



WORSHIP

There is a problem in the Church of Jesus Christ today, and that problem is that there is very little worship going on in the church. That may seem surprising to some because there are many churches with a lot of music and singing happening during the service. The problem is that music and singing is not worship. Music and singing may precede worship, accompany it, or follow it, but it is not worship. You may be shocked by this, but we have to go by what the bible says and interpret scripture by the original meaning and customs of the people at the time it was written,

Dan. 3:1-4 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it. Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "This is what you are commanded to do, O peoples, nations and men of every language:

Dan. 3:5-7 As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace." Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

The point in the verses above is that it is not the music that is the worship. The music is the herald, the announcement that it is time to worship, the call to worship. The worship itself was to bow down to a statue of gold. Something that God expressly forbid in the ten commandments.

Ex. 20:3-5 “You shall have no other gods before 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, ...

It is clear that those who wished to entrap the Jewish exiles into committing a crime punishable by death intended to do it by forcing them to commit idol worship or die. The point is that the king did not command them (the Jewish exiles) to bring their instruments to play music and sing to his golden statue, he commanded them to bow down in obeisance to the idol he had commanded to be made. The music was not the worship, singing was not the worship, bowing down and perhaps praising the statue was worship. The statue was most likely an image of the king himself.

Dan. 3:8-11 At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever! You have issued a decree, O king, that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace.

Dan. 3:12 But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, O king. They neither

serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Dan. 3:13-15 Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”

Dan. 3:16-18 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Of course, we know the outcome to this episode, God rescued them from the fiery furnace and their accusers were thrown into it. The Hebrews refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar’s idol.

Dan. 3:28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.

This is a good primer for what we must do if we are alive when Antichrist commands us to worship his image. We must refuse or we will be thrown into the lake of Fire.

Rev. 14:9-12 A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name." This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.

Notice again, there is no music associated with the worship of the Antichrist, however, that does not mean that music will not be playing when people are worshipping his image. It would be unusual if it were not playing because generally there is music and singing at mankind's events. The star spangled banner is sang before many events such as NASCAR, The World Series and the Super Bowl.

You may ask, brother, what is your point? Are you trying to tell the churches to be like the denominations that do not allow music or singing? I would answer no, not at all. I just want people to once again understand that the preliminaries are not the main event. The ring announcer who introduces the participants of the contest before a title fight is not the fight. The fight is the fight. The singing before a sporting event is not the main focus, the game is the focus. In the same way, worship is not singing and music, Biblical worship is physically and spiritually in the inner being bowing down before God. We will all worship Jesus someday.

Is. 45:23 By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear.

Rom. 14:11 It is written: “ ‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.’”

Phil. 2:10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

The “should” in Phil. 2:10 does not mean that is something we ought to do but have an option to decide whether or not to participate. In this case it will be the fulfillment of Is. 45:23 that everyone will worship Jesus Christ as Lord.

Some may argue, most of the examples that you have used so far pertain to idol worship with the exception of the last one. Are you sure that worship and singing are not the same thing in other parts of the bible? Well, lets take a look, beginning with Abraham.

Gen. 22:5 He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.”

In this case Abraham was going up on a mountain to sacrifice Isaac. There is no record of him bringing a guitar and some song sheets. He brought a knife and some rope to sacrifice his son. God stopped him of course. It was an object lesson for us that someday God the Father would allow Jesus to be sacrificed for our sins.

Hos. 6:6 For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

Matt. 9:13 But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Matt. 12:7 If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent.

It was not the sacrifice of Isaac that God desired, but the willingness of Abraham to give to God the dearest treasure of his affection, his only son, the son God had promised him. Abraham was willing to do whatever God asked of him, that is the lesson here for us. Complete surrender of our wills to him is what God desires of us. That is our worship.

This is in some ways the whole purpose of this study, to show what God really wants. I have heard it said when some Christians depart from a church service where the music was excellent that day, "what a great worship service that was," when in reality, no worship took place at all except maybe a few praises from people in between verses. The singing is not the worship, the sacrifice of our wills, our desires and our entire life to him is the worship that God desires.

While on the topic of complete submission to God I want to present a question to you pertaining to the next verse.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Many are those in the church, at least those I have attended who often say, "that old devil has really been after me this

week,” and then proceed to tell you all about it. The point is, if you have been resisting the devil and he has not been running away, perhaps you should check your submission index. Are you sure that you are walking 100% in God’s will? If so, then like Job’s trial, Satan will eventually be commanded by God to leave you alone. However, that is contingent on your being like Abraham, 100% committed to performing God’s will in your life, regardless of what he asks of you. Many want to claim the promise of having the devil flee, but don’t want to fulfill the prerequisite of submitting and conforming their life to God’s plan. True worship is not singing in church, it is doing God’s will.

Let’s look at what worship was when God brought the Israelites out of Egypt.

Ex. 3:12 And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.”

God commissioned Moses and Aaron to bring the Israelites out of Egypt to worship him.

Ex. 4:23 and I told you, “Let my son go, so he may worship me.” But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son.”

Ex. 7:16 Then say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to say to you: Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the desert. But until now you have not listened.

Ex. 9:13 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what the

LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me,

Ex. 10:7 Pharaoh's officials said to him, "How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the people go, so that they may worship the LORD their God. Do you not yet realize that Egypt is ruined?"

After God had inflicted many plagues on Egypt, almost everyone except Pharaoh realized that God's hand was upon them through Moses and Aaron. Finally, Pharaoh's counselors prevailed upon him to let the people of Israel go and worship. But, Pharaoh wanted restrictions on their release.

Ex. 10:8-9 Then Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. "Go, worship the LORD your God," he said. "But just who will be going?" Moses answered, "We will go with our young and old, with our sons and daughters, and with our flocks and herds, because we are to celebrate a festival to the LORD."

Ex. 10:11 No! Have only the men go; and worship the LORD, since that's what you have been asking for." Then Moses and Aaron were driven out of Pharaoh's presence.

Ex. 10:24 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and said, "Go, worship the LORD. Even your women and children may go with you; only leave your flocks and herds behind."

After more plagues Pharaoh was almost ready to let Israel go free, but not quite. He wanted to retain their personal property in Egypt to guarantee their return to slavery. Moses did not accept that offer, by God's command.

Ex. 10:26 Our livestock too must go with us; not a hoof is to be left behind. We have to use some of them in worshipping the LORD our God, and until we get there we will not know what we are to use to worship the LORD.”

At this point in time the Israelites including Moses did not know how they were going to worship the Lord. They would not find out until they were free from Egypt with all of their possessions. God then put one last plague upon Egypt, the death of the firstborn children. This convinced Pharaoh to free Israel. He did not wait until morning, he summoned Moses in the middle of the night to begin the Exodus.

Ex. 12:31 During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested.

The Israelites did not know how to worship. God had Moses commission a tent to be built to perform animal sacrifices. The death of the firstborn in Egypt signified the death of Jesus Christ, likewise the animal sacrifices. God was using these things as illustrations that he would redeem his people by a blood sacrifice.

Ex. 12:13 The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

Ex. 24:8 Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, “This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

1Cor. 10:16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?

Heb. 9:14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Heb. 10:4 because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Heb. 10:19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,

1John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

While our study is not about our atonement as much as it is about worship, we need to understand the object lessons that God has given us in the bible. Blood sacrifices and communion represent the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. Our worship response should be to love and to serve him with all of our hearts. This is a part of true worship.

Deut. 6:5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Luke 10:27 He answered: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

After leaving Egypt God gave the Israelites instructions concerning worship. What to do, and what not to do along with promises for obedience. In speaking of idols God said:

Ex. 20:5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, ...

Ex. 23:24 Do not bow down before their gods or worship them or follow their practices. You must demolish them and break their sacred stones to pieces.

Ex. 23:25 Worship the LORD your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you.

God gave promises to the Israelites who would worship him. He promised them good health through his blessing on their food and water. We need his blessing today on our polluted water and our unwholesome food. But, pleasant promises were not all he gave. If they did not worship him punishment would follow.

Deut. 8:19 If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed.

Deut. 13:6-9 If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, "Let us go and worship other gods" (gods that neither you nor your fathers have known, gods of the peoples around you, whether near or far, from one end of the land to the other), do not yield to him or listen to him. Show him no pity. Do not spare him or shield him. You must certainly put him to death. Your hand must be the first in putting him to death, and then the hands of all the people. Stone him to death, because he tried to turn you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

God was extremely serious about this worship thing. He was so serious that at that time in Israel, idolatry was punishable by death. One word of enlightenment here, God never commanded that the rest of the world be subjected to these rules. Israel was not commanded to march to India and kill all of the Hindu's, or to go any other country and persecute people because of their religion. These rules were only for those who had first of all received God's blessings before he ever gave them any commands.

This is what the Roman Catholic Church forgot during the crusades and persecutions of the middle ages. God reached down and showered the Israelites with blessings before any curses were placed upon them for disobedience. Not only that, the Israelites made a covenant with him to serve him forever, both them and their children. They were in a covenant relationship with God, and punishment was imposed if and when they violated the covenant. This covenant was not to be imposed on gentiles living outside of Israel.

Ex. 19:3-6 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Ex. 19:7-8 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. And all the people answered together,

and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

Deut. 29:29 The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Deut. 10:12 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,

Those who bomb abortion clinics and who would execute all unbelievers who violate God's laws do not understand the scriptures. Only Israel was bound by this covenant, and that voluntarily after God brought them out of Egypt with great signs, wonders and blessings. Does that make sin right? Of course not! Homosexuality, rape, murder, theft and every sin imaginable was in existence during old testament times. If it did not exist God would not have commanded the Israelites not to do such things. They would not have even known what he was talking about. The only command to Israel to destroy people concerned those who were illegally living on the land that God gave to Abraham and his descendants as an everlasting inheritance. Those people could leave voluntarily or be driven out, no different than if you came home from vacation and found out someone had broken into your house and was living there, refusing to leave. The police might have to resort to violence to get them out. The Israelite were told by God to drive out the squatters by whatever means necessary.

Gen. 13:14-17 The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like

the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.”

Josh. 1:3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

I realize that I have gotten off on a little bit of a bunny trail here, but those of us who do worship the Lord need to understand what it is all about, what it means to serve God. Some would say that we have to kill everyone who does not conform to biblical standards and then others would say that we have to love everyone and accept them into the church even if they have not repented of their sins. We cannot worship the Lord properly unless we understand how he feels about things. We need to look at things from God’s perspective. He desires that all humans would repent and turn to him and be saved, but if they do not wish to that is their choice in this life. On judgment day they will have to give an account of why they did not wish to be saved.

2Pet. 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Matt. 12:36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.

Rom. 14:12 So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

We are neither to murder unbelievers nor to condone their sinful lifestyles. We are to have God’s attitude and continue to give them opportunities to be saved until the end of their natural lives. If we understand these things we can begin to

worship God in the way he desires, because we have the mind of Christ.

1Cor. 2:16 “For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

Now that (execution) does not of course apply to the civil authorities who make the laws in every nation. As individuals we have no right to murder anyone, (except in defense of our families) but the state can enforce it’s laws by whatever means it chooses, but that’s another subject. Lets go back now and study some more verses that pertain to worship.

1Kings 1:47 Also, the royal officials have come to congratulate our lord King David, saying, ‘May your God make Solomon’s name more famous than yours and his throne greater than yours!’ And the king bowed in worship on his bed

2Kings 17:35 When the LORD made a covenant with the Israelites, he commanded them: “Do not worship any other gods or bow down to them, serve them or sacrifice to them.

2Kings 17:36 But the LORD, who brought you up out of Egypt with mighty power and outstretched arm, is the one you must worship. To him you shall bow down and to him offer sacrifices.

2Chr. 20:18 Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down in worship before the LORD.

2Chr. 29:28 The whole assembly bowed in worship, while the singers sang and the trumpeters played. All this continued until the sacrifice of the burnt offering was completed.

Now, here we have an example of worship, singing and the playing of musical instruments simultaneously. Notice the difference though, it was not the singing or the music that was the worship, it was the bowing of the people as an outward act of submission to God and it was the animal sacrifices, that was the worship. Worship has not changed except that since Christ has come we should understand that bowing represents a submissive heart and sacrifices represent us giving up our most beloved things to God as Abraham did, Of course the sacrifices also represent the sacrifice of Christ. Now we can understand worship correctly. We should not go to a church service and think that we have worshipped because we have participated in liturgy, singing, music, dancing or any other outward forms of revering God. It is our innermost thoughts, our surrender of our entire life to God that is our worship.

Is. 29:13 The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.

Mark 7:6 He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

Eventually, everyone will worship the Lord, after the return of Christ. Some voluntarily, some involuntarily. At the present time it is optional, then it will be required. Still, not everyone at that time (the millennium) will be saved. Some will still be giving lip service to God, while their hearts are far from him. That will all be sorted out later at the judgment.

Neh. 9:6 You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth

and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.

Psa. 86:9 All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name.

Psa. 102:22 when the peoples and the kingdoms assemble to worship the LORD.

Dan. 7:27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'

Zeph. 2:11 The LORD will be awesome to them when he destroys all the gods of the land. The nations on every shore will worship him, every one in its own land.

Zech. 14:16-17 Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, they will have no rain.

All the nations of the world will someday bow down and worship Jesus Christ, and in doing so they will be giving glory to God the Father.

Phil. 2:11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

If you are becoming bored with this study and the light has been turned on in your mind, you need read no further, the rest is primarily repetition using different scriptures as proof texts. I

do not believe in hanging a doctrine on a few potentially misinterpreted verses. When I do a bible study I like it to be thorough and complete so I will continue on a little longer and explain more scriptures that pertain to worship.

Satan, when he tempted Jesus requested that Jesus would worship him. What did he desire? Did he want a performance from Jesus as a one man band? Perhaps an opera solo? How about a song and a dance? Let's see what he wanted.

Matt. 4:1-2 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

Matt. 4:3-4 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matt. 4:5-7 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: " 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Matt. 4:8-10 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

Matt. 4:11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

We see that what Satan desired was worship, and that worship was the act of bowing down in submission before him. We also see how Jesus resisted the devil by quoting the Word of God to him. Jesus resisted Satan with the Word and Satan left. That is our example of how to make the devil flee.

John 4:23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

John 4:24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

That time began when Jesus arose from the dead and then instructed his disciples in what to do after his ascension.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The disciples finally understood the gospel after Pentecost and began to preach it. We continue that job until this day and it will soon be completed.

Satan's desire has not changed though, he wants worship. Since he could not get Jesus to worship him he tries to get any human who will do so. Satan is also the great imitator of God's works. Since God receives glory when we worship his son Jesus, Satan will counterfeit that with his own similar scenario. He will receive worship through his man on an earthly throne, Antichrist.

Rev. 13:12 He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed.

Rev. 13:15 He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.

Of course, we know now not to worship the Antichrist when he comes upon the scene. This is another reason why it is important to understand what worship is. Some might think to themselves at this time, “I won’t worship the Antichrist, I will bow down to him so I can buy and sell, but I will never sing songs or play music to his glory.”

2Th. 2:8-10 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

If Satan can deceive us into believing that worship is singing, then he may deceive some into believing that they can bow before him without incurring God’s wrath. Of course, the scriptures indicate that it is not possible for any true believer to be deceived by this ruse, but even so, will that make it any better for those who are cast into the lake of Fire? Would it not be better for them to understand that they are choosing to spend eternity apart from God by worshipping the Antichrist? At least then they would be aware of the consequences facing them because of their actions.

Matt. 24:24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible.

As we see from the verse above, the delusion that persuades people to worship Antichrist will be so strong that if it were not for God's special protection even the elect would be deceived. If the righteous are scarcely saved, what chance do the unrighteous have.

1Pet. 4:18 And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

So then, what is the conclusion of this matter? Romans 12:1 tells us.

Rom. 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

In these, the new testament times, our spiritual act of worship is to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice to God, in other words clean living. We are to follow the commands of Jesus, this is our worship.

1John 5:3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,

Rev. 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

So then, am I saying that it is wrong to sing in church? Of course not.

Heb. 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,

Psa. 95:6 Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;

Psa. 100:2 Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

We can come before the Lord with music and songs to worship, as it says in the Psalms. Just let us understand that the music and singing is not the worship or a part of the service called “the praise and worship.” It is just a background prop that may precede, be used during, or follow after the real worship, and we now know what that is, bowing down to Jesus in our hearts and minds, determining that we will obey God’s word, no matter what the cost.

The following is an article from <http://www.sharperiron.org/> that deals with a similar topic. It gives some background as to how we lost the truth concerning true worship.

How a Worship Format is Destroying the Evangelical Church

During my lifetime, many evangelical churches in America have moved from Bible-oriented gatherings to music-dominated meetings. Interestingly, both sets of religious gatherings typically bore the title, “Worship Service.”

When the evangelical church was Bible-oriented, this “worship” paradigm was in place:

(1) Not all elements of the service were considered equally important; the exposition of Scripture was clearly the first and foremost priority. All other competitors vied for a distant second place.

(2) When the term “worship” was used, it was the equivalent of our modern casual expression, “doing church.” It is important to note that the preaching of the Word was considered part of worship, as were announcements, testimonies, communion, prayer, singing, the offering, and special music. This was the typical structure of a “worship service” before 1980.

(3) Many evangelicals viewed music as a “warm up for the sermon.” In this regard, many leaders did not seem to often respect music ministry as actual ministry but many others did.

The Change

But the paradigm has changed in many churches. The most important change was what the word “worship” communicates. The word “worship” is now used by clergy and laity alike to refer to the religious feelings aroused by music.

(1) The change in paradigms began with the addition on an article: “the” worship. As trivial as this seems, this was the beginning of emphasizing music and separating preaching and announcements from worship. We now have “the worship” and “the sermon.”

Here is just one possible scenario resulting from this change in definition. John Member has schedule a meeting with Pastor Jones. Let’s eavesdrop.

“Pastor, I think we need to cut down the time you preach. Fifteen minutes is plenty, I think.”

“I don’t agree,” replies Pastor Jones, “studying the Bible is crucial for every Christian.”

“Oh, I agree that the Bible is important, Pastor,” responds John Member, “but our morning service is billed as the morning worship service, so it should be mainly about worship, not preaching.”

In the above hypothetical conversation, you can see how the two meanings of the word “worship” are colliding with one another. In the pastor’s mind, Bible study is an important part of worship, but not in the mind of John Member. He views only music as “worship.”

(2) Other terminology changed. Schools that offered a major in church music (or “sacred music” for the hoi polloi) changed the major to “Worship Arts” (about the same time shades and curtains became “window treatments”). The song leader became known as the “worship leader.”

(3) Music became more emotionally intense, and a confusion between the emotional and the spiritual helped set music on an untouchable pedestal. Worship had become something one felt, not something one did. Worship was judged as good or bad based upon how it made worshippers feel. The Scriptures no longer defined good worship; the individual had become the discernor of truth based upon how he felt.

(4) In mega-churches, elitism and an attitude oriented toward musicians performing to the standards of other musicians (rather than aiming to bless the congregation) seems to be the norm. In some cases, musicians have become a special religious caste (like a priest, they lead the sacrifice of praise into the holy place).

(5) Even though Colossians 3:16 implies we should aim our hymns and songs both vertically and horizontally (we sing to one another and in our hearts to the Lord), the entire concept of worshiping God in the third person is gone, despite the fact that many Psalms speak of God as “He” rather than “You.”

(6) The goal of worship is creating a religious atmosphere and its attendant feelings. Often times worship leaders are weak in biblical and theological matters, but because more Christians value “worship” above theology, some of these leaders are carving out a pattern for church with little regard for biblical teaching about what the church is supposed to do when gathered.

(7) Here is the pattern: eventually worship (music and that religious feeling) is considered almost on a par with Scripture, then equal to Scripture, and eventually superior to it.* The Scriptures become subservient to the music and are used more as transitions between songs than holy word to be expounded. Biblical sermons have given way to self-help lectures or emotionally charged sermons with lots of illustrations—replacing the previous Psalm 1 mentality. The idea of worshiping God through deep Bible study and meditation in the Word is unknown; worship now means music and feelings.

The consequences & dangers of the new “worship format”

Religion is back in vogue. We used to hear “I’m not religious, I just love the Lord,” or “Christianity is not a religion; it is a relationship.” Because of the new emphasis on religious feeling, it is fair to say that we have moved back into the domain of religion.

Worship has become a religious experience dependent upon something else than the gathering of Christians to study the Word, pray, celebrate communion, and sing a few hymns. Based upon modern viewpoints, the early church must have done a poor job of worshipping God.

If the church is about worship, and if worship is a religious feeling induced from a church gathering, then, if I get a stronger version of that feeling somewhere else, that is where I need to be. Rather than the Bible, a passionate feeling of worship becomes the canon by which I measure truth.

As a result, Christians not only move from evangelical church to evangelical church, but they also desert evangelicalism. Our heritage is based upon the centrality of Scripture; we are really novices at the religion game. But even if we competed well on a religious level, are we right to trash the primacy of Scripture? What about the convictions of the Reformation?

The problem is not contemporary music, seeking to have meaningful worship through songs of praise, etc. The problem is displacement. When we displace the knowledge of the Word and solid doctrine with music (whether we call music worship or not), we are no longer under the lordship of Christ. The Christian life includes public worship, but the highest form of worship is hearing and doing the Word of God. That is why the ultimate “worship book” in the Bible, the book of Psalms, begins with emphasizing constant meditation on the Word. The longest Psalm (119) makes the point even more emphatically. God seeks those who worship Him in Spirit and in truth. It is hard to worship God in truth if you don’t know the truth and if you do not make the truth a priority.