

**Fundamentals, Study 22. Worship And The Sabbath Day (John 4:19-24)**

by BS Poh

o Worship is to be carried out “in spirit and truth”, i.e. in sincerity and in accordance to Scripture.

1. We must worship the true God - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - because He is our creator.<sup>1</sup> We must not worship angels, or saints, or any other creatures.<sup>2</sup> If a king must be approached according to palace protocols, how much more we need to approach God in the way prescribed by Himself in the Bible. God may not be approached by way of visible images, e.g. pictures, statues, and idols.<sup>3</sup> Since the Fall (i.e. the time Adam rebelled against God), worship is to be given through a mediator, namely Jesus Christ alone.<sup>4</sup> (1. Jer 10:7; Mark 12:32-33; Matt 4:9-10; John 4:23; Matt 28:19; 2. Rom 1:25; Col 2:18; Rev 19:10; 3. Deut. 12:32; Exod 20:4-6; John 4:23; 4. John 14:6; 1 Tim 2:5.)

2. Prayer, with thanksgiving, is one part of worship which is accepted by God only when made through the mediation of the Son, by the help of the Holy Spirit, and according to the revealed will of God.<sup>5</sup> In other words, only converted people are able to offer up acceptable prayer. All acts of worship, including prayer, must be carried out with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance. When praying with others, it must be in a known language.<sup>6</sup> We are to pray for lawful things (i.e. things agreeable to the will of God), for people who are alive now or who will live in the future,<sup>7</sup> but not for the dead,<sup>8</sup> nor for those known to have sinned "the sin leading to death" (probably a reference to those who fall away from the faith and are bitterly opposed to God).<sup>9</sup> The Roman Catholics err by praying for the dead, and so do many pagan religions. (5. John 14:13-14; Rom 8:26; 1 John 5:14; 6. 1 Cor 14:16-17; 7. 1 Tim 2:1-2; 2 Sam 7:29; Luke 16:26; 8. 2 Sam 12:21-23; 9. 1 John 5:16; Heb 6:4-6)

3. The other elements of worship include: (i) reading, preaching, and hearing the word of God; (ii) singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; (iii) the special ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper; and (iv) the collection.<sup>10</sup> On special occasions, worship includes religious oaths and vows, fasting, and thanksgiving.<sup>11</sup> Nothing else must be added to these. The elements and attitude of worship are prescribed by the Bible, but the circumstances of worship (e.g. the time and duration of worship, the order of worship, whether the congregation should be seated, standing, or kneeling) are to be determined by sanctified common sense and the general principles taught in Scripture - e.g. to do all things to the glory of God, for the edification of the church, decently and in order, and without stumbling weaker brethren and non-believers.<sup>12</sup> This has been called *the Regulative Principle of Worship*. New Testament worship is not tied to, or made more acceptable by, any place in which it is performed or towards which it is directed. God may be worshipped anywhere in spirit and in truth.<sup>13</sup> Some Charismatic groups err by having “prayer mountains” and “prayer houses”. (10. 1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 4:2; Luke 8:18; Col 3:16; Matt 28:19-20; 1 Cor 11:26; 16:2; 11. Matt 6:5, 16; Phil 4:6; 1 Thess 5:17-18; 12. 1 Cor 10:23, 31; 14:40; Rom 14:19; 13. John 4:21; Mal 1:11; 1 Tim 2:8)

4. The Fourth Commandment, which is part of the moral law, requires that one day in seven be set aside as holy for God.<sup>14</sup> Up to the resurrection of Christ, this was the last day of the week. After the resurrection of Christ, it was changed to the first day of the week.<sup>15</sup> The Sabbath, or the Lord's day, is kept holy in these ways: (i) preparing the heart in anticipation of it; (ii) arranging the daily affairs in advance so that the day may be a rest from normal work and recreation; (iii) spending that day with acts of piety (i.e. in worship and advancing the cause of the gospel), necessity, and mercy. <sup>16</sup> (14. Exod 20:8; 15. 1 Cor 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; Rev 1:10; 16. Isa 58:13; Neh 13:15-22; Matt 12:3-5, 11-12)

= Let us draw near to our Creator, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Review Questions**

1. Why must we worship God?
2. What manner of approach to God is forbidden us?
3. Who is the Mediator appointed by God for us?
4. How is prayer made acceptable to God?
5. How must all acts of worship be carried out?
6. Who are the people we must not pray for?
7. Name the other elements of worship, apart from prayer.
8. Name the elements of worship found only on special occasions.
9. How do we decide on the circumstances of worship?
10. State how the Lord's day is to be kept holy.

### **Assignment/Discussion**

How may we avoid the extremes of *legalism* and *liberalism* in the keeping of the Lord's day?

### **Memory Passage (Heb 10:24-25)**

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.

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