through Peter. The apostles would first go to a synagogue when visiting a city because that's where God's people (Jews) were. Within a synagogue, you would have the Jews, converts (Gentiles who are circumcised), and God-fearers (Gentiles who believed but weren't circumcised). Usually the apostles were kicked out of the synagogue but many of those who believed left the synagogue to follow Christ because of the speaking through the apostles. So keep in mind, the synagogues were the fold; not the flock.

**Fold?** During the wintertime, the fold is what you would call a group of sheep gathered in a shed to keep warm. The shed is cold and dark during the winter. The sheep would keep themselves warm by snuggling with each other. So the degree of their warmth was based on how many other sheep were there. None would dare to leave the fold out of fear of freezing to death alone. This is a picture of God's people (Jews) under the Law.

The good Shepherd came in through the front door to free His sheep and lead them into the green pastures in the warmth of Spring. A group of sheep spread out in the pasture is what you would call a "flock"... not a "fold". Jesus came to free His people from the Law of Moses which was for their protection and to bring them into the good land... the promised land.

Now... are you in the fold or a part of the flock? Are you freely eating Jesus as you're being led by the Spirit or are you being kept warm by the majority because tradition has told you that you will die in the freezing winter.

The synagogues and the church buildings are not of God but of our adversary. The Lord commanded us to not adopt the customs of the nations surrounding us. We are sojourners and we belong to another kingdom. What kind of sheep would turn away from the flock and return to the fold? Only a sheep who

doesn't know the voice of His Shepherd. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as your forefathers have done when they tested and tried our Lord God in the desert.

To those who have an ear to hear, let them hear to what the Spirit says to the "churches"!

By brother Jonathan