

# Worship - Notes of a Reading John 4

by John Nelson Darby

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*Worship is the return of the heart to God for all His blessings in Christ, and it requires salvation, unity, and the Holy Ghost to take up our praises and prayers.*

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 16:16-17, Isaiah 29:13, Matthew 18:20, Luke 15:23-24, John 4:24, Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 10:22, Ephesians 2:18, Hebrews 10:19-22, 1 John 1:3

**Topics:** "Unity in Christ", "Worship"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes that true worship is distinct from preaching and requires a relationship with God through salvation. He explains that worship can only occur in the presence of Christ and through the Holy Spirit, highlighting the importance of being in a state of acceptance and unity with fellow believers. Darby illustrates worship as a heartfelt return to God for His blessings, rooted in the understanding of Christ's sacrifice and the joy of being in communion with the Father. He stresses that worship involves both praise and prayer, and that it is essential for believers to be in harmony to offer genuine worship. Ultimately, worship is portrayed as a joyful expression of love and gratitude towards God, anticipating the fullness of His blessings.

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## Transcript

(Words of Faith, Vol. 3, 1884, page 71.)

Some desire to have a definite thought as to what worship really is. First let me say that preaching the gospel and hearing a lecture are quite distinct from worship, but one thing I would remark in passing, salvation is first needed for it.

In this chapter the Lord says, "Salvation is of the Jews" - amongst them the true God was known; there was no true knowledge of God save among the Jews. Wherever God put His name, there was the place of worship. Now Christ declares, "Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It can only be in His name. Paul says, to the Athenians, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." Only those who know God can worship. This chapter takes the place of worship away from amongst the Jews, and it supposes accomplished redemption. I get into the place of perfect acceptance through the work of Jesus Christ, and there I can worship; none can worship unless in this place of divine favour; if I can sing in the sense of the acceptance of Christ, I cannot be out of tune.

The essence of worship is that the Holy Ghost can take up our praises and prayers to God in perfect association with Christ. In the wave offering in Deuteronomy 26, we find a beautiful picture of holy worship offered by the individual, but worship in the assembly supposes the Holy Ghost uniting all together in joy and praise - "they lifted up their voice to God with one accord."

In Deuteronomy 16 we get three feasts: the Passover; Pentecost; and the feast of Tabernacles, which is not yet accomplished. The Passover is the sacrifice of Christ for us, and Pentecost is the Holy Ghost already given us, but the feast of tabernacles is still future. There is very little joy in the Passover; as soon as it was done they returned to their tents. At Pentecost I find, "Thou shalt rejoice before the Lord and remember," etc.; but in the feast of tabernacles there is something more, they here have got into the fullest blessing, and worship flows because of being in that fulness of blessing.

In worship you will find often exclusively the notion in hymns of our having escaped judgment through the blood, but what is so beautiful, is the thought that, "praise waiteth for thee, O God" - their voices all ready, and their hearts all tuned to praise. Certainly I must get my conscience cleansed first, but Christ wants children to be with the Father. Is all I know of God this, that He is satisfied about my sins - satisfied with the blood? No, He wants to get my soul into the sense of relationship with Himself when I worship, and this, too, as the Father. In Luke 15 I get God's own joy, "Let us eat, and be merry," etc. When I come up to the cross I do so only about my sins, but when I have passed through the rent veil I have got to God's side of the cross, that is, God is Himself known as well as the blessed truth that "the wages of sin is death, and the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ."

My place of worship is the holiest, where all the value of Christ is put upon me. In Exodus 12 they feed upon the sacrifice - redemption accomplished. Worship is the return of the heart to God for all His blessings in Christ. The Holy Ghost gives me God's feelings about the sacrifice of His Son, and worship goes up to the Father. All our joy and peace flows up to God in praise.

Worship is the best part. When we get to heaven we shall not want gifts. I do not like lectures at worship meetings; such meetings suppose the Holy Ghost there to lead our praises and prayers. If my state of heart is not up to praise it will not do at the Lord's table; it is not in a right state. All who praise ought to walk so that praise should readily burst out - God must have worship in truth; and there must be unity - all one loaf.

We cannot worship without prayer, because desire goes ever beyond our present ability to worship; restricting it to mere praise is impossible, it is never unmixed with prayer; it is not the place properly for prayer, but you cannot separate it, it would not be genuine, and that is the thing God wants.

You never get the Father in the Psalms or in Revelation. Our place is that of children with the Father, and our fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. Praise belongs to both. If all do not come into the unity of the body praise is imperfect. Christ's heart ought to move mine, and He never leaves out any. It is the first circle, and love must flow to all the saints in it. Some may be going wrong, but I am to love them still.

What I get by the Holy Ghost, is a child worshipping the Father. I am standing with the Holy Ghost dwelling in me, between the first and second coming of Christ - a worshipper waiting for His coming. The table is the centre of all worship. The force of that word in 1 Corinthians 10:22, "provoking the Lord to jealousy," is, that if one went with heretics it would provoke Him, or if one were to admit evil persons to the table it would do this. J. N. D.

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