

THE ACTS OF WORSHIP

(Colossians 3:17)

1) God has always set the standard for worship.

- a) When you read about worship in either the Patriarchal Age or the Mosaic Age, God set the standard for acceptable worship.
- b) Genesis 4 reveals the facts of Patriarchal worship of God.
 - i) Genesis 4:3-5.
 - ii) Cain offered from the ground while Abel offered from the flock.
 - iii) God respected, or accepted or looked upon with favor, Abel's offering.
 - iv) God did not respect, or accept or look upon with favor, Cain's offering.
 - v) The reason for this is that Abel's sacrifice was by faith (Hebrews 11:4) and faith comes by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17).
- c) God had made known what He would accept in worship to Him and Abel offered it and Cain did not.
- d) When you come to the Mosaic Age, God revealed to Moses what was acceptable to Him in worship and even some things that would not be acceptable.
 - i) It was only worship offered according to what can be found in Exodus and Leviticus that would be accepted.
 - ii) It was very detailed in who was to offer it and how it was to be offered.
 - iii) When you read 1 Kings 12-13, you see that Jeroboam came along and changed the worship of God, in place, people, and performance.
 - iv) Notice the result of it (1 Kings 13:34).
 - v) Later, the Israelites changed the worship of God (Jeremiah 7:31) – God said He hadn't commanded them to do that and it had never even entered His mind to have them do such a thing.
- e) In both dispensations of time, God set the parameters for acceptable worship by revealing what He would accept to those that would worship Him.

2) God has set the standard of worship for our time.

- a) God has all authority as we discussed last week.
- b) That authority has been given to Jesus (Matthew 28:18).
- c) It is through Jesus that God speaks to us today (Hebrews 1:1-2).
- d) Jesus revealed that God must be worshiped in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).
- e) If God was so specific under the previous two dispensations of time, the Patriarchal and the Mosaic, why would He not be specific in time that is described by inspiration as better, all throughout the book of Hebrews?
- f) John 17:17 – God's word is truth, therefore, we are to worship according to God's word and it alone.
 - i) It is only through acceptance of and adherence to God's word that one can be set apart from the world.
 - ii) This is what it means to be sanctified.

- g) Jesus said... (Matthew 15:9).
 - i) Our Lord said that there were those worshiping in vain.
 - ii) Thayer wrote this about the meaning of the word vain: “a futile attempt, folly”.
 - iii) Bullinger, in his lexicon, has this: “foolishly, that is fruitlessly”.
- h) Paul wrote... Colossians 2:23).
 - i) Notice what is described as will-worship.
 - ii) About this phrase Thayer wrote, “worship which one devises and prescribes for himself”.
 - iii) Bullinger wrote, “a self-devised external form of ceremonial service, a mode of ceremonial worship chosen for one's self.”
- i) The possibility of worshiping God in a way that does not please Him does exist.
- j) In reality, there are only two types of worship: that which is acceptable to God and that which is unacceptable.
- k) Anything not found in truth, God’s word, is unacceptable.

3) Truthful worship.

- a) As noticed, God was very plain and detailed in what He would accept in previous dispensations of time.
- b) God is no less plain and detailed in the Christian dispensation of time, in which we are living.
- c) What we must do to determine what truthful worship is, is to go to the New Testament and see what the early Christians did in worship.
- d) If what they did was acceptable then, we know it will be acceptable today.
- e) Early Christians gave of their means (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
 - i) God is the Giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17).
 - ii) We give to God in order to show our gratitude for what He has given us.
 - iii) We also give so the work of the church can be accomplished.
 - iv) We give to obey the command to give – it isn’t optional.
 - v) There is no way that we should take and take from God but never give back.
- f) Early Christians partook of the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7).
 - i) This is referred to in various ways in the New Testament:
 - (1) Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20).
 - (2) Lord’s table (1 Corinthians 10:21).
 - (3) Breaking of bread (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7).
 - (4) Communion (1 Corinthians 10:16).
 - ii) Jesus instituted this supper the night of His betrayal (Matthew 26:26-29).
 - iii) It is to be observed in memory of the death of Christ.
 - iv) It involves the eating of unleavened bread and the drinking of the fruit of the vine.
 - v) It is a simple but deeply spiritual meal partaken of by Christians.
- g) Early Christians sang praises to God (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).
 - i) They used the instrument of their voice to praise God.

- ii) There is no way to justify the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God.
 - (1) We can't appeal to the Old Testament because it is not binding on us (Colossians 3:17).
 - (2) Paul taught that those who sought to be under the Old Law had fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4).
- iii) All that the early Christians did was sing with their voices only (Acts 16:25; 1 Corinthians 14:15; James 5:13).
- h) The early Christians prayed (Acts 2:42).
 - i) The command is to pray to God through Christ (Ephesians 5:20) because Christ is our Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5).
 - ii) We are to pray for God's will to be done (1 John 5:14-15).
 - iii) We are to be persistent and reverent (Luke 18:1; 11:2).
- i) Early Christians had preaching in their worship services (Acts 20:7).
 - i) 1 Corinthians 1:21.
 - ii) 1 Corinthians 4:17.
 - iii) It is through preaching that the gospel is proclaimed.
- j) Two of these acts are limited by time.
 - i) The giving we do in worship to God is limited to the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), as well as partaking of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7).
 - ii) The other acts of worship can be done at any time and in any place.
- k) These are the only acts of worship that are found in truth, In God's word.
- l) Anything else that is done would fall into the vain, will-worship area.