

Introduction

God, in His wisdom, has known how spiritually dark our minds are and consequently, incapable of knowing how to worship. To assist us in this holy exercise He has given His saints at least three great assists. They are:

- a) Illustrations of individuals and groups in the scriptures who worshipped.
- b) The awareness of the infinite gloriousness of Himself. When God gives us a descriptive term or name it is an unveiling of His person or, as explained by the actions of God in Genesis 1:1-2:3.
- c) The Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth (Jn. 16:13).

It is intriguing that the first time the word “worship” is mentioned in the scriptures (Gen. 22:5), no outside human eye beheld it, and yet it was seen. Two truths are indicated in this observation:

- a) There was, to my mind, two individuals and two groups who witnessed this act of homage, God and His angelic hosts and Satan and his infernal hosts. The same is true today for the very fact that many have been deceived by a false worship of mantra like tuneless repetition of words, lovely feelings etc., shows that Satan is seeking to prevent genuine worship. Satan longs for worship and if we genuinely worship the Lord, it is a piercing reminder of that which he has lost and will never regain. No wonder he blinds people with pseudo worship.
- b) We must ever remember that worship is for the heart of God and not for the other saints. It is a fact that oftentimes “worship” at remembrance meetings is a five minute ministry meeting expounding our knowledge, or parrot like reiterating the facts concerning the Lord. At times an individual will participate because it is expected of them or to fill in some time. This is not worship. In a remembrance meeting the participant, whither in suggesting a hymn, reading a relevant passage or prayer, needs to remember that they are speaking to God and presenting to God their personal appreciation of Christ. The saints may and ought to get some benefit, but it is for the glory of God.

Illustrations of Worship

1) Myrrh

- a) God used illustrations from many avenues of life to convey some of the loveliest pictures of the Lord. One of those pictures is the four spices which have an immediate connection with the Lord. They are “frankincense” (Matt. 2:11); “spikenard” (Mk. 14:3); “myrrh” (Matt. 2:11); and “aloes” (Jn. 19:39). Of these “myrrh” is predominant, being given to Him at His birth (Matt. 2:11); when on the cross (Mk. 15:23); and put in His grave clothes (Jn. 19:39).
- b) It was one of the “principle spices” of the holy anointing oil (Ex. 30:23) and this brings to our attention the preeminence of the Lord. But as in all types it fails at some point, and the one failure here is that it is one of a number of principle spices, whereas the Lord is unequalled in His preeminence. His preeminence is manifested in a number of ways, such as:
 - i) Justification (1 Tim. 3:16)
 - ii) Administration, execution of judgment (Jn. 5:22, 27)
 - iii) Perfection (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 Jn. 3:5)
 - iv) Attraction (Song of Sol. 5:11-16)
 - v) Preserving power (Heb. 7:25)
 - vi) Representation (Heb. 4:16; 7:26)
 - vii) Revelation (Jn. 1:18; 14:8-9)
 - viii) Proclamation (Psa. 2:7-9; Rev. 5:9, 12)
 - ix) Moral perfections (Psa. 24:3-4)
 - x) Glorification (Heb. 6:18-20)
 - xi) Liberation (Gal. 5:1) and many other avenues of superlativeness.
- c) It is described as “sweet smelling” (Song of Sol. 5:13) and this is an avenue which only the heart of God can fully appreciate. When God prophetically said of the Lord, “in whom my soul delighteth” (Isa. 42:1); or when on earth God said, “In whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17), He was declaring that the entire life of the Lord was a sweet smelling fragrance, it was being viewed as

an ointment which never was contaminated by deadness (Ecc. 10:1) but was always, even as a sacrifice, and perhaps more so then, “a sweet savour unto the LORD (Lev. 1:13).

- d) The word “Myrrh” comes from a word connected with tears and is bitter. This draws to memory the three recorded weepings of the Lord over Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37); at the grave of Lazarus (Jn. 11:35); and understood to be when in Gethsemane (Heb. 5:7). Yet there is another observation, for “myrrh” is mentioned more in the Song of Solomon than any other book and it is the book of affection and love! Therefore, on this level myrrh indicates the tears and bitterness of sorrow which filled the heart of the Lord as he displayed the genuineness of His love for the Father and His own. As an individual enters into these truths in a small degree, the heart will worship.
- 2) Moses and the elders are called to worship the Lord (Ex. 24:1-2; 9-18)
 - (a) In this passage there is revealed something of the attitude that ought to be shown in worship. God calls Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the seventy elders of Israel to come unto the Lord, but there was no place for imagined superiority or casualness for they were told, “they shall not come nigh” (Ex. 24:2) but were to worship “afar off” (Ex. 24:1), and for Moses alone to come near unto the Lord (Ex. 24:2). Worship of the Lord necessitates great reverence.
 - 3) When the children of Israel were come into the land they were to bring to the Lord the firstfruits of the harvest. However, it was not just a bringing of the wheat etc., and putting it down and that was it all over. They were to worship (Deut. 26:10). What was involved in that worship?
 - a) An appreciation of the goodness of God to a people so undeserving of His mercy (Deut. 26:5)
 - b) The greatness of divine power in delivering them from the power of Egypt (Deut. 26:6-8)
 - c) The kindness of God in bringing them into such blessings as they now had (Deut. 26:9)
 - d) The evidence of the providential blessings of God in giving sunshine and rain, calm and wind to bring forth food which they then brought to Him in the acknowledging of His worthiness of preeminence of ownership.
 - e) In the wonder of all the divine blessings, they worship. When we consider how the Lord has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ, then add to that the material blessings, the gifts of wellness of body and soundness of mind, having that which through His grace we can offer to Him, surely our hearts ought to bow in worship.
 - 4) At times the children of Israel faced apparently insurmountable obstacles. One of those situations was when Joshua looked at Jericho (Josh. 5:13). The promised land lay ahead but before that could ever be enjoyed, the entrance point, Jericho, was barred and shut (Josh. 6:1). The natural rationale was, even if they defeated these people of Jericho with military know how, sooner or later the others kings of the surrounding area would not give up easily and being mightier, they would defeat them. As Joshua thinks about the enormity of the task, there must have been a degree of anxiety. It was a wonderful promise God gave him (Josh. 1:5-9) but that was then, now there is a need for a renewed assurance. Then Joshua sees a man standing with a drawn sword who reveals Himself as Captain of the Hosts of the LORD (Josh. 5:14). Immediately upon seeing this mighty one and hearing His words, Joshua was assured of victory. The invincible armies of Heaven were with Him, failure was impossible, but that was not what made him worship! That which caused him to worship was an appreciation of the brilliance of this Captain. Joshua abdicates all authority to Him and worships.
 - 5) One of the most difficult times to worship is when there is a child causing heartache, a severe illness, or the death of a loved one. David was faced with the agony of a parent’s heart, for his son Absalom had stolen the hearts of the people and began a coup. David, aware of the danger, runs for his life (2 Sam. 15:14-23). With great lamentation and grief David goes over Kidron into the wilderness (2 Sam. 15:23). The grief was compounded by the treachery of Ahithophel who had been David’s counsellor (2 Sam. 15:12; 1 Chron. 27:33) when he turned against David. What a dark time when a child turns against a parent as Absalom did, or when ones trusted friend turns against them as Ahithophel did, or when one is shamed before ones people and made to publicly feel it. David no longer had the throne etc., all was gone, and he prays to God and worships. That would be hard to do. David lifts his eyes heavenward and sees God as the God of magnificence in His

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influencing (2 Sam. 15:31), and God does frustrate Ahithophel's counsel. He sees God as the One of Supreme unchangeable purposes (2 Sam. 15:25-26). Seeing God as unchanging he trusts God in this darkest hour (2 Sam. 15:30).

- 6) Job had an even deeper trial. In one day he was changed from a wealthy sheik to a virtual pauper. All his servants except one were killed (Job 1:15); all his children were killed (Job. 1:19); his cattle and livestock were all taken by the Sabeans (Job 1:15), by fire from heaven (Job 1:16), or by the Chaldeans (Job 1:17); and eventually he lost his health (Job 2:7), his wife, and with the love of a wife for her husband who was suffering, she told him to, "curse God and die" (Job 2:9). In the midst of such indescribable grief Job worships God (Job 1:20). How great is the man who, when in the throes of such afflictions says, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21). It is very hard to worship in the midst of grief, sickness, or material loss, yet in that situation Job sinned not nor charged God with foolishness (Job 1:22). What a man, no agitation at God, no "Why me", but in quick succession his spirituality and clarity of spiritual vision shines which enables him to worship. When his wife tells him to curse God his reply is, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 2:10).

Conclusion:

This subject will be continued in the next Front page.

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