***Worship

RV134-02***

We continue with our study on the tribulation converts. This is segment number three. Our text is Revelation 7:9-17.

**Martyrs**

In the verses that we have already examined, we have seen that John is in heaven, observing a multitude of tribulation martyrs who are praising God the Father and God the Son for the salvation given by grace to these martyrs. These people entered the tribulation era on earth as total unbelievers, and by the grace of God, the information of the gospel was brought to them. The Spirit of God enabled them to believe it. Though they were killed for their faith in Jesus Christ (they paid for that with their lives), they are now happily in heaven in the Lord's presence.

**Interim Bodies**

These martyrs are in heaven, we observed, with some kind of an interim body awaiting the physical resurrection of their bodies, minus the sin nature.

***The* Salvation**

There is only one plan which God has authorized, which will save a sinner from the lake of fire, and it is referred to here specifically as *the* salvation. This is the one for which they are praising God. And alternate plan for entrance into heaven is a fraud. It will not work. People need to be warned that just to have a religion to which they are sincerely committed is not going to carry them into heaven. It is not enough to escape the consequences of the lake of fire. There is only one way to heaven. There are not many paths, and that deception is taking a lot of people into the lake of fire.

**The Apostle Paul**

The apostle Paul was one of the all-time great examples of a person who had a religion which he confidently believed was under divine approval. There was certainly no question as to Paul's sincerity in his religion of Judaism, and there was no question about his zeal. But in spite of his sincerity and in spite of his zeal, this man was headed for an eternity in hell. Finally, the grace of God intervened, and illuminated his understanding, and the apostle Paul was converted from his religion to a relationship with Jesus Christ. His experience is extremely instructive.

The apostle Paul, as you remember, was, all of a sudden, alerted to the reality of his condition as he was traveling to the city of Damascus to carry out some more of his nefarious work of finding Christians, and putting them in prison, and putting them to death. In Acts 9:3, this situation is described to us. We read, "And as he (Paul) journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly they're shown round about him a light from heaven. He fell to the earth and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' And he said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you persecute. It is hard for you to kick against the goads;'" that is, kicking against the sharp point of God's authority. "And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what will you have me to do?' The Lord said unto him, 'Arise and go into the city, and it shall be told you what you must do.' And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth, and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man. But they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus."

Paul, at the moment that this incident took place, was very elated over the progress that he was making in his persecution of the hated Christians – people who he considered blasphemous. Remember that the people that he was persecuting were fellow Jews. So, he had good ground, if Jesus Christ was not who he claimed to be, for considering these Jewish Christians as blasphemers, and worthy of death by the rules of the Old Testament.

Acts 8:3 tells us about the success of Paul in this enterprise: "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church (he tore it to shreds), entering into every house, and hailing men and women, committed them to prison." There was no doubt in Paul's mind about the truth of his position, and the justice of his treatment of the Christians. He was absolutely certain that he was right. This is, of course, the very issue that people who have a false doctrine of salvation believe today. There's no question in the mind of a Roman Catholic that he's got the right way to go to heaven by his works' efforts. There's no question in the mind of a Mormon that he has the right way to go to heaven via the everlasting gospel of Mormonism and the works procedure that he has provided for himself. However, the apostle Paul, in full confidence, was, in fact, completely wrong.

In Acts 26:9, Paul says, "I verily thought within myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, which things I also did in Jerusalem. And many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priest. And when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them." Paul not only rounded up these Jewish Christians, but he testified against them, so he stood by and had a hand in their death. These were innocent people being executed for their faith in Jesus Christ so, in fact, it was not a legitimate execution. It was outright murder, and Paul later recognized that that's what he had done.

Verse 11 says, "And I punished them often in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme. And being exceedingly mad against them, I prosecuted them even into foreign cities." The apostle Paul said, "When I got them, I would put pressures upon them. And no doubt, this included torture, in order to get them to say obscene things about Jesus Christ; to curse Jesus Christ; and, in the agony of their pain, to force out of their mouths some condemnation of Jesus Christ. You would have thought that the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages would have learned a lesson from Paul's experience, and not had done the same thing to thousands upon thousands of Christians in the process of the Inquisition, to get them to condemn their Protestant beliefs.

**Sincerity**

Obviously, this was a very, very sincere man. He went about, in a systematic way, doing what he considered to be God's work. He believed that the Christians were guilty of heresy in calling Jesus Christ the Messiah that had been promised to the nation of Israel. That's why I like to tell people that believe in a deviant gospel from that which we find in Scripture, to just ask themselves the question, "Are you prepared to pay the enormous price that you will pay if you are wrong in that opinion. If your conflict with what Scripture says proves indeed to be a conflict, are you prepared to pay the terrible eternal consequences?" That's, of course, what Paul had to ask himself, but he didn't, because he was cocky, arrogant, and sure that he had the truth. After all, he was part of Judaism, which had been in effect for hundreds of years.

Well, Paul had a terrible experience on that Damascus road of realizing that his cherished religion was not God's religion; God had set that aside; and, that the thing he was doing as a Pharisee was not even legitimate Judaism, because as a Pharisee, he was playing the same old game: "I'm going to get into heaven on the basis of my personal works. That wasn't true even under the Old Testament system. The only way you were saved under the Old Testament was by trusting in a Messiah Savior, which God had promised to Abraham, that in time He would bring into the human race to solve and cover the same problem. So, you were only saved by faith in that promise, as Abraham was. And the Scripture says that when he believed God in that respect, he was accounted a righteous man. Absolute righteousness was imputed to him. Salvation has always been by faith in the Savior that God was to provide, and you received that gift on the basis of believing the gospel message.

**Apostles**

Well, the apostle Paul saw the Lord Jesus Christ. He did see him in heaven. That's what qualified him to be an apostle. That's what qualified him to have apostolic authority. You could not have apostolic authority unless your eyeballs had seen Christ in His resurrected body, which is the nonsense that you in some denominations that still claim they have apostolic authority – that one apostle can pass his authority on to the other. The gift of the apostle was a gift like any other spiritual gift, given only by God. It was never transmitted, as none of them are, through human hands. So there are no apostles today, because there are no people on earth today whose eyeballs have seen Jesus Christ in his resurrected body.

When the disciples, after Judas' death, decided to bring in a replacement for Judas to fill out the number of the 12, one of the very clear qualifications was: "We have to select somebody who saw Jesus Christ alive from the dead." So, the apostle Paul now saw the Lord alive in heaven; realized who it was; and, immediately called him, "Lord." You know that the word "Lord" implies deity. He would not have called him "Lord" otherwise. In effect, he was saying, "God, who are you?" He as asking for specific clarification. Also: "God, what do you want me to do?" He was recognizing Him for who He was.

There's a difference made by the sound doctrine which Paul now received from the Lord from what he had been taught before. The result was that he went positive to the truth. In Acts 26:12, he describes this wonderful change from religion to relationship. Paul says, "Whereupon, as I went to Damascus with authority and permission from the chief priest, at midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them who journeyed with me. When we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking out to me and saying in the Hebrew tongue, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' Then he asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' And He said, I am Jesus whom you persecute.'"

That's interesting, isn't it? Who was Paul actually putting in prison? Who was Paul actually putting to death? It was not Jesus Christ. Jesus was in heaven. He was doing this to Christians who form the body of Christ. You want to remember that anytime anybody lays a hand on you as a Christian, as a follower of Jesus Christ for your faith in Him, they are reaching out and striking Jesus Christ. But of course, this is exactly what the devil wants to do. Once the Lord ascended, he was out of the reach of Satan. Therefore, Satan now strikes at Christ by hitting His body – we who are the believers of the church age.

Well, the apostle Paul had no taste at this point to hang onto his religion. He was ready to chuck it immediately. Acts 22:10 says, "And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said unto me, 'Arise and go into Damascus. And there you shall be told of all things which are appointed for you to do." The apostle Paul here originated that song Do Lord. Here, he said, "And what shall I do, Lord?" And that was the first time that that chorus had ever been sung. Since that time, of course, it has been repeated many times. But what he was asking was, "Now that I'm born again, what are you going to do with me?" Immediately, this man was aware that he was in the hands of a God who had plans for him. So, he inquired about that. He was told to go into the city, and it would be unraveled to him.

Well, with all the pride of power, and the lust for vengeance, and the arrogance of religion gone, they led the blind Paul to Damascus. You remember the story – how he finally recovered his sight through the healing gift of a man named Ananias. Acts 9:17-19 tells us that. But the problem was that the Jewish community was shocked by the testimony for Christ of this man, the great persecutor.

Acts 9:20-21: "And immediately, he (Paul) preached Christ in the synagogue, that He is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said, "Is not this he that destroyed them, who called on this name in Jerusalem, and came here for that intent, that he might bring them down to the chief priests?" Immediately, people who had been the authorities here in the Jewish nation, that had previously sent him out, turned against him, and they immediately began making plans for how they might take his life.

Therefore, Paul had to leave Damascus secretly in order to escape the vengeance that was now planned for him by his old cronies whose religion he had abandoned. They were still going to hell. He was on his way to heaven, but God indeed had great plans for him. But before God could execute those plans, the Lord had to deal with the fact that he had a dummy on his hands. He had a man who was a university graduate. You must understand that. Paul was a Roman citizen, not by having purchased it, but by virtue of having been born to a father who was a Roman citizen. He was half-Jewish, through his mother's side, but he had all the rights and privileges of a Roman, and he received the highest kind of education. He was one of the all-time great geniuses of any century. So, this was no ignorant man in terms of natural knowledge and intellectual capacity. But he was an ignorant intellectual.

So, God immediately had to do something about this before he could use him. It doesn't matter how smart you are. Until you have a spiritual frame of reference with a knowledge of doctrine, you're not going to be used by the Lord in any degree at all.

**The Arabian Desert**

So, in Galatians 1:17-18, the apostle Paul tells us how God dealt with this. After he was saved, and fled for his life, he said, "Neither went up to Jerusalem to them who were apostles before me. But I went out into Arabia (the desert), and returned again to Damascus. After three years, I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode within 15 days." What an experience. God takes him out into the Arabian Desert; where he is isolated; where it's quiet; where he's safe; and, for three solid years, the Lord runs a seminary with Paul is the only student. This man was practically re-experiencing what Adam and Eve once had before they fell in the Garden of Eden, with God coming in and running Bible class for them.

So, here God runs a Bible class for the apostle Paul. Why? This man was thoroughly versed in the Old Testament. What did he need this for? He knew all the basic doctrines relative to the character of God, and many things that dealt with the Judaistic system. He knew the basic concepts of God's righteousness, and things that are true in any age. Well, what he didn't know was about the new thing that God was doing – the era of the church. He did not have the information about the body of Christ because this had never been recorded in the Old Testament. We can look back into the Old Testament, and we see places where God left gaps in the order of Jewish history. They're marked in the Scripture. We can look back. They're easily see now. We realize that in this gap, God intended to slip something in terms of a new age, which he never told the Old Testament people.

For example, there is the fact that the Old Testament prophets said that the Jewish Messiah, when He arrives, will come storming onto this scene as a conquering lion of the tribe of Judah. The prophets also said that when the Jewish Messiah comes, He will come as a meek and a lowly Lamb – a suffering one who will die.

Peter tells us that the prophets read their own writings, and they looked at one another, and they said, "This is contradictory. You can't come into the world as a meek and lowly lamb who's going to be sacrificed, and also have the role of a conquering lion." Well, what they didn't know was that He was going to come as a Lamb, and some 2,000-plus years later, He would come as the conquering lion. The gap was left. There were several places in the Old Testament where that was true. But what was in the gap was never revealed. That's what the New Testament calls "a mystery."

Now, God said, "Paul, I'm going to unravel the mystery to you. For three years, that's what He did. So, we today are the marvelous beneficiaries of what this man, who abandoned religion, and went to a relationship with Jesus Christ, was introduced to in the form of a brand new age – the age of the church. And most of what we know about church doctrine, we learn in the epistles that Paul wrote.

So, religion is not going to make it. Many people who are the compatriots in the tribulation of these people that we see here in heaven with John – people who are on the scene at the same time, are going to have the religion of the antichrist. They're going to have religion in its finest expression, and in its most glamorous era. But it's going to be a religion, like with Paul, that's going to take them straight into hell.

However, John sees that some people did not depend on that religion in the tribulation. Some people listened to the evangelists, and the result is that they believed and were taken to heaven.

**God's Throne**

We now begin in Revelation 7:11. John hears, in verse 10, these people who have been martyred, and who have been saved, and are in heaven crying, "Salvation belongs to our God; the God who sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb who made it all possible." Verse 11 says, "Upon hearing that expression of praise, all the angels;" that is, the "aggelos." This is referring to the elect angels of God – the same ones that we had been introduced to back in Revelation 5:11. These angels are standing there. That's the Greek word "histemi." This is the word for "standing" in the heavenly throne room. John sees these angels as having stood on their feet at some time in the past, and they have now continued standing. They are themselves personally there in this throne room, and they're standing around that throne. That throne has already been introduced to us previously, on which the Father is seated.

**The 24 Elders**

Also around that throne, he finds the elders ("presbuteros"). The 24 elders, you remember, are seated on their throne all around the throne of the Father. The 24 elders represent the church in heaven, because the church is present. In this scene, we will be there someday to see this take place in actuality. So, the "presbuteros" represent those individual pastors who headed up every church in God's arrangement. There is only one elder in every church, the pastor-teacher-elder, and these now represent the believers in heaven.

**Living Creature Angels**

Around with them also are those living creatures (those "zoon"), and these living creatures are for angels. They are a special category of angels who stand around the throne of the Father as an honor guard. The angels are standing around this throne. The elders are there. The living creatures are there. And all of them together "fall." The Greek word is "pipto." This is the word for doing obeisance. Here it means that they bow down. It's in the aorist tense. At the point of hearing these martyrs praise God for his salvation, all of these people, this group in heaven: the elect angels; the church; and the four living creatures, all fall down before Him on their "prosopos." That means on their "faces." This again reminds us that all of these people here who are in heaven, though they are disembodied, have some kind of an intermediate body, so that it has a face.

**Worship**

What they do upon falling upon their face is proceed to worship God. The word for "worship" is "proskuneo." This is made up of two words. The first word, "pros," is a preposition that means "toward." The second part is the verb "kuneo" which means "to kiss." So, this word literally means "to kiss toward." What it describes is the way you would bow down and kiss the King's hand as an act of respect, as an act of submission. So, here you bow down with an act of kissing toward God as an act of reverence or an act of worship. It's expressing total subjection to the God who sits on the throne.

**Praise**

This is done at the point in time when the heavenly company hears God being praised. It's done by all these created beings, angelic and human, who are in heaven. What they are worshiping, we're told, is God.

**What is Worship?**

What is worship? There is an awful lot of stuff that goes on in Christian circles today under the guise of worship that has nothing to do with it whatsoever. Worship is the human believer's expression of personal love toward the God that he has not seen. Worship is based on coming to know this God, through Scriptures, as we are taught those Scriptures by the Holy Spirit. Our concentration on the Word of God is what reveals God to us.

So, a public church service which teaches the doctrines of Scripture about God is the supreme place of worship. That's why we call a church service a worship service. It is worship because you are learning about the God whose hand, so to speak, you kiss in humility and in subjection. Worship, of course, is a priestly function of the believer who has been made spiritually alive.

**God is a Spirit**

In John 4:24, we're given a very specific statement concerning a guideline for worship that gives us a very distinct understanding of how we can worship God. We read that: "God is a spirit." God is a spirit thing. I've never been able to get an explanation from Mormons, when I've asked them what this verse could possibly mean, since they teach that God is a flesh human being, and that God has a human body, and that He is not a spirit being. But the Bible makes it clear to us that God is a spirit being. So, they who are going to communicate and have contact with Him in worship must worship him in a spiritual way – on a spirit being way, and in truth.

Let's first take the word, "In spirit." God is a spirit being. He is approached, therefore, on spiritual principles. Today we do not worship God through certain symbolic rituals as they did in the Old Testament, because all those things have been fulfilled. So, we don't use the symbols anymore. We do not worship, therefore, through rituals. Most churches today, of major denominations, call that worship. They will worship through a series of rituals.

The Roman Catholic Church, for example, will go through the ritual of the Mass as an expression of worship. We do not worship through a liturgy. Churches will have an order of service. That's what a liturgy is. Every Sunday, the congregation will hear the priest or pastor who is leading the worship, in certain, toned words or certain phrases. They will respond with certain phrases or certain words. They will all recite the Lord's Prayer together. They will do certain things at certain times. It will be a ritual. If you attend such a liturgical service, you will know exactly what's coming in the order of the service at certain points, because it's the same every Sunday. And man that is killing and dead. I grew up in a liturgical system, and I can testify to you that there's nothing to kill spiritual taste and understanding like being in a liturgical church service, and calling that worship.

Well, that isn't what we do today. Nor do we worship God by observing holy days. That is, whatever else you may do about your church attendance, if you are in this understanding of worship, you will certainly be in church on Christmas Day, and you aren't about to miss Easter. I've often been tempted to close up on Easter Sunday, but that's too traumatic for people, because, after all, there are some of you never show up except then, and what are you going to do then? Listen to tapes? No. So, we're going to keep open. But there are people to whom that holy day is very important because you make it with God by being in church on those days.

Or some people worship in a special place. Certainly, we cannot claim that where we worship at Berean Memorial church is a special place. I mean, look around. We have basketball goals and a skating rink. It's a nice place, but it certainly isn't a cathedral. It certainly is not falling into the category of some holy place. Yet that is the concept in Christendom of worship, by and large. You have to be in a holy place in order to do that.

The Old Testament system had this kind of a worship order. It's all obsolete now because the thing has been fulfilled. When we say obsolete, remember that we're talking about the Mosaic system as a way of life, with its rules for civil order; for religious order; and, for personal morality. It's a package deal, and the whole package has been set aside. That's a great mistake that has come down from the Reformation leaders – that only certain parts of the Mosaic Law have been disposed of because they were fulfilled, and certain parts we keep. So, that's where you inherit the concept of walking in and having an altar up front. You don't need an altar anymore. There's no more sacrifice, but still there's an altar with the candles on it, and all the ritual inherited from Babylon, as well as the idea that you must have a priest who wears vestments and robes. That was true in the Old Testament. That whole worship system is dead, but we're still going to take over the vestments and robes, and just down the line, you can fill in for yourself. We do not worship in that Old Testament order because the whole thing has been set aside. But I want to stress to you that also, all of the Ten Commandments, as a code of law, has been set aside.

The moral precepts of the commandments have not been set aside, and that's why they are all reimposed upon Christians in the New Testament. Every one of them repeat it except the one that tells you to go to church on Saturday. That one is never repeated for Christians. All the others are because the standard of God's morality is the same. So, we don't worship today in these ritualistic ways.

**Your Human Spirit**

Regenerated man has a living human spirit as his contact point with God. Job 32:8 tells us that. Proverbs 20:27 refers to man's living human spirit. So, it is this human spirit which is taught the doctrines of Scripture, and this prepares our human spirits to be able to communicate with God the Holy Spirit. Thus, we are able to be led in worship of God. The Holy Spirit teaches us the doctrines of the Word of God. Consequently, we know then how to approach God in a spiritual way, not in these material external ways. So, that's what John for 24 means when it says, "You must approach God in spirit." You have to approach him in terms that he is a spirit being, and his point of contact with you is your human spirit.

**Your Soul**

Your soul is your point of contact with the people around you. Your body is your point of contact with the physical world, through your senses. Your soul is your point of contact with people.

**In Truth**

But it is your human spirit that is your point of contact with God. But you must also worship Him in truth. This refers to the divine viewpoint of Scripture. You can't worship him according to paganistic practices that human beings have invented, such as the Roman Catholic Mass. Your basis of worship must be compatible with the truth of Scripture. So, you have to learn what Scripture teaches, and what is permissible, so that you may adore and reverence God on the basis that is acceptable to Him. Our souls are occupied with God on the basis of what God has revealed about Himself, and not on the basis of our own human inventions, all of which are designed as systems to satisfy the sin nature.

A great deal of worship activity in churches today is an appeal to the sin nature: to wow buy what you hear; to all you buy what you see; and, to cause you to feel a sense of almost fear as you see the things that are taking place, which is what happens in the mass, when at some point, suddenly, the priest practically clicks his finger, and a piece of bread transforms itself into the body of Christ, and a chalice of wine transforms itself into the very blood of Jesus Christ.

That's why, when the priest goes around giving you the bread in the Roman Catholic Church, you will notice that he has an assistant who has a plate with a long handle. It's a little flat plate. It's almost like a pancake turner, but it's a big thing. As he approaches you, his assistant shoves this under your chin, and then he puts the little round wafer in the form of the sun-god into your mouth. The reason the plate is there is that in case he misses your mouth, a piece of the body of Christ isn't going to hit the floor. And they do the same thing when you drink out of the chalice. I mean, this is paganism in its finest expression. That is not truth, and therefore, you cannot worship God in that way.

John 4:23 tells us that God is daily seeking those who will worship him in this way – in spirit and in truth: "But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such to worship him." So, when next Sunday morning comes around, I want you to remember that God the Father is looking down out of the window of heaven, eagerly anticipating that you're going to be here in this auditorium, in this maximum expression of worship. Next Sunday night, that father is going to be looking out the window of heaven, eagerly anticipating that you will meet Him here in worship under conditions of spirit and truth.

**Praise**

Our worship is expressed in several very specific ways. We worship God by praising Him for what He is, and for what He has done for us in grace. Anytime that you praise God, and anytime you express your appreciation to him (which is what praise means), you are performing an act of worship. That is because the word "worship," you may remember, comes from an old English word "worthship." Worship is a contraction of "worthship," and worship is an old English word for recognizing the worthiness of a person. So, when you are praising God, you are expressing appreciation to Him, recognizing His worthiness by the appreciation that you express.

**Prayer**

You also worship God by praying. Anytime you pray (the very fact that you pray), that is an admission that you don't make it on your own. It is an admission of dependence upon our God. So, when you pray, it is an act of worship. You are again proclaiming the worthiness of our father.

**Observing Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

When you observe the ordinances of water baptism in the Lord's Supper, which proclaim the worthiness of the work of Christ on the cross, you are worshiping Him. So, next Sunday evening, when we gather here for the Lord's Supper, it is one of the high points of declaring the worthiness of God. That's why attendance at the Lord's Supper service is so important. Whatever else may be on the testimony, sometimes the testimony service is very impressive. Usually it is. Usually it's very edifying. Sometimes some nut stands up and clowns around and says something that's trivial and useless, or pointless, and that's not too helpful. But in the long run, people who are thoughtful and respectful, and come prepared, find that a useful service. It is an encouragement to the believers that somebody is here to share with them something that God has provided. That is good. But even if you didn't have any of that, when you come to that point of sharing those elements, and those words that are spoken in connection with that bread and that juice of the grape, that is an expression of appreciation for what Christ has done. And that is a high point of worship.

**Bible Study**

We worship when we study the Bible. When we take the trouble to study the Bible, it indicates that we are honoring the mind of God as the source of all divine viewpoint. If you have a girlfriend that you're in love with, and you're separated by distance, you look to the mail, and you keep your eye on the mailbox for the letter that she's going to write you. When you get it, you tear it open, and you devour it. You read it through several times, and you put it under your pillow at night when you sleep, because you are in love, and you consider her a worthy person, and you want to hear from her. So, we sometimes use the word "worship," and say, I just worship that girl," and you're not using it in a blasphemous way. It just means that you have great admiration for someone like that. She has a sin nature, and you may learn to un-worship her someplace down the line too, which fortunately does not happen with God. But indeed, the idea is the same there. If you're in love: "I want to hear what you've got to say." So, when you get to your attention (your concentration) on the studying of the Word of God, that's a high point of worship.

Sometimes, we have people in the service who disturb worship. They themselves are not worshiping because they're not concentrating. They're fooling around, opening a stick of gum, and then clocking it in their mouth, or somebody brings a little nail clipper, and they're sitting there clipping their nails, which in a quiet auditorium, sounds like a boom of lightning thunder stroke coming through. It's distracting. They're doing all these non-worship things for themselves, because they are distracting us from concentrating on the Word of God. People who are visitors come to Berean service, and they have to get used to that idea of worship by concentration upon the Word of God. Most people are not used to going to church and finding it an academic situation, where God is instructing their minds. All they want is heart-to-heart instead of mind-to-mind.

We had some visitors again this morning. We've been having a series of tapers recently. They just love to walk in here, and sit here, to see, and to feel, and to experience firsthand all of these tapes that have been coming to them, and the information of God that comes to them. I get these letters. I got another one recently from a young lady that almost moves you to tears in the expression of gratitude for the fact that these tapes have made it possible for them to worship God. What are they talking about? The study of the Word of God, which is made possible for them through the tapes, is an expression of worship, because of the fact they take the trouble to want to find out what has been said concerning the Bible is an expression that they think God is important, and that He's worthy of their attention.

**Explaining the Word of God**

We, of course, also worship God when we explain the Word of God. When we preach and teach the doctrines of Scripture, that causes people to adore God in His character and in His works. One of the great ways that we worship God is when we maintain our temple fellowship. When you keep confession of known sin, and stay on top of that, that is a great expression that you think God is important, and that you think it is important for you to be on good terms with Him. You have, in the human realm, people that you don't care whether you're on good terms with them or not. There are some of you that never go out the front door where I stand to shake your hand. You head out the back door. Well, that's OK. That doesn't hurt my feelings. But the thing that is important is to recognize that you want to keep on good terms with God, and you want to meet Him. But when temporal fellowship is broken, you're not on good terms, and you can't meet Him: for blessing; for learning; for prospering; for production of divine good; or, for anything else. So, when you say, "I want to confess my sins, and you do it, that is a great expression of personal worship."

**Glory**

We also worship by giving glory to God and exalting Him. The word "glory" means recognizing His essence by giving honor to Him. It expresses our respect for God relative to what the Bible teaches.

**Gratitude**

Certainly we express our worship when we give our thanks, expressing our gratitude for the plan of grace, and for the whole system that His wisdom has put together on our behalf.

**Humility**

These are expressions of our personal humility when we praise Him and when we thank Him. Ingrates are arrogant people. They never appreciate what God does for them.

**Priesthood**

We today do not need a special priesthood with which to worship God. 1 Peter 2:9 tells us all we Christian men and women are our own personal priests in this age of grace. We're all part of the universal priesthood. We don't have to have a specialized priesthood like they did in the Old Testament. God's grace works, of course, are cause for us to worship Him as we see that it is cause here in Revelation for these people to worship Him in heaven. It is His works of salvation that bring this outburst of praise in heaven, and it is worthy here on earth, though it is often neglected. That's one of the reasons we have the Lord's Supper testimony meetings – to express gratitude for what God has done for us in our salvation.

Therefore, all the reasons (and, I mean *all* that you and I may come up with for not attending a church service are simply justifications of a decision that you have made not to worship God at that particular point. you may have a legitimate reason for not coming. You may be sick as a dog. Maybe you can't come, but you still have had to be forced to make the decision not to worship God by not attending that service. This is a great opportunity for worshiping God, because the Word of God is at the center of what we do.

Worship is learning about God in order to love God. Ultimately, that's why we worship Him – to learn about Him, so that we can love Him. These people in Revelation 7:11 fall upon their faces because of their love for God, and for *the* salvation which He has given to them. In the next verse, they burst out with an anthem of praise, peppering one word after another in their expression of worship of God, and we shall join them in the next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1984

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