

True Worship

by Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian church

There were times when God condemned the people of Israel for their solemn assemblies. They came to the temple and offered the sacrifices and went through the motions of worship, so what was wrong? At times they committed sins then came and offered their sacrifices without repenting but for show. Then there were times when they were more concerned with the ceremony and sacrifice than with the one they were supposed to be worshipping.

God was not pleased with just an elaborate ceremony, and the offerings, he wanted them to obey his commands and to love him. When a lawyer asked Jesus what was the great commandment in the law he answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" **Matthew 22:37-39**. God wants man to love and walk with him, not just to offer a ritual and sacrifice.

There seems to be something in man that wants elaborate ceremonies in worship. It's as if there is not a feeling of doing anything unless it is with a lot of ritual. Is there any place in scripture where God said that he desired for his people to put on a big show in worship? I haven't found it and no one else has either; it isn't in the bible. Man has come up with a lot of his own ideas about worship and how it is to be done. The Lord has shown throughout the scriptures that he desires for man to worship in spirit and in truth. **John 4: 22-24**, "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." No amount of lip service and ceremony can make up for a lack of faith and love. It is the same if the people are not walking according to God's commandments, without obedience to his word, no amount of services can be pleasing in God's eyes.

Why do so many "Christians" complain about the preacher preaching too long? It is because they

want to get it over with, so they can get away to do the things that they want to do. When that is the attitude, can the Lord be pleased with the service? I don't see how he could accept what is grudgingly given. I don't like for someone to do something for me when they don't want to do it, and I don't believe that the Lord does either.

God wants us to worship because we want to praise him for what he has done, and is doing, in our lives. We should do what we do to the best of our ability, praising the Lord for our salvation. He made the way, paid the price, and offered the cleansing blood to redeem us from our sins. All we have to do is to believe in him and to obey his commands. No, God doesn't want his followers to worship by the numbers, but to worship in spirit and in truth.

This is also seen in his directions about prayer. In **Matthew 6:7** he said, "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." He didn't want a multitude of words, just words of faith, right from the heart. Our prayers and all of our worship should be from the heart and in faith. Never settle for some dull, dead ritual.

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AHAB, THE SON OF OMRI, SEVENTH KING OF ISRAEL (B.C. 919-896), WAS A MAN WHO, ALTHOUGH HE HAD GOOD INSTINCTS, BEHAVED WICKEDLY DUE TO THE EVIL INFLUENCES OF HIS WIFE JEZEBEL, A PHOENICIAN PRINCESS AND PRIESTESS OF THE HEATHEN GODDESS ASTARTE. JEZEBEL MEANT TO INSTALL THE WORSHIP OF ASTARTE THROUGHOUT ISRAEL WITH AHAB'S HELP AND ONLY THE PROPHET ELIJAH STOOD TO DEFEAT HER, PREDICTING ALSO THAT AHAB WOULD BE DESTROYED FOR TRYING TO HELP HER, NO MATTER WHAT PRECAUTIONS HE TOOK AND, ALTHOUGH AHAB WAS CAREFUL TO DISGUISE HIMSELF ON THE BATTLEFIELD SO AS NOT TO BE A CONSPICUOUS MARK FOR ENEMY ARCHERS, IN HIS LAST BATTLE WITH BENEHADAD OF SYRIA, A RANDOM ARROW HIT BETWEEN THE JOINTS OF HIS ARMOR, KILLING HIM, THUS FULFILLING ELIJAH'S PREDICTION (1 KINGS 21:19).

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