

“IT IS WRITTEN, THOU SHALT WORSHIP”

INTRODUCTION

The first time Jesus used the word worship is in Matt. 4:10, when He addressed Satan when He was being tempted of the devil in the wilderness. He said, “It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve.” The first 3 words of this statement (“It is written”), are repeated twice more in this chapter. This entire passage contains 4 fundamental principles relative to our worship today. In this lesson, we are going to consider them, with special emphasis upon the possible use of instrumental music **in** our worship. Faithful congregations of the church of Christ use **only** “acapella” music, without the addition of mechanical instruments, which is very popular in the denominational world. On occasions, we need to be reminded of “why” we do it this way, lest we get caught up in doing something someone else is doing, and thus make our worship vain in the eyes of the Lord.

Now, let’s apply the 4 basic principles relative to our worship to God.

DISCUSSION

I. The 1st principle: “IT IS WRITTEN.” (text)

A. Jesus refused to worship Satan because of something that had been “written.”

1. The 2 previous references to something “written” in this chapter, along with this one, **all** came from the book of Deuteronomy, which contains the so-called DEUTERONOMIC CODE.
 - a. The 1st reference to Deuteronomy is from Deut. 8:3. cf Matt. 4:4
 - b. The 2nd reference to Deuteronomy is from Deut. 6:16. cf Matt. 4:7
 - c. The 3rd reference is from Deut. 6:13 and 10:20--2 passages. Cf Matt. 4:10
2. Jesus obviously knew that the particulars of His worship had to be authorized by the unchangeable word that GOD had given.
 - a. Now, that “word” was **still** in force for Jesus, as He uses a present tense verb: “is”, meaning “it has BEEN and REMAINS written.”
 - b. The word was given 1500 years before to the Israelites, and was still applicable to Jesus, who was an Israelite.
 - c. Jesus knew that God did **not say** “Thou shalt NOT worship Satan,” but Jesus knew that one is to worship only God, as stated in His word.

B. Now let’s apply this principle to instrumental music in worship.

1. The particulars of our worship (including the music) **must** be governed by “what is written.”
 - a. The particulars of Old Testament worship ended when the Law itself came to an end. Col.2:14
 - b. For some reason, every reference in the New Testament for music in the church age refers to “singing”, with absolutely **no mention** of mechanical instruments of music. (Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Heb. 2:12; Jas. 5:13).
 - c. True, the written word of the New Testament does **not** say, nor does it have to say, “Thou shalt NOT use mechanical music in worship,” just as it did not say, “Thou shalt not worship Satan.”
2. The written WORD of Christ contains His “name” or authority, and Christ **only** authorizes singing as musical praise to God. Col.3:16-17
 - a. Here we are told the **kind** of songs to use in praise. v. 16
 - b. Here we are reminded that **all** we do in this matter is to have the name or authority of the Lord behind us.

II. The 2nd principle is: “THOU SHALT WORSHIP.” (text)

A. The word used here for “worship” is the Greek word *proskukneo*, which is a combination of *pros* (meaning “toward” and *kuneo* (meaning “to kiss”), symbolically meaning “to blow a reverent kiss” to GOD.

1. This is the main word used in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament when translating the Hebrew term “to bow” into the Greek language.
2. It is the **principle** word used to describe New Testament worship. Cf John 4:19-24

B. Now, let’s apply these words of Jesus to “instrumental music” today.

1. Worship is what we DO toward a higher Being, who has told us WHAT it takes to please Him—which is “singing.”
2. To add instruments to that singing because “we like it” is to please **ourselves**, and not God who is the real audience.

III. The 3rd principle is: “THE LORD THY GOD.” (text)

A. GOD (not Satan) is the true object of worship. Gen.4:3-6; Heb. 11:4; John 4:24; Rev. 22:9

1. Men are not true objects of worship.
2. Idols are not proper objects of worship.
3. Angels are not suitable objects of worship.
4. The DEVIL most certainly is not a fit object of worship.

B. Now, let’s apply this to “instrumental music in worship.

1. Since GOD is the object of our worship, we must offer the things He accepts. 1 Pet. 2:5
2. ALL our worship is something we do to please HIM, that He has TOLD us to do.
 - a. Our preaching, giving, praying, communing **and** our singing—are ALL done with a view to pleasing and glorifying God.
 - b. We CAN and DO **enjoy** worship, but it is primarily in doing what God asks of us, and only then do our souls commune with God.

IV. The 4th principle is: “HIM ONLY SHALT THOU SERVE.” (text)

A. **All** of our religious service is to GOD, but not all service is worship, as some maintain.

1. “Serving” is a more *general* term for our dedication to God, while “worship” is a more *specific* term regarding our praise to Him.
2. The 2 words used together, as in our text, remind us that there is some difference between the 2 functions.
 - a. Abraham was “serving” God when he went to Mt. Moriah as God told him to do, but his servant was to wait, as Abraham was to “go” (a service) **and** then “worship”, and then to “return” (another act after the worship was completed). See Gen. 22:5
 - b. The eunuch had been to Jerusalem to worship God (the worship being completed) and was then returning home (another action). See Acts 8:27-28
 - c. Worship is homage paid **to** God in a specific way, while “service” comprehends any act rendered **for** Him, in doing good to fellowman. See Heb. 12:28; Matt. 6:24; Gal. 6:10

- d. Our “serving” in a general way can **include** our worship, but not every **action** of a believer should be classified AS “worship.” See Luke 2:37; Acts 20:19

B. Now let’s apply this principle to “instrumental music in worship.

1. Our supreme LOVE for God means that we are keeping His commandments—without addition or subtraction. 1 John 5:3
2. Just as Noah used ONLY the kind of wood God command him to use in building the ark (gopher wood), WE must offer ONLY the kind of praise He commands us IN our expressed worship paid to Him. See Gen. 8:22; Rev. 22:14
3. Noah could use any other kind of wood in building something else other than the ark (even building a means of transporting him somewhere to warn and to preach, or to build a pulpit if he needed one), but when it came to building the “ark”, God was very specific.
4. We may use mechanical instruments in secular music or personal pleasure, but in the specific act of devotion to God, we are bound by the kind of music He specifies.

CONCLUSION

- I. When we begin and plan our worship, we should begin by finding “what is written”, so as to know what pleases God.
 - A. Our worship on the first day of the week includes singing, praying, communing, giving and preaching, as revealed in scripture.
 - B. Some worship, such as singing, can take place outside of the Sunday assembly, so we need to be careful not to offend God by offering what **we** want instead of what God wants.
- II. If you are not a faithful worshiper of God because you have not yet become a Christian, or if you have become unfaithful to God in your life and need to be restored, why not respond to Christ’s invitation right now—as we stand together and sing?

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