

The Story of Worship
From The Genesis to The Revelation

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Introduction

When one seeks to understand the cohesiveness and the comprehensiveness of the Bible, efforts are often made to discover thread-like themes of continuity. Motifs such as *faith, love and hope* have been rightly identified. Vaughan Roberts (2002), author of *God's Big Picture – Tracing the Storyline of the Bible*, points to what he calls *one supreme subject*: “The Bible obviously covers a great deal of ground. But there is one supreme subject that binds it all together. Jesus Christ and the salvation God offers through him” (Roberts, p. 18) But, rarely has the central theme of *worship* been traced through the Holy Scripture. Any effort at achieving such a goal in a short treatise could never be exhaustive. The effort here, therefore, is best described as a “highlighted” commentary on what most believers would describe as the highest human purpose this side of heaven as well as the other – *worshipping God [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] in spirit and in truth* (Jn. 4:23). And so, begins a humble attempt to outline the unique *story of worship* from the first of sixty-six books to the last.

God's Plan for Worship from The Pentateuch

Many in the current American Evangelical “worship and arts” culture have diminished and even dismissed the Old Testament as a viable and vicarious source in the context of fresh and relevant worship. If there is any reference to the Hebrew Scriptures, it tends to center on the

Psalms, which, of course, is a deeply rich resource for the contemporary worshipper. However, we will discover many principles from The Pentateuch that are foundational to any biblically sound understanding of worship which is pleasing to God.

Our starting point is Genesis where the Creation account is explained in chapters one, two and three. Vernon M. Whaley (2009), in his expansive, topical yet expository work, *Called To Worship: From Dawn's Creation to the Final Amen*, identifies four principles from The Garden story, which summarize what should motivate us to cultivate a "life of worship."

The Worship at Creation

First, we are led to consider the *wonder* of Almighty God, Who exists (and has always and will always) uncreated, the cause of all things that exist, and uncontainable in His omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, and immutability. This inspires awe even when lightly considering this basic list of His incommunicable attributes. *Second*, God's *work* of creation is so overwhelmingly vast and full of beauty, it rightly *demand*s a response of worship. "His work in Creation is beyond our comprehension, and through it, He demonstrated His redemptive plan" (Whaley, p. 13). *Third*, the *wisdom* of God is interwoven throughout His origination of all things, with clear placement and specific purpose. This is amazing enough if one simply dwells on the inanimate creation, but as Whaley (2009) observes, "...only *humanity's* end is to dwell with God and be His children. Those who 'get' this can't help but praise Him" (Whaley, p. 14). Fourth, the author identifies the *wishes* of God in relationship to our worship of Him. After the

comprehensive and perfect creation of all things and creatures, the Godhead declares, “Let Us make man...” (Gen. 1:26). The unique purpose of man’s creation is revealed – “But why make man? Because God wanted *relationship*. Today, He *still* wants relationship – with you and me. And He wants it to last forever. For that, we should adore Him” (Whaley, p. 14). It is obvious that the great God of the universe, Who created “out of nothing” and breathed life into all living creatures, including mankind, is worthy of our unceasing worship. If we only had the creation account, we would have enough motivation to honor and glorify the Godhead. But the story continues in the Mosaic writings.

The Lost Worship of Eden

Next, in chapter two (Whaley, 2009), we are led to consider worship *before the Fall*, which reveals three main ideas. *First*, the context of the Garden and His creation of Adam and Eve make it clear that the Almighty is first and foremost focused on *relationship*. Whaley asserts, “...He [God] strategically placed within the heart of the first man and woman an impulse to pursue, comprehend, love, and ultimately worship Him” (Whaley, p. 22). *Second*, just as Adam and Eve had a unique place of “*quiet*” reserved for intimacy with God, so too the believer needs a *quiet place* without interruption for personal worship. “Only two specific sites in time and eternity have the distinction of being perfect places for worship: *Eden and New Heavens and Earth*. And until God makes us whole and perfect...we will never be able to worship God at the level and freedom Adam and Eve enjoyed. Yet, gratefully, we can still enjoy God – in our own special *place of worship*” (Whaley, p. 23). The *third* observation is that worship brings

multiplication. The author's application here is the "fullness of joy" and "multiplied benefits" as we deepen our intimacy with the God of Creation in the "secret place" of worship (Whaley, p. 24).

The Fall, however, brought severe consequences in the lives of Adam, Eve all who would follow. Pure and unadulterated worshipful relationship was marred by the barrier of sin. Whaley (2009) describes this using the metaphor of "*Worship Wars*", a term all too familiar to modern evangelicals. The author provides us with three "takeaways." *First*, "misguided worship begins in the heart", as was the case initially in the disposition of Satan, spreading his deadly seeds in the hearts of Adam and Eve, and on throughout the history of mankind. Those seeds are just as deadly today and often are revealed in music/arts ministries where the fragility of the ego is on full display. *Second*, as the author rightly observes, Satan is "alive and well", active as the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2 NASB). His work is most often manifested in the believer's life through "demon-caused passivity" (the Gk. word is *diamonizomai*). And this *passivity toward God* leads to self-centeredness that often manifests itself in a pseudo-spirituality. This is particularly deadly in the context of local worship ministry for obvious reasons. *Third*, and thankfully, God is "a God of second chances" (Whaley, p. 39). Even after the murderous Cain perfected the *antithesis of worship*, killing his brother out of bitter jealousy, the Messiah would ultimately come through the line of Seth. This was God's way of providing promised hope even amid hopeless evil.

The Surrendered Worship of Abraham

In chapter four, the author guides the student of worship to six lessons from the life of Abraham. *First and foremost*, “*worship begins with obedience.*” Whaley (2009) prophetically asserts, “...if we are not eager to obey what God asks of us, we are not even *ready* to worship. That’s because obedience is at the heart of worship. It is worship’s very foundation” (Whaley, p. 52). *Second*, “*worship doesn’t begin with a perfect vessel*” (p. 52). The author points to the less than stellar character of Abraham, exhibited in his layered lying, faithless adultery, and perplexing doubt. Yet, because of his repentance, God not only forgave him but positioned him to become a father of many descendants through which the nations of the world would be blessed (Gen. 22:3-18). *Third*, “*worship involves routine.*” “Abraham was a builder of altars. It was his custom, his *routine*. We need altars too...by setting a special time and identifying a ‘set-apart’ place for private worship, you will have established a routine for spending time with God and giving Him your *undivided* attention. He deserves no less” (Whaley, p. 53). *Fourth*, “*there’s more than one way to worship.*” The key “*principle*” takeaway from Abraham’s life is his *complete surrender* whether he was worshipping at an altar or tithing or, for that matter, obeying God in what seemed to make no sense – the requested sacrifice of his only son Isaac, whom God, Himself had identified as His direct fulfilled promise. Yet, Abraham obeyed and by this God saw his unadulterated surrender and true worship. *Fifth*, “*worship brings God’s Revelation of His Presence.*” There is a particularly unique theme throughout the story of Abraham. The more he obeyed and worshipped, the more God “reconfirmed His relationship with Abraham, by revealing more of Himself (Whaley, p. 54). Lastly, we learn through Abraham’s life that “*worship brings reward.*” The promise of a “nation of descendants” and God’s fulfillment of that

promise is a clear example of this same God doing the same for any of His children who will “practice biblical worship from your heart” (Whaley, p. 54).

The Meek Worship of Moses

Chapter five introduces us to Moses, with a focus on how God prepared him for authentic worship and a relationship with the Almighty that would give him the courage and resilience to stand alone against most powerful king of the ancient world at that time. The *first* lesson we learn is that God will not be mocked by those who claim power equal to Him. God’s response to Pharaoh’s audacity was to mock Egypt’s inept and lifeless gods. *Second*, Whaley (2009) observes that “God will fight for His worship. He will also defend His worshippers” (Whaley, p. 68). *Third*, we glean another lesson from the way Moses worshipped when God revealed Himself in the literal fire of a burning bush. He covered his face out of reverence, respect, and awe. “So, come before Him. Worship Him. Be awestruck by his presence. Each time you do, you will be changed, because wherever you worship in your special set-apart place – it is “holy ground” (Whaley, p. 68).

In chapter six, the author focuses the reader on the “Tent of Meeting” where Moses would meet with God as a friend and bless him with His presence. Whaley (2009) points to something quite poignant about this meeting place. “...Moses wasn’t the only one who could use

the Meeting Tent. Exodus 33:7 says that ‘anyone’ (NCV) and ‘everyone’ (NLT) could go to seek the Lord there and make requests of him” (Whaley, p. 75). Yet, it is clear that Moses was by far the one who most took advantage of this amazing blessing. The people knew *about* God and were *fearful of* Him. But Moses *knew* God as a *friend*. “Inside the Tent of Meeting, the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend” (Exodus 33:11). The author extrapolates two lessons from this place in story of God’s people and their leader.

First, “*we must crave God’s presence.*” “When Moses wanted to escape and spend time with God, he would steal away to the Tent of Meeting. There he could shut out all that was going on around him and concentrate on God” (Whaley, p. 82). He wanted something beyond just experiencing His miraculous interventions. Psalm 103:7 shows the distinction between Moses’ desire and the Israelites’ disposition – “He made known His *ways* to Moses, His *deeds* to the sons of Israel (my emph).” (NASB). Moses distinctively had a burning desire to pursue *intimacy* with the Almighty. “Now then, if I have found favor in Your sight in any way, please let me know Your ways so *that I may know You... (my emph.)*” (Ex. 33:11a NASB). One cannot help but notice that the Apostle Paul cried out for intimacy with the Lord Jesus with the exact same phrase, “That I may know Him...” (Phil. 3:10). The *pursuit of intimacy* has always been the passion of the mature believer, whether in the Old or New Testament. The *second* principle follows from the first: - “*...we must cultivate our friendship with God.*” “He wants to be our *comrade* – *your* comrade, your day-by-day devoted, life-long friend” (Whaley, p. 82).

The Pentateuch is rich with stories and principles designed to guide us on how to live a godly life. Yet, these five “first books” of the Bible are far more than a manual outlining *doing good* for God. The stories of Adam, Cain, Abraham, and Moses are full of admonitions and

exhortations teaching us one basic truth: The one and only, Infinite-Personal God of the Bible desires to be in close relationship with anyone who desires such and is willing to obey in place of honest surrender to His will. *Intimacy with God in this life and the life to come* is the ultimate message of Scripture and is clearly threaded throughout the five books of Moses. These books provide a pattern and exhortation for worship that is filled with *passion and integrity*.

Few would disagree that the *central verse of the Pentateuch* is found in the last book, Deuteronomy. “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deut. 6:5 NASB). This is the heart of worship. And so, it is no wonder that this admonition is referred to as the first and foremost of *The Two Great Commandments*.

God's Plan for Worship in the Books of History

An *a priori* principle often overlooked in any discussion on worship ministry in the modern Church is *preparation*. Vernon Whaley (2009) emphasizes this in his observations about Joshua, the protégé of Moses. The author quotes a legendary Nashville recording producer and publisher, Bob MacKenzie: “Now, remember, the longer the line of preparation, the greater the opportunity” (Whaley, p. 84). Perhaps MacKenzie was thinking of Joshua when he stated this axiom. Nonetheless, it very much true of Moses’ apprentice.

Joshua - The Preparation of the Worshipper

Joshua was particularly blessed to be able to look back at the exemplary lives of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph and his own direct mentor, Moses. As Whaley (2009) points out, “Though these men struggled constantly with distractions from the cultures and situations around them, God used their trials to reveal His faithfulness through it all. As He witnessed their authentic commitment to Him and their personal dedication to worship, in spite of their obstacles, He rewarded them. And each became a model of authentic worship to all future generations” (Whaley, p. 84-85). Each of these men, and for that matter, any man or woman used of God for some specific purpose must go through a process of preparation that tests their obedience and perfects a level of *submissive contriteness* from which God can then, *and only then*, use that human vessel.

Joshua - The Priority of the Worshipper's Preparation

This maturation process is no more clearly demonstrated in Scripture than in the life of Joshua. Some 80 years before the successor of Moses led the Israelites miraculously across the Jordan River into the “Land of Promise”, God was preparing him within long chunks of time. These 80 years of divine processing are divided into two segments of forty years – four decades suffering a slave in Egypt and four decades under the able mentorship of Moses. Joshua had proven his faithfulness to the God who had called him over *an eight-decade span of time!* He was truly readied for the daunting task before him. Yet, even then, God was not finished testing him.

Because a *life of worship* was paramount in God's eyes, the "Commander of the Lord's Army", the *Pre-incarnate Christ* appeared to Israel's human commander, to discern his level of obedience and worship. Joshua passed the test with no hesitation, realizing it was not his experience as a leader and warrior that would bring Israel victory. *Rather*, it was his submission to and worship of the Lord God, Jehovah-Nissi, that assure his and Israel's success. As Whaley (2009) asserts, "It was no big deal for Joshua and God's people to walk in victory. Their God walked in victory *for* them, *through* them and *in* them. In the process, God revealed Himself through His mighty acts and thus received glory, honor and praise" (Whaley, p. 37 – Lesson 2.0 video/class notes).

Judges – The Perils of Pseudo-Worship

The *postlude* of Joshua's death is full of *rebellion and rejection* of the very God Israel had promised to "serve" (Josh. 24). The book of Judges gives multiple accounts of God's people turning against Him to worship idols, which, in reality, was "self-worship." Judges 2:11 summarizes the cyclical behavior and disposition of Israel's heart throughout the twenty-chapter account: "...*the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals*" (CSB). While there were notable exceptions to this national idolatry such as the victory of the Prophetess Deborah and her victory song (Judges 5), along with the success of "Gideon's 300", the years between the death of Joshua and the anointing of Saul as king were filled with an audacious rejection of God. This resulted in dire consequences, and little learned by the wayward Israelites. Joshua 17:6 is an ominous insert of the biblical author: "In those days there was no

king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (NASB 1995). Indeed, the final statement of Judges repeats the same reality and is a scathing summation of *hearts antithetical to authentic worship*. Israel had rejected God as their King, and now were about to learn the results of demanding an earthly king whose heart would be revealed to be far away from God. Yet, this would set the stage for a *golden age of worship* in the Old Testament.

The Worship Tale of Three Kings

Another central principle unveiled in the biblical “historical books” is the “proper” *disposition* of the worship leader’s *psyche*. The word *disposition* is worth defining here: “*the predominant or prevailing tendency of one's spirits; natural mental and emotional outlook or mood; characteristic attitude, inclination, state of mind regarding something*” (Dictionary.com). And the *psyche*, or *soul* (mind, will, and emotions), as it has commonly come to be known, is the center or *heart* of the worshipper. It follows that the *disposition of the psyche* is a clear indicator of a person’s *worship health*.

This can be especially seen in the *contrasted lives* of the three most famous kings of Israel; namely, Saul, David, and Solomon.

The Artificial Worship of Saul

As it turns out, the *first “sovereign”* we will observe reflected a *deceptively excellent beginning, but an improper disposition before God*. At first, it seemed that Saul, who was duly

anointed by the Prophet Samuel (I Sam. 10:1ff), was destined to protect Israel from her enemies physically in a manner that was honoring to Israel's God. But soon, it became obvious that *his heart was far from God*. Whaley (2009) poignantly identifies this disposition: "He didn't bow to idols, did he? Well, actually, he did. He bowed to an idol named *Narcissism*. He proved it time and time again by disobeying the Lord - *and* setting up a monument to honor none other than himself. It is from King Saul that we learn the difference between pseudo-worship and the 'real McCoy' ...Saul made a show of worship...but it was against God's law, and you cannot worship God 'above the law'" (Whaley, p. 109). I Samuel 15 describes a Saul who was consumed with himself (vs. 12), disobeyed the clear instructions of God (vs. 19), feared his people rather than God (vs. 24), falling prey to Satan's direct sway (vs. 23a). His disconnection from the Holy One, Who had placed him in authority, is surreally memorialized by Saul's reference to God in his *godless appeal* to Samuel as "the Lord *your* God"; not just once but twice (vss. 21,30). Even then, Saul was hoping that a perfunctory act of *public religiosity* would restore his kingship (vs. 31). Yet, it was not to be, for Saul revealed that though he was *positionally anointed*, his heart was not *spiritually anointed*, surrendered to the King of kings.

One more observation is warranted here, revealing the consequence of this man's self-worship. In I Samuel 28, we learn that Saul was so far distanced from God and His Ways, he pursues help from a *medium*. Saul knew this was evil and strictly prohibited by a Holy God (Lev. 19:31) Indeed, he had previously removed them from Israel! (vs. 9). At first, he "inquired of the Lord" but to no avail – God was silent (vs. 6). Saul, then, is a *prime example* of a man with great authority whose *psyche disposition* revealed the *worship of self* and its ugly consequences

rather than *worship of the One, True God* resulting in His beautiful blessings. It was *artificial* even at its seemingly best public moments.

The Authentic Worship of David

In contrast to the horrific life of Saul, David is a shining example of a man who is a described as a “man after God’s own heart” (Acts 16:33), a man with *humble beginnings yet a proper disposition*. The story of David, as a shepherd boy and Israel’s most famous king, spans many chunks of Old Testament writings - I Samuel 16-31, all of II Samuel, I Kings 1-2 and I Chronicles 10-29. Many themes and lessons can be garnered from his storied life, but perhaps the most lasting and important is *his life of worship*. After all, he penned the lyrics and composed the music of the great majority of the Psalms, a wealth of worship literature. All his considerable accomplishments started very privately and humbly in an obscure pasture watching over the “family sheep.” It was here that he not only cultivated courage warding off predators but also developing the musical talents His Creator had richly given him, both vocally and instrumentally (I Sam. 16, 17). While there is some question as to the age of David when he defeated Goliath, it is likely he was about 15 years old (a compelling argument is found on a webpage by “The Bible History Guy”). It was soon after this that David was anointed king. Saul still physically reigned as the leader of Israel, but in name and political position only. God had made a new choice. Yet, David would have to wait for well over a decade before God’s will would be established upon the death of Saul.

The many years of *shepherding solitude* combined with the humility, patience

and wisdom required to ward off the attacks of the ungodly Saul, provided an opportunity for David to hone his trust and worship of his Creator. Whaley (2009) comments in this regard, “David’s ‘inner worship’ brought God near, and God’s presence was David’s lifelong compass as he ruled his nation. David’s worship of God was shaped, at least in part, in the solitude of the hillsides and plains where he had once kept his father’s sheep...David also connected with God during his dark years as a fugitive...he captured a glimpse of God’s provision, protection and power – and sang about it...David’s compositions...all were filled with praise” (Whaley, p. 113).

However, it is impossible to consider the life of David without observing his heinous, very public sins. After all, David not only was guilty of clearly disobeying God at times but committed adultery and murder. Why was he not disqualified, and even put to death, when we know God could never be accused of favoritism (Deut. 10:17; Eph. 6:9). Whaley (2009) asks a similar question and answers with a particular focus on David as a worshipper: “How could the man after God’s own heart have taken such monstrous missteps? Satan targets and tempts the authentic worshipper. He certainly targeted King David. And David fell, more than once. But God forgave the worshipping king and made both his name and kingdom great. Again, and again, the once-adulterous king conquered his foes because of his *unadulterated* praise” (Whaley, p. 114).

An oft-overlooked core of David’s worship was his knowledge and love for the *words* of God. Psalms 19 and 119 are perfect examples of the Shepherd-King’s meditative worship based on the *perfect* Scriptures. Whaley (2009) asserts rightly, “Anyone who truly adores the Lord will also treasure His Word, and it will lead that individual to a deeper worship experience. David

spent a lifetime loving both God and the Word that came forth from Him – and thus became a model of worship” (Whaley, p. 114).

The Ambivalent Worship of Solomon

This brings us to the life of Solomon who succeeded his father, David. He started *well* but possessed an *incomplete disposition* toward his God. The Psalmist-King died at the age of 70, having handed the “baton of leadership” to his son, Solomon, who was 20 years old when he became king. Solomon’s first public act was to call the people of Israel together to offer sacrifices of *worship* to the Lord. And it is apparent that the king, himself, was *extravagant* in his personal worship: “*Solomon offered sacrifices there in the Lord’s presence on the bronze altar at the tent of meeting; he offered 1,000 burnt offerings on it*” (II Chron. 1:6 HCSB). This must have touched the heart of God, because that very evening, God appeared to Solomon and essentially gave him a *blank check* – “*Ask, what should I give you?*” (vs. 7). The young king, with a heart of gratitude for his father’s faithful example, and realizing his dependence on God, asked, “*Now grant me wisdom and knowledge so that I may lead these people, for who can judge this great people of Yours?*” (vs. 10). God, discerning what was *in his heart*, decided to not only give him what he asked, but also “*riches, wealth, and glory, unlike what was given to the kings who were before you, or will be given to those after you*” (vs. 12).

The *centrality of worship* in the early reign of Solomon is memorialized in the building of the temple in all its unique magnificence. However, the true significance of the fulfillment of his father David’s dream, was *not in the brick and mortar*. As Whaley (2009) observes, “It

represented the best of man's efforts using the best of God's resources. But for the Lord, the joy wasn't in the edifice itself; it was in the heart of worship behind it. And when construction was complete, God met Israel there" (Whaley, p. 118). It was time for Israel to celebrate the new home for Almighty God with praise and worship, and Solomon wasted no time calling the people together to offer sacrifices once again extravagantly. But this time, the *extravaganza* would be a *worship music festival* to rival any that had occurred before or would ever occur again.

"And all the Levitical singers...with cymbals, harps and lyres, standing east of the altar, and with them one hundred and twenty priests blowing trumpets ¹³ in unison (my emphasis) when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice (my emphasis) to praise and to glorify the Lord...they praised the Lord saying, "He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting," (II Chron. 5:12-13a NASB 1995)

Whaley (2009) refers to this as *A Worship Service Extraordinaire* (p. 118) and explains the significance of this unique moment – "The people had arrived with one agenda: to worship God – as one. They checked their egos at the door and joined together, in unity, to give God praise" (Whaley, p. 119). Then, something happened that no one could have predicted. God was literally "*in the House*" in response to their extravagant worship with His very Presence in a powerful, awe-striking way. "...then the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests **could not stand** (my emphasis) to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God" (II Chron. 5:13c-14). Solomon, overwhelmed, kneeled at the altar, raised his hands to the sky and prayed with a sober intensity. In his prayer, he acknowledges the uniqueness of God (reverence), asks that He would forgive His people (repentance), and calls on Him: "...come to Your resting place" (II Chron. 6:39-41 NCV). God's response? Literal fire fell from heaven and consumed the sacrifices accompanied by the very

glory of God filling the Temple. The people's response? They bowed prostrate on the ground, worshipping with hearts of thanksgiving (II Chron. 7:3). Whaley (2009) comments on the significance of the fire from heaven – “It symbolized God’s sanctioning of Solomon’s worship. God was pleased with the worship of the king, and with His holy fire, He was *proving* it!” (Whaley, p. 120).

Unfortunately, this amazing experience would not be the norm throughout Solomon’s reign. As the years passed, the king who would be renowned for his wisdom, riches and influence *wandered away in compromise and disobedience*, both maritally and spiritually. Yet, at the end of his life, we have clear evidence of his repentance memorialized in the poignant book of Ecclesiastes. Indeed, his final written words are sobering and reflect an authentic lifestyle of worship – “*The conclusion, when all has been heard, is fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil*” (Eccl. 12:13-14 NASB 1995). Solomon evolved grievously into an *ambivalent* worshipper. Thankfully, he made a course correction in his final days which provides all who followed him with a poignant reminder – The *true tales of these three kings* provide multiple lessons about what God’s purpose and plan for worship *is and isn’t*. God never glorifies His heroes, but rather presents them as fragile and broken people who “*get it right*” through their worship in the “*moments of truth*.” Even the best of these *worship examples* is only a taste of what awaits the believer in heaven where God will be forever enjoyed in uninhibited worship.

Elijah – The Power of the Worshipper’s Peaceful Disposition

After Solomon's death, the Kingdom of Israel experienced, in modern ecclesiastical nomenclature, a "*church split*." Both the Northern (Israel) and Southern (Judah) Kingdoms were mostly disconnected from any hint of normal worship due to their God. Both political systems were often led by kings who did evil in sight of God. During this "*dark age*" of the Chosen People's history, however, there were some notable exceptions.

I Kings 17 and 18 describe the prophet Elijah and his confrontation of King Ahab, a rather oxymoronic character. While there were some good spiritual moments in his life (Whaley, p. 125), Ahab's disobedience in marrying the occultic infidel, Jezebel (Deut. 7:3) led to *sin-infested consequences* for God's already wayward people. Jezebel's influence on Ahab led to the occult practices and the building of a temple to the demonic god, Baal. Increasingly, Ahab placated to Jezebel's agenda to persecute anyone who did not bow to the false deity (II Kings 9ff).

God sent Elijah to confront Ahab and get his attention by announcing a drought (I Kings 17:1). The absence of rain lasted for 3 years before God sent Elijah back to confront the unrepentant king and his false prophets. I Kings, chapter 18 contrast the wild and dramatic *pseudo-worship* of the false prophets with the calm and confident request of Elijah to demonstrate who was the one true God. The response of the non-existent Baal to the baalist's cries was deafening silence. The response of Jehovah, the true God, to Elijah's quiet prayer was a fiery burst from heaven, consuming the entire water-soaked altar. The rest of the story is codified in I Kings 18.

So, what is learned through this story about worship? Elijah demonstrated that there are times when God responds to a succinct prayer of supplication from a heart surrendered worship. Whaley (2009) describes Elijah as “a man of few words. He prayed briefly, worshipped without pageantry, and – again – fire fell from heaven. Thunderous, demonstrative worship can be a wonderful thing – unless it’s offered from immoral hearts” (Whaley, p. 129). Solomon and Elijah are a study in *contrasted forms of worship*. Both were authentic in function yet quite opposite of each other. And yet both brought fire down from heaven, demonstrating the holiness and *worship-worthiness* of God.

Another noteworthy exception to the common self-worship of the Divided Kingdom monarchs was Jehoshaphat. His rule is described in II Chronicles, chapters 17-20. This king’s decision-making was riddled with inconsistency and lack of wisdom (his failed partnerships with Ahab – Ch. 17 – and Ahaziah – Ch. 20). Yet, Jehoshaphat himself demonstrated *worship integrity* and as a result God blessed much of his effort.

The test of his worship disposition came when he received a message that an unusually large army was preparing to attack. The king, fearful despite his own vast army and resources, called the people to fast and pray. Whaley (2009) identifies the unique elements of Jehoshaphat’s prayer (vss. 6-12): “First he lauded God’s *power*. No one, the king said, was God’s equal. Then, he reminded the Lord of the *past*, and how good the Israelites had been to enemy nations, sparing their lives. Finally, he mentioned the *promise* of God. The land given to Abraham was to be Israel’s forever, but now it was threatened. In humility, the king concluded, ‘*We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you*’ (vs. 12 NIV)” (Whaley, p. 132).

A public worship service ensued and suddenly a musician named Jahaziel interrupted the *worship service*. He claimed to have a “word from the Lord” exhorting the king to put aside fear, know the battle was God’s, and watch the Almighty save His people (vss. 14-17). Jehoshaphat’s reaction? He fell to the ground, *prostrate*, along with the entire city of Jerusalem and *worshipped* (vs. 18). From this position of worship, they rose and began to praise God with loud voices (vs. 19). As Whaley (2009) observes, “The Lord had spoken, and when He gives a word, it’s a *sure* one. Judah accepted the victory by faith” (Whaley, p. 132).

The king’s next decision to prepare for battle seems even to this day to be the most foolish war strategy in the history of armed conflict. Whaley (2009) describes the surreal scene: “Jehoshaphat chose a band of singers – *singers*, not *warriors*. Their job? Sing. To the Lord. Why? Because it was good war strategy? No. Because, quite simply, God is ‘holy and wonderful’ (vs. 21 NCV). And now, this burly, all-male choir was instructed to march in front of the arm and sing about Him: ‘Give thanks to the Lord, for His love endures forever’ (vs. 21b NIV) ...in the face of what looked like certain doom, this husky gospel choir was to testify to the enemy nations – in song – of God’s all-sufficient love for Judah. No weapons would be on the front line, no chariots, no swords, no bullets – only a chorale of brawny men, whose hardest-working “muscles” would be their vocal ones. The warriors – with all their arms and ammo – would follow behind them” (Whaley, p. 133).

The conclusion of the battle was almost as *humanly surreal* as the Judean strategy. God confused the three armies poised against God’s people. Rather than unitedly facing off with Judah, they turned on each other, *completely destroying themselves*. The biblical narrative goes

on to reveal that God not only won the battle for them, but He also provided them with an overabundance of the “victor’s spoil.”

These two examples of worship from the lives of *Elijah and Jehoshaphat* demonstrate the power of *quiet and focused dependence on God amid conflict*. Both biblical characters, although frail and mistake-prone, were sensitive to the “word of the Lord” and were faithful to carry it out in faith. Their *worship* was *calm and confident*, yet robust, leading to *dramatic victory* at the Hands of their Almighty God, *not their own*.

Ezra - The Power of the Worshipper’s Precepts

In the annals of the Biblical Historical Books, the story of Nehemiah and Ezra stands out uniquely because of the *unique role* the written Word of God played in the narrative.

II Kings 25 provides the plight of Judah falling into the brutal hands of Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar. God used this monarch to discipline His people to have them return to Him in worship and integrity. Yet, it was to be under another nation’s rule (Persia) and its ruler (Cyrus) that Jerusalem and its people would be “restored” to a place of health politically and spiritually. Amazingly enough, God used a foreign, unbelieving king to send Judah back to Jerusalem and help them rebuild as a nation. This included rebuilding the temple that had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. Now, fifty years later, God’s people were back in the City of God rebuilding their lives. Although the new temple was completed after 20 years, it was clearly not comparable to the “former glory” of Solomon’s temple. In addition, the needed city walls needed repair to protect against enemy attacks.

Some 50 years after the second temple was completed, God raised up two men to bring physical and spiritual fortification back to the Chosen People. The book of Nehemiah describes the challenges to and completion of the walls in just 52 days (Neh. 4-6). But Nehemiah knew that physical restoration was not enough. Whaley (2009) observes, “With his construction work complete, Nehemiah promptly chose priests and singers to begin to bring religious order back to Judah’s fair city. Jerusalem’s walls stood tall and proud. Judah’s dignity was restored. Now it was time to restore their worship” (Whaley, p. 140).

Ezra, a priest, and biblical scribe was called on by Nehemiah and the nation to re-introduce the written Word of God to the People of God (Ez. 8). This resulted in what Whaley (2009) describes as 8 responses, which are very much applicable for the modern worshipper (Whaley, pp. 142-147).

First - The People Listened Attentively (vs.2). And they listened for hours with a strained focus so as not to miss a single word. *Second – They Stood in Respect* (vs. 5). It was not so much that they stood in honor of the words, although this was undoubtedly true. It was more that they honored and respected the “God” of the Word. *Third - They Lifted their Hands* (vs. 6). In this context, this was a spontaneous and unforced response as Ezra himself praised the Almighty. *Fourth – They Shouted “Amen!”* (vs. 6b). This was an unmistakable affirmation of agreement with and commitment to obey God’s written commands and precepts. *Fifth – They Bowed Down in Worship* (vs. 6b). This signified the people’s humility and submission to the “Great I Am.” *Sixth – The Priests Read the Scripture* (vss. 7-8). Whaley (2009) comments, “Most scholars believe that Ezra himself, read the Word in Hebrew, and the Levites (priests) translated it sentence by sentence into Chaldean, expounding the religious and cultural significance so the

people could comprehend it” (Whaley, p. 145). This time-consuming process, more, demonstrates the “hunger” the people possessed for the precepts of God. *Seventh - ...And the People Wept* (vs. 9-10). Whaley (2009) points out that the Hebrew word for “wept” “means literally the shedding of tears in humiliation – joy...They wept – bitter tears of grief, but at the same time, joy also. Why? After more than a century of separation from God, they were back together as a nation with the freedom to seek- and find – their God...And, in that moment, these post-exilic Hebrews experienced the warmth and wonder of true, sincere biblical worship” (Whaley, p. 145-146). *Eighth – They Celebrated* (vs. 12). Ezra saw their grief and understood it but encouraged them to overcome the bitter sense of loss with sweetness of new-found joy in the Written Revelation and His Personal Revelation. And that is exactly what they did – they enjoyed *food, fellowship, and fun*...and all in the context of worshipping the God Who had revived them through His Word and His Presence.

Ezra was used of God to renew His people’s love for His Written Revelation – *His very Words*. Those Words were the catalyst of a true and lasting revival in the hearts of the Hebrew nation. In our context today, if America is ever to experience another authentic revival like the First and Second Great Awakening, it will be unmistakably *rooted in the Scripture, immersed in worship*, and will exemplify a *desperate brokenness before God* that will result an *authentic move* of God that *awakens the lost* to their desperate need for Him. Yet, it is obvious that at the core of this hope is the need for believers who are integral worshippers “*in spirit and in truth*” (Jn. 4:24).

The Historical Books of Scripture describe a wide variety of worshippers and worship principles God has provided for the modern believer in his/her own worship experience. Every

protagonist in these stories had a “*long line of preparation*” initiated and perfected by God, which led to “*great opportunities*” showing the uniqueness and glory of God. The thread of “*worship*” throughout the Historical Books is not only clearly observable but deeply embedded in the fabric of these narratives. For those who ignorantly assume spiritual irrelevance of the Old Testament in the modern age, these biblical characters and their journey serve as *excellent and needed examples* of powerful and authentic worship in life of every believer.

God’s Plan for Worship in the Books of Poetry, Wisdom Literature and The Prophets’ Writings

The biblical books of Poetry, Wisdom and Prophecy provide us with rich and enduring examples and principles of authentic worship. Sometimes these representations are riveting and radical, while other times they are quite surprising and surreal. But there is no more significant source of Holy Writ for the *student of worship* and the *activist worshipper*.

Worship Within The Psalms

And so, we begin with the “book of songs”, The Psalms. This compilation of poetry put to music is often solely ascribed to King David; yet, as it turns out *more than half* of the Psalms are written by others. Indeed, this biblical Psalter is not a solo project. On the other hand, it is important to note that David is the main composer of these heartfelt expressions of adoration, thanksgiving, confession, and supplication. And while, there is commentary about many subjects mixed into the lyrics, these are first-person compositions directed to the one and only true God.

As Vernon Whaley (2009) observes, “As a whole, the book of Psalms affords the sincere worshipper a comprehensive model for the expression of his love and praise to God” (Whaley, p. 153).

David, among the other composers, mastered this not in the “Hebrew Conservatory of Music” of his day, but rather in the wide fields of *baah-ing* sheep. It was there that he accompanied himself on a harp and sang from his heart to the Lord in solitude. But it is clear God *heard him and shaped him there* for a lifetime of ministry service that would intentionally integrate *song and music* into moments of danger as well as times of *praise and worship* (I Sam. 18:8). David, of course, is the best known writer of the psalm-hymns, but there are others who were inspired by their God to write songs that found their place in Holy Writ.

One particularly surreal example would be the *Sons of Korah*, who were responsible for almost ten percent of the entire one-hundred fifty Psalms. Why surreal? Because they are the descendants of the insidious and godless Korah, who opposed Moses (and God by extension) in Numbers 16. Korah’s end was disastrous, but God, in his mercy, redeemed his offspring and forever validated their faithfulness in the Bible’s hymnal! Now, that is restoration! Whaley (2009) notes, “...the descendants of Korah, and the musicians known as the Sons of Korah, were ashamed of their forefather’s misconduct. In reaction, they became meek and obedient to God. Rather than evidencing an arrogant leadership style, they gave themselves to humility, serving without fanfare as temple musicians and priests” (Whaley, p. 156). It is also likely a surprise for most that the modern tune put to Psalm 42 by Marty Nystrom (“As The Deer”) was a song written by the *redeemed of Korah!*

Another lesser-known author of eleven Psalms is *Asaph*, whose composition of Psalm 73 has blessed generations of believers and who have found *voice* in this song, “*Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever*” (Whaley, p. 157).

And there were other writers too. Whaley (2009) identifies them; “Psalm 90 is a prayer attributed to Moses. Two psalms are credited to Solomon, son of David (72 and 127). And Heman and Ethan... (temple) court musicians... were the creators of Psalms 88 and 89, respectively. This last psalm has been the foundation for many a modern hymn and worship tune... verse 1: “*I will sing of the Lord’s great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations*” (Whaley, p. 157-158)

And so, among the many principles we learn about worship in the Psalms, here are a just a few: we are equipped to worship, praise, love, exalt, know, trust God; we are challenged to live for God, remember His goodness; and we are instructed on how to experience His joy (Whaley, p. 160-179). The Psalms are more than an ancient songbook. They are a portal into the hearts of those who have experienced every emotion common to mankind. And they give expression to the modern believer to do the same through the highs and lows of life; and everything in-between.

Yet, the Psalms, which are often paired categorically with the “Wisdom Literature” of the Bible, are not the only treasure of worship examples.

Worship Within the Life of Job

Job is a book describing the life story of the man after which it is named. Indeed, it the depiction of a man who, through unspeakable tragedy and pain no fault of his own, demonstrated a *lifestyle* of worship. Perhaps the most amazing example of this fierce devotion to God is in the context of his sudden loss of children and all his possessions almost simultaneously. And what was his response to these unthinkable circumstances? “*He bowed down to the ground to worship God*” (Job 1:20). This is all the more astounding in that Job did not have the benefit of the written revelation that would later give comfort and salve to believers experiencing such. And, if this were not enough to “break” him, God allowed him to experience severe sickness, spousal betrayal, and condemnation from his “friends.” Whaley (2009) comments, “Though Job could have heeded the whispers of his enemy, disguised as his friends—even his own loving spouse—he didn’t. Curse God? No way! He was a man of integrity! And he won the battle for his worship” (Whaley, p. 189). There are many lessons about a lifestyle of worship we can glean from the life of Job. Job 42:10-18 tells us that God rewarded him many-fold with a long life and new family that extended to great-great grandchildren! Again, Whaley (2009) summarizes this in a way that refreshes the soul: “What a beautiful ending to a hard-to-read story. Job’s faithful worship... recompensed him on a grand scale. There is a reward...for our unfailing worship. But it may not be the reward we expect...We owe Him our best worship, whether or not we ever receive the answers we expect from Him in this life...But if we truly love Him, worship will never seem a duty. It will be a joy” (Whaley, p. 192).

Next, we will investigate the book of Proverbs for worship insight. After all, Proverbs *is* the book of insight linking worship and wisdom together. Interestingly, neither the word *worship* nor *praise* appear in this compilation of axioms. Whaley (2009) explains, “In Proverbs, the application of worship is to our *lifestyle*. How do we treat others? Are we honest with them? Generous? Fair? If not, then we can’t possibly worship God pleasingly...worship is *respect*. How can we show due respect for God if we constantly disrespect those made in His image?” (Whaley, p. 193). The rhetorical nature of this question is clear. And, the many times Solomon, the author, uses the phrase “*fear of the Lord*” brings us back to the *central non-negotiable* for worship that is pleasing to God – *integrity*.

Worship Within Ecclesiastes

The theme of *worship integrity* brings us to the book of Ecclesiastes. Solomon is a poignant example of someone who started well, wandered away from the very wisdom for which he was famously known, and wrote a “second” book that warns the reader of the consequences of *self-worship*. Ecclesiastes serves as sobering warning against the inevitable results of replacing God with *idols of the heart, mind, and body*. Whaley (2009) identifies the *Solomonic idols* that still today are used by the Evil One to distract and dissuade us from the joy of worshipping God and God alone – *education, pleasure, achievement, wealth, sexual gratification, and false gods* (Whaley, p. 197-201). Whaley observes, “After he had tried everything, and nothing filled his God-shaped hole, Solomon repented. ‘[My] *last and final word*,’ he wrote, ‘*is this: Fear God. Do what He tells you. And that’s it*’ (12:13-14 MSG).

While Solomon personally repented, the results of his “leadership sins” would reverberate for years to come. God, for the sake of David his father, decided to not bring the consequences of Solomon’s rebellion on him. However, his sin would affect the next generation and beyond horrifically (I Kings 11:9-13; Deuteronomy 28:15-68). This brings us to the role of the prophets God used to warn His people of the inevitable effects of rejecting Him and His call to turn their hearts back to Him.

Worship Within the Prophetic Literature

There are three periods that describe the timeframe of the “prophets” God used to warn and communicate His judgment – *Pre-exilic, Exilic and Post-exilic*. In each one of these periods, the message, through a variety of personalities, is the same: *turn back to God, call on His mercy and experience His forgiveness with restoration* (Whaley, p. 208-209). At times, there were short moments of hope and other times, there was delay into the next generation. The pain and suffering of God’s people was proportionate to the degree of their *self-worship*. And, yet the Father, being all-merciful, did not *give up* on His people. He had a plan through the selfless giving of His Son to *once and for all* bring all things to egregious judgment and blessed resolve.

So, what was *corporate worship* like in the *prophetic age*? Full of *pomp and circumstance*. However, prophets such as Amos, made it clear what God thought of such pageantry and celebration: “*I hate, I despise your religious feasts, I cannot stand your assemblies...away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps*”

(5:21, 23). The issue was not the musical performance, which was likely performed with excellence, but rather the disposition of the “worshipper’s” hearts. The prophet Isaiah poignantly observed this, quoting the Omniscient One; “*When you raise your arms to me in prayer, I will refuse to look at you. Even if you say many prayers, I will not listen to you...These people worship me with their mouths, and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me*” (Isa. 1:11-15; 29:13 MSG). Whaley (2009) comments, “These were harsh words from the Almighty, directed at a people who were ‘going through the motions’...they were going mad with...forms of worship...But God wasn’t accepting any of it. He had just one thing to say about it: *DON’T BOTHER...unless you repent!*” (Whaley, p. 211).

While it is *unthinkable* that God’s people who knew clearly of His mighty deeds and expectations for “normal” behavior and worship would drift so far away to a lifestyle *antithetical* to His heart and design. Besides the decadent immorality, Whaley (2009) describes unethical behavior which God had previously condemned with hatred; “...they were mistreating the poor, charging huge and unfair interest on money loaned, and practicing ethnic/racial prejudice...” (Whaley, p. 211). Considering what our modern American culture has accepted as normal economic practice, and the undeniable, underlying discriminatory attitudes even within the church, it is clear that the prophets’ call to repent is just as applicable today as in the centuries preceding Jesus’ transformational entrance. In the days of the Prophets, what was particularly surreal was the blindness and the “fear of God” dearth in addition to the obvious immorality. Whaley (2009) describes these categories, pointing out that we face the same tendencies today in the “Blood-Bought Church”! (Whaley, p. 211-214).

As already mentioned, there is only one antidote to these deadly diseases of the mind, body, and soul: *repentance*. It has always been true that *repentance (a convicted change of mind that leads to a willful change of behavior)* of known sin leads to a *freedom*; and this *freedom* is what leads us to *worship in the “filling of the Spirit” and in “personal, integral truth.”*

In capturing the principles, we learn from the Major and Minor Prophets, Whaley (2009) *first* reminds us that integral worship “embraces the way we treat the impoverished, the homeless, the widowed, and the orphaned...God will not endure religious “activities” or accept offerings or worship from those who neglect the fatherless, ignore the penniless, ridicule the disabled, or reject the elderly” (Whaley, p. 220, 221). Indeed, these thematic warnings are reinforced in the New Testament in passages like Matthew 25 and James 1:27, countering any thought that the prophets were part of an isolated age not applicable for today’s Christ-follower.

The author’s *second* extrapolated lesson is that “true worship must be offered from untainted hearts...He wants our worship. But He will never, ever, *ever*; accept our worship unless and until we *examine ourselves*, see our sin in Technicolor, and confess it to God” (Whaley, p. 221).

In Ezekiel 36, after numerous warnings and prophecies of consequential doom from the effects of His people’s national and individual sin, God gives a promise that has always been, was at the time of its communication and will always be; that the Almighty is merciful and is ready to forgive, softening even the hardest of hearts, to restore broken relationship and remind all onlookers that He alone is God and worthy of unadulterated worship.

Here is an amazing promise and demonstration of mercy by the Lord God to an undeserving people. The promise of forgiveness and restoration is the essence of what our loving

Maker will do for any person who turns from their wicked ways and self-worship. “*For here’s what I’m going to do...I’ll pour pure water over you and scrub you clean. I’ll give you a new heart, put a new spirit in you. I’ll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart that’s God-willed, not self-willed. I’ll put my Spirit in you and make it possible for you to do what I tell you and live by my commands...You’ll be my people! I’ll be your God!*” (Ez. 36-24-28 MSG).

We have surveyed worship and its many nuances over a period of history spanning the lives of David, Solomon and the Prophets God sent to address the Divided Kingdom. The place of *worship* took a plethora of shapes from verbal/musical to dispositions of the heart to lifestyle indicators. The many aspects and applications of *worship* in the *Psalms*, the *Wisdom Literature* and the *Prophetic Period* all have one thing in common. God is a Holy and Just God Who cannot and will not tolerate sin; and yet, He is a Merciful and Gracious God who is ready and desirous to forgive and restore. God has never changed; He is immutable. His image-bearers, on their own, change only for the worse, leading to physical and spiritual death. Yet, this Awesome God, who never changes, is omnipotently able and willing to *change anyone who asks*. As Whaley (2009) so beautifully observes, “...from the beginning, God wanted relationship. Fellowship. Friendship...He created humanity and then communed with them, revealing Himself to them” (Whaley, p. 227).

And this is what God has designed us to experience; intimacy with Him, always in a heart posture of worship. Our hearts wander, with a proneness toward selfishness and ingratitude. But, even though undeserving, we can always return in true repentance and once again enjoy the

presence and blessing of our Maker. How was this made possible? By the *Second Adam, namely, Jesus The Christ*. His *official biographers* - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – describe the God-Man and how He changed *worship forever*.

The Worship of Jesus and of The Gospels

While it is true that Jesus Christ is the center focus of *Christian worship*, it is also equally or truer that Jesus is the primary model for worship leadership in the local church. We will discover He is the ultimate and apex *Worship Leader* of all time.

Jesus, The Sanctuary Worshipper

The Gospels' description, although limited in narrative, makes it clear that Jesus grew up in Nazareth with parents who trained Him in the worldview of Judaism. By the time Jesus was an adolescent, He was quite familiar with the ways of the synagogue and the Hebrew Scriptures. Luke 2:41-52 tells the story of Jesus remaining behind after He accompanied His parents on a trip to Jerusalem celebrating the *Feast of Passover*. While there are a few themes that emanate from this passage, we can certainly conclude from the description of his enmeshed conversation with the synagogue leadership, that He loved to worship and engage in the *House of the Lord*. In fact, it is noteworthy that He dutifully attended the ceremonies of the Passover with His parents, but voluntarily and passionately engaged in an act of worship by interacting with the teachers in the Temple about the Word of God. Vernon Whaley (2009) notes, "By this time, Jesus was a man, capable of choosing – or not choosing – to engage in worship in God's house. Where do

we find Him? In the house of worship, by choice. Worship in the house of God was a deliberate and customary part of Jesus' routine...He set the example for all humanity to worship God in His house (Whaley, p. 238). Jesus, even, from the early moments of Jewish manhood, was a *sanctuary worshipper*.

Jesus, The Submissive Worshipper

Submission is not a term one would normally associate with divinity, especially someone Who was in essence, fully divine and fully human, as was Jesus. Yet here we find one of the amazing mysteries and realities of the Trinity. The Scripture proclaims that, "...at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and *that* every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11 NASB). Yet, we discover that Jesus, the Christ, is *submitting Himself*. The Person to Whom Jesus was submissive was His Father, Whom He wanted to please, honor and obey unconditionally. Whaley (2009) points to His baptism described in Luke 3 as a primary example of this – "...the perfect, sinless Son of God submitted Himself to what He knew to be God's bidding and stood alongside sinners to be baptized by a fallen man – whom He would one day die to save...Jesus demonstrated to all generations that authentic worship begins with a heart that is willing to obey" (Whaley, p. 239). As oxymoronic as it may seem, Jesus was a *submissive worshipper*.

Jesus, The Prayerful Worshipper

Why would God, the Son be found *praying* since He was and is and always be, *very God*? Here again, is the mystery innate to the Trinitarian relationship of the Three Persons. Jesus had an intimate relationship with His Father that has no beginning since He has always been in a loving relationship from time-eternity past with the, both the Father and the Holy Spirit. The inter-dependence of the Triune God will always be a mystery beyond knowing, but John 17 reveals that Jesus and the Father were in intimate communication about the accomplishment of Jesus' mission on earth. He glorified the Father and the Father glorified Him. *Authentic, biblical prayer is always enmeshed with worship and praise.* Jesus was well acquainted with the praise and worship nomenclature of the Old Testament, particularly the Psalms. And while it is theologically true that the praise-filled psalms were focused on His divinity, there is no doubt that the human dimension of Jesus participated in regular prayer and praise of His Father when They met alone regularly throughout Jesus' earthly life (Luke 5:16). It is no small thing that the Gospels record over 25 references to Jesus praying, most times in private. Whaley (2009) observes, "Obviously, this private time with [The Father] was a source of guidance, strength, comfort and joy. It was an opportunity to get away from the 'busy' so He could worship [The Father] *privately*, pray about what mattered to Him, and seek direction as He worked to fulfill His mission. We need these times too" (Whaley, p. 244). Indeed, Jesus not only cultivated these devotional times with His Father for His own sake, but as an example of necessity to all who would call Him Savior and Lord. The Lord Jesus was without question, a *prayerful worshipper*.

Jesus, The Praise-Filled Worshipper

It is quite uncommon for the modern believer to think of Jesus as someone who would emotionally burst out in praise. But even a casual observation of the Gospels reveals that Jesus was a “God/Man of Praise” (Matt. 11:25; Luke 10:21). Whaley (2009) asserts, “Jesus didn’t use bywords...He was *spontaneously* overcome with awe for [The Father]” (Whaley, p. 246). And He glorified the First Person regularly; how can we, as His redeemed followers, do any less? The Son of God was, indeed, a *praise-filled worshipper*.

Jesus, The Singing Worshipper

If asked to describe Jesus, the vast majority of modern evangelicals would likely not include “singer” in their profile. Yet, Luke 4:15 reveals Jesus’ habit was to attend “church” (aka. Synagogue), and, as Whaley (2009) observes, “...songs were part of the traditional Jewish worship” (Whaley, p. 246). There is no doubt that Jesus, knowing the great heritage of psalm-based singing as a part of the Jewish worship service, was a willing and robust participant. One can only imagine what it was like for God, the Son to be heard singing the *songs of Zion* in a way that was deeply pleasing to His Father, and undoubtedly His fellow image-bearers. Jesus was a *Gospel-singing worshipper*, in the truest sense.

Further Observations from the Gospels

Noel Due (2005), in his work *Created For Worship*, “All of Jesus’ life was an expression of his worship to God His Father as He served Him in thought, word, and deed, and ultimately as he set the captives free from Satan’s power through His sacrificial death” (Due, p. 19). And all of these “works of Christ” emanated from a motivation of one primary characteristic – *love*. Specifically, this was a unique kind of love, whose word nuance is only found in the New Testament, namely *agape*. This “one and only” love expresses itself sacrificially, unconditionally and with no motive of return. This is the kind of love Jesus possessed toward all with whom He came in contact, including His Father.

Worship in the Gospels – Servanthood Flowing from Integrity

Jesus made it unmistakably clear that the primary goal of life was *vertical love* – “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment*” (Matt. 22:37-38 NIV). Yet, following right after this, with the priority established, is the second “great commandment” which is *horizontal* – “*And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’*” (Matt. 22:39 NIV). The Messiah is teaching that the latter flows from the former, and it is meant to be authentically shown through *practical service*. Whaley (2009) reveals the essence of this *servile worship* – “...because His Spirit dwells *within* us...as worshippers of the Most High...we must allow His Spirit to work *through* us...This is worship heedless of walls and ceiling, of physical address, of stained glass and steeple. And it is worship fragrant to God, because...when we’re *servicing*...we are in essence, said Christ, doing these same deeds for God Himself [Matt. 25:40] (Whaley, p. 253).

However, Jesus went further; indeed, He went to the greatest extreme possible to demonstrate what He taught. He not only practiced what He preached but *perfectly accomplished* what He preached. By giving Himself literally as a sacrifice on the cruel cross of Calvary, He established a *new covenant*, by which anyone trusting in His death and resurrection can enter a fresh and vibrant relationship with the Living God. Whaley (2009), points to amazing ramifications of the *finished work* of the Resurrected Christ – “Today, Christ’s empty tomb stands as a monument to His conclusive victory over Satan and His detailed plan to end God’s redemptive plan. We are redeemed and nothing stands in our way anymore. Jesus is risen, and He – not a human priest – is our own, personal worship leader. Best of all, with His resurrection, He blazed a trail for us to go right to the Throne of God – in worship” (Whaley, p. 259).

Yet, until the time the believer enters the “new heaven and earth” described in Revelation, there is a sober warning. Jesus scathingly rebukes dead and hypocritical “forms” of worship, of which even the believer can be guilty. Matthew 23 provides just one example of The Messiah’s disgust and intolerance of *pseudo-worship*. The worship of the *New Covenant* is liberating and vibrant, full of joy and frankly, indescribable. All of what God intended for a *blessed ramp* into His Presence is available to *any* believer at *any* time whether alone or in a believers’ gathering; but it is *only* available to the regenerated child who is *integral and blameless* before The Holy God of all Scripture.

The Gospels provide us with a worship model that flows from the “God in flesh”, Jesus, Who, calls us to *worship in Spirit and in truth* (John 4:23). This is the *pinnacle* description for how we are to worship and there is no exception. And to worship as Jesus modeled and taught,

the professing believer is called to life of *integral service rooted in intimate love for Almighty God*.

The Worship of the Early Church and The Worship Truths of the Epistles

Any discussion about *worship* in the “Early Church” begins in the *Book of Acts*. This “history” of The Church in its formative stages is often referred to as the “Acts of the Apostles”; but it could just as legitimately be called the “Acts of the First Church Planters.” It was *after* Jesus’ resurrection and ascension that “*worship*” took on new form and meaning. Indeed, it took on a new “*brand*” and a new life!

Worship in the Early Church

As one observes the stories Luke records in the fifth book of the New Testament, the early believers met at times in the synagogues and outer temple courts. Acts 1-5 indicates that the *place* of worship was in the outer court of the Temple. But soon after this we see descriptions of Christians meeting in homes; eventually they went essentially “underground” as the cultural intolerance and persecution increased depending on their geographical context. Yet, these resilient followers of the risen Savior were unabashed in their commitment to not only gathering to worship but also to evangelize their communities (I.e., Acts 9:3; 14:27; 21:19-20).

It is also evident that the early Church met regularly and on a particular day. The traditional day of worship in the Jewish culture was Saturday, but these Messianic believers shifted their *gathering time* to Sunday (Acts 20:27). Author Allen P. Ross (2006) provides insight on how this came to be – “Christians no longer were compelled to give merely one day a week to the Lord...However, the church found it profitable to have a day for the Christian

community to assemble. So as time progressed, Sunday, the resurrection day, became devoted to the service of the Lord” (Ross, p. 415).

The “worship experience” in a *macro sense*, is best described early in Luke’s narrative and while there were some adjustments made in the location of the gatherings, the basic *functions* remained the same. Acts 2:40-47 describes the blessed scene: “*They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved*” (CSB). These actions, dispositions and functions were *normal* for the Early Church as it formed in various places, first in Jerusalem and then broadly into the rest of the known world with *fiery relevance*. One has to wonder in the context of our modern evangelical context, how it is that the Church has wandered away from such basic Christian behavior and passion. Just a plain reading of this text and others like Acts 9:31 should result in a desperate “*crying out*” to God for a return to the fundamental normalcy of His Church. One thing is consistently apparent. The Early Church was committed to a *daily lifestyle of worship* that was infectious to the “lost” around them.

This brings us to another dimension of *worship* not often seen as foundational and effectual in the context of those *early believer gatherings*. David Peterson (1992), author of *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship*, reasons, “If worship is an engagement with

God on the terms that He proposes...preaching Christ is a key to that engagement. Acts points to the proclamation of the heavenly rule of Christ...as the means chosen by God to draw people into relationship with Himself, through Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit” (Peterson, p. 143-144). Is there any doubt these early Christians were passionate *worship evangelists*?

The role of the Holy Spirit in the *worship lifestyle* of the Early Church cannot be overstated. Vernon Whaley (2009), author of *Called To Worship: From the Dawn of Creation to the Final Amen*, observes, “...with the coming of the Holy Spirit, worship was transformed. Believers began to enjoy ‘triune’ worship...God no longer [dwelt] in a cloud, a fire, in tents, or in a temple. God the Holy Spirit now [chose] to dwell in the hearts of those who [love] him... they worshipped *within*, savoring the immediate presence of God – *at all times* – in their own hearts and lives, because the Spirit of God dwelled *within* them” (Whaley, p. 276, 277). This *worship norm* was not just for those initial believers. It is the modern believer’s *blessed privilege!*

Worship in the Epistles

Noel Due (2005), author of *Created For Worship*, poignantly asserts, “For a human being there can be no vacuum of non-worship. One is either submitted to God in the doing of His will and the glorifying of His Name, or one is submitted to someone, or something else. The error described in Romans 1:18 ff is not the neglect of worship but the exchange of worship...They sin not by *not* worshipping, but by worshipping wrong[ly]...The Biblical reality is that men and women are shaped by their worship” (Due, p. 27). The *Book of Romans* is often thought of as Paul’s treatise on *salvation (both nuances of justification and sanctification)*, and certainly it is.

But it is also a letter about an individual's focus and heart disposition toward one's *object of worship*. The unlikely (at least in this contextual discussion) poet-songwriter, Bob Dylan, was *biblically correct* in his classic, *You Gotta Serve Somebody*. "Well, it may be the Devil or it may be the Lord, but you gotta serve Somebody!" (Dylan, B., *Slow Train Coming*, 1979).

In the early chapters of Romans, Paul reveals various themes of *pseudo-worship*, which he points out in numerous statements and examples is *self-worship*. In the latter chapters, particularly from Romans 12 through 16, the apostle contrasts the ugliness of false worship with authentic worship. His admonitions, ranging from calling believers to be *living sacrifices* in 12:1 (a clear worship motif familiar to his readers), to instructions for integral Christ-like behavior, challenge his audience to an integral *life of worship* wherein behavior matches their words, whether spoken or sung.

In the books of First and Second Corinthians, Paul directly addresses a number of themes indigenous to the *functions* of the local church. The Corinthian believers had descended into a very unhealthy immaturity, and at one point even gave tacit approval to blatant immorality within their fellowship. Yet, they were boldly displaying the "gifts of the Spirit" and abusing the intention of the Lord's supper. Whaley (2009), rightly observes, "In any worship gathering, if you get various groups of "gifted persons" all battling for attention and each trying to outdo the other, the product can only be *confusion*" (Whaley, p. 292).

In addition to confusion amongst the *Corinthian body*, there was marked division and faction. In I Corinthians 11 Paul identifies this in his instructions about the *Eucharistic "Love Feast"* (MSG). I Cor. 11:17-19 reveals the apostle's heart for unity but not at the expense of truth. He acknowledges that *schism* is sometimes necessary to reveal those who are aligned

rightly with God's truth. Yet, his overall exhortation points to the need for a *unified and loving Body* of believers *worshipping and thanking* the Lord Jesus for lovingly giving *His body* for their salvation in this life and the one to come.

If there is one theme the Church at Corinth was and is known for, it would be *spiritual gifts*. While Romans 12 lists an important combination of these unique Spirit-sourced *motivational gifts*, the “lion's share” of gifts are mentioned with instruction in I Corinthians, chapters 12 and 14. And herein is a subject which sadly not only brought confusion and division in the Corinthian Church, but has done the same in the American Evangelical culture for over 100 years. Scores of books, sermons and lessons have been delivered both in favor and disfavor about the gifts' function and even existence. The debate between “*cessationists*” and “*continuationists*” especially in connection with the gift of *tongues* continues in the modern era, often *without loving disagreement*. It is not the purpose of this commentary to address this in detail. However, it is important to emphasize that The Church, not only in America but around the world, will never arrive at God's will for healthy worship until a new and *emotionally healthy unity* emerges.

One can only hope – and pray – for an open dialogue to begin amongst leaders from biblio-centric denominations and parachurch “*until we all attain to the **unity of the faith**, [my emph.] and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ*” (Eph. 4:13 NASB). Is it possible that God will use (as He has in the recent past) the *music and lyrics of worship* to break down the barriers that have long existed denominationally, generationally, and ethnically? Is possible that the *Spirit of the gifts*, would work so deeply in believers who are yielded to His control, so as to bring about an

unprecedented, renewed desperate cry for God to stir His children's hearts; that He would grant a "sorrow leading to repentance" necessary for revival?

While the Corinthians were an example more of what *not to be*, than *what to be*, we are given numerous instructions as to what a *Worshipping Church should be*. Whaley (2009) succinctly summarizes with four critical lessons to be learned: "Everything we do in worship should be without confusion (I Cor. 14:40). All of our worship should glorify God and point people to Christ. Our worship ministries should not exalt people. Prima donnas should exist in the world, not in the church. And most important: 'The purpose of all [of the gifts] should be to help the church grow strong' (14:26b NCV).

As for the rest of the *Epistles*, each letter was written, on the one hand, to address specific challenges, problems, and even sinful practices/tendencies indigenous to each province or city or, in the case of Hebrews, ethnicity. On the other hand, the *Epistilian authors* were motivated by love and compassion, encouraging their fellow Christ-followers to "...run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith..." (Heb. 12:1,2 NASB 1995) and to "press toward the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:14 NASB). Hebrews, in particular, is full of references to the *High Priestly* role of the enthroned Christ, and His supreme role as the One and Only *Worship Leader* (Whaley, pp. 304-308).

So, what are the principles one can extrapolate from the Epistles that equip us to "worship in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:23)? Whaley (2009) summarizes this way:

1. *Jesus Christ is our eternal object of worship*. He is the Head of The Church...our Worship Leader forever...our Great High Priest.

2. *The Holy Spirit 'supersizes' our worship.* God, the Spirit dwells in the believer, adding 'meat' to our worship. When we don't know exactly how to worship "right", the Spirit is there, inside us, to help us acceptably worship God.
3. *Preaching is an act of worship.* God wants *relationship* with people – people who will worship Him. And anytime – every time – your delivery of God's Word reaps the results that His own heart desires – relationship and worship – then you have worshipped.
4. *Sing, sing, sing, because singing is worship.* That's why Paul was so emphatic about music being a part of worship, both public and private. "Speak to each other with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs", he wrote (Eph. 5:19). And if that didn't say enough: "Teach and instruct each other by singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" (Col. 3:16).
5. *Worship with Communion – but worship worthily.* Communion is a beautiful act of worship. Think about Christ's broken body purchased for you. But before you take that cup or bite into that symbolic bread, look within. Are you eating and drinking unworthily?
6. *Worship requires a living sacrifice.* It is a "spiritual act of worship" (Rom. 12:1 NIV), because it requires *self-crucifixion*. Real worshippers "kill their sins", "die daily" to selfishness, and...commit...to serving God through serving others.
7. *Worship must be done corporately, too.* [All] of the epistles are addressed to *churches*... find a church and be faithful to it. Remember, Christ promised to be in the midst of any genuine group that gathers in His name – to worship.

(Whaley, pp. 308-310).

When one looks closely at the *norms* of the Early Church in its most “submitted state”, one catches a glimpse of what we *should be* as a Church professing allegiance to the Scripture and the Great God of that Scripture. Paul’s and the other *Post-Acts* authors’ description of what Christ-followers *should be and not be*, should deeply motivate the current believer to examine himself/herself and *recalibrate* according to His will and purpose. *Revival* in the Church and the resulting *Awakening* in our culture can never occur until God’s people everywhere embrace the essential message of the Early and the Apostle’s Epistles – *worship the LORD Jesus Christ and live under HIS LORDSHIP*. This is *true, integral, and normal Christianity*. And the worship that results in public and private will not only provoke the unbeliever to jealousy, but will, most importantly bless the Almighty, Who calls His *redeemed children* to Himself to experience indescribable intimacy and the resulting grace and power to fulfill His *Great Commandments* and *Great Commission*.

The Worship of Heaven Revealed in Revelation

Day and night they never stop, saying,

*Holy, Holy, Holy,
Lord God, the Almighty,
Who was, Who is, and Who is to come.
Our Lord and God,^[c]
You are worthy to receive
Glory and Honor and power,*

(Revelation 4:8b, 11a)

The Book of Revelation contains *God’s apex blueprint* for ultimate worship in this life, as well as a descriptive *taste* of what believers will experience forever in the Presence of the Almighty. The new heavens and new earth are unimaginable and will be beyond any description given (I Cor. 2:9). We are given the promise of receiving a unique blessing from God - “*Blessed*

(happy, prosperous, to be admired) is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and who keep the things which are written in it [heeding them and taking them to heart]; for the time [of fulfillment] is near” (Rev. 1:3 AMP). What a promise!

Roberts’ (2002) description of a “world gone wild” provides a deeply encouraging illustration by comparing the Throne in Heaven, with a movie director who has everything under control in what *appears* to be a horrific tragedy (i.e., World events). “We may not understand what He is doing in the world, but we can be absolutely sure that He is in charge” (Roberts, p. 149). The believer is free to worship without anxiety no matter the circumstances. Worship, then is not a crutch to “escape” the realities pressing in around us. Rather, worship is the instrument to “blessing God” in the knowledge of His sovereign control. Now, that’s security and peace!

Regarding “what is to come”, the new heavens and the new earth are, as Roberts (2002) notes, “...completely new creation: a new earth and new universe...The frustrating cycle of life followed by death, which is built into the present world, will be broken. There will be no more death or decay in the new creation...” (Roberts, p. 155). Now, this is something to celebrate with *our worship* in the present age, anticipating the promise before us. With all the contextual limitations of our present worship experiences and the joys they provide, we “can only imagine” new dimensions of our hearts’ fulfillment in the new universe God is preparing for us. No props, just God in all of His splendored beauty!

Songs have been written about the new “Jerusalem”, the Holy City, which have touched the hearts of longing believers for decades. Often, at least in recent times, they reflect a singular cultural style. But the new and final *Jerusalem* will be filled with every ethnicity and culture that has ever existed. Roberts (2002) comments, “God’s new community will be a multi-racial, multi-

cultural society uniting black and white, male and female, Serb and Croat, Arab and Jew” (Roberts, p. 157). And it is assuredly the case that the “worship of heaven” will reflect the nuances of all these cultures. In addition, one can likely expect that “new songs” will reflect new genres and musicality heretofore unknown nor experienced. What will musical worship be like in heaven? We really don’t know, but we can be sure that our richest experience in this fallen world could not compare to what our ears and hearts will experience in the *new universe* awaiting us!

Revelation 21:22 reveals a new description of the *temple* far beyond any previously known – “I saw no temple in it, [*Jerusalem*] for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.” Roberts (2002) observes, “There will be no distance between us and God anymore; we shall know Him perfectly” (Roberts, p. 159). And this is truly the supreme vision of worship – that this city where the believer will be forever has no physical edifice where God “shows up.” God *is* the temple and to meet with the Almighty is without boundaries determined by brick and mortar. Nothing will be between the One and Only God of the universe and His adoring, awe-struck people...forever! Hallelujah! And Amen!

The worship Revelation describes is, in a word, *awesome*! This is something some have describe as “Throne Room Worship.” Revelation 4 reveals lyrics that have been put to many tunes and arrangements, some familiar to us and some we have never heard...not to mention those yet to be written. Beyond this, we are yet to hear the music of heaven put to the lyrical words of *Revelation 4 and 5*! *Revelation 21* promises us there is coming a time, and it is assured, when there will be no more “props” - the Temple, The Sun (Vss. 22,23). God replaces them with Himself. Indeed, there will be no obstacle or distraction. No more tears. No more sorrow. No more night (vs. 4). Pure and unadulterated worship! *Amazing!* As the songwriter suggested, “We

can only imagine"...but imagine we should, with hearts worship-filled, actively worshipping Him in all His glory until that moment when the perfect worship of heaven will be...*perfected in the believer's heart, mind, soul and strength. Hallelujah!*

Conclusion and Benediction

The *story of worship from Genesis to Revelation* in many ways describes the struggle of mankind to find its purpose and meaning in the context of day-to-day experiences. And the journey God intends on the way to eternity requires a personal, redemptive relationship through the exclusive salvation offered in Jesus Christ. The *imperfect struggle of the worshipper* will continue this side of heaven just as it did for the *pre-Pentecost and post-Pentecost* believers, but gratefully it will be sprinkled with *tastes of untainted worship and praise*. Yet, as good as it can be here, there is coming a day when the *worship of the Garden exemplified by the heart of David, the best moments of Solomon and the broken, contrite spirit of the Prophets* will be *the norm* in heaven forever! And, as Roberts (2002) reminds us, "As God's plan of salvation is eternal, it is no surprise to see hints of it even during the dark days of the fall and its immediate aftermath; even then the bright light of the gospel can be seen. It gives hope in the midst of despair and begins to promise better things to come" (Roberts, p. 49) Indeed, the true believer whose heart belongs to his/her God cannot help but fall down in prostrated worship - *Hallelujah to the Lamb*

on The Throne, Who is the source of those better things, and the Preparer of what no eye has seen, nor ear has heard!

Now to “[Him] who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen! (I Tim. 6:15b, 16 NASB 1995).

Indeed, Amen and Amen!

Glossary of Terms for Worship

Altar

1. *the literal and figurative “worship place” of sacrifice, associated with repentance and thanksgiving (personal definition)*
2. *often used figuratively to describe a thing given great or undue precedence or value especially at the cost of something else*

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/altar>

Authenticity

1. *conforming to an original so as to reproduce essential features*
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/authentic>
2. *conforming one’s heart with a clear conscience before God in a disposition of worship, allowing Him to shape His character into the innate personality of the worshipper. (worship application – personal)*

Blended Worship

This term is a fairly modern term, which came into usage over the last forty years, as The Evangelical Church has struggled with finding a balance in providing a worship experience that is both relevant and intergenerational. It ideally speaks of both a “blending of styles” and age groups coming together in a unified worship experience.

Creativity

1. *the use of the imagination or original ideas, especially in the production of an artistic work.*

<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=creativity&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

Corporate Intimacy

This term is not likely unique to this writer, but it is an excellent way to express how a large group of people can express intimacy. The only way this is possible, based on the way God has designed intimacy, is when such a group worships, as the Body of Christ, the One, True God (personal definition)

Glory

1. *praise, honor, or distinction extended by common consent; worshipful praise, honor, and thanksgiving*
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/glory>
2. *Ascribe to the Lord, all you families of nations,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name Ps. 96:7-8*

High Priest

1. *Jesus is the ultimate High Priest, since He is the perfect and sinless mediator. (Heb. 4:14-16; 8:6; I Tim 2:5). And, as a result, He is our true and pure “worship leader.”*

Hymns

1. *(from Greek hymnos, “song of praise”), strictly, a song used in Christian worship, usually sung by the congregation and characteristically having a metrical, strophic text... always sung to the same tune or rhythm like 8.8. 8.8. The melodies and lyrics of the music can be interchangeable.*

<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=evangelical+definition+of+a+hymn&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

2. *Hymns are generally structured with multiple verses and a “refrain” (or “chorus”), are often a platform for healthy theological teaching and affirmation of praise-worthy truths. In most cases, they are “third-person” oriented and meant to be sung “horizontally” with the function of mutual encouragement amongst believers.*

Integrity

1. *the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness; the state of being whole and undivided.*
<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=integrity&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>
2. *The quality of being honest before God and possessing strong biblical principles; the state of being wholly submitted and undivided in affection toward God. (worship application – personal)*

The Lamb

1. *When a definite article is placed before “lamb” it is most often referring metaphorically to Jesus Christ as the “sacrificial Lamb” God, the Father sent into the world to take away the sins of those who would trust in the Messiah (John 1:29)*

Psalm

1. *a sacred song or hymn, in particular any of those contained in the biblical Book of Psalms and used in Christian and Jewish worship.*
<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=psalm&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

Praise

Hebrew – “hallel” – “praise”

Hebrew – “Yah” (Yahweh) – “God”

Hebrew – “Hallelujah” – “Praise God”. (Whaley, p. 176)

Repentance

1. *The doctrine of **repentance** as taught in the **Bible** is a call to persons to make a radical turn from one way of life to another. The **repentance** (metanoia) called for throughout*

the Bible is a summons to a personal, absolute and ultimate unconditional surrender to God as Sovereign.

[https://www.google.com/search?](https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=repentance&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8)

[client=safari&rls=en&q=repentance&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=repentance&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8)

2. *The disposition of the mind and heart, without which worship is impossible (personal)*

Spiritual Songs

Spiritual songs may be described as the songs which are spontaneous and are inspired by the Holy Spirit [Himself]

[https://www.google.com/search?](https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=spiritual+songs+def&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8)

[client=safari&rls=en&q=spiritual+songs+def&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=spiritual+songs+def&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8)

Colossians 3:16 mentions a category of “song” as distinguished from hymns and psalms. Much of the debate surrounding what this actually means is centered on the role one views the Holy Spirit as having in the writing and/or the source of “spiritual songs.” It is the opinion of this writer that the Spirit of God is always prompting composers of music and lyrics to write “new songs” that are consistent with the Scripture. The modern application of these songs lean in the direction of “first-person” word structure with a “vertical” t focus on God. But, whatever one’s understanding of this simple phrase may be, it seems clear that there is no definite sense of what the Apostle Paul meant by this phrase. What we do know is that as believers we are called to sing songs that are thoroughly based on Scripture and theologically” sound” (personal definition).

Tabernacle/Tent

1. *The temporary physical place where God promised to meet with His people, particularly priestly representatives, and to dwell with them and guide them (Exodus 25:8-9).*

Temple

1. *The physical edifice where God responded to the desire of King David to build Him a permanent location for sacrificial worship, which included prayers and songs of worship (II Sam. 7:1-3).*

Worship

1. *“to honor or show reverence for as a divine being or supernatural power to regard with great or extravagant respect, honor, or devotion.”*
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/worship>
2. *“Old English wordscip, wurðscip (Anglian), weorðscipe (West Saxon) “condition of being worthy, dignity, glory, distinction, honor, renown,” from weorð “worthy” (see [worth](#)) + -*

scipe (see [-ship](#)). Sense of "reverence paid to a supernatural or divine being" is first recorded c. 1300. The original sense is preserved in the title worshipful "honorable" (c. 1300)."

<https://www.etymonline.com/word/worship>

Worship Leader

A person given the sobering and blessed privilege to lead believers in worship as he/she worships The One and True Personal-Infinite God of Scripture. (personal)

Worship Lifestyle

The constant state of practicing the Presence of God whether in private or public, in a worship service or showing the evidence of worship by serving all with whom God provides "divine appointments. (personal)

Worship Wars –

1. *A local church context where personal preferences regarding song style, musical instrumentation and "approach to worship" issues are the impetus for harsh disagreement and even division leading to faction. (personal definition based on Whaley, p. 26).*

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