

## A BIBLICAL STUDY ON PRAISE

### LESSON FIVE: PRAISE AND WORSHIP

by Sandy Harber

**"O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth." Psalms 96:9**

Praise and worship. Worship and praise. These terms go hand-in-hand. At times they are used interchangeably. The concepts are that close. And why not? Praise is indeed a part of worship. When we praise God we are also worshipping Him. One hundred percent. On the other hand, all worship is not praise. Worship is a big umbrella under which falls praise, prayer, service to God and to others, scripture reading and instruction, sacrificial giving, tithing, obedience to His Word, and more. Everything we say, do, and think from dawn to dusk can be an act of worship. There is one important difference between praise and worship: praise may be given to anyone but worship is for God alone. We may praise our children when they get good grades. We may praise an athlete for winning a game or competition. Praise, which is commendation, may be bestowed upon anyone for an achievement of any kind. But worship - an attitude of reverence, homage, and submission - is reserved for the one true God (Ex. 20:3-6; Mt. 4:10) and to Him only.

The English word "worship" comes down from the German to the middle English term "worthship," which referred to the action of human beings in expressing homage to God because He is worthy of it. The primary Hebrew and Greek words translated "worship" in our Bibles mean "to cause oneself to lie prostrate," "bow down," "to depress (i.e. prostrate)," "fall down flat," "do obeisance," "do reverence," "humbly beseech." The idea is complete submission. In addition, both Hebrew and Greek have a term that stresses service to God. Worship starts inwardly with an attitude of awe and thanksgiving and humble submission to His will. It acknowledges God's presence every moment in our lives. Worship is demonstrated outwardly by our activities (praise, prayer, service, etc.) and relationships (to other Christians, neighbors, enemies, etc.) that are in obedience to His Word and the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Worship is divine intoxication: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). As the drunk surrenders control of his mind and body to the influence of the wine, so we should surrender control to the indwelling Holy Spirit. Through His guidance everything we say and do will be an act of worship to our Lord.

God has commanded His people to gather together to encourage one another in the faith (Heb. 10:25). From the beginning, new converts were immediately baptized and brought into the fellowship where they received instruction and joined together in prayer and praise (Acts 5:42; 1:41-42, 46-47). The Church today continues the practice started over 2,000 years ago of communal worship. Our Sunday morning Worship Service is aptly named because it contains many elements of worship: Praise, prayer, giving, Scripture reading and instruction, and taking communion.

The praise portion of the Worship Service consists of the singing of hymns, choruses, and contemporary Christian songs. The methodology varies from church to church. Congregational singing may be led by the Pastor, Praise Leader, Praise Team, or a formal choir. Individuals and groups provide "special" music. Musical instruments provide accompaniment, especially the piano or organ. Several "praise" words in the Hebrew and Greek mean "to play a stringed instrument with the fingers," such as a harp and lyre. An orchestra or band is available in some areas, especially in the larger churches. Each local church utilizes the unique musical talent available. Singing praises to our Creator and Redeemer sets the mood for the rest of the worship service.

Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn at the end of their Passover celebration (Mt. 26:30). Many of the hymns we sing in our own worship service contain words drawn from the book of Psalms, Israel's hymnbook, Praise cannot be separated from worship; it's an integral part of it. So, praise the Lord. Sing a hymn. Compose your own song of praise because He is worthy.

*"I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations." Psalm 89:1*