

Do You Want to Worship God?

“The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (Jn 4:23-24). God, your Creator, is the worthy object of your worship. In fact, the reason you are here is to worship and please God: “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev 4:11). If you do not worship God, you are missing out on your ultimate purpose in life. The question then arises, “How can I worship God?” In John 4:23-24, quoted above, we learn that true worship is in *spirit* and in *truth*. Let us consider these two divisions in order.

Worship in spirit

By nature, you are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1). You are spiritually dead, so you cannot worship God in spirit. You have broken God’s Law in countless ways, and are wicked and unrighteous: “There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Rom 3:10-12). You have a sinful nature, a “heart [that] is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer 17:9), so that “every imagination of the thoughts of [your] heart [is] only evil continually” (Gen 6:5) and you are “as an unclean thing, and all [your] righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Is 64:6). Until you are born again, you “cannot please God” (Rom 8:8) in any way, but are “defiled and unbelieving” with “nothing pure; but even [your] mind and conscience is defiled” (Tit 1:15). This very moment, “the wrath of God abideth” on you (Jn 3:36), and you are “condemned already” (Jn 3:18). You “have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out” (Num 32:23).

Because you have not continuously and perfectly obeyed, you are under the curse of God’s Law: “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal 3:10). Since “the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23), you are subject to both physical death, the separation of the soul and spirit from the body (Heb 9:27), and to spiritual death, the separation of a person from God. Your “damnation is just” (Rom 3:8), and you are consequently headed for the second death, eternal separation from God in the lake of fire: “This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev 20:14-15). In the lake of fire you “shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and [you] shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of [your] torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and [you] have no rest day nor night” (Rev 14:10-11). The question arises: “How can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Mt 23:33).

Jesus Christ is “God manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim 3:16). The Son of God, who existed from eternity past with the Father and the Holy Spirit, the three eternal Persons of the one and only true God (1 Jn 5:7), took to Himself a human nature, so that, although

He was still 100% God, He became 100% Man as well. He lived a sinless life and then died on the cross, where His Father “made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor 5:21). He then rose bodily from the grave and ascended to heaven, from whence He will soon return to judge the world. On the cross God laid your transgressions upon His Son, who suffered to pay your sin debt. The law demands perfect righteousness for entry into heaven, but Christ died as your Substitute so that His death and shed blood could pay for your sin, and you could have His righteousness put to your account and be counted righteous in God’s sight for the Savior’s sake. You can be saved, not through your own works, but through His work; not by your attempts to obey the law, but His perfect obedience to it and death to satisfy it. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us” (Gal 3:13). “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but [made alive] by the Spirit” (1 Pet 3:18). Since by “one offering he hath perfected for ever” those that are washed in His blood (Heb 10:14), there is no righteous act that you can do to save yourself, or to keep yourself saved. “Salvation is of the LORD” (Jon 2:9).

To have the Lord Jesus’ blood wash away your sins, you must place your faith in Him. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn 3:16). Saving faith in Jesus Christ involves:

a.) **Repentance.** “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Ac 3:19). In repentance, you agree with God that you are as bad as the Bible says you are, that you are headed to hell and deserve it for your sins, and you turn from your sins to submit unconditionally to God as your Lord. Jesus Christ said, “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life [wants to live his own way and will not turn to God’s way] shall lose it [in hell]; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:34-36).

b.) **Faith,** or trust in the Lord Jesus alone to save. You do not believe on Jesus Christ for salvation if you think that any good deed you have done, are doing, or will do helps save you, or if you believe that any religious ritual, such as baptism or communion, has a part to do with the forgiveness of your sins. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “For by grace [undeserved favor] are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” If salvation is “by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” (Rom 11:6). “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us” (Tit 3:5). Saving faith is also not just mental assent to facts, nor is it having an emotional experience, repeating a “sinner’s prayer,” responding to an “altar call,” or asking Jesus to come into your heart. Also, nobody can say that he has always believed in Christ. You must come to a specific point in your life where you see yourself as a lost, helpless sinner who deserves hell and is headed there, you must turn from your sins, and you must trust solely in the Lord Jesus for eternal life. You must forsake all confidence in your supposed goodness and your religious rituals and place your confidence in the Savior’s blood and righteousness alone.

If you will come to Jesus Christ for salvation, He will keep you saved; no one who has ever truly believed in Him can perish (Rom 8:28-39). Once you are saved, you are always saved, both from sin's penalty, eternal damnation, and from sin's power: "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor 5:21). If you will repent and believe in Him, he promises you everlasting life with Him in heaven upon His return or your death, and a holy life on earth now, freed from the bondage of sin. Then you will be able to truly worship Him in spirit. You will be able to fulfill your purpose in this life, and in the life to come.

You need to receive Jesus Christ immediately to save you from your sin. He promises, "him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (Jn 6:37). Repent, and turn to Him today! Tomorrow it may be too late. "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Pr 55:6-7).

Worship in truth

Once you have turned from your sins and trusted in Christ, God commands you to worship Him, not in spirit only, but in truth. Part of worship in truth is, every day, offering yourself as a living sacrifice to God: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom 12:1). God also commands you to worship Him publicly in His church (Heb 10:25) and to separate from all false religion: "[W]hat agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor 6:16-18). Going to a true church is not just something optional. It is necessary if you really want to worship God in truth. If God is a "Father unto you," you must "come out" and "be separate." While you must be born again before you can join a true church, so nobody is saved by being a church member, there are no examples in the New Testament of true believers who chose to reject the church for a false religion—all converts mentioned in the New Testament submitted to Biblical baptism and followed Jesus Christ in His church (Ac 2:41-47) unless they were literally unable to do so by, say, dying first (Lu 23:39-43). If you claim to be saved but you do not have a new nature that makes you want to follow Jesus Christ, whatever the cost, you should very seriously examine yourself to see if you have truly repented of your sin (2 Cor 13:5). There are no "Christians" like you in the Bible. We will look below at three marks of the true church of Jesus Christ.

1.) *True churches preach the true gospel*—that somebody is justified (declared righteous) before God by repentant faith in Christ alone (Rom 3:28; 4:5; 5:1) and once someone is saved, he is always saved, both from hell and from a life dominated by sin (Rom 8:28-39; 2 Cor 5:17). This means that all "Christian" groups that teach that salvation is by works, including Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, the Watchtower Society (so-called "Jehovah's Witnesses"), Mormonism, Seventh Day Adventism, and many others, cannot be true churches. All religious denominations that teach that simple morality will make

one acceptable to God, including those “mainline” or “liberal Christian” churches that deny that the Bible is the infallible Word of God, are false religions. All groups that say that infant baptism in some way contributes to salvation, including most Lutheran, Anglican or Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Reformed, and Methodist denominations, are not true churches. In fact, the Bible teaches that one “believeth and is baptized,” and commands “Repent, and be baptized (Mr 16:16; Ac 2:38). Infant baptism is a dangerous heresy that is not taught anywhere in the Bible, since infants cannot repent and believe, and religions that adopt this practice almost always end up seriously corrupting the gospel. Religious groups that teach that believer’s baptism remits sin, such as the so-called Christian church, Disciples of Christ, and Church of Christ denominations, as well as Oneness Pentecostalism, are heretical. Religious groups that teach that God fails to keep His people saved, but that one who has been born again can cease to be God’s child if he does not do enough good works, such as the overwhelming majority of the denominations in the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, attack justification by faith alone in a subtle way and are thus heretical.

There are many “evangelical” and “non-denominational” churches that claim to believe in justification by faith alone but corrupt the gospel by using worldly and fleshly “worship.” They attract crowds with ungodly marketing techniques that do not fit the holiness of God, instead of boldly preaching the gospel, living sacrificially, and making disciples, like churches did in the Bible (Mt 28:18-20; Ac 5:13; Lu 9:23). They get people to visit their congregations by giving away material goods, when the Lord Jesus commanded, “[M]ake not my Father’s house an house of merchandise” (Jo 2:16), and He used a whip to drive out those who did such wickedness from God’s place of worship (Jn 2:12-17). Such worldliness is the opposite of worship in spirit and in truth (Rom 13:14). Other “evangelical” churches do not require a holy life for church membership (Mt 18:15-18). Others are afraid to boldly and pointedly preach everything in the Bible (2 Tim 4:1-4) because they know that doing so will be unpopular and bring persecution (2 Tim 3:12). Instead of preaching, they give talks, or have dramas, or do skits, or do other things not found in Scripture. Others replace “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (Eph 5:19) with praise (?) choruses and other contemporary songs filled with “vain repetitions” (Mt 6:7) that have nothing like the content of the 150 inspired psalms of the Bible. Others use rock, jazz, blues, easy-listening, country-western, pop, or rap music originally written to encourage sexual immorality and wickedness, put Christian words to it, and think God will accept it. They ignore the fact that God has sent fire from heaven and burned people up for offering Him false worship (Lev 10:1-2). By turning from the pattern of Scripture, such “churches” lead people to think that God is not holy, but worldly and fleshly like the “worship” they offer Him. We are like what we worship (Ps 115:8). False worship leads to a false gospel, to “churches” that profess the truth but are filled with people who have never truly repented of their sins and trusted Christ (Rev 3:14-22). A watered-down presentation of the gospel, or the assumption that repeating a “sinner’s prayer” is the same as the repentance and faith that the Holy Spirit gives the spiritually dead sinner (2 Tim 2:25; Jn 16:8-11), also leads many “evangelical” churches to be filled with people who have a “form of godliness” but are not truly saved. Scripture is clear: “from such turn away” (2 Tim 3:5). While true churches rejoice to have lost people visit their services, their membership is made up of visible “saints” [holy people] (1 Cor 1:2) only, not a mixture of true believers and the ungodly. God calls all true

believers to separate from every false gospel and all false worship, to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph 5:11). True churches believe the words of Jesus Christ: “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (Jn 14:15). Because they love Jesus Christ, they want to practice everything He says, since He said: “Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:19).

2.) *True churches follow the pattern of the New Testament.* The Greek word *church* means *congregation* or *assembly*, a way it is translated in the Bible (Ac 19:41). Each church or congregation found in Scripture is an independent assembly—there are no religious hierarchies of popes, archbishops, priests, presidents, general assemblies, church courts, synods, national conventions, or anything else of the sort in Scripture—just independent congregations, with only two church offices—pastors, who are also called elders and bishops, and deacons (1 Tim 3; Ac 20:17, 28; 1 Pet 5:1-2). Since God states that pastors and deacons are to be the “husband of one wife,” women cannot have these positions (Tit 1:6; 1 Tim 3:8-11; 2:11-15; 1 Cor 14:34-37). True churches do not have sacraments, since there are no sacraments in Scripture. They recognize two “ordinances” (1 Cor 11:2), the baptism of believers by immersion (not sprinkling or pouring) upon profession of faith in Christ (Col 2:12; Ac 8:36-38; Mt 3:8) and the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11). The bread and fruit of the vine in the Supper do not change into anything else—at the time they are consumed, they are still bread (1 Cor 11:26-27) and juice from grapes (Mt 26:29). True churches practice these ordinances out of love for and in obedience to Jesus Christ. They recognize that neither baptism nor the Lord’s Supper save or help save anyone from his sin. They take very seriously the Biblical command: “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it” (Deut 4:2).

Since obedient churches do not add or take away from the Bible, they believe that the Lord Jesus kept His promise when He said that “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Mt 24:35; 5:18; Ps 12:6-7; Is 59:21). They receive (Jn 17:8) the pure Bible that God has preserved without corruption until today, accurately translated in the King James Version. They consequently reject corrupt translations of Scripture like the NIV, Living Bible, NRSV, NASV, and ESV. (If you want to see if you have a corrupt Bible, look at verses like Matthew 17:21 Mark 9:44, 46; Ac 8:37; 1 Jn 5:7 and see if they are still there just like they are in the KJV, or if they have been changed or taken out). They remember the solemn warning, “If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev 22:18-19).

Obedient churches also recognize that, while the most important thing is to love God from the heart, He has given us commands about our outward appearance as well. 1 Cor 11:14-16 state that the “churches of God” recognize that “if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him[,] but if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering,” and that “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God” (Deut 22:5), so they practice gender-distinction in appearance.

They wear “modest apparel” (1 Tim 2:9), since God says that He will “punish . . . all such as are clothed with strange [heathen, ungodly] apparel” (Zeph 1:8).

Obedient churches recognize that every member of their congregation should be involved in “go[ing] . . . into all the world” to “preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). They recognize that Christians are not only be good examples to those they knew personally (1 Pet 2:12) but are to seek to reach everybody. They would evangelize “publicly [reaching large groups at one time], and from house to house [one-on-one evangelism reaching every household],” preaching “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:20-21; 5:42; 8:1, 4; 17:17). Obedient churches today will follow the pattern in the Bible and try to reach every single person in their local community using methods like systematic house-to-house evangelism, as well as looking for and make opportunities to reach groups of people at once. They will strive to fill their community with the message of salvation (Acts 5:28), and support church planters to evangelize and establish new churches in other parts of the country and around the world, even “unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19; Luke 24:47).

Faithful churches will strive to practice all that is mentioned above, and everything else in the Bible. They will also obey the command in 2 Thess 3:6: “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”

3.) *True churches were founded by Jesus Christ* in the first century, not hundreds or thousands of years later. The Lord Jesus said, “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mt 16:18). God will get “glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages” (Eph 3:21). Any religious organization that originated after the first century cannot be the church of Christ. Roman Catholicism developed as the emperor Constantine united “church” and State in A. D. 325; the first real Pope was Leo I (A. D. 440-461). Many of its modern doctrines developed many centuries after Christ started His church—for example, the Mass was only officially instituted in A. D. 1215, while the sinless conception of Mary was decreed only in 1854, and the infallibility of the Pope only in A. D. 1870! Roman Catholicism is not the church of Christ.

Protestant denominations all started in the sixteenth century or later at the time of the Reformation. Since Jesus Christ started His church in the first century and promised to preserve it on earth, the idea that the true churches only started 1,500 years after Christ died and rose again is impossible. Protestant denominations cannot be the churches of Christ. Nor can churches in the modern “Bible church” and “nondenominational” movements, which only started in the twentieth century. Nor can the various modern cults that have existed for only a few hundred years be the church Jesus Christ started nearly 2,000 years ago.

However, congregations that believe and practice like modern Bible-believing Baptist churches have existed from the first century until today. Known under different names through the centuries, martyred, tortured, and persecuted by their “Christian” opponents, they have gone under different names through the centuries, such as Waldenses, Donatists, Cathari, and Anabaptists. Today they are simply called “Baptist.” In the words of the Catholic cardinal and historian Hosius, who wrote at the time of the

Reformation (A. D. 1560): “If the truth of religion were to be judged by the readiness and boldness of which a man of any sect shows in suffering, then the opinion and persuasion of no sect can be truer and surer than that of the Anabaptists since there have been none for these twelve hundred years past, that have been more generally punished.” This Catholic cardinal admitted that the Baptists had been around since A. D. 360. Allowing them an origin any earlier would make his position very uncomfortable. The Protestant historians Durmont & Ypeig wrote: “[The Baptists] descended from the tolerably pure evangelical Waldenses. . . . They were, therefore, in existence long before the Reformed Church . . . We have seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists . . . were the original Waldenses; and who have long in the history of the Church, received the honor of that origin. On this account the Baptists may be considered the only Christian community which has stood since the Apostles; and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrine of the gospel through all ages.” Only Baptist churches have been around since the first century. They alone fulfill the promise of Jesus Christ that the gates of hell would not prevail against His church.

Have you repented of your sins and trusted in Christ to save you? If not, you should do so immediately. Joining a true church of Christ will not save you from any sin—“the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn 1:7). The death and blood of the Son of God is the only payment that will satisfy the wrath of God against you for your sins. Now is the time for you to receive salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. God will make you spiritually alive, so that you can worship Him in spirit.

If you have come to Christ in repentant faith and had His blood wash away your sins, have you united yourself with one of His true churches? If not, you need to do this immediately. God wants your worship, not in private only, but also publicly in His congregation. He wants worship in truth. When you repented of your sins, you committed yourself to following Jesus Christ, whatever the cost (Lu 14:25-33). He said, “Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Lu 14:27). Do you want to worship God?

For more information about salvation, or for a free Bible study series that explains the way to eternal life and how to worship God after you have been saved, download from the website below, or call, visit, or write to:

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