



## **“WORSHIP” THE ULTIMATE PRIORITY #2** **JOHN MACARTHUR JR.**

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### **OUR GREATEST NEED**

Perhaps the greatest need in all of Christendom is for a clear understanding of the biblical teaching about worship. When the church fails to worship properly, it fails in every other area. And the world is suffering because of its failure.

### **FOUR KINDS OF UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP**

#### **Worship as a Way of Life**

#### **WHAT IS WORSHIP?**

#### **WORSHIP IN THREE DIMENSIONS**

#### **WHOLE-LIFE WORSHIP**

#### **THE ORDER OF PRIORITIES**

**Saved to Worship \*JOHN 4:20-24**

### **THE RESPONSE TO THE MESSIAH**

A look at the end of Isaiah’s prophecy in chapter 66 as he sees the great fruit of the Messiah’s work reveals the same perspective. Isaiah writes: “And it shall come to pass, that from one moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall **all flesh come to worship before me, says the Lord.**” That is the goal and the consummation of the Messiah’s work. **Worship!**

Shift your thinking to the New Testament. The Messiah arrived, and the overwhelming response to Him was worship.

In Matthew 2:11 the response of the wise men—the initial response to Christ—was worship. “And they came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell down and worshipped Him.”

In Matthew 8:2 “And behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean”

In Matthew 9:18, Jesus was speaking of the wonderful reality of the New Covenant: “While he spoke these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him,

In chapter 14 we find Jesus with His disciples. He has walked on the water, He has calmed their hearts, the wind has ceased, “and those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, ‘You are certainly God’s Son!’” (v. 33).

In Matthew 15:25 (KJV) tells of a woman of Canaan who “worshiped Him, saying, Lord, help me.”

In Matthew 28:17 His last days here on earth, our Lord went into a mountain with His disciples. In one of the final verses of his gospel Matthew writes, “And when they saw Him, they worshiped Him”.

John’s gospel also has the theme of worship throughout its chapters.

In John 2 tells of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. He came first to the Temple, made a whip, and cleansed the Temple. Why did He do that? Because God sent Jesus Christ into the world to bring into His presence true worshipers. And one of His first acts was to throw out the false ones. In John 3 we meet the first of the true worshipers in John’s gospel—Nicodemus.

In John 4, Jesus tells the woman at the well that the Father seeks true worshipers.

### **WORSHIP WITHOUT END**

You could follow the theme all the way through the New Testament to the book of Revelation, where we find eternal universal worship of God. In the vision of the end times that he describes throughout the book, John repeatedly focuses on acts of worship that occur. In Revelation 5:13–14 And the elders fell down and worshiped. 11:15–17...fell on their faces and worshiped God. 14:6–7 “Fear God, and give Him glory; and ...worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.” Notice that the angel’s message is called “the Eternal Gospel.” What is the eternal message? “Fear God, and give Him glory ... and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth.” 15:4...for all the nations will come and worship before Thee. 19:4: “And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, ‘Amen; Hallelujah!’”

19:10 “I fell at his [the angel’s] feet to worship him. And he said to me, ‘Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God’

22:9 “Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book; worship God.” Worship God. That is the everlasting gospel, the message that God has given from eternity to eternity.

It is the theme of Scripture, the theme of eternity, the theme of redemptive history: to worship the true and living and glorious God.

### **WHO MAY ENTER HIS HOLY HILL?**

Psalm 24:3–6 gives us what is perhaps the most lovely Old Testament picture of an acceptable worshiper:

Those who receive righteousness from God, or those who are redeemed. The two characteristics are inseparable. One does not become a true worshiper apart from redemption, and one who is genuinely redeemed becomes a true worshiper. He is done with superficial religion and false gods and adores the living and true God.

We will fail often, and at times our worship will be less than it should be, but we will pursue glory for God as those committed and recreated to worship Him. No believer is satisfied to offer worship that falls short of what God wants it to be.

### TURNING PAGANS INTO WORSHIPERS

In John 4, Jesus uses the term *true worshipers* to describe all believers. *True worshiper* is equivalent to Christian, or believer, or saint, or child of God, or any other term used to describe our union with Christ. *We are true worshipers who worship the Father in spirit and in truth*. As believers, we may not always worship as fully and as consistently as we ought to, but nevertheless, *we are true worshipers*. In fact, acceptable worship is our chief distinguishing characteristic.

### THE MARK OF THE BELIEVER

Philippians 3:3 may be the best definition and mark of a Christian anywhere in the Bible: *“For we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.” All virtues flow from this worship.*

### HOW ABOUT YOU?

A Christian is a worshiper of God. Face the questions: Do you worship God? Is it a way of life for you? Are you a true worshiper? As a true worshiper, is your worship all it should be?

## THE PRODIGAL PLANET “MELTDOWN”



Life is good  
when life.  
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