

Praise and Worship

Introduction

Picture with me the throne room of God as described in the book of Revelation by the Apostle John. Around the throne are four living creatures. *"Day and night they never stop saying, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come'"* (Rev. 4:8). Each time this happens, twenty-four elders sitting on thrones around God's throne fall down before God and cry, *"You are worthy, our Lord God, to receive glory and honor and power"* (Rev. 4:11).

Thousands of angels encircle the throne, singing, *"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and power!"* (Rev. 5:12)

Heaven is a place of praise and worship of God. Earth should be as well. Perhaps you wonder why. Why should I praise and worship the Lord? What difference does it make anyway?

Well, consider this: Scripture talks about praise approximately 500 times, more than any other single subject. Obviously our praise and worship is important to the Lord. For that reason, if no other, it should be important to us.

Although the early church was a praising church, throughout history the church as a whole has forgotten how to or neglected to praise the Lord. However, in recent times in different places all over the world, people are rediscovering that praise and worship draws them closer to God. In their newfound intimacy with the Lord, they begin to change into the kind of people he wants His followers to be, they begin to see their prayers answered, and they experience a new power in their lives. Wouldn't we all like that to happen in our lives?

Our Study

Let's begin our study by looking at some of the reasons why we should praise God.

He Is Worthy of Our Praise

The Scripture: Colossians 1:16, 17

"For by him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; He is before all things and in Him all things hold together."

1. What has God done? _____

2. How are things held together? _____

God is the One who created the whole world and everything in it, including you and me, and He holds everything together.

The Scripture: John 3:16

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

3. What else has God done? _____

God loves us so much that he sent his Son to die for us, to save us from our sins, and enable us to spend eternity with Him.

God Wants Our Praise

The Scripture: Psalm 50:23 (NKJV)

"Whoso offereth praise glorifies Me."

4. What does our praise do? _____

The Scripture: Psalm 68:4

"Sing to God, sing praise to His name, extol Him who rides on the clouds--His name is the Lord--and rejoice before Him."

5. When we sing and praise God, what are we doing? _____

When we extol someone, we magnify them.

The Scripture: Psalm 22:3 (NKJV)

"But You are holy, who inhabit the praises of Israel."

6. What does God do? _____

Other versions of the Bible tell us that our praises "enthroned" God, in other words place Him on a throne.

Teacher-writer Paul Billheimer explains it like this: *"God dwells in an atmosphere of praise. Praise and His presence have a mutual affinity. When there is joyful praise, there God is dynamically and benevolently active. This means that wherever there is adoration, reverence, and acceptable worship and praise, there He identifies and openly manifests His presence."*

The Scripture: Psalm 100:4

"Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise."

7. How do we enter the Lord's courts? _____

This psalm is referring to the tabernacle of the Old Testament. Worshipers entered the gates with thankful hearts, but as they came into the courts, their thanksgiving turned to praise.

We Are Commanded To Praise God

The Scripture: Psalm 117:1

"Praise the Lord, all you nations, extol Him, all you peoples."

8. Who is commanded to praise the Lord in this verse? _____

The Scripture: Psalm 150:6

"Let everything that has breath praise the Lord."

9. Who is told to praise the Lord in this verse? _____

Let's get down to more specifics: Where, when and how should we praise the Lord.

Where Do We Praise God?

Is church the only place where we praise God? Not according to Scripture.

The Scripture: 1 Chronicles 16:24

"Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous deeds among all peoples."

10. Where is our praise to be given? _____

The Scripture: Psalm 22:22

"I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you."

11. Where does this verse tell us to praise God? _____

The Scripture: Psalm 149:5

"Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds."

12. Where else? _____

It is proper to praise the Lord in all places.

When Do We Praise the Lord?

Is there an appropriate time to praise the Lord?

The Scripture: Psalm 59:16

"In the morning I will sing of Your love."

13. When does the psalmist say he will sing to the Lord? _____

The Scripture: Psalm 71: 24

"My tongue will tell of your righteous acts all day long."

14. How often should we praise the Lord for his righteous acts? _____

The Scripture: Psalm 146:2

"I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live."

15. How long should we praise the Lord? _____

The Scripture: Psalm 34:1

"I will praise the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be on my lips."

16. When should we praise the Lord? _____

Varieties of Praise

The next question becomes: how then do we praise the Lord? Scripture shows us many ways to praise and worship Him.

The Scripture: Psalm 47:6

"Sing praises to God; sing praises to our King, sing praises."

17. How are we to praise God? _____

The Scripture: Isaiah 12:6

"Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you."

18. What else are we to do? _____

The Scripture: Psalm 47:1

"Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy."

19. What does the psalmist tell us to do? _____

The Scripture: Psalm 150: 3-5

"Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet...with the harp and lyre,...tambourine and dancing...strings and flute...cymbals."

20. List some of the musical instruments we can praise God with. _____

The Scripture: Luke 6:23

"Rejoice in that day and leap for joy because great is your reward in heaven."

21. What does Jesus tell us to do? _____

The Scripture: 2 Samuel 6:14

"David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the Lord with a linen ephod."

22. How did David praise the Lord? _____

The Scripture: Acts 10:46

"They heard them speaking in tongues and praising God."

23. What accompanied the early Christians' praise? _____

Worship

But praise is not an end unto itself. Praise frequently leads us into worship.

The Scripture: John 4:23-24

"True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

24. What kind of worshipers is the Father seeking? _____

25. Why? _____

To truly worship God, we must worship him in our spirits. *Worship* is our spirit touching God's spirit. There are times when we are so overwhelmed with love for the Lord that we pass beyond praise and enter into worship. Sometimes we kneel down, stand with our hands raised, or put our faces to the floor. Sometimes we weep unashamedly. Worship brings us into a closeness--into an intimacy with God.

Something supernatural happens when we worship God. Let's consider two examples from Scripture.

In Matthew 15, we have the story of a heathen woman who comes to Jesus to ask him to heal her demon-possessed daughter. At first Jesus does not answer her and the disciples urge him to send her away. But the woman persists.

The Scripture: Matthew 15: 25 (NKJV)

"Then she came and worshipped Him, saying, 'Lord, help me!'" (NKJV)

26. What did the woman do? _____

27. What did she say? _____

Here is a woman, not a Jew, who nevertheless has heard enough about Jesus to know he is worthy of her worship, and she knows that he can heal her daughter.

The Scripture: Matthew 15:28

"Then Jesus answered, 'Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.' And her daughter was healed from that very hour."

28. What did Jesus do for this woman? _____

When she worshiped Jesus, He granted her request.

The Scripture: Matthew 8:2, 3 (NKJV)

"A leper came and worshipped Him, saying, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.' Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." (NKJV)

29. What did the leper do? _____

30. What happened? _____

This is not to say that every time we worship the Lord, we are healed or our requests are granted. But something in our acts of worship enables Jesus to work in ways he could not otherwise do. This is one of the great mysteries of our faith.

Our God is a God who is worthy of our praise and worship. Let us join with the hosts of heaven and give him the glory that is due him.

The Answers

1. Created all things in heaven and earth
2. In Him
3. Given us His Son, that whoever believes in Him should have eternal life
4. Glorifies God
5. Extolling Him
6. Inhabits our praises
7. With praise
8. All nations and peoples
9. Everything that has breath
10. Among the nations, among all peoples
11. In the congregation
12. On our beds
13. In the morning
14. All day long
15. All of our lives
16. At all times, continually
17. With singing
18. Shout
19. Clap our hands, shout with cries of joy
20. Trumpet, harp, lyre, tambourine, strings, flute, cymbals
21. Rejoice and leap for joy
22. With dancing
23. Speaking in tongues
24. Those who will worship him in spirit and in truth
25. Because God is spirit
26. Worshiped Jesus
27. "Help me."
28. Healed her daughter
29. Worshiped Jesus, said Jesus could make him clean
30. His leprosy was cleansed.

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