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What You Need to Know About Worship

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WORSHIP

Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. (Psa. 29:2; But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him; God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23, 24).

A. The definition of worship

Andrew W. Blackwood has defined it thus: "Worship is man's response to God's revelation of Himself."

To worship God is therefore to ascribe to him the supreme homage of which he alone is worthy.

B. The importance of worship – "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.... So God created man in his own image" (Gen. 1:26-27).

How was man made in the image of God? In essence, God fashioned a creature that, in some areas, would share similar experiences with the animal, such as breathing, sleeping, eating, etc. But this creature would be able to do something no dog, dandelion, or dinosaur could do, namely, to bow its head and thank God for the food it was about to eat.

The difference between Adam and all other creatures in the Garden was not in his size or strength, but in his ability (and command) to worship the Creator. God did not make the first man to build the largest Sunday school in Eden or to "win that soul nearest hell," but rather to fellowship with and follow after his Maker.

C. The reasons for worship

1. We are to worship God because of who he is – "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psa. 29:2). "And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.... And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great" (Rev. 7:11-12; 19:5). He and He alone is the only eternal, infinite, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, sovereign, righteous, faithful, holy, gracious, and loving God.

2. We are to worship God because of what He has done – It can be said that everything God has already done, is doing, or will do, can be correctly placed under one of two categories, namely, his twin works of creation and redemption. These two works are highlighted by God through a sevenfold scriptural reminder:

a. The two heavens and earths

(1) The heaven and earth of creation – "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).

(2) The heaven and earth of redemption – "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (Rev. 21:1).

b. The two gardens

(1) Creation's garden – "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he

put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil” (Gen. 2:8-9).

(2) Redemption’s garden – *“Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder” (Matt. 26:36). “When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples” (John 18:1).*

c. The two marriages

(1) Creation’s marriage – Eve to Adam (Gen. 2:23-24)

(2) Redemption’s marriage – The church to Christ (Rev. 19:7-9)

d. The nine feasts in Leviticus 23

(1) Feasts reminding us of creation

(a) The weekly Sabbath rest

(b) The 7-year rest

(c) The 50-year rest

(2) Feasts reminding us of redemption

(a) The Passover (speaking of Calvary)

(b) The first fruits (speaking of the Resurrection)

(c) The seven-week feast (speaking of Pentecost)

(d) The Feast of Trumpets (speaking of Christ’s return)

(e) The Day of Atonement (speaking of the great tribulation)

(f) The Feast of Tabernacles (speaking of the Millennium)

e. The two special days

(1) Saturday, reminding us of creation – *“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.... For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Exod. 20:8, 11).*

(2) Sunday, reminding us of redemption – *“Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils” (Mark 16:9).*

f. The two special chapters

(1) Genesis 1 – The creation account, describing how man was made in the image of God.

(2) Luke 2 – The redemption account, describing how God was made in the image of man.

g. The two songs in Revelation

(1) The song of creation – *“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:11).*

(2) The song of redemption – *“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev. 5:9).*

D. The aspects of worship – How do we worship God?

1. Through our handling of the Word of God

a. We are to read it.

- b. We are to heed it.
 - c. We are to deed it (to our children).
 - d. We are to seed it (in the fields of society) – *“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.... Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (2 Tim. 1:13; 2:15). *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Rom. 10:17). *“I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren”* (1 Thess. 5:27). *“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle”* (2 Thess. 2:15).
2. **Through our prayers** (Acts 4:24; 6:4; 10:9; 12:5; 13:3; 1 Tim. 2:1-8) – *“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word”* (Acts 6:4). *“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting”* (1 Tim. 2:1, 8).
 3. **Through our obedience in observing the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper** (Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23-25)
 4. **Through our singing** – *“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”* (Eph. 5:19). *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”* (Col. 3:16). *“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms”* (James 5:13). Several New Testament passages may contain parts of hymns that the early church used. Example: *“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory”* (1 Tim. 3:16).
 5. **Through the offering up of sacrifices** – According to 1 Peter 2:5-9 and Revelation 1:6, every New Testament believer is a priest unto God. The main function of the Old Testament priest was to sacrifice. So it is with the New Testament priests. Their priestly service toward God is fourfold.
 - a. The sacrifice of our bodies – *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service”* (Rom. 12:1).
 - b. The sacrifice of our praise – *“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name”* (Heb. 13:15).
 - c. The sacrifice of our good works – *“But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased”* (Heb. 13:16).
 - d. The sacrifice of our substance – *“But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God”* (Phil. 4:18).

Robert Grant’s great hymn probably says it best:

O WORSHIP THE KING

*Worship the King, all glorious above,
And gratefully sign His pow'r and His love;
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavillioned in splendor and girded with praise.*

*O tell of His might, O sing of His grace,
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space;
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm.*

*Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light.
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.*

*Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
In thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail;
Thy mercies how tender! How firm to the end!
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer and Friend.*

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