

HOW DO CHRISTIANS WORSHIP GOD?

“21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 23 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. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:21-24, KJV).

Introduction

Loved ones, correct worship necessarily sees God as the proper and ONLY audience (Revelation 22:8-9).

As said in our Scripture reading, true worshipers worship the Father “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24). Joshua

told God's people of old to "fear the Lord and serve Him sincerely and in truth..." (Joshua 24:14).

Correct worship must possess the proper sincere attitude by being conducted "in spirit." This phrase is referring to the disposition of the heart and mind.

The worshiper must genuinely and sincerely engage his spirit in the worship activity. He must be mentally and emotionally involved. He must have a humble, attentive, reverent mindset.

In addition to the proper audience and the proper attitude, correct worship requires the proper actions - "in truth!"

To worship God "in truth," is to worship as God has directed in His word; i.e., according to His instructions found in the new covenant (the New Testament), because His Word is truth (John 17:17).

If we worship God according to the doctrines and commandments of uninspired men, we are worshiping God in vain (Matthew 15:9).

The New Testament also speaks of “ignorant” worship (Acts 17:22-23) and “will” worship (Colossians 2:20-23).

Christians must practice true worship. This is the only kind of worship that is pleasing to God. There are five avenues of church (congregational) worship taught in the New Testament.

1. We Worship God By Teaching/Preaching His Word.

The first century Christians "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrines..." (Acts 2:42).

The apostles taught and preached the saving gospel (or Good News of Jesus Christ - 1 Corinthians 15:1-2; cf. 9:16).

One must be careful NOT to pervert the gospel (Galatians 1:6-9), because ONLY the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16).

"15 The Holy Scriptures are able to make you wise unto salvation. 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; 17 that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

Timothy was told to commit what he had learned to faithful men, "who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2).

2. We Worship God By Praying To God.

The first century Christians "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

Will we be worshiping God in spirit and in truth if we do NOT continue steadfastly in these things? NO.

The Lord taught His disciples to pray to God the Father (Matthew 6:5), NOT to Mary (the mother of Jesus) or some so-called saint.

MEN are to pray everywhere, and giving of thanks should be made for all men (1 Timothy 2:1-8).

Jesus said His disciples ought always to pray and NOT lose heart (Luke 18:1).

Mediate on and be thankful for this wonderful promise given to Christians: "If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us: and if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of him" (1 John 5:14-15).

3. We Worship God By Partaking Of The Lord's Supper (Communion).

The first century Christians "continued steadfastly...in breaking of bread..." (Acts 2:42).

"Jesus took bread, and blessed it and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat ... And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, drink ye all of it" (Matthew 26:26-27).

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16).

Thus, the bread represents the body of Christ, and the cup represents the blood of Christ (Mark 14:22-24).

When we worship God in spirit and in truth, are we commanded to partake of both the bread and cup? YES.

When we eat the bread and drink the cup on the first day of the week, we do so in remembrance of Jesus to show (proclaim) the Lord's death till He come (1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 20:7).

When God told the Israelites in Exodus 20:8 to remember the Sabbath (Saturday), did He mean for them to keep every Sabbath? YES.

When Christians remember Jesus by partaking of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week, should we do this every first day of the week? YES.

4. We Worship God By Singing Praise To His Holy Name.

As Christians worship and praise God with the fruit of our lips (Hebrews 13:15), we are to speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace and making melody in our hearts to the Lord (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

We are to sing with the spirit, and sing with the understanding also (1 Corinthians 14:15).

Do these passages mention the use of mechanical instruments to accompany our singing? NO.

Please notice that no piano, organ, or any other kind of mechanical instrument was used in the worship of the first century saints. History reveals that they did NOT use mechanical instruments of music in their worship for hundreds of years after Christ.

When you attend an assembly of the churches of Christ, you will notice we do NOT use mechanical instrumental music in our worship. Here are two Old Testament incidents that will help illustrate the reason:

Noah was commanded to make an ark out of gopher wood (Genesis 6:14).

Would Noah have sinned if he had built the ark out of any other material or a kind of wood NOT commanded? YES. (cf. Deuteronomy 12:32).

Two Jewish priest, Nadab and Abihu, "offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not" (Leviticus 10:1-2).

As punishment for their disobedience, they were devoured by fire from the Lord. We should learn from these two stories that it is sinful to alter the commands of God.

The wise man wrote, "Add thou not unto his word lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Proverbs 30:6).

As we partake of the Lord's Supper, would it be a sin to put jam on the bread to improve the taste, or add Geritol liquid multivitamin to the cup to aid our enthusiasm? YES.

Every honest believer should now be able to see that it would also be a sin to add mechanical instruments to aid us in singing praises to God.

NOTE: There is NOT a single Scripture in the New Testament that gives Christians the authority to use mechanical instruments (or rhythmic hand clapping) during their worship of God (search the Scriptures and prove it to yourself).

Mechanical instruments are being used in worship simply because emotional led people like the way the beat makes them move and how the instruments make the singing sound.

All believers who use mechanical instruments during worship today have taken an old covenant practice and without authority from the Lord added it to God's New Will! (BEWARE: Revelation 22:18-19).

5. We Worship God By Giving Of Our Increase To Support The Work Of His Church.

The first century Christians "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship..." (Acts 2:42).

Concerning this fellowship or collection for the saints, Christians are shown the example of giving on the first day of the week as God has prospered them (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

Christians are NOT to give grudgingly or of necessity. Thus, it is NOT NECESSARY to give a tenth (or tithe) as the Jews were commanded to do.

Christians are simply to cheerfully give a freewill offering as we purpose in our heart (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Conclusion

Loved ones, the Bible is Right! Every expression in our worship to God is to be done with reverence, awe, and with a heart full of humility.

As we worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24), we are to teach and preach the apostles' doctrine. Preaching the word of God is an expression of worship. And even hearing the word preached is an expression of worship.

In our worship we are to pray, for praying to our heavenly Father is an expression of worship.

We also are to partake of the Lord's Supper, for eating the Lord's Supper is an expression of worship.

We are to sing praises to God (cf. Hebrews 13:15). Singing as God has commanded us is an expression of worship.

Finally, we are to give of our means as we decide in our heart. Giving as God has prospered us is an expression of worship.

Invitation

With love, God says we are sinners (Romans 3:23). He tells us Christ is the Savior (Luke 19:10). He tells us what to do to be saved from our sins (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38).

He tells us about His church (Matthew 16:18-19; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23), and how to worship Him in His church (John 4:24).

He tells us how to live the Christian life by His authority; i.e., in His name (Colossians 3:17). He tells us where the good and the bad will spend eternity (Matthew 25:46).

All mankind must hear and obey God's word (Matthew 7:24-27; 17:5). We obey by DOING what God says (James 1:21-22; Acts 2:37-38, 41).