

The True Worship

“...for the Father is seeking such to
worship Him.” (John 4:23b)

**Welcome –
Come and see!**

Today, God is seeking believers who will worship Him in spirit and in reality. If you have the desire to satisfy the Father as true worshipers, you are cordially invited to the Lord's Table and to our weekly meetings.

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and diligently labor on Christ as the good land (2 Pet. 1:3-11).

**7. *What is the goal of the true worship?
God's satisfaction and our perfection***

First and foremost, the goal of the true worship is to satisfy God the Father because it is His will. God is seeking the true worshipers today to worship Him in spirit and reality. It is also God's wisdom that in bringing the firstfruits and the best of the offerings for the true worship, we believers will mature, be transformed and be perfected (Col. 1:28; Heb. 6:1). At the end of the Bible the believers living on this earth who have matured and ripened early are described as *firstfruits*; they will be raptured to the heavenly Mount Zion at God's throne for the satisfaction of the Father (Rev. 14:4). The true worship is the marvelous way God has ordained for His people to be perfected.

God Is Seeking True Worshipers

For 2,000 years, Christians have traditionally gathered together on Sunday to worship God. But very few believers give any serious thought to whether God is even pleased with their worship. Is God pleased every Sunday if His people sing some hymns, hear a sermon, donate money, and then go home again to live their own lives? Christians have many different ideas of how God should be worshiped. For many, worshiping God means singing beautiful Christian songs, creating a particular atmosphere. Some worship God by speaking a prayer or quoting Bible verses. Others consider how they live their lives as worship to God. But the critical question is this: what is the true worship that God is seeking and will satisfy Him?

Jesus Christ addresses this question: "*But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking*

such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:23-24).

The Bible rarely speaks of God seeking something. And if He is seeking something, then it must not be very easy to find. God the Father is seeking true worshipers, who *must* worship Him in spirit and in truth. This means God does not accept every form of worship. On the contrary, He wants a very specific form of worship. What does this true worship that the Father is seeking look like?

At the time of the old covenant, God already gave His people, the Israelites, specific instructions in how they should worship Him. His people certainly were not allowed to worship Him in any way they pleased. God commanded: “*You shall not at all do as we are doing here today – every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes –*” (Deut. 12:8). If God gave very clear instructions about how He wanted to be

memorate the work of Christ and worship God the Father with spiritual offerings.

**6. *How are the spiritual offerings prepared?
By laboring on the good land,
which is Christ***

In the old covenant, after God brought His people out of Egypt into the exceedingly rich and fruitful good land of Canaan (Deut. 8:7-10), God’s people labored on the good land in order to prepare the offerings for worship. Today, in the new covenant, Jesus Christ is the reality of the good land. Paul said we are partakers of the inheritance of the saints, which is the good land, that we have received in Christ Jesus (Col. 1:12; Acts 26:18). Believers should possess Christ as the good land and walk in Him. Paul says: “*As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him*” (Col. 2:6). In order to prepare spiritual offerings for our God and Father, we must learn to walk in Christ day by day

How We Can Prepare Ourselves for the Lord's Return – the Last Three Feasts

- **The Feast of the Trumpets** – We blow the trumpet by speaking the truth in love to gather and to warn God's people (Num. 10:1-10; Rev. 18:4).
- **The Day of Atonement** – We afflict and deny our soul life to follow the Lord (Matt. 16:24) and to be fully reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:20).
- **The Feast of Tabernacles** – We live on the earth as sojourners and pilgrims (1 Pet. 2:11) and should not love the world as it is passing way (1 John 2:17) and are preparing ourselves for the coming of the Millennial Kingdom (Zech. 14:16-19).

Experiencing Christ as the reality of all the feasts in our daily living and enjoying them in all their fullness at the Lord's Table, will help us prepare for the Lord's second coming. God instituted the festal gatherings at the Lord's Table, so that believers com-

worshiped by His people at the time of the old covenant, why should He be so tolerant and accept all forms of worship today? Since God already prescribed the manner of worship so precisely in the old covenant, how much more does God expect believers to worship Him in His prescribed way today in the new covenant! Therefore, we must humble ourselves before God and ask Him how He would like us to worship Him. Only the Holy Scripture, given to us by God Himself, can show us the true worship that God desires.

The True Worship: In Spirit and Reality

True worshipers are those who worship God in spirit and in reality. Jesus Christ tells us this plainly in John 4. But what does it mean to worship God in spirit and reality?

In spirit: First, man must be born again, born of the Spirit of God (John 3:3-6). When man is born again through faith in

Jesus Christ and baptism into Christ, he becomes a child of God (see John 1:12-13), receiving eternal life, and thus can now call God his Father (see Gal. 4:6). This is the beginning of a new life. Because the true worship can only be done in spirit, Christians must learn right from the start to walk in the spirit daily (Gal. 5:16, 25) and come to know the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:10-16). This is the first condition to become a true worshiper.

In reality: The second condition is to worship in reality. The word “truth” in Greek also means “reality”. So when Jesus said that the *true* worshipers should worship God in *truth*, this means that today in the new covenant, God wants the *reality* of the worship that was already practiced in the old covenant. Why? Because the entire Bible is woven together by one fundamental principle: all things in the old covenant are shadows and point to the things to come; and in the new covenant, Christ is

6:57) to strengthen us to purge out all leaven (e.g. the leaven of sin, religion, politics, hypocrisy, evil, malice) (1 Cor. 5:6-8).

- **The Feast of Firstfruits** – Christ resurrected from the dead as the firstborn from the dead (Col. 1:18) to abolish death (2 Tim. 1:10) and to give us His resurrection life (1 Cor. 15:20-22, 45) for us also to overcome all death.
- **The Feast of Weeks** – The ascended Christ sitting on the throne of God to be the head of the church (Eph. 1:22) and to pour out the Holy Spirit for the building up of the church (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4).

Jesus Christ accomplished these four feasts with His first coming. At the Lord’s Table, we proclaim His completed work until His return (Matt. 26:26-30; 1 Cor. 11:24-26). The last three feasts refer to the second coming of Christ.

bringing the spiritual offerings. Believers should celebrate this Table until Jesus returns. At the Lord's Table, we remember everything Christ has accomplished, and that He will return as the King. We celebrate on the first day of every week (Acts 20:7).

Leviticus chapter 23 describes the seven feasts God decreed to His people. These feasts are divided into two groups. Each group wonderfully describes the following:

What Christ Accomplished in His First Coming – the First Four Feasts

- **The Feast of the Passover** – Christ as the Lamb of God bore all our sins to save us from God's eternal judgment (John 1:29) and has delivered from the present evil age (Gal. 1:4).
- **The Feast of Unleavened Bread** – Christ came as the true bread from heaven for us to eat Him and live by Him (John

the fulfillment and reality of all things in the old covenant.

Paul writes about this principle: “*So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a **shadow** of things to come, but the **substance** is of Christ*” (Col. 2:16-17). All of God's instructions and commandments at the time of the old covenant regarding food, drink, festivals, new moons, sabbaths and the like, are only a shadow of Jesus Christ. When Jesus came on this earth, He fulfilled and realized all these things through His human life, His death on the cross, His resurrection, and His ascension. Take for instance the Sabbath: in Exodus 20, God commanded His people to rest on the seventh day of the week, the Sabbath (vv. 9-11). When Jesus came, however, *He Himself* became the true Sabbath; He said: “*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*” (Matt. 11:28). In effect, Jesus Christ (the reality) in the new covenant replaced

the Sabbath in the old covenant (the shadow). We see this same principle in Exodus 16 with the manna: when the Israelites were in the desert, God gave them manna, bread from heaven, to eat. When Jesus came He said: *“I am the living bread that came down from heaven”* (John 6:51a). The manna in the desert was only a shadow of Jesus Christ. When He came, Christ as the true bread from heaven replaced the manna.

Thus, Jesus Christ came as the reality of all the shadows in the old covenant. This same principle applies to the worship of God the Father. If we want to understand the true worship that God is seeking today, we must carefully consider its shadow at the time of the old covenant.

Worship in the Old Covenant – the Shadow

In Deuteronomy 12, God instructed His people how they should worship Him at

being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand” (2 Tim. 4:6).

If we apply Christ in our daily lives as the spiritual reality of these offerings, we will be changed and conformed to His image. We will experience Christ in all His riches in all the many situations that we find ourselves in day to day. We then take the best experience of Christ, to offer it as a spiritual offering to God the Father. But when should we bring the offerings?

5. When should the worship take place? During the feast at the Lord's Table

In the old covenant, the feasts were celebrated three times a year; today in the new covenant, all the feasts have been replaced by the Lord's Table, which the Lord Himself instituted at exactly the same time of the Passover (1 Cor. 11:23-26; 5:7-8). The Lord's Table meeting is the appointed time God has set for us to worship Him by

- **The Peace Offering** – Christ is our peace through whom we can be fully reconciled to God and have complete peace with both God and man (Eph. 2:14-18).
- **The Sin Offering** – Christ who committed no sin has conquered death, thus releasing us from the dominion of sin and death and dealing with the root of sin in us (Rom. 6:9-11; Heb. 2:14-15).
- **The Trespass Offering** – The precious blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all the trespasses we have committed and sanctifies us (1 John 1:7, 9).

Besides the five main offerings, God also requires the drink offering (see Lev. 23:13, 18, 37). In addition to the other offerings, the drink offering was poured out on the altar in the form of wine. Christ as the drink offering was prepared to pour out His entire life for God and to die on the cross. The Apostle Paul also wrote about *“being poured out as a drink offering”* (Phil. 2:17). When he was about to be martyred, he wrote Timothy: *“For I am already*

the time of the old covenant. He specifically did not want His people to worship Him as the nations worshiped their idols. For this reason, God revealed to the Israelites exactly how they should worship Him down to the last detail: *“But you shall seek the place where the Lord your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go. There you shall take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, your vowed offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. And there you shall eat before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which the Lord your God has blessed you. You shall not at all do as we are doing here today – every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes –”* (vv. 5-8).

The Holy Scriptures show us that God chose Mount Zion in Jerusalem as the singular place of worship (Ps. 132:13-14).

Each year, God's people were required to go to Jerusalem to bring God the offerings. These offerings were animal sacrifices and the fruit of the field to be burned on the altar for God. In Leviticus chapters 1-7, all the offerings that God required of His people were described in exact detail. The offerings were food for God (Lev. 3:11) and were pleasing and acceptable to Him.

God also specified times for worship: three times a year at the appointed feasts of the Lord – in the spring, the summer, and in autumn – all of God's people would gather in Jerusalem to rejoice before God and to bring the offerings due Him (Deut. 16:16; Lev. 23). The offerings for worship consisted of the firstborn of the livestock and the firstfruits of all the fruit of the ground (Deut. 26:1-2). They were the result of the Israelites' work on the good land to which God had brought them. What does this mean for us who are now in the new covenant?

ing us, so we can worship the Father in spirit and reality with the best of what Christ has gained in us at the feast. Peter wrote: *“you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”* (1 Pet. 2:5).

Below is a summary of the five main offerings in Leviticus chapters 1 to 7 that God required of His people and their spiritual meaning in the new covenant for us to experience today:

- **The Burnt Offering** – Christ is the only One fully absolute for the Father, one with the Father, and obedient to the Father in all things. We must experience Christ as such to obey God and to do His will (John 6:38; 8:29; 10:30).
- **The Meal Offering** – Jesus is the heavenly bread of life for us to eat (John 6:48-51), strengthening and transforming us to live His fine and perfect humanity.

for God. A biblically correct name on a sign above the entrance of a church is insufficient to make the church a place of worship. So to be a place of true worship, the church must be heavenly; therefore, only God Himself must be the master builder of the church (Heb. 8:2; 9:11; 11:10).

4. How does the Father want to be worshiped?

With Christ as the spiritual offerings

In the old covenant, the Israelites worshiped God by presenting Him with various offerings described in detail in Leviticus chapters 1 to 7. Today, in the new covenant, Jesus Christ is the spiritual reality of all the offerings. When He lived on this earth, Jesus replaced every single offering of the old covenant (the shadow) with Himself as the reality thereof (Heb. 10:1-9). Now, God expects us to experience this wonderful Christ day by day as the spiritual reality of the offerings chang-

The True Worship in the New Covenant – the Reality

Today we are living in the time of the new covenant; and God now desires the reality of the true worship from His people through Christ Jesus. Once again the above principle applies: every detail regarding worship that God required from His people at the time of the old covenant has a corresponding spiritual reality today in the new covenant.

1. To whom is the worship due? To God the Father

In Exodus 34, God says to His people: “*for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God*” (v. 14). This makes it unmistakably clear whom we should worship: God and God alone. Jesus confirmed this: “*...for the Father is seeking such to worship Him*” (John 4:23). As Christians, we therefore need to have the awareness that the worship is not

for our own satisfaction and to our liking, but that it is exclusively for God the Father. Worship is not about what pleases us, but about what pleases Him.

2. Who are the worshipers?

The holy priesthood

In the old covenant it was the priests who offered up the sacrifices to God on the altar (Lev. 1:8-9). From the very beginning, God wanted to have a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6). Likewise, in the new covenant, God has not changed His purpose: “*To Him [Jesus Christ] who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father*” (Rev. 1:5-6). Today, all the believers are priests – not just a special group of people ordained by a hierarchical church organization. God the Father wants all Christians to practice the priesthood and to practice the true worship in spirit and reality.

3. Where is the place of worship?

In the church, the heavenly Jerusalem

In the old covenant, God allowed only one place of worship: on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, Mount Zion. Psalm 132:13 says: “*For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place.*” In the new covenant, Jerusalem is also the place for the true worship, but it is no longer the earthly Jerusalem but the heavenly Jerusalem: “*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the festal gathering assembly and church of the firstborn*” (Heb. 12:22-23). Even today, all the believers in the church must be heavenly in nature. How is this possible? The believers must learn to walk in the spirit. Thus, God does not simply recognize every church as a place of worship. Christian organizations and churches that are built on human ability are unfit to be a place of true worship