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WORSHIP

Thanksgiving, Praise and Worship

John 4:23 "- But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. (24) God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

Worship plays a part in all religion.

Certain religious sects believe in worshipping their ancestors; others worship or hold in reverence creatures or objects; others worship myriads of gods by name. All of these kinds of worship consists of intricate and specific rituals and rites practiced by its followers. All of these come from serious and sincere beliefs and are fervently held. Religious worship may be in the form of the burning of incense, or the spilling of blood sacrifices offered in the most solemn manner. Praise and worship are practiced in all Christian Churches but in a variety of ways.

Priests or 'holy men' wear sacred garments in order to follow the rigor of their prescribed worship. Worshipers follow rites of purification, bow and posture, fold their hands, or make mystical gestures heavenward. Supplicants learn to follow such rituals and think that by so doing they become a true worshiper. The natural man or woman may easily learn a ritual and follow that ritual with some degree of solemnity and in doing so believes they have completed their spiritual duty. What does Jesus Christ say regarding such worship?

What Jesus said about True Worshipers

A foundation of understanding of the subject of worship is found in the gospel account of Jesus' encounter with the woman at a well in Samaria:

John 4:19 - John 4:24 19 - -The woman said to Him, "*Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20, Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.*" 21, Jesus said to her, "*Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22, You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23, But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24, God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*"

We, who believe ourselves to be True Worshipers, claim to know who we worship.

We also have our own notions about whether or not we are worshipping "*in Spirit or in Truth.*" Certainly not all of the world's religions worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who we Christians are now permitted to call "Our Father."

But I would further suggest with confidence that not all those who surround us in Christian meeting houses know the one they claim to worship. A spiritual union with the Father is the very first requirement. This results from a supernatural spiritual act of God The Father by

believing in the Lord Jesus Messiah as the one who paid for our salvation (redemption.) This same Jesus declared that, “ - - *no one comes to the Father except through me.*”
John 14:6

Following is a description of a typical Christian worship service

Musical preludes performed by an organist or musicians.
The congregation sings hymns from a hymn book or screen projection at intervals.
Partakers may share a handshake or a greeting with others.
An individual, priest or pastor, offers a teaching, a Bible lesson or homily that engages the congregation to enhance the spiritual life and understanding of the congregation.
God's tithes and offerings are collected.
The congregation or choir sings musical responses after parts of the service such as scripture readings, prayers and petitions, or collection of offerings.
Singers may perform well rehearsed anthems.
Individuals as featured soloists may perform special music.

Programmed worship services as listed in the above example are standard fare in most Christian denominations. Such programs are performed with greater or lesser sophistication depending upon the size of the congregation and the talent and resources available. Churches with a greater pool of talent and imagination are more successful in creating quality performances and presentations. Better programs eventually attract larger congregations. An important point to note is that the participation in worship services is by relatively few individuals. The majority of the assembled worshipers are onlookers who are the congregation acting in their role of an audience. The question remains how much of this accrues to being true worshipers? God knows the hearts of his people as well as those individuals who are passive or disengaged.

Praise and worship are the cornerstone - of the Christian life

In the scripture quoted just above, Jesus makes a number of points about worship that reveal a new paradigm, the mystery of relationship of believers to the (spiritual) Father. **First, worship is not about a place** to meet with God. Location, whether in the hill tops of Samaria or on the temple mount of Jerusalem is rendered irrelevant. One does not go to a place to find God. Rather worshipers who carry the Spirit of God gather together. The church is manifest as its members assemble.

I believe the next point that Jesus makes is that a large segment of the present world worships a god different from the one who Jesus presents. Such worship is one sided and blind. There is no connection of the worshiper to the object of their worship. Their god is unknown to the worshiper and absent any spiritual bond.

For Christians who would be worshipers, I think it can also be inferred that *if one is not of the sort who are born of the Spirit, any effort to be a true worshiper is in vain!* Any form of worship that is not from the heart will not bridge the gap to make someone a true worshiper. True status as a blood bought son of God fulfills the requirement of Worshiping the father in Truth.

True worshipers must be true believers

True believers must be called into the Kingdom of God. This is not a wholesale process. Each individual must approach the throne of grace seeking mercy and pardon for sins. If this seeking is sincere and *heartfelt* the individual is born of the Spirit. Thereafter, these become partakers in Jesus Christ's divine nature. They have become sons and daughters of God and as God's nature is deposited in them they begin to have fellowship with Him. This statement will not be understood or agreed upon by some religious experts because of the fact they still do not know who they worship.

Any who would say there is no God. Or anyone who says we can not know God or claim to have his Divine nature imparted to us are simply reasoning. Those who are **born of God have had their eyes opened** and become a brand new creation. *2 Corinthians 5:16 - 2 Corinthians 5:18 17, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18, Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ- - "*

The Spiritual side of worship

First understand that **the mind is NOT the spirit** although actually teach this. Understand also that **the soul or personality of a person is not the spirit**. Human are *soulish* beings before coming to Christ and tend to remain so after coming to Christ. But the **soul which equates to -mind, intellect and emotion**, is not the part that is born from above (or reborn) in Christ Jesus. The soul can be exalted in reaction to someone else's emotional presentation. But such is not Spiritual worship. Soul music is aptly named. Soul music comes from the soulish, personality side of human beings. Uniqueness of presentation that exalts the performer characterizes soulish worship. Soul music says, look at me. Soulish performance is made to move an audience. It says, "Aren't I a snappy performer!" Spiritual worship requires no audience but God. Spiritual worship does not have to have special gifts, ornamentation or sophistication. It is simply from ourselves, who were in times past, entirely unworthy but now are raised up into a new hope and future.

The Spiritual side of worship is about our interaction with heaven. It wishes to be free and unrestrained. It exalts in the joy of salvation and the wonder of being called forth to be called, with Christ, into heavenly places. *Colossians 3:1 - Colossians 3:3 1, "- So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2, Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, 3 for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. "*

Spiritual life is about engaging in the very presence of God. In the times of the First Covenant priesthood, the high priest went annually into the presence of God through a heavy veil but only after scrupulous preparation and purification. In such a place the priest hardly dared to make a move in the presence of a Holy God. Any falling short resulted in the death of the officiate. The veil of God's temple was rent in half at the death of Jesus on the cross allowing another kind of priest to enter into God's Holy presence. (Revelation 1:6) *To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, ⁶and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

Worship within the Holy Place is now a part of the legacy of the child of God born of the Spirit. We can now boldly go into God's presence through the blood of the Messiah Jesus who has purchased this right for us. *Hebrews 10:19 - Hebrews 10:22 20, - -by the new and living way that he opened for us through the veil (that is, through his flesh), 21, and since we have a great priest over the*

house of God, 22, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. - -"

So to simplify and make plain: We worship the Heavenly Father with our hearts.

The heart is the very center of our passion and desires, for what the heart desires becomes its worship. Those born from heaven esteem and value the Spiritual life which is given from heaven and orchestrated from heaven. Heaven interacts with our hearts to make us true worshipers. Zeal is not the emotion of the soul it is the passion of the heart for Him who called us out of darkness into the Holy presence of heavenly things. (Mount Zion and the heavenly company of angelic beings and righteous souls.

Our souls can be inspired and stimulated by stirring music but takes the Holy Spirit to lift our hearts to heaven. The Holy Spirit (Holy Ghost) animates and empowers the worshipers with inspiration and revelation in times of worship. When some particular saint is in worship he may be at the very feet of Jesus or receiving a revelation of a truth that has been hidden from us until this very minute.

Free worship versus program worship

In the beginning we may not all have a sense of comfort about openly practicing thanksgiving, praise and worship.

As we gather together we should feel free to give praise or thanksgiving with the liberty that God allows. This means it does not have to be scripted to be heartfelt.

We find throughout the Old Testament Scripture a great number of references to praise. It is a valuable study to research and discover that this word praise comes from several different Hebrew antecedents. Words translated Praise in the psalms and other books and include at least 7 words. Each word addresses somewhat different kind of praise or thanksgiving which may include, singing, playing, shouting and others. If we understand what these words express it will help us to expand our understanding of the variety and flavors of praise.

1.YADAH - yaw-daw - to worship with the extended hand. The giving of oneself in worship and adoration. To lift your hands unto the Lord. It carries the meaning of absolute surrender as a young child does to a parent - "pick me up, I'm all yours". **Scriptures: Gen. 29:35, 2 Chron. 7:6, 20:21, Psalms 9:1, 28:7, Psalms 33:2, 42:5,11, 49:18, Isaiah 12:1**

2.TEHILLAH -teh-hil-law- to sing, to laud. **A spontaneous new song. Singing from a melody in your heart by adding words to it.** This refers to a special kind of singing-it is singing unprepared, unrehearsed songs. Brings tremendous unity to the body of Christ. Singing straight to God. Can move into tehilah anytime. Singing it the second time would be ZAMAR. It is the praise that God inhabits (sits enthroned on)(Psalm 22:3) God manifests Himself in the midst of exuberant singing. Scripture: Psalms 22:3, 34:1, 40:3, 66:2, 2 Chronicles 20:22

3.BARAK - baw-rak - To kneel or to bow. To give reverence to God as an act of adoration. It implies to continual conscious giving place to God. Blessing the Lord, extolling virtue. There is a sense of kneeling and blessing God as an act of adoration in the word BARAK. Physical application - To bow, kneel or to do this with the intent in my heart that He is my KING and I yield to HIM. I am acknowledging Him as KING and GOD. SONG: BLESS THE LORD Scripture: Psalm 103 tells us how to bless the Lord and then goes on to enumerate those blessings: loving kindness, satisfaction redemption, honor, renewal. We bless the Lord by remembering all of these things.

4.HALAL Scripture: 1 Chron. 16:4, 23:5,30, 25:3, 29:13, Neh. 12:24 (this word appears over 110 times in the OT) **1984 halal** (haw-lal'); a primitive root; **to be clear (orig. of sound, but usually of color); to shine; hence, to make a show, to boast; and thus to be (clamorously) foolish; to rave; causatively, to celebrate; also to stultify:**

5.TOWDAH -to-daw -**To give worship by the extension of the hand in adoration or agreeing with what has been done or will be. This word is commonly found in connection with sacrifice-applying the**

giving of thanks or praise as a sacrifice before reception or manifestation. Thanking God for something that I don't have in the natural. Agreeing with His Word - faith in His Word. This form of praise goes in operation just because His Word is true. "Father, I thank YOU that YOUR WORD is TRUE. As we raise our hearts and hands in praise to the Lord, it involves a sacrifice, especially if one is very sick in body. The carnal mind would fight and ridicule this particular action, but there is great faith in TOWDAH as praise. The lifting of the hand symbolizes agreement. The right hand symbolizes my covenant with my my Father. As I go through the scriptures, God is seen extending His Right Hand to me. That's the covenant. When He extends His right hand to me, He's saying to me - ALL THAT I AM IS YOURS, and when I extend my right hand to Him, I am saying "All that I am is yours and I agree with what You're saying. It is the sacrifice that God honors by His performing of miracles. The ATTITUDE for TOWDAH is: I'm thanking God. I'm agreeing with God that it is as He says. I don't care what it looks like. I'm agreeing with what His Word says. Example: Father, I thank You that I am healed. **Scripture: Psalm 42:4, 50:23, Jer. 17:26**

6.ZAMAR - zaw-mar - To sing with instruments. To make music accompanied by the voice. One of the musical verbs for praise in the book of psalms. It carries the idea of making music in praise to God as in Psalm 92:1. The word ZAMAR also means to touch the strings, and refers to praise that involves instrumental worship as in Psalm 150. The one word is usually translated "sing praises". **2167 zamar** (zaw-mar'); a primitive root [perhaps ident. with 2168 through the idea of striking with the fingers]; properly, **to touch the strings or parts of a musical instrument**, i.e. play upon it; **to make music, accompanied by the voice**; hence to celebrate in song and music: KJV-- give praise, sing forth praises, psalms. to sing, to sing praise, to make music; (Piel)

7.SHABACH - shaw-bakh - to address in a loud tone, a loud adoration, a shout! Proclaim with a loud voice, unashamed, the **GLORY, TRIUMPH, POWER, MERCY, LOVE OF GOD**. This word implies that testimony is praise. **The phrase "shout unto the Lord" can be understood as the action of SHABACH.** It is not just being loud. You should have the attitude of putting your whole being into it, an attitude of being totally uninhibited. Scripture: Psalm 117:1, 63:3-4 **7623 shabach** (shaw-bakh'); a primitive root; properly, **to address in a loud tone**, i.e. (specifically) loud; figuratively, to pacify (as if by words): KJV-- commend, glory, keep in, praise, still, triumph.

Thanksgiving:

A heart of thanksgiving is called for by all who claim to be the children of God through Christ Jesus. If we are callous and have no true thanksgiving in our souls it would appear that we have not been impacted by God's loving kindness, mercy and grace:

If we were impoverished and received a legacy valued beyond all the riches of this world, would we not be happy and wish to give thanks?

If we were spared an eternity of judgment and hell by God's gift of righteousness which says we do not have to pay the penalty for being unrighteous or unworthy because Jesus himself bore our sins, would we not be happy and full of thanksgiving?

If we are spared from the horrors of oppression by tyrants or sorrows of natural calamities ought we not offer up thanksgiving to God?

If we eat are comfortable while thousands go without food and shelter, ought we not give thanks? The people who do not know God are called "unthankful, unholy, etc. - - "

2 Timothy 3:2 - 2 Timothy 3:2 - - -, for men shall be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, evil-speakers, to parents disobedient, unthankful, unkind - - .

The Psalms: Examples That Teach Us Thanksgiving, Praise

Psalms are not entirely made up of songs of praise as they include prayers and prophetic utterances.

But they are the best examples of a man possessed of God's Holy Spirit (The Ruach Ha Kadesh) whose life and thoughts are turned continually God-ward. God refers to David as a man '- after His own heart.' While addressing the matters of trouble which surround him,

David looks to the Lord as his strength, his hope, and his deliverer. He never forgets God's mercy and faithfulness. Even while praising the Lord actively (with his mouth) God at various times intervenes in the midst of his utterances and begins to speak His words through the psalmist's mouth. (Psalm 91, a good example)

Here are typical utterances of Praise and Thanksgiving.

Psalms 9:1-2 - Psalms 9:1; I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works. ;2 I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High. **

Psalms 111:1 - Psalms 111:1 Praise the Lord! I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, In the assembly of the upright and in the congregation.**

Psalms 34:2 - Psalms 34:3 1) I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. 2) My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; The humble shall hear of it and be glad. 3) Oh, magnify the Lord with me, And let us exalt His name together. **

Psalms 30:12 12) To the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever. **

Psalms 106:1 - Psalms 106:1 1) Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. **

Psalms 5:11 - Psalms 5:12 11 But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You. 12 For You, O Lord, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as with a shield. **

Psalms 13:5 - Psalms 13:6 5 But I have trusted in Your mercy; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. 6 I will sing to the Lord, Because He has dealt bountifully with me.**

Psalms 31:7 - Psalms 31:8 I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy, For You have considered my trouble; You have known my soul in adversities, 8 And have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy; **

Psalms 71:23 - Psalms 71:24 23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You, And my soul, which You have redeemed. 24 My tongue also shall talk of Your righteousness all the day long; **

24 This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it. **

Psalms 148:2 - Psalms 148:5 1 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights! 2 Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! 3 Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light! 4 Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, And you waters above the heavens! 5 Let them praise the name of the Lord, For He commanded and they were created. **

Psalms 148:13 - Psalms 148:14 13 Let them praise the name of the Lord, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven. 14 And He has exalted the horn of His people, The praise of all His saints— Of the children of Israel, A people near to Him. **

Psalms 149:2 - Psalms 149:6 1 Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, And His praise in the assembly of saints. 2 Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. 3 Let them praise His name with the dance; Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp. 4 For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation. 5 Let the saints be joyful in glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds. 6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, **

Psalms 150: - Psalms 150:6 1 Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament! 2 Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! 3 Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute

and harp! 4 Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! 5 Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals! 6 Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!

We see that there is no shortage of Praise and Thanksgiving addressed here in the Psalms. There is much more throughout other Old Testament books as well. "Praise is an ornament of beauty" for the upright. There is strength in praise. Praise is active and not passive. When we praise The Lord we are interacting with the hosts of heaven who continually offer praise unto Him who sits on the throne. There is deliverance in praise, it brings confusion to the ranks of the enemy (demonic spiritual orders.) Praise takes all kinds of forms. It includes music and dance. Praise includes shouting loudly to extol the virtues of God. Praise includes making joyful noises to God. Praise brings us into the very presence of the Holy presence of God. 'Enter his gates with thanksgiving' speaks of making the way into God's place, as one would enter the Tabernacle from the world of care into the gate beyond the fence. Enter into His courts with praise, addressing progressing into a place of greater intimacy. This part of the tabernacle is the Holy Place. Here we may still praise and speak to God and extol his goodness and mercies. But the ultimate place is entered with a higher lever of worship where we can nothing but *worship* in the Holiness of His presence.

For those who say there should no be noise and clamor in the zeal of worship they are not biblically accurate. For those who say there should be no musical instruments, they are not biblically accurate. For those who say there should be dancing, again, this is not in harmony with what we have seen in the Psalms.

Liberty in Spiritual worship allows a lot of praise. It should not be curtailed. It should allow each person to engage in his or her own forms of praise. We all are called to Praise. Let everything that has breath, Praise the Lord! Freedom in praising the Lord creates a beautiful tapestry of sound and glory into which God's presence is pleased to dwell.

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