

WORSHIP

The Call to Worship

Throughout eternity God has desired that His people worship Him. He desires that they come to Him with a spirit of praise and thanksgiving, for He alone is God and there is none like Him.

In these last days, according to Revelation, there is a call going throughout the world. That call is for God's people to worship Him, the Creator. In **Revelation 14:7** an angel brought a message... *"Saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: And worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters'."*

This word will be going out prior to the mark of the beast and the time of bible prophecy which is still ahead. We believe that the Spirit of God is moving in an even greater way as the day of our Lord's return draws closer. God's people are beginning to enter into a new dimension of worship and praise.

I have found that worship is a subject that needs to be taught. People need to learn how to come into God's presence and worship Him in spirit and in truth. I thank God with you that His Holy Spirit is revealing these truths to us, that we might grow in understanding of God's word and that we might grow in an expression of our love for our heavenly Father. That expression of love is known as worship and praise.

A call from our Lord to worship Him is in **Deuteronomy 26:10**. *"And now, behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, has given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God:"* In this scripture God is calling us, through His servant, to come into His presence with an offering in order to worship before the Lord our God.

1st Chronicles 16:29 *"Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name: bring an offering, and come before Him: Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."*

Psalm 95:6 - "O come, let us worship and bow down: Let us kneel before the Lord our maker."

Psalm 96:9 "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: Fear (reverence) before Him all the earth."

Matthew 4:10 - "Then saith Jesus unto him, 'Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve'."

John 4:24 - "God is a Spirit: And they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Revelation 22:9 - "Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: For I am thy fellow servant, of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: Worship God."

The background of **Revelation 22:9** is this: the apostle John was going to bow down to the angel who brought him the revelation by the Spirit of God. The angel said, "Don't bow down to me: Worship God." This powerful word expresses the call of God Almighty to His people that we are to worship Him. We are to put no one or nothing before Him. We are not to bow down to angels, for we are here on this earth to worship God and God alone. We are created to be to the praise of His glory. The call of God for all eternity is to worship Him, bow down to Him, honor Him, and give glory to His holy name.

I am excited about this message because I believe that the Spirit of God is the One giving the call to minister concerning worship. I believe this call will go throughout the body of Christ. God's ministers will be bringing it forth and teaching by the Holy Spirit of God. Then God's people will grow to prepare themselves for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ and for the time when we will sit before the throne of God, worshipping and giving glory and honor to Him. He alone reigns on the throne; He alone is God.

The Lord has been dealing with me about the importance of coming into His presence to worship Him in spirit and in truth, and how to come into His presence.

Attitudes of Worship

The Holy Spirit Himself ministered through various words of prophecy about how to come into God's presence and worship Him correctly in spirit and in truth:

1. COME IN HOLINESS.

When we talk about holiness, we have noticed that some people get shook up about it. They think it is unattainable. It is something they cannot grasp or deal with because in themselves they are not holy. Man, in himself, is poor, miserable, and wretched. Nevertheless, the word of God shows what God has done in our behalf through the blood of Jesus Christ.

God is holy, according to His word, and there is none like Him. Those who would come to Him must be holy. It goes beyond some people's comprehension that they could come into the presence of God. There is a fear in their hearts about Him, and a feeling of unworthiness. They wonder if they have the right to come to God and to be in His presence.

Leviticus 10:1-11 - *"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer and put fire therein, and put incense thereon and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not." (Note here that this displeasing offering was called "strange fire," which God had commanded them not to offer. This offering was not correctly brought to God, so His judgment was brought down upon them). "And there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said to Aaron, this is it that the Lord spoke, saying, 'I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.' And Aaron held his peace."*

There was a high calling upon the priests when they came into the presence of God; they were to have prepared themselves. They were to have sanctified themselves by the means that the Lord had set down. They were to be cleansed, prepared, and made holy as they came before God because only holiness would stand in the presence of God.

How important for us to understand the need to be holy as we come before God! We need to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus. We need to be prepared. Otherwise we are not coming into God's presence properly.

Verse 4 - *"And Moses called Mishael and Elzapan, the sons of Uzziel, the uncle of Aaron, and said unto them, 'Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp.' So they went near and carried them in their coats out of the camp; as Moses had said. And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar his sons, 'Uncover not your heads, neither rend (tear) your clothes; lest you die, and lest wrath come upon all people: But let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled. And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you.' And they did according to the word of Moses."*

The anointing oil of the Lord upon the priest was part of the sanctifying process in the Old Testament. God's anointing was upon them, and they were to be ministering in the tabernacle of the congregation, and they were not to go out to the rest of the people lest they die also.

"And the Lord spoke unto Aaron, saying, "Do not drink wine or strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: It shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy and between unclean and clean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses'."

Exodus 15:11 - *"Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"* It needs to be established that a holy God can have only holy people coming into His presence.

The people recognized that they could not come before a holy God on their own.

1 Samuel 6:20 – *"And the men of Bethshemesh said, 'Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? And to whom shall he go up from us?'"*

Psalm 99:9 - *"Exalt the Lord our God and worship at His holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy."*

Isaiah 6:3 - *"And one cried unto another and said, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: The whole earth is full of his glory."*

Revelation 15:4 - *"Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou art holy: For all nations shall come and worship before Thee: For Thy judgments are made manifest."*

These scriptures deal with the fact (and it is established throughout the word of God) that God is holy, perfect, and blameless. There is none like Him.

God's call to His people concerning holiness is shown in the following:

Leviticus 11:45 - *"For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: Ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy."*

Luke 1:74, 75 - *"That He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life."*

It is the call of God to us, His people, to be holy and righteous (in right standing) with Him.

2 Corinthians 7:1 - *"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,"*

Hebrews 12:14 - *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."*

1 Peter 1:16 - *"...Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."*

2 Peter 3:11 *"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation (way of life) and godliness..."*

According to His Word, God desires us to be holy as He is holy.

Again, the term "holy" strikes fear in many people. As they look at themselves, they see themselves unworthy, weak, and failing every now and then (sometimes more often). Still, as we study how to worship, we realize we are to come into His presence in holiness.

2. RECOGNIZE THAT GOD HAS MADE YOU HOLY.

Is it possible to come into God's presence in holiness? On what basis do we have to come to Him? Take a look at what God has to say about it:

Psalm 65:3 - *"Iniquities prevail against me: As for our transgressions, Thou shalt purge them away."*

Isaiah 1:16 - *"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil."*

Isaiah 1:18 - *"Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."*

In the Old Testament scarlet was a dye. When it was put into the material, it could not be removed. *"Though our sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow."* In other words, though it be impossible for our sins to be removed, God says He will remove them. He will make us holy in His presence.

Ezekiel 36:25 - *"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you."*

Zechariah 13:1 - *"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness..."*

God will cleanse us. It is tremendously exciting to see what God is doing. He is making us holy.

Malachi 3:3 - *"And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."* This means an offering that is worthy and acceptable to God.

Ephesians 5:25b - *"...Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it..."* **Verse 26** - *"That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."*

We are washed, cleansed, and made holy by the word of God. As we learn to appropriate the blood of Jesus that has been provided for us, God cleans us and makes us holy. God Himself has made us worthy to come into His presence. He alone could do that because He alone is holy. Since God, in His love, wanted us to worship and praise Him, and have

life with Him forever, He had to move in our behalf to prepare the way for us to come. He had to do the cleansing. Otherwise we never could have come into His presence.

I thank God for the privilege of coming into His presence through the blood of Jesus. His blood has made us holy and worthy so that we can now come freely. We can worship Him and give Him the honor that is due His name because He has made us sons and daughters through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 9:14 - *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"* Works done on our own are dead as far as God is concerned, nor are they pleasing to Him. As the blood of Jesus was given for us, and as we now appropriate it in our daily lives, God cleanses us and makes us holy so that we can come into His presence and serve Him with a clean heart. We can know that His power is flowing through us, that He is receiving the offering of our lips and the sacrifice of praise before Him.

1 John 1:7 - *"But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanseth us from all sin."*

We want to come into His presence cleansed, knowing that we are forgiven. If we have any unforgiveness in our lives towards anyone, we need to ask God to forgive us and then come to worship and praise Him.

3. COME WITH AN AWARENESS THAT WORSHIP IS ONLY POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF GOD'S MERCY.

Psalms 5:7 - *"But as for me, I will come into Thy house in the multitude of Thy mercy: and in Thy fear will I worship toward Thy holy temple."* Fear means reverence or holy awe towards God. It is important that we pay close attention to this because it is an attitude God would have us develop. Because of the mercy of God we can now come, for in His love, He has not held our sins against us. He has made us worthy and holy by the blood of Jesus, and He now allows us to come into His presence.

Because of the mercy of God we have been put in right standing with our heavenly Father through Jesus Christ. **Hebrews 10:18-25** gives a fuller explanation of His mercy:

“Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh: and having a high priest over the house of God; 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. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised); and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: And so much more, as ye see the day approaching.”

To sum up: We are called to worship God. God has made us holy enough to come into His presence because of the blood of Jesus and because of His mercy.

The Old Testament tells us that this matter of coming into God's presence was one of seriousness. The priest going into the Holy of Holies had bells around the bottom of his robe, which would jingle as he walked inside. If he was not right with God when he walked into the Holy of Holies, he would drop dead. Because of that, they tied a rope around the high priest's ankle in case something should happen while he was in there (that he had not sanctified himself correctly). Then they would be able to pull him out by the rope. If everything went well, the priest came walking out. If it didn't go well, then he was to be pulled out. You might think this strange, but remember they were dealing with coming into the presence of God Almighty. He has set down ways to come into His presence and to worship Him. As His children, it is the desire of our hearts to come in the way God has instructed us.

We now come in through the blood of Jesus Christ as shown in the New Testament. We are bound with God in an everlasting covenant. This promise of God is that He is ours and we are His. Therefore, worship and

thankfulness are attitudes that come from our hearts to God. We want to worship God, and we want to do it in a way that is pleasing to Him.

4. COME BEFORE GOD WITH THE PURPOSE OF HEART TO HONOR AND GLORIFY HIM.

Psalm 29:2 *"Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."* We are to come before God, giving glory to His name, in an attitude of heart which is pleasing to Him. We are to come in the beauty of holiness.

I want to emphasize that we are to give to the Lord the glory due to His name. In other words, God has glory coming because of who He is and what He has done in behalf of His people. As we come to Him, we are to give Him the glory and the praise that He is worthy of.

Psalm 22:23 tells us, *"Ye that fear the Lord, praise Him; all ye the seed of Jacob glorify Him and fear Him, all ye the seed of Israel."*

Again, this is a call to give glory and honor to God. This call goes out to His people. Since we are His people, we want to glorify Him, give Him honor, and give Him praise. We want to recognize who He is. He is the Lord God of hosts. There is none like Him; there is none beside Him. He alone is God. He alone is worthy to be praised; great is our God and greatly to be praised. Honoring Him and glorifying Him is to be the attitude of our hearts as we come to Him in true worship.

Isaiah 25:1 - *"O Lord, Thou art my God; I will exalt Thee, I will praise Thy name; for Thou hast done wonderful things; Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth."*

As we teach about worship, I believe that the Spirit of God ministers to people *in* a spirit of worship. Enter into that tone of worship as you learn about it because you are not just being taught. This is a time of worship and praise to God as well. Because we are studying about worship, we cannot help but give glory and honor to God. So, expect that

as you read, you are worshipping and praising God with me today. The Spirit of God will touch your life in a new and refreshing way.

5. COME BEFORE THE LORD WITH REVERENCE.

As stated previously, holy reverence is often called fear. We come before God, counting it as a sacred time, as a holy time, as a special time. It is a time in which we and God become one. We unite with others in giving Him praise and thanks. Then the power of the Holy Spirit is free to minister.

Many times the Spirit of God begins to move in the place when we praise and worship Him. He does wonderful things too great for our minds to understand. As people enter in, much will happen in the spirit, in the mind, and in the physical realm because the Spirit of God will minister. This attitude of reverence is something that is often lacking.

Worship does not involve just being quiet. Quietness often has nothing to do with praise and worship. Praise can be loud because we are rejoicing. What we need is an attitude of the heart that we are in awe of Him, honoring Him and glorifying Him in holy reverence.

Psalm 89:7 - *"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him."*

In **Exodus 3:5** we find an example of God's servant Moses coming into the presence of God on holy ground. *"And he said, 'draw not nigh hither: Put thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground'."*

God told Moses not to come up until he had taken his shoes off because he was in a holy place. We are not recommending today that you take off your shoes, or this or that, when you go into worship. However, if God calls you to do something while worshipping, be obedient to do it!

As we enter into worship, we should recognize that it is a holy time. It is a special time which shouldn't be clouded with distractions and distracting thoughts. It is a time when all of our being is to be focused upon the Lord.

Here is another account of needing holiness when coming into God's presence: *"And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, 'Loose thy*

shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy.’ And Joshua did so.” **Joshua 5:15**

As we come into God's presence to worship, God will move, and it will be a holy time.

Psalm 4:4 - *"Stand in awe and sin not: Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still."*

Psalm 33:8 - *"Let all the earth fear the Lord: Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him."*

Habakkuk 2:20 - *"But the Lord is in His holy temple: Let all the earth keep silence before Him."* God is to be revered and honored as we come before Him.

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 - *"And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?"* Again, we see the call to reverence God, to honor Him in a holy time.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 - *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear [reverence] God and keep His commandments: For this is the whole duty of man."* The call is to reverence God, which has to be an attitude that we begin to develop within our hearts. It is a matter of coming into the presence of a holy God who has given us the privilege and right to worship and honor Him.

Isaiah 8:13 - *"Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear and let Him be your dread."*

Many times people have a disrespectful attitude when they come into worship. This needs to be dealt with seriously. God has set down our time of worship as a time of holiness and honor. So, it is tremendously important that we not neglect to do so. Take time to prepare before coming to worship. Pray in the spirit, pray with your understanding, sing and rejoice in the Lord. As you come into worship with other believers, be ready to go.

People come in with thoughts weighing them down. They are thinking about other things or scurrying around. They may be relieved to finally get there, but then it takes a long time to get them into a spirit of

worship and praise. I find it is helpful for all of us to enter into worship before we ever get together with other believers. At that point we will see a powerful move of the Spirit of God because of the unity and oneness right from the start.

I am fully convinced that we are not to come into God's presence being afraid of Him. What Isaiah 8:13 is talking about is understanding that God is holy and that He has given us the right and privilege to come to Him in worship. We do not need to be afraid of Him, but we do need to reverence Him.

It would be like coming into the presence of the king, as recorded in the bible, and recognizing that we were under the king. The king was free to do whatever he wanted to do. In the same way, God is Lord of all. He is King of kings. As we come into His presence, we need to reverence Him. We need to honor Him. He is our friend and our Father, and we are to show Him honor for now and forever.

6. LEARN HOW TO LISTEN TO HIM.

When people come to worship, they often minister to one another. Worship is not a time of edifying one another as much as a time of edifying and worshipping God. As one worships Him, the attention goes towards Him, and then He will edify every person.

We know that as we pray in the spirit we are edified. But, who are we praying to when we pray in the spirit? It says we are praying to God (**1st Corinthians 14:2**), and He edifies us. As we pray, worship, and sing praises with the spirit and with our understanding, He is the one who is moving. Please note, the attention is going to God.

It would do us well in our worship time to learn to listen to God. This is something that we have to develop. It is difficult for many people to sit still and be quiet because they are so used to busily running around and being active. There comes a time, as we are entering into worship by the Spirit of God, that we need to just listen to God, and He will move in our midst.

In *Acts 13* a group of men who were in various ministering offices came together to worship. **Verses 2-3** tell us, "*As they ministered to the*

Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said: 'Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

In **verse 2** it says, "*As they ministered to the Lord...*" This is what worship is all about, ministering to the Lord that which God has a right to have: our worship, our glory, our praises, our honor, our whole being. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost spoke to them (one of the spiritual gifts was operating there). As they ministered to the Lord, the Holy Spirit then ministered to them. This is always the way it is when we enter into the true worship that is pleasing to God. He will always come down and minister to His people. As we listen for His voice, He will speak in that still, small voice inside.

Ecclesiastes 5:1, 2 - "*Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: For they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: For God is in heaven and thou upon earth: Therefore let your words be few."*

A fool is known for talking too much. Proverbs say that the wise man says few words, but what he says is of importance; it is valuable. The fool talks about everything that comes to his mind, and there is not much of importance coming into his mind to talk about. When we come into God's presence, He wants us to be sincere in heart and words. . . and listen to Him.

As you grow in the spirit, the Lord begins to minister to you by speaking to you. It may be in an audible voice, or it may be inside you. You will find that when God speaks, He has few words to say, but they are to the point, they are true, and they change people's lives. He wants to be heard today in our hearts. As He is heard, changes happen.

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." **James 1:19-20**

As we learn to listen to God, then we get His direction. He will never steer us wrong. He wants to lead us in the true path. He wants to lead us in His true ways.

Idle words are not pleasing to God. He says He will hold us accountable for the words that we speak. (**Matthew 12:36-37**) I don't take that as condemnation because God understands the way we are, but I do see it as an encouragement to speak that which is profitable to the hearer. Especially when we are speaking to God, we should speak from the heart because He knows what is in our hearts. It is important that we learn to know what is in us too. The closer we draw to God and He draws near to us, we are able to get His clarity of instruction, wisdom, and understanding. I find that as we enter into worship, He often gives direction and leading.

Ezekiel 33:32 - *"And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument: For they hear thy words, but they do them not."*

Many times God's words come to us as a pleasant voice and like an instrument. We will hear those words, but it is important to do the words, not just go through the motions. Get serious about what God has given you to do and then do it.

Worship is more than something we do. Worship is our way of giving honor and praise to our God. It is our way of expressing our love for Him and our thankfulness to Him.

7. PUT ASIDE AND AVOID ALL FORMALISM.

Avoid mere traditions of men when coming to God. Put the commandments of God first.

In **Matthew 15:1-9** Jesus said that the people did not worship God correctly. *"In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men:"* Formalism and man's ways of coming to God are not pleasing to Him. Jesus made this quite clear. The only thing pleasing to God is coming to Him His way, and He is the One who has set down the ways in which we are to come.

The finest way to come is with a clean heart, knowing that the blood of Jesus has washed us clean. We are forgiven and not forsaken, and we are God's children. He lives within our hearts. He is the One who has made us holy and worthy. This is not a dead ritual. We come to our God in truth, rejoicing in His presence.

The Lord tells us in **Hosea 6:6** - *"For I desired mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."* Come to God with knowledge of the ways He has set down, with a true heart that is pleasing to Him.

For your own reference you might also like to take a look at Isaiah 58. The things that deal with true worship (and not dead formalism) are listed there.