

We are in a series on worship.

For the last two weeks we have talked about what is worship and what should be our attitude in worship.

To our question...

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

We said, “Worship is prostrating oneself before a superior being with a sense of respect, awe, reverence, honor, and homage.”

In short, “Worship is honor and adoration directed to God.”

That’s what we have seen in our look at Psalm 95.

We are told to “come” and “worship and bow down,...kneel before the LORD our maker” (v. 6) with songs of “joy” (vv.1-2) and “thanksgiving” (v.2).

All of those verses tell us what worship is and the attitude we’re to have as worship.

Now, I want to address the second question...

WHO ARE WE TO WORSHIP?

This may sound like an irrelevant question but not in light of our culture.

There is much worship taking place but the question is “*who* are they worshipping.”

For the Christian the answer is simple and Jesus Himself gives us the answer in Matthew 4:10.

In this chapter, Jesus is being tempted by the Devil.

By this point in Matthew 4 all attempts to get Jesus to presume on God had failed.

Now Satan tries one more time.

This time Matthew records beginning in verses 8 and 9, "Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."

Now Jesus responds in verse 10.

Here he is quoting from Deuteronomy 6:13, and He says, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"

Jesus make it emphatically clear *who* we are to worship.

He says, “*the LORD your God.*”

We need to note at this point why it is important to identify who we are to worship.

There are so many people using God's name but mean someone entirely different.

The Muslims say Allah is God and that's who we are to worship.

New Agers say, "Everything and everyone is God," so that must mean we worship each other

In the passage Jesus quotes, He identifies God by the tetragrammaton or 4 letters YHWH or Yahweh.

This is the name given to Moses in Exodus 3:14, the “I AM.” (Yahweh)

God is known by many names in the Bible like Elohim or El Shaddai (God Almighty) or El Elyon (the Most High God).

Here He is identified as Yahweh, the “I AM,” the self-existent God. The only true God.

Exodus 20 records the giving of the Ten Commandments.

The very first of those commandments calls for and regulates worship:

God says, “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. **3** "You shall have no other gods before Me. **4**"You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in

heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.”

When he says “Before Me” at the end of verse 3, it may be understood as “besides me” (^{nab}, ^{tan}) or “in my presence” (Durham). The New Jerusalem Bible (^{njb}) has “You shall have no other gods to rival me,” and The Translator’s OT (^{tot}) has “You must not defy me by acknowledging other gods.” The Today’s English Version (^{tev}) is clear and accurate, “Worship no god but me,” and the Contemporary English Version (^{cev}) has “Do not worship any god except me.”¹

^{nab} New American Bible

^{tan} TANAKH (New Jewish version)

^{njb} New Jerusalem Bible

^{tot} Translator’s Old Testament

^{tev} Today’s English Version

^{cev} Contemporary English Version

¹ Noel D. Osborn and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Exodus*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1999). 472.

All false gods stand in opposition to the true God, and the worship of them is incompatible with the worship of Yahweh.²

As is clear from Exodus 20:2-5, God is a jealous God. He will not give His glory to another.

Isaiah 42:8 says, “I am the LORD, that is My Name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images” (NKJV).

It’s clear as you study the Bible that there is a Trinity.

From the very first verse of the Bible, Genesis 1:1, we hear, “In the beginning God.”

The Hebrew word for “God” in this verse is the name I mentioned earlier.

² John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997).

It's the name Elohim (im is plural) which means this singular God exists in a form of plurality.

So when we say we are to worship God we are talking about all three members of the Trinity, referred to in the New Testament as the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

So when we ask the question, "Who are we to worship?", it should be no surprise to see Jesus the second member of the Trinity receiving worship.

Who are we to worship? God the Father and secondly...

"Jesus"

This is not the worship of another God.

Jesus is God, one with the Father and Spirit.

The Jehovah's Witnesses make the mistake of saying Jesus is another god in John 1:1.

But Scripture makes it very clear that He is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

He is God incarnate (John 1:1, 14).

And when you consider this in light of worship, throughout His ministry, He never refused worship because He is God.

He didn't respond like the angel who told John not to do that.

No, he accepted their worship.

After His resurrection, Matthew 28:7 says when He appeared to His disciples in Galilee, "they worshiped Him."

Again, you don't hear Him saying, "Do not do that!"

In Matthew 14 after He comes to His disciples in the midst of a storm walking on the water, it says in verses 32-33, “When they got into the boat, the wind stopped. And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, ‘You are certainly God’s Son!’”

They worshiped Jesus because everything He did and said pointed to the reality that He is God!

Listen to Hebrews 1 in light of this:

“God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, **2** in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. **3** And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the

right hand of the Majesty on high, **4** having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they. **5** For to which of the angels did He ever say, “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You”? And again, “I will be a Father to Him And He shall be a Son to Me”? **6** And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, “And let all the angels of God worship Him.” **7** And of the angels He says, “Who makes His angels winds, And His ministers a flame of fire.” **8** But of the Son *He says*, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, And the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom. **9** “You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness above Your companions.”³

Now, we must not forget about...

³ *New American Standard Bible : 1995 Update* (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995). Heb 1:1–14.

“The Holy Spirit”

He is a member of the Trinity and equally deserves our adoration.

Philippians 3:3 says, “For we are the true circumcision, ***who worship God in the Spirit of God*** and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh” (NKJV).

Though the Spirit came to testify about Jesus according to John 16:13-14, as a member of the Trinity, He too receives worship, especially when we yield to Him as Ephesians 5:18 says.

So we are to worship God in totality as the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We are to worship Him only!

He is a jealous God. He will not share His glory with another.

When we fail to worship God properly, we experience His chastening, some His judgment.

John MacArthur says, “God repeatedly judged those who failed to worship Him properly. When the people of Israel worshiped the golden calf, God mercifully mitigated His initial righteous reaction, which would have been the utter destruction of the nation, and only slaughtered thousands of them. It stands as a graphic illustration of how God feels about false worship.”⁴

In Leviticus 10 we hear the ordination of the priesthood of Nadab and Abihu.

These were the sons of Aaron the high priest.

They had spent all their life for this moment--to offer worship to God on behalf of the people of Israel.

⁴ John MacArthur, *The Ultimate Priority : John MacArthur, Jr. on Worship*, electronic ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998). 4.

They had been prepared, trained, and now they were to be ordained.

In their first real function as priest, we are told they offered “strange fire.”

This, according to verse 1, was that “which [God] had not commanded them.”

In other words, they did not do what was prescribed to be done as priests, leading the people in worship.

They acted independently of the revelation of God regarding proper worship, and instantly God killed both of them.⁵

So who we worship is important as well as how we worship.

Let’s consider another question...

⁵ John MacArthur, *The Ultimate Priority: John MacArthur, Jr on Worship*, electronic ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998). 4-5.

ARE THERE ANY PREREQUISITES TO WORSHIP?

Given what we have looked at now for 3 weeks, what do you think the answer is?

“Yes”!!!

We can narrow our answer in this way:

You must have a right view of God and a right view of your self as presented in the Bible.

Let's consider the first...

A Right View of God

When Paul addressed the Athenians in Acts 17:22-29, he pointed out 4 things about God:

He said...

God is the Creator (v.24a)

God is Omnipresent (v.24b)

God is Omnipotent (v.25)

God is Sovereign (v.26)

William Temple said, “It is much worse to have a false idea of God than no idea at all.”⁶

Charles Spurgeon went on to say that “a very large majority of churchgoers are merely unthinking, slumbering worshipers of an unknown god.”⁷

What do you think when you hear a statement like that?

Much of what occurs in church in what we would call worship is not worship at all.

It’s merely going through the motions and worshiping an unknown god.

⁶ Christianity Today, Vol.34. No.3

⁷ Christianity Today, Vol.40. No.1

It's not giving glory and honor and adoration to the true God.

That's why we need to also have...

A Right View of Self

Guess what? You're a sinner.

Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

And as a sinner, naturally, you do not seek God.

Romans 3:10-11 says, "As it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God."

But God requires that you believe His Word and the words of His Son as well as obey them!

1 Peter 1:14-16 says, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were

yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

CONCLUSION

So, What can be said about your worship?

Do you worship idols?

Do you worship other gods?

Do you worship yourself?

There are times when we probably would have to answer yes to those questions because we have fallen down to idols.

We might not be guilty of worshiping other gods but we have certainly worshiped ourselves.

Every time we disobey God's Word we are worshiping ourselves.

There are two more questions I want us to consider next time.

But for today, let's meditate on what we have already heard.

Are you a child of God?

Have you been born from above?

If not, you are worshiping a false god--Satan.

Ephesians 2:2 says you are walking "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience."

And not only that but you are worship yourself by living "in the lusts of [your] flesh, indulging

the desires of the flesh and of the mind” (v.3),
and therefore “by nature children of wrath.”

You ask, “What shall I do?”

Repent and cry out for the mercy of God.

Believe that God sent Jesus to die in your place
for your sin and commit your life to Him.

Then worship Him by His Spirit.

Let’s pray.

LIFE APPLICATION

How does worship affect what you believe
about God?

Should we worship the Holy Spirit? Why?

Are there any prerequisites to worship? If so,
what are they?