# True Worship Of God

***By R. A. Torrey***

## What Is Worship?

*"And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that He had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped"* (Ex. 4:31).

*"And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever"* (2 Chr. 7:3).

*"And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord"* (2 Chr. 20:18).

*"And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground"* (Neh. 8:6).

Worship is the soul bowing itself in adoring contemplation before the object worshiped. To worship God is to bow before God in adoring contemplation of Himself.

The word "worship" is commonly used in a very loose and unscriptural manner, for example, we speak of the whole service of Lord's Day morning and evening as "public worship," but there is a great deal in it that is not worship. Reading the Bible and meditating upon it is not worship. It may lead to worship, but it is not worship. Listening to a sermon is not worship. Praying is not worship. It may be, and should be, accompanied by worship; but it is not worship.

Singing is not necessarily nor generally worship. There are hymns which, if sung intelligently and in the proper spirit, would be worship, but they are comparatively few in the hymnology of the day.

Worship is a definite act of a character very clearly defined in the Bible. It is, as said, the soul bowing before God in adoring contemplation of Himself. The root of the Hebrew word translated "worship" in the Old Testament means "to bow down."

It has been well said, "In prayer we are occupied with our needs, in thanksgiving we are occupied with our blessings, in worship we are occupied with Himself."

## Whom to Worship

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*"Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve"* (Matt. 4:10).

We should worship the Lord our God and Him alone. We may admire men, we must worship God alone. No holy man, saint, nor angel should be worshiped.

*"And when it came to pass that Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man"* (Acts 10:25-26).

*"And I John am he that heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them which keep the words of this book: worship God"* (Rev. 22:8-9).

We should worship the Father and Jesus Christ. How do we reconcile worshiping Jesus Christ with Matthew 4:10: *"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve"*?

*"And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God"* (John 20:28). Jesus Christ is the Lord our God.

**The Duty of Worship**

*"Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve"* (Matt. 4:10).

*"And again, when He bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him"* (Heb. 1:6).

Worship of God and of Christ is commanded. We owe worship to God. It is His due. We owe love to man, obedience to parents, worship to God. It is our first duty toward Him. He is the All holy, All wise, Almighty, The Infinite, All Perfect One, and our rightful attitude toward Him is that of bowing before Him, or prostrating ourselves before Him, in adoring contemplation of His infinite loveliness and glory, of His attributes, of Himself.

If we do not worship God we are robbing Him of what is His due. It is not enough that we obey Him, that we pray to Him, that we return thanks to Him, that we seek to serve Him and do His will. We must worship.

Have you ever worshiped God? How much time do you spend daily in worshiping Him – in pure and simple worship, in bowing before Him in silent and adoring contemplation of Himself?

*"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"* (John 4:23).

God is seeking true worshipers. The one thing above all else that God desires of men is

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worship. God desires obedience of men, He desires service, He desires prayer, He desires praise and thanksgiving, but His supreme desire from men is worship. He is *seeking* "worshipers."

It has been said that "We are saved that we may serve." This is true, but still more profoundly true is it that we are saved that we may worship. The whole work of redemption finds its culmination and completion in a body of men and women being found and fitted to worship God.

*"After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 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... What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?... These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them"* (Rev. 7:9-15).

The word translated "serve" here, is the same word translated "worship" in Philippians 3:3.

**Where to Worship**

The place is not important. *"The woman saith unto Him, Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews. 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"* (John 4:19-23).

**How to Worship**

We should worship on the ground of the shed blood of Jesus. There is no approach to God except on the ground of shed blood. *"But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people... How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"* (Heb. 9:7, 14).

*"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus"* (Heb. 10:19).

We should worship by the Spirit of God. *"For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh"* (Phil. 3:3). Compare John 4:24: *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."*

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The only true worship, worship which is acceptable to God, is the worship which the Spirit inspires. Not all worship of God is "in the Spirit." Very much is of man himself, in the power of his own will. It is of the flesh. The flesh seeks to intrude into every sphere of life, even the highest and most sacred. The flesh has its worship. Men seek to do the things that please God, and win credit for themselves, of their own motion and in their own strength.

But this worship is not acceptable. Men may be very earnest in this worship, very sincere in it, but it is not acceptable. It is not what God is seeking.

God is seeking worshipers who worship in the Spirit, and who have *"no confidence in the flesh."* To worship aright we must recognize the utter inability of the flesh – that is, ourselves untaught, unprompted and ungoverned by God's Spirit – to worship acceptably. We must realize the danger there is that the flesh intrude itself into our worship. In utter self-abnegation we must cast ourselves upon the Holy Spirit to lead us in our worship.

The first thing we should do when we would worship is, with a realization of our own utter helplessness, to look up to the Holy Spirit to teach us and enable us to worship aright. He must present God to our mind for our contemplation. He must subdue and awe our hearts before Him in true adoration.

The only living that is acceptable to God is living in the Spirit, the only walk that is acceptable to God is walk in the Spirit, the only service that is acceptable to God is service in the Spirit, the only prayer that is acceptable to God is prayer in the Spirit, the only thanks that are acceptable to God, are thanks in the Spirit, and the only worship that is acceptable to God is worship in the Spirit. Would we worship aright our hearts must look up and cry, "Teach me, Holy Spirit to worship"; and He will do it.

We should worship *"in truth." "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:24).

What does it mean to *"worship in truth"*? *"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth"* (1 John 3:18).

Not in mere form or profession or pretense, but in reality. There is much worship that is not real. The head bows, the body is prostrated, but the soul does not bow in true adoration before God. The Spirit alone leads to worship in truth.

**The Results of True Worship**

When there is true worship the Father is satisfied. He has found what He seeks. *"The Father seeketh such to worship Him"* (John 4:23).

The worshiper is satisfied. His highest joy is found. *"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple"* (Psa. 27:4).

There is no higher, no deeper, no purer joy than that which springs from the adoring

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contemplation of God. I have walked miles, and climbed through underbrush and briars and over crags and precipice, just to get some beautiful view, and as I have looked out upon it, and feasted upon the never-to-be-forgotten vision of mountain and valley, forest and river, village and hamlet, cloud and sunshine, I have felt well repaid for the trial and suffering and weariness. I have sat by the hour before a great painting in joyous beholding of its beauty.

Earth has few purer joys than these, but they are nothing to the profound and holy joy that fills the soul as we bow before God in worship, asking nothing, seeking nothing from Him, occupied with and satisfied with Himself. Was the Psalmist thinking only of the future, or of what he had enjoyed in the present, when he wrote: *"In Thy presence is fulness of joy"*? (Psa. 16:11). One of the highest privileges of heaven will be that we shall see His face.

The worshiper is transformed into God's likeness from glory to glory. *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." "But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit"* (2 Cor. 3:18, KJV and RV).

Beholding God and worshiping God we become like God (Moses, Ex. 34:29). Our complete transformation into His likeness will come through the complete and undimmed vision of Himself.

Worship empties us of pride, and reveals our weakness and vileness. *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is"* (1 John 3:2). *"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts"* (Isa. 6:5).

*"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes"* (Job 42:5-6).

*"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint"* (Isa. 40:31).

It is true that power comes in answer to definite prayer, but not only in answer to prayer. Power belongeth unto God, and the coming into contact and remaining in contact with God in worship fills our souls with power.

Spiritual power has many points of similarity to electric force, and just as a receptive body can be charged with electricity by being insulated and brought into contact with some source of electric energy, so we can be charged with the energy of God by the insulation from the world and contact with Himself that is found in worship.

As we worship God His power flows into us. Nights spent in contact with God, on our faces before Him in worship, are followed by days of power in contact with men. One great secret of the lack of power in service today is the absence of worship in our relations to God Himself.

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– Taken from *What The Bible Teaches* by R. A. Torrey.

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