

Lord of Our Worship



SABBATH—SEPTEMBER 3

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Psalm 99:9; Psalm 47; Psalm 63:1-4; Psalm 150; Revelation 5:8-14; Revelation 14:6, 7; John 2:13-16; Acts 4:24-31; Colossians 3:16.

MEMORY VERSE: “Come, let us bow down and worship him. Let us fall on our knees in front of the Lord our Maker. He is our God. We are the sheep belonging to his flock” (Psalm 95:6, 7, NIV).

IMPORTANT THOUGHT: People who live under Jesus as Lord will find their greatest joy in worshiping God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in spirit and in truth.

GOD IS LOOKING FOR TRUE WORSHIPERS. Every human will worship someone or something. We do not make a choice to worship or not to worship. Instead, we choose what or whom we will worship. During His earthly ministry (work), Jesus showed the importance of worship in His actions and teachings. In the temple, in a synagogue (Jewish church), or on a mountainside, Jesus took time to worship His heavenly Father. At one time, Jesus met with a woman at Jacob's well. He shared with her the good news that God is looking for true worshipers. Jesus said that true worshipers were people who worship God “in spirit and truth” (John 4:23, NIV).

This week, we will study worship as it relates to people who live under Jesus as Lord.

Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, September 10.

SUNDAY—SEPTEMBER 4**THE FOCUS OF OUR WORSHIP
(Psalm 99:9).**

Satan tried to force Jesus to bow down and worship him. But Jesus answered: “ ‘Get away from me, Satan! It is written, Worship the Lord your God. He is the only one you should serve’ ” (Matthew 4:10, NlrV).

Why should we worship God?

Psalm 95:6, 7 _____

Psalm 99:9 _____

Revelation 4:8-11 _____

Revelation 5:8-14 _____

The Bible clearly shows that God alone should be the focus of our worship. But there are times when people try to worship something else or someone else. For example, when John saw an angel, he fell down in worship. He received the following scolding from the angel: “ ‘Don’t [do not] do that! . . . Worship God!’ ” (Revelation 19:10, NlrV).

What did the people of Lystra do

after Paul and Barnabas healed a crippled man in Jesus’ name? Acts 14:8-18. Why can we understand what they did? How might we today be tempted to do the same thing?

The people of Lystra brought sacrificial animals and wanted to worship Paul and Barnabas. They said, “ ‘The gods have come down to us in human form’ ” (Acts 14:11, NlrV). Ellen White notes that “Paul tried to direct the people’s minds to the true God as the only object worthy of worship. But to turn them from their purpose was still very difficult.”—Adapted from *Sketches From the Life of Paul*, p. 58.

Suppose someone asked you, Why do you worship the kind of God you do? What answer would you give? How can you be so sure about worshiping a God you have never seen? Is God just something you have to take on faith? Write a paragraph or two that gives your reasons. Read your paragraphs in class on Sabbath.

MONDAY—SEPTEMBER 5**SABBATH AND WORSHIP
(Genesis 2:1-3).**

It is our honor to worship God every minute. Every time we lift our hearts and voices to God in worship, we join the angels in front of His throne. These angels worship Him day and night. Through silent prayers of

thanksgiving and praise, we can worship God anytime, anywhere (1 Thesalonians 5:17). In many ways, our personal and private devotion and worship are more important than what we might do as part of a church.

But there are special times for worship. These times are separate from what we might do during our daily routine. The Hebrew feasts were special times set apart for worship and thanksgiving (Leviticus 23:4-44).

But more universal¹ than the Jewish feasts is the seventh-day Sabbath. Our Creator set apart the Sabbath as a time for all His people, Jews or Gentiles.²

What do you see in Genesis 2:1-3 that shows the seventh-day Sabbath is for everyone?

Read Revelation 14:6, 7. Then answer the following questions:

1. For whom is the message of the “everlasting³ gospel”? How does this answer fit in with Genesis 2:1-3?

2. Whom are we to worship?

3. How do your answers to questions

¹universal—for everyone.

²Gentiles—people who are not Jews.

³everlasting—lasting forever; without beginning or end.

1 and 2 help you understand the part the Sabbath plays in the first angel’s message of Revelation 14:6, 7?



The first angel’s message is about worshipping God on the Sabbath day, because He is our Creator.

Why does the Sabbath commandment (Exodus 20:8-11) give us a special opportunity for worship we might not have any other time? How well do you use that opportunity? What changes might you need to make to receive the best the Sabbath has to offer?

TUESDAY—SEPTEMBER 6

**A HEART FOR WORSHIP
(John 4:23, 24).**

Read David’s song of thanksgiving in 1 Chronicles 16:8-36. What

does it mean to “worship the Lord because of his beauty and holiness” (1 Chronicles 16:29, NIV)? John 4:23, 24 will help you with your answer.

Holiness in the Bible gives the idea of something “set apart for holy use.” So worship is setting aside time and ourselves for special fellowship with God. Worship is our way of saying, “How great you are, God! How unworthy I am.” Worship is our way of admitting we totally depend on Jesus’ righteousness (holiness) as our only way of salvation. Worship is a time to stop work, play, and everything else we do so we can praise and honor Jesus. Jesus’ death has opened the door to heaven for all who will enter.

But true worship is so much more than the order (plan) of a worship service. True worship is a way we humans can thank God for who He is and for the great things He has done for us through Jesus. John said, “Here is what it means to love God. It means that we obey his commands” (1 John 5:3, NIV). We also show our love for God by worshiping Him. It is a different way of showing our love than keeping His commandments. This is what Jesus was talking about when He said we would worship the Lord in “spirit and in truth.”

Based on what true worship is, why do you think Jesus cleared out the temple? John 2:13-16.

When we worship again and again,

it can become boring to us. Once we stop worshiping God in spirit and in truth, our worship can become unhealthy. This happened during Jesus’ time. The temple services had become cold and businesslike. The same can happen now. Our churches can become social clubs where the Lord could look upon us and say: “ ‘These people worship me only with their words. They honor me by what they say. But their hearts are far away from me. Their worship does not mean anything to me. They teach nothing but human rules’ ” (Isaiah 29:13, NIV).

Think of a worship experience where you left uplifted and encouraged in your faith. Then think of another worship service where you left discouraged and cold. What caused the difference between the two services?



**“ ‘Give thanks to the Lord. . . Sing to Him. Sing praise to Him’ ”
(1 Chronicles 16:8, 9, NIV).**

WEDNESDAY—SEPTEMBER 7**THE EXPRESSIONS OF OUR WORSHIP (Psalm 149:3).**

As we study the Bible, we discover that throughout history, worshipers have shown their devotion to God in different ways.

What examples of worship do you find in the following verses? As you read these verses, ask yourself: What kind of situation do they seem to speak about? Is the situation serious or joyful and positive? Is something automatically holy if it is serious? Or is something automatically disrespectful if it is joyful?

Psalm 47 _____

Psalm 63:1-4 _____

Psalm 150 _____

Psalm 149:3 _____



Music always has played an important part in worship. Heaven is filled with songs of praise (Revelation 5:9, 10; Revelation 15:3, 4). When we express our worship to God through music, we have the honor of praising Him with other people. “Music is an important part of God’s worship in heaven. We should try to sing songs of praise in harmony with the heavenly singers. . . . In religious services, singing is as much an act of worship as prayer is. The heart must feel the spirit of the song, to sing in the right mood and spirit.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 594.

How do you understand Paul’s advice that we should “sing with thanks in our hearts to God” (Colossians 3:16, NIV)?

There are musical shows that may please people. But these shows have

no signs of God's grace. Only music that comes from a heart touched by the grace of Jesus is worship that is in spirit and in truth.

What is your favorite worship song? Sing it now as an offering of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord.

THURSDAY—SEPTEMBER 8

THE RESULTS OF OUR WORSHIP (Acts 2:46, 47).

When we worship God in spirit and truth, we will experience personal change in our lives. It is impossible to stand in the presence of God and remain unchanged.

Think about the experience of the early Christians as they met together for worship. Read Acts 2:46, 47. What was the result of their worship?

True worship influences us personally. David wrote, "I was very glad when they said to me, 'Let us go up to the house of the LORD'" (Psalm 122:1, NIV). David had discovered that God's presence "fill[s] me with joy" (Psalm 16:11, NIV). We experience joy when we worship God in spirit and in truth. There is always the danger of getting carried away emotionally in some kinds of church services. But there is also the danger of

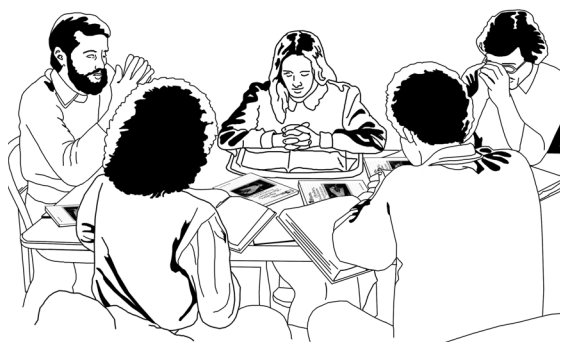
our worship being cold, dead, and lifeless.

Worship is nothing if it is not a personal show of faith. But the Bible talks about coming together and worshipping as a group. How were the lives of the early Christians influenced by prayerful worship when Peter and John were freed from prison? Acts 4:24-31. What can we learn from this story about what group worship should do for us?

The worship of the early Christians filled them with joy. Their worship made them ready to boldly share God. They strengthened and encouraged each other with words of faith and love for God. This should be our experience, too. We should receive faith, hope, and encouragement from others as we worship with them. In the same way, others should receive faith, hope, and encouragement from us. Group worship should bring us closer to God and to one another. It should fill us with a desire to preach the great news of the crucified Christ. If this is not your experience, you have not worshiped. You have just gone through a religious service without having a truly spiritual experience.

Write down your understanding of what true group worship should be. Do you have some ideas or beliefs that need to be changed? Compare⁴ notes in class.

⁴compare—show how things are the same.



Worship together in prayer.

FRIDAY—SEPTEMBER 9

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Find some New Testament verses about Jesus' death for us. Think deeply about what His death means. Write your understanding of His death and the forgiveness it offers you. Pray over what you wrote. Ask God to help you understand that Jesus' sacrifice was complete.⁵

Afterward, you will be filled with a desire to worship Him. Of all the reasons we have to worship God, no reason is better than the Cross.

"It will be the honor of saved people to worship God throughout eternity.⁶ We will come from every family, nation, language, and people. Our cultural history will be different. But our worship will join together in a beautiful song of praise. 'Heaven and earth will unite [join together] in praise, as from one Sabbath to another' (Isaiah 66:23), the nations of the saved shall

bow in joyful worship to God and the Lamb (Jesus)."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 770.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. As a class, have different people give their understanding of what an ideal worship service should be like. What differences are there among your views? Are there basic differences or simply differences in taste and style? Most important, what does the Bible teach us about proper worship?
2. How can our worship show more clearly the worship of God in heaven? (Revelation 4; Revelation 5; and Revelation 19:1-7.)
3. What changes have you noticed in the way people worship? How much are those changes cultural rather than from the Bible? How much should culture affect how we worship? Is there any one "right" way to worship?
4. Worship services can be cold, boring, and formal. Or they can be too entertaining. In which direction does your local church go? What changes might you need to make to improve the services? How can you make these changes?

⁵complete—all that was needed for your salvation.

⁶eternity—life without end.