

What About Worship?

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Christian worship involves reverent acts of homage paid to God and/ or Jesus Christ. While the Old Testament is the inspired revelation of God, its authority perished with the death of Christ (Col. 2:14). The only source of information for worship that pleases God and His Son is the New Testament. No man knows anything about what pleases God without learning it from its twenty-seven “books.”

Is God somehow “obligated” to accept whatever men may wish to offer to Him in the name of “worship”? A great number of people seem to believe so as indicated by the wide variety of worship practices. They did not get this variety from the Bible.

Although we do not live under Old Testament authority in the Christian age, its records of God’s attitude toward worship are nonetheless instructive. In case after case, God expressed His certain wrath against those who disobeyed Him regarding worship (e.g., Cain, Nadab, Abihu, King Saul, Uzziah, Israel, Judah, et al.). While the worship practices in the New Testament differ greatly from those in the Old, God’s attitude toward those who disregard His will concerning worship remains the same. All that we do or say must be by His authority (Col. 3:17).

The New Testament mentions some “kinds” of worship that are displeasing to God. Jesus condemned the worship of the Jewish leaders as “vain” (i.e., to no purpose) (Mat. 15:8). It was such because human rather than Divine doctrines and precepts were its basis (v. 9). The only acceptable worship of God and His Son is that which Divine precept authorizes.

Paul condemned some in the Colossian church who engaged in “will-worship” – practices that satisfied their own wills rather than seeking and conforming to God’s will (Col. 2:23). The context identifies these acts with “the precepts and doctrines of men” (v. 22). So much of what people do in religious assemblies today is to please themselves and involves nothing less than entertainment in the name of religion. Our worship must seek to please God, not ourselves.

Jesus identified “true worshippers” as those who worship God “in spirit and truth” (which implies that all other worship is “false worship”) (John 4:23–24). “True worship” requires the sincere involvement of our hearts (“in spirit”) and adherence to God’s will concerning worship (“in truth”). Sincerity is not enough if we ignore God’s Word. Nor is it

enough to outwardly do what God requires when our hearts are not in it. True worship requires one's sincere compliance with Truth.

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