

Moody 100th Anniversary 1986 the Wonder of Worship

by Warren Wiersbe

Worship is the believer's adoring response to all that God is, all that God does, and all that God says, and it involves a sense of wonder, adoration, and reverence.

Duration: 57:02

Scripture: Matthew 7:26, Matthew 18:3, Revelation 4:11, Revelation 5:12, Revelation 11:15, Revelation 19:1

Topics: "Worship Renewal", "Christian Wonder"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of wonder and celebration in worship. He highlights how we have lost our sense of wonder and take things for granted, including God's creation and the church. The preacher encourages us to become like little children, who are fascinated by the smallest things and ask questions. He also mentions the Apostle Paul's recognition of the wonder of God's sovereignty and the beauty of creation. Overall, the sermon calls for a renewed sense of wonder and celebration in our worship.

Transcript

I want to talk with you about worship. Heaven is a place of worship. The views that we have of heaven given in the scripture indicate that heaven is a place of worship.

Isaiah chapter 6, a familiar passage used so often at missionary meetings, and rightly so, in the year that King Isaiah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim, each one had six wings, with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, "now apparently this was antiphonal praise of God, echoing back and forth before the throne, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of his glory.' And the posts of the door moved, or trembled, at the voice of him who cried. And the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me." It's an odd thing to say to worship service, isn't it? And by the way, you don't find many people saying it these days.

"Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips. And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. For mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar." It's rather interesting, the connection between the throne and the altar. The throne in Israel was the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle. But you could not get to that throne without going past the altar.

In the book of Revelation you're going to find over and over again the throne and the altar. A throne without an altar means judgment. But a throne with an altar means sovereign grace.

"Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. And I heard a voice, the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me." Here is a man who had a worship experience.

I'll never have one exactly like that. But the elements are here. He saw something, and he heard something, and he felt something, and he did something.

That's what worship is all about. We're not about to see the Lord high and lifted up in the same way that Isaiah did, but we have a Bible in which we can him. He saw something, and he heard something.

He heard worship going on in heaven and realized he could not worship because he was a man of unclean lips. Nor could he find anybody among his people to help him because they were a people of unclean lips, which suggests to us that worship is a privilege that belongs to the cleansed. He saw something, and he heard something, and he felt something.

He felt the cleansing of God. If I go away from worship the same as I came, I actually go away worse than I came, for I should go away different from what I came. And he did something.

He said, Here am I, send me. We say that the worship is the service. Come to our worship service.

No, it isn't. The service starts after the worship is over. I have walked into many churches that have the maho over the auditorium or sanctuary door that reads, Enter to worship, depart to serve.

I don't quite agree with that anymore. It should say, Enter to worship and serve, and depart to worship and serve. We never cease to worship the Lord.

I want to consider this subject of worship, because heaven is a place of worship, and if worship is boring to you, said A. W. Tozer, you are not ready for heaven. There will not be much preaching in heaven. I don't find in the book of Revelation much preaching going on in heaven.

If we aren't preaching here on earth, there won't be anybody in heaven, so we do have to have preaching. A great deal of worship goes on in the book of Revelation in heaven. Heaven is a place of worship.

All of nature right now is worshiping God. That's an amazing thing. I'm a student of the early American transcendental movement.

You know, Emerson and Thoreau and Alcott and some of those people. They looked upon nature as their God. Emerson's first book was a thin little book just simply called Nature.

It's an interesting book, sort of like fireworks in a fog. Every once in a while there's a flash and then there's a lot of fog. But all of nature right now is worshiping God.

The trees of the forest are clapping their hands together to praise God. We don't dare do that in church, but the trees of the forest do it. All of the flowers are lifting up their beauty to God.

The birds, who have nothing to sing about, they spend all day long just trying to stay alive. But yet they'll sit on the branch of the tree and just sing praises to God. All of nature is worshipping God while you and I neglect worship.

Isaiah is not the only person in scripture who worshiped God. As you read your Bible, you'll find that all the way through scripture, people worshiped God. And the greatest need in our lives and in our churches today is for worship.

And I'll tell you why. Everything that we are involved in is a byproduct of worship. The pastor says, oh, I've got people in my church who desperately need to get right with God.

They're gossips and they're troublemakers and they are sanctified obstructionists. And oh, if they would just see themselves and get right with God. How do you do that? Worship.

Isaiah saw himself after he saw the Lord. Somebody else says, oh, there's a need for missionaries. I'm praying right now for God to provide hundreds of missionaries.

I get the missionary prayer lists from the various mission groups and I'm on a couple of boards and there's a desperate need right now for missionary volunteers. Where are you going to get them? Well, Isaiah went to a worship service and came out a volunteer. Somebody else says, oh my, we need to give.

Oh, our people are so cheap, they just don't give. And so we better have a big financial drive and do some picking of pockets in a sweet evangelical way. And how do you go about getting resources for God's worship? You see, everything that we are interested in, evangelism is a byproduct of worship.

God said to Isaiah, go out and preach. And the most evangelistic of the prophets is Isaiah. He's the one who wrote, all we like sheep have gone astray.

We've turned everyone to his own way. The a byproduct of worship. And not only is it a byproduct of worship, but all of these blessings are strengthened by worship and maintained by worship.

And they keep going because of worship. And we today in our churches are neglecting worship. I trust I won't sound critical.

I've been a pastor of three churches. I've preached in hundreds of churches. I don't want to be a critic.

I don't want to grow up, grow old and become a mean old man and just go around criticizing people. But I really believe there's a desperate need for us to get back to the worship of God. Now, what I'd like to do in this simple address on worship is consider three different aspects of worship.

I want to consider, first of all, a definition of worship. We better know what we're talking about. Then secondly, I want to talk with you about the elements of worship.

There are three of them. Worship involves three very simple elements. Then finally, we want to look at some examples of worship found in a book in the Bible that we neglect when it comes to worship, namely the book of Revelation.

I have in my library, I suppose, three shelves of commentaries on the book of Revelation and prophecy. In those commentaries you will not find a great deal about worship. Yet the book of Revelation is devoted to the worship of God.

Let's begin with a definition of worship. What is Christian worship? I think one of the finest definitions ever given of Christian worship is found in a neglected commentary on the Gospel of John, written by William Temple. William Temple was the Archbishop of Canterbury back during the years of World War II and before then.

William Temple was an interesting man, a good theologian. I didn't totally agree with all of his theology, but this is the way he defined worship. Now, will you listen? Don't just listen.

Says William Temple, "...to worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open up the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God." I like that. Let me repeat it now. William Temple says, "...to worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God.

Woe is me, for I am undone. It is to feed the mind with the truth of God. They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God.

Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, to open up the heart to the love of God." We love him because he first loved us. "...to devote the will to the purpose of God. Present your body a living sacrifice, which is your spiritual worship, and be not conformed, but be transformed, that you might prove that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." In other words, worship involves all of us.

Worship is much more than the body being in an assembly. It's also the mind receiving the truth. It's also the heart expressing love.

It's also the will obeying God. And it's also the imagination coming into contact with true beauty, so that the imagination can be cleansed. By the way, some of the dirtiest sins that people get involved in start in the imagination.

It's not enough when we worship God simply to receive a Bible truth or to sing a Bible song. There must be the beauty of God come through to us so that our imagination is cleansed. That's a long definition.

It's a good definition. But let me give you a simpler one that may help you in your own personal and corporate worship. Worship is the believer's adoring response to all that God is, all that God does, and all that God says.

That's easy to remember. Worship is the believer's adoring response to all that God is, all that God does, and all that God says. Now, worship is something that believers do.

I know that the birds worship God, and all of nature worships God, and I'm sure that there are unbelievers who try to worship God. Our Lord said in John chapter 4 that those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. But an unbeliever is someone who has not the spirit and who has not received the truth.

Now, in their own best way, they may seek to worship God, and God may in his kindness look upon that worship and lead them to true worship. I think of Cornelius. Cornelius was a Roman centurion who had borrowed the Jewish religion.

He turned his back on Roman paganism, and now he had become a Jewish, not a proselyte, but he had begun to get interested in the Jewish religion, and God paid attention to that worship. God saw his sacrifices, and God noticed what he was seeking, and God brought a man to him, Peter, to tell him the truth. I firmly believe that a sinner and a seeking Savior are going to find each other.

We're talking to believers now. Worship is the believers' adoring response. Not just a response, it's an adoring response.

It's a response that comes from the very depth of our being. It is a response of all that we are to that God is, all that God does, and all that God says. A worship service is not a production or a performance.

A worship service is when God's people gather together and they give their adoring response to God with all that they have. Martin Luther made an interesting statement. He said, God has given to us five senses.

It would be tragic for us not to use them all in worshiping him. Now, in many worship services we use, well, we use hearing. We listen to preaching and singing.

We use seeing. We read our Bibles and our hymn books, and we speak to God in prayer and in praise. In some services you actually use touch, where you reach out and pass the peace, or you give a greeting to someone, the friendship, fellowship time in the service.

Some people are bothered if the service is too, if there's too much beauty. A strange thing. You want to have your living room beautiful.

You want your house to be beautiful, but God's house is not supposed to be beautiful. It's strange. Somebody's sick in the hospital, you take flowers to them, but don't bring any flowers to the church.

That's too liturgical. Now, the word liturgy simply means an order of worship. It's a good Bible word.

It's used several times in Scripture, not the Greek word from which we get liturgy. It means priestly service. Every church has a liturgy, either a good one or a bad one.

Every church has an order of service. I have been in churches where weeks before the pastor phoned me and said, Brother Wiersbe, what Scripture do you want read? What will you be preaching about? What Scripture do you want read? Because I want to get somebody prepared to read the Scripture. I've also been in churches where as we walked from the pastor's study to the pulpit, he said, What Bible portion do you want read? Can you imagine at the last minute asking someone to get up and read Holy Scripture? You wouldn't do that with Shakespeare.

Every church has a liturgy, either a good one or a bad one. Let's have a good one. And let's appeal to all that we are and respond to all that God is, and all that God does, and all that God has said.

Now let's look at the elements of worship. The elements of worship. There are three of them.

They're very simple. True Christian worship involves wonder. Now we've lost this today.

There's not much of a sense of awe when God's people get together. We sort of lost the wonder of it all. When Isaiah saw the Lord, I don't know if he was in the temple, we aren't told.

Let's assume he was. Others were there. Others were there going through the routine motions of worship that God met with Isaiah, and he saw the Lord.

There was a sense of wonder about it. When you read the book of the Revelation, you find John wondering. He's caught in the awesomeness of it.

The apostles over and over again in the four Gospels were attracted by the wonder of Jesus Christ. What manner of man is this that even the winds and the waves obey him? We've gotten so familiar with God, and we know so much about God that we've lost all of our wonder. Now people have the crazy idea that the more you know about something, the least wonder there will be.

That's not true. You say, I'm going to study a flower. I'm going to take a pansy, and I'm going to devote years to studying this pansy.

At the end of those years, I'm going to know so much about that pansy that there's nothing more I can learn. The problem is, the more you learn, the more you find out there is to learn. The study of that one little pansy leads you to start studying about other flowers, and about the ground they live in, and the sun that they take in, and the rain that they drink in.

And one little pansy puts you in touch with all of nature, and you find that there's so much more to learn. The fact of the matter is, the more you know about something, the more wonderful it becomes. I wish I knew as much about the Bible as I did when I started my ministry.

I wish I knew as much about preaching as I did 25 years ago. I wish I knew as much about pastoral work as I used to know. I made a statement at a prophecy conference once, I don't know as much about prophecy as I used to.

This is true. You see, wonder doesn't come from knowing nothing. Wonder comes from knowing more and more.

The more we know, the more wonderful things become. Isn't that true of people? You say, I didn't know that about him. I just saw a new side to her, been married to her for 30 years.

I never knew about that. There's always some new, exciting thing to find out. Worship involves wonder.

Now, we won't go into detail on this. I'll just drop it into your heart. You think about it now.

Let's begin with the wonder of God. I tremble at the way people talk to and about God. I tremble.

I have to catch myself, oh Lord, help me not to be so familiar that I get trite. There comes a point in every Christian's life when he gets to a certain level and thinks he has to be cute when he talks to God. The wonder of God.

God exists. God is. No beginning, no ending.

God doesn't change. God named all the stars and yet he knows my name and he's numbered the hairs on your head. The wonder of God.

The wonder of God's creation. I'm going to talk more about that later on. God's creation.

There was a time in my ministry when I thought it was liberal and sinful to sing any songs about God the Creator. Let the liberals do that. I was at a service once and they announced they were going to sing, This is My Father's World.

Well, the liberal churches sing that song. Let's sing the old rugged cross. I'm going to point out to you that the first hymn found in the book of Revelation is a hymn to God the Creator, not the Redeemer.

You know why we are in an ecological mess today? Because we have forgotten to worship God the Creator. You see, if you don't worship the Creator, you worship the creation. If you don't worship the Creator, you worship the creature.

Paul said that in Romans chapter 1. They worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator. And when you worship the Creator, you realize that creation is a gift and you are a steward. When you worship the creature, you exploit creation.

And that's why we have dirty air and dirty water and polluted fish and all these other things that are going on. It's because we don't worship the Creator anymore. We're exploiting what we ought to be using for his glory, the wonder of creation.

It amazes me. We now live in Lincoln, Nebraska, where at night you can see the stars. In Chicago, on a clear day, you can see your feet.

Our next-door neighbor has a teenage son. He's a freshman at the University of Nebraska. A bright boy, just a lovely boy.

He's at our house as much as he is next door. I'm going to start claiming him as an exemption, I think. He has a telescope.

They came rushing over one night and he said, Hey, come on up! You've got to see the comet! Well, my wife went out to see the comet. I wasn't feeling well, so I didn't. I thought to myself, that's a marvelous thing that a teenage boy who could be sitting by a stereo with a pair of earphones on, knocking all of his ear bones to pieces, is out looking at God's creation.

We're too busy to do that. We're just too busy. Jesus wasn't.

You see how much Jesus said about creation. He talked about the flowers, and he talked about the birds, and he talked about seeds, and he talked about birth. He talked about light and water, bread.

We take all these things for granted, don't we? Well, we worship God, the wonder of God, the wonder of creation. How about the wonder of God's church? We take the church for granted. The church is a remarkable thing.

What other organization or organism on the face of the earth could bring together so many different people in one? In the Roman Empire, the only place where a slave could go and be accepted as an equal was a local church. Anyplace else, he was a piece of furniture. Less than a thing.

The wonder of the church, the wonder of redemption. Worship involves wonder. My friend, if you have lost your sense of wonder, you don't have much left.

You know what keeps science going? A sense of wonder. Einstein said that. I have a big poster hanging in my study at home, a picture of Einstein on the poster, and underneath is a quotation from Dr. Einstein which says, Imagination is more important than knowledge.

When I first saw that poster, I thought, hey, that man was smart. That's pretty dumb. Then the more I thought about it, I said, you know, he's right.

You know how you get knowledge? Through imagination. I won't talk about it now, but I'm going to write a book about it someday, the Lord willing. What we need in our preaching is imagination.

We have lots of information. We're being deluged with information, but not enough imagination. When Jesus preached, it was imagination.

Whenever Jesus talked to people, he didn't say, I'm now going to describe for you five Latin words. No, he said, I want to talk to you about how to be born again. That's imagination.

I want to talk to you about two fellows who built houses. One was a lousy builder, put it on sand. That's imagination.

Not fancy, imagination. We've lost our sense of wonder. Nothing to us is marvelous.

That's why Jesus said, become like little children. My grandchildren can stand and stare at a bug and never move. They're fascinated with a bug or a flower.

That's why they ask questions. Then we get embarrassed because we can't answer them. Worship involves wonder.

You know, there's an element missing in our worship today among evangelicals, and that element is wonder. We don't have enough celebration. The preacher explains everything.

I'm afraid of a preacher who can explain everything. When the Apostle Paul finished writing the three most difficult chapters he ever wrote, Romans 9, 10, and 11, you know what he said? Well, folks, I have now written Romans 9, 10, and 11, and everybody understands the sovereignty of God and all the problems are solved. That's not what he said.

After wrestling with history, with sin, with sovereignty, with prophecy, after wrestling with these momentous things, Paul ends up and moves from theology to doxology and says all the depths, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, his ways are past finding out. I wonder what would happen if the Moody Bible Institute, right in the middle of a theology lecture, the professor started to praise God. Or I wonder what would happen in your church if the pastor paused and leaned over the pulpit and said, folks, I'm already over my head.

I can't explain any more of this. Let's just pause and worship God. But no, we have to explain everything.

We know God so well, we're no longer in awe of him. The second element of worship is witness. Witness.

When God's people gather together to worship, it's a witness. To begin with, it's a witness that Jesus is alive. When we gather together on the Lord's day, it's a witness that Jesus is alive.

Who gets together and worships a dead person? Neither on the first day, nor the second day, nor any other day of the week, will you find millions of people getting together to honor. You get together, you worship. He's opened for you a new and living way, and the day of his appearing is approaching.

Now, you get together and worship. When you pick up your Bible and you start out for church on Sunday, you're saying to all your neighbors, Jesus is alive. Now, when God's people gather together to worship, it is, first of all, a witness to God.

When we assemble in the house of God, or wherever we are, to worship him, we are, first of all, bearing witness to God. This is our adoring response. To begin with, we have brought him our bodies.

There are lots of people who worship God in spirit. They stay home. They attend the Warm Springs Baptist Church.

When you come to God's house with God's people, you are presenting to him a living sacrifice, your body, holy, acceptable to God. That's Romans 12, 1 and 2. And then when we sing, we're presenting to him the fruit of our lips. That's Hebrews 13, 15.

Praise. Did you know that when we praise God, we're witnessing to him? That's why I like for a worship service to open with a song that lifts my heart to God, because I want to bring to him the fruit of my lips as a sacrifice. When they pass the offering plate, that's a spiritual sacrifice.

Philippians 4, Paul talks about that. He said, I am full, I have received all from Epaphroditus. The Philippian church had sent a missionary gift to Paul.

Paul said, that wasn't money, that wasn't clothing, that was a spiritual sacrifice, a fragrance that was lifted to God. And so when you put your offering in that plate, you're worshipping God. And God forbid that we should bring him that which costs us nothing.

Prayer. According to Psalm 141, verse 2, prayer is a spiritual sacrifice. He says, I'm going to lift my prayer to you.

The lifting up of my hands, the lifting up of my voice, is like the evening sacrifice. And so when we praise God, it's a sacrifice. When we pray to God, it is a sacrifice.

We're bearing witness to God. Now at this point, some profound theologian speaks up and says, just a minute, God is God. And God doesn't change.

He can't change for the worse. He's perfect. He can't change for the better because he's perfect.

So God is God and he doesn't change. What effect does my worship have on him? I don't know. But I do know this, in my Bible, God is seeking worshipers.

Now he's seeking the lost. I know that. But he's worshipers.

My Father in heaven is so made in his nature that he rejoices and responds when his people worship him. Don't think of God as some sort of celestial ice cube who is cold and indifferent and who doesn't respond. God responds to our worship.

Now our worship does not enrich God because God can't be any richer. It enriches us. But our worship pleases God and our worship brings joy to God's heart.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Christians and said, now I want you to learn how to walk so as to please God. Worship involves wonder and worship involves witness. It involves witness to God.

Secondly, it involves witness to each other. You see, the difference between Christian worship and many other kinds of worship is this. Our worship involves not only the vertical, we lift our hearts to God, it also involves the horizontal.

We lift our hearts and our hands out to one another. Now I know there are those people who belong to a spiritual elite who when they come to church don't want to pay attention to anybody else. I'm here to worship God.

You can stay home and do that. Now you're better off there because you're bearing witness. But our worship involves one another.

I recommend you go home, get your concordance off the shelf, and make a list of all the one another's in the New Testament. Wash one another's feet. In honor, prefer one another.

Forgive one another. Love one another. Edify one another.

Encourage one another. How do you do that through worship? We don't worship one another, but we worship with one another. And as we're reaching up to God and praising and responding to him, we're also reaching out to one another.

By the way, we're bearing witness to one another every time you have baptism in the Lord's Supper. I don't know how you perform baptism in your church, the church that I belong to. We immerse.

And every time our pastor is immersing someone, it's a reminder to me, it's a witness to me, that I died with Christ. My whole life was buried with Christ. Praise God, I was raised to walk in newness of life.

Bless the Lord. The Lord's Supper, Paul said, when you do this, you're doing it as a proclamation. You do proclaim the Lord's death till he comes.

And so when we get together at the Lord's table, it's a family. Not as individuals, as a family. It's a meal.

And by the way, the Lord's Supper is not a place of gloom and doom. There are some preachers who have the idea that if everybody isn't under a guilt cloud, they can't come to the Lord's table. The Lord's table should be a time of joyful celebration.

We're forgiven. We're going to heaven. He died for us.

He's coming for us. Yes, we do want to prepare our hearts and confess our sins, but don't major on that. Major on the beauty and the blessing of the Lord.

And so we witness to one another. By the way, before you leave the house of God, have you helped some other Christian? I will confess to you that there was a time in my life when I did not like the greetings of one another in church services. I wanted to come and start with a stately hymn and worship God, and just begin with an earthquake and build up to a climax.

But you know, you can't do that. It's not even normal. A worship service has to have its mountains and its plateaus, its mountains and its plateaus.

And I'm learning, oh I have so much to learn, but I'm learning little by little that when I turn to the fellow next to me and say, well God bless you, peace be unto you, that's good for me and it's good for him. There's flesh and blood. You know, there are people who come to your church on Sunday morning, nobody touches their hand all week long.

Nobody gives them a hug. And the only place they have any kind of spiritual, physical contact is with the people of God. I know some folks carry this to extremes, that's all right.

I'd sooner tone down a fanatic than resurrect a corpse any day. Worship involves wonder. Secondly, worship involves witness.

Witness to God and witness to God's people and witness to the lost world. When unfaithful people come into one of our services and watch us worship God, what kind of a witness do they get? What do they think about God because of the way we've acted? I wonder. I wonder about that unsaved person sitting next to that Christian who's singing the doxology, chewing on bubblegum at the same time.

I know we're sheep, but keep your cud someplace else. Worship is serious business. We're witnessing to God and we're witnessing to one another and we're witnessing to the lost.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 14, Paul talks about an unsaved person coming into the Corinthian assembly. Now the Corinthian assembly was a mess, no order, and this one would jump up and speak in tongues and that one would jump up and try to interpret, and before he was through, somebody else jumped up with something else and it was a zoo. Paul said if an unsaved person comes in and sees that, he'll think you're mad.

But he said, if things are done decently and in order and you're glorifying God, he'll fall on his face and say, God is among you. That doesn't happen much in our services today. God is among you.

Worship involves witness. There's a third element to worship. Worship involves warfare.

I alluded to this in the message this morning. Have you ever stopped to think that the nation of Israel, in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, and Joshua, the nation of Israel was a worshiping army. The Ark of the Covenant went out before the army of God.

They no sooner, the Israelites no sooner got out of Egypt redeemed when they burst into song. The very first song in the Bible, Exodus 15, the Lord is a man of war. Oh, you don't preach that today.

We have lost the militant aspect of worship. We have so compromised with the enemy that we don't believe in being militantly worshipful anymore. I'm going to drop into your mind right now a thought that is going to stun you.

Do you know what heaven and hell have in common? Do you know what heaven and hell have in common? They both want worship. The devil wants to be worshiped. That's how Lucifer became Satan.

I will be like God, Isaiah 14. He said to the Lord Jesus, fall down and worship me and I'll give you all the kingdoms of the world. The devil wants worship.

Now he's getting worship through creation. When you worship and serve the creature and the creation rather than the creator, you are worshiping and serving Satan. Oh, the ramifications of that truth are frightening.

For example, if when I minister the word of God, the focus of attention is on me instead of on God, the devil is getting worship. If preaching is not an act of worship, you end up worshiping the preacher. And there are churches where the preacher is worshiped more than God.

Now, these are serious things. It's true of musicians. If the focus of attention is on the demonstration of talent instead of the declaration of truth, Satan is getting worship.

And that could happen in an evangelical assembly. It's frightening. Worship involves warfare.

And the reason you and I are seeing the church defeated, defeated, defeated, is because we have neglected the warfare of worship. Now that leads us to the book of the Revelation. Would you turn there? We're going to take just a few minutes to page through the book of the Revelation and consider the third aspect of our subject, some examples of worship.

When you mention the book of the Revelation, you instantly think of a prophetic chart. The book of the Revelation is the revelation of the future, but it's also the revelation of Jesus Christ. Did you notice that? The revelation of Jesus Christ.

And throughout this book, do you know what you find? You find wonder. I tell you, John describes some things that will blow your mind. Wonder.

You see God on His throne. You see the Lamb. You see Babylon.

You see the Holy City. This is a book of wonder. John exhausts the imagination and the use of simile and metaphor to describe for us these spiritual truths.

I wrote a book on Revelation, one of the B series, Be Victorious. And I tell you, by the time I got through that book, I said to myself, I better go back and rewrite it. I didn't.

I probably should have. Wonder. If you can read the book of Revelation with a ballpoint pen and a piece of paper drawing charts, you've missed the meaning of this book.

Secondly, the book of Revelation is a book of witness. The word witness is found 18 times in this book. Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, my two witnesses, all the way through here, God is bearing witness to His people.

His people are bearing witness to Him and to each other and to a lost world. Thirdly, it's a book of warfare. Throughout this book, you find a battle going on.

Heaven against hell, Christ against Satan, light against darkness, truth against error. And by the way, in every generation of the church, this battle has gone on in one way or another. There has been an Antichrist of some kind or another in every generation.

There has been a Babylon in every generation. Martin Luther had to fight his Babylon and his Antichrist. D. L. Moody had to fight his Babylon and his Antichrist.

Ultimately, it's going to culminate in the devil's masterpiece. We know that. But even today, while we wait, a battle is going on.

It's a book of wonder, it's a book of witness, and it's a book of warfare. And the people of God in this book are engaged in a battle and the victory comes from worship. Now, let's just look at some of the worship hymns in the book of Revelation.

Revelation chapter 4. We will not do this exhaustively. We shall do it suggestively, because I speak to an intelligent Bible-reading congregation, and you will follow through in your own home. In Revelation chapter 4, the writer John is caught up to heaven.

He sees the wonder of God's throne forty-six times in this book. The throne, the throne. It's the book of sovereignty.

Now, the people, the creatures that are around the throne and before the throne are going to sing. Verse 11. Thou art worthy.

That's what worship means. Worship means worth-ship. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power.

Why? For thou hast created all things. Wait a minute. Isn't the most important thing the cross? Why start with a hymn to the Creator? Did you ever notice Paul's preaching to the Gentiles? Read the book of Acts.

When Paul preached to the Gentiles, he always started with creation. If you're wrong about creation, you'll be wrong about everything else. By the way, that's why the evolution problem is a problem.

If we don't have a Creator, then we have nothing. We are just mere insects. Crawling around from one annihilation to another.

Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. Worship involves the Creator. If we're going to win the battle, we've got to know the Creator.

I was interested in going through my Bible and marking what it had to say about the Creator. Jesus said, Are you worrying? Then get acquainted with the Creator. See how he takes care of the flowers and the birds.

What's the cure for worry? Get to know your Creator. Are you suffering? Peter says, Commit yourself to the faithful Creator. Getting old? Well, Ecclesiastes says, Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before all these things happened.

How does a young man or a young woman keep body and mind pure and dedicated? Just remember, you've got a Creator. The first hymn in Revelation is a hymn to the Creator. But I know some super-spiritual saints who, if the pastor chose a great Isaac Watts hymn about creation, the heavens are telling, take it up and walk out.

I want to go to a spiritual church. You better learn how to worship the Creator, or you're going to end up being a very poor steward of the creation God's given to you. You'll waste it.

You'll ruin it. Chapter 5, here's a hymn to the Redeemer. Here's the Lamb standing at the throne.

Verse 12, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain. Our good friend Don Wurtson has taken this and made such a beautiful song out of it. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.

And all the creatures gather together and praise, blessing and honor and glory and power, and be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever. Twenty-eight times in this book, Jesus is called the Lamb. First we worship the Creator.

He made all things. Then we worship the Savior who redeemed us. Chapter 11, I'm not hitting all of them.

I'm just going to hit some of the high spots. Chapter 11 of Revelation, we're praising the King. Look at verse 17.

Well, we should start with verse 15. And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever. Now we're praising the King.

Some churches, you don't dare talk about the kingdom. That's liberal. Then the four and twenty elders fall down, and verse 17, we give thanks.

We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty. That's a great title for our God, who art and was and art to come, because thou hast taken unto thee thy great power. Thou hast reigned.

He goes on to talk about God's reign on earth. We worship the King. O worship the King, all glorious above.

Chapter 19, you have the great Hallelujah chorus. Long before Handel, John wrote this great Hallelujah chorus. Verse 19, after these things I heard a great voice of many people in heaven saying, Hallelujah! Which means praise the Lord.

Salvation and glory and honor and power unto the Lord our God, for true and righteous are his judgments. When was the last time you sang a worship song about judgment? You see, we're so manby-pamby today. We don't sing about judgment.

We don't even preach about judgment. The saints in glory are praising the judge. But we don't do that today.

We have cute little songs with clever little tunes that talk about the gentle carpenter of Nazareth, but we don't say much about judgment. Hallelujah, he's the judge. Verse 33, they said again, Hallelujah! Why? Her smoke, the smoke of Babylon was rising up.

Verse 5, praise our God. Verse 6, Hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Praising the conqueror.

You see, what's happened to our worship is that we have divorced worship from theology. Worship involves wonder, and the better you know your Bible, the more you're going to wonder at God. Campbell Morgan said, when all of my attempts at exegesis fail, I worship.

One evening I preached a prophetic message. Pathetic might be a better description, but it was a prophetic message in which I outlined the whole course of the ages from eternity to eternity in 40 minutes. A preacher friend of mine happened to be in the congregation that night.

Ordinarily, he would have been in his own pulpit. He stopped me afterward and said, that was quite a sermon. I said, well, thank you.

He said, you know, I want to give you a suggestion. How about moving off of the planning committee and get on the welcoming committee? I said, you're right. You're right.

You know, we know so much. We've got it all outlined, analyzed. It's in the margins of your study Bible, in the footnotes of your study.

And these are good things. I've written books, and I'm glad people get a blessing from them. But oh, the wonder of worship, that God is so great.

Worship involves witness. You don't just go to church to witness to God. You're witnessing to others and to the laws.

And worship involves warfare. It's a battle. And the only way to win that battle is to worship the Lord.

Oh, there's much more we could say, but we'll stop at this point. I recommend that in your private devotions, you take time to worship God. What is worship? The believer's adoring response to all that God is, and all that God does, and all that God says.

Oh, come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord. We confess our Father, our desperate need to grow in worship. We know we shall not be perfected in this until we reach glory.

Deliver us from substitute worship, from shallow worship. Oh, may we truly adore you, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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