

Sunday March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2008  
Here I Am To Worship Part 4  
'In Spirit and Truth' – Part 2

1). Joh 4:23 *"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). Now we had seen clearly here in our scripture that the true worshippers will worship in spirit and truth – that is they will be faithfully obedient with respect to the spirit and faithfully obedient with respect to the truth.

b). Spirit and truth are really inextricably linked together, but to help with the ease of our understanding we shall deal with them separately, beginning this week with 'spirit'.

c). But first let's return to some things from our previous studies to remind ourselves of the frame work in which we are operating.

2). As we saw in our study last time, our foundational scripture here in John 4 needs to be seen within the context of the picture concerning the search for the Bride amongst the eternally saved of this dispensation.

a). From what we have seen we have been able to conclude that those who will make up the Bride of Christ are those who are described here in John as 'the true worshippers'.

b). As worship and faithful obedience are one and the same thing this should not be difficult for us to understand.

3). Remember – the word worship has to do with bowing low to the ground in complete submission to the one being worshipped. And within our frame of reference this would be subjecting our own will to the will of God with the inheritance and a future salvation in view - 1Pe 2:16 *as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.*

a). Now look at this in - Lu 4:5 *Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 7 "Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours." 8 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"*

b). In this encounter with Satan we see the god of this world offering God the Son the rulership over the earth – which has been created by Him and for Him – if He will worship at Satan's feet.

c). In other words if God the Son would subject Himself to the will of Satan, which would be for Satan to remain the god of this world, and to accept Satan in the position of God the Father, which had always been his intention –  
*Isa 14:14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'*

d). Then the rulership of the earth would be His. Now this could seem at face value to be not a bad thing – it would after all achieve more rapidly God's intended purpose. And it would of course negate the necessity of going to the cross. But as Christ points out, only God shall be worshipped and only God shall be served. It is quite ridiculous to think of the Creator being subservient to the creature, and yet in many ways the church at large treats God like a genie in a bottle who is to be conjured up to grant our wishes.

e). Even if we were to set aside the foolishness of this offer, even though it was a legitimate one, we cannot help but realize that so perfect is God's plan that even the suffering of the cross is as nothing when compared with what will follow.

f). And in this incident with Christ and Satan there is much we can learn for ourselves. As with Christ, it has always been God's intention for members of the human race to rule with His Son over the earth, but the only way this can be accomplished is through submission to the will of God. We would be familiar with this scripture from - *Mr 8:36 "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"*

g). This is truth on a grand scale, but in the minutiae of our everyday life the deception may be far less obvious, yet equally deadly – if we believe we can gain the Kingdom without determining to submit every area of our life to Christ, without denying ourselves and picking up our cross daily, without becoming true worshippers, then we so to speak, have accepted the devil's bargain.

h). Our will must be subject to the will of God – He must be worshipped in Spirit and truth, there is no other way. And it needs to be so as God's will must be accomplished upon the earth and in the heavens. That is an absolute given – all that remains in doubt is whether we, individually, will participate in God's glorious conclusion or not.

4). *Ac 24:14 "But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets."*

a). And here through inspiration of the Spirit we see Paul worshipping the God of his fathers, according to the Way - Joh 14:6 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

b). Believing all things that are written in the Law and in the prophets – all of which talk of Christ and His coming Kingdom, who has shown us the way we are to follow – death followed by resurrection – the loss of our life now that we may gain our life in the age to come.

c). Remembering of course that to Paul was entrusted the ‘mystery’ kept secret since the world began – the mystery of Christ and His church in a marriage relationship fulfilling God’s plans and purposes for the ages.

d). Revealed through the typology within the OT, beginning with Adam and the Woman in the Garden, and confirmed and reaffirmed through the pages of the NT.

5). And it is within the context of the conclusion of God’s plans and purposes that we find another example of an act of worship, that at this moment remains prophetically in the future, but is nevertheless just as certain as that which has been fulfilled in the past - Re 4:9 *Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: 11 "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."*

a). Here we have the 24 elders, those numerically representing the two thirds of the angels who were the original rulers over the earth who did not rebel with Satan, who had retained their crowns of rulership, although no longer ruling, worshipping God by casting those crowns at God’s feet following the events of the Judgment Seat, where the new order of rulers, those who would be the Bride of Christ, has been revealed.

b). Here in complete acceptance of and in complete subjection to, the will of God, the 24 elders give up the crowns they have had for millennia in recognition of the perfect completion of God’s purpose. Their will, and God’s will, are one and the same.

c). What contrast there is here with the fallen angels whose crowns will be forcibly taken from them.

6). Now if we return to the Lord’s earthly ministry for a moment we will recall that He said this concerning Himself in - Joh 5:30 *"I can of Myself do nothing. As I*

*hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.*

a). Now it may be redundant to say so, but Christ's will and God's will are one and the same - Lu 22:42 saying, "*Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.*"

b). Christ's birth, His suffering, His death, burial and resurrection are all the out workings of the will of God, and all with the fulfillment of God's purpose in view - Re 11:15 *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"*

c). Now not only in our Lord do we see the very manifestation of God's will Joh 1:14a *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,*

d). But also the bodily manifestation of the Godhead

e). Col 2:9 *For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;*

f). This being so, when the Lord makes the statement in John 4:24 that 'God is spirit', this is not just a reference to God the Father's character and nature, it must also be a description of His own.

7). If we review for a moment we will remember that the scripture says that God is spirit, not that He is a spirit – and should be understood in the same way as – 1Jo 4:8.... *for God is love.*

Or

Ps 99:9..... *For the LORD our God is holy.*

Or

1Jo 1:5 ¶ *.....that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.*

a). We are dealing with character, not a physical description.

b). That God's character should be described as 'Spirit' is not surprising. In the same way as there is no darkness in Him, there is nothing in His character or nature that has any communion with sin - Joh 14:30 *"I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.*

c). Everything that is of the Spirit is set in antitheses to everything that is of the flesh. This is plainly seen in - 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.*

d). Where we see the flesh and death set against the spirit and life.

8). Let's pause for a moment here and note that there is nothing inherently wicked about the skin we all walk around in – in one sense it is just that – flesh, the blood filled covering of our bones.

a). Christ came in a body of flesh, yet completely apart from sin – and this was the same kind of flesh that you and I possess.

b). In fact He still possesses the same body of flesh even now, although it is now animated by the Spirit rather than the blood and has a covering of glory.

c). In the same way we will be raptured or resurrected in a body of flesh and will rule with Christ in that same body.

d). Rather, when we speak of flesh in connection with that which is antithetical to the Spirit we are really referencing our sin nature, that connected to our first birth when we were born dead in trespasses and sins and in bondage to the god of this world.

e). It is our new birth alone that is connected with the spirit - Joh 3:6 *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."*

f). It is exactly what we see laid out for us in the type of Ishmael and Isaac. And as we know it is Isaac alone who is to receive the promises, Ishmael will have no inheritance with him.

9). So then, to continue, when the character of God is described as spirit, this must reference Christ in His incarnation also - Joh 14:9 *Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

a). As Jesus is described as the Word that became flesh, and the word of God is the spirit of God through being the breath of God - 2Ti 3:16 *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, [literally – God breathed]*

b). Then we would realize that Jesus, in His earthly ministry, is the very embodiment of the nature and character of God.

c). There is not one moment then when our Lord is anything but ‘Spirit’.

d). And as we would seek to worship in spirit so we would seek to pattern ourselves after Christ as He provides the model for the nature and character of God we are to follow.

e). Ga 2:20 *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."*

f). Now we see in our Galatians scripture the death of self, self being replaced by Christ, and this is done through faith in the Son of God.

g). Php 3:3 *For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,*

h). And we see in our Philippians scripture that those who worship God in the Spirit are ‘the circumcision’ and they ‘have no confidence in the flesh’.

10). It is obvious that the letter written to the Philippians is written to those who are Christians and as such reference to ‘the circumcision’ can have no bearing on the physical descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. In fact we read this in - 1Co 7:19 *Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.*

a). If keeping the commandments of God is what matters, and it always does, and circumcision and uncircumcision are nothing, then how would we reconcile the apparent contradiction between 1 Corinthians 7:19 and Philippians 3:3?

b). As always scripture is its own commentary - Ro 2:28 *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; 29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.*

c). Col 2:11 *In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

d). And here we have it, it is not the religious ritual of circumcision that counts for anything, it is rather allowing our heart to be circumcised ‘by the circumcision of Christ’, that which is done without hands, that which is done by the Spirit. That which is hardened in disobedience to God, ‘the body of the sins of the flesh’, is pared away by Christ as we die with Him, are buried with Him and raised with Him to walk in obedience, led by the Spirit.

e). And we are inevitably back to where we have been before – worship in spirit can only come after death and burial, by the power of the Spirit in resurrection – only as we allow Christ to circumcise our heart, thereby producing the metamorphosis within.

f). And all of this we are to embrace as worshippers and bondservants because of what awaits us as we stand at Christ’s Judgment Seat, looking to the reward.

11). Heb 12:1 ¶ *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. 4 ¶ You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. 5 And you have forgotten*

*the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."*

a). Not only should we be encouraged by 'so great a cloud of witnesses' – those who have already proved themselves to be true worshippers through faithful obedience, who have already gone before us and found approval in God's sight, but we should also recognize that Christ endured the cross and despised the shame because of the joy that was set before Him – the joy of seeing God's plans and purposes for the ages being realized in the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom.

b). Not only is this to be our focus, but also our example - 1Pe 2:19 *For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;*

c). To do this is not the desire of our flesh, it will be the work of the Spirit in our life. And will be a demonstrable act of worship.

d). Christ is our example that we should follow in His steps.

e). And notice the further commentary on this in - 1Pe 3:17 *For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*

f). And again in - 1Pe 4:19 *Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.*

g). And we know where suffering according to the will of God takes us – Ro 8:17 ¶ *and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

h). And haven't we seen time and time again, that true worship on our part is complete submission to the will of God?

12). Again our suffering, which will always require the death of our flesh, trusting God in the midst of our circumstances, is a necessary part of our faithful obedience, a necessary part of our worship in the Spirit.

a). Jas 5:10 *My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.*

13). 1Th 4:3 *For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;*

a). Not only would our scripture here be taken in a literal sense, but also in a figurative sense. In James 4 involvement with the world and the things of the world are described as adultery. And it is God's will for us that we abstain from sexual immorality both on a literal and a figurative level.

b). Our submission to His will as we bow low to the ground in worship must take account of this.

c). Just as Christ proclaims, 'the ruler of this world is coming and he has nothing in Me.' – So this should be our determination also.

d). And we can never know if this is a reality for us unless we are put to the test - 1Pe 1:7 *that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,*

14). And then in the midst of our suffering, in the midst of dying to self, as another facet to our act of worship - 1Th 5:16 ¶ *Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

a). We are to rejoice always - Ac 5:41 *So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.*

b). And in everything give thanks – not because we enjoy the suffering, but because - Ps 107:1 ¶ *Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.*

c). And we should pray without ceasing – now this doesn't mean 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, but in the sense of - Php 4:6 *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;*

d). This is the will of God in Christ Jesus for us.

e). And if we return to Hebrews 12 for a moment we will recall that the whole context for our suffering and testing is that of child training, 'do not despise the chastening of the Lord' – the training that is absolutely necessary for those who will be sons and therefore coheirs in the Kingdom. This is why we should rejoice and give thanks in the midst of it.

15). As we think about these things for a moment, let us return briefly to our original starting point with Abraham and Isaac at Mount Moriah and a sacrifice to be made after a three days' journey as an act of worship.

a). Without wanting to minimize the event, essentially the test for Abraham was, did he trust God's faithfulness to deliver on His promises even if it meant putting to death that which he loved the most?      b). And of course the act of worship was his unequivocal embrace of the will of God, knowing that God is faithful.

16). And in reality this is the same ongoing test for us that we encounter on a daily basis.

a). Do we trust God to come through on His promises for us enough to deal with the issues that are raised in our lives – those parts of our sin nature that are still alive and well? Are we prepared to be a true worshipper in the spirit at the expense of our flesh? Will we allow Him to train us as sons?

b). I know we like to think so.

c). Abraham went without a word of murmuring – Christ went to the cross – Ac 8:32 *The place in the Scripture which he read was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth.*

d). And what is our admonition? - Php 2:14 ¶ *Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.*

e). Jas 5:9 *Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!*

17). If we want to know if we are a true worshipper like Abraham, or if we are worshipping through following Christ, bowing ourselves low to the ground in complete submission to God's will and allowing ourselves to be child trained, trusting wholeheartedly in a faithful Creator, then we only have to listen to what comes out of our mouths - Mt 12:34b.....*For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*

a). Remember the children of Israel - 1Co 10:10 *nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*