

Lesson
8

Worship—Now and Forever

Stolen! The two horses the missionary ladies had counted on for transportation were gone. The ladies had been in a house praying with a woman for salvation. When they came out to where they had left the horses, the animals were not there.

Suddenly they saw several men coming toward them. One fumbled under his belt for a weapon. Others picked up stones. Then they began shouting angrily. The missionaries realized they would have to try to escape on foot.

Instead of trembling with fright they began to rejoice. “Praise the Lord,” one of them said, “We are counted worthy to suffer for the Lord!” (Acts 5:41). They walked courageously up the hill as the bullets whizzed harmlessly by. The men did not follow and the women escaped unharmed.

One of these missionaries was my mother who to this day testifies how worship acted as an invisible barrier between them and the attackers.

In this lesson you will study . . .

The Effects of Worship

The Extent of Worship



This lesson will help you . . .

- Desire the blessing God offers to those who worship Him.
- Look forward to an eternity of unbroken communion with the Lord.

THE EFFECTS OF WORSHIP

Objective 1. *List five blessings that come through worship.*

The Bible gives us examples of situations similar to the story at the beginning of this lesson. There were times when praise and worship were closely tied to protection and deliverance for the believer.

Worship can also bring strength. In Isaiah 40:31 we read that “they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.” The early martyrs of the

Christian church found strength to face torture and death because they praised and worshiped God. Historians have told how the Christian believers were sent out in the great coliseum of Rome to be eaten by lions. What the crowds watching them did not understand was how these Christians could sing and worship God while facing death! They found strength by taking their eyes off themselves and the terrifying circumstances around them. They simply concentrated on God, on His faithfulness and love. They knew that soon they would be seeing Him face to face!

How happy are the people who worship you with songs, who live in the light of your kindness! Because of you they rejoice all day long, and they praise you for your goodness. You give us great victories; in your love you make us triumphant (Psalm 89:15-17).

As we studied in Lesson two, our first reason for worshiping the Lord is because He is worthy. That one reason is all we need.

But God gives generously and He has promised added benefits that come as a result of worship—blessings we realize and appreciate in this present life. We have already touched on the spiritual blessings we receive, and these cannot be minimized. Our enemy, the devil, will try to beat us down and discourage us, but the Bible says that the joy the Lord gives makes us strong (Nehemiah 8:10).

How do we get this joy? Isaiah 12:3 tells us that God’s people rejoice when He saves them. Sometimes the enemy tries to bring in doubts and rob us of our joy. If we listen to him and make room for discouraging thoughts, we become weak. When we become weak we do not pray as much as we ought to. We might even wonder if we really are saved. But we can get our joy back by deciding to worship, to dwell upon the Lord’s goodness to us. As we worship Him, our cup of joy fills up again and we become strong.

We become strong enough to face problems that otherwise would throw us down. We read that when Job learned that he had lost his children he said, “The Lord gave, and now he has taken away. May his name be praised!” (Job 1:21).

The next verse says, “In spite of everything that had happened Job did not sin by blaming God.” His heart and his mouth were filled with praise because he knew that God was in control. His worship was an expression of that trust.



If you put a jar under a water spout and the jar is kept full of clear, bubbling water, the dust that is in the air will not get in. Dust collects in empty vessels. So it is with us. If we continue to rejoice there will not be room for sinful words and expression.

Jesus who is our perfect example stood at a grave and said, “I thank you, Father, that you listen to me” (John 11:41). After that He restored life to the one who was gone. The Gospels give several instances, too, of the sick who received healing when they worshiped (Matthew 8:2, Mark 7:25).

The greatest and most lasting joy of worship is that we get to know our loving Heavenly Father better. We can feel God’s presence in a special way when we keep His commandment to worship. First John 3:24 tells us that when we keep God’s commandments we live in union with Him and He with us. As we get to know the Lord better we trust Him more. We know that His faithfulness will never fail. We know that He has a plan for our lives and we can rest in the fact that He has everything under control. How wonderful to have the assurance that our future is in His hands here on earth and throughout all eternity (Psalm 139:7-18).

Giving is another act of worship which we have already discussed. When the apostle Paul received gifts from a group of believers, he wrote to acknowledge their generosity and said,

I have all I need now that Epaphroditus has brought me all your gifts. They are like a sweet smelling offering to God, a sacrifice that is acceptable and pleasing to Him. And with all his abundant wealth through Christ Jesus, my God will supply all your needs (Philippians 4:18-19).

These words indicate that the apostle Paul also recognized giving as an act of worship. He believed that God would reward those who gave. His words confirmed an Old Testament promise where God said, “Put me to the test and you will see that I will open the windows of heaven and pour out on you in abundance all kinds of good things” (Malachi 3:10).

Acts 8 tells an interesting story of a government official from Ethiopia who had made the long journey to Jerusalem to worship. He spent time and money just to be in the house of the Lord. As he was riding along in his chariot on the way home, he was reading from Isaiah 53. God saw his open heart and sent Philip, an evangelist, to help him. Philip ran over to the chariot and asked the Ethiopian if he knew what he was reading. The man said to him, “How can I understand unless someone explains it to me?” (Acts 8:31).

Philip rode along in the chariot and told the story of Jesus. The official accepted Jesus as his Savior and was baptized. Then he continued on his way full of joy (Acts 8:39). His spiritual hunger was met and his questions answered as a result of his taking time to worship. What God did for the Ethiopian 1,900 years ago He will do for us today. He will give the answers that we need.

Then we will worship the Lord again, praising Him for leading us in the right way, for He has “faithfully kept his promise” (Genesis 24:27).



For You To Do

1 Read Psalm 89:15-17 again and fill in the sentence. In spite of living in a dark world we can praise the Lord and be assured of
as we rejoice.....

2 Read Psalm 138:2-3. What four reasons are listed in verse 2 for praising and worshipping God?

.....
.....

3 What two blessings to the worshiper are given in Psalm 138:3?

.....
.....

4 Five of the many blessings a Christian receives through worship are:

.....
.....
.....

THE EXTENT OF WORSHIP

Objective 2. *Identify two activities we will share in heaven.*

We have reached the last section of our book on Christian worship. Mostly we have touched on the reasons for worship and how worship affects us as individuals and as members of the church, the body of Christ. This we have read, understood, and experienced.

There are, however, other facets of worship that we do not completely understand. One of them is found in the story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. As He came riding into the city on a colt, the disciples and the crowd began shouting, "God bless the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Luke 19:38).

Some of the Pharisees looking on objected to their praise. Jesus answered, "I tell you that if they keep quiet, the stones themselves will start shouting" (Luke 19:40).

How can stones cry out and shout? We don't know. But we do know that it is possible for God to make them do so if it were necessary. The greater significance of the words of Jesus is, however, that praise is important. Worship is not a meaningless, lifeless ritual. Its powerful force can break through the hardest surface. If we as "living stones" don't praise the Lord, then some other kind of stones will have to. Genuine praise means that much to God and to His eternal plan. How privileged we are to take part!

There are further mysteries to praise, one of them being the ministry of praise we will have in heaven. Little children especially like to ask questions about heaven. What will it be like when we get there? What will we do? If they have lost grandparents or others dear to them, they want to know exactly what has happened. We try to answer them as best we can, but our words falter. We don't know what to say.

What does the Bible have to say about heaven?

"Do not be worried and upset," Jesus told them. "Believe in God and believe also in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I am going to prepare a place for you. I would not tell you this if it were not so" (John 14:1-2).

Heaven is a place that has been specially prepared for us. The most beautiful place on earth cannot compare with it, because sin can never enter heaven. Sin destroys and mars God's creation. But in heaven all will be pure and clean. God will wipe away all tears. There will be no more grief or crying or pain (Revelation 21:4).

What will be in heaven? There will be rejoicing and praise because our victory is complete (1 Corinthians 15:54). We will be forever with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

What will we do in heaven? No doubt God has beautiful surprises waiting for us, most of which He cannot tell us now. As mortals we lack the ability to comprehend things eternal. But of two activities we are certain. We are told of these two activities in Revelation.

The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. There shall be no more night, and they will not need lamps or sunlight, because the Lord God will be their light, and they will rule as kings forever and ever (Revelation 22:3, 5).

Worship! And why shouldn't we? When all the heavenly beings are singing and praising the Lord, we will want to do it too. When we see Jesus and we fully understand the price He paid for our salvation, I'm sure we will bow in love and adoration. When we look ahead and realize that heaven is ours for all of eternity, our thankfulness will know no limit. We must praise.

In the Scripture we just read, praise came first. And I am sure it will come first in heaven. We will also be given something else to do. We are to rule as kings forever and ever. (See Revelation 5:6-10.)

Kings do more than sit on thrones. They have responsibilities. Perhaps when you were younger you thought it would be nice to just be lazy and do nothing. After a while you learned how boring that would be. To serve is a pleasure, and to serve God is the greatest pleasure of all.

Kings also have opportunities because they have resources to draw from. Treasures, more than they need, are heaped upon them. Will not the God of heaven likewise supply us with whatever we must have if we are to rule with and for Him? Perhaps we will be given opportunity to explore the universe. We may follow the Milky Way with its billions of stars all the way to the end. Who can tell?

And I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, in the world below, and in the sea—all living beings in the universe—and they were singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, be praise and honor, glory and might, forever and ever" (Revelation 5:13).

And we all say, "Amen!"



For You To Do

- 5 Complete this sentence. Jesus said He would..... a place for us.
- 6 Choose the correct answer to the sentence. Two activities we are certain of in heaven are
 - a) resting and playing harps.
 - b) worshipping and ruling.
 - c) building altars and sacrificing.
- 7 What joyful activity will we and the angels have in common for all eternity?
- 8 Has studying this course helped you in your worship? Has it increased your desire to spend eternity with the Lord? Write in your own words what it has meant to you.

.....
.....

Now that you have completed the second unit, you are ready to answer the questions in your student report for *UNIT TWO*. Review the previous lessons, then follow the instructions in your student report. Send your answer sheet to the address given on the copyright page of your study guide and ask about another course of study.



Check Your Answers

- 1 light, all day.
- 5 prepare.
- 2 His constant love, His faithfulness, His Name is supreme, His commands are supreme.
- 6 b) worshiping and ruling.
- 3 He answers us when we call. He strengthens us. Look for other blessings in verses 6, 7, and 8.
- 7 Worshiping.
- 4 You might have listed victory, protection, healing, guidance, deliverance, joy, strength, material needs met, or other blessings you have already experienced.
- 8 Your answer.

One Final Word

This is a special kind of book because it was written by people who care about you. These are joyful people who have found good answers to many of the questions and problems which trouble almost everyone in the world. These people believe that God wants them to share with others the answers they have found. They believe that you need some important information in order to answer your own questions and problems and find the way of life that is best for you.

They have prepared this book in order to give you this information. You will find this book based on these fundamental truths:

1. You need a Savior. Read Romans 3:23, Ezekiel 18:20.
2. You cannot save yourself. Read 1 Timothy 2:5, John 14:6.
3. God desires that the world should be saved. Read John 3:16-17.
4. God sent Jesus who gave His life to save all those who believe in Him. Read Galatians 4:4-5, 1 Peter 3:18.
5. The Bible shows us the way of salvation and teaches how to grow in the Christian life. Read John 15:5, John 10:10, 2 Peter 3:18.
6. You decide your eternal destiny. Read Luke 13:1-5, Matthew 10:32-33, John 3:35-36.

This book tells you how to decide your destiny, and it gives you opportunities to express your decision. Also, the book is different from others because it gives you a chance to contact people who prepared it. If you want to ask questions, or explain your needs and feelings, you may write to them.

In the back of the book you should find a card entitled *Decision Report and Request Card*. When you have made a decision, fill out the card and mail it as indicated. Then you will receive more help. You may use the card to ask questions, or make requests for prayer or information.

If there is no card in this copy of the book, write to your ICI instructor and you will receive a personal answer.