

WOK Conference 2008
Wednesday Session One
Here I Am To Worship
Part One

1). Within the church at large there is a phrase that is commonly used to describe what has become the traditional introduction to the church service – it is the phrase, ‘Praise and Worship’ which can incorporate the singing of both traditional and contemporary songs.

a). Worship songs have become a multimillion dollar business and seem to be, at some degree, at the heart of the Laodicean church at the end of this dispensation.

b). And, generally speaking, within our practice of praise and worship we would commonly distinguish worship from praise by the tempo of the music and the nature of the emotion involved.

c). And I have wondered for a long time whether our understanding of worship as it exists in Christendom today is based on what scripture teaches or whether it is from the wisdom of man? – We are not going to look at the place of music in a church setting over the next two nights – we are just going to examine ‘worship’.

d). As so much of the church at large, from what it teaches to its practices, is contrary to scripture, could it be that the same would be true with respect to worship?

e). *2Co 11:2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. 3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted--you may well put up with it!*

2). The only way to know for sure whether we have been deceived, as Eve, by the serpent in respect of worship, is to go to the scriptures and see what the word of God says.

a). And where better to start than the very first mention of worship.

3). *Ge 22:4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and*

I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." 6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

a). This is of course a very familiar scripture for us – It is the account of Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac.

b). And here is the thing – Abraham says to his young men that he and Isaac are going yonder to ‘worship’ and will then come back.

c). We know exactly what God was requiring Abraham to do as the Lord had made it perfectly plain - *Ge 22:2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."*

d). And from God’s own commentary on this incident we can know that there was absolutely no doubt in Abraham’s mind as to what he was going to do and what the end result would be.

e). *Heb 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.*

i/ He was not being disingenuous when he said, ‘we are going yonder to worship’.

f). Let us be in no doubt, Abraham’s intent and his resolve to carry out his intent cannot be separated from his statement concerning worship.

g). In fact he does do exactly what he tells his young men that he is going to do – he goes in obedience to God’s command and offers the sacrifice – *Ge 22:13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.*

h). As the sacrifice on Mount Moria is the action that takes place once they have left the young men we must conclude that Abraham and Isaac have indeed performed the act of worship and then returned.

i). So what we see here, from a scriptural standpoint, is that worship has to do with faithful obedience to the word of God that incorporates the offering of a sacrifice and is connected with resurrection.

j). Not only that, but this act of worship, Abraham's faithful obedience through the death of the firstborn cannot be separated from the consequence of the act of worship –Ge 22:15 ¶ *Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son - 17 "blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."*

4). The Hebrew word translated 'worship' here in Genesis 22 is *shachah* = to depress, i.e. prostrate (especially reflexive, in homage to royalty or God):--bow (self) down, crouch, fall down (flat), humbly beseech, do (make) obeisance, do reverence, make to stoop, worship.

a). What we see here in this word is the recognition by the one 'worshipping' of the superiority of the one being worshipped. There is in the action of prostration the implicit idea of the will of the worshipper being subjected to, and therefore becoming the same as, that of the one being worshipped.

b). And this is just what we see with Abraham.

5). Now Genesis 22:5 is the first time we find the word 'shachah' translated worship, but the Hebrew word itself appears earlier in Genesis, but interestingly enough also concerning Abraham and God - Ge 18:1 ¶ *Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. 2 So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed [shachah] himself to the ground, 3 and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant.*

a). Again, what do we see here? We see Abraham in complete understanding that he is in the presence of God subjecting himself to God's will and purpose.

b). And this is made clear by his referring to himself as 'Your servant'.

c). The word servant here is, *ebed* = bondservant.

6). The word 'bondservant' denotes someone who has given over every aspect of their life to the service of their master.

a). We find this identified for us later in - Ex 21:5 *"But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' 6 "then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to*

the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

b). Here in Exodus we find a servant who has gained his freedom, but willingly and voluntarily choosing to give his life to the service of his master for all time. Making his will and his master's will one and the same.

c). Within a N/T context we find Mary embracing the role of bondservant with regards to the angel's announcement with regards to her part in the conception of Christ - Lu 1:38 *Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant [lit. bondservant] of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.*

d). Note what she says, 'let it be to me according to your word' – she places her will in complete subjugation to the will of God. She believes what God has said, she has faith, and then acts upon it – she is faithfully obedient.

e). And as a result of her faithful obedience comes redemption through the Redeemer, the promised Seed of the Woman from Genesis 3:15.

f). And then look at this - Tit 1:1 ¶ *Paul, a bondservant of God*

g). Jas 1:1 ¶ *James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,*

h). 2Pe 1:1 ¶ *Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ,*

i). Jude 1:1 ¶ *Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ,*

j). And how would we characterize the lives of these men? Faithful obedience to the word of God.

k). 2Ti 4:7 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

l). The lifestyle of these men cannot be separated from the consequences of living such a life – a crown of righteousness.

7). The words that come to our mind as we consider these things have to be, 'faithful obedience'.

a). Faithful obedience that comes from the organization of our life in response to that which God has said concerning our inheritance, the salvation of our soul and rulership – in the absolute assurance of God's faithfulness in respect of what He has promised concerning the age to come. An assurance that is expressed in - Heb 10:34 *for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.*

8). The Tabernacle of Moses has this recorded about it in - Heb 9:1 ¶ *Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary. 2 For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; 3 and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, 4 which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; 5 and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. 6 Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the divine worship.*

a). Here we see reference to the performing of divine worship by the priests.

b). The word translated worship in the NASB is translated service in the KJV and is the Greek word – *latreia* = ministrations of God, i.e. worship:--(divine) service.

c). Within the scope of this service/worship would be the offering of sacrifices for sin, supplying oil for the lampstand, bread for the table of showbread and incense for the altar and all of these were of course - Heb 10:1 ¶ *For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things,*

d). Let us note two things here – within the tabernacle of Moses worship was expressed through the keeping of the Law, not through song and this was just a shadow of the good things to come.

e). And in case you are wondering - Col 2:17 *which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.*

f). The Law of Moses that contained the ordinances for Divine worship was still in place in Temple in Jerusalem at Christ's first coming.

g). However, what we see generally from the religious leaders of Jesus' day is the practice of what had become religious ritual completely apart from any inward change on their part – Mt 23:23 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.*

h). There are a series of seven 'woes' that are declared to the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23 that can be summed up in - Mt 23:27 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.*

i). To look at them on the outside as they would perform the religious rituals in accordance with the Law of Moses they would appear 'beautiful', but on the

inside they were full of ‘dead men’s bones’ – they performed all the correct religious practices, but their hearts were corrupted.

9). The depth to which they had sunk is made very clear in - Joh 8:44 *"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

a). Here are the very men who are the religious leaders of the nation, those who sat in Moses’ seat, who performed the ordinances of divine worship, yet according to the words of Christ they are of their father the devil.

b). Now of course the devil was not literally their father, but the condition of their heart translated into their actions and their mindset more closely aligned them Satan than with God. Satan does not stand in the truth, and they did not stand in the truth either.

10). What needs to be of concern to us is the possibility of us performing the ordinances of divine worship within our context completely apart from an inward change in our heart.

a). Water baptism, foot washing, the Lord’s Supper, the singing of songs, can become an end in themselves that then take on some mystical quality rather than being stepping stones to maturity.

b). It is perfectly possible for us to be deceived into thinking that we are worshipping God because we sing a ‘worship song’ - while at the same time having a hardened heart, a stiff neck and walking in disobedience to the word.

c). And even worse we might be deceived into thinking that God will accept our song and will overlook our disobedience.

11). Jesus Himself talks about worship and that is where we are going to go next

a). Joh 4:19 *The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23 "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. 24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." 25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is*

coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." 26 Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

b). The word translated 'worship' here is the Greek word – *proskuneo* = from 4314 and a probable derivative of 2965 (meaning to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand); to fawn or crouch to, i.e. (literally or figuratively) prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore):--worship.

c). What we see here is essentially the same as we saw in our O/T example – the worshipper in total subjection to the One being worshipped, with the added dimension of the dog licking its master's hand.

d). Now the dog dimension may provide for us a sense of adoration that was not implicit in our O/T word.

e). But I wonder if the dog and its association with the Gentile nations is pointing to something deeper? After all the Lord is speaking to a Samaritan woman and from a Jewish perspective they were considered dogs - Mt 15:26 *But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."*

12). Let's notice some things concerning our scripture –

a). The Lord's encounter with the Samaritan woman takes place at Jacob's well – this is fraught with significance. We have seen a well of water used in scripture to denote the word of God. Abraham's oldest servant finds the bride for his master's son at the well of water as she comes to draw from it, and Rebekah of course is a foundational type for us of the Bride of Christ.

b). Jacob finds his wife by a well of water as did Moses – and both can be seen as a type of Christ.

c). And here we have a Samaritan woman, a Gentile, coming to Jacob's well – the word of God given through Israel – to draw water, and finding Christ, who has a conversation with her about living water and husbands.

d). A conversation that leads into our scripture where the woman makes a statement about worship which elicits a response from the Lord.

e). The woman's statement has to do with location - "*Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship*, but the Lord's response to her does not concern location, rather it deals with the nature of what worship is and who those will be who will be true worshippers.

f). Worship on the mountain would be idol worship done in ignorance – 'you worship what you do not know' and worship in Jerusalem would be at the Temple – 'we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.'

i/ It is interesting to note the connection between worship and salvation, and in the context of Christ's earthly ministry to an eternally saved nation this would have to be salvation in relation to the Kingdom of the Heavens and an inheritance therein.

ii/ It would not be long of course until the Temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed and all Temple worship would cease.

iii/ And with the church about to come into existence, which would be largely from the Gentile nations – where would be the place of worship for them?

iv/ What we will find is that Christ's comments on the nature of worship and the location for worship are inextricably linked together.

13). Let's read v23-24 again - 23 *"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. 24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

a). Note three things –

True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth

The Father is seeking such to worship Him

God must be worshipped this way because He is Spirit

b). Now the fact that there will be true worshippers must of necessity mean that there will be false worshippers – and this would have to be in the context of the eternally saved – those who would 'worship' other than in spirit and apart from the truth.

c). The fact that the Father is seeking those who would be true worshippers inevitably takes us to the Holy Spirit's present ministry amongst the eternally saved of searching out a Bride for the Son. A connection between true worshippers and the Bride is inescapable.

d). Now those who will be true worshippers 'must' worship the Father in spirit and truth and this is because God is Spirit.

e). Let's look at this for a moment – the scripture says that God is Spirit. It does not say that God is a Spirit. The structure of the language here denotes God's nature and character, not His physical make up.

f). We would understand this in the same way as the statement in – 1Jo 4:8..... *for God is love.*

g). It is an expression of character not physicality.

h). That God is Spirit is really self evident - 1Jo 1:5 ¶ *This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.*

i/ There is nothing in the character and nature of God that has any common ground with that which we would call ‘the flesh’. Everything associated with spirit is completely antithetical to everything associated with the flesh - 2Co 6:14b...*For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?*

i). So those who are true worshippers must worship Him in Spirit – this is not a charismatic experience, but rather worshipping after the same nature and character as God.

j). For us to operate in the spiritual realm in this way two things have to happen - Ro 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.*

i/ We are not to pattern our lives, be conformed, according to this world, as this world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

ii/ Rather we are to be transformed, undergo an inward change, a metamorphosis, that is brought about by the renewing of our mind.

iii/ And the process of renewing our mind is described for us in – Col 3:9 *Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,*

iv/ ‘Knowledge’ here is the Greek word - *epignosis* – meaning mature knowledge – that which is the truth of scripture concerning the Christ and His coming Kingdom – the meat and strong meat of the word. The truth that neither the devil nor the religious leaders in Israel stood in.

k). And for the renewing of our mind and the transformation to be a reality for us we have to ‘put off the old man with his deeds’ – there has to be a dying to self, a putting to death the deeds of the flesh - Ro 8:13 *For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

14). Ro 12:1 ¶ *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.*

a). And here we have it – just as the animal sacrifice of the O/T was bound to the altar and its veins opened until its life was drained out, so are we, in a figurative sense, to bind our old man, that associated with our first birth, to the altar and open his veins until the life is drained out – and for us this is a continuous daily process not a onetime event.

b). And as we offer this sacrifice in obedience to the command of God in the absolute assurance of God's faithfulness to allow us to walk in the power of a resurrected life, as we focus on what lies ahead of us, don't we find ourselves right back at Mount Moria with Abraham and Isaac?

c). Don't we see in this our act of worship and how it is paralleled in his?

15). In conclusion for this evening then we can say that music is an avenue through which worship can be expressed, but it is not the substance of it.

a). It is not the song we sing, but the condition of our heart that determines whether we are worshipping God or not. And it is not a Sunday morning experience – it is a lifestyle of faithful obedience.

b). The enemy of our soul would like us to believe that the avenue is the substance – this is a lie – do not be deceived my beloved brethren.

16). And where does our act of worship take place? In the Temple.

a). Mt 3:9 *"and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.*

b). 1Pe 2:4 ¶ *Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 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.*

c). 1Co 3:16 ¶ *Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*

d). It takes place within each of us individually – without an individual act of worship through faithful obedience and sacrifice – corporate worship is a myth.

17). More on this later.