



OUR WORSHIP IS IMPORTANT

Our Worship is Important

For it Reveals the Condition of our Hearts

B. P. Harris

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BPH

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“Beware, lest your hearts be deceived and you turn away and serve other gods and worship them.”

Deut. 11:16 NASB

“Those who make them will become like them, everyone who trusts in them. **Psalm 115: 8 NASB**

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.” **I John 5:21 KJV**

Little children, keep yourselves from idols...from heathen idols and idolatry, into which the saints in those times might be liable to be drawn, by reason of their dwelling among heathen idolaters and being related to them...**Moreover, errors and false doctrines, which are the figments of men’s minds, and what they are fond of, may be called idols, and should be guarded against, and abstained from,...**nor should...**anything be loved more than God or Christ;** the One only living and true God—Father, Son, and Spirit. He is only to be worshipped, feared, and loved. **John Gill**

Many in the world today worship what they do not know, a god that is not really a god, a god which is represented in images created by man. Such images or idols show that the hearts of such worshippers are alienated from the life of God (Eph. 4:18); they do not know that they are dead in their trespasses and sins in dire need of God's forgiveness and salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. Without Christ all men and women are hopelessly lost. It should break our hearts. Our prayer should be that every lost soul hears the good news of Jesus Christ and is wondrously saved.

Then there are others who worship a God whose nature they have changed over into a nature of their own understanding. Some change God into a Unitarian God and others change Him into an Arian God. Both reveal a heart in need of repentance and salvation; this too is a form of idolatry, for man's logic and/or wisdom becomes the overriding arbitrator in the decision of who God is, rather than it being the simple acceptance of the revelation of God by faith. Thus, the true God is changed into, what John Gill calls, a "figment of men's minds," in which case that idolatrous figment becomes the thing that is worshipped. Our prayer should be that "God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will" (II Tim. 2:25-26 NASB).

Then there are Christians who worship the one true God, who reject the heresy of Unitarianism and reject the heresy of Arianism, but who have, nevertheless, changed the nature of God into a non-processional God in contradiction to revelation of God in the Bible, and the revelation that has always been affirmed by the Church throughout many centuries in the Historic Christian Faith. They deny the eternal generation or begetting of the Son of God from the Father, to the dishonour of the Father who begets, and to the dishonour

of the Son who has been eternally begotten, and to the dishonour of the Holy Spirit who has affirmed the blessed doctrine in Scripture.¹ This reveals a heart, not in need of salvation, but a heart in need of sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth—for while they most assuredly are saved, they have also been misled by their own logic and wisdom in contradistinction to the Faith that was “once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3 NASB). Our prayer should be that they repent of their departure from the Historic Christian Faith and once more affirm, with untold numbers of godly Christians throughout the centuries, the truth of the Only-Begotten Son of God, whose “goings forth” (i.e. His procession from the Father) has been from everlasting (Micah 5:2), as the Church has always believed.

Then, finally, there are others, who while knowing the one true God in the face of Jesus Christ (for which we should rejoice) many times will worship God for the mere experience of worship, rather than for the One who is to be worshipped. This is because the Church’s worship, in some cases, has been turned into a time of entertainment of sight and sound, with the intention, perhaps, unwittingly, of eliciting strong emotions in the souls of the worshippers, which emotions, over time, unfortunately become the standard by which they measure (in their estimation) what they consider to be either a good or boring time of worship. This reveals hearts in need of

¹ If one wishes to study this issue in depth, please see this author’s work: *Understanding the Trinity: An Encouragement to Abide in the Doctrine in both Faith and Practice* (Assembly Bookshelf, Sacramento, 2006), also see John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity: Or a System of Evangelical Truths Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (The Baptist Standard Bearer, Paris, AR, 2001) especially pages 140-160, or J. C. Philpot, *The True, Proper, and Eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God* (London, J. Gadsby, 1861)

spiritual growth and discernment. Our prayer for them should be that God in His love and mercy will grant them “a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,” so that they “may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,” so that they may be able “to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge,” and so “be filled up to all the fulness of God,” so that they may “grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,” to “a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.” (Eph. 1:18; 3:18-19; 4:15, 13 NASB).

Beloved, God has revealed Himself in the Word of God. He has revealed Himself in all that He has created, so that all men and women are without excuse (Rom. 1:20). Worship is important, for not only does it reveal, it also influences, the condition of our hearts. Those who worship idols will become like those idols, their hearts being devoid of the life of God. Those who worship a God of their own understanding will become like that God of their own understanding; they may be very religious, but their hearts will be devoid of the truth. Those who worship a God, whose nature has been changed, according to their logic, into a non-processional God, will become non-processional in their living, being influenced more by logic, wisdom and natural talents in the things of God, than by the revelation of God in the Word.

It is so important to worship the one true God of the Bible as revealed in the Word of God and affirmed by the Church for two millennia in the Historic Christian Faith, for only then can we, by God’s grace, “speak the truth in love” and “grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, *even* Christ” (Eph. 4:15 NASB).

May God speak to the heart of anyone who might read this little booklet, some in need of salvation, some in need of repentance and sanctification, and some in need of

spiritual growth and discernment. May He remind us that the true worshippers the Father desires are worshippers who worship in Spirit and TRUTH (Jn. 4:23).

In this light, we will briefly look at the importance of the “who” of worship, the “where” of worship, the “when” of worship, the “why” of worship, and the “whereon” of our worship.

1) It is important “who” we worship. Do we worship the God of the Bible or, as is done by many throughout the world, a god who is not God at all, or, indeed, if supposedly the God of the Bible, a God that we have changed over into our own image, according to our own reason and logic in total contradiction to the revelation that has been given to us in the Bible, and that which has always affirmed in the Historic Christian Faith? God desires us to worship Him in Spirit and Truth, i.e. according to the revelation of Himself that He has granted to us in the Word of God—anything less is changing the God we worship into an image of our own making.

We are to worship the very One into whose Name we are baptized—the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit—the Father, who is God over all, through all, in all, and from whom are all things (Eph. 4:6; I Cor. 8:6)—the Son, who is true God of true God, the Only Begotten Son of God, begotten before all time, whose goings forth have been from everlasting, ever dwelling in the bosom of the Father (Micah 5:2; John 1:14, 18; I Jn. 5:20 KJV)—and the Holy Spirit, who eternally proceeds from the Father, the One who is the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, the Eternal Spirit, (John 15:26; Heb. 9:14 NASB). This is the God of the Bible, the Blessed Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit; anything less is not the God of the Bible.

If we claim to worship in Spirit and in TRUTH, then this is the God we should worship, for the Spirit is Truth, and the Holy Spirit will never lead anyone into anything less or different than that which has been revealed, for anything less or different would be false, and the Spirit of Truth will never lead anyone into that which is false. And so, if one does not worship the God as revealed above in the Bible, and affirmed by the Church in the Historic Christian Faith for almost two thousand years, one, by definition, cannot claim to be worshipping God in Spirit and TRUTH.

This is the God of the Bible; it has been affirmed in the Historic Christian Faith by godly Christians from every generation and borne witness to by a faithful Church from the Day of Pentecost until the present time. May we continue to be faithful to God's revelation of Himself in the Word, ever holding fast to the Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints, ever worshipping the one true God of the Bible—God the Everlasting Father, from whom are all things, the Everlasting Son, who is the Only-Begotten Son of God, being true God of true God, and the Eternal Spirit, He who is the Blessed Holy Spirit of God. Anything less is dishonouring to God.

Applicable Scriptures

Exodus 20:3-6 Thou shalt have **no other gods before me.** ⁴ Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: ⁵ **Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them:** for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; ⁶ And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. KJV

Romans 1:21-23 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, ²³ **And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.**
KJV

Isaiah 46:6-10 They lavish gold out of the bag, And weigh silver on the scales; **They hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god; They prostrate themselves, yes, they worship.** ⁷ They bear it on the shoulder, they carry it and set it in its place, and it stands; From its place it shall not move. Though *one* cries out to it, yet it cannot answer nor save him out of his trouble. ⁸ “Remember this, and show yourselves men; Recall to mind, O you transgressors. ⁹ Remember the former things of old, For I *am* God, and *there is* no other; I *am* God, and *there is* none like Me, ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure.’”
KJV

Acts 17:22-29 Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; ²³ “for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: ²⁴ “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. ²⁵ “Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. ²⁶ “And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, ²⁷ “so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸ “for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’ ²⁹ “Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, **we**

ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. NKJV

John 1:14, 18 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of **the only begotten of the Father**, full of grace and truth.¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*. NKJV

John 16:30 Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe **that thou camest forth from God.** KJV

Micah 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; **whose goings forth have been** from of old, **from everlasting.** KJV

Hebrews 1:1-3 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,² has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;³ who being the brightness of *His* glory and the **express image of His person**, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. NKJV

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which **proceedeth from the Father**, he shall testify of me. KJV

Matthew 28:19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” NKJV

2) It is important “where” we worship. Worship can be done anywhere *in spirit*, for true worship is done by

the Spirit of God and the Spirit of God indwells the heart of every believer. But God especially desires that we all worship together in “one place,” having been gathered together by His Spirit in assembly.

In the Old Testament such worship was done within the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and then within the Temple in Jerusalem. But in the New Testament God desires such worship to be done within the Church, which is the Temple of God in this dispensation of grace. It pleases the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit that we never abandon the physical assembling of ourselves together for worship in Church, for while we can worship anywhere and anytime in spirit, it should never be done at the expense of our worship of God in Church—now in this dispensation, and unto eternity.

Applicable Scriptures

John 4:20-24 “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.**” NKJV

Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were **all together in one place.** NASB

I Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that **you are the temple of God** and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? NKJV

Hebrews 10:21-25 And *having* a High Priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies

washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ **not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together**, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. NKJV

3) It is important “when” we worship. As we said before, not only can worship be done anywhere, it can also be done at anytime, for in Him “we live and move and have our being.” But God desires that we especially worship Him on the Lord’s Day, gathered together in His Name—not in our name, nor in the name of any of His servants, nor in any other name, but only the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We should be gathered in His Name to manifest His body upon earth on the one special day He has chosen for our worship, the Day of His Resurrection, i.e. the first day of the week. In this way His death, burial and resurrection will continually be proclaimed upon this earth on that special Day.

Applicable Scriptures

Luke 24: 1a, 13, 28-36 Now on the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning... ¹³ Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. ²⁸ Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. ²⁹ But they constrained Him, saying, “**Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.**” And He went in to stay with them. ³⁰ Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, **that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.** ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. ³² And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” ³³ **So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who***

were with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, “**The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!**” ³⁵ And they told about the things *that had happened* on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread. ³⁶ **Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, “Peace to you.”** NKJV

Acts 20:7 And on the **first day of the week**, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul *began* talking to them, intending to depart the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight. NASB

I Corinthians 16:2 On the **first day of every week** let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. NASB

Revelation 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the **Lord's day**, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the *sound* of a trumpet. NASB

4) It is important “why” we worship. Do we worship for our own pleasure or for God’s pleasure? Do we worship by Old Testament standards or by New Testament standards? Do we worship for our own emotional *high*, or do we worship the one who is the *Most High*? Unfortunately, in some Churches, one will find music and lights being utilized for worship in ways not dissimilar to a weekend concert. Tempo and beat—lights and large screens—are now used to create and control the desired emotions of the worshippers in ways no different than what one might find being used by modern musicians performing for eager concert-goers—first an upbeat song, then a quiet song, next strobing lights, then dimming lights, at one time, thought provoking images upon a screen, then, at another time, inspiring images upon the screen.

As such, Christians are more and more judging the quality of worship by the emotional responses of their souls

generated by these outward techniques, than by the Spirit of God within, or the Word of God dwelling down deep in their hearts.

Hymns filled with truth and doctrines are more and more being replaced with songs more adaptable for the creation of these desired emotional responses and atmospheres. As a consequence, some Christians now consider worship to be unsatisfying if it does not attain a certain level of emotion and/or excitement. Yet, does not such a mindset reveal that the Church's worship is actually being transformed into a time for ourselves, rather than a time for God?

More and more, a Christian's perception of worship is judged by the outward things of the soul, rather than by the inward things of the Spirit or the Word. Our dependence on sight and sound for worship is causing "feelings" to become the paramount factor in worship, not "faith."

In some circles worship has been turned into such an elaborate and an extravagant production of lights and sounds that such productions are now considered sacrosanct for worship, so much so, that a young Christian might think that any worship without such artificially produced atmospheres is not worship at all, or if it is worship, it is simply boring worship.

As a result, some Christians are now coming to Church to be entertained—in the name of worship; some are now coming to experience elaborate productions of sight and sound—in the name of worship; and some are now coming to experience the emotional and physical excitement of amplified rhythm and beat—all in the name of worship.

But, beloved, that should never be the reason for worship; worship is for God. We should worship God in humble adoration without any thought for ourselves. It should make no difference, whether God grants the pleasure that comes from experiencing His presence in our souls in

worship, or He does not, for Christians are called to worship by *faith*, not *feelings*.

Faith will never depend on feelings or emotions for worship, nor will it depend on orchestrated atmospheres and elaborate displays of lights (all things meant to envelop or to excite), for faith apprehends those things which cannot be seen; it does not need such outward stimuli for worship. Scripture exhorts and reminds us that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, **the evidence of things not seen**” (Heb. 11:1), and that we are called to draw near with true hearts “**in full assurance of faith**” in worship (Heb. 10:22).

Thus, for one who worships by faith, such outward displays of excitement and sound do not matter, nor does it matter if a song be a long hymn filled with deep doctrine, or a short song filled with simple adoration; both are equally acceptable for worship, for the focus is now on God, and not on ourselves. Such a one does not need to receive such outward displays of music and lights to worship, for they are there to *give* to God, not to *receive* from God.

Beloved, **true worship is “giving,” not “receiving.”** And it is only when that attitude of the heart becomes established in us that we will truly be able to honour and worship Him with unselfish adoration.

But many young Christians do not understand this since they are assured that such modern day displays of lights and sounds—meant to excite—are completely appropriate for worship. And so many lose themselves in the tempo and beat, not realizing that they are focusing more on what they are experiencing in worship than what God might be receiving from our worship.

And this is not to say that God will not, nevertheless, still receive such worship that comes from His children. He loves all His children, and one cannot doubt that such modern day worshippers still love Him. Scripture tells us that the Lord Jesus not only received worship from those who worshipped

by faith, but He also received that worship from those whose faith was weak, and even from those who were simply caught up by the outward excitement of it all (see John 9:38; Mk. 9:24; Lu. 19:35-44). And yet, He received it all in love, even though much of that worship was mixed and short lived, while what it really should have been was unmixed and enduring. (We all fail in this; none of us worships as we should—and as our Lord always did—with complete perfection and unmixed faith. As such, we all need to learn to worship as Jesus our Lord did, in both spirit and truth, and with no thought of ourselves.

Perhaps, such outward worship might be acceptable in the camp of Israel in the wilderness, or maybe even in the outer court of the tabernacle or temple (cf. Ex. 33:10; Deut. 26:10-11; II Chron. 29:25-30), but God desires our worship to now be in in the **Holy of Holies**, free from all such outward things of natural talent and human endeavor. We are told in Scripture to be careful to never mix the wool and the linen, so as to avoid the sweat of human endeavour (Ezekiel 44:17-18). Our worship is to be in spirit, not simply in our soul. God wants our worship to now be full of the inward things of faith, meekness, and self-control. No longer are we called to worship by Old Testament standards—by the confines of a “Samaria,” or the confines of a “Jerusalem,” so to speak. Now we are called to worship by New Testament standards—by a “new and living way,” made possible by the blood of our Lord—in “spirit and truth,” in the fullest “assurance of faith,” in the Holiest of all (John 4:20-24; Heb. 10:5-10,19-22)!

Then, it will not matter as to what we will “receive” from worship, for we will be more concerned as to what God will “receive” from worship. If God in His mercy and love allows us to experience the wonders of His grace within our souls in the Holiest of all, we will rejoice and be thankful, but, equally if He chooses to withhold from our souls that wonderful experience of His presence and grace in our

worship, we will still rejoice and be thankful, for our worship is by faith! Remember Habakkuk (See Hab. 3:17-19)!

And that is not to say that worship should not be joyous or uplifting—it should be both! Christians should be one of the most joyful people on earth. Paul tells us to, “Rejoice in the Lord always!” And then again, he says, “Rejoice!” (Phil. 4:4). And the writer of Hebrews says that we should “continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God” (Heb. 13:15). The problem is never one’s emotions in worship. The problem, rather, is discerning from where does that emotion arise, and from what or where does it proceed? In some Churches, joy or emotions are made to arise from *without*, as we mentioned before, by carefully orchestrated atmospheres all intended to elicit such feelings. But God desires our joy or emotions to arise and proceed from *within*, from our hearts or human spirits, by our faith and the fruit of the Spirit. For when it arises from without, man might be glorified, but when it arises from within, only God is glorified.

As such, Christians should never seek for, or imitate the former, for the outwardly produced emotions of the former may fluctuate and may sometimes even disappear (for it needs the continued outward assistance of sight and sound to sustain its existence); but the emotions of the latter will always be sure and enduring as we are careful to always walk and worship by faith, walk and worship by the Spirit, and walk and worship by the precious Word of God. Why? Because they will be coming from within, from the Blessed Holy Spirit, in accordance with the Sacred Scripture, apart from all external stimuli.

Joy in worship should never be based upon the outward things of human endeavor and natural talent; rather, our joy should always be based upon those inward things of the Spirit and God’s Holy Word. Therefore, it will not matter whether we find ourselves in a bright, clean room, or we find

ourselves in a dark, dank prison (like Paul and Silas)—our joy in worship will be the same, for it arises from our spirit with the Holy Spirit within!

Acts 16:24-25 Who, having received such a charge, **thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.** ²⁵ And at midnight **Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God:** and the prisoners heard them. KJV

True worship, beloved, must always be in Spirit and in Truth; it should never depend on such outward physical manipulations of sight and sound adapted from the world, nor should it be judged by the measure of our feelings or the level of our excitement; rather, it should depend upon the inward things of the Spirit, in accordance with God's Word, engendered by faith in our spirit, and intended solely to bring about God's pleasure—never our own. May it always be.

Applicable Scriptures

Revelation 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, **to receive** glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, **and for thy pleasure** they are and were created. KJV

Habakkuk 3:17-19 “**Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines;** the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: ¹⁸ **Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.** ¹⁹ The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.” KJV

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. NKJV

John 9:38 And he said, Lord, **I believe**. And **he worshipped him**.
KJV

Philippians 3:3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God **in the spirit**, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and **have no confidence in the flesh**. KJV

Psalms 118:8 It is **better to trust in the LORD** than to put confidence in man. KJV

Hebrews 10:21-25 and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God,²² **let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith**, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;²⁴ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,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. NASB

Hebrews 11:21 **By faith** Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and **worshiped**, *leaning* on the top of his staff. NASB

5) The important “whereon” of worship—the remembrance of the Lord in the “breaking of bread.” It is very fitting that we conclude with the “whereon” of worship, that upon which all worship is based, and so derived. The remembrance of the Lord in the breaking of bread is the basis, and, indeed, the very well-spring of every act of worship, since it, itself, is rooted in the very worship of the Son of Man, our God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As such, the “whereon” of worship, that on which all worship is based, is none other than that wonderful ordinance that was given to us by our Lord—the breaking of bread, in which we remember the Lord in the bread and the cup,

bespeaking that ultimate act of worship found in the sacrifice of Himself upon the cross (cf. Eph. 5:2 & Heb. 9:1-26 NASB).

The remembrance of the Lord in the breaking of bread was one of those commandments given to the apostles by our Lord, so that they, in turn, would pass it on to every disciple (Matt. 28:20). We know this because Acts 2:42 tells us that the early Church “continued steadfastly,” in the apostles' teaching; which contextually included “the breaking of bread.” The early Church never would have even known about the ordinance of breaking bread if the apostles had not taught them. As such, we see in Scripture that the early Church continued to faithfully remember the Lord in worship, through breaking bread every day of the week, which would, of course, also include the first day of the week.

This is the “whereon,” and, indeed, not only the whereon but also the very source of all worship before God. It is the foundation and the very means given to us by our Lord, by which we can worship the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit in spirit and in truth. It is the Church's highest act of worship.

In this light it is important to remember that our Lord gave His apostles this commandment to remember Him in the bread and cup during His last meal with them, that being the feast of Passover. He established this New Covenant ordinance within the Old Covenant's ordinance of Passover, thereby making known to His apostles that His body and blood (the precious blood of the New Covenant) laid the basis for their own Passover of deliverance, not from the bondage of Egypt, as in the Old Covenant, but from the bondage of sin and death, as shown in the New Covenant.

The apostles already knew, of course, from the Old Testament Scriptures, that the feast of Passover was based upon the blood of a lamb being slain for the people. Throughout the centuries it forever reminded the children of Israel of their deliverance from Egypt that was provided for

them by God; and it was during that time, during that last Passover meal, during their time of worship and remembrance with the Lord, while they were partaking of that very lamb slain under the Old Covenant (symbolizing the Lord Jesus Christ) that our Lord chose to institute for them something entirely new!

We see this recorded for us in the New Testament, especially in the Gospel of John, where it tells us that our Lord Jesus Christ was that *Lamb of God* that was given to take away the sins of the world (Jn. 1:29)! And we see it in the epistles of Paul, where we are told that *Christ our Passover was slain* (I Cor. 5:7). Thus, the Lord's Table, also known as the Breaking of Bread, Holy Communion, the Remembrance Meeting, and/or the Eucharist (which is derived from a transliteration of the Greek word εὐχαριστέω—to give thanks—in I Cor. 11:24) is biblically linked in Scripture with the *lamb of the Passover* feast, which, in turn, we find was linked by the Holy Spirit with worship, not only in the Old Testament, but also in the New (e.g. Ex. 12:27; Jn. 12:1, 20).

In fact, in the LXX, the last phrase of Exodus 13:5, referring to the remembrance of Passover mentioned in Ex.13:3 could be translated: “you shall do this worship.” The remembrance of Passover was considered worship before God (also cf. Ex. 12:25-27).

As such, the linkage of this remembrance of Passover in worship, becomes all the more significant for us, for not only does the remembrance point backward to God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt, through the shed blood of a lamb, it also points forward to Christ, the Lamb of God, whose shed blood provides for our deliverance from a slavery far worse than that of Egypt, our slavery to sin and death. It points forward to the remembrance of Christ our Passover, which lays the foundation for our worship. It teaches us what true worship really is. Why? Because the highest act of worship that ever was, is, or ever could be, is revealed in

Christ our Passover Lamb, who, in loving obedience to the Father, bowed Himself low in worship, declaring to Him in the garden of Gethsemane—“Not my will, but thine be done” (Luke 22:42).

His submission to the will of the Father in the garden was an act of pure worship. It fulfilled, not only the symbolism of the Passover lamb, it also fulfilled the Old Testament symbolism of Isaac, who was Himself an only-begotten son, whose own willingness to be bound upon an altar for sacrifice, was his way of saying the same thing, “Not my will, but thine be done” (see Gen. 22:5).

Beloved, the greatest, highest, and most pure act of worship, by which all worship is measured, is the worship demonstrated by our Lord, when He submitted to the Father’s will, and offered up His body as a sacrifice for our sin and His blood as the atonement for our iniquity. Even though He was equal with the Father in every way, being consubstantial and one with Him, the Son was willing to empty Himself, and take upon Himself the form of a bond-servant, as Paul tells us in Phil. 2:6-9.

Philippians 2:6-8 Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. NASB

Our Lord emptied Himself, **not of His deity**, for that would be impossible, as He is very God of very God, but He emptied Himself of that outward glory that was His from all eternity (John 17:5). He took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh, thereby, showing His *selflessness* in appearing as one that had “no stately form or majesty” (even though He was the King of Israel), nor as one having an appearance that one “should be attracted to Him” (Isa 53:2 NASB). His focus

was purely upon His Father and not on Himself. He was willing to make Himself of no reputation. He never sought attention for Himself. That was true worship.

Indeed, even His incarnation, in and of itself, was a pure act of pure worship, whereby He, in communion with the Father, agreed in the fullness of time to be born of a virgin. But the apostle Paul tells us He did more—not only did He empty Himself in worship when born of Mary, He also humbled Himself in worship by being obedient to the Father to the point of death; and then, He lowered Himself in worship even further, by allowing that death to be upon a cross, the ultimate symbol of shame. His worship was completely *selfless*. He never sought anything for Himself in His worship.

His act of humble obedience to God His Father was the highest and, indeed, the purest act of worship ever done, or, indeed, the highest act of worship that ever could be done. Why? Because only the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was God manifested in the flesh, could lower Himself in worship the way He did, because no one else in heaven or on earth could ever hope to be as high as He, which in turn meant that no one would ever be able to lower themselves more than He.

Thus, dear brethren, our remembrance of our Lord as the Passover Lamb that was slain is a remembrance of the Highest Act of Worship in all of creation, which, when remembered faithfully by us in the bread and the cup, becomes “our highest act of worship” that we can ever hope to attain! In other words, the **remembrance** of *His worship*, becomes the **source** of *our worship*, because it faithfully **shews forth** *His worship*, in humble adoration, till He comes!

Beloved, worship in its most basal sense means “to prostrate oneself before another.” It is a lowering down of ourselves before someone who is higher than we are. Thus, when done in spirit and truth, it becomes an acknowledgement

that we are truly submitting ourselves in worship to another who deserves our obedience and respect. (Of course, in regard to the Son, the Father was higher than the Son—in “order” only—never in substance; in substance the Son was co-equal, consubstantial, and co-eternal with the Father.)

Thus, when we partake of the bread and cup, we are prostrating ourselves, in humble adoration and obedience, to One who is higher than we, thereby admitting that apart from His body and blood, we would be hopelessly lost, but equally admitting, with joy in our hearts, that His sacrifice and blood are eternally sufficient for our sins and eternal salvation. This brings honour and worship to Him! If we wish to worship God, then we should remember His Son in Holy Communion.

And so, I hope we can now begin to see that the worship of remembrance is a time for Him, wherein He is lifted up and given His rightful place in our hearts and in His Church. It is an acknowledgment of a humble heart that, if not for His act of worship, that of the Son in sacrificing His life and glory for us, we would be hopelessly lost for all eternity.

Oh, dear Christian, the remembrance meeting of our Lord in the breaking of bread should never be considered to be a time that is wearisome or tedious because it is not very exciting. If the Son of Man was willing, in an act of purest worship, to forego upon that cross those wonderful feelings that came from His eternal communion with His Eternal Father, so much so that He cried out in anguish, “My God, my God, why has Thou forsaken me?” cannot we be willing to forego that common idea today that worship must always be that which brings us intense emotions and wonderful excitement? That is such a shortened view of worship. The cross was not very exciting for our Lord, yet it was considered by God to be the highest act of worship in all the universe.

O the love and, O the grace, dear saint—that we never need to cry out, “My God, my God, why has Thou forsaken me?” He suffered so much for us when He bore our sins in

His body upon the tree (I Pet. 2:24). He cried that out in agony for us, in complete and utter selflessness, so that we, as believers, would never need to cry that out! That wonderful hymn says it all—

O CHRIST, what burdens bowed Thy head!
Our load was laid on Thee;
Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead ---
To bear all ill for me.
A victim led, Thy blood was shed;
Now there's no load for me.

Death and the curse were in our cup ---
O Christ, 'twas full for Thee!
But Thou hast drained the last dark drop,
'Tis empty now for me.
That bitter cup --- love drank it up;
Left but the love for me.

The tempest's awful voice was heard,
O Christ, it broke on Thee;
Thy open bosom was my ward;
It bore the storm for me.
Thy form was scarred, Thy visage marred;
Now cloudless peace for me.

—Ann Ross Cousin

And so, beloved, the breaking of bread meeting is never tedious or wearisome to one who approaches it in faith, to one who approaches it with nary a thought for themselves, but only with thoughts for God. On the contrary, it becomes a most glorious time, because our focus in worship is on Him and His joy, not on ourselves and our joy. It becomes the most blessed time of worship that we as saints can ever experience

upon this earth, if we are careful to keep our eyes fixed upon Jesus alone and never on ourselves (Heb. 12:2-4).

As such, the “remembrance” of the Lord’s sacrifice for us as we partake of the bread and the cup is the very basis and means of our worship in the Church. Unto eternity we will ever worship and rejoice in *Christ our Passover*, the *Lamb of God* that was slain! (Rev. 5:8-14)

So, to be invited by the Lord to His Table every week is one of the greatest privileges we have as Christians. When we accept His invitation to remember Him and to eat of the bread and drink of the cup, it brings glory, honour and blessing to Him. Why would we not want to give Him this worship every time we gather together in His Name on the Lord’s Day?

In the early Church the apostles thought it was so important that in Jerusalem they worshipped the Lord in remembrance every day of the week (Acts 2:46)! And, later, among the Gentiles, we are told it was done the first day of every week (Acts 20:7).² Yet, in spite of that early example left for us by the apostles, many Churches today have now abandoned that weekly observance and worship. Why?

Some say the reason is that they do not wish the ordinance to become ritualistic or taken for granted, i.e. made common. But, dear Christian, to the one who walks by the Spirit, who worships in spirit and truth, the Lord’s Table could never become common or ritualistic, for when one partakes of the bread and the cup, one is in close communion with Him, worshipping Him, giving Him the glory He deserves!

² More than likely, the reason for this change was because so many Gentile Christians were slaves (cf. I Cor. 1:26-28 & 7:20-21 NASB). And, as such, more than likely, it would be very difficult for them to gather together more often than just once a week for worship, unlike many of their Jewish brethren in Jerusalem who were free.

Moreover, did we not see that the twelve apostles of our Lord remembered the Lord in the breaking of bread, not only weekly, but also daily in Jerusalem! They never feared that such frequency would cause the ordinance to become ritualistic and/or common. Nor did Paul and Barnabas (or, later, Paul and Silas) fear that the ordinance would become ritualistic and/or common by their weekly observance of it among the Churches of the Gentiles. If the apostles had no fear in that regard, neither should we.

This author has had the wonderful privilege of remembering the Lord in the breaking of bread every Lord's Day for many, many, many years. And it has never, never become common or ritualistic, but it has always been a most blessed time of worship and a most wonderful time of communion with the Lord. So again, the question must be asked, "Why has the weekly observance of the Lord's Table ceased in so many Churches on the first day of the week?"

Perhaps, others might answer that question by saying that it is because there is no direct command in Scripture for us to do so weekly, so we choose to do it monthly. But, beloved, the same could be said in regard to the frequency of our gathering together in Church. There is no "direct command" in Scripture that the Church should meet on the first day of every week, and yet we do! So if that is our reason as to why we do not keep the breaking of bread weekly, why do we not use the same criteria in regard to the day of the week that we meet, and/or the frequency of that meeting?

The answer most would give is that it is because we believe that we are called to follow the example and the pattern left for us by the apostles in the Churches. Since they met on the first day of the week, we meet on the first day of the week. And since they met every week, we meet every week. In other words, we meet every Lord's Day because we are simply following the example left for us in Scripture by the early Church, believing that they were obeying the

teaching of the apostles, who in turn, were obeying the teaching of the Lord Jesus who told His apostles to make sure that future disciples should be very careful “to observe all things that He had commanded them” (see Matt. 28:19-20).

Indeed, we could also ask the same thing regarding “preaching.” “Why is it given such an important place in our Church meetings today?” In fact, in some places, preaching has become so important that some Christians, unfortunately, will attend one Church over another solely based upon the preaching! But why is it given such importance, especially since one will not be able to find a single verse in Scripture that specifically commands that preaching be the “first” and “overriding” concern or reason for our gathering?

The answer is the same as before; it is because we have the example given to us in Scripture of what was done by the early Church when they gathered together, and so, like with the other issues mentioned before, we follow their example, believing that their order of worship was instituted by the apostles, for all Churches, for all time. The example is found in Acts 20:7, 11—

Acts 20:7-11 “And upon **the first day of the week**, when the disciples came together to break bread, **Paul preached** unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. ⁸ And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. ⁹ And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as **Paul was long preaching**, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. ¹⁰ And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing *him* said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. ¹¹ When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and **talked a long while, even till break of day**, so he departed.” KJV

How wonderful is the example of the apostle Paul in leaving for us the example of preaching in Church on the

Lord's Day as they were gathered around the bread and the cup. It was so important for him that he preached until midnight and then talked until morning! Preaching is an integral part of the Church meeting! Consequently, following Paul's example, most Churches make sure there is ample preaching from God's Word every Lord's Day, as they should.

So, again, we see that such examples and patterns left for us in Scripture by the apostles are very important. They are the reason why many Churches meet the way they do on the Lord's Day today.

But that leads us to the final question that must be asked, "Why does the Church today make sure that all these other examples are followed every Lord's Day, without having any specific verse that directly commands us to do so, but yet, the same principle is not followed when it comes to our worship in breaking bread every Lord's Day?"

In fact, this question becomes even more pointed and succinct, when we realize that Acts 20:7 does not say "upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together for **preaching**;" rather, it says "upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to **break bread**!"

In Acts 20:7, the "primary" reason given by the Holy Spirit for their coming together on the first day of the week was for the purpose of breaking bread—not preaching! And yet today, we ignore that "primary" reason—our breaking of bread—and, instead, focus simply on the preaching! Beloved, this should not be! Preaching was done along with the breaking of bread, not without it. In fact, the preaching was that which led up to the bread being broken. As such, should we not be careful to also follow this apostolic example and pattern left for us in the Churches they founded, that of breaking bread every Lord's Day? Are not both examples very important?

If it is sufficient to follow their example of gathering together on the first day of the week (and not, for example, the seventh day), and if it is sufficient to follow their example of gathering together in church weekly, and not once a month, and if it is sufficient to follow their example in making sure we give ample time for preaching from God's Word every Lord's Day, is it not sufficient to also follow their example of remembering the Lord in worship, in the breaking of bread, every Lord's Day?

Dear brethren, perhaps the real reason for this change in so many Churches is simply this—we have forgotten what true worship really is. We have forgotten that the primary purpose for worship is not for ourselves; it is not for the purpose of attracting or even keeping new members, nor is it even for the purpose of saving souls (as important as that is). Its purpose is to submit to God; its purpose is to honour the Son; its purpose is to obey the Spirit. And so, because of this forgetfulness, this highest act of worship is more and more being replaced with other types of worship more to our liking, and this highest act of worship in the Church is relegated to the last Lord's Day of the month.

What a grievous thought this is—that in the Lord's very own Church, which He purchased through His shed blood, and His body broken, this time of worship of remembering Him in the bread and the cup, representing His body and blood, is simply relegated to the last Lord's Day of the month! And in its place, during those other Lord's Days, we choose to worship Him with worship more to our liking.

Oh, dear saint of God, worship is first and foremost for the Lamb of God that was slain—not for ourselves or for our entertainment! It is for giving thanks to God for the bread and the cup, emblems which represent the body and blood of our Lord, which emblems, when taken faithfully, ever shews forth the Lord's death until He comes. It is to remind us that without His worship, we would have no true worship at all!

Maintaining the apostolic example of weekly communion pleases the heart of the Father, for it bears witness every week to the greatness of His love in giving His Only-Begotten Son, our Saviour, who lovingly laid down His life for the sheep. And it pleases the Holy Spirit whose ministry is to ever take those things of the Son and declare them to us, so that we in worship, by the same Spirit, can offer them back to Him in humble adoration (Jn. 16:14). It is the highest form of worship and honour that we can give to our Lord on His Day in His Church and it also is our most solemn expression of our love. Why would we not want to do this every week?

And, what is so wonderful, is that once we realize such worship is for His glory and not for our pleasure, it actually then becomes our pleasure, for our pleasure becomes the *pleasure* of simply knowing that our breaking of bread in honour of the Lord is that which so *pleases* the heart of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

It pleases and honours the Father, who gave the Only-Begotten Son; it pleases and honours the Son who died for us upon the cross, giving His body as a sacrifice for our sins and His blood as a redemption for our souls. And, finally, it pleases and honours the Eternal Spirit through whom our Saviour in purity offered up Himself without spot unto God (Heb. 9:14). This act of worship in the bread and cup should be the highlight of our week!

As we mentioned at the beginning of this booklet, there is a truth revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament Scriptures that a person will become like that which he or she worships (Ps. 115:8). As such, the Holy Spirit lovingly provided for us in the New Testament the means, whereby we can keep in the forefront of our own hearts and minds the true image of the invisible God, the precious Lord Jesus Christ, the One, who in worship, sacrificed Himself for us upon the cross. And that means is none other than the

ordinance of breaking bread. The Lord Jesus Christ lovingly provided this ordinance for us, for He knew that the more we remember Him in spirit and truth, in humble worship and adoration, the more we will become like Him, as we continue to live in a world that is still full of idolatry.

And so, beloved, in today's world things have not changed. Our need is the same. Many Christians today, unfortunately, still live in a world full of idols; in some places, they are still idols made of silver and gold; in other places, they are idols made of man's wisdom and understanding; and, in other places, they are the idols made of our own covetousness and selfishness (Col. 3:5). Everyone becomes like that which they worship. That is why it is important to guard ourselves from idols and to make sure we worship the one true God of the Bible, and His Only-Begotten Son, by the Blessed Holy Spirit of God who sweetly dwells within.

May every Christian return to the example left for us by the Churches founded by the apostles in Scripture and once more be faithful to remember the Lord Jesus Christ with the bread and cup every Lord's Day, especially since we still live in a world full of idolatry. May we become like Christ by remembering Him in this most precious ordinance and time of worship every week. It is the Church's highest act of worship and adoration, and when done in Spirit and Truth it will never become a common or ritualistic observance, but will be a most blessed time of communion with the Lord to His eternal glory and honour. Amen.

Applicable Scriptures

Revelation 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, **and for thy pleasure they are and were created.** KJV

Philippians 4:9 Those things, **which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do:** and the God of peace shall be with you. KJV

Acts 2:42, 46 And **they continued** stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, and **in the breaking of bread** and the prayers. And they, **continuing daily** with one accord in the temple, and **breaking bread from house to house**, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. KJV

Acts 20:7 And the first day of the week, **the disciples being come together to break bread**, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued the preaching unto midnight. GNV

I Corinthians 11:17-18, 20, 22-29, 33-34 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise *you*, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.¹⁸ For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.²⁰ **Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper.**²² What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise *you*.²³ **For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;**²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."²⁵ In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me."²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, **you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.**²⁷ Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.²⁸ But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.²⁹ For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.³³ **Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.**³⁴ But if anyone is

hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come. NKJV

This is the **Who** of worship, the **Where** of worship, the **When** of worship, the **Why** of worship, and the **Whereon** of worship in the Church. God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth, which means by our spirit, as led by the Holy Spirit, in accordance with the truth of the eternal Word of God.

Worship is not for ourselves, but is for God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. The apostles bore witness to the “who” of worship, and established for us the “where,” the “when,” and the “why” of our worship, and taught us by the example in those Churches they left behind, the “whereon” of worship, the source and very foundation of the Church’s worship for all time—the precious remembrance of our Lord in the bread and cup.

The Holy Spirit tells us to imitate their ways, to maintain the pattern they left for us, and to keep the ordinances they delivered to us (I Cor. 11:1-2). It was given to them to lay down the foundation of the Church, and instruct the saints in worship. Worship is important for it reveals the condition of our hearts. May every Church be faithful to imitate and obey the apostles in this matter, and be careful to worship the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit in spirit and truth, unto the end of the age. Amen.

BPH

Not to us, O LORD, not to us, But to Thy name give glory Because of Thy lovingkindness, because of Thy truth. Why should the nations say, “Where, now, is their God?” But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of man's hands. They have mouths, but they cannot speak; They have eyes, but they cannot see; They have ears, but they cannot hear; They have noses, but they cannot smell; They have hands, but they cannot feel; They have feet, but they cannot walk; They cannot make a sound with their throat. Those who make them will become like them, everyone who trusts in them. **Psalm 115:1-8 NASB**

☉ sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth. Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, Give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth. **Psalm 96:1-3, 6-9 KJV**

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