

LANDMARK MESSENGER

The Object of Worship

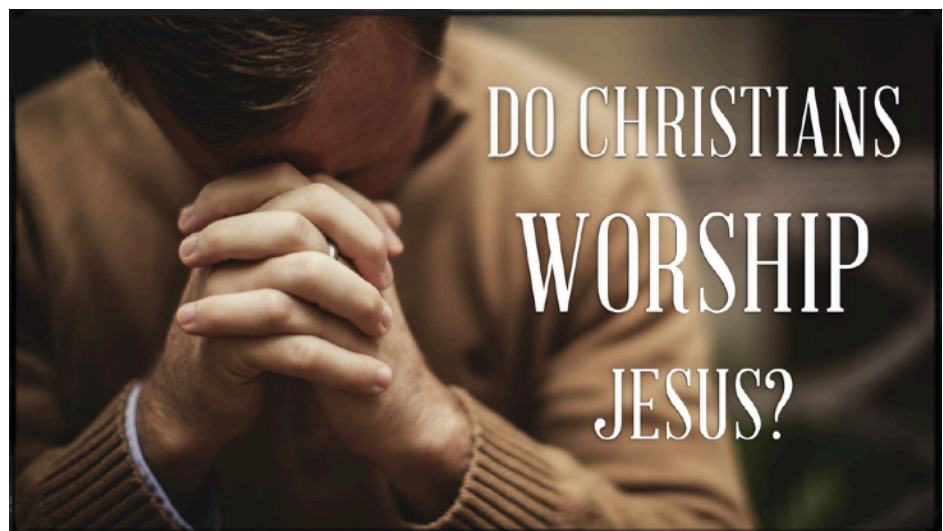
Since Cain and Abel the subject of how to appropriately worship God has been one of the controlling themes of scripture. Cain discovered (to his great murderous displeasure) that God is very concerned with the proper expression of religious devotion. Abel by attentive faith (Romans 10:17) offered a more excellent sacrifice (Hebrews 11:4) than Cain who did not use his ears to hear (Matthew 11:15).

One day at Jacob's Well, Jesus encountered an inquisitive Samaritan woman who asked whether a particular physical location was relevant to acceptable worship. Jesus answered her question and responded:

"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).

There are several astonishing details explicated by the Lord in this section of scripture. First, Jesus states that Christians *must* worship in spirit and truth. This declaration certainly catches the attention of every serious God-fearer who is interested in faithful God-approved service. This fundament has certainly been recklessly disregarded by the ancient and modern denominational world as it builds its human-designed ecclesiastical edifices.

Jesus further specifies that the true worshipers will worship the Father because the Father is seeking such to worship Him. Does that exclude the worship of Jesus? This is a hotly debated subject, the intensity of which is heightened by the background of false doctrine propagated by some cults that Jesus is not eternal God. In today's issue, we will pursue the question of 'Do We Worship Jesus?'



Do Christians Worship Jesus?

By Bart Shaw

Do Christians worship Jesus? The immediate and reflexive answer that many, if not all Christians would give, is “Well, of course, we do! Jesus is God!” At the same time, there is the tenuous hint of controversy lingering around this subject. Jesus Himself responded to the tempter:

“You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve” (Matthew 4:10).

Surprisingly, a search of the English Bible reveals no single scripture that commands the worship of Jesus. Do Christians as the body of Christ corporately worship God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit? Do Christians pray to all three Persons of the Godhead? Do Christians give thanks to Jesus and the Holy Spirit? Is it wrong to say, “Jesus I worship You”? The answer is not an easy one because to wrestle with this question is to grapple with the Trinity, with Trinitarian doctrine, and with the subject of the Godhead.

Jesus is God

Before we answer this question, we must address the Divinity of Jesus. Scripture teaches that there is One God but that “the divine nature is shared by three distinct personalities, and these personalities are characterized in the New Testament as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each of the three personalities of the Godhead is eternal and equal in essence, though they may assume individual roles in their respective work (which may involve subordination)” (Wayne Jackson).

In the tremendous Christological passage of Hebrews chapter 1 the writer uses great precision and rigor to convince his audience that Jesus is part of the unique divine identity.

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they (Hebrews 1:1-4).

The Hebrew writer wants the reader to know that Jesus is part of the Godhead, was fully involved in the creative work of God (verse 2), and is the radiance of the glory of God – the *apaugasma* (verse 3). Jesus is the brilliance of God, the luminosity, the illumination, the divine *lux*. The Son is the faultless representation of the Father’s being and His nature; the English Standard Version renders this the ‘exact imprint of His nature.’ The Greek word rendered nature is *hypostasis* which refers to the “essence, the actuality, the reality” (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*). The Son was always present as a co-sharer of eternity with God the Father.

Verse three also confirms that Jesus is the Pharaoh (the '*Pheron*' in Greek) who upholds, sustains, and supports all things by His word. The Egyptians considered their Pharaoh to be a god, but history has proved him to be ineffectually mortal. Jesus, however, is truly the divine 'Upholder' who has arisen from the grave and ascended to sit at the right hand of the Father.



Paul affirms that Jesus is our 'great God and Savior' (Titus 2:13-14) and that Jesus is God 'manifested in the flesh' (1 Timothy 3:16). Paul further declares that the Lord was equal with God the Father, but He did not hold onto His parity:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men (Philippians 2:5-7).

Why did Jesus voluntarily forsake this equality? For the sake of humanity's salvation:

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:8).

Surprisingly, in Christ's subordinate position, the Father was greater than He:

"If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28b).

In speaking of Christ's volitional subordination to God, Paul writes:

But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God (1 Corinthians 11:3).

The astonishing and dramatic fact of the Incarnation is that Jesus, though He is God, subjected himself to God the Father. The Lord Jesus made Himself of no reputation and personified service, obedience, and self-renunciation. He is the Christian's peerless example and leads us on to higher service to our King.

Did Jesus Deny His Divinity?

Some seize on the record of the rich young ruler to assert that Jesus denied that He was God.

Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God" (Mark 10:17-18).

Does Jesus deny on this occasion that He was God? Is this a refusal of the Divine nature by Jesus Christ?

Instead of representing a denial, this statement of Christ is in truth an assertion of divinity. The rich young ruler casually used the word 'good' in the same sense applied to talented professors and rabbis even today. The Lord seeks to provoke the man to consider the absolute meaning of the word good. Only God possesses authentic goodness as the source of all life and blessings.

The master teacher redirects the conversational flow, seizing upon the thoughtless grammar of the questioner to make a cosmically significant point. Christ's rhetorical question demands deeper introspection from the rich young ruler.

The Pulpit Commentary paraphrases Mark 10:17 as follows: "If you call me good, believe that I am God; for no one is good, intrinsically good, but God."

R.C. Foster renders it: "Do you know the meaning of this word you apply to me and which you use so freely? There is none good save God; if you apply that term to me and you understand what you mean, you affirm that I am God"

Rather than a denial, Jesus here asserts what would be considered blasphemous to the Jews, that He was perfect GOOD, thus perfect God.

Additional evidence of the divinity of Christ is found in the 'I AM' statements of Jesus. 'I AM' is found both in Hebrew (the Tetragrammaton¹) and in Greek (*ego eimi*). The notable Torah event is Exodus three when God reveals to Moses His name, but it is also in Deuteronomy and Isaiah. John records Jesus saying seven absolute 'I AM' sayings with the seventh repeated twice. They are: I AM the bread of life (6:35), I AM the light of the world (8:12), I AM the door (10:9), I AM the Good Shepherd (10:11), I AM the resurrection and the life (11:25-26), I AM the way, the truth, and the life (14:6), and I AM the true vine (15:1).



There is no doubt that Jesus asserted His divinity in the scripture. Many additional sources are available to explore this topic.

¹ 'Tetragrammaton' refers to the four-letter Hebrew rendering of the divine name of God, YHWH, revealed in the Old Testament. As opposed to the generic word 'god' which can refer to false idols, the tetragrammaton only refers to the Lord God of heaven and earth.

Is Jesus worshipped in scripture?

Scripture leaves no doubt that Jesus is worthy of worship. Before His incarnation, God the Son was worshiped in the scriptural events known as Christophanies. A Christophany is when the pre-incarnate *Logos* appears: Genesis 18, Genesis 32, Judges 13, Daniel 3, and Joshua 5 are examples. Jesus was worshiped as a baby (Hebrews 1:6), as a young child (Matthew 2:9-11), during His ministry (Matthew 8:2), by the disciples (Matthew 14:33), after His resurrection (Matthew 28:9-10, 16-17), and in Heaven (Revelation 5:8-10).

Further, Paul unquestionably declares that every knee will someday bow to Jesus:

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

Does scripture command worship of Jesus in the Church?

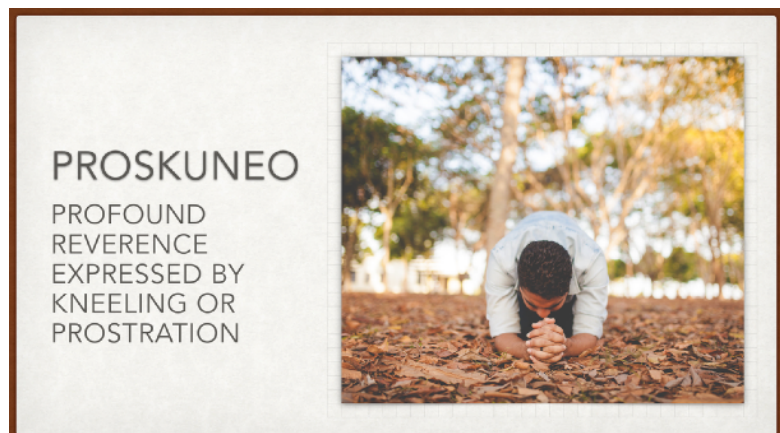
The question that remains to be answered is whether Christians worship Jesus Christ while assembled as congregations of Christ. What is the worship theology of the New Testament? What does the language of scripture between Christ's ascension and the last day command disciples to do?

To answer this question, we must look at the four major words for worship in the Greek language and see if they are used in reference to the Savior in the epistles.

Proskuneo (προσκυνέω)

Proskuneo (to bow down, prostrate one's self) is used 65 times in 54 verses. This is the term Jesus uses in Matthew 4 and John 4 to describe worship to the Father. It describes Cornelius' reaction to Peter entering his home (Acts 10:25-26). It is why the Ethiopian eunuch came to Jerusalem (Acts 8:27). It is used of worship to Jesus after His resurrection when the women fell and held His feet (Matthew 28:9) and when the disciples worshiped Him in Galilee (Matthew 28:17). Paul visualizes visitors to the congregation of believers to 'fall on their faces and worship God' (1 Corinthians 14:25). John is rebuked for offering *proskuneo* to an angel (Revelation 19:10; 22:8-9).

Note that the majority of the usage of *proskuneo* occurs in the gospels and in the book of Revelation. In the Acts, Pauline epistles, Hebrew, and the General epistles Christians are never commanded to *proskuneo* Christ.



Latreuo (λατρεύω)

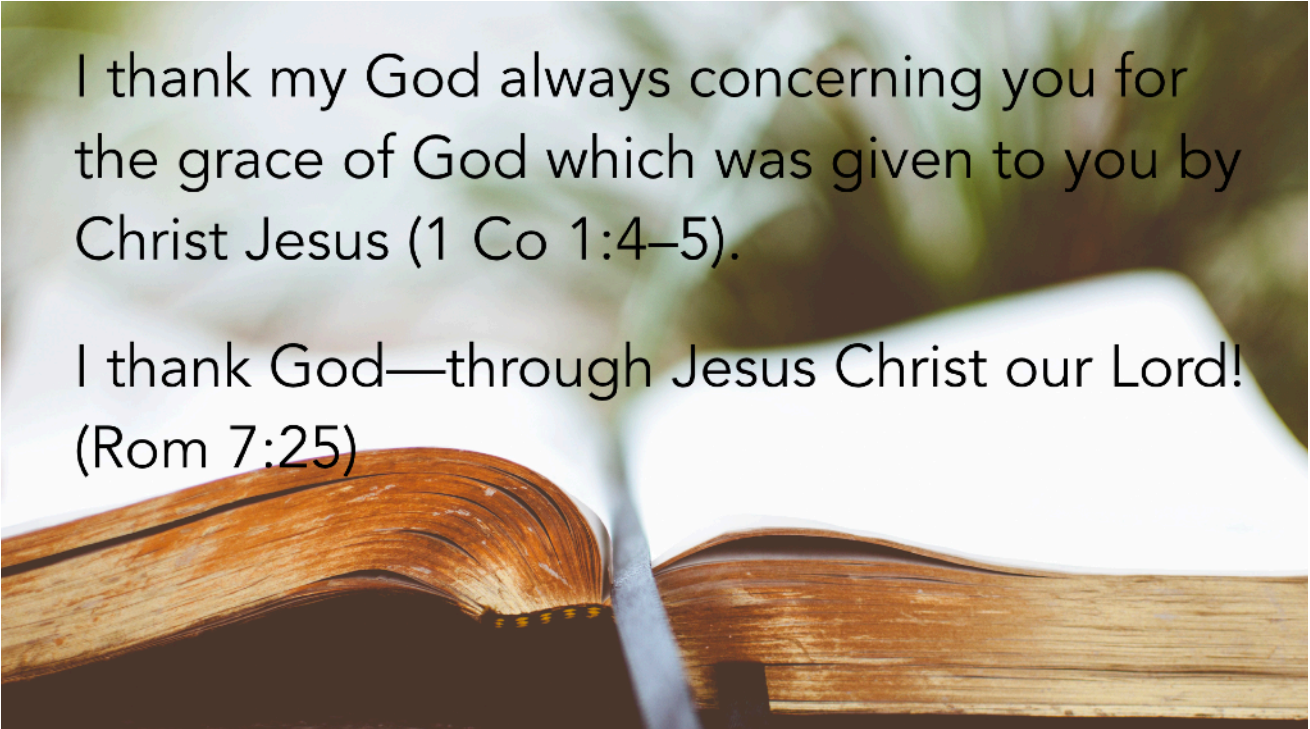
The next most common word, *latreuo* (to serve), is used 21 times in 21 verses. This Greek word especially refers to the kind of service that priests gave in the Mosaic temple. This word is found paired with *proskuneo* in Matthew 4: “Worship (*proskuneo*) the Lord your God and serve (*latreuo*) only him” (Matthew 4:10; Luke 4:8). Nowhere in the New Testament is *latreuo* offered to Jesus Christ. Paul says in the Romans letter: “God as my witness whom I serve (worship, *latreuo*) with my spirit in the gospel of his Son” (Romans 1:9). When used in scripture this word always speaks of service rendered to God the Father.

Sebō (σέβω) & *Eusebein* (εὐσεβεῖν)

The two remaining terms are *sebō* (used 10 times in 10 verses) and *eusebein* (used 2 times in 2 verses). Again, neither of these two terms are used to describe worship to Christ but only to God the Father.

What about giving thanks? Do Christians give thanks to Jesus? *Eucharisteo* is the verb for ‘give thanks’ and is regularly used to give thanks to God the Father. It is striking that Paul never gives *eucharisteo* to Jesus in his epistles. One time Paul does use another term for thanks (*charis*) directed to Christ when he writes: “I am grateful (*charin*) to Christ Jesus our Lord” (1 Timothy 1:12). However, overwhelmingly thanks are offered to the Father in the scripture.

A few examples include:



I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus (1 Co 1:4–5).

I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!
(Rom 7:25)

Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him (Colossians 3:17, NRSV).

Noteworthy also are Colossians 3:17 and Ephesians 5:20, where thanks are given to God the Father “in the name of our Lord Jesus [Christ].” To give thanks in everything is “the will of God in Christ Jesus for us” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Do Christians pray to Jesus? Jesus teaches His followers how to pray in Luke 11:1-2:

Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” So He said to them, “When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.”

Later Jesus enlarges on this subject and instructs His disciples to pray to God the Father in His name:

WE ARE TO PRAY IN JESUS' NAME (AND ADDRESS OUR PRAYERS TO THE FATHER)

John 15:16

16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

John 16:23

Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.

John 16:26–28

In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. 28 I came forth from the Father and have come into the world.

It is a clear imperative from Christ that prayer is directed to God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some disagree and say that we can pray directly to Jesus using Stephen as an example:

And they stoned Stephen as he was calling (*ἐπικαλέω*) on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (Acts 7:59).

Is this scriptural sanction for prayer directed to Jesus? No, it is not. Notice the following points:

- The scripture does not necessarily contain all the prayer and Stephen may have begun with words addressing the Father.
- Stephen can see Jesus in his vision making this is an extraordinary situation more similar to a conversation than prayer.
- The point of the Lucan narrative of Acts is to impress upon the stiff-necked, hostile, and belligerent Jews that Jesus' name is to be called upon (*ἐπικαλέω*) for salvation.



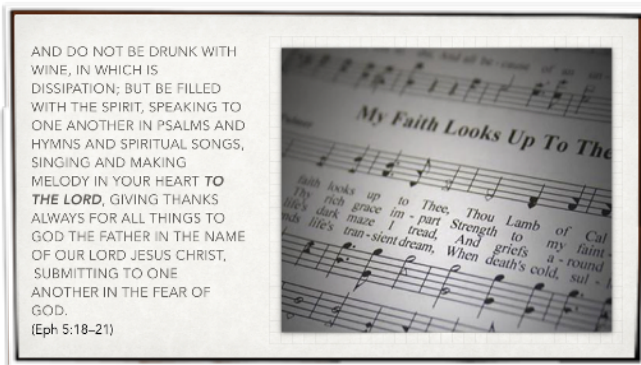
Luke draws out this particular part of the narrative because it is germane to the doctrinal issue at hand. Stephen called on the name of Jesus (*ἐπικαλέω*) just as scripture commands and as Joel prophesied.

It is inappropriate to use this example to justify addressing Jesus in prayer when Christians have an explicit command to petition God the Father.

Still, those who would have us pray directly to Jesus use the example of Paul:

Concerning this thing, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me (2 Corinthians 12:8).

Did Paul pray directly to Jesus? As with the situation with Stephen, Paul had supernatural, direct conversations with Christ. We know of at least three cases (Acts 18, 22, 23) where Paul conversed with Jesus and it may have been during these dialogues that he asked the Lord his request. Once again, the exception does not invalidate the rule.



May Christians sing to Jesus? Unquestionably, yes. Ephesians 5:18-21 and Colossians 3:16-17 confirm that Christians are to sing and make melody to the Lord, "giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

It is notable that when the most crucial memorial ever established is described in God's word that the word worship is not mentioned. What are Christians to do during the Lord's supper every first day of the week? Christians are to remember (*anamnesis*) Jesus. Christians are to proclaim (*katangelo*) the Lord's death, but never is it said Christians are to worship Christ during communion.

What has this survey of scripture taught us?

1. Jesus is God manifested in the flesh—Jesus became a Man (and is still a Man according to 1 Timothy 2:5 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Jesus proclaimed His Divinity in numerous ways and at many times during His life on Earth. He has become subordinate to the Father, some day He will hand over all authority to the Father: "Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28).
2. During His life on earth people worshiped Him. At the end of time all people who have ever lived will worship Him in Heaven.
3. Christians bow the knee to Jesus and confess Him as Lord, becoming His slave and bondservant.
4. However, surprisingly, in the regulated worship doctrine of the church, Christians are never commanded to worship Christ - not even a single time. The focus of worship is upon God the Father *through* Jesus Christ. What does that mean? Jesus has become our Mediator and Intercessor (1 Timothy 2:5). We come to God the Father through Jesus Christ: "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

This principle is demonstrated by the disciples themselves when the Lord ascended into heaven in the last words of the gospel of Luke:



Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen (Luke 24:51-53).

Note how when Jesus was physically present the disciples worshiped Him but after He ascended they went to the temple and worshiped God the Father.

Conclusion

In summation, the answer to the question, 'do Christians worship Jesus?' is 'yes, but.' Jesus is God and is certainly worthy of worship. If Jesus were physically present before a Christian the appropriate thing to do would be to fall down and worship Him-- as John the Revelator did. However, Jesus is not physically present before worshipers in the assembly and we are not yet in the afterlife.

Part of the difficulty of this topic is the uncertainty associated with the broad and loose definition of the word 'worship' in the English language. Is it worship to be the bondservant of Christ? Is it worship to submit to Christ as your Lord and Master? Is it worship to declare Jesus God and to obey His every command? If so, then we certainly worship Jesus.

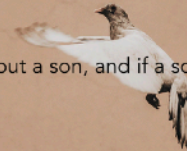
However, and very importantly for those concerned with authentic Christianity, the worship theology of the New Testament instructs us to worship God the Father through Jesus Christ. There are multiple verses which teach this basic and fundamental precept of the New Covenant (e.g. Ephesians 2:18) and Jesus Himself directed our worship towards the Father (Matthew 4, John 4).

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God *through* our Lord Jesus Christ... (Ro 5:1)

And not only that, but we also rejoice in God *through* our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. (Ro 5:11)

For *through* Him we both have access *by* one Spirit to the Father. (Eph 2:18)

Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God *through* Christ. (Gal 4:7)



Peter says it clearly that Christians offer up spiritual sacrifices to the Father through the Lord:

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 Peter 2:5).

Peter directs Christians to use the words of the scripture to describe scriptural things:

If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified *through* Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen (1 Peter 4:11).

We worship Jesus when we worship through the approved scriptural paradigm, the pattern, the template of the New Testament and in the framework of the Godhead. Part of the majesty of the scheme of redemption is that the Godhead was *eternally changed* when God the Son became a man and voluntarily subordinated Himself to God the Father.

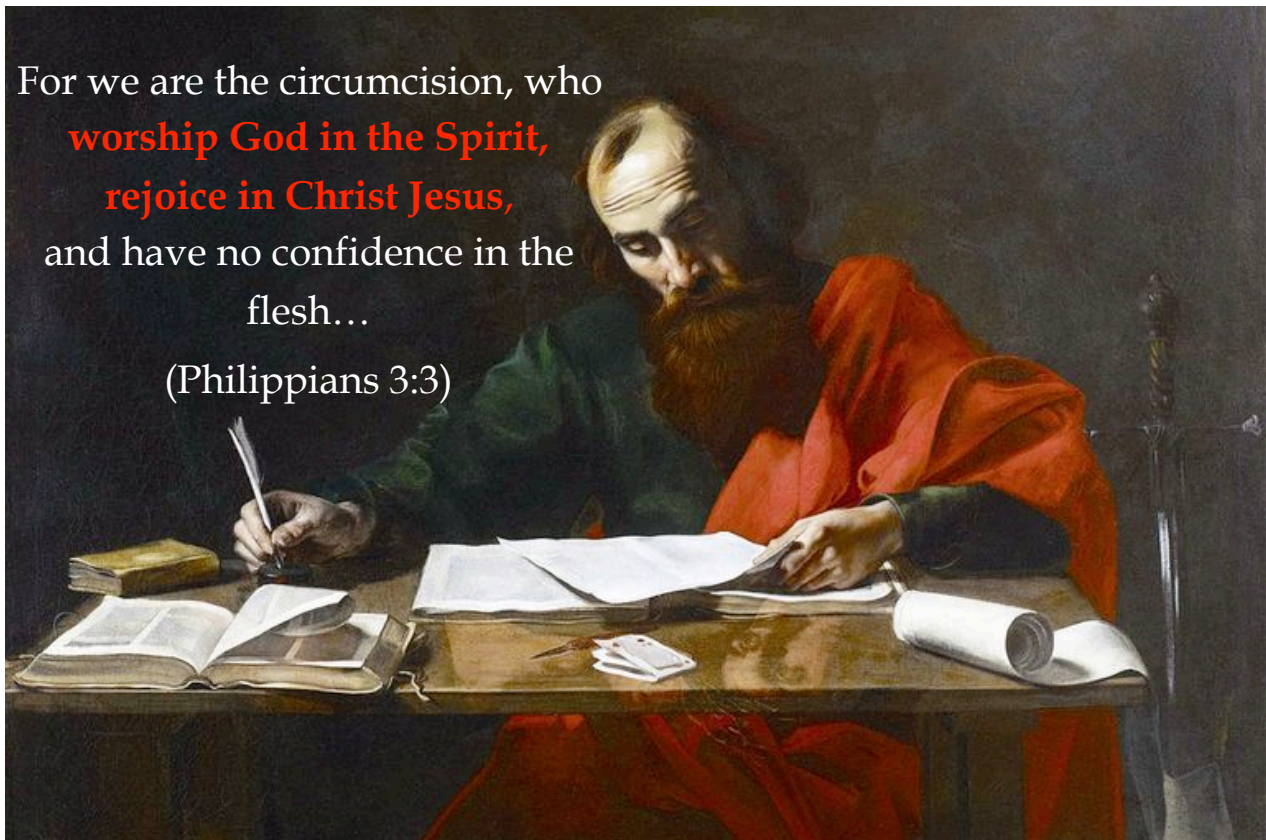
We worship the Holy Spirit when we worship through the framework of the revealed pattern and we understand that it is through keeping the word which has been delivered by the Holy Spirit that we are worshipping God the Spirit. There is a reason why during congregational assemblies Christians do not proclaim "We have come to worship the Holy Spirit today." Such language is nonscriptural; it is never provided in the Bible. We worship God the Father through the name of Christ and in the Spirit. To worship 'in the Spirit' means that we take earnest heed to the things that He had delivered to us through His inspired prophets and apostles (Ephesians 3:5).

Christians should use Biblical language to describe worship to God. This does not diminish the divinity of God the Son or of God the Holy Spirit in any way. The members of the church of Christ must take seriously the need to wrestle with words and make sure that we use the appropriate scriptural vocabulary. Are we satisfied with the language that Paul the Apostle and the other writers of the holy page has provided us? To go outside the standard, the gauge, the measuring rod of scripture is to step outside God's providence and into the territory of the unknown.

Denominations are loose in their doctrine, profligate in their worship, and licentious in their grammar. The Apostle Paul and the other writers of the New Testament were very deliberate in their choice of language, in their locution, as they describe how Christians interact with the Godhead. We need to do the same. If we are people of the book, we will worship God the Father through Jesus and in the Spirit. Anything outside this framework is non-scriptural and is dangerous, perhaps heretical.

For we are the circumcision, who
worship God in the Spirit,
rejoice in Christ Jesus,
and have no confidence in the
flesh...

(Philippians 3:3)



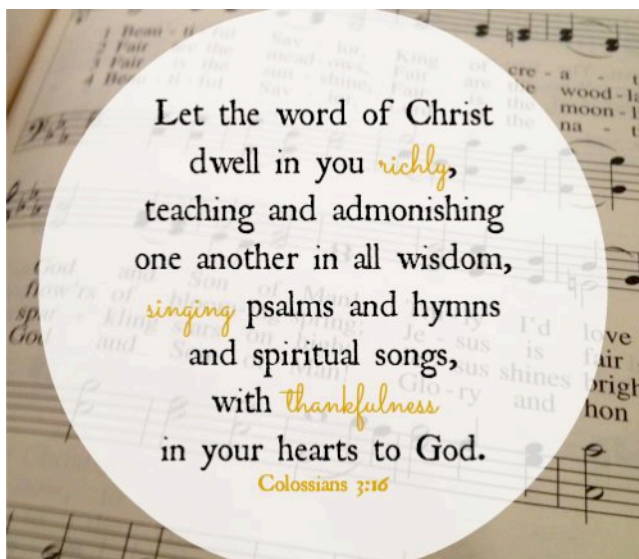
Landmark Q&A

Question: Can you comment on the first verse of the song “God is So Good To Me” from the new Legacy song book, “Wonderful Name”? I’ve heard several people say it is not scriptural and should not be sung.

Answer: Although this question does not directly impact this issue’s greater study of the object of Christian worship, it does pertain to the language we use in our assemblies, particularly the use of poetry. Before getting into the particulars of this song, it seems necessary to point out a fundamental fact about song lyrics – but one that seems lost on many people. Song lyrics almost always involve poetic language. This is true of the massive collection of song lyrics in the Old Testament we call The Book of Psalms. Some of the poetic features used in Psalms include:

- Personification, where inanimate objects like trees, rocks, and water are said to do things that only intelligent beings could do (Psalm 98.8).
- Metaphor, where a person, like God, is said to be something in a figurative sense in order to describes some aspect of His character or nature (Psalm 18.31).
- Anthropomorphism, where spiritual beings, like God, are describes as having physical characteristics (Psalm 17.6).
- Anthropopathy, where God, who being omniscient would not actually experience some of the emotions of men, is said to have those emotions (Psalm 74.22)

Because of the figurative and symbolic nature of poetic language, there are several occasions in the Book of Psalms when taking the words literally would result in false doctrine. For example, in Psalm 58.3, “The wicked are estranged from the womb; They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.” If taken literally, this teaches that infants (at least some of them) are separated from God even in the womb. However, it is absurd to take this statement literally: no one speaks as soon as he is born, lies or otherwise. This is a poetic hyperbole – an exaggeration for the purpose of emphasis. It means that those who become heinous sinners usually begin their criminal career early in life.



It may be that some people are not comfortable with poetic language and would prefer instead wooden literalism. However, scripture clearly shows that God has authorized the use of poetry in worship (Colossians 3.16; Ephesians 5.19), and has used poetry Himself in His revelation! Consequently, it is altogether inappropriate to brand an expression as unscriptural, simply because it is poetic, figurative, or accommodative. While there are certainly some unscriptural songs, we should be prudent before taking our penknives to the hymnal and ask if there is perhaps a poetic meaning that we are missing in these words.

With these thoughts in mind, let us consider the verse in question from the song, "God is So Good to Me" by Videt Polk.

The first verse begins: "From up in heaven one day God looked down, saw that the souls of men downward were bound..." Some object that this statement impugns the



omniscience of God. They challenge that God knows all things, so it is wrong to speak of Him "looking down one day." Let the reader consider Psalm 102.19-21: "For He looked down from the height of His sanctuary; From heaven the LORD viewed the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to release those appointed to death, to declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem..." Also, Psalm 14.2-3: "The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, no, not one." One responds, "That is just poetry!" Indeed, and so is the modern song lyric. In fact, it seems obvious that the song writer had a better familiarity with the scripture than his critics and borrowed the expression straight from the pages of the Bible.

The song in question continues: "It made Him so sad, He wanted a way that saved they might be..." Some challenge that this expression depicts God as unprepared for the sin of man and denies the eternal foreordination of the gospel. However, let the reader note Genesis 6.6-7, "And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.'" Also, 1 Samuel 15.10-11, "Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, 'I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments.'" One responds, "That is accommodative language!" Indeed, and so is the modern song lyric. As stated above, it is most likely that the lyricist borrowed the expression from the Bible.

Finally, the song states: "After all else had failed God sent His son..." Some challenge that this makes the mission of Jesus a last-ditch effort, rather than the consummation of history. Yet, once more, the reader should note Matthew 21.33-39: "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned

another. Again, he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.” One responds, “But that is the figurative language of parables!” Indeed, and the lyric is the figurative language of songs. Once more I suggest that the writer borrowed his expression from the Bible itself.

I find nothing harmful in the lyrics of this song. With all due respect to the conscientious and concerned whose only desire it is to please God, we need to realize that God has chosen the language of poetry as a part of His system, and He has included it in worship! If you find a song lyric that seems disconcerting, seek out a knowledgeable brother – perhaps the brother who edited and published the song book, and ask for guidance in how to sing that song with the spirit and the understanding. Your worship life will be richer and better for it.

What’s Old and New From Christian Landmark?

At the heart of this month’s discussion regarding worship is the nature of Christ. As Bart Shaw presented in his article, the Bible unequivocally upholds the deity of Jesus teaching that He is equal with the Father in every respect. The concept of worship being directed to the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit, does not diminish the deity of Christ or the Holy Spirit. Rather, it magnifies and honors them by acknowledging their unique roles in the scheme of redemption. These two sermons will prayerfully help in your further study on the nature of Christ.

The Sonship of Christ



In the history of Christianity the term ‘Son of God’ has been the subject of some controversy. For example, when did Jesus become the Son of God? Was He always the Son of God? Is there a point in time when He became the Son of God, and if so, how did He become the Son of God? What does it mean for Jesus to be the ‘begotten’ Son of God. Evangelist Mike Criswell [discussed](#) these issues at the 2015 Mid-MO Study.

The Good Confession

The apostle Paul told his son in the faith: “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1 Timothy 6:12). Twice in this chapter a reference is made to “the good confession” which was spoken by Timothy and also “Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate” (vs. 13). Obviously, there is an important confession

believers must make, for Paul also wrote that “with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10). In this [presentation](#) from evangelist Billy Dickinson, the nature, purpose, and wording of this blessed confession is given a thorough investigation.

News

Bennie Cryer

Please join us in prayer for the family of brother Bennie Cryer. It was the strange “sorrow, but not as other men” that I felt when the news came to me that he had died. Bennie Cryer had one of the greatest impacts on my life because of his Bible teaching. Two sermons in particular, [Fellowship with Christ's Suffering](#) and [Judgment, Heaven, and Eternity](#), still linger in my mind and the things I learned in those sermons have made a permanent imprint on my soul. I had the marvelous privilege to [interview](#) brother Bennie and learn first hand about the challenges, joys, and adventures he had in more than 60 years of preaching here and all across the world. Only God knows the number of souls he brought to Christ and the full measure of good work he accomplished in the Lord’s Vineyard as he ordained elders, taught the scripture, and established congregations. I have missed him at the studies in the last several years while he was sick and I will continue to miss him until the Great Reunion Day. But I thank God that I was able to know him and hear him. Please pray for his wife, children, and other friends and loved ones. - Clint De France



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