

Praise And Worship by Gerald Rowlands



PRAISE AND WORSHIP

BY GERALD ROWLANDS

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Reverend Gerald Rowlands of Queensland, Australia, has been a Minister of the Gospel for more than fifty years. During this time he has served in various roles such as a Pastor, Evangelist, Missionary, Christian Radio Teacher, Bible College Lecturer and Principal.

Gerald and his wife Elizabeth have traveled to some seventy nations of the world having lived for various periods of time in Africa, Asia and Israel.



Gerald is the founder and president of Church Planting International (CPI) and these notes form part of the CPI Training Course for prospective church planters. The CPI Course is being used effectively in some 23 nations around the world.

Gerald's CPI vision for training potential leaders in evangelism, church planting and pastoral ministry was birthed whilst Gerald and his wife were missionaries in Harare, Zimbabwe in 1980. During his first twelve months in Africa in 1975, Gerald had conducted numerous large crusades with many "conversions" recorded and he observed that it was relatively easy to draw a crowd and to see hundreds of people "make decisions" for Christ. The real challenge came after the crusade when those working with Gerald would seek to integrate the "converts" into the Body of Christ and walk in a truly Christian lifestyle. He had begun to realise how crucial it was to train local pastors in the principles of church growth and development. As a result, Gerald began to organise Pastors' Seminars in various parts of Africa to provide teaching and training. In 1979 when God led him to start a Bible College in what was then Rhodesia. At that time, Gerald was able to obtain an old guest house/motel and commenced a one year training course, the for-runner of the CPI Course.

During later visits to Zimbabwe, whilst conducting Church Growth seminars with national pastors, Gerald was able to introduce the CPI training program to many hundreds of ministers. As an ongoing result, the program has been adopted by some 27 denominations in Zimbabwe. All of these denominations and hundreds of graduates of Gerald's CPI Courses participated in a national decade long project called TARGET 2,000. Even now, despite many adverse circumstances within the nation, hundreds of new churches are started every year.

In 1992 Gerald received what he terms a "Macedonian Call" from Asia to place the CPI Course into some 30 new Bible Colleges in several parts of S.E. Asia. Gerald was based in Singapore at that time, and the colleges were in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines. It took a few months to accomplish the necessary editing and printing. After this he began to organise pastor's conferences at which his strategy could be shared and the materials made available to all pastors that desired them. Zimbabwe became a missions' focussed nation, sending church planters into several surrounding nations. There are also many churches using the CPI Course in Lesotho, Botswana, Zambia, Swaziland, South Africa, Malawi, Nigeria and Namibia.

Gerald's CPI Course has also been adopted in colleges in India, China, Israel, and in many parts of the former USSR including the Ukraine, Kazakstan and Siberia and Russia itself.

In 2006, Gerald was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) by the Australian government for services rendered in the emerging world and today Gerald still ministers via a regular radio program focusing on God's plan for Israel and the Church in the end times.

Introduction

The Subject of Praise and Worship is one of the most important of all Bible themes. It is also one of the most neglected. To fall short of a full appreciation and practice of pure spiritual praise and worship is to forego a vital aspect of our ultimate calling in Christ.

In recent years, God has been restoring this ministry to His people. An integral feature of the great Spiritual renewal which is sweeping the church throughout the world is the restoration of praise and worship in the Church, as prophesied by Joel. **(Joel 2:21, 23, 26).**

I am aware that many fine books have been published recently on this important subject. I am not under the illusion that this article will improve on what has already been said in these fine contributions.

If there is a dimension that I personally could add, it may well be that of simplicity. One of my main reasons for compiling this study is that the great majority of my readers live in emerging world and restricted access nations where these books on praise are not readily available. It is to those leaders particularly that this study is dedicated. The prayer of my heart is that its pages will help, inspire and motivate many of my readers to become praisers and worshippers of God. This is what the Father is seeking. *"Worshippers, who worship in spirit and truth."* **(John 4:23)**

The early chapters (1-8) deal with some of the biblical references and principles of Praise and Worship. Chapters 9, 10, refer to some of the practical aspects of leading people in worship, whilst the final chapter (11) touches upon the prophetic significance of Praise and Worship.

In teaching this subject it is vital that the students become actually involved in doing and practising the various modes of biblical worship. So some of the time should be given to workshop sessions and to actual times of worship when the whole class begins to enter into times of corporate worship together employing the various scriptural ways of expressing worship. Every Christian should be at least free enough to do everything the bible exhorts us to do, particularly in this important area of ascribing to God the worship of which He is profoundly worthy.

Gerald Rowlands.

The author of this article, was for ten years the Director of Praise and Worship at the Christian Celebration during the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, Israel. This annual event often attracts crowds in excess of 10,000 people who are both Christians and Jews.

Chapter 1

THE NEW PRIESTHOOD

Under the Old Covenant, God ordained a priesthood to represent His people before Him. Their ministry involved a complicated system of ritual and ceremony. These ceremonies were symbolic of Spiritual realities to come. They were the shadow of those things, but not the substance.

The priestly ministry of Christ fulfilled every type implicit in the Old Testament priesthood. He has fulfilled all its symbolism. He is the fulfilment of all its types.

The Levitical and Aaronic priesthood has now been superseded by a new priesthood. Under the terms of the New Covenant, every believer is ordained to be a priest unto God. We do not offer animal sacrifices, as did the Old Covenant priests. We are called to be a "*...holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*" (**1 Peter 2:5**).

One of the spiritual sacrifices we are ordained to offer is the "fruit of our lips." "*By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*" (**Heb 13:15**).

The Greek word for "offer up" is "anaphero", which means to bring, raise up, or offer up. It is the word used in **Exodus 24:5** (Septuagint version) where they "offered up" "*...burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord.*"

The word "priest" means "to draw near." In the terms of the law, it is used of one who may draw near to the Divine Presence (**Ex 19:22; 30:20**). It is usually applied to the sons of Aaron, but it has a much wider application as well. It is also applied to Melchizedek (**Gen 14:18**), Jethro (**Ex 3:1**), and to the priests mentioned in **Exodus 19:22**, who exercised priestly ministries prior to the inception of the Aaronic priesthood.

In **Numbers 16:5** we see the three things which pertain to the Old Testament priesthood: "*...the Lord will show who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him; whom he hath chosen...*"

- a. SET APART FOR JEHOVAH "*those who are His.*"
- b. HOLY "*... and who is holy...*"
- c. ORDAINED TO APPROACH GOD. "*...will cause him to come near Him.*"

The first of these describes the position of the priest. He is sanctified; set apart from the world and unto God.

The second describes his condition. He is holy - consecrated unto the Lord. Every vessel offered to God became holy unto the Lord (**Lev 27:28**).

The third describes his ministry and function - to draw near to God. This refers to every function the priest performed.

Since the priesthood represented the people, their function also represents the essential elements on which the whole covenant community was based. They were to be :

- a. A CALLED OUT, SEPARATED COMPANY
- b. A HOLY NATION, A PECULIAR PEOPLE
- c. A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS UNTO GOD (Ex 19:4-6).

THE NEW TESTAMENT ALSO DESCRIBES THE ROLE GOD HAS DESIRED FOR HIS NEW COVENANT PEOPLE

1. **We are the Ecclesia** - the called-out company. Called out of the Egypt of sin, and the kingdom of Satan; and separated unto the Kingdom of God and His dear Son. (Col 1:13).

1. **We are to be a Holy People.** Holiness is essential to fellowship and communion with God. *"Without holiness no man shall see God."* (Heb 12:14).

3. **To draw near to God and offer up spiritual sacrifices.** *"...a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Pet 2:5).
"...let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips..." (Heb 13:15).*

CONSIDER SOME FURTHER ASPECTS OF THE PRIESTHOOD

1. **Sonship.** God selected the sons of Aaron to be priests (Ex 6:18-20; 28:1). Aaron was the first high priest. We are **SONS** of God, and descendants of our High Priest - Jesus Christ.

2. **Ordination.** The sons of Aaron were ordained to the priesthood by Moses. We are also ordained to be Kings and Priests unto God, by Jesus Christ. (Rev 5:10).

3. **Wholeness.** Lev 21:17-21. *"No man that hath a blemish ... shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord..."*

4. **Cleansing.** Priests were required to wash their hands and feet before entering the Tabernacle. Ex 30:17-21; 40:30-32.

5. **Clothing.** Even when not officiating in the Tabernacle, priests wore a distinctive dress. They were always recognisable as priests of the Lord. However, when they ministered in the sanctuary, they were required to wear their official dress, which consisted of four pieces. (Four is the number of the Kingdom of God. Thus, they were seen to be servants of the Kingdom).

- a. Linen breeches. (Ex 28:42)
- b. The coat, woven in once piece, without a seam.
- c. A multi-coloured girdle, the same four colours as in the veil which hung before the holy place.
- d. A linen cap.

6. **Anointing.** The candidate for priesthood was conducted to the door of the Tabernacle.

- a. His body was washed with water.
- b. He was clothed with the official vestments.
- c. He was anointed with holy oil (symbol of the Holy Spirit) (**Ex 30:30**).

7. **Priestly Ministry.** (in the tabernacle - unto the Lord).

a. IN THE COURT

To keep the fire constantly burning on the altar of sacrifice. (**Lev 6:9,13**).

To clear away the ashes from the altar. (**Lev 6:10,11**).

To offer the morning and evening sacrifice. (**Ex 29:38-44**).

To bless the people, after the daily sacrifice. (**Lev 9:22; Num 6:23-27**).

To offer the sacrifices on the altar.

To blow the silver trumpets, or the jubilee horn.

b. IN THE HOLY PLACE

To burn incense on the golden altar morning and evening.

To clean and light lamps every evening.

To place the shewbread on the table of shewbread every Sabbath.

This is but a brief outline of the priestly functions, but it serves to guide us as to our functions as a "Kingdom of Priests" unto our God.

WE ARE ALSO TO BE

1. **Sons of God.** Only the truly regenerated Sons of God have access to the royal priesthood. It is through the new birth that the human spirit is "made alive" unto God. Until this happens, we are totally incapable of offering the spiritual worship which the Father seeks (**John 4:24**). Spiritual worship is the Spirit of God worshipping through our redeemed, renewed spirit.

2. **Priests unto our God.** As reborn children of God, we are a "*...royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people,*" (**1 Peter 2:9**).

Christ has made us "*A Kingdom of Priests to serve our God.*" (**Rev 5:10** NIV).

3. **Whole.** The physical imperfections and blemishes outlined in **Lev 21:17-21** and applicable to the Old Covenant priesthood are also symbolic, and in the symbolic sense, applicable to worshippers today. It is not physical imperfections which prohibit our assuming the role of a priest, it is those spiritual imperfections, of which the physical ones are a type. God desires the praises of a **WHOLE-(SOME)** people. Our Christian life is to be consistent with that which we profess by our worship of God. A fountain cannot send forth both sweet and bitter water at the same time. Neither can a mouth send forth blessing and cursing. (**James 3:9-11**). We cannot praise God and with the same mouth, curse man. These things ought not to be. (V 10).

4. **Cleansed.** Jacob demanded that his household should "*...Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean (wash yourselves) and change your garments.*" (**Gen 35:2**) - Before they went up to Bethel, to build an altar unto the Lord, that they might worship Him who "answered me in my distress."

Moses also insisted that Israel sanctify themselves and wash their clothes. (**Ex 19:10**) in preparation for the manifestation of the Lord on the third day.

God insisted that the priests wash their hands and feet at the laver before entering to minister in the Tabernacle. (**Ex 3:18-21; 40:12-16**).

Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord for failure to comply with the requirements God had laid down for the priests who would minister to Him. (**Lev 10:1-3**). God said, *"I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified."*

We need to take warning from this. It is not a light thing to come before the Lord. To perform the function of a priest under the Old Covenant was an immense privilege. It is no less so today. In fact, it is more of a privilege now. The terms of our Covenant are far superior to that of the Old. It is important that we are not lax in our preparation for worship.

The priestly ministry of many congregations has ceased because, like Nadab and Abihu, they were not careful to fulfil the requirements God made of worshippers.

Note these five results from being cleansed by the Blood, the Word, and the Spirit.

a. **Pure Conscience.** **Heb 10:22.** Our approach to God is no longer associated with sprinkling ourselves with the blood of animals. The sacrifice of Christ has fulfilled all which that typified. Now it is the blood of Christ with which we are sprinkled. As we, by faith, receive its power, our hearts are *"...sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."* (**Heb 10:22**). Only in this way can we draw near to God in full assurance of faith.

b. **A united heart.** **Psa 86:11.** *"...unite my heart to fear (reverence) thy name." "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded... Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up."* (**Jas 4:8,10**).

Here we have the New Covenant equivalent of the Old Covenant requirement, the washing of hands prior to ministering to the Lord. We must purify our hearts from double-mindedness. We should never attempt to offer worship unless our mind is set wholly upon the Lord. To offer praise while our thoughts are dwelling on other things is a dreadful insult to the person and character of God.

c. **A pure heart.** **Psa 24:3,4.** *"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."* A pure heart indicates right motives. Why are we praising God? Are our motives right, or do we have secret ulterior motives?

d. **A humble heart and spirit.** **Psa 51:17.** *"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken spirit and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."* The "broken spirit" David referred to is not a broken-heartedness in the sense of someone who is sad and heavy hearted. The broken spirit refers to a spirit which has been "broken in" by the dealings of God, as a horse is broken in - a spirit which has learned discipline and yields to the Lordship of Christ. A contrite heart is a repentant and humble heart. This describes the condition of David's heart after the severe judgements of the Lord because of his sin of adultery with Bathsheba.

e. **Reverence and Godly fear. Psa 89:7.** *"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence of all them that are about him."*

5. **Clothed upon.** We are not called to wear special robes, as were the Old Covenant priests, but spiritually, there is a very real sense in which we must be "clothed upon" :-

a. **CLOTHED WITH SALVATION.**

In **Psalm 132:16**, God says He will *"...clothe his priests with salvation..."* The clothing of the priests with linen garments was symbolic of two things.

- i The hiding of the flesh, *"That no flesh should glory in his presence."*
- ii God stipulated linen rather than wool, because linen does not cause one to perspire, as wool does - perspiration being symbolic of the curse and self effort (**Gen 3:19**). Also linen can be thoroughly cleansed. Wool can never be so clean.

b. **CLOTHED WITH HUMILITY**

In **1 Peter 5:5** we are exhorted to be *"...clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud"* Carnal pride has no place in the presence of God.

c. **CLOTHED WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS**

".....a great multitude.....stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." (Rev 7:9).

We are told in **Revelation 19:8** that the fine linen (white robes) is the righteousness of the saints.

d. **CLOTHED WITH POWER**

In **Luke 24:49**, Jesus commanded the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they were endued (clothed) with power from on high.

As the priests of old were anointed with oil, prior to commencing their ministries, so must we be clothed with the Spirit's power in order to properly function in our role as priests.

Jesus Himself, did not commence His ministry until He was clothed upon by the Spirit at Jordan. (**Matt 3:16**).

6. **Ministers as New Covenant priests offering unto God:**

a. **OURSELVES. Rom 12:1** *"So then, my brothers, because of God's many mercies to us, I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service, and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer."* (Good News Bible).

Presenting our whole being to God, to be wholly and eternally His. That we may bless the Lord, with all that is within us (**Psa 103:1**).

1 Thess 5:23 *"May your spirit, soul and body be preserved sound and complete, and found blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah."*

We are tri-partite beings; spirit, soul and body. David instructs us to *"Bless the Lord ... with all that is within me..."* (**Psa 103:1**).

- i. **Spirit.** *"My Spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."* (**Luke 1:47**).
- ii. **Soul.** *"Bless the Lord, o my soul..."* (**Psa 103:1**).
- iii. **Body.** *".....let all flesh (bodies) bless his holy name...."* (**Psa 145:21**).

b. THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE. **Heb 13:15,16.**

The "sacrifice of praise" intimates that it is not always easy or convenient to do this. We are to praise the Lord at all times and not only when it is easy to do so. Our sacrifice of praise is the "fruit of our lips" - praise which is verbalized - spoken forth audibly.

c. DEMONSTRATIONS OF PRAISE. "*.... that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*" (**1 Pet 2:9**).

d. OUR SINGING OF PSALMS, HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS.
Eph 5:19; Col 3:16.

e. SPIRITUAL GIFTS. **1 Cor 12, 13, 14.**

f. ALL THINGS as unto the Lord to the glory of God. (**1 Cor 10:31**).

g. OUR SUBSTANCE. "*Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.*" (**Prov 3:9,10**).

Under the Old Covenant, God required that when the priests came before Him, they should never come "empty-handed". They should always bring an offering. (**1 Chron 16:29; Ex 23:15; 34:20; Deut 16:17**).

We should never come before Him empty-handed. We ought to come with praise, worship, adoration and thanksgiving, expressing our praise in songs, rejoicing, and with our substance.

Chapter 2

THE SPIRIT OF PRAISE

If we could dissect and analyse praise, what would we discover at its core? What is the essence, the substance and nature of praise? Of what does true praise consist? What are the vital elements involved?

Let's take a look first at some of the words in the Old Testament that are translated "praise", in order to discover something of the meaning and significance they are intended to convey.

1. **Hallal** is the most frequently used word in the Old Testament for praise. It occurs some 88 times. Its primary meaning is "to produce a clear sound." Its further meaning is "to boast, to celebrate, to rave about, to glory in..." True praise, therefore, should have a clear and distinct sound. There should be no confusion as to what is intended. It must be clearly recognisable for what it is. It is a note of celebration, a celebration of the Lord.

2. **Hilluwi** (derives from Hallal) is a "celebration of thanksgiving for the completion of harvest." Such praise is to be expressed in merriment. A post harvest scene in any agricultural country would illustrate the essence of this word. The long months of anxious waiting are over. The harvest is safely gathered in. The hard work is finished, the tools are laid down, the crops are safely stored away. It is the time to celebrate the successful completion of the harvest. It is a time of merriment and celebration. Singing and dancing are the order of the day. The rejoicing is an expression of thanksgiving and praise.

3. **Tehillah** (another word derived from hallal). This time the emphasis is on singing. Thus, we sing our hallal, our celebration! We sing forth a clear song of praise to God. We celebrate Him in song. Too many of our songs and hymns are obscure and abstract. They should be clearly and unmistakably songs of praise to God. We are to boast about Him, both in the words and music.

4. **Shabach**. This means to "shout with a loud voice, a shout of triumph, glorying in the victory!"

Praise does not always have to be noisy. We do not always have to shout. But there are occasions when a triumphant shout is the only fitting manner in which to praise our God. (**Psa 47:1**). *"...shout unto God with the voice of triumph."* When such occasions arise, do not be half-hearted, let your shout of praise be a resounding one.

5. **Zamar**. The meaning is "to touch or play the strings." Here is an obvious reference to praising God on musical instruments. It also has the sense of "singing praise to the accompaniment of musical instruments." How wonderful to play unto the Lord on all kinds of instruments, making a glorious anthem of praise unto God.

6. **Yadah.** The primary meaning is "to give forth a confession of thanks." However, it also conveys the thought of "extending forth the hands," giving thanks with the hands extended towards God.

7. **Towdah.** This word comes from the same root as Yadah, and has obviously a very similar meaning, but is even more specific. It means "the extension of the hands in adoration and thanksgiving."

8. **Barak.** "To kneel in adoration." Here, the posture of the whole body speaks volumes of praise. To kneel before someone is to manifest humility and to demonstrate their superior worth and position.

Let us think for a moment of some of the ingredients we notice in these forms of praise.

a. They are **PHYSICAL EXPRESSIONS** of spiritual attitudes. They are the physical enactment and demonstration of spiritual perceptions. Praise and worship is initially an inner response of the heart to a revelation of God and His greatness. In order for it to become true praise, it must be manifested.

b. Most praise involves **AUDIBLE SOUND**. (The possible exception being Barak, — to kneel in adoration). Such a posture of worship could be demonstrated silently. However, we may also kneel and sing or shout unto God.

c. There is **PHYSICAL ACTION**. Praise demands active physical participation. It cannot always be silent and inactive. Praise is something we DO!

D. There can be **EMOTIONAL RELEASE**. Praising God is NOT an emotional exercise. It is a spiritual activity. However, it does necessitate emotional release. Far too many Christians are frightened of emotional expression. They are always seeking to suppress it, believing it to be carnal and fleshly. Biblical expressions of praise require a positive, controlled emotional release. God gave us our emotions, and they are meant to glorify Him. David says we are to "*Bless the Lord with all that is within us.*" (**Psa 103:1**). That includes our emotions. Human emotion must have expression. If we do not provide a positive healthy release, then there will be a negative unhealthy release. Praising God is the healthiest way to release your emotions. It is the God-ordained way!

e. An attitude of **REVERENCE**. Every true expression of praise should be reverent. Reverence is to honour and esteem someone properly. Activities of praise should never be allowed to degenerate into irreverent excesses. Praising God is NOT merely a means of enjoying ourselves.

Praise is not primarily for the enjoyment of man, although we do enjoy expressing it. It is, and always should be an expression of reverence to God. In releasing our emotions in praise, which is both biblical and legitimate, we should carefully avoid going to excess and merely making a show in the flesh. True reverence is always an essential ingredient of praise.

Chapter 3

WHY SHOULD WE PRAISE THE LORD?

Psalm 47:7 says to "...sing praises with understanding." We should know why we are offering praises to God. Here are some of the scriptural reasons why we should do so.

a. BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS. "*Praise ye the Lord...*" (**Psa 149:1**). In other words, praise Him because He is the LORD. He is the ultimate authority. The highest power. The King of all kings and Lord above all lords. He was before all things and is the maker of all things. Therefore, He is greater than all things. "*Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised...*" (**Psalm 48:1; 96:4**).

b. PRAISE GLORIFIES GOD. "*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me...*" (**Psa 50:23**). Surely this should be the great desire of all God's people, to glorify Him.

c. BECAUSE GOD COMMANDS US TO. "*Praise ye the Lord*" is not a suggestion or a request. It is a commandment.

d. BLESS THE LORD FOR ALL HIS BENEFITS. **Psa 103:1-5**

1. Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name!
2. Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:
3. Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases,
4. Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,
5. Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. NKJV

e. PRAISE HIM FOR HIS GOODNESS. **Ps 107:21-22**

21. Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!
22. Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, And declare His works with rejoicing. NKJV

f. PRAISE HIM FOR HIS MIGHTY ACTS. **Ps 150:2**

2. Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! NKJV

g. IT IS A GOOD THING TO GIVE THANKS. (**Psa 92:1,2;147:1**).

Ps 92:1-4

1. It is good to give thanks to the LORD, And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High;
 2. To declare Your loving kindness in the morning, And Your faithfulness every night,
 3. On an instrument of ten strings, On the lute, And on the harp, With harmonious sound.
- 4 For You, LORD, have made me glad through Your work; I will triumph in the works of Your hands. NKJV

h. THE LORD IS WORTHY OF PRAISE. (**II Sam 22:4; Psa 18:3**).

2 Sam 22:4

4. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies. NKJV

i. PRAISE MAGNIFIES GOD. **Ps 40:16**

16. Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; Let such as love Your salvation say continually, "The LORD be magnified!" NKJV

j. PRAISE IS COMELY! - FOR THE UPRIGHT. (**Psa 33:1**). The old English word "comely" means proper, right, fitting, appropriate, becoming and suitable. Unfortunately some Christians seem to feel that praising God is unseemly and improper. They are concerned lest they should appear to be undignified. For some reason, they feel that this so-called dignity is the proper attitude for Christians. However, the Bible projects the opposite view. God says the garment of praise is most becoming upon them. Rejoicing in God and praising the Lord is suitable and proper for the Child of God. I would much prefer to have the approval of God than of men!

k. GOD DWELLS IN THE PRAISES OF HIS PEOPLE. (**Psa 22:3**). The Holy one of Israel inhabits our praises! If our heart is filled with praise it is also filled with God, for He inhabits our praises. This is also true of our home or church. Fill them with praises, and they are filled with God's presence. We can surround ourselves with God's presence by cultivating the attitude of praise. We shall then be more conscious of His presence than we are of problems, difficulties and adverse circumstances. There are many blessings to be experienced as a result of praising God.

l. PRAISE GENERATES POWER. In **Psalm 84** David says, "*Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will still be praising thee... blessed is the man whose strength is in thee...they go from strength to strength...*" The man who praises God has the Lord for his strength. He also knows the joy of the Lord through praise, and the joy of the Lord is his strength. (**Neh 8:10**).

m. THE PRAISING SOUL DELIGHTS HIMSELF IN THE LORD, AND GOD GIVES HIM THE DESIRES OF HIS HEART. (**Psa 37:4**). So many people say, "If only God would grant me the desires of my heart, how I would praise Him for it!" The divine order is the reverse of that. We praise Him, and delight in Him, and *then* He gives us the desires of our heart. For the praising heart has the right desires. His priorities are in order, and God then delights to grant those desires.

n. PRAISE PRECEDES VICTORY. In **II Chron 20**, King Jehoshaphat led God's people into battle against their enemies. God instructed him that he should appoint singers unto the Lord. They went before the army praising God and saying, "*Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth forever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.*"

Imagine an army being led by a choir! How strange to the natural mind to go into battle this way. But the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. They are strong to the pulling down of strongholds. As we face our enemy in these days, we need to realise afresh the power of praise and go into battle with the high praises of God in our mouth. We can

then expect to see the salvation of God. The people who truly learn to praise the Lord are the people who will show forth His presence and power.

WHO SHOULD PRAISE THE LORD?

- a. ALL MEN EVERYWHERE. (**Psa 145:21; 148:11,13; 150:6**).
- b. ALL FLESH. (**Psa 145:21**).
- c. EVERYTHING THAT HATH BREATH. (**Psa 150:6**).
- d. THE PEOPLE OF GOD. (**Psa 67:3,5; 78:4; 79:13**).
- e. THE RIGHTEOUS. (**Psa 140:13**).
- f. THE SAINTS (**Psa 145:10**).
- g. THE REDEEMED. (**Psa 107:1,2**).
- h. THOSE THAT FEAR THE LORD. (**Psa 22:23**).
- i. THOSE WHO KNOW AND BELIEVE THE TRUTH. (**1 Tim 4:3**).
- j. THE SERVANTS OF GOD (**Psa 113:1; 134:1; 135:1**).
- k. ALL HIS ANGELS (**Psa 148:2**).
- l. ALL NATURE (**Psa 148:3-10**).

WHEN ARE WE TO PRAISE THE LORD?

- a. FROM MORNING TILL NIGHT. *"From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised"* (**Psa 113:3**).
- b. ALL DAY LONG. (**Psa 71:8**) *"My mouth shall be filled with your honour and your praise all day."* (Amplified Bible).
- c. AS LONG AS WE LIVE. (**Psa 146:2**) *"While I live I will praise the Lord..."*
- d. AT ALL TIMES (**Psa 34:1**) *"....his praise shall continually be in my mouth."*
- e. IN TIMES OF DEPRESSION. (**Psa 42:11**) *"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God."*
- f. IN EVERYTHING. (**Eph 5:20**). *"Giving thanks always for all things unto God the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

WHERE ARE WE TO PRAISE THE LORD?

- a. **Psa:22**. *"...IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION will I praise Thee."*
- b. **Psa 22:25**. *"MY PRAISE SHALL BE OF THEE in the great congregation..."*
- c. **Psa 57:9**. *"I WILL PRAISE THEE, O LORD, among the people. I will sing unto Thee among the nations."*
- d. **Psa 100:4**. *"ENTER INTO HIS COURTS with praise."*
- e. **Psa 107:32**. *"LET THEM EXALT HIM also in the congregation of the people and praise him in the assembly of the elders."*
- f. **Psa 108:3**. *"I WILL PRAISE THEE, O LORD, among the people; and I will sing praises unto Thee among the nations."*
- g. **Psa 109:30**. *"....I WILL PRAISE HIM AMONG THE MULTITUDE."*
- h. **Psa 149:1**. *"...IN THE CONGREGATION..."*
- i. **Psa 150:1**. *"... IN THE SANCTUARY..."*

Chapter 4

HOW PRAISE BRINGS GOD'S BLESSING

Isa 55:10-13

10"As the rain and snow come down from heaven and stay upon the ground to water the earth, and cause the grain to grow and to produce seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry, 11so also is my Word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It shall accomplish all I want it to and prosper everywhere I send it. 12You will live in joy and peace. The mountains and hills, the trees of the field-all the world around you-will rejoice. 13Where once were thorns, fir trees will grow; where briars grew, the myrtle trees will sprout up. This miracle will make the Lord's name very great and be an everlasting sign [of God's power and love]. TLB

In nature there is a cycle that brings great blessing to the earth. It is known as the HYDROLOGICAL CYCLE. It is the process by which clouds are formed through evaporation and send forth rain to water the earth, making it fruitful and productive.

The Bible has a great deal to say about this. It is used to illustrate spiritual principles which teach us that according to the measure of our praises that rise up to heaven, so will be the abundance of blessing that God showers down upon us.

Job 36:29, "*Can we understand the spreading of the clouds...?"* Do you understand the process by which God produces clouds? v.30, "*He spreads light upon the ocean.*" (paraphrased).

Job 36:29-31

*29. Indeed, can anyone understand the spreading of clouds, The thunder from His canopy?
30. Look, He scatters his (sun)light upon the ocean and covers the area of the sea.
31. For by these He judges the peoples; He gives food in abundance. NKJV*

- a. God causes the sun to shine upon the ocean.
- b. The heat causes the water to evaporate (vaporise).
- c. As warm vapour, it rises up into heaven where the vapours form clouds.
- d. When the vapours cool, they distil and form drops of water.
- e. This forms the rain which distils and drops upon man abundantly (v.29).

This natural process illustrates spiritual truth.

- a. GOD CAUSES HIS BLESSINGS to shine on mankind just as the sun shines upon the ocean.
- b. MAN'S HEART SHOULD BE WARMED towards God, in response to the blessings He has shone upon Him.
- c. MAN'S PRAISES ARE TO ARISE to God as the vapours that are created by the sun upon the ocean.
- d. THOSE PRAISES FORM CLOUDS of blessing.
- e. GOD CAUSES THEM TO DISTIL into rain that pours forth on the earth.
- f. THE BLESSING OF RAIN makes the earth fruitful and prosperous providing seed for the sower and bread for the eater.
- g. THE EXCESS RAIN forms rivers that run to the sea, from whence it originally came and the whole process begins again.

Consider the following scriptures that illustrate this process.

a. Amos 5:8

*who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land-
the LORD is his name- NIV*

Amos 9:6

*who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land-
the LORD is his name. NIV*

"God.... calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth..."

Amos was a farmer, and understood very well the process by which rain is formed. Here he describes the process of evaporation. God "calleth for the waters of the sea" - He causes the ocean to evaporate and vaporise, and from those vapours, pours down rain upon the face of the earth.

b. Psalm 147:7,8. *"Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God: who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains."*

c. Prov 11:25. *"The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered himself."*

As we sing praise to God, He forms clouds of blessing from our praises, from which He sends forth rain upon the earth. The amount of blessing is governed by the amount of praise we have sent up to God. Our liberality prompts God's liberal response. During the future millennial reign of Christ over the earth, all the kings of earth will be required to visit Jerusalem annually to worship Jehovah. If they fail to do so, God will withhold rain from their nation. (**Zech 14:17**). No worship - no rain!

d. Ecc 1:7. *"All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again."*

e. Ecc 11:3. *"If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth..."*

f. Hos 6:3. *"...he (the Lord) shall come to us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."*

g. Isaiah 45:8. *"Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation...."*

h. Zech 10:1. *"Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to everyone grass in the field."*

i. Isaiah 55:10. *"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater."*

j. Jas 5:7. *"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and bath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."*

k. Joel 2:23-24

*23Be glad then, you children of Zion, And rejoice in the LORD your God;
For He has given you the former rain faithfully, And He will cause the rain to come down for you--The former rain, And the latter rain in the first month.
24The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, And the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.*
NKJV

These scriptures clearly show that there will be an end-time outpouring of God's Spirit before the coming of the Lord. That period will be known as the "time of the latter rain." (**Zech 10:1**). The Spirit will fall from heaven as a deluge of rain. Joel predicts an unprecedented outpouring, the "former rain and the latter rain (together) in the first month. (**Joel 2:23**).

Normally Israel experienced two rainy seasons. The one that facilitated the planting of the seed. The second, after many dry, parched months to fatten the grain for harvesting. These were termed the former and latter rains. But the glorious outpouring of God's Spirit in the end times will be as though both these rains came together at the same time!

The Heavenly Husbandman is patiently waiting for this copious rain so that He can finally gather in the great harvest.

What causes this great rain? The abundant praises of God's renewed people!

He is going to raise up such a praising people in these last days; they will arise as a mighty army, marching through the earth. The high praises of God will be in their mouths, and two-edged swords in their hands. Their praises will form abundant clouds of blessing. God will distil them and send forth showers of blessing more copious than ever witnessed before. They will ripen the great final harvest of earth and God's people will keep the Feast of Tabernacles unto the Lord.

Zech 14:16-19

16And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 17And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. 18If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 19This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.
NKJV

Chapter 5

HINDRANCES TO PRAISE

Even when a people are persuaded that praise is scriptural, right and proper, it is still not always easy for them to begin to praise God. Many excuses have been offered in this regard. People endeavour to explain why they cannot praise God. Some seek to excuse themselves because of their disposition or temperament. They plead shyness, or the fact that they are not "outgoing" or demonstrative.

The fact is that the Bible does not excuse anyone on any of these grounds. David says, "*Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord!*" (**Psa 150:6**). If you have breath, then you are to praise God!

"The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." (**Psa 115:17**)

There are some definite hindrances to praise, all of which God wants us to deal with and overcome. He will not accept any of them as a valid reason to not praise Him.

1. **Sin.** Sin is the first hindrance to praise. This is the basic reason why the unconverted do not praise God. It is also one reason why some Christians do not. Unconfessed sin inhibits us in the presence of God. We do not feel free, or at ease, in God's presence if we are conscious of unforgiven sin in our life.

David said, "*If I regard iniquity in my heart, (if I am aware of sin in my life) the Lord will not hear me.*" **Psa 66:18**. Sin and iniquity separate us from God (**Isaiah 59:2**), and we lose whatever communion we may have previously enjoyed. The realisation of sin in our life ties our tongue before the Lord. The only thing we really feel free to speak to Him about under these circumstances is our sin.

There is an obvious answer to this hindrance. Confess the sin to God and sincerely accept His forgiveness and cleansing so that a right relationship can be restored and the flow of praise released. (**1 John 1:9**).

2. **Condemnation.** Even when we have been forgiven by the lord, it is not always easy to accept that forgiveness completely and forgive ourselves. Many Christians remain in condemnation. Though God has freely forgiven them, they cannot forgive themselves.

This often results in a sense of unworthiness. Freedom to worship is inhibited. They tend to "hang their heads" in God's presence. The sense of God's presence tends to make them more aware of their unworthiness than of the mercy and grace of God that He has exercised towards them.

This kind of attitude often comes from being overly self-conscious instead of God-conscious. If we are constantly searching our hearts with a negative attitude, always looking for faults and weaknesses, naturally we will find them. Nobody is perfect. This ultra-critical inspection of self is unhealthy. It focuses attention on self all the time instead of on Jesus.

The Bible entreats us to "*Look unto Jesus (who is) the author and finisher of our faith.*" (**Heb. 12:2**). This accomplishes at least two things. First, it gets our thoughts and attention off

ourselves and on to Jesus. Second, the more we look to Jesus, think about Him, meditate on Him, occupy our thoughts with Him, the more we desire to praise Him. This is how praise begins - by looking to Jesus. Our admiration and appreciation for Him will grow continually as we do this. Our awareness of His worthiness will increase and this will promote thoughts of praise and worship to Him.

3. **Worldliness.** Oliver Cromwell once defined "worldliness" as "everything that cooeth my affection for Jesus Christ." Worldliness is the opposite of spirituality. It is the condition prevailing when our minds and thoughts are centred on the things of this world, rather than the things of God and His Kingdom.

Worldly minded people find praising God extremely embarrassing. It offends their carnal sense of dignity. The cure for this problem is to become more and more Christ-centred. As our awareness and appreciation of Him increases, worldliness will decrease accordingly.

One of the symptoms of worldliness is an obsession about maintaining dignity and decorum - an over-consciousness of "What will people think?" - too much concern about what people's reactions will be. Our first concern as Christians, is to please the Lord. This does not always please carnal man. If we become too concerned with pleasing men and winning their approval, we shall be in danger of displeasing God.

4. **A wrong concept of God** is frequently a strong hindrance to praise. Many have a completely negative view of God. They see Him as someone who is constantly trying to catch them in some failing so that He can condemn them, someone opposed to everything they do. They feel there is little hope of pleasing Him and enjoying His approval. They view God as an ogre who is determined to stop people from enjoying themselves in any way.

How could one ever think to praise such a God as this?

Praise begins to rise in our hearts only when we gain a right concept of God. The Holy Spirit must show Him to us as He really is. Reading the Word of God is a wonderful cure for wrong concepts of God, but only if we are open and will allow the Spirit to reveal the truth to us. Many who read the Bible have their minds closed to the truth. A true awareness of God, who and what He is, will surely lead us to praise and worship.

5. **Religious traditions.** In Christ's day, many allowed vain traditions of men to make void the Word of God. (**Matt 15:6**). Unfortunately, there are many today who do the same thing. A lot of Christians have been brought up in so-called Christian traditions, that frown upon the biblical style of praise and worship. Such traditions condemn praise as mere emotionalism. Instead of obeying the injunctions of scripture, they follow the religious traditions of men. Unfortunately the conservative traditions of the Western church have been strongly embraced and many of these traditions run contrary to biblical truth. In such cases we should determine to please God rather than man. (**Gal 1:10**)

Remember that "Religion represses, but **Redemption releases.**" Persons imprisoned in traditions of men frequently have wrong concepts of God too. God is an extremely negative being in their view. He is completely unemotional, stern and forbidding.

Those who believe in such a God, become like this themselves. The cure for this condition is to have courage to boldly expose our traditions to the Word of God, with an open heart and mind. Whenever the Holy Spirit reveals the error of your tradition, be willing to abandon it and embrace the Word of God instead.

6. **Pride** is a further hindrance to the release of praise. This is a difficult problem to deal with because of our unwillingness to acknowledge pride of heart. Our very egotisms will not allow us to do so! God can break such pride and release the prisoner.

Pride is so concerned with the self-image; always wanting to be well thought of; always wanting to be seen doing what is considered to be the right and proper thing.

7. **Fear of man.** Proverbs 29:25 tells us "*The fear of man bringeth a snare.*" Fear of man, his thoughts and opinions, creates a real snare in which many have been caught. "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom....*" (**Prov 9:10**). If we truly reverence the Lord, we need never be afraid of man.

We should always seek to please the Lord in all things and certainly we must praise Him in order to do this. If men do not like it, that is their problem. Never allow their opinions to inhibit you or hinder your desire and intention to give to God the praise that is due to Him.

8. **Satanic suppression.** Finally we come to the most serious of all hindrances, a Satanically-inspired suppression of praise. It is difficult for us to understand the deep hatred that Satan has for God, and how greatly he loathes hearing people praise God. It was Satan's deep-rooted jealousy of God that brought about his downfall. In his pride, he thinks himself greater than God. He is filled with unreasonable jealousy whenever He hears God being praised and magnified. He therefore seeks to discourage and suppress all such praise.

When a person is under the direct control of Satan or one of his demons, it has been discovered that this person cannot even speak the name of Jesus. When encouraged to do so their throat freezes. The word will just not come out. It has also been noted that when the name of Jesus is spoken in the presence of such people, the demons within them begin to rage. Satan reacts strongly to even the very mention of that Name. His victim will sometimes froth at the mouth, fall into a fit, curse and blaspheme, so violent is the reaction against the praise of God or Jesus.

Whenever a Christian is aware of an aversion to praise, a sincere and honest searching of the heart should take place. He should prayerfully ask God to reveal the nature of his problem, and what it is that is restricting or blocking the flow of praise. When this has been discovered, there must come a repentance and turning away from the hindrance. The person must set his heart to be obedient to God and to give praise to Him. If it still seems impossible to flow into praise, help should be sought from some mature and spiritually-sensitive person. It may be that there is a Satanic suppression on the life that needs to be broken. Until this has been done, the person can never serve God adequately. An inability to praise and worship God indicates a rebellion somewhere. There is obviously a basic problem that needs to be dealt with. Keep seeking God until victory comes and rivers of praise are released from the innermost being!

Chapter 6

SCRIPTURAL WAYS TO PRAISE THE LORD

Praise is primarily the expression of admiration and approval. In its fullest sense, it also includes the expression of gratitude and thanksgiving for favours received. Thus, praise and thanksgiving are frequently linked together.

However the purest forms of praise do not include thanks and gratitude. They are essentially expressions of admiration and adoration to the object of one's praise, irrespective of whether or not favours have been received.

Praising God, therefore, is primarily the extolling of His person, character, attributes and perfection. It is the adoration of God, for who and what He is, rather than for anything He has done from which we have benefited. *"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised..." (Psa 145:3).*

Praise is first an inner awareness of worth. It is subsequently an outward expression of that inner appreciation. It does not become praise until it finds outward expression. While it remains within the heart and mind, it is admiration. When it finds expression and becomes vocal or visible, it is then praise

SCRIPTURAL EXPRESSIONS OF PRAISE

There are many scriptural ways in which we may express our praise to God. We are now going to look at some of these. Our list may not be exhaustive. You may be able to find other ways which are equally as scriptural. I believe that God wants every Christian to be free enough in their spirit to be able to praise Him in any and all of the ways found in the Bible.

Remember that these expressions of praise are valid and acceptable only if they are truly giving expression to praise that is in our hearts and needing to be released to God. In other words, merely going through the motions, mechanically doing these various things, does not constitute praise. They are merely a means of giving expression to the admiration, thanksgiving and respect that is within us.

If you are conscious of praise within your heart that has never been given adequate expression, let me suggest that you study these various expressions. Look up the scripture references cited and prayerfully consider the context and significance, then DO whatever expression you are considering.

For example, if you are studying the references to shouting, then go ahead and shout unto the Lord. You will discover a tremendous release in doing it. Something will be set free within you. A new dimension of joy will be released within, for you are being obedient to God, and you are beginning to praise Him in new ways which He has ordained for you in His Word.

Should you be teaching others these principles of praise, get them to DO each one as you teach. Don't be content to only talk about these methods of praise, have the people participate and actually do what you are teaching.

1. **Praising God with the voice.** *"My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed. My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long...."* (Psa 71:23,24).

"That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell all of thy wondrous works." (Psa 26:7).

David was constantly speaking forth the praises of God. He would say things like, *"The Lord is my strength, and my shield; My heart trusted in him and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song I will praise him."* (Psa 28:7).

We should also cultivate the habit of talking about the Lord and extolling His wonderful works. Begin each day by speaking forth praise to God. Tell Him how great and wonderful He is, how you love Him and appreciate Him. Thank Him for a new day and begin to praise Him for His presence with you throughout that day. Sing a song of praise and thanksgiving to God. Employ your voice, your lips, your mouth. Make them instruments of praise. You will be surprised how quickly you will cultivate the habit of praise.

"I will bless the Lord at all times. his praise shall continually be in my mouth." (Psa 34:1).

"Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love salvation say continually, the Lord be magnified." (Psa 40:16).

"O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard" (Psa 66:8).

2. **Shouting unto God.** The verbal praise we have spoken about in the previous segment requires only conversational volume. We are speaking to God in a conversational manner, telling Him our opinion of Him and expressing our appreciation. However, there are also times when it is fitting and scriptural to raise our voices and really shout unto God. *"...SHOUT UNTO GOD with the voice of triumph"* says David in Psalm 47:1.

Many conservative people are very adverse to shouting or making any kind of loud noise. They feel it is undignified. Some have even said, "There is no need to shout, God is not deaf!" To which we would reply, "God is not nervous either!"

There is a time and place for the joyful noise and the shout of praise and we should not be afraid to do it when that time comes.

"But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy.." (Psalm 5:11).

"Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart." (Psa 32:11).

"Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause" (Psa 35:27).

"Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joyand her saints shall shout aloud for joy." (Psa 132:9,16).

"Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." (Isa 12:6).

"Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all thy heart, O daughter of Jerusalem." (Zeph 3:14).

"And the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the peoplewhich when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces." (Lev 9:23,24).

"And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout so that the earth rang again." (1 Sam 4:5).

3. **Singing.** "... Come before his presence with singing." (**Psa 100:2**).

Singing is one of the simplest and most natural responses to the wonder of God. It is a spontaneous expression of joyful emotion. It has always been a valid expression of praise amongst God's people. Immediately after the exodus from Egypt, when God had brought them safely through the Red Sea, Miriam led the children of Israel in singing the praises of God, who had so wonderfully delivered them from the hand of their enemies.

"And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." (**Ex 15:21**).

There are many references to singing throughout the scriptures. Here are but a few:

"...I will sing unto the Lord, I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel." (**Jud 5:3**).

"Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name." (**II Sam 22:50**).

"Sing unto him, sing Psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works." (**1 Chron 16:9**)

"Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped." (**II Chron 29:30**)

"I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high." (**Psa 7:17**).

"I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou Most High." (**Psa 9:2**)

"Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion..." (**Psa 9:11**).

"I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me" (**Psa 13:6**).

"Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power." (**Psa 21:13**).

".....I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord." (**Psa 27:6**).

"Sing unto the Lord, O ye his saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness." (**Psa 30:4**).

"Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise." (**Psa 33:3**).

"Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing ye praises with understanding." (**Psa 47:6,7**).

"My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise" (**Psa 57:7**).

"But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy." (**Psa 59:16,17**).

"So will I sing praise unto thy name forever, so that I may daily perform my vows." (**Psa 61:8**).

There are many other references to singing praise to God, but these few will suffice to give some idea of the importance of singing.

Singing is a sign of gladness and contentment.

It is a symptom of joy, indicating a satisfaction with one's lot in life.

It is a healthy expression of positive emotion that ministers strength to the total being.

God delights to hear us singing His praises.

A VARIETY OF SONGS

In **Eph 5:19** and **Col 3:16**, we are exhorted to sing Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs ... to the Lord.

The Psalms have provided a tremendous amount of material for worship in song - from the old traditional hymns to modern choruses taken directly from them.

Hymns have also provided great themes to inspire the Church and furnish her with anthems of praise.

Spiritual songs are somewhat different from either of these previous categories. They are songs given directly by the Spirit and sung spontaneously as the Spirit supplies both words and melody.

These songs may be in the language of the person singing, in which case they are sung *"...with the understanding..."* (**1 Cor 14:15**). At other times, the lyrics may be in "other tongues" in which case, the mind of the person is *"...unfruitful..."* (**1 Cor 14:14**). The mind has no natural understanding of what is being sung, though at the same time knows intuitively that the Spirit is praising and magnifying God, frequently with the "tongues of angels." In both cases the songs are completely spontaneous and unplanned. The songs are rendered by faith. The singer, listening to the Spirit of God within his own spirit, faithfully follows the melody and words that He supplies.

PHYSICAL EXPRESSIONS OF PRAISE

In addition to verbal, audible expressions of praise, the Bible cites many ways in which we can use physical expressions in order to worship God.

1. **Standing.** To stand erect is always a sign of respect. If a person of importance enters a room, those already present will stand to their feet to honour and show respect to that person. Frequently the Holy Spirit will inspire us to stand before the Lord as an act of worship and reverence. *"Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world STAND in awe of him."* (**Psa 33:8**).

"Bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord." "Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the name of the Lord; praise him, O ye servants of the Lord. Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God." (**Psa 134:1; 135:1,2**).

2. **Raising the Hands.** Raised hands are a universal sign of surrender. By raising our hands high before the Lord we acknowledge that we are completely surrendered to Him. We tell Him again that we are unconditionally His.

We have no desire to rebel against Him, we have no weapons in our hands to fight against Him.

People who are NOT wholly surrendered to God have great problems in doing this, though it appears to be such a simple thing. They strongly resist this mode of worship. However, once having done it, great release comes and they are frequently able to express praise in many other ways also.

"Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord" (**Psa 134:2**).

It is also a sign of deep longing after God. *"Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands towards thy holy oracle."* (**Psa 28:2**).

It is also symbolic of spiritual thirst after God. *"I stretch forth my hands unto thee; my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land."* (Psa 143:6).

3. **Clapping our hands.** When someone does something which wins our admiration and approval and we want to let them know they have done so, we frequently put our hands together and clap. Perhaps a concert pianist plays a truly beautiful piece that the audience thoroughly enjoys, they will often break forth into spontaneous clapping. If they wish to express their approval even more obviously, they will often stand to their feet and clap their hands. We call this a standing ovation. When God is so wonderful, and has done so many glorious things that win our admiration and approval, is it so strange that we would want to applaud Him?

We are commanded to *"clap our hands unto God"* (Psalm 47:1).
It is a sign of gladness, rejoicing and approval.

4. **Bowing low or kneeling.** Often when people are overcome with the sense of God's presence and glory, they will spontaneously fall on their knees or bow before God. It is a gesture of reverence and respect.

"O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker"
(Psalm 95:6).

One day every knee will bow before Him. (Phil 2:10).

5. **Falling prostrate before God.** Here is another extreme form of obeisance and worship. To fall and lie in front of someone is a sign of deepest reverence. A humbling of oneself to increase the sense of elevation of the One before whom we prostrate ourselves.

6. **Dancing.** Because dancing is a highly demonstrative and perhaps somewhat emotional form of praise, it has met with a good deal of criticism and opposition. Mostly from conservative people. Because of this controversy, I have given rather more space to the consideration of this aspect of praise.

Dancing involves the use of the whole body in order to express joy, praise and worship before the Lord. The Hebrew and Greek words translating "dance" in the scriptures, have a variety of meanings, including "leaping", "skipping", "lifting up the feet", "jumping". These translations indicate something of the spontaneous, unstructured nature of such dancing. This dancing is not generally according to prescribed and programmed movements, but rather, simple, spontaneous responses of joy before the Lord.

Such incidents as that recorded in Acts 3:8 in which the previously lame man went off *"walking and leaping, and praising God."* can now be seen in a different light. This is particularly so when we remember the integral part that dancing has always played in the worship of the children of Israel.

"Let them praise his Name in the dance..." (Psa 149:3).

"Praise him with the timbrel and dance..." (Psa 150:4).

SOME INSTANCES OF DANCING IN THE BIBLE

TO CELEBRATE SALVATION AND DELIVERANCE

"And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand: and all the women went out after her with timbrels (tambourines) and with dances." (Ex 15:20).

"And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances...." (II Sam 6:16).

"... Michal ... saw king David dancing and playing" (1 Chron 15:29).

Jeremiah prophesied concerning the glorious restoration to come...

"Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old men together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow." (Jer 31:13).

According to **Lamentations 5:15**, their dances had been turned to mourning when they were taken into captivity. In **Jer 31:13** we see the dance was restored when they were brought out of captivity again.

In **Joel 1:12** we see that drought and barrenness come upon God's people when, *"...Joy is withered away from the sons of men."*

The joy and laughter that accompanies a return from captivity is a testimony to the heathen, that *"The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." (Psalm 126:3).*

DANCING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

It has been argued, by those who would oppose dancing in the church today, that it was purely an Old Testament phenomenon, and has no place in the New Testament church. However, it is obvious when reading the New Testament that this expression is there also.

Jesus said, *"Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward is great in heaven..." (Luke 6:23).*

One of the Greek words for joy that appears frequently in the New Testament is "agalliao," which means literally "to leap for joy." This is not a deep, inner type of joy, rather it is a dynamic, emotive expression of tremendous joy that makes one literally "jump for joy." Here are a few of the places where it occurs in N.T. scripture.

"...Jesus rejoiced (agalliao) in the spirit..." (Luke 10:21).

Mary said, *"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced (agalliao) in God my Saviour." (Luke 1:46,47).*

The jailor, *"...rejoiced (agalliao), believing God with all his house." (Acts 16:34).*

Believers leap for joy because of the power of God unto salvation and the glorious inheritance that is reserved for them (**1 Peter 1:3-7**).

Right at the end of the New Testament we encounter an exhortation to *"Be glad and rejoice (agalliao - jump for joy), and give honour to him (Christ); for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (Rev 19:7).*

When the prodigal son was restored to his father, there was music and dancing (**Luke 15:25**). When the restoration of all things spoken by the prophets takes place, there must also be dancing, for this is one of those things spoken by the prophets (**Jer 31:13**).

SOME ASPECTS OF SCRIPTURAL DANCING

a. **It is spontaneous, primitive, and unsophisticated in style.**

Not a highly structured, practised and precision mode.

It is expressed in leaping, jumping, skipping and gyrating.

It was sometimes accompanied by music from instruments.

(**1 Chron 15:29; Psalm 149:3**).

It was often accompanied by singing (**Ex 15:20,21**).

b. **May be practised by an individual or as a group.**

David danced before the Lord.

Miriam and ALL the women danced.

c. **Is not dancing with a member of the opposite sex.**

Miriam and all the women danced (**Ex 15:21**).

Young men and old men together (**Jer 31:13**).

d. **No age limit on it.**

Young men and old men together.

e. **Singing and dancing often went together.**

"Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in the dances, saying Saul slew his thousands, David his ten thousands." (1 Sam 29:5).

f. **There is a right time to dance.**

"A time to mourn.... and a time to dance" (Ecc 3:4).

g. **God has prophesied a restoration of dancing.**

"..... and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry." (Jer 31:4).

"Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance...." (Jer 31:13).

WARNING!!!

Dancing of a carnal nature, is also associated with backsliding, idolatry, immorality and worldliness, e.g., **Ex 32:19**, dancing around the golden calf.

Satan has a counterfeit for everything.

Counterfeits prove only the reality of the genuine and original.

The fact that Satan may counterfeit something does not mean that we should not practise the genuine.

7. **Musical instruments** were frequently used in scripture to express praise and worship. They can also play a vital part in worship today. We are commanded to *"Praise him with the sound of the trumpet; praise him with the Psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals"* (Psalm 150:3-5).

Those musicians who would offer praises on their instruments, must seek to excel in doing so. They must apply themselves to "play skilfully" on their instruments (**Psa 33:3**).

This does not necessarily imply the skill of precision. It is not the offering of skilful human ability.

It is a spiritual skill, rather than natural talent.

The skill is not only in playing of the instrument but in interpreting the mood of the Spirit.

We call this "playing in the Spirit."

a. DAVID'S SKILFUL PLAYING ON THE HARP drove the evil spirits from Saul (**1 Sam 16:23**).

b. MUSICIANS CAN PRODUCE AN ATMOSPHERE conducive to the exercise of spiritual gifts.

c. 4,000 MUSICIANS PRAISED THE LORD on their instruments at the dedication of Solomon's temple (**1 Chron 23:5**). *"And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps; and they sung as it were a new song before the throne..."* (**Rev 14:2,3**)

8. **Silence.** In complete contrast to the sounds of singing, musical instruments, dancing etc. is the expression of praise through silence - *"... a time to keep silent, and a time to speak"* (**Ecc 3:7**).

Do not be afraid of silence. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will bring a holy hush upon a congregation. In these times the silence becomes profound and eloquent. There is often a great sense of awe and reverence during such periods. One can stand (or sit) silently before God, contemplating, adoring and worshipping Him. *"Be still, and know that I am God..."* (**Psalms 46:10**).

9. **Weeping** can also be a legitimate response of praise to God. It is not the weeping of sorrow or heartache, but of gratitude and thanksgiving. Sometimes as we meditate on the greatness and goodness of God, the only appropriate response to His goodness is to weep tears of gratitude.

Do not be afraid to do this. It is not a sign of weakness. Let the tears flow. Our human reaction is often to refrain from tears. However, weeping can sometimes express the deepest longings of our being in a manner which nothing else can. It often brings a deep release and liberation.

One should not be given to too much weeping as this can be a sign that something is wrong in the inner being, and in such cases there may be need for inner healing. When Nehemiah began to read and explain the Word of God, the people wept when they heard it. Nehemiah allowed them to weep for a time, but then he interrupted their weeping and instructed them to *"...Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, ...neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength"* (**Neh 8:10**). Too much weeping weakens one, whereas the joy of the Lord is a source of strength.

10. **Laughter.** There is such a thing as holy laughter, when a desire to laugh unto the Lord comes upon one. This is not a response to something humorous that someone has said. It is an expression of such heightened joy in the Lord that the only way to express it is through laughter.

The children of Israel experienced this upon their return from captivity. *"Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing..." (Psa 126:2).*

"Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing" (Job 8:20,21).

11. **Marching.** God frequently commanded His people to march. Probably the best known instance of this was the march around Jericho (**Josh 6:2-5**). Israel marched in response to God's command and Jehovah brought down the walls of Jericho. Many walls still fall when God's people march in response to His direction. Walls of pride, unbelief, spiritual bondage etc.

Jehoshaphat and his army marched and sang praises to God, and God delivered their enemies into their hand even though they were badly outnumbered (**II Chron 20:22**).

Many congregations have marched around in response to a prompting of the Spirit. Marching around a church building may have seemed, to the natural mind, to be as ridiculous as marching around Jericho. But often the results have been almost as dramatic. Walls of bondage, pride and bitterness have been brought tumbling down. This type of march has sometimes been called a "Jericho March." Others call it a "glory march."

The Bride of Christ is pictured as an army marching forward together (**Song of Solomon 6:4,10**).

12. **Rejoicing in the Lord** is yet another way of praising God. When Nehemiah came into the King's presence with a sad face, the King knew immediately that something was drastically wrong (**Neh 2:1**). Nehemiah says, *"He had never seen me look sad before, so he asked, 'Why are you looking so sad? You aren't ill, so it must be that you are unhappy.' "* (Good News Bible).

Nehemiah was sore afraid. To come before the king with a sad face seemed to be an indication that he was unhappy in the king's service. This would be an insult to the king and would not be tolerated by him, which was why Nehemiah was afraid. He quickly began to explain the reason for his sad countenance and that it had nothing to do with the conditions under which he was serving the king. No one would dare come before the king with a sad countenance and manner, yet many Christians come before the King of kings with sad and mournful dispositions. To do so is an insult to God. It is an indication that we are far from satisfied with our lot under His rule. The proper manner in which to appear before the King is with rejoicing - thus indicating that we are delighted with our position and thankful for the honour bestowed upon us, to be servants of the King! The people of God were frequently told, *"And ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God."*

One of those places is in **Deut 12:11**. God was instituting a place where He could meet with them. *"Then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you, your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord. And ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants...."*

Thus God decreed that when we come into the place which He has ordained for us to meet with Him, we should come there with rejoicing. David understood this when he said, "*I will enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise...*" (**Psalm 100:4**).

When the children of Israel kept the Feasts of the Lord, they were to do so with rejoicing before Him (**Lev 23:40**). "*.... and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God...*" Rejoicing is a way of expressing thanksgiving and praise. When we give a gift to someone, their rejoicing indicates their pleasure and appreciation. So too, when we rejoice before the Lord, we express our pleasure in Him and our appreciation of Him. It is a great pity that so many churches have instilled the idea that reverence is only solemnity, quietness and soberness. They seem to feel that to express joy and gladness is the height of irreverence. Nothing can be further from the truth. Christians should be the most joyful people in the community and their rejoicing should be obvious to all. The Church, in its meeting together, should be a celebration. It would then attract many more people, for it would more faithfully reflect the true nature of God. Instead, many modern churches often repel people by their coldness and dreariness. They are so solemn and heavy. The atmosphere is so stiff and formal. The people conduct themselves in such a false, religious and unnatural manner. It should not be so. Let us return to the spirit of rejoicing before the Lord.

There are many ways in which our rejoicing can be expressed. Singing joyful songs instead of mournful dirges, is one way. Raising our hands, clapping and dancing are some of the other means. Rejoicing in the Lord will cause us to be much more relaxed in God's presence. We need less formality and more reality! This world is a sad enough place without our adding to its sadness. Let us aim to brighten it up, for we are the light of the world.

In the New Testament, the Greek word "*agalliao*" (discussed previously - see "dancing") is translated 'rejoice!' This literally means 'to jump for joy.' 'to rejoice exceedingly, to be exceeding glad, with exceeding joy.' Here is an expression of joy that is free and uninhibited, spontaneous and expressive - so free that it might cause us to even skip and leap for joy, with childlike delight.

Chapter 7

OFFERING THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." (Heb 13:15).

There is a distinct difference between praising God and offering the "sacrifice of praise." For a child of God, in right relationship to the Father, praise is usually something that flows easily. We have so much to praise God for that whenever we think about Him there should be a spontaneous flow of praise from our hearts. Our praise usually involves thanksgiving as well and we minister to God in praise for all the blessings and benefits He has brought into our lives.

The "sacrifice of praise" is somewhat different. It does not usually flow easily and spontaneously. It is not the praise we offer because everything is going nicely and we are happy and blessed. The sacrifice of praise is something we offer to God when we do not feel like praising Him.

Everything seems to be going wrong. Our world seems to be falling apart. In these circumstances, we are praising God, not because of our circumstances but in spite of them. Our praise is not ascending because we feel great and want to give expression to our good feelings. In this situation, we are praising God by faith. We are praising Him in obedience. We are praising Him for who He is and not particularly for what He has done. This kind of praise does not come easily. It is not a cheap thing. It is costly. But it brings special delight to the heart of the Father and He loves to receive the sacrifice of praise.

1. **It is continual praise.** David learned the secret of this. He said *"I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth"* (**Psalm 34:1**).

This praise is not spasmodic and erratic.

It is not "fair weather" praise.

It is not cheap, easy praise that costs nothing.

It is not sentimental praise.

It is not superficial and empty.

It is consistent. It is offered to God continually.

In the good times, and in the bad times.

When everything is fine, and when nothing seems to be going right.

In those times when "The Lord giveth."

And those times when "The Lord taketh away."

And we are enabled to say *"blessed be the Name of the Lord."* (**Job 1:21**).

It is praising God when the baby dies and we do not understand why.

It is praising God when sickness has struck and doctors say there is no hope.

It is praising God when you lose your job.

When you are miles from anywhere, without a jack, and your car has a flat tyre.

It is especially in those times when the heavens seem to be brass, God seems to be a million miles away. Your prayers do not seem to be heard, much less answered.

When you cannot immediately think of anything for which you want to praise God, but you praise Him just the same. That is the sacrifice of praise.

It is the praise you offer to God when it really costs you something to do it. Your natural feelings argue against it. Your friends discourage you. Your heart is heavy, there is no spring in your stride. The devil says "What have you got to praise God for?" He says, "Nobody can be expected to praise God in this kind of situation. even God would not expect you to do it. It would be fanatical."

Nevertheless, you know, deep inside, that God is worthy to be praised. You know that He is still on the throne.

He is still the Almighty, the God of the whole Universe. He has not changed in any way. He is the same, yesterday, today and forever. Praise His wonderful Name!

2. It is audible praise. It is the fruit of our lips. Our lips produce words. They help us to verbalise our thoughts.

So the sacrifice of praise is something we say.

Something we speak out.

Satan can hear it.

People can hear it.

We can hear it ourselves.

And, most important, God can hear it.

It was the sacrifice of praise that Paul and Silas offered to God at midnight, when they were held fast in the deepest dungeon. They had been thrown into prison for speaking about Jesus. They were not criminals. They had not committed some grievous crime. They were spreading the good news of the Kingdom and were thrown into prison for their efforts. They had been beaten with many stripes. Their backs were open and bleeding. They were sore. Their wounds were raw. Every nerve in their bodies were screaming out. Every inch of their backs was painful. Their hands and feet were chained to the wall. They could not make themselves comfortable, no matter how they tried.

Now it was midnight. The time when the human spirit is at its lowest ebb; when their spirits would normally be at the depths of depression and despair. They had probably never felt less like praising God than at that very time.

But at midnight, they began to sing praises to God. They opened their mouths and began to sing forth the praises of the Lord. How this must have gladdened the heart of God. Here were two of His servants, suffering shame, pain and despair for His Name. Languishing in prison because they had done what God had told them to do. Would they curse Him? Would they deny Him? Would they say "What were we thinking about, to let ourselves get into this mess?" Would they blame Him, saying "We would not be in this trouble, were it not for God."

No! A thousand times No! They began to sing His praises.

At midnight.

In the darkest hour.

When everything seemed dark and discouraging.

Suddenly the walls of the prison began to shake. Their chains became loose.

I like to think that when the Lord heard their midnight praise session, He was so thrilled that He joined in with them and shouted "Hallelujah!" so loudly that the walls of the prison began to reverberate!

Those men were offering the sacrifice of praise. They were praising God despite every adversity. They were climbing right up on top of their circumstances, and shouting "Glory to God anyway!"

Saints of God around the world are still offering these same kinds of sacrifices. From prison cells in many parts of this earth, where saints of God suffer for the testimony of Jesus, they are offering their sacrifices of praise to God.

3. It can be done only through Jesus. *"By him, therefore, let us offer..."*

Only Jesus can make this kind of offering possible. This is why Christ is so wonderfully glorified in this exercise. The Father knows full well that no person could offer praise and thanksgiving from out of that kind of situation unless the Lord was helping him. So God sees the wonder of His Son in this offering. It is the grace of His Son that has accomplished this miracle. Here is a person who previously might have cursed God in this situation, but now, because of the triumph of God's grace in his life, he is actually thanking and praising God. He is saying, "I just don't understand why this is happening, God, but I am praising you just the same." "I cannot understand why this should happen to my family and me, I cannot discern the reason or fathom the purpose, but I praise you just the same."

Every time a sacrifice of praise is offered, Jesus Christ is glorified!

4. It is the giving of thanks to His Name. God wants to bring us into the place where we can sincerely *"Give thanks always for all things unto God and the Father."* (Eph 5:20). Notice it is not giving thanks to the Father FOR all things. That is much more difficult. First, God teaches us to give thanks unto Him IN all things. We can do this only when we really believe in the sovereignty of God. When we truly *"...know that ALL things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose"* (Rom 8:28).

HOW TO OFFER THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

1. Determine beforehand that you are going to praise God at all times and in every situation.

2. Begin to do it right now. Praise God every day and all day. No matter what may arise in your day, praise God in it, for, and through it. Get into the good habit of praising God continually.

3. If trouble should come your way, or you find yourself in difficulties, order yourself to praise the Lord. David said, *"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me, and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God"* (**Psalm 50:23**). Order yourself to praise God in that difficult situation, and God will prepare a way of deliverance for you.

4. Begin to do it by faith. Speak out words of praise. Give vocal thanks to God by faith, even though you may not understand what you are thanking Him for. Begin to praise Him for making a way of deliverance for you. You cannot yet see the way. You

do not know how God will deliver you, but you are thanking Him and praising Him just the same. You are already in victory.

5. **Having once begun, continue to praise Him.** Let your praises ascend higher and higher. Let the Spirit of praise really overtake you. Shout out praise to God. Sing unto Him. Dance before Him. Glorify Him and magnify His Name. He will make a way of salvation for you.

Chapter 8

PRAISE AND WORSHIP

To praise is to speak well of. To express admiration for. To compliment. To commend. To congratulate. To applaud. To eulogize. To extol.

To worship is to express reverence, to have a sense of awe. To bow low before the object of worship. To make obeisance.

Worship is the highest form of praise. We generally commence with praise and then move on into worship.

The word 'worship' derives from the old English word 'WORTHSHIP' - to esteem the worth of, and to make a suitable response to that worthiness.

Worship is first an attitude of heart. It is the reverent occupation of the human heart with its Creator. It begins with an inner musing of the heart. A depth of meditation upon the greatness and worthiness of God. It is the savouring of admiration about God. It is an inner sense of awe and respect for the Almighty.

Second, it is an OVERFLOW of those thoughts and emotions. They flow forth spontaneously. They should not have to be pumped up, or forced out. Our cup, like David's, should "run over joyfully."

Third, it is the OUTPOURING of the soul in deep expressions of reverence, awe, wonder and adoration.

THE FIRST BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO WORSHIP

One of the principles of Bible interpretation is the "law of first mention," that states that the first biblical mention of any subject gives a clear indication of its meaning and significance wherever it may occur in the Bible. It is the key to understanding the import of that word or subject throughout the scriptures.

The first occurrence of the word worship is in **Gen 22:5**. Abraham, speaking to the young men who accompanied him and Isaac to Moriah, "... *I and the lad will go yonder and worship.*" The word used here is SHACHAH (pronounced Shaw-kaw), meaning to prostrate oneself before, to bow down, to fall before in humble reverence, respect and obeisance. Let us look at some of the implications of this first mention of worship.

1. **God commanded Abraham to go and worship.** Praise and worship is not an option that we may decide to do or not to do according to our whim. It is a commandment of God. When the Bible says, "**PRAISE YE THE LORD**," that is not a suggestion or a request, it is a commandment. There are no exceptions made. Every child of God is commanded to praise and worship God.

2. **Abraham's response was one of Obedience.** This obedience was essential to his covenant relationship to God. God and he had entered into a covenant that demanded Abraham's absolute obedience and total commitment to God. God was about to test the

sincerity and integrity of Abraham's commitment. He was demanding the sacrifice of the very thing that Abraham held to be most precious, Isaac, the son of promise.

3. **The Act of Worship is a costly one.** This act of worship would cost Abraham his very best and highest offering. It was to truly be a "*sacrifice of praise*" (**Heb 13:15**). A life of worship demands everything we are and have. (**Rom 12:1,2**). There has to be a complete surrender of our whole self to God, in order to become a true worshipper. David also understood this principle when he said, "*Shall I offer to God that which costs me nothing?*" (**11 Sam 24:24**).

4. **The Act of Worship is an act of Faith.** Every step that Abraham took that day was a step of faith. As he marched up Mount Moriah, knowing that God had demanded the offering of his well-loved son, he knew by faith, that somehow he and Isaac would return together. (**Gen 22:5**).

5. **The surrender of self.** Not only was Abraham prepared to offer Isaac, he was also to offer to God his own plans, desires, ambitions and wishes for the future. His future was tied, inevitably, to this boy. This was the son that God had promised him - through whom all the promises of the covenant would be fulfilled. To surrender him in obedience was to surrender the prospect of all he longed to see fulfilled. He surrendered himself.

We can never enter into true worship until there has been a complete surrender of our "self" to God. The self or ego will always get in the way of worship. So we must give it to God in surrender.

6. **Praise glorifies God.** Abraham's costly act of worship glorified God. A normal reaction would be, "How great and glorious must be the One for whom Abraham would be willing to sacrifice his well-loved son, in order to render the worship of obedience and faith." God says, "*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me..*" (**Psa 50:23**). Every true act of worship glorifies God.

7. **The worshipper is also blessed.** God's response to Abraham's act of worship indicates His great pleasure and also His desire to bless every worshipper. "*.... because thou hast done this thing, and has not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies...because thou has obeyed my voice*" (**Gen 22:16-18**).

The story of Mary, (**John 12:3**) anointing the feet of Jesus with precious ointment, is a beautiful type of worship. John tells us that afterwards she "*....wiped his feet with her hair..*" Imagine the sweet fragrance she would have carried away in her hair. Everywhere she went people would be aware of the sweet aroma. So it is with worshippers. Their lives carry a sweet fragrance wherever they go. It is the fragrance of the presence of the Lord!

WORSHIP PORTRAYED IN THE TABERNACLE

A further principle of Bible interpretation is the "law of much mention." This principle says that the amount of treatment and space given to a particular subject indicates its

importance. When we consider how much space is devoted to the description of the Tabernacle - fifty one chapters throughout the whole bible, we realise how important this subject is. Since the primary purpose of the Tabernacle was the worship of God, we see that God is conveying to us the vital nature of worship, and the tremendous importance He attaches to it.

The first piece of Tabernacle furniture that God describes (**Ex 25:22**), is the ark of the covenant which was overlaid by the mercy seat. God said, "... *there will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat...*" The Holy of Holies, in which the ark was located, was the place where God would meet and commune with man face to face. It was the place of worship.

In the Old Covenant economy, this awesome privilege was given to the High Priest only, and that on only one day of the year, the Day of Atonement. How blessed we are, under the terms of the New Covenant, to have the privilege of continual access through the blood of Christ.

The basic teaching implicit in the Tabernacle for us Christians is that of worship. God had brought forth His people out of Egypt with a strong and mighty hand (**Ex 32:11**). Once their deliverance from Egypt was complete, the first thing He did was to commission Moses to build the Tabernacle. God's first desire, after our deliverance from Egypt (sin and its bondage), is to initiate us into the ministry of worship.

The Tabernacle teaches us the order and progression of worship. When entering the outer court of the Tabernacle, the first item one sees is the brazen altar of sacrifice. This is where our sins and iniquities are dealt with and we receive the pardon of God.

Next came the brass laver, typical of cleansing through the water of the Word. The would-be worshipper had to come through these two experiences before reaching the curtains of the holy place.

Within the holy place stood the table of shewbread, the seven branch candlestick and the golden altar of incense. All of which have deep significance in the teaching of worship.

Ultimately, there was the Holy of Holies, that sacred and solemn meeting place which typifies the highest and purest forms of praise and worship. It is to this spot that the Spirit wants to bring us. There is a definite progression in learning the skills of worship. God wants to bring us through all the various phases until, at last, we can enter the ultimate place of sacred worship, that place within the veil with Him.

WHAT IS TRUE WORSHIP?

A classic, biblical definition of worship is found in :-

Deut 6:5

5 *Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.* (NIV)

It was reiterated and augmented by Jesus in :-

Matt 22:37-40

37 *Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."*

38 *"This is the first and great commandment.*

39 *"And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*

40 *"On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (NKJ)*

The addition He made was, *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself"*. He reminds us that true worship has two dimensions, perpendicular and horizontal. The true worshipper is to love God with all his heart, soul and strength and love his neighbour as himself.

True worship is declaring and eulogizing the WORTH-SHIP of God. We should do this directly to Him with verbal and physical declarations of our love and esteem. We should also declare His worth to our fellow man by the manner in which we regard, esteem and treat him that he too may begin to glorify God.

Matt 5:16

16 *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (NKJ)*

One objective of Worship is to Glorify God by inviting, experiencing and celebrating His dynamic presence.

In the various scriptures we have quoted in respect to "loving God" for instance:

Deut 6:5

5 *Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. (NIV)*

The first emphasis is on loving Him with "ALL your heart". Obviously this infers loving Him whole heartedly, i.e. with all you have. However, it is very interesting that the heart comes before the mind, soul and strength. If we do not truly love God with ALL our heart it is unlikely that we will truly love Him wholly with the remainder of our being. Which is one reason why many people have a problem with loving God with their heart. The Bible clearly teaches that it is with the heart that we believe unto salvation.

Rom 10:10

10 *For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. NIV*

It is with the heart that man believes, which implies more than an assent of the understanding, and takes in the consent of the will, an inward, hearty, sincere, and strong consent. Verbal confession of our heart's conviction concerning Jesus, His death and resurrection, brings assurance of salvation. It is from and with the heart that love proceeds.

However, it is also true that the heart is also inevitably linked with one's emotion. It is impossible to fully express one's love without involving the emotions. Imagine how sterile and boring a marriage would be with emotional expression. The same is true of our relationship with God. An integral aspect of experiencing the living presence of God involves emotional expression and encounter.

Such an experience of God's presence is:-

a. Discerned initially in one's spirit.

God is a spirit. His presence is a spiritual presence. It is recognized initially in one's own spirit, the deepest, most intimate part of one's being. In order to recognize and perceive God's presence we must be spiritually inclined and sensitized.

Jacob was a carnal man by nature. God was at times unable to get through his natural resistance. However, when Jacob fell asleep his natural mind was in neutral and God was able to speak to his spirit through a vivid and remarkable dream. On awakening Jacob realized that God had been in that place all the time but his natural mind had not discerned His presence, nor heard His voice.

Gen 28:16-17

16 *When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it."*

17 *He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven." (NIV)*

b. Experienced in the release of positive emotions

Although experiencing God's presence is not primarily an emotional experience, the profound effect of it is usually conveyed to the emotions. So there is usually an emotional response to a spiritual experience of God's presence. That response may be one of tears, or it may be an emotional elation and joy. Whatever form it may take, it will eventually produce a positive, beneficial result.

Unfortunately many sincere Christians have an almost paranoid fear of emotional expression. As soon as they feel emotional expression arising within they suppress it. This hinders and stifles their ability to enter into and experience the atmosphere of God's presence. They must realize that the spirit and soul are linked almost inextricably together. So intricate is their mutual involvement they are frequently incapable of being untangled. The Bible confirms the close nature of this link.

Heb 4:12

12 *For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (NIV)*

It often requires the supernatural discernment of the living Word to discern between soul and spirit.

c. Frequently accompanied by physical response

The physical or bodily response may be one of trembling, prostration, falling down. It can be expressed with clapping, raising the hands, dancing, jumping. It is hard to conceive that a person could receive a visitation from God, experience a normal emotional response to it, yet have no physical reaction. Bible characters often had emotional and physical responses to a visitation from God. Such experiences will not be detrimental or harmful. On the contrary they will be therapeutic and beneficial. Whenever the physical response is truly Spirit engendered, it will cause an ultimate good.

Worship is not a formula, it is the continuing, patient development of a love relationship.

It is the keeping of a love encounter in which the chief aim is to further and deepen the mutual love and esteem each of the other. An opportunity to further investigate the charms and appeal of their lover. To exchange words of endearment and mutual appreciation. Worship is the furtherance of a romantic association between a redeemed child of God and his Redeemer. The words of a chorus express the intimacy of such a communion.

When I look into your holiness,
When I gaze into your loveliness,
When all things that surround
Become shadows in the light of you.
When I've found the joy of reaching your heart,
When my will becomes enthralled in your love,
When all things that surround
Become shadows in the light of you:
I worship you, I worship you,
The reason I live, is to worship you.
I worship you, I worship you,
The reason I live, is to worship you.

(Wayne and Cathy Perrin, Copyright, Integrity's Hosanna Music 1980)

LET'S LOOK INTO THE SONG OF SOLOMON

THIS DELIGHTFUL STORY PORTRAYS A DEVELOPING LOVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A SHEPHERDESS AND A KING. IT IS A TYPE OF THE BELIEVER AND HER KING, JESUS. FROM THE MOMENT SHE FIRST SEES, SHE IS SMITTEN WITH LOVE FOR HIM. HER LOVE IS WHOLE HEARTEDLY RECIPROCATED AND BEGINS TO DEVELOP THROUGH A SERIES OF MEETINGS THAT ARE TYPICAL OF OUR WORSHIP OF CHRIST.

This book gives the dialogue of a king, his wife, and her friends in the king's harem. The man and woman described their love for each other, while the friends praised the woman's beauty and her favoured place before the king. The reader hears about the beauty of love from several directions. The particular setting was the harem of King Solomon.

WHAT DOES THIS DEVELOPMENT REQUIRE?

a. The initial attraction was physical

Initially, both parties extol each other's physical appearance and features. Their verbal interchanges relate almost solely to these.

This is typical of Outer Court Praise which stems largely from our physical beings. We use our natural senses and organs to initiate praise to God. We sing and shout. We raise

our hands and clap. We wave to God. We jump and shout, expressing our admiration and love in very physical terms.

b. Overcoming initial sense of unworthiness

Song 1:6

6 *Look not upon me, because I am swarthy, Because the sun hath scorched me. My mother's sons were incensed against me; They made me keeper of the vineyards; (But) mine own vineyard have I not kept. (ASV)*

The young woman spoke about herself (1:5-6) to Solomon (1:7). Her complexion had been darkened (“dark,” 1:5) from working in the hot sun (1:6). The “tents of Kedar” were made of black goat’s hair. The family background of the Shulammitte is revealed in the fact that she had two older brothers who forced her to work in their vineyard. As a result, she was unable to care for her own vineyard, a figurative reference to her own physical being. Solomon may have been on a hunting trip when he first encountered the Shulammitte, who evidently mistook him for a shepherd (1:7).

c. The King’s constant reassurance

Song 1:5

5 *Dark am I, yet lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, dark like the tents of Kedar, like the tent curtains of Solomon. (NIV)*

This verse constitutes an intimate conversation. She protests, “Please don’t look too closely at me. I am badly darkened by the sun. My complexion is spoiled.”

He responds, “yes, you are dark, but you are also truly lovely.” He did not only see what she was at that moment, he saw what she could become, with the proper treatment and in the right circumstances.

We often feel an initial unworthiness to worship God, but He lovingly reassures us with words of loving confirmation. As the relationship develops and deepens we are gradually able to receive His assurances and to see ourselves as he sees us. He sees us in Christ and to Him we are a thing of beauty.

d. His unashamed love

She initially felt unworthy of His presence and favor, but He was never ashamed of her nor embarrassed to be seen with her. She finally became convinced of this when He took her to a royal banquet and sat her beside Him at the top table, under His royal banner.

Song 2:4

4 *He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. (NKJ)*

e. Her desire for privacy with Him

There is also an urgent desire to be alone with the object of one’s affections.

Song 1:4

4 *Take me away with you-- let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers. We rejoice and delight in you; we will praise your love more than wine. How right they are to adore you! (NIV)*

f. A Sensitive and selfless approach.

The partners take nothing for granted, they woo each other continuously. Each meeting is a new love affair. The approach is gentle, considerate, and unselfish.

Song 1:2

2 *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth-- for your love is better than wine.*

A kiss is the first link in a new bonding relationship between the believer and Christ.

Ps 2:12

12 *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. (NIV)*

g. Meaningful reciprocity (mutual exchange)

Song 2:16

16 *My beloved is mine, and I am his: (ASV)*

Each partner contributes in an activity of reciprocity, each valuing the other more than themselves. It becomes a two way relationship, each giving and taking to and from the other. With each rendezvous the relationship becomes more reciprocal as each convinces the other of their love with words and deeds.

h. The lover's response

The overtures of the shepherdess soon received a positive response from the object of her love.

Her Beloved declared;

Song 1:9-10

9 *I liken you, my darling, to a mare harnessed to one of the chariots of Pharaoh.*

10 *Your cheeks are beautiful with earrings, your neck with strings of jewels. (NIV)*

God guarantees,

Jer 29:13

13 *And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. (NKJ)*

As we seek for God through worship, He will respond to us. He will manifest His presence. Sometimes this will happen with a quiet drawing near that we sense in our inner man. At other times God will reveal His presence through some manifestation of His Spirit.

i. Mutual fulfillment

The quality of relationship is gauged by the degree of fulfillment that each partner experiences. Such a development increases the awareness of belonging each to the other. A mutual bonding transpires that accentuates each one's relationship to his partner.

Song 2: 16-17

16 **My beloved is mine, and I am his:** *he feedeth among the lilies.*

17 *Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel. (KJV)*

j. Inspires extravagance.

Reciprocated love opens the heart to increased extravagance. The more their relationship develops, the more extravagant she becomes in her praise of her Beloved. The more she desires to give to Him of herself and her life.

Song 5:10-16

10 *My lover is radiant and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand.*
11 *His head is purest gold; his hair is wavy and black as a raven.*
12 *His eyes are like doves by the water streams, washed in milk, mounted like jewels.*
13 *His cheeks are like beds of spice yielding perfume. His lips are like lilies dripping with myrrh.*
14 *His arms are rods of gold set with chrysolite. His body is like polished ivory decorated with sapphires.*
15 *His legs are pillars of marble set on bases of pure gold. His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as its cedars.*
16 *His mouth is sweetness itself; he is altogether lovely. This is my lover, this my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem. (NIV)*

k. Strengthens relationship.

Each subsequent encounter further strengthens the bonding. The relationship grows by mutual trust and appreciation. The Shulamite and Shepherd pledge their love again as at the first. She pleads for a seal to be set upon their relationship so that not even death can separate them. She wants to love Him eternally.

Song 8:6-7

6 *Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame.*
7 *Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned. (NIV)*

(v. 6): Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm.

Matthew Henry says;

“She begs of him that her union with him might be confirmed, and her communion with him continued and made more intimate

(1.) "let me have a place in thy heart, an interest in thy love." This is that which all those desire above any thing that know how much their happiness is bound up in the love of Christ.

(2.) "let me never lose the room I have in thy heart; let thy love to me be ensured, as that deed which is sealed up not to be robbed. Let nothing ever prevail either to separate me from thy love, or, by suspending the communications of it, to deprive me of the comfortable sense of it."

The presence of God is experienced when our spirit, sensitized by the Holy Spirit, achieves a compatibility with God's Spirit.

THE STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

In the realm of the spirit, there is a stairway that ascends into the very presence of God. It is like a ladder, the bottom of which is on earth, the top reaching into God's presence. There is a constant flow of traffic up and down this ladder. The ascending traffic is

composed of worshipping saints, progressing step by step toward an encounter with the Lord. The descending traffic is the heavenly messengers sent to minister to those who are the heirs of salvation. (Heb 1:14) Many Christians are oblivious of this access route, it is only the true worshippers who learn how to use it to gain entrance into God's glorious presence which is heaven on earth.

An incident in the life of Jacob gives us a glimpse into the usually unseen spiritual realms.

Gen 28:11-22

11 *When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep.*

12 *He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.*

At the close of a tiring day, as Jacob travelled between Beersheba and Haran, he found a good place to rest for the night. With a stone for his pillow, he slept, and dreamed of a giant stairway that reached from earth to heaven. Angels constantly ascended and descended and at the top of the stairway he saw the Lord.

This is a stairway that exists in the Spirit and we need to be "in the Spirit" to discern it and to climb it. Our natural man can neither see nor ascend it. In fact, the natural man needs to be "put to sleep" that our spiritual senses may take over and open up to us those realms of the Spirit that help us to rise into the very presence of God.

He had a fresh vision of God

13 *There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying.*

14 *Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.*

15 *I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."*

After plodding a long lonely road with little awareness of God's immediate presence, Jacob received a fresh, dynamic vision of God whilst he slept. Sometimes our natural senses are so resistant to spiritual realities, that God has to anaesthetize them in sleep and speak to our spirit in a dream.

In the dream God spoke clearly to Jacob and re-affirmed his promise of :-

a. His Person.

I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and of Isaac.

b. His Promise.

"I will give to you the land on which you are lying."

"Your descendants will be as the dust of the earth for number."

"All peoples on earth will be blessed through your descendants."

c. His Presence.

"I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go."

d. His Provision.

“I will bring you back to the land I have given to you.”

JACOB’S REMARKABLE REALIZATION

16 *When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it."*

17 *He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."*

On awakening, Jacob suddenly realized that God’s presence had been in that place all the time but initially, he had neither perceived nor recognised it. He had no immediate awareness of the stairway to heaven, and the proximity of God’s presence and voice. He suddenly realised that the place of revelation and the Gateway to heaven is much closer than we usually realise. All that it usually takes, to experience this, is a quieting of the natural senses and a fresh sensitizing of our spiritual man. These things can be realised in moments of true worship.

Jacob’s memorial

18 *Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it.*

19 *He called that place Bethel, though the city used to be called Luz.*

20 *Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear*

21 *so that I return safely to my father's house, then the LORD will be my God*

Jacob’s vow

22 *and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth." (NIV)*

PREPARING THE WAY OF THE LORD

We must never take for granted the presence of the Lord. We must esteem and value it. We also need to prepare the way for the manifestation of His presence among us.

Exod 19:10-11

10 *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes.*

11 *"And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. (NKJ)*

Build a highway for the Lord

Ps 50:23

23 *He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me, and he prepares the way (BUILDS A HIGHWAY) so that I may show him the salvation of God." (NIV)*

David says, “Whoever offers true praise to God, glorifies the Lord and builds a highway by which God can come among us and reveal the fullness of His gracious provisions.” (Paraphrase)

Isaiah also speaks of “preparing a highway for the Lord.” It is a highway in the wilderness.

God dearly wants to come amongst, and visit his people. But He insists that we prove our desire for Him by preparing a highway for Him in our desert.

Isa 40:3-5

3 *A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.*

What are the materials from which the highway is built?

a. Repentance

The first imperative factor is usually repentance. That repentance may initially be from overt sins of the flesh. If these are a reality among us, they must certainly be repented of, renounced and put away. We must also vigorously repent of any previous involvement with strange spirits through association with the occult in any form.

However, the key aspect of repentance is from “dead works”, (Heb 6:1) This includes repentance from the fact that we have substituted religious programs for the true worship of God. Many church services consist of religious programs instituted by man. The liturgy is followed to the letter but little attempt is made to truly touch God’s presence with heartfelt praise and Spirit engendered worship. Man has made himself the Lord of the service, relegating the Holy Spirit to a lowly, often non-existent role.

b. Removal of obstacles

In the East, in Bible times, it was the custom to send a party of men, before a king or prince, to prepare the way for him. They cleared the way of thorns, brambles, rocks, and other potential impediments. They smoothed out the road, found fording places through rivers, and generally prepared a highway through the wilderness.

In the life of a church, many obstacles may accrue that hinder the moving and freedom of the Spirit. These obstacles may be religious traditions, wrong attitudes, resistance against the Spirit, lack of unity, and many other obstacles. All these impediments must be removed from the pathway, through repentance and renunciation.

c. Deep Desire

God only responds to deep, earnest desire. He says, “I will be found of those who seek me earnestly and diligently.”

David crystallized His desire for God:-

Ps 27:4

4 **One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.** (NKJ)

Ps 27:8

8 *My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, I will seek.* (NIV)

God will rarely ever visit a people in blessing who are not seeking His face and expressing to Him the longing of their heart.

d. Faith

We need more than desire when we seek God's face, we must also see Him in faith. Don't seek Him unless you truly believe that He will respond. Seek Him diligently, in active faith, fully expecting Him to answer.

e. Submission to the Spirit

Once the Holy begins to respond to your prayers and faith, submit immediately to His prompting. Let Him assume leadership and authority over the gathering.

In the words of Mary, "Whatever He says to you, do it." The Holy Spirit will **TURN OUR WATER INTO WINE! (John 2:1-11)**

He will turn our mourning into dancing.

Ps 30:11-12

11 *You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness,*

12 *To the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever. (NKJ)*

When the Holy Spirit is truly made Lord of our gathering, He will begin to transform us.

2 Cor 3:17-18

17 *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.*

18 *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (NIV)*

f. God's glory will be revealed

Isa 40:4-5

4. *Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.*

5. *And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken." NIV*

Chapter 9

MUSIC IN PRAISE AND WORSHIP

Music has always played an important role in the worship of God. Way back, in the dawn of creation, *"...the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy"* (**Job 38:7**).

Hebrew music was predominantly vocal. There were very few instruments in the earliest days of their history. The human voice was the most accessible and popular instrument with which to make music.

The first biblical mention of music and song is in **Genesis 31:27**, and is associated with the expression of mirth. Worship in song is first mentioned in **Exodus 15:1**. Moses and the children of Israel sang unto the Lord; V2, Miriam and all the women, with tambourines and dances, responded to the song of Moses.

The digging of the well at Beer was celebrated with singing (**Numbers 21:17,18**).

Deborah and Barak celebrated their victory in song (**Judges 5:1-31**). The women of Israel celebrated David's victory over Goliath in song (**1 Sam 18:6,7**).

4,000 Levites praised the Lord with instruments (**1 Chron 23:5**), when Solomon was made king over Israel.

"The children of Israel.....kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord" (**1 Chron 30:21**).

"And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, Psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy" (**1 Chron 15:16**).

It is clear that music and singing are vitally integral to the praise and worship of God. This is portrayed all through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. And so it is today. It is a vital, glorious, positive expression of praise to God.

THE POWER OF MUSIC

Music has always played an important role in the worship of God. Way back, in the very dawn of creation, *"...the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy"* (**Job 38:7**).

This scripture refers to a pre-history occasion. It alludes to an earliest era of the dateless past when God first created the universe. It is the oldest historic reference to music and singing. Several things emerge from it.

Music was conceived in the heart of God

- Music existed before the foundation of the universe.
- It was used by the "sons of God."
- It was employed in the praise of God.

- It was expressed with joyful enthusiasm.

In its simplest forms music may be defined as an art form consisting of sequences of sound, organized methodically, harmoniously, and rhythmically. Such sounds are usually produced by musical instruments, human voices, or both, separately or together.

- Music is a gift of God to mankind.
- It is an expression of God's essential being.
- It is the language of the soul, expressing its highest aspirations.
- It facilitates a more intense feeling than spoken words.
- It has uplifting and healing powers.
- Good music directs one's thoughts to God.

The earliest Hebraic music was predominantly vocal. There were very few instruments in the earliest days of their history. The human voice was the most accessible and popular instrument with which to make music. However, biblical references to later periods include mention of many forms of musical instruments.

MUSIC CREATES AN ATMOSPHERE

All music creates its own atmosphere. Marketing strategists have understood this. Service industries have too. Restaurants play music conducive to relaxing and eating. Congregational attitudes are influenced by the type and tempo of music and by the lyrics.

"Spirituals" were birthed by slaves in the cotton fields of the southern states of the USA. They sang to alleviate their indignities and suffering. They sang to create an atmosphere of hopeful anticipation in the midst of their trials, to bring God's encouragement to their hearts.

God's people used it to create certain atmospheres

Worship in song is mentioned in **Exodus 15:1**. Moses and the children of Israel sang unto the Lord; V2, Miriam and all the women, with tambourines and dances, responded to the song of Moses. Moses and Miriam created an atmosphere of victory and triumph to minister encouragement to the bewildered Israelites.

1 *Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD: "I will sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea.*

2 *The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. (NIV)*

The digging of the well at Beer was celebrated with singing

Num 21:17-18

17 *Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it:*

18 *The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves. And from the wilderness they went to Mattanah: (KJV)*

Deborah and Barak celebrated their victory in song (Judges 5:1-31).

The women of Israel celebrated David's victory over Goliath in song. (1 Sam 18:6,7).

4,000 Levites praised the Lord with instruments (1 Chron 23:5), when Solomon was made king over Israel.

"The children of Israel.....kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord" (1 Chron 30:21).

"And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, Psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy" (1 Chron 15:16).

Imagine the high drama and joyful release of witnessing 4,000 singers and musicians playing loudly and singing enthusiastically to God. What a glorious occasion that was!

MUSIC INSPIRES PROPHETIC UTTERANCE.

1 SAM 10:5

5 *"After that you will go to Gibeah of God, where there is a Philistine outpost. As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with lyres, tambourines, flutes and harps being played before them, and they will be prophesying.*

It is clear that music and singing are vitally integral to the praise and worship of God. This is portrayed all through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. Music is also associated frequently with the release of spiritual gifts such as prophecy. The group of prophets employed a wide variety of musical instruments as they prophesied. Both music and prophecy create a sense of God's presence.

A GREAT VARIETY OF INSTRUMENTS WERE USED

The scriptures reveal that a great variety of musical instruments were used in Davidic praise. **Psalms 150** lists all the basic families of instruments found in the modern orchestra.

Ps 150:1-6

- 1 *Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens.*
- 2 *Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.*
- 3 *Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, (brass) praise him with the harp and lyre, (strings)*
- 4 *praise him with tambourine (percussion) and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, (woodwind)*
- 5 *praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.*
- 6 *Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD. (NIV)*

It seems obvious, from such references, that music offered to God in the Old Testament, was neither sterile nor conservative. There is very obvious spontaneity, passion, life, color and movement that identifies biblical music. Biblical worship often attracted the criticism of conservative minds that were more concerned with maintaining outward dignity, than with expressing enthusiasm.

The idea taught in many churches, that the organ is the only instrument suitable for accompaniment of worship, is certainly not a biblical concept. The modern organ is

often too limited and restrained to express the varied dynamics of spiritual communication. It does not afford the measure of freedom and spontaneity that the Spirit needs to adequately express His praise to God.

Worship in the bible was frequently accompanied by a great variety and a large number of musical instruments. Percussion instruments, including drums, tambourines, cymbals and various kinds of shakers are the oldest and were frequently used to accompany songs and dances of praise.

Wind instruments included trumpets, and the shofar (rams horn)

Amongst the variety of stringed instruments were the harp and lyre. Several lyres were often used together in a string ensemble to accompany the singing of a choir. People who object to the employment of guitars in worship should realize that the harp and lyre which were inevitably used to accompany biblical worship, are the ancient equivalent of the modern guitar.

Musical accompaniment in the bible, employing a wide and colorful variety of instruments, must have been very dramatic and exciting.

2 Chr 5:12-14

12 All the Levites who were musicians-- Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and their sons and relatives-- stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and lyres. They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets.

13 The trumpeters and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, they raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang: "He is good; his love endures forever." Then the temple of the LORD was filled with a cloud,

14 and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the temple of God. (NIV)

Numerous and varied styles of music were used too which should encourage us to realize that God does not share the narrow views of many Christians as to which instruments may be unsuitable for worship.

Many national churches have been robbed of authentic cultural expression in music and worship by a narrow view, frequently espoused by Western missionaries and church leaders, about the suitability or otherwise of historic, ethnic instruments.

SATAN AND MUSIC

It is also true that Satan uses music most effectively to achieve his purposes. Before his fall, Lucifer was a chief musician. Ezekiel 18:13 tells us that the *"workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou was created."* Lucifer was a master musician. He was meant to use this gift for the glory of God, but when he rebelled against Jehovah and had to be cast out of heaven, he prostituted his gift and began to use it for evil instead of good. He has done so very effectively to this day.

It was the descendants of Cain who invented both instruments of music and instruments of war (**Gen 4:21,22**).

When Moses returned from meeting God in the mountain, he discovered that the children of Israel had backslidden and returned to the worship of idols. They were dancing and singing around the golden calf. The sounds of their music was so confusing to the ear of Moses that he could not immediately discern the significance of the sound.

This confusion-filled type of music has the hallmark of Satan - he is a confuser. So much modern music is filled with confusion. It disturbs and deranges people.

Godly music has just the opposite effect. It is calming rather than confusing. It may stir us, but it will never cause us to lose control of our emotions. It will strengthen us, not deplete us.

Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, used musical instruments of various kinds to induce the worship of the golden image he had erected (**Daniel 3:5-7**).

Herod succumbed to the seductive music and dancing of Salome and foolishly ordered the death of John the Baptist (**Matt 14:6**).

The Satanically-inspired music of Babylon will finally be destroyed when the city of Babylon is cast down. The sound of her music will be heard no more (**Rev.18:22**).

MUSIC CAN INSPIRE THE WORSHIP OF GOD

The Holy Spirit can also use music for the glory of God and edification of people. Notice the powerful therapeutic effect that anointed music had on Saul. (**1 Sam 16:23**). David had been anointed by God (V 13). He was a skilful musician, a gifted composer and a sweet singer. When he played and sang under the anointing of the Spirit, the evil spirit departed from Saul. He was refreshed. He was well.

When Jehoshaphat needed a prophet in a time of national crisis, he called for Elisha. The prophet called for a musician. *"... and it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him (Elisha). And he said, 'thus saith the Lord ...' "* (**II Kings 3:11,15,16**). The music obviously helped create an atmosphere and mood for the prophetic gift to operate.

King David appointed 4,000 men to prophecy with harps, Psalteries and cymbals (**1 Chron 25:1**).

It was only when Israel was in captivity in Babylon that they ceased to sing and play. Their anointed music ceased and they hung their harps on the willow trees (**Psalms 137**). When their Babylon captors goaded them to sing, they replied, *"How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"*

When their captivity ceased, after 70 years, they returned home with joyful singing and laughter. There was praise on their lips (**Psa 126:1,2**). It is only when the Church is in spiritual captivity that her anointed music ceases. When that captivity is broken and the people come into liberty once more, music, singing, praise, dancing and laughter are all restored unto her.

MUSIC AND SONG IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. **The disciples sang hymns together.** (Matt 26:30; Mark 14:26).
2. **Paul and Silas sang praises to God in prison.** (Acts 16:25).
3. **The Apostle Paul instructs the church in anointed singing.** They should sing:
 - a. **PSALMS.** The Psalms set to music.
 - b. **HYMNS.** Song of praise to God.
 - c. **SPIRITUAL SONGS.** Spontaneous songs given by the Spirit. The songs of the primitive church were praises to the Lord. Their primary objective in singing was to praise and magnify God. They did not sing for effect, or to entertain. Their singing was not man-centred. It was directed to God for His pleasure alone.

This type of anointed singing and music, directed to God in praise and worship, is very rare in the church today. But God is restoring this ministry to His people. Here are some suggestions to help you bring your community into a ministry of anointed music in praise to God.

1. **Commence each service with thanksgiving and praise in song.** (Psa 100:4). *"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise, give thanks to him, praise his name."*
2. **Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit for the right song or hymn.** God has a theme and a message for every service. Often the right song will set the tone for that theme.
3. **Do not be afraid to sing the song more than once,** or even a particular portion of it which seems especially anointed and blessed.
4. **Exhort the people** to really "sing unto the Lord." Hymns are often sung because it is our tradition and custom to sing. We have a much worthier purpose than this. It is to sing unto the Lord - to direct our focus heavenward in song.
5. **Commence with songs of praise and thanksgiving.** Allow the people to genuinely express their praises through them. Songs are not praises in themselves. They are merely vehicles through which we may express our praise. It is highly possible to sing many hymns and songs without expressing any true praise.
6. **Songs of praise will inspire the people to worship.** We often begin with praise and then the people move progressively through various levels of praise until they move right into worship, which is the highest level of praise.
7. **Do not "rush through" the song service.** Many ministers look on this part of the service as the "preliminaries," an irksome, but traditional, necessity. Take time to sing, praise and worship. This is a very important function of our gathering.
8. **Allow opportunity for congregational participation.** Encourage spontaneous expression. Someone may lead in prayer, that may set the tone for the meeting. Another may prophesy, and the exhortation may supply the theme for the rest of the service.
9. **The manifestation of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:8-11)** should find expression in believers' worship services. Do not quench the Spirit (1 Thess 5:19). Encourage participation and

expression through these spiritual endowments. However, the appointed and anointed leader should retain spiritual authority over the service at all times.

10. **All things should be done to mutual edification.** Every scriptural manifestation is legitimate and proper, but let everything that is done, and the manner in which it is done, be to the edifying of the whole gathering **(1 Cor 14:26)**.

11. **Avoid contributions that cause confusion.** *"God is not the author of confusion..." (1 Cor 14:33)*. If the service begins to move into confusion, take charge and lead it back out of confusion. If necessary, pause and explain to the people what is happening, thus clarifying the situation. Use such times to teach the right and wrong way to do things.

12. **Let everything be done as unto the Lord,** and to the glory of God. Remember the aim of every gathering is to glorify God and edify the believers.

13. **Use a song book or overhead projector** so that the people can participate. Do not be afraid, at a certain point, to put down the song book or words and just worship from the heart.

14. **Obviously there are certain "mechanics"** to the leading of a song service or a worship service, but you must carefully avoid becoming mechanical or too formal. Let there be an underlying freedom. Be flexible. Don't insist on keeping to the programme. Be constantly sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit and be willing to follow them. Good song leading entails much more than waving the arms, even if this is done correctly. The liberty of the Spirit and spontaneity are more important than technical correctness.

15. **Seek to be hidden,** that the people may *"...see no man, but Jesus only."* **(Matt 17:8)**. I remember a church that I pastored for many years in Brisbane, Australia. The first time I stepped up to the pulpit, I saw some words carved into the pulpit. They confronted every person who stepped up to that pulpit to speak or minister. The words said, *"Sir, we would see Jesus"* **(John 12:21)**. We ought always to bear this in mind. The people have not come to see you or hear you. They have come to see and hear Jesus. Our task, with the help of the Spirit, is to draw aside the veil, that every eye may see the Lord and worship before Him. This should be the ultimate aim of every servant of Christ who leads a worship service.

Chapter 10

LEADING A WORSHIP SERVICE

Congregational worship is an extremely important element of the New Testament Church. The primary calling of New Testament Christians is the worship of God. The most important functions of a church in order of priority are:-

- a. VERTICAL. Worshipping God.
- b. HORIZONTAL. Ministry to the Body - edifying the saints
Ministry to the world - evangelism

Every church should be a worshipping community. In the development of corporate worship, much depends on the leader of the service.

CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP

The impact and effectiveness of good praise and worship, in a congregational setting, can scarcely be exaggerated. This is a fact I have noticed so many times. Most successful churches I have observed, have had the help of a good worship program. Most churches that have experienced dynamic growth, have also featured good congregational worship. There are factors involved in effective praise and worship that are powerfully conducive to the atmosphere that wins the day.

WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE OF A WORSHIP SERVICE?

If the average Christian were asked this question, what might their response be?

- A worship service is where the members gather together to worship God.
- A worship service is a gathering of the members to hear the Word of God.
- A worship service is where Christians gather to sing hymns and songs.

Responses like these would be partially correct, but not wholly so. These concepts fall short of the ideal result of a church worship service.

Congregational worship.

True congregational praise and worship occurs when a gathered group of God's people join harmoniously to exalt God corporately in music and song. Such worship originates in heaven.

Job 38:4-7

4 *"Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand.*
5 *Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it?*
6 *On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone--*
7 **while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?**
(NIV)

It was an integral feature of the New Testament church that even a prison sentence could not stifle. God shouted a responsive Hallelujah so loudly that the prison walls fell down!

Acts 16:25-26

25 *About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.*

26 *Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.*

It will also feature strongly in heaven throughout eternity. Rev 19:6-7

6 *Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.*

7 *Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. (NIV)*

TRUE CORPORATE WORSHIP UNITES A CONGREGATION

Ps 133:1-3

1 *How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!*

2 *It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes.*

3 *It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore. (NIV)*

Dwelling, living, flowing in unity attracts the anointing of God in a powerful way. True corporate worship is one of the ways in which the Spirit of God *tunes* a congregation and brings it into the unity of the Spirit. As a congregation yield themselves to attaining united expressions of worship, God blends their spirits together in harmonious unity.

THREE DIMENSIONAL WORSHIP

The number 3, has considerable significance in respect of worship. God required the Israelites to appear before Him in festivals of worship, three times each year.

Exod 34:23-24

23 *"Three times in the year all your men shall appear before the Lord, the LORD God of Israel.*

24 *"For I will cast out the nations before you and enlarge your borders; neither will any man covet your land when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year. (NKJ)*

The three occasions were at the Feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles.

The number three also suggests numerous others important matters concerning Praise and Worship in the biblical context. viz :-

Pesach	Shavouth	Succoth
Passover	Pentecost	Tabernacles
Body	Soul	Spirit
Outer Court	Inner Court	Holy of Holies
Praise	Worship	Adoration
Courtship	Marriage	Married Intimacy

This pattern, as clearly portrayed in the plan of Moses' Tabernacle with its three distinct areas, obviously prescribes a certain progression of worship.

This progression marks the route of the worshipper as he sets his face towards the worship of his creator and redeemer God.

- 1: Outer Court. The body. **Praise.**
- 2: Inner Court. The soul. **Worship.**
- 3: Holy of Holies. The spirit. **Adoration.**

1: The Outer Court.

Represents the body, the physical aspect of our being.

This area of praise frequently involves the use of our physical being to praise and exulting in God. Such praise includes singing, shouting, clapping, waving our hands, raising our hands, jumping, dancing, marching.

2: The Inner Court.

Represents the human soul and the employment of its faculties to praise God. This dimension includes the human faculties of emotion, expressing such through singing, weeping, laughter and the expression of emotion through physical activities as mentioned previously.

3: The Holy of Holies.

Represents the redeemed spirit of man engaged in the intimacies of the true worship and adoration of God. This dimension is very sacred, personal, intimate and fulfilling. This is the ultimate object of our exercises of praise and worship. To come before God in His intimate presence and meet with Him face to face, in an attitude of reverential awe.

It is to this place also, that the worship leader endeavors to lead the congregation of worshippers. It is this kind of spiritual worshiper for whom the "Father is seeking." **John 4:23.** Every church should be a worshipping community.

In the development of such corporate worship, much depends on the leader of the service.

The primary purpose of worship, whether expressed individually or corporately, is to uplift, eulogize and exalt the WORTH-SHIP of God. To exalt His greatness!

Therefore the ultimate purpose of a “worship leader” is not to merely conduct community singing but to lead a congregation into a posture and spirit of true worship of God. His function is to guide and lead the congregants spiritually, from the Outer Court, through the Inner Court, and into the very presence of God in the Holy of Holies. He will usually achieve this by example and exhortation. He should not use the opportunity to preach at the people, but to simply exhort and encourage them by word and example, to enter into an attitude of heart that is conducive to worshipping God.

MUSIC EXPRESSES THE JOY OF LIBERTY

It was only when Israel was in captivity in Babylon that they ceased to sing and play. Their anointed music ceased and they hung their harps on the willow trees (**Psalm 137**). When their Babylon captors goaded them to sing, they replied, *"How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"*

When their captivity ceased, after 70 years, they returned home with joyful singing and laughter. There was praise on their lips (**Psa 126:1,2**). It is only when the Church is in spiritual captivity that her anointed music ceases. When that captivity is broken and the people come into liberty once more, music, singing, praise, dancing and laughter are all restored unto her.

MUSIC ATTRACTS THE PRESENCE OF GOD

II Ki 3:14-18

14 *Elisha said, "As surely as the LORD Almighty lives, whom I serve, if I did not have respect for the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look at you or even notice you.*

15 ***But now bring me a harpist." While the harpist was playing, the hand of the LORD came upon Elisha***

16 ***and he said, "This is what the LORD says: Make this valley full of ditches.***

17 *For this is what the LORD says: You will see neither wind nor rain, yet this valley will be filled with water, and you, your cattle and your other animals will drink.*

18 *This is an easy thing in the eyes of the LORD; he will also hand Moab over to you. (NIV)*

When Elisha the prophet urgently needed a word from God, he summoned a musician. Even while the harpist played, the Spirit of God came upon Elisha and he prophesied what Israel must do. Music produces an atmosphere conducive to spiritual manifestations that indicate the presence of God. Spiritual music can invite God's presence in a tangible, discernible manner. A dynamic spiritual atmosphere is often created by a congregation harmonizing with each other and with God's Spirit.

A group of Spirit filled musicians, with instruments and voices lifted in praise can be a dynamic and powerful attraction in a church. Every church leader should give high priority to forming such a team.

It is exciting to realize that God loves music. Whenever His people delight themselves in music, song and dance, God loves to join in with them.

MUSIC INSPIRES AND STIMULATES PEOPLE

There is a rousing and stimulating element in stirring music that unites and activates any body of people. Who has never been aroused by a military band? The army of the Lord marches best to the strains of triumphant music that stirs the inner passions of a redeemed heart. The music of the church, marching triumphantly towards the future manifestation of God's kingdom reign, should be the finest in the world.

Unfortunately the church at large has frequently allowed itself to believe that sacred (holy) music must be staid, conservative and old fashioned. This is not true. Kingdom music, inspired in heaven, should be the most dynamic and appealing ever heard. It should be so unique and inspirational that people would travel miles to hear and participate in it.

Triumphant music lifts morale.

Morale is mutual, and united confidence. Its is "esprit de corps", the united, optimistic, triumphant spirit of a body of people amalgamated by the same aims and objectives. It is the high degree of optimism and confidence that fills the heart of a united and committed company of people.

Stirring music is a main contributor to high morale. It inspires people and brings out the best in them. It unites them as one person. Which is why John says:

Rev 19:6-7

6 *And I heard, as it were, the voice (singular) of a great multitude,(plural) as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!*

7 *"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." (NKJ)*

The army that was led by a choir.

2 Chr 20:20-22

Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."

21 *And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the LORD, for His mercy endures forever."*

22 *Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. (NKJ)*

Israel's army was outnumbered and facing possible defeat, except that God had promised them victory.

2 Chr 20:17

17 *You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the LORD will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the LORD will be with you. (NIV)*

God did not encourage them to rely on their numbers, or weapons, but on His Word, to which the Levites responded with great shouts of praise.

2 Chr 20:19

19 *Then some Levites from the Kohathites and Korabites stood up and praised the LORD, the God of Israel, with very loud voice.* (NIV)

God sent them into battle with a choir before them, exalting the Lord in their praises and magnifying His grace. As they sang God set ambushments against their enemies completely conquering their adversaries.

The lone Piper

One of my friends of some years ago, won the Victoria Cross Medal for outstanding bravery under enemy attack. The incident occurred in World War II, when he was a piper in a Scottish regiment. His platoon was under heavy attack and suffering massive casualties. Communications were poor, his unit was in disarray, making a disorderly retreat under withering enemy fire.

Bill soon realized that their confused retreat was making he and his mates an easier target for the enemy and that if something were not done quickly they would soon be decimated. Being a earnest Christian, he immediately committed the situation to God in prayer. Throwing down his rifle, he grabbed his bag pipes and began to play a stirring Scottish tune. Immediately his associates slowed down their retreat.

Encouraged by his own music, Bill began to march towards the enemy. His comrades, witnessing his bravery, began to sing and shout loudly and joined him as he walked resolutely towards the enemy troops. Fresh morale surged through his unit as a sense of patriotism and bravery inspired them all. Though Bill was wounded, he continued to advance and the whole unit took fresh courage, surging past him, into the teeth of their foe with guns blazing. The tide was soon turned under their counter attack, and before long the enemy were in retreat and the Scottish troops had won the day.

In subsequent dispatches, his bravery under fire despite sustaining two bullet wounds, was recognized as the factor that changed the fate of his unit. His associates spoke of the surge of morale that swept their ranks as the skirl of the bag pipes sounded forth. Without considering their own safety they joined their brave comrade, routing the opposition and winning a strategic victory that ultimately saved their lives. The whole regiment was later honored when Bill was invested with the V.C. by his king.

That incident frequently reminds me of spiritual warfare. Often, when the enemy appears to be gaining the upper hand, voices lifted in praise to God have turned the tide from imminent defeat to resounding victory. In a similar manner, dynamic music expressing praise to God, has frequently inspired God's army to march forward to victory.

THE POWER OF MUSIC'S ATTRACTION

Rousing music has a universal appeal. It stirs something within every human spirit. It awakens dormant faith and positively inspires the inner man. Other people love to join an enthusiastic congregation. There is a special sense of belonging amongst people who lift their voices together in jubilant song. Good, spirited, triumphant music and song is an extremely positive and attracting force. It makes people want to be part of that crowd.

WHAT KIND OF INSTRUMENTS?

The question often arises, “What is the best type of instrument to use for praise and worship?”

Obviously there are numerous factors involved in answering this question. Some of those factors might be :-

1. The ethnic origin of the church.
2. The size of the congregation and venue.
3. The kind of instruments available.
4. The style of worship desired.

However, there are several issues that need to be considered in making this important decision.

ACCOMPANIMENT

This is the most important aspect, the need to provide basic accompaniment for the congregants. The obvious instruments for this are simple accompaniment instruments such as a piano, electronic keyboard, or guitar, all of which are suitable to provide the simple basics of music, i.e. melody, harmony and rhythm. In a very real sense these are the lead instruments and one should try to ensure that the players are competent and capable.

An electronic keyboard is very desirable because it is capable of producing such a wide variety of musical effects and is extremely versatile.

Rhythm section.

This usually consists of drums, and other forms of percussion instruments, plus bass instrument. The skill and maturity of the rhythm musicians is extremely important. They frequently dictate the tempo of the worship. Drums are a particularly powerful music medium with a very strong influence and should be carefully utilized. They can almost “make or break” the quality of worship.

AN IDEAL SMALL MUSIC GROUP

In a relatively small situation a piano, or electronic keyboard, guitar, bass and drums will constitute a very adequate music group. Modern electric key boards, particularly a MIDI board may be ideal because they can simulate a whole orchestra if necessary.

Augmentation.

In a larger setting it is often desirable to augment the basic instruments with other suitable ones. Violins, flutes, or other single note instruments can add great to the effectiveness and beauty of worship, setting very powerful moods. Almost any instruments, properly and appropriately used, can enhance a worship service.

Suitable music team members.

A worship team must be prayerfully and carefully put together. Adding the wrong persons can spell disaster. Each member should be carefully examined using the following criteria.

1. Spiritual maturity.

This qualification covers a wide spectrum and is by far the most important factor. Spiritual sensitivity and discernment, with an eagerness to flow with God's Spirit, is even more important than technical skills.

2. Musical ability and skill.

Obviously this is also very important. Yet this is an area in which people can frequently achieve a greater degree of competence. In other words, if you have someone who meets all the other criteria, they can usually improve and enhance their musical skills.

3. Commitment.

Every team member must be willing to commit themselves to every requirement that will ensure the effectiveness of the team. This obviously includes attending all rehearsals, keeping in practice, and being present for every event to which the team is committed.

4. Loyalty.

The harmony and unity of the worship team must have the highest priority and to achieve this every member must exercise and maintain loyalty to the pastor, leader, and every fellow member of the team.

5. Compatibility.

Musicians are often uniquely individualistic, artistic, creative and sometimes temperamental. It is essential that they are also compatible, willing and able to fit into and flow together with the team. There must be no petty jealousy or competition among them. Every individual talent must be brought into subjection to God and to the spirit of the team. Team spirit is essential.

6. Unity of the Spirit.

Eph 4:2-3

2 *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

3 *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (NIV)*

The musicians and singers must be in spiritual unity, with the Holy Spirit and with one another. It takes regular prayer, spiritual adjustments, and corporate worship together to achieve and maintain this.

7. Corporate anointing and flow.

The music team must enjoy and move in a mutual anointing. They must learn to listen to the gentle voice of the Spirit and be aware of how the Spirit is moving on other members of the team. They must learn to flow together in the anointing of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit can also use music for the glory of God and edification of people. Notice the powerful therapeutic effect that anointed music had on Saul. (1 Sam 16:23). David had been anointed by God (V 13). He was a skillful musician, a gifted composer and a sweet singer. When he played and sang under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the evil spirit departed from Saul. He was refreshed. He was well.

QUALITY IN LEADERS

1. **Leading worship is a special ministry.** Not everyone has this ministry. Often the pastor does not have this particular ability. In which case, he should find someone in the congregation who does possess such a gift and be willing for that person to take the lead in this particular area.

2. **The Leader must be a worshipper.** It is essential that one who is called to lead others into worship should be skilled and adept in the worship of God. It is impossible to lead others into something unless the leader has already learned the requirements and skills of worship. This person should be free in his own spirit and able to freely praise and worship God in his personal life.

3. **Spiritual Maturity.** The worship leader should be a person with experience and maturity in the things of the Spirit. His spiritual development should be equal to (and preferably superior to) the congregation that he is seeking to lead. Such maturity gives the leader a confidence and results in a sense of security in the congregation.

He should be able to control his own spirit so that his personal thoughts, feelings and emotions do not intrude into the meeting. He must also be a man of faith, not only able to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit, but with faith to implement what the Spirit may be saying to the assembled saints. He should be an exhorter who can motivate and encourage the believers.

4. **Spiritual Sensitivity.** The ideal leader has developed a sensitive ear for the voice of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit Himself will lead the service if the leader will actively move into those promptings that the Spirit will give. Worship services should be led by the Holy Spirit. However, He will always use human channels, so there must be a deep spiritual awareness in the leader. This will be conveyed to the congregation as well. They will begin to develop the ability to hear the promptings of the Spirit and quietly and confidently move into them.

5. **Genuine humility.** A good leader will always seek to "hide behind Christ." Nothings ruins the spiritual atmosphere of a service more quickly than an egotistical leader who constantly projects himself into the meeting. The Holy Spirit loves to glorify Christ, and is totally unwilling to turn His spotlight on any human being. No flesh should glory in the sight of God. Rather than drawing the congregation's attention to himself, the leader must always seek to focus the attention of the people on Christ.

6. **Prayerful preparation.** Prior to the service, the leader should always spend some time privately in prayer. The theme of a meeting can be discerned beforehand in this way. The spirit of the leader can be tuned to the Spirit of God and in this way the meeting can move right into God's purposes from the very commencement. There should be no such things as "preliminaries" in a worship service. The whole service, from the very first moment, is dedicated to the praise and glory of God. Too many preachers regard everything prior to their sermon as a preliminary - necessary, but unimportant. The truth is that what precedes the sermon is usually much more important, for the sermon is addressed to the people, but our worship is addressed to God Himself!

7. **Allow sufficient time for worship.** The manner in which many "worship services" are hurried through is an insult to the majesty of God. We need to recognise the importance of corporate worship and give ample time to it. Worship time should not be wasted by needless chatter on the part of the leader. His real task is to get the congregation in tune with the Spirit of God just as quickly and sweetly as he can. Unnecessary talk and comment can detract from this purpose. When people have come to worship God and want to give themselves to Him in praise, worship and adoration, it is a sad thing when they are delayed and hindered by the very one who is ordained to lead them into such worship.

8. **Be open to the Holy Spirit.** It takes real faith to lead a service into into worship because such worship cannot be prescribed or programmed beforehand. Many leaders feel they must have a prescribed programme. They want to know exactly what is going to happen in a given service and just when it is going to take place. Spiritual worship demands more flexibility than this.

Once the service has commenced, seek to keep quietly aware of the way the Spirit is leading. Be prepared to follow His leading step by step. He will instruct you as to just when the worship should take place. Not every service will be the same. God is a God of variety. He does not have to do the same thing every time. He has a special purpose for every gathering.

The leader must learn to discern what the purpose is and to flow along with it, as the Spirit unfolds it step by step. God can even change the order and direction of the service while it is proceeding. A good leader will be able to discern the very songs that should be sung; how many times they should be sung; and with what kind of emphasis! Sometimes a service will be bright and full of rejoicing. Other times the Spirit may lead in a much quieter way and even into periods of silence that may be extremely profound and meaningful.

9. **Be aware of all that is transpiring.** The leader should avoid closing his eyes and being "lost in worship." It is wonderfully possible to be fully involved in worship and still be aware of and sensitive to the people. The leader should have a sensitivity to the Spirit and at the same time, be exercising a gentle but definite influence over the service.

SOME SIMPLE GUIDELINES FOR LEADING WORSHIP

1. **Begin right where the people are.** Seek to make immediate contact with the congregation, right where they are. Quietly establish your leadership with them. along with Help them to recognise that God has ordained you to lead this service and that if they will cooperate and follow you, they will be led right into the Holy of Holies and have a glorious experience of worship.

2. **Song leading is not necessarily worship leading.** There are many good song leaders who do not have the ability to lead people into worship. However, the worship leader must be able to lead singing and then to lead further on into worship. Most often a worship service will commence with singing. The singing of appropriate songs that eulogize God and speak of His greatness, might and splendour, will help to get the

people's minds off themselves and their problems and on to the Lord. Songs of praise and thanksgiving are often appropriate and suitable. Community singing is also a good way to bring the people into unity. As their voices blend, so will their minds and spirits. Once that unity has been achieved, the people may be led on into realms of worship. We begin with praise and then move on into worship.

3. **Allow the Holy Spirit to give direction.** This may come in any one of a number of ways. It may spring out of the first song that is sung. This may set the theme for the entire service. Often the Spirit will lead from one song to another, all on the same or relevant themes. If there are those present with charismatic endowments, the Spirit may use these to indicate the course the service should take. This may be communicated through a prophecy or some revelation. Sometimes the mind of the Spirit is imposed on the service in a very quiet and undramatic fashion. It is only after the gathering, when looking back, that one sees so clearly how beautifully the Spirit led, and what unity and harmony was woven into the fabric of the service.

4. **Avoid intrusions and cross-currents.** This is where the spiritual maturity of the leader is so necessary. He must be able to discern a new emphasis that might be introduced, that is not of the Spirit. He must be spiritually alert to recognise such a trend. A meeting can be very subtly redirected if one is not careful and watchful. Once the Spirit has set the course and direction, be sensitive to any intrusion that may change the emphasis. The intrusion may seem quite harmless. It may come in the form of a lovely chorus that is quite scriptural in content and yet it changes completely the direction in which God is seeking to lead the people. The leader must be loving and yet firm in keeping the worship on target.

There are many ways in which he can bring the meeting back on course again. He may say directly, "Now friends, let us keep pursuing this direction which the Spirit is indicating, and let us not turn aside." He may commence another chorus that reinforces the original theme of the Spirit. There may come a further word of prophecy, directing the attention once more to the original theme.

It requires faith and boldness on the part of the leader. He must exercise discretion and tact, but he must not compromise the purpose of God for that occasion. This often demands great wisdom and grace. The Holy Spirit will supply these if we trust Him implicitly.

5. **Recognize transition and change.** The Spirit may direct a service along any line He wishes. This frequently means that there may be a change of emphasis during the course of the service. In fact, this may happen several times. These transition periods are very important. The leader must be ahead of the people anticipating what the Spirit is wanting to do. He must give clear and firm leadership during these transitional periods, so the meeting does not begin to wander aimlessly. If a time of indecision is allowed to develop, someone may be tempted to try to give direction and a wrong note may be introduced. The leader must always remember that God has anointed and appointed him to lead the people and he is therefore responsible for doing just that. Do not rule the meeting with a heavy hand. Do not try to impose your will on the people. Keep a firm but gentle grip on the direction and progress of the worship.

6. **Keep the purpose in mind.** Never lose sight of the objective and purpose of the gathering. It is first to praise and glorify the Lord. Second, to edify and bless the people. Never allow the gathering to degenerate to anything less than these basic objectives.

7. **"Make us a Symphony."** One of the many fine choruses we often sing says, "Lord, make us a symphony, a symphony of worship." The Greek word "symphoneo" from which we derive symphony, means to "agree together." Jesus said, "*If any two of you shall agree together.*" He used this word, 'symphoneo,' to "produce a symphony of sound." A worship service should be like a symphony. Everything should blend harmoniously together. The voices should all blend, the instruments should blend, the various parts of the service should all blend together. This is one of the basic purposes God seeks to achieve through our corporate worship, to blend us all together in a glorious harmony. In doing so, He introduces and encourages unity at the deepest levels of our being. A famous priest said, "The family that prays together, stays together." And we might say, "The congregation that truly learns to worship together, will stay together."

8. **Encourage participation.** Too often today, the congregation becomes mere spectators instead of participators. Frequently we find the minister doing everything and the congregation merely watching and listening. The New Testament encourages the participation of every member. However, good solid teaching on this subject needs to be given first. God's people should be taught that He wants to hear their voices raised in worship. They must be taught how to participate, and having been taught, given opportunity to do so. Verbally encourage the people to enter in. Exhort them to lift their voices in praise. Make opportunities for them to express their praise.

9. **Let everything be done decently and in order.** Many churches use this scripture (1 Cor 14:4) as an excuse for not allowing any congregational participation. They are so intent on maintaining "decency and order" that they allow nothing to be done. This is not what the Bible says. It does NOT say, "Let nothing be done, decently and in order." It says "Let EVERYTHING be done." Let there be participation. Let there be prophecies, revelations, Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs. But let them be done in such a manner that there is no confusion, for God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor 14:40).

10. **Seek to Excel.** Our goal, as we learn to praise and worship God, should be to ultimately excel in these things. We should aim for progress and development in these vital areas. Such excellence will not be human excellence. It will not be the development of human talent and ability. It will not be the employment of professionals, with correctness and precision. It will be the deepening of spiritual life. It will be the sharpening of spiritual sensitivity, the growth of spiritual awareness and the ability to make a spiritual response to the promptings of the Spirit of God.

The ultimate objective of our worship is to uplift and glorify God. The more effectively we can do this, the more acceptable our praise.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THE WORSHIP SERVICE

1. Commence with meaningful prayer.

Encourage all members of the worship team, instrumentalists, singers, dancers, amplified sound technicians etc. to come together before each service for prayer and interaction.

This helps to promote greater unity and harmony among them. Should there ever be any indications of disunity or wrong attitudes between any members, these should be prayerfully resolved at such a pre-service gathering. Don't allow this time to degenerate into a formality. It must remain a meaningful time of spiritual interaction with God the Spirit and with one another. It is an opportunity to tune the spirits of music group members to the same pitch of the Spirit.

2. Begin each service with thanksgiving and praise in song.

(Psa 100:4). "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise, give thanks to him, praise his name."

Thanksgiving and Praise is the first step into the presence of God. It is a spiritual key that may be thrust by faith, into the door that leads into God's presence. Don't be content to merely sing about thanksgiving, heartily encourage the congregation to genuinely give thanks to God. Motivate them to lift up their hearts and spirits to God in real acts of thanksgiving and praise.

3. Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit for the right song or hymn.

God has a theme and a message for every service. Often the right song will set the tone for that theme. Do not simply choose some songs at random. Try to discern in your inner spirit what song(s) the Holy Spirit would like to use. Sometimes He will so powerfully minister through an appropriate song that the theme of the whole service will be powerfully indicated.

4. Do not be afraid to sing the song more than once

Some times a particular portion of a song may be especially anointed and blessed. Feel free to repeat that portion until its message truly penetrates the spirits of the people. Variations of tempo and volume can also affect the atmosphere. Rousing songs or hymns can stir up the people and to exercise the "High praises of God". On other occasions, slower, more worshipful songs may set a more serious mood in which to meditate on the grace and goodness of God.

5. Exhort and encourage the people

Some worship leaders have a gift to motivate the people to really "sing unto the Lord." Hymns are often sung because it is our tradition and custom to sing. We have a much worthier purpose than this. It is to sing unto the Lord - to direct our focus heavenward in song. Our spirits can make meaningful contact with the Spirit of God through worship in song.

6. Commence with songs of praise and thanksgiving

Allow the people to genuinely express their praises through them. Songs are not praises in themselves. They are merely vehicles through which we may express our praise. It is highly possible to sing many hymns and songs without expressing any true praise.

7. Songs of praise will inspire the people to worship.

We often begin with praise and then the people move progressively through various levels of praise until they move right into worship, which is the highest level of praise. However, they usually need to be led into these expressions. The worship leader is like a shepherd, going before the sheep, through the meadows of Praise and into the sanctuary of worship. Don't settle for simply praising God. Worship is a higher level of praise and we want to pursue God to the greatest degree possible.

8. Do not "rush through" the song service.

Many ministers look on this part of the service as the "preliminaries," before the main event, i.e. preaching. Worship is frequently regarded as an irksome, but traditional, necessity. Many times it deteriorates into a religious ritual simply because insufficient time is given for its proper development. Take time to sing, praise and worship. This is a

very important function of our gathering. Don't allow the clock to become more important than experiencing the presence of God.

9. Allow opportunity for congregational participation.

Encourage spontaneous expression. Someone may lead in prayer, which may set the tone for the meeting. Another may prophesy, and the exhortation may supply the theme for the rest of the service. One of the important features of congregational worship is to stir and motivate the people to reach out to God. They need to be brought out of their shells of reticence and indifference and opened up to fully participate in the congregation's expressions to God.

10. The manifestation of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:8-11)

Manifestations of the Spirit should find expression in believers' worship services. Paul exhorts us, "Do not quench the Holy Spirit". (1 Thess 5:19). If we quench the Holy Spirit, we kill the true life of the service. Encourage participation and expression through these spiritual expressions. However, the appointed and anointed leader should retain spiritual authority over the service at all times.

11. All things should be done to mutual edification.

Every scriptural manifestation is legitimate and proper, but let everything that is done, and the manner in which it is done, be to the edifying of the whole gathering. (1 Cor 14:26). The overall result of an anointed service should be that every member is edified, encouraged, strengthened and blessed. Obviously there may be some exceptions with people who are not spiritually oriented and do not appreciate the liberty of the Spirit. The order and quality of a service should not be determined by such people. Paul insists that we must rather please God than men.

Gal 1:10

10 Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ. (NIV)

12. Avoid contributions that cause confusion.

"God is not the author of confusion..." (1 Cor 14:33). If the service begins to move into confusion, take charge and lead it back out of confusion. If necessary, pause and explain to the people what is happening, thus clarifying the situation. Use such times to teach the right and wrong way to do things.

13. Let everything be done as unto the Lord, and to the glory of God.

Remember the aim of every gathering is to glorify God and edify the believers. Because our worship. As with everything else we do, should be done "as unto God" we must always do it whole heartedly. We must strive for excellence in our worship. Not necessarily the excellence of technical perfection, but that excellence we achieve when we do something from the heart to the very best of our ability.

14. Make the words available to all

Having the words available, in one form or another, will greatly encourage participation. It is embarrassing, especially for new comers, if everyone is singing except them. We must make it easy for all present to join in the worship. Overhead projectors are very useful because the congregation are much freer to worship without books in their hands.

Do not be afraid however, at a certain point, to put down the song book or words and just worship from the heart.

15. Obviously there are certain principles involved.

In the leading of a song service or a worship service, you must carefully avoid becoming mechanical or too formal. Let there be an underlying freedom. Be flexible. Don't insist

on keeping meticulously to the program. Be constantly sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit and be willing to follow them. Good song leading entails much more than waving the arms, even if this is done correctly. The liberty of the Spirit and spontaneity are more important than technical correctness.

16. Hide behind Jesus

that the people may "...see no man, but Jesus only." (Matt 17:8). I remember a church of which I was the minister for many years in Brisbane, Australia. The first time I stepped up to the pulpit, I saw some words carved into the pulpit. They confronted every person who stepped up to that pulpit to speak or minister. The words said, "*Sir, we would see Jesus*" (John 12:21). We ought always to bear this in mind. The people have not come to see you or hear you. They have come to see and hear Jesus. Our task, with the help of the Spirit, is to draw aside the veil, that every eye may see the Lord and worship before Him. This should be the ultimate aim of every servant of Christ who leads a worship service.

"Sir, We would see Jesus!"

(John 12:21)

Chapter 11

THE PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAISE

The importance of praise is emphasised throughout the entire Bible. Praise has always been important. However, in the final days of this age, praise and worship are especially important, and play a special role in the fulfilment of God's purposes. This is why God is restoring praise to His people today. We are moving rapidly towards the manifest reign of Christ on the earth. One of the great characteristics of that Age will be praise and worship. So God is preparing His people for that time. We are already entering into the Kingdom and part of our preparation is excelling in praise and worship.

DESPISING WORSHIP PRODUCES BARRENNESS

David's wife Michal is a clear example of this.

2 Sam 6:20-23

20 *Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, "How glorious was the king of Israel today, uncovering himself today in the eyes of the maids of his servants, as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!"*

21 *So David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me instead of your father and all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel. Therefore I will play music before the LORD.*

22 *"And I will be even more undignified than this, and will be humble in my own sight. But as for the maidservants of whom you have spoken, by them I will be held in honor."*

23 *Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.*

Her overt criticism of David's enthusiastic worship, left him unmoved. He refused to conform his worship style to the perceptions of a carnal, conservative woman who was embarrassed to be associated with uninhibited worship. David insisted that his purpose was to please God, not man and that if uninhibited worship appeared unseemly to a carnal mind, he would continue to do it nevertheless. As for Michal, her attitude ensured that she remained barren until the end of her days.

What are the miracles?

Encountering God's presence in a personal and intimate manner

The miracle of our ability to experience the personal presence of Christ amongst us.

Once this happens, any number of wonderful miracles may transpire.

The mystical miracle power of Christ releases a potential for all manner of wonders.

Miracles of revelation, encouragement, healing, and restoration

The miracle of conversion and transformation can happen.

The breaking of bondages and a release of one's spirit from imprisonment.

The miracle of experiencing God's love

Many people find it difficult to fully accept the fact of God's love for them. They often feel unworthy of such love and cannot believe that God really loves THEM so much.

In the Song of Solomon, the shepherdess is initially self conscious, shy and inhibited. She protests her unworthiness of his attention.

Song 1:6

6 *Do not look upon me, because I am dark, because the sun has tanned me.* (NKJ)

As their relationship develops and deepens, He constantly assures her of His love and admiration for her, speaking of the beauty He sees in her. Basking in the attention of His love for her, she begins to see herself as He sees her. She is encouraged to lose those inhibitions.

The miracle of receiving His pardon

We really need to experience the wonder of God's loving presence in order to truly know His pardon in an experiential manner. The more we experience His presence, the more we sub-consciously know that we are truly forgiven pardoned, freely accepted and restored.

The Prodigal Son, could not believe that His father could ever restore him to the favor and privilege of sonship. He rehearsed all manner of possible scenarios, the best of which was that he might become a hired servant of his father's. But the loving father brushed aside all his protestations and generously poured the full quota of his love upon him. He fully and completely restored him to his original position of privilege. He generously killed the fatted calf, threw a huge party, put shoes on his feet and placed a ring on his finger.

The miracle of seeing His power and glory

Ps 63:2

2 *I have seen you in the sanctuary (the place of worship) and beheld your power and your glory.* (NIV)

It is also in the place of worship that we are able to behold and gaze upon the beauty of the Lord.

Ps 27:4

4 *One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.* (NKJ)

The miracle of experiencing the Joy of the Lord

Ps 21:6

6 *Surely you have granted him eternal blessings and made him glad with the joy of your presence.* (NIV)

Ps 27:6

at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD. (NIV)

Ps 16:11

11 *You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.* (NKJ)

Neh 8:10

This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.
(NIV)

The Bible is filled with references that link joy to the presence of the Lord. During the feast of Tabernacles God commanded His people to "Rejoice for seven days before the Lord". God loves to witness our supreme joy in His presence. In fact, He has promised to augment it.

Zeph 3:17

17 The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." (NIV)

ELISHA'S EXPERIENCE

II Ki 3:15-16

15 But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon Elisha.

16 And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches. (KJV)

Confronted with the need to bring a prophetic word from God, Elisha immediately called for a musician. Whilst the harpist played, the hand (Spirit) of the Lord came upon Elisha and he was inspired with a word from God. Obviously the atmosphere fostered by the music helped to create the right atmosphere to release a genuine prophetic word from God. The anointed atmosphere helped to produce a spiritual miracle.

PAUL'S EXPERIENCE

Acts 14:7-10

7 And they were preaching the gospel there.

8 And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked.

9 This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed,

10 said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And he leaped and walked.

It seems apparent, from the context of this incident, that the presentation of the Gospel by this group of missionaries, created an exciting and stimulating atmosphere. Whole cities were both stirred and divided by this phenomena. In Lystra the gathering produced an atmosphere of exciting faith conducive to the performance of miracles. The preaching of Paul created a spirit of faith and expectancy among his listeners. As Paul observed one particular man in the crowd, he could clearly see that the spirit of faith had gripped him. This encouraged Paul to shout with a loud voice "Stand up on your feet". The man immediately leapt to his feet and walked. Imagine the great excitement that accompanied this mighty miracle!

THE HIGH PRAISES OF GOD (Psalm 149:6)

The first portion of **Psalm 149** is filled with exhortations and commandments to praise the Lord. There are at least ten clear commands to praise God in a variety of ways. We

are told to sing unto Him; rejoice in Him; be joyful in our King; dance before Him; praise Him with musical instruments etc.

In V6, we reach the highest expression of that praise. The highest level of pure praise. David calls it "the high praises of God." The ultimate weaponry of God's last-day army are the "*high praises of God in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand.*" With such weapons we can wage victorious warfare against the enemy and gain the final victory, in the Name of our God.

God is seeking to teach us many things about praise. He is leading us from one truth to another progressively. Always seeking to further purify our praises, until at last we are able to enter into the high praises of God.

He is seeking to:

- a. Enlarge our understanding of praise.
- b. Purify our motives in praise.
- c. Refine our expressions of praise.
- d. Establish His throne upon them (**Psa 22:3**).
- e. Manifest His authority through them.

In verse 8 God tells us what He will accomplish when we begin to exercise those high praises. He will "*...bind kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron.*" These are not earthly human kings and nobles. They are the principalities and powers who exercise spiritual rule over the heathen nations. In response to the high praises of His people, God is going to bind these satanic principalities and release the peoples they have held in bondage to receive the blessing of the Gospel of the Kingdom. This is going to pave the way for the greatest spiritual awakening the world has ever witnessed. The great pagan nations of earth are going to open up to the Kingdom of God. Those multitudes that Joel saw prophetically, in the "valley of decision," are going to be released from the spiritual bondage of centuries, and be free to receive the blessing of God's glorious reign.

Psalm 67 GOD'S SAVING HEALTH TO ALL NATIONS

This prophetic Psalm opens with a cry for God's mercy and blessing to be revealed to all nations. It closes with the prediction that God SHALL bless us, the earth will yield her increase, and "*... all the ends of the earth shall fear him.*" The key that releases such universal blessing is the praises of God's people. (V.3,5).

NOTICE THE PROGRESSION OF PRAISE

1. **Let the people of God praise Thee, O God.** This refers to the people of God - His redeemed people. They are to be the leaders of an army of praising people. The trigger that precipitates the great blessing of Jehovah for the whole earth is the praises of His redeemed community.

2. **Let all the people praise Thee** - signifying a time when praise will no longer be limited to God's redeemed people, but it will spread far beyond them. Even the unregenerate will begin to praise Jehovah. They will begin to recognise Him as the one true God and the only one worthy of praise, worship and adoration.

3. **Let the nations be glad and sing for joy.** At this point, entire nations will begin to speak favourable and in praise of Jehovah. They will begin to realise that the only solution to their humanly-insoluble dilemma is in the intervention of the government of God.

When this chain reaction of praise has been triggered off by God's people, it will bring the government and justice of God to the earth (V.4). Only this can cause the "*way of God to be known upon earth, and His saving health among all nations.*" (V.2).

The word used here for "health" is "YESHAH," meaning salvation, deliverance, victory, prosperity, well-being etc. All these blessings are inherent in one Person, His Name is JESUS. He is the only answer to the world's multitude dilemmas. It is for Him alone that we look. His coming will be accelerated as we enter into the **high praises of God.**

Psalm 72 THE KINGDOM REIGN

Psalm 72 is a glorious, prophetic Messianic Psalm that outlines many wonderful aspects of the coming Kingdom of our Messiah, Jesus. The whole Psalm is filled with marvellous facts about the Kingdom. However, we will mention only two of them, that are in keeping with our present theme.

V 15b. *"...daily, shall be (Messiah) be praised."*

V 17. *"His name shall endure forever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed."*

One of the integral features of God's eternal, universal reign upon earth will be the worship of Jehovah. God's throne will be established in Jerusalem. Christ will be seated upon it. King David will be His Vice-Regent (**Jer 30:9; Ezek 37:24,25**).

All nations will go up to Jerusalem from year to year to worship the King and keep the Feast of Tabernacles (**Zech 14:16**).

The house of the Lord will be established on top of the mountain and people of every nation will come to be taught of the Lord (**Isaiah 2:2,3**).

They will say, one to another, *"...come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of our God, and He will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths..."* (**Micah 4:2**).

Any who refuse or neglect to come and worship will forfeit the rain on their land (**Zech 14:17**).

In that day the watchword will be *".....HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD....."* (**Zech 4:20**).

**OH COME, LET US ADORE HIM!
AMEN!**