

# WORSHIP IN THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY

## Ed Dye

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. Worship fills an instinctive or natural human need.
  - a. The Greeks called man *anthropos*, meaning “the upward looking one.”—Waymon D. Miller, *Fundamentals of the Faith*, Plaza Press, p.89.
  - b. Immanuel Kant said, “Man is the creature of religious instincts, and must worship something.”
  - c. One of the first recorded human experiences in the Bible was of worship, Gen.4:3-7, the case of Cain and Abel. Cf. Heb.11:4.
  - d. Man’s need for God is intense according to Psa.42:1, “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God,”; Psa.63:1, “O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee...”
  - e. Worship of God is the most solemn, sacred, and holy act man ever performs.
2. The Scriptures, esp. the Psalms, testify of how thrilling an experience worship is for the believer.
  - a. Psa.122:1, “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.”
  - b. Psa.26:8, “Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.”
  - c. Psa.27:4, “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.”
  - d. Psa.138:1,2, “I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving kindness and for thy truth for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.
3. Have you ever given serious thought the fact that when we come together for worship in the public assembly:
  - a. That we are in the presence of God? Mt.18:20; Ac.10:33.

- b. Then have you given thought to what it means to be in the presence of God? Or could it be that we too often take it too lightly?
  - c. Have we really given serious thought to what our attitude and our actions should be while in the presence of God in the public worship?
  - d. To what it really means to worship acceptably while in the presence of God in the public assembly?
  - e. To things that would be out of order on our part, as to thought and action, while in the presence of God in the public assembly?
4. This raises the question in my mind pertaining to the matter of:

## **II. DISCUSSION**

### **A. HOW IS WORSHIP PERFORMED?**

1. The Bible contains numerous exhortations for man to worship God.
  - a. God should be glorified, extolled, praised, an offering should be presented, and worship done “in the beauty of holiness,” as 1Chr.16:29 declares, “Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.”
  - b. God’s name should be properly honored according to Psa.29:2, “Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.”
  - c. We should worship, bow down, and “kneel before the Lord our maker.” Psa.95:6 says, “O come, let s worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.”
  - d. All the earth should fear (reverence) the Lord and worship Him. “O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth,” Psa.96:9.
  - e. Because God is holy, we should exalt him and worship at his footstool, so says Psa.99:5, “Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.”
  - f. According to Jno.4:23,24, God is a Spirit and seeks those to do so who will worship him in spirit and in truth.
2. Various postures in worship are described in the Bible which show an attitude of reverence and awe in God’s presence in the public assembly that must be manifest at all times.
  - a. Some were “bowed down” in worship.

- (1) Gen.24:26, “And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord.”
    - (2) Gen.24:48, “And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the Lord, and blessed (praised, adored, revered) the Lord God of my master Abraham...”
  - b. Others “bowed their heads,” Exo.12:27, “...And the people bowed the head and worshipped.”
  - c. Moses “bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped,” Exo.34:8.
  - d. “Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,” Job 1:20.
  - e. In approaching the infant Jesus, the wise men, bringing gifts, “fell down, and worshipped him.”
  - f. The apostle Paul, in 1Cor.14:25, spoke of worship being done by one “falling down on his face, he will worship God.”
- 3. What, then, is the meaning of the word and the act of “worship”?
  - a. It comes from an original term meaning:
    - (1) “To bow down; to make obeisance; do reverence to.”
    - (2) “To kiss (the hand) toward”
    - (3) It is used of an act of homage or reverence to God.
  - b. Worship is the presentation of one’s self before God. Cf. Josh.24:1: “And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; **and they presented themselves before God.**”

## **B. WHAT ABOUT ATTITUDES ESSENTIAL TO WORSHIP IN THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY?**

- 1. Without a doubt proper attitudes is worship in the public assembly are required, which are:
  - a. Reverence:
    - (1) Psa.5:7, “But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.”
    - (2) Hab.2:20, “But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.”

- (3) Heb.12:28, “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”
  - b. Adoration:
    - (1) Psa.103:1, “Bless (praise) the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless (praise, honor, glorify) his holy name.”
    - (2) Jude 1:25, “To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”
  - c. Exaltation:
    - (1) Psa.18:46, “...and let the God of my salvation be exalted.”
    - (2) Psa.97:9, “For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.”
    - (3) Psa.118:28, “Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.”
  - d. Gratitude:
    - (1) Psa.119:62, “At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments.”
    - (2) 2Cor.9:15, “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.”
    - (3) Eph.5:20, “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Cf. Jas.1:17
    - (4) “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.” Lk.17:17,18.
2. Do you suppose our manner of conducting our selves and even our manner of dress while in the presence of God in our public worship could possibly show a lack of reverence and an improper attitude on our part while in the presence of God in public worship? –especially on the part of those who take a public part in the worship service?
  - a. Like the old razor blade commercial used to say, “You better check!”
  - b. To this end, let us consider the definition of some terms and the significant actions necessarily implied.

- (1) Attitude: “the manner of acting, feeling or thinking that shows one’s *disposition*.”
  - (2) Disposition: “one’s customary frame of mind, or *inclination*.”
  - (3) Inclination: “a particular disposition or bent of mind; a liking or preference; any action, practice, or thing toward which one is inclined; *in this case, toward God in our worship of Him*.”
  - (4) Indifferent: “careless; unconcerned; without proper concern; of no consequence or importance; as, it is indifferent as to how we act or what we do, or how we dress in God’s presence; one shows as much reverence or respect as the other; it makes no difference! God accepts one as well as the other! He accepts whatever we offer him! No! He didn’t accept Adam and Eve’s dress. Gen.3:7,21.
- c. In this same vein of thought:
- (1) Why do you dress differently at a funeral service if you are one of the pallbearers instead of simply attending the service?
  - (2) Why do you dress differently at a wedding ceremony if you are the best man and not just some one attending the wedding?
  - (3) Why does the attorney and his client dress differently standing before the court than if one in the audience witnessing the trial?
  - (4) What about when you are leading the singing in the worship service? Waiting on the Lord’s table? Does it make no difference at all as to how one is dressed? If not, where do we draw the line on manner of dress in performing public functions in the worship service in the public assembly?
- d. Who would doubt that one’s dress reflects an attitude?

### **C. ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON WORSHIP IN THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY AS THE BIBLE REVEALS THEM.**

1. Why should we worship God?
  - a. He is our Lord and we should do so, Psa.45:11b.
  - b. To honor his name and praise him, Psa.66:1-4.
  - c. In recognition of his holiness, Psa.99:5,9.

- d. Because of his loving kindness, and for his truth, Psa.138:1,2/
  - e. Because he is worthy of it, Rev.4:11.
  - f. Because he is our God, and we are his people, Psa.95:6,7.
2. We are to worship God and him alone, Mt.4:10; Lk.4:8; Rev.19:10; 22:8,9.
  3. Rules established in the N.T. for worship.
    - a. Anything done in public worship must be done for edification, exhortation, and comfort, 1Cor.14:3.
    - b. That which is spoken should be “words easy to be understood,” this includes prayer and worship in song 1Cor.14:9,15,16,19.
    - c. All things must be done “unto edifying,” 1Cor.14:26.
    - d. Women are to keep silence in the assemblies, i.e., they are not allowed to speak publicly as do the men, 1Cor.14:34,35.
    - e. All things are to be done decently and in order, 1Cor.14:40.
  4. The elements of the worship in the public assembly of the N.T. church.
    - a. The saints assembled for public worship, Heb.10:25.
    - b. The Lord’s supper was observed on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week, Ac.20:7.
    - c. Singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs was one of the acts of worship, Eph.5:19; Col.3:16; 1Cor.14:15.
    - d. Prayer was another act of worship, Ac.2:42.
    - e. Giving of material means on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week was another act, 1Cor.16:2; Ac.2:42.
    - f. Preaching and edification of the saints was also practiced as another act, Ac.2:42; 20:7, etc.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

1. Our understanding of God will determine and govern our reverence for God manifested in our actions as a consequence of our thoughts during our worship in the public assembly.
2. Just how serious are we in making sure we possess and manifest the proper attitude and actions in our worship of God in our public assembly?