

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

What is Worship?

Let's consider a few overview questions to get started:

1. What exactly is worship?

Answer: Our Savior gave as good of a summary as can be found anywhere in John 4:24

²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

The idea here being that those who worship God will do so sincerely, genuinely, intelligently and rationally (in spirit) and in harmony with His Will, i.e. pleasing in His sight (truth.)

Note how this is in great contrast to worshipping mechanically, ceremonially, and ritualistically.

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What is Worship?

Let's consider a few overview questions to get started:

2. What are the specific 'acts' are we supposed to do during our worship to God?

Answer: Fortunately for us, these are spelled out with considerable clarity within the pages of the NT. In this study, we'll take a look at these to make sure we're doing what God expects.

3. Can our worship be done according to our own wishes and desires which provide us with a enjoyable worship experience and a gratifying level of spiritual fulfillment?

Answer: No! The NT speaks to this matter rather clearly.

4. But specifically, what do we think about? Focus on?

Answer: We'll look at a passage from the OT in the book of Isaiah which can provide amazing clarity on this very question!

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What is Worship?

Let's begin with various 'acts' of worship designated in the NT:

1. Singing (Also see I Corinthians 14:15)

Hebrews 2:12

¹¹ saying, "I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN,
IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE."

Ephesians 5:19

¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

Colossians 3:16

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and spiritual* songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

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Let's begin with various 'acts' of worship designated in the NT:

2. Prayer

I Thessalonians 5:17

¹⁷ pray without ceasing;

1 Timothy 2:1

¹ First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,

I Corinthians 14:15

¹⁵ What is *the outcome* then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also.

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What is Worship?

Let's begin with various 'acts' of worship designated in the NT:

3. Giving

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

¹ Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also.

² On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.

2 Corinthians 9:7

⁷ Each one *must do* just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 8:12

¹² For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what *a person* has, not according to what he does not have.

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Let's begin with various 'acts' of worship designated in the NT:

4. Preaching/Teaching

Hebrews 10:25

²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Ephesians 4:11-12

¹¹ And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers,

¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

I Timothy 4:13

¹³ Until I come, give attention to the *public reading of Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching.

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Let's begin with various 'acts' of worship designated in the NT:

5. Partaking together of the Lord's Supper

Matthew 26:26-29

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took *some* bread, and after a blessing, He broke *it* and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

²⁷ And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you;

²⁸ for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

²⁹ But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

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What is Worship?

Let's begin with various 'acts' of worship designated in the NT:

5. Partaking together of the Lord's Supper (cont.)

1 Corinthians 11:26

²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Acts 20:7 (Frequency to partake of the LS and also supports the that is it appropriate to preach/teach during the worship service)

⁷ On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul *began* talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.

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What is Worship?

There are also clear indications in scripture that there is an expectation from God that our worship be done both orderly and following the prescribed pattern:

Hebrews 8:5 (It is our duty to seek to understand the proper pattern)
5 who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned *by God* when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN."

Mark 7:7 (Because worship can be done wrong!)

7 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME,
TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'

I Corinthians 14:40

40 But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.

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What is Worship?

But probably the biggest question each of us face is not about what we *do* relating to the 'acts' of worship, but rather what 'worship' is. What exactly do we think about? How do we remain focused and not let our mind wander??

In the Gospel of John 4:19-24, the savior is asked a question regarding worship where he provides tremendous insight.

Let's first examine this passage and then discover the timeless insight which the prophet Isaiah shared regarding worshipping our God!

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John 4:19-24

¹⁹ The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.

²⁰ Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you *people* say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

²³ But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship ***in spirit and truth.***"

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What is Worship?

So, the question stands before us, what is worshipping our God “in spirit and truth?”

Does simply following the “acts of worship” constitute worshipping God? Not necessarily....

True worship is the soul’s adoration of the creator **and** by acting obediently to follow His divine will and instructions!

Revelation 14:7

⁷ and he said with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.”

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What is Worship?

Isaiah 6:1-8 is a passage which, at first glance, would not appear to have anything to do with the worship of God.

But upon close examination, the insight which this prophet of God provides, metaphorically speaking, on our own worship experience to our God is simply and utterly extraordinary! This passage is most commonly known as Isaiah's vision.

Let's take a look!

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What is Worship?

First, our worship to our God begins with a keen awareness of His majesty and greatness. (Verses 1-4)

¹ In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple.

² Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

³ And one called out to another and said,
"Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts,
The whole earth is full of His glory."

⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke.

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What is Worship?

Second, our worship to our God involves a fearful consciousness and awareness of our own sinfulness and the sheer unworthiness of the worshipper. (Verse 5)

⁵ Then I said,
"Woe is me, for I am ruined!
Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I live among a people of unclean lips;
For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

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What is Worship?

Third, our worship to our God is accompanied by the realization of a sense of cleansing and the glorious forgiveness of sin which He freely offers (Verses 6-7)

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs.

⁷ He touched my mouth *with it* and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven."

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What is Worship?

And finally, our worship to our God stimulates an overwhelming response of service which can only be expressed with a single reaction: ***Here am I. Send me!*** (Verse 8)

⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

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What is Worship?

Our conclusions:

1. There are five clearly defined 'acts' of worship found in the NT which, if done properly and with a sense of humility, arise before the throne of our God as a sweet smelling incense! These are: praying, singing, giving, preaching/teaching, and partaking together of the Lord's Supper.
2. However, simply going through the ritualistic motions of following these 'acts of worship' does not necessarily result in a pleasing offering to our God!

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What is Worship?

Our conclusions:

3. Worship, according to our savior, is an event which is not done at a “special place”, but rather a spiritual experience where our worship is done ‘in spirit and in truth.’
4. True worship is the soul’s adoration of the creator **and** by acting obediently to follow His divine will and instructions!
5. Worship also must be done according to God’s pattern and in an orderly manner.

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What is Worship?

Our conclusions (cont.):

6. In Isaiah 6:1-8, the prophet provided eternal clarity into what 'worship' entails with four amazing insights:

- a. Our worship to our God begins with a keen awareness of His majesty and greatness.
- b. Our worship to our God involves a consciousness and awareness of our own sinfulness and the utter unworthiness of the worshipper.
- c. Our worship to our God is accompanied by a realization of a sense of cleansing and the glorious forgiveness of sin which God freely offers.
- d. Our worship to our God stimulates an overwhelming response of service which can only be expressed through a single reaction:

Here am I. Send me!

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