

The Inevitability of Worship



Thanksgiving, Praise, and Worship (Part 15)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we draw near to the close of another week. Today I'm going to continue, and conclude, the theme that I've been dealing with all week, worship.

In my previous talks this week I've explained that worship is an inner attitude of the spirit in which the renewed believer relates directly to God as a Spirit. It is spirit to Spirit, person to person.

Scripture provides various different patterns to illustrate the progression that leads to true worship. In Psalm 95, the successive phases are exuberant thanksgiving and praise, bowing and kneeling down, and stillness in which we can hear God's voice. In the tabernacle of Moses, the progression to worship is illustrated by the progression that leads from the outer court, through the first and second veils, into the immediate manifest presence of God.

Today in my final talk on this theme I'm going to speak about the inevitability of worship. Ultimately, man's choice is not whether he will worship but only whom he will worship.

This issue of whom to worship is stated very clearly in the words that God spoke to Israel from Mount Sinai, the words that we habitually refer to as the Ten Commandments. Here are the opening verses of what God said to Israel on that occasion. Exodus 20:1-5:

> "And God spoke all these words: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me. [Or, an alternative translation, 'You shall have no other gods besides Me.'] You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God am a jealous God punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me."

I want to draw your attention to certain important points. First of all, God will not share worship with anyone or anything. If we worship God, we worship Him alone and He only has the right to receive worship. There is no other person or being or object in the universe to which we may offer worship except to the true God. Secondly, you'll see the implication of bowing down that is always an indication of worship. Speaking about the idols, which were forbidden, God said, "You shall not bow down to them nor worship them." Bowing down and worshipping are almost synonymous. The third point is very serious. The evil consequences of wrongly directed worship extend to our descendants. God says He will punish the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.

Now, I don't believe that implies to every kind of sin that men commit, but this particular sin is so unique and so grievous, the sin of worshipping any other God but the true God, that God says it will be carried on in its consequences to the third and fourth generation of those who practice it.

The next thing that we need to see is something I've already mentioned but it needs to be brought out more emphatically. Worship leads to service. Whatever we worship ultimately we will serve. This is brought out very clearly in the dialogue between Jesus and Satan when Jesus was tempted by Satan to fall down and worship him. And notice that was the ultimate temptation. This is what it says in Matthew 4:8-10:

> "Again, the devil took him [that's Jesus] to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. All this I will give, he said, if you will bow down and worship me. [Notice again, 'bow down and worship.'] Jesus said to him, Away from me, Satan. For it is written: worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only."

Notice there the order and the connection. Worship first, then serve. So many Christians try to reverse the order but it doesn't work. Serving without worshipping is not the same thing.

But also there's a functional connection. What we worship ultimately we will serve. The more we worship any person, the more certain consequences work out in our lives. Let me state two of these consequences. The more we worship any person or any thing, the more complete becomes our commitment to that person or thing. And secondly, the more we take on the identity of that person of thing.

Worship lead to commitment and identification. This is inevitable. Hence, worship is the ultimate decision and none of us can evade it. You see, originally man was created to worship. He cannot change this aspect of his nature. All he can change is its direction from a true God to a false god. And further, ultimately those who refuse to worship the true God will worship some false God.

Let me give you briefly a few examples of false gods that men commonly worship.

First, actual idols. Idols of wood and stone, which are worshipped in many quarters of the world today. The word we use for that is idolatry.

Second, man frequently worships his own physical desires and pleasures. They become his god. The name usually given to that is Hedonism, the worship of pleasure.

Third, money and material possessions. Multitudes of people here in this country and across the world make money their god. The name for that is covetousness and the New Testament says specifically that covetousness is idolatry.

Fourth, political leaders such as Lenin or Hitler. It's interesting that those who reject the Bible and reject the true God with their political philosophies always end up with an alternative object of worship.

And then, founders of cults or ideologies. The tragic events associated with Jonestown in Guyana show how deadly are the results of worshipping the leader of some false cult.

All these are forms of false gods. Let me list them again.

(1) Actual physical idols

(2) Physical desires and pleasures

(3) Money and material possessions

(4) Political leaders

(5) Founders of cults or ideologies

All forms of false worship ultimately lead to one and the same person: Satan.

Satan desires worship because it uniquely sets forth his claim to be equal with God. You see, I've said that worship belongs to God alone. So when Satan can receive worship, it reasserts his claim to equality with God. That was how Satan fell in the first instance. This is prophetically described in Isaiah 14:12. The prophet says:

> "How have you fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn!"

Morning star or Lucifer is one of the titles of Satan.

And then in verses 13 and 14, the prophet reveals the inner motivation of Satan which caused him to rebel against the true God. Isaiah 14:13-14:

> "You said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven, I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of the assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds. I will make myself like the most High."

Notice one phrase repeated five times. "I will." That's the essence of Satan's rebellion, the setting of his will in opposition to the will of God. And the ultimate ambition of Satan is stated in the last words, "I will make myself like the most High." The same words can be translated "equal to the most High." That has been and still remains Satan's ultimate ambition, to claim equality with God. And one way he claims it is by claiming worship because when he receives worship, that identifies him, in a certain sense, as God.

For a brief period Satan will come near to achieving this ambition on earth. Let's look at a few verses in Revelation 13 that picture something that is coming on the earth. In verses 1 and 2, John the revelator says:

> "And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority."

When we look behind that we see that the beast is a human ruler, the dragon is Satan himself. Now look at the consequences, verse 4:

> "Men worshipped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshipped the beast and asked, Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

So you see that's the way in which human history is headed in its rebellion against God. Satan is moving and working throughout the earth and upon men and women, upon nations, upon political leaders everywhere with the one supreme objective of gaining worship. And he's going to find a political leader whom he can so empower that this man will receive worship and that through him Satan will receive the worship offered to the man.

Now, because of this plan of Satan we really need to face ourselves with a question. The question is, Whom do I worship, who is my God? And let me give you once again the only right decision provided by Jesus. Jesus said to Satan in Matthew 4:10:

> "Away from me, Satan. For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only."

Are you willing to say that? "I will worship the Lord and I will serve Him only?" That's the most important decision you can make. It can determine your eternal destiny.

Well, our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday.

Next week is a special week in our American calendar, the week of Thanksgiving. I'll be speaking about various practical ways that this affects all of us who live in the United States.

If you would like to study this theme of worship more fully in the quietness of your own home and with opportunity to focus on passages of special interest to you, all my five messages this week on worship are available in a single, carefully edited 60 minute cassette.

Also this week I'm making a special offer of my book, The Baptism in the Holy Spirit, which will give you a scriptural key to releasing the kind of worship that God desires from us.

The announcement that follows will tell you how to obtain both the cassette and the book.

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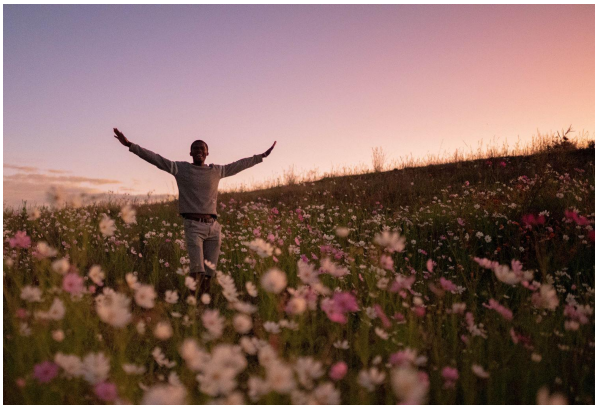
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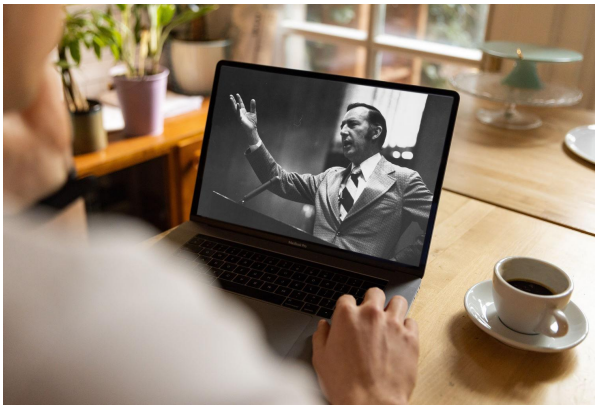
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