

Revival of True Worship

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John 4:23–24 (NKJV) *“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. 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

God made human beings with an inherent disposition to worship. Everyone worships something. Even atheists worship their own opinion. But not everyone who worships is a true worshiper in the sight of God. Jesus said that the Father is seeking *true* worshipers. I believe that the church is experiencing a crisis in the area of worship. There is probably more “worship” services taking place than ever before but I am convinced there are fewer true worshipers than ever before. Many Christians are not true worshipers because they do not understand true worship. The reason that they do not understand true worship is because the church has strayed from true worship. The reason the church has strayed from true worship is because there are many who fill pulpits who do not know the Lord.

In the days of Samuel there was a priest named Eli who was over the tabernacle and the worship of God in Israel. Sadly, Eli failed to teach his sons about true worship. The Scripture tells us that they did not know the Lord. As a result, they abused their position and privileges in worship. They were involved in sexual sins with the women who came to worship. Their abuse of worship was such that the people began to abhor the offering of the Lord. People strayed in their worship because their leaders in worship did not know the Lord. The prophet Isaiah declared: *“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: ‘I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me;’³ The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master’s crib; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider.”* (Isaiah 1:2-3 NKJV) In the same way the prophet Jeremiah declared, *“The priests did not say, ‘Where is the LORD?’ and those who handle the law did not know Me; the rulers also transgressed against Me; the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.”* (Jeremiah 2:8 NKJV)

Apart from knowing the true God, we cannot be true worshipers. Jesus said in John 17:3 (NKJV) *“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”* Jeremiah declared that the essence of salvation is knowing the LORD, *“Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.”* (Jeremiah 24:7 NKJV)

Let me make something very clear: the goal of true worshipers is to know the true and living God, and in response to worship Him. Unfortunately, the object of 21st century worship has not been to know the true God of Scripture. The church today caters to seeker sensitive worshipers who are obsessed with their own needs and who seek a god who will make them feel good about themselves. Seeker sensitive worshipers are uncomfortable with the holy God described in Scripture.

In order to know the true God we must return to the Scriptures. The Bible is our worship handbook. It tells us who the true and living God is, what He is like, and how He wants to be worshiped. Any method of worship that deviates from the Bible is unacceptable worship and produces false worshipers. A solid biblical understanding of worship is a sure antidote for the false worship systems that have entered the church. I would like to specifically address three of the most common false systems found in the church today: man-driven worship, self-driven worship, and experience-driven worship.

Man-driven worship is based upon the strict promotion and adherence to man-made traditions. It is man’s attempt to worship God through life-less and man-made requirements. It is a religious form that lacks the power and presence of God.

Self-driven worship is the popular religion of self-esteem, self-fulfillment, and self-glory. This kind of worship focuses on the temporal rather than the eternal. Its motto is, “Eat, drink, and be merry for

tomorrow you die!” and its message is, “You can have your best life now!” Unfortunately, for a person on their way to hell, this is their best life now!

Experience-driven worship is the mystical religion of the wild, weird, and whacky. This kind of worship focuses on the pursuit of greater and more bizarre experiences “from God.” It is wrapped in the terminology of “glory,” “Spirit,” and “anointing.” However, this kind of experience-driven worship has little to do with the Holy Spirit. It has more in common with the demonically induced experiences of pagan religions that are conjured up through hypnotic chants, incantations, mystical music, frenzied displays, and idolatrous sacrifices. Pagan worship often employs external stimulants such as alcohol, drugs, and sexual orgies to enhance the mystical experience. The pursuit of greater and more intense experiences leads people into greater deception and more bizarre unscriptural behavior that may be demonically induced.

We must pray for a revival! Since the term “revival” has been used to justify many of the false systems just mentioned, we must first regain the true meaning of revival. Revival is the turning of God’s people from sin and false worship to righteousness and true worship. True prophets of God confront false prophets and false worship systems. They bring God’s message of repentance to a backslidden people who have involved themselves in false worship and given heed to false prophets. God’s prophets call people to repent of sin and false worship and to return to righteousness and true worship.

We can see the ministry of a true prophet of God illustrated in 1 Kings 18 with Elijah’s confrontation with the false prophets of Baal and Asherah. In 1 Kings 18:21 (NKJV) we read, *“And Elijah came to all the people, and said, ‘How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.’ But the people answered him not a word.”* Elijah called the people back to true worship of the Lord (YAHWEH). He called people to get off of the fence of indecision. If the LORD (YAHWEH) is God, then it is time to worship Him 100 percent. If not, then make your decision and serve who you will. God will not honor those who are satisfied with mixture.

Elijah then began to restore the true worship of the LORD that the people had abandoned. In 1 Kings 18:30–37 (NKJV) we read, *“Then Elijah said to all the people, ‘Come near to me.’ So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.³¹ And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, ‘Israel shall be your name.’³² Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed.³³ And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, ‘Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.’³⁴ Then he said, ‘Do it a second time,’ and they did it a second time; and he said, ‘Do it a third time,’ and they did it a third time.³⁵ So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.³⁶ And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, ‘LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word.³⁷ Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.’*

Upon restoring true worship, Elijah called upon the name of the true God, the LORD (YAHWEH). In response the LORD answered with fire from heaven: *“Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench.”* (1 Kings 18:37 NKJV) If we want the true fire of God and not a man-made or demonic substitute, we must worship the true God according to how He has revealed Himself, in the way that He has said He must be worshiped. God did not answer until true worship was restored. God will not answer us until we do the same.

The result was true revival: *“Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, ‘The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!’”* (1 Kings 18:39 NKJV) Revival was evidenced by the return of God’s people from sin and false worship to righteousness and true worship. The antidote for false worship in the church today is a return to a solid biblical understanding of true worship and prophets of God who will declare it.

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