

Eternity Past

Eternity Future

The LandBetween

M I N I S T R I E S

The mission of the LandBetween Ministries is to equip leaders to fulfill Christ's Great Commission of heart-focused discipleship in a broken world.

Newsletter

Volume V Issue No. 1 — Dec 2012 / Jan 2013

❖ NEWSLETTER THEME:

THE WORSHIP OF MAN vs. GOD

❖ Online tax-deductible gifts to this ministry can be made by going to: www.landbetween.org

"I can safely say, on the authority of all that is revealed in the Word of God, that any man or woman on this earth who is bored and turned off by worship is not ready for heaven." -- A.W. Tozer

The Emptiness of Man Worship

The worship of man has its roots in Satan and has led to unconscionable pain and agony. Despite its track record of carnage and leaving people with an insatiable inner emptiness, the the worship of man can be difficult to define and counteract. Not all aspects of the worship of man can be covered here; but, the goal is to define worship, the root of worshipping man, its characteristics, and some final thoughts.

"I've seen these stairs before" I thought. Then, as I walked up them I felt how uneven and difficult they were to climb. This difficulty was by design, as these were the infamous "Stairs of Death" at the Mauthausen Nazi concentration camp in Austria.

During part of his youth, Adolf Hitler lived near Mauthausen in Linz, Austria. The veteran missionary who gave me a tour of the area showed me the dark beige building where as a middle-schooler Hitler took religious classes.

However, organized religion did not fill the void in Hitler's heart. Instead of finding fulfillment in worshipping the triune God, Hitler worshiped a man, a fascist tyrant, Benito Mussolini.

Both Hitler and Mussolini would die in disgrace. Yet, for a season these men were worshiped like emperors.

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

Dr. Ronald Allen and Dr. Gordon Borrer: "Worship is an active response to God whereby we declare His worth."¹ Another element of worshipping God is to recognize His spiritual nature. In teaching the Samaritan woman, Jesus tells us to worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Swindoll and Zuck point out, "Worship must focus on spiritual realities, not physical formalities, and should not be limited by time or place."² Regardless of time or place, God is worthy of our worship. The English word "worship" stems from the Anglo-Saxon "*weorthiscope*" that turned to "*worthship*" and then "*worship*".³

How will we worship God in the midst of a world that calls us to worship it?

The worship of God may occur during a time and place like a worship service; however, worship has a much deeper element to it than singing or experiencing emotions. Dr. Eugene Merrill explains: "The Hebrew concept of worship centered not around emotional expressions as much as the volitional decision to submit oneself to God."⁴

Our choosing to come under the Lordship of Jesus and receiving His blessings means we

will worship God by living in a way that our bodies are holy (set apart) and acceptable to God. Worship at its root deals with the inner attitude of the heart, and how we live in our bodies reveals where we are in regards to our spiritual acts of worship (Romans 12:1).

The Hebrew and Greek words in Scripture for worship carry a range of meanings such as honor, serve, and bowing down low (prostrating) in reverence. The main elements of worship expressed in the Bible are the following: 1. Humility. 2. Reverence. 3. Service.⁵ Worship in these three areas and others is very important to God and it should be important to us.

The worship of God can bring your heart love, joy, courage, and peace; but, the worship of man and false gods brings frustration and a life of meaninglessness. The vain worship of man is very prevalent in our culture and has its roots from the craftiness of Satan.

ROOT OF WORSHIPING MAN

The root of man worship began with Satan succeeding in tempting Adam and Eve to listen to and act upon the lie that Satan's words were worthy of following. Satan, filled with audacious pride, tried to tempt Jesus into worshipping him in exchange for giving Jesus the kingdoms and glory of the world that Jesus already owned (Matt. 4:9). It is no surprise Satan would have such pride. In his jealousy of the worship the angels gave to God, Satan tried to leverage his role as the head angel...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to be the one worshiped instead of God. Because of Satan's rebellion, God cast Satan and a third of all the angels to be cursed by God and cast out of their heavenly positions.

Since his rebellion against God, Satan's priority is to tempt humans to worship created beings instead of the Creator God. The purpose of Satan prowling around is to have you join him in the misery of a life that does not worship God. This misery is found in Genesis 3, where the context is the garden of Eden.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MAN AND CREATURE WORSHIP

Satan markets man worship as benefiting the people; he keeps the focus on their desires.

Throughout history, the men of incredulous evil who were worshipped hardly ever rose to power by first demanding submission. Rather, they made deceptive speeches that lured the masses into thinking the leader had the masses' best interests at heart. In his rise to power, Hitler made himself look as if he was one of the working class whose heart was for the disenfranchised. But, Hitler knew of the brutal bondage he would inflict upon the people he pretended to save. Where did Hitler learn such tactics? The root of it was in Eden.

The cunning chess moves played by Satan in the garden of Eden would draw the envy of a marketing genius. Satan's entire focus while talking with Eve was the benefits that would come to her and Adam if they would eat fruit from the forbidden tree.

Likewise, today as we live in a culture that bombards us with the benefits of their products. It is easy to become fixated on the benefits of becoming associated with certain people and buying certain things. The worship of obtaining material things often substitutes for the worship of God. There is a never-ending lust of wanting to have the things people think will bring happiness. But, the "benefits"

of worldly worship end as curses and leave people empty.

The worship of man appears to be free but is very costly.

In Eden, Satan never put a price tag on what it would cost to worship him; but, God did. Adam and Eve knew the cost of ignoring God's commands. Instead, their behavior revealed they chose to "worth-ship" Satan.

Likewise, believers in America are increasingly rebelling God when it comes to their behavior and are taking the enemy's route of doing whatever they feel like doing. The sexual immorality and lies running rampant in the culture does nothing but prove there is an increase in the worship of the creature instead of God. Sexual immorality, lies, and other sins stemming from the worship of man often do not cost anything financially, but are very deadly. These sins destroy the thing we should value most: Worshiping God and relating well with Him and others.



Adam and Eve *believed* worshiping Satan would get them what they wanted. But, their ignoring the worship of God led to all the wars and sufferings that still ravage the world. Yet, the true worship of God always leads to eternal peace and satisfaction. Until God is given the complete devotion and praise He deserves, those who ignore Him remain in turmoil.

The worship of man creates a crisis

Satan created a crisis by lying that God "knew" the forbidden fruit would open Adam and Eve's eyes; he lied by implying God was withholding good things from them (Gen. 3:5).

By creating this crisis of loyalty between himself and God, Satan lured Adam and Eve away from the worship God deserved. When Adam

and Eve found Satan's words worthy of obedience, they began to worship him.

Often, the enemy can plant a crisis in your mind, such as thoughts of God not caring for you or the lie that there is no way out of your problem. The enemy incited a crisis in the heart of David that there needed to be a census (1 Chron. 21:1). Instead of David worshiping God by finding it worthwhile to listen to God, David quickly reacted to the crisis Satan incited and had Joab take the census. As a result of David's failure to worship God, there was a great price inflicted on the Israelites.

The Gibeonites craftily made up a crisis in order to bail themselves out of trouble (Josh 9) and because God's people failed to worship Him by humbly inquiring of His wisdom, it cost them in the long run.

In the New Testament, Satan tried to create a crisis of doubt in the mind of Jesus as to the truth of Jesus being the son of God. In Luke 4:3, Satan tempts Jesus to prove His deity by turning stones into bread. Unlike Adam and Eve, Jesus does not bite Satan's bait. Jesus did not waste His time dialoguing with the devil. Jesus rebuked Satan's temptations with the truth and told Satan to not tempt the Lord and the devil left (Lk. 4:13).

Enticed by Satan, people can create a crisis and then try to make you solve it. Manipulation like this can be subtle, but prove to be damaging. People may try to tempt others to enter into self-worship by pridefully thinking that another person is *the* answer to *all* their needs. Like the Gibeonites in the Old Testament, they can act weak and as if another person is the only one that can solve their problems. But, don't let flattery or someone's false stories lead you to think that their worship of you is good. If you worship someone else or accept the worship of others, both of these sins will only lead to negative outcomes. Worship of man creates impossible expectations that can never be filled. *CONTINUED ON PAGE 3*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2...

Self-worship can lead someone to believe the lie that they are the solution for all of someone else's problems. This lie can lead to pride, resulting in the vain and empty worship of man.

Some of the most effective discipleship and counseling training emphasizes that God is to be worshiped and not the counselor. The counselor is not the source of the answers for those in crisis. The most effective counselors and disciple-makers make it clear up front to those they are ministering to that the counselor's role is not to solve the other person's problems; rather, the counselor or disciple-maker's first priority is to help the counselee find answers from Jesus and His Word as they worship Him. This way, God receives the worship of which He is worthy and the person learns to go to God directly to ask Him to supply the inner needs in their heart (Ps. 139). By helping someone learn how to worship the heavenly Father by going directly to Him with their needs, it helps them know they are never alone and that God will accept them and their Biblical worship right where they are.

WORSHIP TAKES FOCUS

It takes a lot of focus to remain in an attitude of prayer when you are helping others become the worshipers of God He designed them to become. When you are helping others, you need to be worshiping the Lord yourself. And, strive to not let the problems of the other person lead you to be distracted from what hurting people need, which is an accurate view of God and His love for them. Certainly, we are to deeply empathize with what others are going through, and depending on how God leads, sometimes the best thing is to just be with someone and worship God.

At other times, the Lord may want us to share more truth from the Word and insights the Holy Spirit has given regarding another person's particular situation.

But, the goal is for everyone to become a worshiper of God. The goal is not merely for the person you're helping to say the "right" answers back to you or simply show positive emotions about God and His Word. Rather, one of many goals is that the other person will worship God from deep within their heart, their whole mind, and their emotions. We are responsible for worshiping God by expressing emotions of His Spirit such as love, joy, peace.

Jesus said, "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." - John 4:24

It is relatively easy to go to worship services and mouth words and interact with people.

But, is it really worshipping? What is the focus of the thoughts and emotions? People can sing words to a song in church, but their minds can be far from the words. They may think they are worshipping but their hearts are disconnected. People can fake others here on earth that they are worshipers of God; but, no matter how skilled at deception one may be with people, they cannot deceive the One who died for them. When they do not worship God from their hearts, they are the ones who lose out on the deep and secure benefits that only come from focusing on God and worshipping the Way, Truth, and Life (John 16:4).

ATTITUDE TOWARDS WORSHIP

God's commands, like the one in John 4:24 to "...worship Him in spirit and in truth", are not designed to weigh us down with one more thing to *do*, but are *prescriptive* of the type of person we are to strive to *become*. The enemy of our soul will try to tempt us to believe the lie that worship of God is so "hard" to "do" and that the Bible is so "confusing" that we give up on worshipping God with our whole heart. The truth is that when God gives us an imperative (command), He is not out to bring us more stress or to confuse our minds (1 John 5:3). Instead, he desires that we experience the benefits of a life fully worshipful of Jesus. It is helpful to consistently remind ourselves that



God desires us to worship Him because He knows what is best for us. In His love, He provides His presence in our hearts and He gives the the capacity to worship Him at all times.

The worship of God Jesus calls us to in John 4:24 is not an option. Worship can be seen in the lives of prisoners of war such as Corrie Ten Boom and her sister Betsy. Corrie and Betsy found Jesus worthy of worship while they suffered great pain in the midst a concentration camp run by evil men. This type of worship by the Ten Boom sisters and other believers like them is not dependent on life being "nice" before giving God the glory due His name. Ironically, when you worship God when you feel like it the least is when you can benefit the most. It is in choosing to praise God in the hard times that you can experience His love and his caring for your heart in deeper ways than if you are only a "fair-weather" worshiper.

Focusing on praising God for His character, including His love, joy, and peace, leads us to experience these emotions in our own hearts. The world seeks love, joy, peace, and other positive emotions through its forms of worship, but they fail because they ignore wor-

shipping God. We are designed by God to experience the warmth and acceptance that only He can give us in this cold world. Only by the worship of God and being responsive to Him can we find the love and acceptance we need.

People spend time and money worshipping musicians, movie stars, and sports figures, but still have an inner ache and emptiness that can only be filled by worshipping Jesus. In this era of cable and satellite TV, Internet, smart phones, and more entertainment options than ever before, we are being pulled to find things worthy of our spiritual and physical attention. We need to be careful that the "pull" of the world and its endless options of worship does not take us away from what our hearts and minds need to remain healthy and vibrant and glorifying to God. We need to be aware that when Jesus tells us to worship Him in spirit and truth, He is telling us that He is calling *all* of who we are (spirit, emotions, mind, etc.) to find Him worthy of our praise, honor, and focus.

Devoting time or resources on such things as music, movies, or sports teams, essentially demonstrates what we believe is important to us. With our time or money, we are saying, "We find what you are doing is worthy our time and devotion." Or, we could say we are letting others know that, "We're glad to be with you" in this concert hall or sports arena. In a similar way, when God is worshiped, it is like we are saying, "We are glad to know you and we are glad to be with You." A key theme in the Bible is that of "Immanuel" which means "God with us."

Jesus came to earth to be with us and to go to the cross to save us from sin and separation from Him. This separation from God was brought into the world by man's sin. In this fallen world, Satan is jealous of the worship due to God and is trying to weaken us by tempting us to worship music, people, or anything but Jesus. Those who experience the presence of God that comes from worshipping Him also experience the joy and strength that only God can provide (Neh. 8:10).

In contrast to the attitude of joy found in worshipping the true God, evil men have tried to market and force people to worship false gods and idols (Daniel 3:11-15). But, this type of worship leads to death.

ANTICHRIST AND WORSHIP

The Bible prophesies that a fraudulent global savior will come during these last days; he will be the "antichrist" (1 John 2:18-22). This antichrist will is also connected to the "man of lawlessness" (2 Thess. 3-12).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4...

PROMISES TO RELY ON

IN A WORLD OF UNCERTAINTY,
GOD'S PROMISES STAND SECURE

"And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'"

-- Luke 4:8

"Who will not fear, O LORD, and glorify Your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

-- Revelation 15:4

Jesus said, "...in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." -- Mark 7:7

"Exalt the LORD our God and worship Him at his holy mountain; for the LORD our God is holy!" -- Psalm 99:9

References

1. Ronald Allen and Gordon Borrer, *Worship: Rediscovering the Missing Jewel*, 16.
2. Chuck Swindoll and Roy Zuck, *Understanding Christian Theology*, 180.
3. *Ibid*, 245.
4. Eugene Merrill, *The Bible Knowledge Word Study (Gen-Deut)*, 173.
5. Bob Deffinbaugh, *Worship (Part 1) (John 4:1-6)* www.bible.org
6. Harry Schaumburg, *False Intimacy*, 88-89.

About the President:

Joel Francis is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary with a four-year Master of Theology (Th.M.); Michigan State University, B.A., Telecommunications.

The LandBetween Ministries

831N 550E

Lafayette, IN 47905

Internet: www.landbetween.org

The LandBetween Ministries is a 501c(3) non-profit organization. All contributions are tax-deductible and will further the worldwide teaching of God's Word and equipping of His church.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3...

The world leader of the antichrist system will have unrivaled earthly power and people will feel compelled to worship him (Rev. 13:4).

The antichrist will severely attack the saints of God (Rev. 13:7). The saints of God will choose to worship Jesus in spirit and truth and they will have an eternal reward in heaven and will have the right to enter God's city (heaven) for an infinity of blessings and peace (Rev. 22:14). Those who are evil, like the antichrist, will be proud and cruel to those who worship Jesus, but their evil will be repaid (Rev. 22:12) and they will experience punishment for the pain they caused true worshippers of Jesus.

The antichrist will have the same spirit as Satan, and will position himself as the "Solution" to the problems of the world. People will be deceived by the antichrist who will present himself as the global savior, just like the Serpent presented himself to Adam and Evil to solve their "problem" of a lack of knowledge.

As the Serpent attempted to deceive Adam and Eve, he will work to deceive the entire world, including God's people. The deceived will clamor to worship the antichrist and will put their hope in him to keep the world stable, usher in global peace, which will establish a one world government.

The people of the world will believe the deceptive and powerful signs of the antichrist (false prophet) and will worship him (Rev. 19:20). But this false prophet will be defeated by Jesus.

WORSHIP: SEXUALITY

Dr. Harry Schaumburg, has a well received book on the struggle of sexual addiction called, *"False Intimacy."*

Regarding fantasy, Dr. Schaumburg writes, "A sexual fantasy stems from a desire to gain more in a relationship than is possible." He goes on to share how people can "gorge" themselves with passion and try to "...move into a state free of any chance for disappointment." However, Dr. Schaumburg aptly points out, "...the very desire to know the bliss of the Garden (Eden) here on earth is skewed by our obsession with self. In demanding the bliss of someone else's real or imagined warmth, we become consumed with ourselves, which destroys the very ecstasy we seek."

This obsession with self is a form of self worship; and, the destruction self-worship is at work if sexual fulfillment is sought in any context other than a marriage between a man and a woman. Thus, focusing on ourselves leaves us, "...always wanting and therefore always destroying what we want. The process is

insane. Until we become consumed with the love that desires to give for the sake of another's good, all joy is an illusion." (p. 88). We cannot expect to find fulfillment in life if we worship ourselves or others because it leaves us "adulterous" in God's eyes.

Because of their prideful expression of sexual immorality and the worship of their own perverted pleasures, cultures that reject God's design for sexuality have spiraled down into meaninglessness and unbridled violence. Eventually, cultures that continually worship Satan in sexual immorality go extinct.

Many "Christians" think they can worship themselves by having no sexual moral boundaries; however, God has always made clear His disdain for cultures that insist on worshiping the creature rather than the creator God (Rom. 1).

DECEPTION -- MAN WORSHIP

Satan's goal is to deceive humans in to thinking they can worship both themselves and God. A command of God: *"Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."* (Rev. 14:7).

The worship of man is partly seen in the hero worship of popular political leaders, sports stars, entertainers, and others. The worship of these fallen people leads to emptiness of heart and sinfully fails to honor the Lord Jesus.

DECEPTION DESTROYED

God requires that people worship Him based on Biblical truth. In contrast, ungodly worship is based on lies. Truth and security are experienced by embracing the great promises and blessings that come to those who worship Jesus with their whole hearts.

To grow in our appreciation and knowledge of God's good character in this fallen world, we must see Him as worthy of *all* our worship. This fallen world's problems are put into perspective when we see that Jesus is the center of all things, the giver of truth and eternal life.

When John, a disciple of Jesus, saw a powerful angel in Revelation, he fell down to worship the angel. Unlike the fallen angel Lucifer, who sought the sinful worship from Adam and Eve, God's angel in Revelation had a totally different approach to worship. When John fell down to worship God's angel, the angel redirected John, "...You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." (Revelation. 22:9).