

# Answering Questions About True Worship

“God is Spirit, and those who worship  
Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

– John 4:24

# What Exactly Is Worship?

- Is worship just an emotion, just a reverence, or something more?
- Does every act of service to God count as worship?
- Must worship be delegated to a specific time, place, and/or group of individuals (i.e. the church)?

## ➤ **Great place to start learning – John 4:23-24**

*“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

# What Exactly Is Worship?

## Four answers about worship from John 4:24

- ***Worship is either true or false*** – only true worship is acceptable to God: an important distinction to learn!
- ***True worship involves the proper object*** – namely, the true worshipper is motivated to worship God
- ***True worship involves the heart, the inner spirit*** – it cannot be done emotionlessly, with heart/mind detached
- ***True worship is offered according truth*** – i.e. according to the word, “[God’s] word is truth” (John 17:17)

# What Exactly Is Worship?

## 1. The proper object of worship

- This point involves motivation and purpose:
  - *We worship to praise and exalt God.*
- *Worship* in John 4:24 is the Greek *proskuneo* meaning:  
“to make obeisance to, do reverence to (from pros, "towards," and kuneo, "to kiss")...used as an act of homage or reverence” (Vine)
- Christians seek to reverence and pay homage to God
  - Matt 4:10; I Cor 14:25; Phil 3:3; Rev 10:10
- **If our actions are not aimed to praise and exalt God, then whatever we do is not worship!**

# What Exactly Is Worship?

## 2. Worship offered “in spirit”

- This point involves the attitude, intellect and emotions
  - cf. Acts 18:25; Rom 12:11; I Cor 14:25-17
- *True worship begins in our hearts before any external action is conducted!*
  - Psalm 138:1-3; Matt 22:37-38; Luke 6:43-45
- Paul used the same phrase to indicate his presence with people who were far away from him (e.g. Col 2:5 )
  - Worship in spirit is offered as if bowed low before the very throne of God (see Psalm 100; Heb 10:19-25)
- **If our worship does not genuinely engage the mind and heart, it is not true worship!**

# What Exactly Is Worship?

## 3. Worship offered “in truth”

- This point involves authority and obedience:
  - *We worship God as He commands in His word.*
- “Truth” encompasses whatever is revealed in the word of God (cf. John 17:17; Ps 119:160; John 8:31-32)
- *True worship is more than just a feeling: it is an action, moved by the heart, **carried out in accordance with the word of God!***
  - Note the importance of obedience in Psalm 103:17-22; Psalm 119 (e.g. vs. 1-8, 169-176); Matt 15:7-9
- **If worship is offered without God’s authority, in disobedience to Him, it is not true worship!**

# True Worship

– Proper Object –

– Proper Spirit –

– Proper Authority –

➤ **Acceptable To God!**



# Does It Matter *How* We Worship God?

- **Popular belief:** it doesn't matter how we choose to worship God as long as we mean to glorify Him
  - *Sometimes* 1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17 are cited as proof
- **Remember** - true worship does not just depend on your intentions and attitude:
  - **John 4:24** – God desires worship offered in spirit **and in truth!**
  - **Col 3:17** – “in the name of the Lord” means “under the authority of the Lord” (cf. Matt 28:18)!
  - **Matt 15:7-9** – worship offered by the doctrines and commandments of men is vain and useless!

# Does It Matter *How* We Worship God?

## Old Testament Examples:

- **Gen 4:1-6** – God was glorified by Abel’s sacrifice but not by that of Cain:
  - Abel worshiped God by faith, according to God’s commands (not enumerated for us in the text)
  - See Heb 11:4 with Rom 10:17
  - When Cain decided to ignore God’s commands, even in worship, **God called it sin!**
- **Acts 18:13** – the Jews at least academically understood that worship must be offered in accordance with God’s expressed will.

# Does It Matter *How* We Worship God?

## Old Testament Examples:

- **Lev 10:1-7** – Nadab and Abihu punished for worshipping God with unauthorized fire (incense)
  - It appears their error was to use a source of fire unauthorized by God's law (cf. Exo 27,30)
  - Their father, Aaron, and brothers were commanded not even to mourn for Nadab and Abihu
  - They were to show visibly to all the people that God's judgment and punishment was righteous
- **True worship glorifies God and exalts Him as holy: this is impossible if we ignore His expressed will!**

# Does It Matter *How* We Worship God?

## New Testament Examples:

- **Matt 7:21-23** – Jesus Christ cannot be served and glorified by lawless actions, i.e. disobedient service
- **Acts 17:13** – The worship offered by the Athenians was not acceptable because they were ignorant of God's will
- **Heb 13:15** – Instead of the Old Testament laws of sacrifice, we offer sacrifices of praise and worship:
  - Sacrifices that must be offered by faith, according to the will of God (Heb 11:6; Matt 15:7-9)
  - Sacrifices mediated by Christ, our High Priest, and must be according to His authority (Col 3:17)

# Does It Matter *How* We Worship God?

## New Testament Examples:

- **Col 2:23** – traditions and rituals created by man are referred to as self-imposed or self-made religion
  - Special days, invented by man or remnants of the OT
  - Restrictions on food (cf. I Tim 4:1-4)
  - Denial/destruction of the body
  - **Whatever does not come from Christ, the Head of the church (i.e. the Lord, the Authority)**
- **Acts of worship in accordance with man's will, not God's will, are neither holy nor acceptable to Him!**



# Does God Demand Our Worship?

Is it true that God demands that mortals (even angels, etc.) worship Him – and if so, why?

- Some people find a real stumbling block at this idea:
  - Why would God create man and then demand his worship? Isn't that just arrogance?
  - Why do some passages of prayer sound like bargaining with God for the offering of praise? (cf. Ps 54; 30:8-10)
  - Why do religious people invite others to learn of God in order to worship Him?
  
- **To answer, we must begin with understanding man's *nature* to praise and God's expectation of *worthy* praise.**

# Does God Demand Our Worship?

1. **God neither needs nor depends on anyone's praise**
  - Ps 50:7-13 – All created things are His: what can we offer?
  - Acts 17:24-25 – He *gives* to all life, breath and all things!
2. **God did not create man to praise Him**
  - i.e. His purpose was not to create beings to praise Him
  - We cannot know every reason for which God created man: but the Scriptures nowhere even hint that He made man for the purpose of being worshipped by him.
  - **Acts 17:26-31; Rom 8:28-30** – God created mankind so that we might search for Him, find Him, and be glorified and loved by Him, the same why that He loves His Son!

# Does God Demand Our Worship?

## 3. People spontaneously praise what they admire

- Sports fans, art enthusiasts, music lovers, cuisine aficionados, cinema fanatics, lovers, artists, poets...
- *Praise is not just compliment or giving honor*: the world rings with praise as we overflow with what we love and admire!
- In fact, our admiration does not seem to take full form until it is *expressed* – and we invite others to share, too!
  - Did you see that great game!? Did you see that phenomenal play!? Did you hear this awesome album!? Have you seen that amazing movie!?
  - We almost cannot contain ourselves from inviting others to share in our admiration too!

# Does God Demand Our Worship?

4. **People who love God need no command to praise**
  - Just as in other aspects of life, people who *love God* and realize their *need for Him* need no command to worship
  - See Ps 108:1-6; 145, 104:33 – could you have prevented the psalmists from worshipping even if you tried?
  - Many passages exhort God's people (i.e. by covenant) to worship Him and love Him (cf. Deut 6:4,13):
    - These were commands to **faithfulness** and **sincerity**, not an angry God coercing praise!
  - God's love, wisdom, eternity, power, beauty, etc. *demand* our worship without a single command (cf. Luke 22:40)!

# Does God Demand Our Worship?

5. God commands *who* should praise Him and *how* they should worship
  - God is not glorified by the praise of unholy, rebellious people (see Ps 50:16-21)
    - Would *YOU* be honored by just anyone expressing their admiration of you?
  - God is not glorified by acts of “praise” against His will (see Acts 17:23,24, etc.)
    - Would *YOU* be honored by acts of “admiration” that are displeasing or offensive to you?
  - **Of all those who will freely seek to worship their Creator, will you seek Him in spirit and truth?**

# Does God Demand Our Worship?

## The bottom line:

- God is not glorified by just any act of “praise” people might try to offer.
- God does demand *how* He should be worshipped, and expects to be worshiped worthily.
- BUT God does not coerce anyone to worship against their own will.
- If you have to be commanded to worship, your heart is not prepared to offer true worship anyway!
- **Truly learn what God has done for *you* and you will seek to be a person of praise, too!**

# Does God Demand Our Worship?

## A few passages often cited as God demanding worship:

- **Matt 4:10** – the command *assumes* that the people are going to worship *something*: God demands the object, not the act.
  - History, especially that of Israel and their idolatry, bears out that generally people want to worship *something*...
  - The devil was trying to get Jesus to break the very intention of this Old Testament command (cf. Deut 6:13, NASU)!
- **Matt 22:37** – a command of sincerity and obedience: God's people (by covenant) cannot "love" Him half-heartedly and without obedience!
- **Rev 14:7** – spoken by an angel as a warning to the people of God: difficult to interpret as an angry God coercing praise...

# Does God Demand Our Worship?

## A few passages often cited as God demanding worship:

- **Ps 50:23** – “Whoever offers praise glorifies Me...”
  - See NIV and NASU reading, in context
  - God is not glorified by outward signs of worship offered by rebellious, insincere people!
  - He desired their obedience and gratitude, *not* their pious and empty signs of worship (cf. Joel 2:13)
- **John 4:24** – God is not “seeking” in the sense that He is in need: out of all the people in the world, God is glorified and honored only by those who offer worship in spirit and truth!
- **Challenge:** find a passage in the NT in which Christians are given a command to force them to praise (not *how to praise*)...



# Questions about the Lord's Supper

**Let's take a step back:** why is it so important for us to understand how the Lord Supper should be observed?

- The Lord's Supper is a memorial of the greatest sacrifice of love that mankind has ever known
- Jesus Christ despised the shame of the cross (Heb 12:2), but endured it that we might be saved!
- As we remember the death of Christ and the awful price that He paid, we want to be sure that our memorial is truly pleasing to Him
- **Are we taking part in the Lord's Supper in Christ's way or in our own way?**

# Questions about the Lord's Supper

## 1. What is the Lord's Supper?

- I Cor 11:20 – Paul used “Lord's Supper” to refer to the memorial instituted by Christ (cf. Matt 26:26-29; etc.)
- A memorial of Christ's death (I Cor 11:26) – *not* His life and resurrection, though these are related.
  - The most significant event of all time, especially to Christians (see Isa 53:4-6, 59:9-20; Rom 5:1-11; Heb 9:15-10:10)
- *Names:* the “Lord's Supper,” the “breaking of bread” (e.g. Acts 2:42, 20:7), a “sharing” or “communion” in the death of Christ (I Cor 10:16) and the “Lord's table” (vs. 21)
  - Note: “breaking bread” sometimes refers to eating a common meal, e.g. Acts 2:46 - be careful to determine *the context!*

# Questions about the Lord's Supper

## 2. What is the purpose of the Lord's Supper?

- Examining the gospel accounts and I Cor 11, we see that the Lord's Supper serves three purposes:
  - A time of worship to God, remembering with thanksgiving the sacrifice of Christ (I Cor 11:23-25)
  - A time of proclamation, sharing our faith with one another, and indirectly with the world (vs. 26)
  - A time of self-examination, reflecting on our lives in the context of Christ's death for us (vs. 27-32)
- The Lord's Supper is a time of worship and a time to refocus our lives on the service of Christ: in every way, this is a spiritual activity.

# Questions about the Lord's Supper

## 3. What are the emblems of the Lord's Supper?

- Matt 26:26,29 with I Cor 10:16 – stated simply but specifically as the “bread” and “fruit of the vine”
  - Do we have authority to deviate from this specific example?
- *Necessary conclusion*: this is unleavened bread
  - Christ and the apostles were gathered for the *Passover*
  - Ex 12:15; Deut 16:4 – no leaven was to be in the house
- Fruit of the vine, also called simply “the cup,” is simply the juice of the grape (nothing further specified)
  - By comparing the gospel accounts with I Corinthians, “the cup” refers to the contents, not the actual container.

# Questions about the Lord's Supper

## 4. What about feasting during the Lord's Supper?

- How much bread and fruit of the vine should each individual consume?
- Should we also have other foods to make the Lord's Supper more like a feast?
- *Amount:* the Lord's Supper is not meant to satisfy hunger (see I Cor 11:34) – it reminds the mind, but does not fill the belly!
- *Foods:* All accounts of the Lord's Supper are very specific – Christians don't have authority to change the command
- *Note:* there is no connection in Scripture between the Lord's Supper and “love feasts” mentioned in Jude 12

# Questions about the Lord's Supper

## 5. The Lord's Supper: when, where, and who?

- **When:** from the gospel accounts, we don't know –
  - The apostles were gathered on Thurs. evening for the Passover. Christ: "as often as you..." (I Cor 11:25)
  - How often and when?
- **Example:** on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7)
  - These disciples, following the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42), assembled on the first day of the week
  - They were there for a full seven days (vs. 6) but only met for the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week
- **Collection:** from I Cor 16:1-2 (and 4:17) **it is clear that all churches everywhere met on the first day of the week!**

# Questions about the Lord's Supper

5. **The Lord's Supper: when, where, and who?**
- ***Where***: the physical location is clearly unimportant (cf. Acts 2:46, Rom 16:5, etc.)
  - ***Example***: the disciples assembled for the purpose of breaking bread (Acts 20:7)
    - Not incidental: an assembly of saints with one purpose
  - ***Command***: read I Cor 11:17-24
    - Repeatedly emphasized that the Lord's Supper belongs "when you come together as a church"
    - **Christians ONLY have the authority to observe the Lord's Supper within an assembly meeting together as a church!**

# Questions about the Lord's Supper

## 5. The Lord's Supper: when, where, and who?

- **Who:** the example is that *disciples*, i.e. Christians, take part in this memorial (cf. Acts 20:7; I Cor 11 with 1:2)
  - Christ's death only holds fullest meaning to those saved by the blood of Christ (I John 1:7).
- **What about "closed communion"?**
  - Should the church decide who should take of the emblems and who should not?
  - Read I Cor 11:27 – "*so let a man examine himself*"
  - The church does not decide who should observe the Lord's Supper! *Each individual examines himself!*

# Questions about the Lord's Supper

## 6. What about the doctrine of transubstantiation?

- *Transubstantiation*: the changing of one substance into another
  - Does the bread turn into Christ's literal body?
  - Does the fruit of the vine turn into His literal blood?
- **Put simply, this doctrine has no basis at all in Scripture:**
  - “*this is my body*,” while His body was sitting there before the apostles, is a figure of speech, a metaphor
  - The teaching that transubstantiation is a continual sacrifice of Christ contradicts Heb 9:28, I Pet 3:18, etc.
  - “*this do in remembrance*” – the Lord's Supper is a memorial, not an actual consumption, of the Lord's body

# Questions about the Lord's Supper

7. **Should a person who has sinned refuse to participate?**
  - *"I'm not worthy"*: some use I Cor 11:27 to teach that people who have sinned should not observe the Supper
    - This view misunderstands vs. 27 (helped by the KJV)
    - vs. 27 speaks of the manner in which the Lord's Supper is observed, not the *person* who is participating
    - *"an unworthy manner"*: the Corinthians were dishonoring and demeaning the Lord's Supper, treating it as a physical meal and not a spiritual memorial
  - **We are all unworthy of Christ's sacrifice, and we all need to be reminded of the price Christ paid!**
    - See Eph 2:1-10; Jam 3:2; I John 1:8-10; Rom 3:23; etc.

# Questions about the Lord's Supper

- 8. Should we only use one cup for the fruit of the vine?**
- “This cup is the new covenant in My blood...” (Luke 22:20)
    - Did Christ teach that disciples should use but one cup?
  - Compare the three gospel accounts to I Cor 11:23-26
    - Christ emphasized the *contents* of the cup, i.e. the fruit of the vine, and *not* the container itself
    - Both Christ and Paul used “cup” metaphorically to represent its contents, not the actual container
    - There is no emphasis placed on the container of the fruit of the vine or the container holding the bread (if any)
    - It appears from Luke 22:17-20 that both the cup and the bread were first divided among the apostles



# Questions about Prayer

**Let's take a step back:** why is it so important to understand what prayers are pleasing to God?

- We pray for such important things, often out of such dire circumstances – we want to be sure we are heard!
- We offer thanksgiving and praise in prayer that we long for God to hear – how can we be sure He does?
- Is it true that God listens to absolutely any prayer offered by absolutely anybody?
- **If God isn't listening to our prayers, how pitiful and lost we are! How can we be sure our prayers are pleasing to Him?**

# Questions about Prayer

## 1. Does God accept the prayers of just anyone?

- Ps 34:15-16 with 1 Pet 3:12 – God listens to the righteous but turns His back on the wicked
  - If we are living in rebellion to God, ignoring His will, why should we expect Him to listen to us?
  - See also Prov 28:9; Isa 1:15-17, 59:1-2; Job 35:12-14
- Luke 11:1-2 – God listens to His children in Christ
  - See Gal 3:26-27; II Cor 6:18, Rom 8:16-17 (written to whom?)
- I John 3:21-22 – God listens to His faithful children
- I John 5:14-15 – God listens when we pray according to His will, i.e. making priority for His will above our own
  - See Luke 11:2 and Jam 4:3

# Questions about Prayer

## 1. Does God accept the prayers of just anyone?

- Can God listen to the prayers of unbelievers and unfaithful Christians?
  - Yes: God may choose to listen to the prayers of anyone
  - See Acts 10:1; Acts 9:11; Jonah 4:10; etc.
  - **We only have assurance that God hears us if we live faithful to Him and pray according to His will!**
- God is always willing and waiting to forgive and show mercy if man will repent!
  - See Isa 1:18-20; I John 1:9-10; etc.
- **Christians must pray for those whose own prayers might not be heard by God! See I Tim 2:1ff; Rom 10:1; etc.**

# Questions about Prayer

## 2. Should we repeat the “Lord’s Prayer”?

- This prayer is found in Matthew 6 and Luke 11
- “The Lord’s Prayer” does not accurately reflect its content:
  - Jesus, after all, prayed other prayers (cf. John 17, etc.)
  - Jesus approved of other prayers (cf. Acts 4:24ff)
- This model prayer **should not** be repeated as a substitute for our own prayers.
  - Jesus teaches us to pray “in this manner,” **not** “with these words”!
  - If the “kingdom” refers to the establishment of the church (cf. Col 1:13; I Cor 15:24-25; Rev 1:9), we cannot say this prayer with the same meaning as Christ...

# Questions about Prayer

## 3. Should we use repetitions in prayer?

- Matthew 6:7-8 – God does not desire repetitious prayers
  - Therefore, vain (i.e. mindless and heartless) repetition of the same words is the **opposite** of what God desires of us
  - Memorizing a prayer is not inherently wrong
    - Might sometimes be important, e.g. when leading in public prayer (with thoughts well-prepared beforehand)
  - Even repeating a similar prayer is not inherently wrong if the mind, heart are engaged (cf. Matt 26:44)
  - Remember: even prayer must be offered “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24)!
- **God’s acceptance of your prayers does not depend on number of words, or how often you repeat the same prayer!**

# Questions about Prayer

## 4. Should we pray to/through “saints”?

- Common practice: ask the saints directly for help or ask them to pray to God *for* you.
  - a. **All saved people are saints, lit. “holy ones”** – see Ps 16:3, 149:1; Acts 9:13 (26:10); Rom 1:7, 12:13; etc.
  - b. **Prayer, an act of worship, is to be directed to God alone** – cf. Luke 11:2; Acts 12:5, 16:25; Rom 10:1, 15:30; Phil 4:6...
  - c. **Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and men** – see I Tim 2:5; Heb 7:25
  - d. **Jesus Christ is totally sufficient in interceding for us** – see Heb 2:18, 4:15-16, 7:24-25
- **We may pray for each other (I Tim 2:1), but never in the Bible do we see a command/example to pray to the dead!**

# Questions about Prayer

## 5. What about praying to Mary, mother of Jesus?

- *See question 4...* Mary is a great example of faith, trust in God, and obedience to the gospel (cf. Acts 1:14)
- After Acts 1, we hear nothing about her again in God's Word
- Mary was chosen by God to bless the nations with the birth of Christ...just like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc. (see Heb 11)!
- Mary bore Jesus, and His (half) brothers/sisters (see Matt 12:46, 13:55-56; Gal 1:19; Jude 1; etc.
- Evidently she became a Christian, and that's where her story ends, as far as the New Testament goes .
- Nothing in the Bible immortalizes Christ's mother...

# Questions about Prayer

## 6. Can Christians pray to Jesus, God the Son?

- *See question 4...* Christians are instructed to pray to God, i.e. the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (I Cor 13:14; Eph 2:18; etc.)
- All three Persons are referred to individually as God (see Matt 28:19; John 6:45, 13:3, 20:28; Tit 2:13; Acts 5:3-4; etc.)
- Christians in the New Testament addressed prayer and praise to Christ (see Acts 1:24, 7:59; I Cor 1:2, 16:22; II Cor 12:7ff; II Thes 2:16-17; I Tim 1:12; Rev 22:20; etc.)
- Jesus taught His disciples to pray to the Father (Luke 11:2) at a time when He was not yet Intercessor for all the saved (see Heb 4,7)!
- Christians pray to God: *one God in three Persons*



# Questions about Music in Worship

**Let's take a step back:** why is it so important to understand what kind of music in worship is pleasing to God?

- God is worthy of glory, praise and thanksgiving
- Those who love Him and recognize His blessings rightly yearn to worship and adore Him
- BUT, just as any person might not be honored by just *any* showing of adoration, God is pleased only by a certain type of worship – *“in spirit and in truth”*!
- **How do we use music in worship in an honorable and worthy way such that we truly glorify God?**

# Questions about Music in Worship

## 1. Does the NT authorize music in worship?

- There are many types of music:
  - Vocal: singing, humming, whistling, etc.
  - Instrumental: percussion, strings, winds, etc.
- Does God authorize any of these in worship through command, example, and/or necessary conclusion?
- God has always revealed His choices on the matter of worship: what about now and what about music?
- Search the New Testament – Acts 16:25; I Cor 14:15; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16; Jam 5:13
- Other verses for consideration – Mark 26:30; Mark 14:26; Rom 15:9; Heb 2:12

# Questions about Music in Worship

## Specific Authority:

- Col 3:16, Eph 5:19 – several things *specified* about music in worship to God:
  1. “*singing*” – the *method* of making music is specified
    - Do we have the liberty to use instruments when it is specified that Christians make music by singing?
  2. “*making melody*” – literally means to pluck, twang, to play a stringed instrument [see Vine, “melody”]
    - Literally: “playing the strings of the heart” (Eph 5:19)
    - The “instrument” is specified!
  3. “speaking,” “teaching” – how can we accomplish this by instrumental music, humming, clapping, etc.?

# Questions about Music in Worship

## Specific Authority:

4. “*psalms, hymns and spiritual songs*” – the *type* of songs we are to sing is specified:
  - “*Psalms*” – inspired songs of praise (cf. I Cor 14:26), thus limited for us to worshipful words found in the Scriptures (for example, the Old Testament Psalms)
  - “*Hymns*” – a song of worship to God (cf. Acts 16:25; Heb 2:12, both in verb form, “sing praise”)
  - “*Spiritual songs*” – songs of spiritual, not secular, nature; spiritual encouragement and instruction
  - Any other type of song (e.g. patriotic, emotional but not spiritual) is beyond our authority!

# Questions about Music in Worship

## General Authority:

- For an assembly to sing with decency and order (I Cor 14:40) requires some method of singing together:
  - i.e. words, timing, initial pitch: nothing is specified
  - Vocal parts – it is often difficult for all to sing the exact same melody: nothing is specified
- To sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, we still must have words to sing
  - Nothing is specified
  - Must be truthful (I Tim 3:15; John 4:24)
  - Must proclaim the word of God (I Pet 4:11) since our singing is to teach and admonish

# Questions about Music in Worship

## Silence of the Scriptures:

- Where is there a command, example, or necessary conclusion that Christians are authorized to use mechanical instruments in worship?
  - Every relevant passage speaks only of singing
- Where is there indication in Scripture that these rules of worship are different at home than within the assembly?
  - If you mean to worship, where is your authority to go beyond singing? (Cf. I Cor 4:6)
- What about other types of vocal music: humming, whistling, yodeling? What about clapping, stomping?
  - Scriptures are silent: is that authority to do our own will?

# Questions about Music in Worship

## 2. What about instrumental music in the OT?

- **Common question:** *if God allowed instrumental music in worship under the Old Testament, why not today?*
- First, let's be consistent: are we willing to concede that *everything* allowed under the OT is allowed today?
  - Animal sacrifices (Ex 12; Lev 1; etc.)
  - Levitical priesthood (Ex 29; etc.)
  - Burning of incense (Ex 30; etc.)
  - Laws concerning leprosy (Lev 13)
  - Capital punishment for adultery, etc. (Lev 20; etc.)
- Most will agree that God does not want Christians to practice these things: *what about instrumental music?*

# Questions about Music in Worship

## 2. What about instrumental music in the OT?

- **Simple fact of the New Testament:** *Christians follow the commands of Christ – He is our Lord and King!*
- Matt 28:18-20 – “all things that I have commanded you”
- II John 9-10 – If we go beyond what Christ teaches us, we have no fellowship with God!
- A constant theme of the New Testament, Christ has fulfilled and replaced the Old Testament!
  - Acts 3:22-23 with Heb 1:1-2 – All must listen to Christ
  - Heb 8:6-13 with 7:12-19 – He established a better Law
  - Col 2:14 and Gal 3:23-25 – The Old Law fulfilled

# Questions about Music in Worship

## 3. What about instrumental music in heaven?

- **Another common question:** God is worshipped with instruments in heaven, so why can't we do the same?
- **Firstly:** *whatever the spiritual and celestial hosts in heaven do before the throne of God does not change the commandments given to disciples who now live.*
  - We follow the authority of Christ in His word, “even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:20)!
  - Things will be different in heaven: we cannot assume that God’s “rule” there is the same as on earth!
  - For example, Matt 22:29-30 – no marriage in heaven
  - II Pet 2:4, Jude 6 – what do we know of God’s law for angels?

# Questions about Music in Worship

## 3. What about instrumental music in heaven?

- **Another common question:** God is worshipped with instruments in heaven, so why can't we do the same?
- **Secondly:** it is difficult to conclude that the spiritual beings in heaven play literal harps before God...
  - Read Revelation 5:8-9, 14:2 and 15:2
  - These passages are full of metaphorical language, sublime spiritual images expressed in physical words!
  - **Are these spiritual beings really playing physical instruments?**
  - **Are these “harps” literal instruments of worship?**

# Questions about Music in Worship

## 3. What about instrumental music in heaven?

- Rev 5:8-9 – this is highly figurative language:
  - “golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints”
  - Yet another scene in heaven where John could not describe his vision of heaven in literal, physical words!
    - Like trying to describe a dream that cannot possibly correspond to physical reality...
  - Note that *nothing* is said of them *playing* harps, only that they are singing:
    - ***The harps represent how they were singing, its sound.***
  - Consider Rev 4:1, a voice “like a trumpet”

# Questions about Music in Worship

## 3. What about instrumental music in heaven?

- **Rev 14:2 – all figurative:** “the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps” (NASU)
  - Again, the multitudes are *singing* not playing...
  - Are we really willing to accept all of these statements literally?
  - Example: only 144,000 Jewish virgins know this new kind of praise (cf. Rev 7 where this multitude is described first)
- **Rev 15:2** – John uses apparently figurative language
  - “And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire...”
  - The hosts are only described as *singing*, though they are described as “having harps of God”
- **Like the incense symbolical of prayers in Revelation 5, these martyred saints hold harps symbolical of praise!**

# Questions about Music in Worship

## 3. What about instrumental music in heaven?

“All the scriptural imagery (harps, crowns, gold, etc.) is, of course, a merely symbolical attempt to express the inexpressible. Musical instruments are mentioned because for many people (not all) music is the thing known in the present life which most strongly suggests ecstasy and infinity. Crowns are mentioned to suggest the fact that those who are united with God in eternity share his splendour and power and joy. Gold is mentioned to suggest the timelessness of heaven (gold does not rust) and the preciousness of it. People who take these symbols literally might as well think that when Christ told us to be like doves, He meant that we were to lay eggs.”

– **C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity***

# Conclusion

**Many aspects of true worship are explicitly defined for us in Scripture for Christians to obey (Matt 28:20)**

- Prayers offered only to God through Christ
- Lord's Supper observed every first day of the week
- Music in worship only with voices singing while melodies are made in the heart

**These laws have are not due to any man's tradition or preference, but are observed by those who seek to glorify God in His own way, humbly obeying Him!**

- Let us learn fro Scripture what it means to truly glorify God:
- *“By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified” (Lev 10:3)*