

Conversation Starter

FOR the week of January 13 to 19, 2008

This Week's Theme: What Is Worship?

Reading #1: Matthew 2:1-12
Reading #2: Psalm 29:2
Reading #3: Psalm 100:2
Reading #4: Hebrews 10:25

In what is known as the “church year”, we are currently in the season known as Epiphany. As always, Epiphany began on January 6th – a day when we remember the visit of the magi (wisemen) from the east to the child Jesus in Bethlehem. It certainly was a miraculous moment because it was by the light of a very bright star that they were brought to where Jesus and his parents lived. In this story which you will find in Matthew 2:1-12 of the Bible, worshipping Jesus is found to be a central focus. Just before the wisemen give their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to Jesus, they bowed down and worshipped Him. To the wisemen, there was something special about this child – they believed Him to be a future king and therefore, He was worthy of their worship. (See Reading #1.) And as we “fast forward” to today, this same Jesus as well as God the Father are worshipped by those who call themselves Christians. And when it comes to worship for Christian believers, God's Word clearly states that it is not an option, but it is something that it is required as the word “worship” is written in the imperative in the following verses:

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness. (Psalm 29:2, Reading #2)

Worship the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs. (Psalm 100:2, Reading #3)

Since worship is essential for followers of Jesus, then what is worship? The Little Oxford Dictionary states that it is “homage or service paid to a being...regarded as divine; acts, rites or ceremonies displaying this; adoration or devotion” and with ‘homage’ meaning a “formal acknowledgement of allegiance.” As Christians, we know the divine being is God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. Moving on from this point, let's now consider how the scripture views worship in order to continue answering the question: what is worship? In the Old Testament the main Hebrews words for worship are ‘shachah’ meaning ‘bow down, prostrate’ AND ‘abhadh’ meaning ‘work, labour, serve’. What this means is that worship is a reverential attitude of mind or body or both and combined with whole-hearted adoration of, obedience to and service for the One being worshipped. In the New Testament the main Greek words for worship are ‘proskuneo’ meaning ‘kiss the hand or the ground’ and ‘latreuo’ meaning ‘to serve religiously, worship publicly, perform sacred service, offer gifts, and observe the rites instituted for worship of God.’ So, then, people of the living God ... the God who created you ... the One who loves you so much that He gave Jesus to redeem you, make a new commitment to regular and frequent worship. *Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; worship the Lord in the splendour of His holiness. Amen!!!*

1. In what ways has the answer to the question what is worship? in today's Conversation Starter broadened your understanding of worship? What is one new thing about worship you have learned so far today?
2. Why does God require His children to be worshippers rather than suggest to them that it is optional?
3. What are some ways you worship God/Jesus outside of church?
4. Describe a time when God “touched” your life in a special way during a worship service at church.
5. READ Hebrews 10:25, Reading #4. Why is regular public worship so important for Christians?

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