

## Session II

### How Then Should We Worship

By Cindy Smith – Jan 13, 2009

To begin our lesson, let's read the account of Jesus' answer to His disciples when they said, "Tell us, when will this happen and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age!" That is in Matt 24:3-39. We read this last week in Mark 13 and Luke 21- noting both the consensus in these parallel Scriptures as well as differences, but which reveal even further, details regarding the signs of His return. Let's look again at the verse which sets the theme for this series: II Pet 3:10-12 "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, The heavens will disappear with a roar, and the elements destroyed by fire and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and Godly lives and speed its coming." Last week we looked at signs of the coming of the Lord, because the Lord wants us to be discerners of the times so we can live in a way that will effect the preparation of our hearts. If you missed last week, get the notes or listen to the download off of Sandy's web site.

Last week we looked at the place of prayer in hastening the day of the Lord. As we pray, partnering with the Lord, both in personal prayer and corporate intercession for the purposes of God, we will see many of these things occur prior to being caught up by the Lord, the Rapture of the saints from the earth, the dead first and then those alive. Together with the angels we will be a part of God's end time army, and then will rule and reign with Christ over the nations during the 1000 millennial reign of Christ. We can pray for Israel and the peace of Jerusalem. We can pray for revival of the church and the Harvest from the nations. In prayer we develop intimacy with our Father, with the Son and with the Holy Spirit, which will give us the oil needed to keep our lamps burning through the dark days ahead. We will develop the listening ear for His voice, and the listening heart which will give guidance-for leads His people with peace. Your heart will know the rest of God though turbulent times surround you. It says the increase of His government and peace will know no end in Isa 9:7.

This week we want to look at the place of worship in these end times. We know that this is the goal of our lives on this earth, to worship the King of Kings, to see Him exalted and honored over all the earth and throughout all the heavens. What is worship? Worship is the outward expression of an inward reality. Jesus wants to sit on the throne of our hearts and lives, and to the extent that that is occurring, for we are all in process, we can worship. There are so many stories of how God used the Israelites, a people He called to Himself, to teach us about worship-both the outward expression and the inward reality.

The Jews had a system of ritual sacrificial offerings. They were specific for many different areas: sin and burnt offerings, guilt offerings, thank offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings, wave offerings, offerings of first fruits, fellowship offerings, and offerings of consecration. God established the covenant with Abraham through a sacrifice, so it was a God-initiated system. Even Cain and Abel offered up sacrifices.

And these sacrifices reflected their heart toward God. One gift was acceptable before God, while another was not, because of the heart attitude behind the gift. We know these sacrifices and the shedding of blood for the remission of sin were types and shadows of the sacrifice that Jesus Christ would ultimately pay for our atonement so that we might be restored to fellowship with God. So the sacrificial system of blood sacrifice ended with the death of Christ. For "whosoever will" can now partake of fellowship through Christ's perfect sacrifice. He gave all of Himself. He worshipped God with His whole heart, His whole mind and His whole strength as a man and as the Son of God. We know that worship will cost us; it will attract persecution. We read of the martyrs below the altar in heaven (Revelation) crying out, "How long, O Lord for our redemption?"

Worship is an offering of all that we are. It is a reflection of the inward reality that we are in love with God. Jesus has every right to say that the Father does not want lip service or "going through the motions" or any kind of passive participation. His worship was costly, it was focused and it was all-consuming. Worship is an offering. It is something we bring to His altar as consecration of all that we are and possess. It is never forced! We become voluntary lovers, because He first loved us. We speak of worship and often think immediately of music and great celebration, which was a part of worship in the days of the Old Testament as well as today. David was a worshipper of God, and he knew the joy of utter abandonment in the place of worship. He was not worshipping the Ark, but the very Presence of God among them. He knew that having the Presence made all the difference to him personally as well as for the nation in the day of battle. With God, they could do anything! They could leap over a wall, they could run into the face of their enemies. David had personal relationship with God. He was an extravagant worshipper-he called for 4000 singers and musicians to serve in the temple. And at certain feasts they all were present as well as serving in "watches" 24/7. Can you imagine the sound of all those instruments and voices?! Music touches part of our soul that is all-consuming of who we are. It draws us to the object of worship-so if God is the focus, it draws us to Him. If something else is the focus, we are drawn to that. That is why music so powerfully effects the generations.

What we worship tells us and everyone, who we belong to? Notice in Daniel's time, the place of worship that Nebuchadnezzar demanded of all the people. Let's read it from Daniel 3:13-30. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego made a choice to not worship the image of gold of Nebuchadnezzar, but to worship the God of Israel alone. Just as they, we make a choice to whom we will bow down as we consider our time, our energy, our gifts and talents, our resources. For they are our offerings and reflect very clearly to whom we belong, whom we love for that is whom we will worship. Matt 6:21 says: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." You can see here the connection between our heart and our money in Scripture. That is why we can talk about our offerings on Sunday to God as an act of worship.

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In Daniel we also read about Antiochus Epiphanes, a ruler who came against Israel in 175-164, B.C. who demanded worship himself, and sacrificed a pig to the worship of a statue of Zeus that he erected on the temple mount. We know Antiochus IV was a type and of the antichrist who is yet to be revealed and we are told will exalt himself, demand worship and desecrate the temple mount yet again. Let's read from Daniel 11:36-12:4 So we see that worship exalts someone and Satan is trying to direct the worship to himself. It is the way it has been since the fall of Lucifer. The question is, who will we worship? Will we fix our eyes on our beautiful Jesus, or on the boastful claims of an anti-Christ or on the circumstances in the world?

It says in the Psalms that when we worship, we make war in the heavenlies. Worship, we see, is a weapon of warfare, both personally and corporately. I have experienced the breakthroughs that can come through both personal and through corporate worship. When my family went on a mission trip for 19 days with Impact Mission, through Youth with a Mission, to Honduras, I experienced the power of this weapon. We were there to help build homes for those who lost everything in Hurricane Mitch. We had always wanted to experience third world missions as a family, to expose our kids to this reality. When we arrived, we were dropped off at a community center in Monjaras. The previous teams had vacated due to illness and the project was halted. The head foreman was there but was deathly sick with a fever of over 105 degrees. He spoke English, but was too weak to talk to us. There was no food. My kids were 14 and 17 at the time. We knew a little Spanish, but were not fluent. There was a guy from Chile there, but he was involved with the community and did not speak English.

We felt we had arrived at the uttermost part of the world. The time we were there, the microbes from the dead bodies and carcasses up river had reached the water system and the whole community was sick. At night, people would get drunk and shoot into the air. There was a pervasive feeling of hopelessness, not just for us, but for the whole community. After we figured out how to get some eggs and make transactions with their money and ate, we were able to reflect on the situation. My kids were starting to complain and prayer brought only a deathly silence—we needed a breakthrough! So Henry led us in worship, and we worshipped for a long time. Then, breakthrough came spiritually and we had our “seeing eyes” back in our head. We saw the Lord again in the situation. After the first 4 days, the breakthrough came in the natural.

The biggest corporate breakthrough I have experienced happened in Egypt January, one year ago as I was with a group of 70 people in Cairo. My friend, Christine Darg was leading a mission and we had worship as a team in the morning knowing that night we would be at the Citadel, a fortress and stronghold of the enemy. We began to worship with a trumpet, keys and guitar and our voices, but it seemed

we were bouncing off the ceiling. There had been some undermining and complaining on the trip. We needed to come together in unity. Suddenly, Christine began running and jumping and banging her tambourine in one direction and then another. She did this many times and I have to tell you that Christine is not a small woman and she was leaping 3-4 feet off the floor. There were tacks and nails all over the floor all of the sudden, like a hindrance. We had been in our stocking feet. We continued to praise and the enemy was scattered. You could feel the breakthrough almost tangibly. The dinner that night was in a tent and we had some opposition just trying to get into the place. It was in a Muslim atmosphere and you could cut through that tension spiritually. We were partnering with the Coptic Christians who were brave enough to come to a dinner. We were served by Muslim men and surrounded by hotel and National police for security. They had a presentation which began with a shaman, they had whirling dervishes, all sorts of folk music with a Nubian band. It was getting darker spiritually and I began feeling very sick. All intercessors knew we were engaged in a BATTLE WITH THE POWERS OF DARKNESS. The Christine said as a gift we would sing a few songs for our guests and all those present. Well our few songs of praise turned into worship in the Spirit and the darkness disappeared. At the height of worship, including dancing in the Spirit, I was vomiting into a bag. I am pretty sensitive to spiritual warfare and often have a physical manifestation in my body. At the end of the worship, our leader shared a few words knowing she was sharing not just with our Coptic Christian Pastors and their wives but with the 40 or so servers and the police, all of whom were Muslim. When we offered “gifts” to our servers (Arabic New Testaments, Videos and DVDS of testimonies of Muslim converts to Christianity), they scrambled for them with the police also asking for them. Victory—the end result of warfare in the Spirit. And without worship, our warfare would not have been successful.

King David knew this. Read I Ch 16:1-4,23-36, I Chr 25:1 and I Chr 29:10-13. Johashaphat knew this: II Chron 20:20-22. Worship set ambushes. A shout is often a part of worship and as we see in the story of Joshua and the Israelites, placing their priests with 7 ram's horns, ahead of the army, circling Jericho for 6 days and then on the 7<sup>th</sup> day—they gave a shout and blew their trumpets and the walls of Jericho fell down so that this fortified city was destroyed. Worship and obedience together formed a mighty weapon. Ps 149:6 says: “May the praise of God be in their mouths, and a double-edged sword in their hands to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples.” If you are facing challenges and dark days, some kind of valley, I recommend you worship as a sacrifice of praise. In some of our darkest days, immediately after tragedy, our family has turned to worship and offered up to the Lord a sacrifice of praise. It was costly—we could not give in to self-pity, but rather lifted our voices up to the Lord. We will have time set apart to do this today—so if you are facing something, would you worship together with your sisters and yield all of who you are to the Lord in worship? The Word tells us that we are not unaware of the schemes of the enemy. He uses depression, disappointment, and defeat to

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break us, but God says, I have given you all you need for life and Godliness. We must pull it down from a place of worship.

Eph 5:19 instructs to “speak to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.” Sing the Word of God-Psalms were written to be sung. God is singing over us and HE loves it when we sing His word back to Him! Heb 13:15 “Through Jesus, therefore. Let us continually offer to God, a sacrifice of praise-the fruit of lips that confess His name.” Ps 68:24-25: ”Your procession has come into view, O God, the procession of my God and King into the sanctuary. In front are the singers, after them the musicians, and with them the maidens playing tambourines." It sounds like a parade-a parade of praise! God likes parades! He likes high-sounding cymbals! In Heb 12:28 We are admonished: “Therefore since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe. For our God is a consuming fire!”

Rev 5:9-14 gives us a picture of the worship of heaven-let’s read it. We pray heaven’s will to be expressed on the earth. We see continual singing and highest worship in heaven and I believe the Lord allows the song in our own hearts to join that of the great chorus which will magnify and exalt Him forever and ever. As you read Revelation, make a note wherever you see speech (s) which exalts God, a song of praise or worship (&) or shouting with a loud voice (S). Note who is doing the worship. Note that the worship is directed to Jesus, the Lamb: “You are worthy to take the scroll!” It is very personal! Notice that heaven is not a quiet place, but is full of sound. It seems there are no spectators, but everyone is engaged. It is totally consuming! So as we see the day approaching of the Lord’s return, let us set our hearts to worship our way through the days ahead! Next week we will speak of the place of God’s Word in our lives in these last days.