

Acceptable Worship

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Who?

Worship should be offered to Jehovah God, not to mankind, mammon, or any material object (Matt. 4:8-10; Acts 7:41-43; Rom. 1:24-25).

Matthew 4:8-10 ... 8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; 9 and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.' "
(NASB95)

Acts 7:41-43 ... 41 "At that time they made a calf and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. 42 "But God turned away and delivered them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, 'It was not to Me that you offered victims and sacrifices forty years in the wilderness, was it, O house of Israel? 43 'You also took along the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of the god Rompha, the images which you made to worship. I also will remove you beyond Babylon.' (NASB95)

Romans 1:24-25 ... 24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (NASB95)

The Lord accepts the worship of the righteous (Psa. 24:3-6; 141:1-4; 145:17-21), but the service and sacrifice of the wicked is rejected (Prov. 15:8, 29; 28:9).

Psalm 24:3-6 ... 3 Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood And has not sworn deceitfully. 5 He shall receive a blessing from the Lord And righteousness from the God of his salvation. 6 This is the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Your face—even Jacob. Selah. (NASB95)

Psalm 141:1-4 ... 1 A Psalm of David. O Lord, I call upon You; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to You! 2 May my prayer be counted as incense before You; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering. 3 Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips. 4 Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, To practice deeds of wickedness With men who do iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies. (NASB95)

Psalm 145:17-21 ... 17 The Lord is righteous in all His ways And kind in all His deeds. 18 The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth. 19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them. 20 The Lord keeps all who love Him, But all the wicked He will destroy. 21 My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, And all flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever. (NASB95)

Proverbs 15:8 ... 8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, But the prayer of the upright is His delight. (NASB95)

Proverbs 15:29 ... 29 The Lord is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous. (NASB95)

Proverbs 28:9 ... 9 He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, Even his prayer is an abomination. (NASB95)

What?

Several Greek word families are used in Scripture to communicate the concept of worship.

- *Latreuō* means “to serve,” and describes the carrying out of religious duties. So likewise, *latreia*, derived from *latreuō*, refers to “service/worship” that is offered to God.
- *Proskuneō* means “to express in attitude or gesture one’s complete dependence on or submission to a high authority figure, (fall down and) worship, do obeisance to, prostrate oneself before, do reverence to...” [BDAG]. In like manner, *proskunētēs*, derived from *proskuneō*, refers to “a worshiper.”
- *Sebō* means “to worship,” i.e., “to express in gestures, rites, or ceremonies one’s allegiance or devotion to deity...” *Sebazomai*, derived from *sebō*, means “to fear, specifically to have reverential awe” i.e., “to show reverence to, worship.”

Broadly speaking, there are five acts of worship in both the Old and New Covenants. In the Old Testament, faithful Israelites offered up praise (singing/instrumental music), prayer, the proclamation of God’s word, sacrifice, and tithing. Similarly, in the New Testament, faithful Christians engage in praise (singing), prayer, preaching, observance of the Lord’s supper, and giving (Acts 2:42; 12:5; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20-26; 16:1-2; Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16-17; Heb. 2:10-13).

Acts 2:42 ... 42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. (NASB95)

Acts 12:5 ... 5 So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God. (NASB95)

Acts 20:7 ... 7 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight. (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 11:20-26 ... 20 Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, 21 for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you. 23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 ... 1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. 2 On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. (NASB95)

Ephesians 5:18-20 ... 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; (NASB95)

Colossians 3:16-17 ... 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (NASB95)

Hebrews 2:10-13 ... 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. 11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 saying, "I will proclaim Your name to My brethren, In the midst of the congregation I will sing Your praise." 13 And again, "I will put My trust in Him." And again, "Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me." (NASB95)

When?

In the Old Testament, collective worship was offered on designated Holy Days: annual festivals, new moons, sabbaths, etc. (Exod. 20:8-11; 23:14-17; Lev. 23:26-32).

Exodus 20:8-11 ... 8 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. 11 "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and made it holy. (NASB95)

Exodus 23:14-17 ... 14 “Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me. 15 “You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed. 16 “Also you shall observe the Feast of the Harvest of the first fruits of your labors from what you sow in the field; also the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year when you gather in the fruit of your labors from the field. 17 “Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord God. (NASB95)

Leviticus 23:26-32 ... 26 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 27 “On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to the Lord. 28 “You shall not do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before the Lord your God. 29 “If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people. 30 “As for any person who does any work on this same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. 31 “You shall do no work at all. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. 32 “It is to be a sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall humble your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall keep your sabbath.” (NASB95)

In the New Testament, worship is offered on the first day of the week, and whenever God’s people assemble (Heb. 10:19-25). Singing, prayers and the proclamation of God’s word may occur at any time (Acts 16:25-26); however, observance of the Lord’s supper and giving should take place on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Hebrews 10:19-25 ... 19 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. (NASB95)

Acts 16:25-26 ... 25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 26 and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were unfastened. (NASB95)

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1 Corinthians 16:1-2 ... 1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. 2 On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. (NASB95)

Where?

Some mistakenly argue that everything we do is worship. However, the Genesis account of the offering of Isaac reveals the fallacy of this assertion: While Abraham readily engaged in all necessary preparation, worship was considered a distinct and unique act of obedience (Gen. 22:1-14).

*Genesis 22:1-14 ... 1 Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. 5 Abraham said to his young men, "**Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you.**" 6 Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. 7 Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together. 9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 12 He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." 13 Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. 14 Abraham called the name of that place **The Lord Will Provide**, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the Lord it will be provided." (NASB95)*

In the Old Testament, God's people could offer up prayers and praise in any time and any place. They could proclaim and ponder divine revelation in a variety of circumstances. However, sacrifice and tithing were offered in the place of God's choosing (Deut. 12:1-19); so likewise, the annual festivals of Passover (Deut. 16:1-8), Pentecost (Deut. 16:9-12), and Tabernacles (Deut. 16:13-17).

Deuteronomy 12:1-19 ... 1 "These are the statutes and the judgments which you shall carefully observe in the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess as long as you live on the earth. 2 "You shall utterly destroy all the places where

the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. 3 “You shall tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods and obliterate their name from that place. 4 “You shall not act like this toward the Lord your God. 5 **“But you shall seek the Lord at the place which the Lord your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come.** 6 “There you shall bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the contribution of your hand, your votive offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock. 7 “There also you and your households shall eat before the Lord your God, and rejoice in all your undertakings in which the Lord your God has blessed you. 8 “You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes; 9 for you have not as yet come to the resting place and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you. 10 “When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around you so that you live in security, 11 **then it shall come about that the place in which the Lord your God will choose for His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution of your hand, and all your choice votive offerings which you will vow to the Lord.** 12 “And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion or inheritance with you. 13 **“Be careful that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every cultic place you see, 14 but in the place which the Lord chooses** in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you. 15 “However, you may slaughter and eat meat within any of your gates, whatever you desire, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and the deer. 16 “Only you shall not eat the blood; you are to pour it out on the ground like water. 17 **“You are not allowed to eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or new wine or oil, or the firstborn of your herd or flock, or any of your votive offerings which you vow, or your freewill offerings, or the contribution of your hand.** 18 **“But you shall eat them before the Lord your God in the place which the Lord your God will choose,** you and your son and daughter, and your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God in all your undertakings. 19 “Be careful that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land. (NASB95)

Deuteronomy 16:1-8 ... 1 “Observe the month of Abib and celebrate the Passover to the Lord your God, for in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt by night. 2 **“You shall sacrifice the Passover to the Lord your God from the flock and the herd, in the place where the Lord chooses to establish His name.** 3 “You shall not eat leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat with it unleavened bread, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), so that you may remember all the days of your life the day when you came out of the land of Egypt. 4 “For seven days no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory, and none of the flesh which you sacrifice on the evening of the first day shall remain overnight until morning. 5 **“You are not allowed to sacrifice the Passover in any of your towns which the Lord your God is giving you; 6 but at the place where the Lord your God chooses** to establish His name,

*you shall sacrifice the Passover in the evening at sunset, at the time that you came out of Egypt. 7 **“You shall cook and eat it in the place which the Lord your God chooses. In the morning you are to return to your tents. 8 “Six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a solemn assembly to the Lord your God; you shall do no work on it. (NASB95)***

*Deuteronomy 16:9-12 ... 9 “You shall count seven weeks for yourself; you shall begin to count seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain. 10 **“Then you shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God with a tribute of a freewill offering of your hand, which you shall give just as the Lord your God blesses you; 11 and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite who is in your town, and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your midst, in the place where the Lord your God chooses to establish His name. 12 “You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes. (NASB95)***

*Deuteronomy 16:13-17 ... 13 “You shall celebrate the Feast of Booths seven days after you have gathered in from your threshing floor and your wine vat; 14 and you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your towns. 15 **“Seven days you shall celebrate a feast to the Lord your God in the place which the Lord chooses, because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful. 16 “Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed. 17 “Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you. (NASB95)***

Eventually, God chose Jerusalem and Mt. Zion as the permanent place where such worship should be offered (2 Chron. 7:11-18; Psa. 78:67-72).

*2 Chronicles 7:11-18 ... 11 Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord and the king’s palace, and successfully completed all that he had planned on doing in the house of the Lord and in his palace. 12 **Then the Lord appeared to Solomon at night and said to him, “I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. 13 “If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, 14 and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land. 15 “Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place. 16 “For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that My name may be there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. 17 “As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, even to do according to all that I have commanded you, and will keep My statutes and My ordinances, 18 then I will establish your royal throne as I covenanted with your father David, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man to be ruler in Israel.’ (NASB95)***

*Psalm 78:67-72 ... 67 He also rejected the tent of Joseph, And did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, 68 **But chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved.** 69 And He built His sanctuary like the heights, Like the earth which He has founded forever. 70 He also chose David His servant And took him from the sheepfolds; 71 From the care of the ewes with suckling lambs He brought him To shepherd Jacob His people, And Israel His inheritance. 72 So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, And guided them with his skillful hands. (NASB95)*

While praise may be offered individually, it regularly occurs in the public assembly (2 Chron. 29:28-30; Neh. 5:13; Psa. 22:22, 25; cf. Heb. 2:10-13; Psa. 35:18; 89:5; 107:32; 111:1; 149:1; etc.).

*2 Chronicles 29:28-30 ... 28 While **the whole assembly worshiped**, the singers also sang and the trumpets sounded; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. 29 Now at the completion of the burnt offerings, the king and all who were present with him bowed down and worshiped. 30 Moreover, King Hezekiah and the officials ordered the Levites to sing praises to the Lord with the words of David and Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with joy, and bowed down and worshiped. (NASB95)*

*Nehemiah 5:13 ... 13 I also shook out the front of my garment and said, “Thus may God shake out every man from his house and from his possessions who does not fulfill this promise; even thus may he be shaken out and emptied.” **And all the assembly said, “Amen!” And they praised the Lord.** Then the people did according to this promise. (NASB95)*

Psalm 22:22 ... 22 I will tell of Your name to my brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You. (NASB95)

Psalm 22:25 ... 25 From You comes my praise in the great assembly; I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him. (NASB95)

Hebrews 2:10-13 ... 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. 11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 saying, “I will proclaim Your name to My brethren, In the midst of the congregation I will sing Your praise.” 13 And again, “I will put My trust in Him.” And again, “Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me.” (NASB95)

Psalm 35:18 ... 18 I will give You thanks in the great congregation; I will praise You among a mighty throng. (NASB95)

Psalm 89:5 ... 5 The heavens will praise Your wonders, O Lord; Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones. (NASB95)

Psalm 107:32 ... 32 Let them extol Him also in the congregation of the people, And praise Him at the seat of the elders. (NASB95)

Psalm 111:1 ... 1 Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart, In the company of the upright and in the assembly. (NASB95)

Psalm 149:1 ... 1 Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, And His praise in the congregation of the godly ones. (NASB95)

In the New Testament, worship is not connected with a specific/exclusive physical location, like the city of Jerusalem (John 4:20-24). Saints were scattered throughout the world (Mal. 1:11; 1 Tim. 2:8). Thus, we read of the church of God at Corinth, Philippi, the seven churches of Asia Minor, etc. (1 Cor. 1:1-2; Phil. 1:1-2; Rev. 1:10-11).

John 4:20-24 ... 20 "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. 24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (NASB95)

Malachi 1:11 ... 11 "For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering that is pure; for My name will be great among the nations," says the Lord of hosts. (NASB95)

1 Timothy 2:8 ... 8 Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension. (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 1:1-2 ... 1 Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, 2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours: (NASB95)

Philippians 1:1-2 ... 1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (NASB95)

Revelation 1:10-11 ... 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, 11 saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." (NASB95)

Three of the five acts of worship (singing, praying, and preaching) can be done any time, any place, and in any gathering. However, two of the five (giving and the Lord's supper) are done on the first day of the week in the local assembly (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Acts 20:7 ... 7 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight. (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 ... 1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. 2 On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. (NASB95)

How?

During the Old Testament dispensation, the people of God worshipped as He directed (Deut. 4:1-2).

Deuteronomy 4:1-2 ... 1 “Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, so that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. 2 “You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you. (NASB95)

Consider the rejected offering of Cain (Gen. 4:1-7; Heb. 11:4).

Genesis 4:1-7 ... 1 Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, “I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord.” 2 Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. 4 Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering; 5 but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. 6 Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 “If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.” (NASB95)

Hebrews 11:4 ... 4 By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks. (NASB95)

Consider the condemnation of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1-2; Exod. 30:1-10).

Leviticus 10:1-2 ... 1 Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. 2 And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. (NASB95)

Exodus 30:1-10 ... 1 “Moreover, you shall make an altar as a place for burning incense; you shall make it of acacia wood. 2 “Its length shall be a cubit, and its width a cubit, it

shall be square, and its height shall be two cubits; its horns shall be of one piece with it. 3 "You shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and its sides all around, and its horns; and you shall make a gold molding all around for it. 4 "You shall make two gold rings for it under its molding; you shall make them on its two side walls—on opposite sides—and they shall be holders for poles with which to carry it. 5 "You shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. 6 "You shall put this altar in front of the veil that is near the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat that is over the ark of the testimony, where I will meet with you. 7 "Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it; he shall burn it every morning when he trims the lamps. 8 "When Aaron trims the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense. There shall be perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. 9 "You shall not offer any strange incense on this altar, or burnt offering or meal offering; and you shall not pour out a drink offering on it. 10 "Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once a year; he shall make atonement on it with the blood of the sin offering of atonement once a year throughout your generations. It is most holy to the Lord." (NASB95)

Consider the curse that befell Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:16-21).

2 Chronicles 26:16-21 ... 16 But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to the Lord his God, for he entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense. 17 Then Azariah the priest entered after him and with him eighty priests of the Lord, valiant men. 18 They opposed Uzziah the king and said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful and will have no honor from the Lord God." 19 But Uzziah, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, was enraged; and while he was enraged with the priests, the leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, beside the altar of incense. 20 Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous on his forehead; and they hurried him out of there, and he himself also hastened to get out because the Lord had smitten him. 21 King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death; and he lived in a separate house, being a leper, for he was cut off from the house of the Lord. And Jotham his son was over the king's house judging the people of the land. (NASB95)

In the New Testament dispensation, the same principle applies: true worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth, i.e., with a proper disposition and according to the divine pattern (John 4:23-24).

John 4:23-24 ... 23 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. 24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (NASB95)

Consider the example of apostate Israel (Matt. 15:1-9).

Matthew 15:1-9 ... 1 Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, 2 "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash

their hands when they eat bread.” 3 And He answered and said to them, “Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? 4 “For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother is to be put to death.’ 5 “But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God,” 6 he is not to honor his father or his mother.’ And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition. 7 “You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: 8 ‘This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. 9 ‘But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’ ” (NASB95)

Consider the example of the Judaizers (Phil. 3:2-11).

Philippians 3:2-11 ... 2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; 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, 4 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. 7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. (NASB95)

Consider the example of the Gnostics (Col. 2:18-23).

Colossians 2:18-23 ... 18 Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. 20 If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, 21 “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!” 22 (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? 23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence. (NASB95)

Why?

God is worthy of praise because of His protection and providential concern (2 Sam. 22:1-4; Psa. 18:1-3).

2 Samuel 22:1-4 ... 1 And David spoke the words of this song to the Lord in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. 2 He said, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; 3 My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, You save me from violence. 4 "I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies. (NASB95)

Psalm 18:1-3 ... 1 For the choir director. A Psalm of David the servant of the Lord, who spoke to the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And he said, "I love You, O Lord, my strength." 2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. 3 I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies. (NASB95)

God the Father is worthy of praise because He created all things (Rev. 4:5-11).

Revelation 4:8-11 ... 8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come." 9 And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four 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, 11 "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." (NASB95)

Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, is worthy of praise because of His wonderful sacrifice (Rev. 5:6-14).

Revelation 5:6-14 ... 6 And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. 7 And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. 8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. 10 "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." 11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." 13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." 14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped. (NASB95)