

#StudySeries: Worship

Exodus 34:14

“...for you shall not **worship** any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God...”

- **General Context:** This command is being given as the Lord replaces the commandment tablets He had given Moses (ch 20). They were shattered (v1) when Moses walked down from the burning bush and saw that the people had made a golden calf to worship while he was with God at Mount Sinai.
- **Specific Context:** As the Lord makes the new covenant with Moses through these commandments, He explains that He will perform miracles never before seen (v10). But He also tells Moses not to allow the people to make covenants with the inhabitants of the land where they are going (v12). In verse 13, He goes further with this part of the command and tells Moses to tear down their altars because [insert verse 14] and without doing so they will be tempted (as before) to take up the worship of the gods of the inhabitants
- **Cross-references:** N/A
- **Takeaway(s)**
 - Do not get tangled up in relationships with people that do not worship the Lord lest you fall away
 - Do not surround yourself with things not aligned with God expecting to sway them to worship your God, because you will simply end up worshipping theirs; our flesh is weak, the Spirit is only strong in us - if we have it (and they don't have it).
 - Before God (re)commanded Israel to worship nobody but Him, He commanded Moses to tear down the altars of the inhabitants. *Why?* We are to remove all things that stand in the way of *living in* worship to the Lord
 - There is no indication that worship is about singing or music in this context

Deuteronomy 6:13

“You shall fear only the Lord your God; and you shall **worship** Him and swear by His name.”

- **General Context:** Moses is again repeating the 10 commandments to the people. *Note:* *Deuteronomy means “repetition of the law” so this makes sense.* God had Moses lead the people away from the mountain, towards the wilderness (ch. 1 and 2). They recount times from Exodus, they recount their victories, and then God has Moses present the law once again (ch. 4 and 5). In an extension of that in chapter 6, Moses is telling Israel how to live, or apply, these commandments.
- **Specific Context:** Moses is commanding them to remember the Lord as they go on towards the land God promised them. He is telling them to teach the Word to their children, keep the truth of who God is on their hearts, follow the statutes and commandments given, and then

[verse 13]. Immediately following verse 13, Moses again reminds the people not to follow any gods of the people surrounding them.

- **Cross-references:** Jesus quoted part of this verse when tempted by Satan in Matthew 4:10 | Luke 4:8.
 - **Takeaway(s)**
 - We are so quick to begin worshipping what the Lord has blessed us with (circumstances, people, provisions) that we forsake worshipping the Lord, who brought the blessings to our lives
 - “Blessed be Your name when the sun is shining down on me; when the world is all as it should be, blessed be Your name.”
 - As difficult as it can be to worship the Lord in the midst of rough times, it can be even more difficult to remember the Lord when we’re standing in the midst of His blessing over our lives because our flesh would rather be overwhelmed by it and focus on ourselves, than worship the Lord for it all.
 - This time, as compared to Exodus 34:14, the command to worship is following “You shall **fear** only the Lord your God...”; from what I found regarding the original Hebrew in that context, it is talking about literal fear, being afraid. I have taken that to mean that their enemy is not to be feared over the Lord, for it is the Lord who delivered them from Egypt, and it is the Lord who maintains the power to “wipe them off the face of the earth” (v15).
 - There is no indication that worship is about singing or music in this context
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Psalm 2:11

“Worship the Lord with reverence and rejoice with trembling.”

- **General Context:** David opens the Psalms talking about the difference between the blessed man and the wicked; how the blessed man is like a tree firmly planted (1:3) and the wicked is like chaff which the wind drives away (1:4). Discussion about the wicked carries into Psalm 2.
- **Specific Context:** He is specifically writing about the kings and how they walk in opposition of the Lord, and His anointed, together. David is warning them against their irreverent behavior while prophetically speaking of the birth of Jesus. In verse 11, we see for the first time in this study that people are being told *how* to worship - in reverence. And we see another command linked to it - to rejoice (Hail the Lord as King) with trembling.
- **Cross-reference(s):** Acts 4:25-28
- **Takeaway(s)**
 - Reverence (*defined*) deep respect for someone or something; true worship cannot happen without reverence; reverence and humility seem deeply tied
 - In verse 11, trembling is defined as awe and reverence; so after they’re told to worship, David is telling them to Hail the Lord as King with awe and reverence. When I read this, I don’t see

two separate commands. I am seeing “rejoice with trembling” as an extension of worship.

- There is no indication that worship is about singing or music in this context
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Psalm 66:4

*“All the earth will **worship** You, and will sing praise to You; They will sing praises to Your name.”*

- **General Context:** This Psalm comes after a string of Psalms that show David praying for God’s presence and pleading with Him for protection from his enemies. We see again that his life is being pursued in Psalm 62. In Psalm 64 he is still praying to God, but this time with a confidence that God will come through. By Psalm 65, he is praising God for His goodness, which leads into Psalm 66.
 - **Specific Context:** Verse 4 not only mentions singing/song with worship, but is preceded by verses that set the context of singing praise. With that, there are specific commands regarding the praise - shout *joyfully*, sing *glory to His name*, verbally *tell* God how *awesome* you think He is. Even so, worship and singing praise are mentioned separately. Verse says “All the earth will worship you, **and** will sing praises to You.
 - **Cross-references:** Psalm 46:10
 - **Takeaway(s)**
 - The first time in this study that worship includes singing or music, in this context
 - Worship is not exclusive to singing praises to God, though it can include that
 - This Psalm is written out of the confidence received from watching God come through; David positioned himself to see God be God through prayer, and *that* is what lead his heart to praise and worship
 - Looking at the cross-reference, “Cease striving and know that I am God, I WILL be exalted...” what I see is the prayer journey from Psalm 60 to 66 written in one sentence. *Stop running circles, have confidence in who I am, and you can know, regardless of the current circumstances, that I will be exalted among the nations.*
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Matthew 15:9

*“But in vain do they **worship** Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.”*

- **General Context:** Jesus had just fed the five thousand, walked on water, and healed many. The Pharisees approach Him to ask Him why his disciples eat bread without first washing their hands (v2). Following this chapter (ch 16) they test Him further. In fact, from here out, they become rather relentless.
- **Specific Context:** Jesus just performed a string of miracles (ch 14), healing all that came to Him, and I’m sure they knew of this, yet they confront Him regarding tradition. Jesus doesn’t leave

them unanswered. First, Jesus challenges them on why they regard man's tradition above the Word of God (v3). Then, he calls out their hypocrisy (v4-7). He closes out with prophetic Scripture from Isaiah that addresses how [they] honor with their lips, but not their heart (v8), followed by [verse 9]. The disciples tell Jesus the Pharisees were offended by what he said (v12) and Jesus speaks [verses 13 and 14] - in which there is a deep assuredness.

- **Cross-references:** Isaiah 29:13

- **Takeaway(s)**

- God has no desire for lip service; He wants your heart or He wants nothing
 - Our acts of worship have no value to the Lord if our hearts are not worshipping Him in Spirit and in truth (John 4:24); the Pharisees weren't worshipping in *truth*, and therefore not in Spirit either, because they were more focused on the traditions of man than what the Word of God said
 - The person that "worships" as the Pharisee will fall into destruction
 - There is no indication that worship is about singing or music in this context, **however**, now that we have identified that singing and music are a *form* of worship, that can be included in what Jesus is saying in this passage; raising our hands and singing praise to God is done in vain if we are not worshipping Him by the way (1) we love others (2) abide in His Word, etc.
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John 4:24

*"God is Spirit and those who **worship** Him must do so in spirit and in truth."*

- **General Context:** John 4 is the story of the woman at the well, and succeeds the introduction to John the Baptist. Jesus travels through Sychar and comes across a woman retrieving water from the well. This is the beginning of His public ministry, the disciples are not with him when this happens, and He chooses to reveal Himself to this woman at the well.

- **Specific Context:** In the midst of His conversation with this woman, he says "you worship what you do not know (v22)." In the next verse (v23) He speaks prophetically of His death and resurrection and lays the foundation for verse 24. In the verse 24, He says that "those who worship [the Father] must worship in Spirit and truth." Why? Well, in verse 22, He told her she worshipped what she did not know. The Samaritan Bible only contained the Pentateuch, so while they worshipped God, they didn't know the rest of Scripture (footnotes). Therefore, they didn't know the truth - which means they didn't know Christ. Per John 14:6, Jesus IS the truth.

- **Cross-references:** John 14:6

- **Takeaway(s)**

- We can't worship what we don't know. If Jesus IS truth, and we are called to worship in **spirit** and in **truth**, then we need to have a real understanding of who He is in order to truly worship

- There is no indication that worship is about singing or music in this context
 - Edit (2/20/20): And we will worship God most for what we know best about Him; example: my favorite worship songs talk about His faithfulness. Why? Because that's a character trait of His I've taken the time to be aware of "most" in life; same thing with His worthiness. In fact, to take that further, not only have I recognized those traits of His and how I've seen them so active in my life, but I have also specifically recognized how I lack in them → this realization, that He is what I am not, produces humility in me... *which* is necessary for true worship
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Romans 12:1

*"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of **worship**."*

- **General Context:** Paul uses Romans to explain salvation from concept to practical application and walking it out. He writes of our justification and sanctification. He writes of how our old nature and new nature (will) conflict. He writes of how the Lord gives us victory over the old nature and then, in chapters 10 and 11, how it is only by a working faith and His grace that salvation is made available - not works, not happenstance. He frequently quotes Old Testament in the process, too, comparing us present-day to Israel.
 - **Specific Context:** The verse starts with "Therefore," so we have to look back at what precedes it. In chapters 10 and 11, Paul writes of the reality of salvation; how it is by faith and grace it's available to us. Then, he starts chapter 12 with "Given everything I just said, I urge you..." This is followed by v2 where Paul tells us not to be conformed to this world, but transformed. We're all the way in Romans, yet this sounds similar to what God had Moses tell the people back in Exodus 34 regarding tearing the down the altars as to not be tempted to serve other gods. Paul is starting to explain what our response to this salvation should be.
 - **Cross-references:** Romans 6:13
 - **Takeaway(s)**
 - In light of what God has already done through Jesus, our *reasonable* response is to live a life that pursues righteousness as an act of worship to the Lord; a life that seeks to wholly surrender our flesh to His spirit
 - *Again*, this call to worship is immediately followed by a warning against being conformed to the world around us; the things of this world will only stand in the way of our worship
 - Verses 4-8 talk about how each member of the body has a different function / gift; as this follows what Paul writes about worship, I take from this that part of our worship is to walk in our gifts to further glorify God
 - There is no indication that worship is about singing or music in this context
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Philippians 3:3

*“...for we are the true circumcision, who **worship** in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh...”*

- **General Context:** Paul is writing to the Philippians to thank them, update them on his circumstances, and keep them encouraged. He writes from prison.
- **Specific Context:** In chapter 3, Paul repeats much of what he’s said before - warning them against evil, challenging them to walk with the Lord (verse 3) and then gets into his personal testimony to bring what he’s written to life.
- **Cross-references:** N/A
- **Takeaway(s)**
 - False circumcision vs. true circumcision = Being physically circumcised because it’s what the law calls for vs. your heart being circumcised because of what God has done in your heart
 - There is nothing about us in ourselves worth boasting about; we are to glory in Jesus, and what He’s done in us, alone
 - *Worship in the Spirit of God* ... worshipping in our flesh is meaningless because it quickly becomes more about us than God. How interesting it is that we need the Holy Spirit in us to worship the Lord and glory in Christ. If not for the helper of the Lord, we wouldn’t even be able to worship God with any semblance of purity, humility or understanding.
 - There is no indication that worship is about singing or music in this context, however, what it said here is profoundly applicable to singing praise

Revelation 4:10 (and 11)

*“...the 24 elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will **worship** Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying ‘Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things and because of Your will they existed, and were created.’”*

- **General Context:** Chapter 4 comes after the letters to the seven churches, and describes what will be happening in Heaven at the end of time. The following chapters are about the seven seals.
- **Specific Context:** Verses 1-4 describe what it looks like in Heaven; the door, the thrones, who is where. Verses 5-11 begin to discuss smaller details and activity. First, the four living creatures will cry out [verse 8]. Then, the twenty four elders mentioned in verse 4 will cast their crowns before the One on the throne and *worship*, saying [verse 11]. The focus is on the majesty of Heaven in this passage, and the majesty of Jesus that the 24 elders would place their crowns before Him to worship.
- **Cross-references:** Isaiah 6:3
- **Takeaway(s)**
 - To “fall down” and “cast their crowns” before Jesus are both acts of humility; as Psalm 2:11 tells

us, humility is necessary in worship - a *form* of worship even.

- The absolute majesty described in this passage brings me to a place where I can close my eyes, and picture it all. If only we would worship the Lord in this place in our hearts while here on earth.
- There is no indication that worship is about singing or music in this context

Revelation 14:11

*“And the smoke of the torment goes up forever, and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who **worship** the beast and his image, and whoever received the mark of his name.”*

- **General Context:** There is a lot going on around this verse. It holds the same general context as Revelation 4 in that John is writing about the visions the Lord gave him of the end times, and all that goes into that. This section in general covers what happens with those who choose to worship the beast rather than the Lord.
- **Specific Context:** First, we get a depiction of Jesus standing on Mount Zion with the 144,000. But then John writes about the worshippers of the beast, and what happens to the wicked. *“...those who worship the beast and his image...”* Now that we’ve defined what worship is, we know this isn’t just about the physical bowing before the wrong person. This is about their hearts being so far removed from the presence of the Lord that they would worship the *“beast and his image”* which directly opposed the image they were created in. *“...they have no rest..”* Their torment is endless, physically, but I also believe this speaks of their souls finding no rest (or peace) in the midst of it.
- **Cross-references:** Revelation 19:20; 20:10
- **Takeaway(s)**
 - Everything that comes as a byproduct of worshipping the Lord in Spirit and truth is completely lost to those who choose to worship the beast.
 - The severity of this is brought to life for me after looking at the depth of what worship is.
 - There is no indication that worship is about singing or music in this context