

Oneness In Christ: Lesson 11

## Unity In Worship

**Memory Text:** “Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— 7 saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water’.” (Revelation 14:6, 7)

**Setting The Stage:** At the heart of the everlasting gospel to go to the world is the call to worship. And to not just worship anyone or anything, but to worship the One who “made” all things.

Interestingly, in the heart of mankind is the desire to worship. It is often said, “Religion is man-made.” The reason given for why this is has to do with our need to explain our existence. But if religion is man-made, why is there an innate desire in humanity to worship? Think about religions of the world for a moment. A large percentage of the world’s population worships a deity. And if they aren’t worshipping a deity, then they’re worshipping something.

**Definition:** A basic definition of worship is “the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity.” I like the 1828 Webster’s Dictionary definition: “Worship is to honor with extravagant love and extreme submission.”

Worship is not the songs we sing in church, or how much we put in the offering plate, or what ministry we perform for the church or the community. These are acts of worship, but they are not worship in and of themselves.

“What is worship? Worship is to feel in your heart and express in some appropriate manner a humbling but delightful sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder and overpowering love in the presence of that most ancient Mystery, that Majesty which philosophers call the First Cause, but which we call Our Father Which Are in Heaven. “ – A.W. Tozer

Worship, directed at God, offered freely and willingly, is at the heart of the Christian’s lifestyle and community.

**1 Peter 2:5:** “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.”

This verse speaks to the idea that true worship preserves unity among believers—our topic for this week.

## Sunday – Worshipping Our Creator & Redeemer

Romans 12:1, 2; Revelation 4 & 5; 15:3, 4

Significant and meaningful are the words of the psalmist: "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Ps. 96:9). **What does it mean to worship God? And why do we do it?** The psalmist helps us understand that worship is essentially to give God the glory and honor He deserves.

**Romans 12:1, 2:** "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

This passage contains all the elements of true worship. First, there is the *motivation to worship*: "the mercies of God." God's mercies are everything He has given us that we don't deserve: love, grace, the Holy Spirit, peace, joy, saving faith, comfort, strength, wisdom, hope, patience, kindness, honor, glory, righteousness, security, eternal life, forgiveness, reconciliation, justification, sanctification, freedom, and much more. The knowledge and understanding of these incredible gifts motivate us to pour forth praise and thanksgiving—in other words, worship!

Revelation 4 & 5 provides a couple of reasons the inhabitants of heaven worship God (see Rev. 4:8, 11; 5:9, 10, 12, 13) and provide a basis for our worship of God: worship is a response of our faith in God for creating us and redeeming us. In worship we give to God the adoration, reverence, praise, love, and obedience we believe He is worthy to receive.

At the end of time, the redeemed will join in adoration and respond in a similar way to God's salvation.

**Revelation 15:3, 4:** "They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: 'Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! 4 Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested.' "

When we come together in worship, it is out of this sense of awe and gratitude that our worship should occur. And it is this individual appreciation and adoration for God that not only preserves our unity, but also promotes it. In what ways?

1) When we focus our attention on worshipping the Center of our lives, we are less likely to focus on the little things that divide us. 2) Worship gives us the opportunity to recognize that we are a part of something beyond ourselves. 3) Worship reminds us that we are all dependent on God, thus dissolving pride and jealousy that threaten disunity.

## Monday – False Worship

Isaiah 14:12-14; Revelation 13:1-4; Matthew 4:8, 9; Revelation 13:11-17

**Isaiah 14:12-14:** “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! 13 For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’ ”

Lucifer wanted rulership and dominion. He wanted the worship and adoration that belonged only to God. This is where evil started. Although unsuccessful in heaven, he didn’t change his objective when he came to earth. He still wants worship. The cosmic battle involving the whole world is spearheaded by a jealous devil, seeking on earth what he failed to get in heaven. Now the conflict comes to a head in the book of Revelation:

**Revelation 13:1-4:** “Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. 2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. 4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?’ ”

Satan wants the worship that belongs only to God. He came here to earth and sought to gain worship from our first parents, Adam and Eve. The whole world wondered after the beast. He came to Jesus in the wilderness, but Jesus wouldn’t have anything to do with it. The devil will do anything he can to get it.

**Matthew 4:8, 9:** “Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Away with you, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’ ”

**What does the Bible say will be the final, decisive question each living person on planet earth will have to answer?** See Rev. 13:11-17 (cp Dan. 3). A universal image is set up, earth’s inhabitants are forced to worship it, and we will either have the MOB or the seal of God. The question everyone will have to answer is, “Who will I worship? Who will have my heart?”

**How might false worship be a more subtle threat than we realize?** What are some things that we might even now be tempted to worship? (Fame, fashion, fortune, performers, cultural norms contrary to the Bible, own opinions)

*“The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death.”* (Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, p. 81; cp PK 188)

## Tuesday – The First Angel’s Message

Revelation 14:6, 7

**Revelation 14:6, 7:** “Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— 7 saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water’.”

An angel in the Book of Revelation is symbolic of a messenger. So here we have a messenger, with a message. And it is flying in the midst of heaven; up where everyone can see. This stresses the importance of the message they are bringing. It is a message for everyone to hear.

And the angel has the “everlasting gospel.” The gospel is the good news - salvation full and free through Jesus Christ. There is but one gospel to save men. There never has been and never will be another gospel, another way of saving people.

Here in Revelation we find that final gospel message to which every inhabitant of planet earth will have the opportunity to respond to. That makes the message very important.

And this angel is up there sharing this message with a “loud voice.” When we translate this from Greek into English we get “megaphone”. This message is to be proclaimed with volume, with urgency, with clarity. It’s an important message. And what specifically is the message?

**Fear God.** Not terror, but respect, reverence, and awe. It means to be in love with God, to be completely for God. Folks who go to heaven will have a relationship with God that recognizes His transcendence, and they experience a thorough surrender to the Holy One of heaven.

**Give Him glory.** What does it mean to give glory to Him? It means to honor and give God glory with our life. There’s many ways this can be done (1 Cor. 10:31).

Rom. 12: 1 is a counterpart to this verse and offers a description of the *manner of our worship*: “present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice.” Presenting our bodies means giving to God all of ourselves.

The reference to our bodies here means all our human faculties, all of our humanness—our hearts, minds, hands, thoughts, attitudes—are to be presented to God. In other words, we are to give up control of these things and turn them over to Him, just as a literal sacrifice was given totally to God on the altar.

**Judgment.** Why? Because the “hour of His judgment is come”. That is profoundly important.

**Worship.** And then the Bible says we are to worship the Creator, who is Christ. In Revelation there is a call to worship the beast, and a distinct call to worship the Creator. This certainly is an urgent end-time message.

There is an unmistakable allusion to the fourth commandment in this verse. The Sabbath is a memorial of God’s creative acts (Ex. 20:8-11; Ezek. 20:12). The heartfelt observance of such in and of itself testifies of the observer’s loyalty and worship of the Creator, as loving obedience to God is the highest act of worship we can render to God.

It’s with urgency that this message goes to the world as it will be at a time of increasing atheism and anti-atheism, as well as increasing false worship of the beast power of Revelation. This clarion call urges people to make a decisive stand on the side of right, and to determine once and for all to make God sovereign of their lives.

## Wednesday – Bible Study & Fellowship

Romans 12:2; Acts 2:42

**How do we give ourselves as a living sacrifice?**

**Romans 12:2:** “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

We renew our minds daily by cleansing them of the world’s “wisdom” and replacing it with true wisdom that comes from God. We worship Him with our renewed and cleansed minds, not with our emotions. We live with emotions, but unless they are shaped by a mind saturated in truth, they can be destructive, out-of-control forces. Where the mind goes, the will follows, and so do the emotions.

**Acts 2:42:** “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

There is only one way to renew our minds, and that is by the Word of God. It is the truth, the knowledge of the Word of God, the truth about God. To know the truth, to believe the truth, to hold convictions about the truth, and to love the truth will lead

to true spiritual worship. It is conviction followed by adoration, adoration that is a response to truth, not to any external stimuli, including music.

Music can't produce worship, although it certainly can produce emotion. Music is not the origin of worship, but it can be the expression of it. Do not look to music to induce your worship; look at music as simply an expression of that which is induced by a heart that is rapt by the mercies of God, obedient to His commands.

True worship is God-centered worship. People tend to think only about a worship that feels good or whether it "speaks" to the younger generation, or how their worship looks to other people. Focusing on these things misses the point. Jesus tells us that true worshipers will worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). This means we worship from the heart and the way God has designed.

Like the early Christian church where worship included praying, reading and studying God's Word, singing, participating in communion, serving others, and fellowship, God is calling His church today to worship in the same way.

We are a united people because of the truths we proclaim, truths that we find in the Bible. The study of the word of God forms the core of both our worship to God and our unity as a people who have been called to proclaim the three angels messages to the world.

## **Thursday – Breaking Of Bread & Prayer**

Acts 2:42

The early church was united in its common faith in Jesus and in the truth He had entrusted to it. And they expressed this unity in a number of ways:

1. Breaking of bread. This refers to eating and fellowshiping together, and it likely included sharing in the communion together. So these moments became moments of worship (see Acts 2:46). No doubt these moments also helped strengthen their sense of unity.
2. Praying together. They prayed for grace and power to proclaim the message entrusted to them. They prayed for the success of the enterprise. They prayed for one another. (See Acts 1:14; 4:23-31; 12:12). The early church was a praying church. A church that prays together stays together because it binds hearts together in a common cause and purpose.

True worship is not confined to what we do in church. True worship is the acknowledgment of God and all His power and glory in everything we do. The highest form of praise and worship is obedience to Him and His Word. To do this, we must know God. Worship is to glorify and exalt God—to show our loyalty to our Father.