



Does God Care How We Worship?

Presented by George Bradley

Quote - James Montgomery Boice

To worship God we must know who God is, but we cannot know who God is unless God first chooses to reveal himself to us. God has done this in the Bible, which is why the Bible and the teaching of the Bible need to be central in our worship.

The background is an abstract, textured composition of warm, earthy colors including shades of beige, light brown, and soft pink. A faint, stylized map of the Americas is visible in the background, rendered in a light, muted tone that blends with the overall color palette. The text "Who is God?" is centered in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Who is God?

**God Is Infinite – He is Self-Existing,
Without Origin - "And he is before all
things, and in him all things hold
together." - Colossians 1:17**

**God Is Immutable – He Never Changes -
“I the Lord do not change. So you, the
descendants of Jacob, are not
destroyed.” Malachi 3:6**

God is Omnipotent – He Is All Powerful - “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.” – **Psalm 33:6**

God Is Omniscient – He Is All-Knowing - “Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please” - **Isaiah 46:9-10**

**God Is Omnipresent –
He Is Always Everywhere –**

“Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me.” Psalm 139:7-10



The Attributes of God

God Is Wise – He Is Full of Perfect, Unchanging Wisdom - “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!” –
Romans 11:33

God Is Faithful – He Is Infinitely, Unchangingly True -
"Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his **covenant** of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands." - **Deuteronomy 7:9**

God Is Good – He Is Infinitely, Unchangingly Kind and Full of Good Will - “O, taste and see that the Lord is good” – Psalm 34:8

God Is Just – He Is Infinitely, Unchangeably Right and Perfect in All He Does - "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.” – Deuteronomy 32:4

**God Is Merciful – He is Infinitely,
Unchangeably Compassionate and Kind –**
“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,
and I will have compassion on whom I have
compassion.” So then it does not depend on
the man who wills or the man who runs, but
on God who has mercy." - **Romans 9:15-16**

God Is Gracious – God Is Infinitely Inclined to Spare the Guilty

- "The LORD is gracious and merciful; Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness." – Psalm 145:8

God Is Loving – God Infinitely, Unchangingly Loves Us -

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.” -

1 John 4:7-8

God Is Holy – He is Infinitely, Unchangingly Perfect –

“Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord Almighty” – Revelation 4:8

However, there is one attribute we tend to forget...

God Is a Jealous God – God wants us to love Him in return - “You shall have no other gods before Me. "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. "You shall not worship them or serve them; for **I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me **and** keep My commandments.” -**

Exodus 20:3-6

**It has often been said we are
free to worship God any way we
choose.**

**Is that an accurate statement
when the light of His Word is
shed upon it?**

A Few Definitions

**Before we go deeper its
probably best we define
several terms:**



Legalism – Adding to the Word of God.
Some, also consider the way to salvation
by strict obedience to the law, ignoring
Yeshua's expiation, is another form
of Legalism.

Liberalism – Taking away from the Word
of God.

A Few More Definitions

Antinomianism - is a heresy that's all about grace. Yes, you heard that right—Antinomianism is about grace. The word *antinomianism* comes from two Greek words, *anti*, meaning "against"; and *nomos*, meaning "law." *Antinomianism* means "against the law." Theologically, antinomianism is the belief that there are no moral laws God expects Christians to obey.

Antinomianism takes a biblical teaching to an unbiblical conclusion.

Antinomianism takes a biblical teaching to an unbiblical conclusion. The biblical teaching is that Christians are not required to observe the Old Testament Law. When Jesus Christ died on the cross, He fulfilled the Old Testament Law (Romans 10:4; Galatians 3:23-25; Ephesians 2:15). The unbiblical conclusion is that there is no moral law God expects Christians to obey.

The following list of statements are characteristic of antinomianism, but not exhaustively so. There may be more which can be added:

- . *The law is made void by grace. Justification by faith alone renders good works unnecessary.*
- . *Since Good works are unnecessary, obedience to the law is not required of justified persons.*
- . *God sees no sin in the justified, who are no longer bound by the law, and is not displeased with them if they sin.*

. God therefore does not chastise justified persons for sin.

. Nor can sin in any way injure the justified.

. Since no duties or obligations are admitted in the gospel, faith and repentance are not commanded.

. The Christian need not repent in order to receive pardon of sin.

. Nor need he mortify sin; Christ has mortified sin for him.

- . Nor aught he be distressed in conscience upon backsliding, but he should hold fast to a full assurance of his salvation in the midst of the vilest sins.*
- . Justifying faith is the assurance that one is already justified.*
- . The elect are actually justified before they believe, even from all eternity.*
- . Therefore they were never children of wrath or under condemnation.*

. Their sin, as to its very being, was imputed to Christ so as not to be theirs, and His holiness is imputed to them as their only sanctification.

. Sanctification is no evidence of justification, for assurance is the fruit of an immediate revelation that one is an elect person.

. No conviction by the law precedes the sinner's closing with Christ, inasmuch as Christ is freely offered to sinners as sinners.

. Repentance is produced not by the law, but by the gospel only.

. The secret counsel of God is the rule of man's conduct.

. God is the author and approver of sin, for sin is the accomplishment of His will.

. Unless the Spirit works holiness in the soul, there is no obligation to be holy or to strive toward that end.

. All externals are useless or indifferent, since the Spirit alone gives life.

A Few More Definitions

Syncretism – is the fusion of different forms of belief or practice. 2 Kings 17:24-41 says that the Assyrians not only took some of the people of Israel away to Assyria as captives, but they repopulated Israel by importing peoples from other areas of the Assyrian Empire. Intermarriage with Jewish people took place, and this mixed race became known as the Samaritans. Samaritans are mentioned in the New Testament at the time of Christ and the apostles, and they still exist today in north central Israel.

The fusion that took place between the people of Israel and the foreign settlers was not just the physical fusion of intermarriage. A fusion of religion took place as well. The Jewish people who were left in Israel should have returned to the Lord and taught the Law of God to the new residents. Instead, they joined in the worship of the foreign gods that the new settlers brought to the land.

Because of Israel's worship of false gods, the Lord allowed lions to come down from the hills and kill some of the new residents of Samaria. When the king of Assyria heard this, he decided to placate the "god of the land." He ordered one of the priests who had been taken captive to go back to teach the people what "the god of the land requires" (v27). Unfortunately the "priest" he sent back was most likely a false "priest" who had served at the golden calf shrine established by King Jeroboam I. Thus this "priest" was neither willing nor able to teach anyone about the requirements of the Law of God.

Here is what happened, 2 Kings 17:30-33 - “The men from Babylon made [idols] Succoth Benoth, the men from Cuthah made Nergal, and the men from Hamath made Ashima; the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire as sacrifices to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. They worshiped the LORD, but they also appointed all sorts of their own people to officiate for them as priests in the shrines at the high places. They worshiped the LORD, but they also served their own gods in accordance with the customs of the nations from which they had been brought.”

Rebellion against God leads to sinful syncretism - then and today. In fact, religious syncretism exists in many of our churches today - a fusion of Christianity mixed with the vestiges of pagan religions. Why? Because of disobedience to the First Commandment. When Christianity came into the culture, their ancient gods were not completely removed. Festivals for pagan gods were “Christianized” to allow traditional or ethnic sinful celebrations to continue.

This is the sin of syncretism at work.

2 Kings 17:39-41 - “Rather, worship the LORD your God; it is he who will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies. They would not listen, however, but persisted in their former practices.

Even while these people were worshiping the LORD, they were serving their idols. To this day their children and grandchildren continue to do as their fathers did.”

Syncretism is the fusion of different forms of practice or belief. Mexican culture and American culture are intertwined, so tacos are just as American as Mexican is syncretism - but it's not sinful syncretism. The fact that baseball is just as much Japanese as American, and martial arts are now as American as Asian is syncretism, but it is not sinful syncretism.

Syncretism is a sin only when biblical truth and moral standards are not involved. When vestiges of pagan religions and unbiblical beliefs and practices are mixed in and fused with the gospel of Christ, it is not only syncretism - it is sinful syncretism.

What does God think of Syncretism? "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it"

Deuteronomy 12:32

Rebellion against God leads to captivity. That truth is just as true today as it was in 722 BC.

People think that they can gain personal fulfillment by ignoring or “reinterpreting”

God’s moral standards in order to free themselves of any restraint. But ironically, the very opposite is true. People who rebel against God become captives to their sin and to Satan.

Ephesians 2:1-3 makes an unbeliever's situation very clear: unbelievers are dead in sin and captives of Satan. "You were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath."

However, even Christians who rebel against God can become captives of the enemy in certain areas of their lives! Christians can gradually stray away from the Lord into sin in areas like false doctrine, over-emphasis on worldly security, or unbiblical sexual practices.

So it's possible that both unbelievers and rebellious believers are in view in 2 Timothy 2:25-26. There Paul urged Timothy to instruct these people, **“in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.”**

Is God serious - you bet, there are several examples in the Bible where people lost their lives for **NOT** taking God seriously.



How We Shouldn't Worship God

God has given us many examples of how we shouldn't worship Him and the first is in Genesis.

"So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions.

And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

Genesis 4:3–7

The narrative of Genesis does not tell us explicitly why the Lord “had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard.” Nevertheless, the text gives some subtle clues. First, we should notice that it is not merely that God accepted or rejected the offerings of each respective brother, but that first God accepted or rejected the brothers: “Abel and his offering...Cain and his offering.” Much of the reason for accepting Abel’s offering, and for rejecting Cain’s offering, then, was tied to the person making the offering—that is, to the heart of the worshiper.

God gave specific instructions to His priests on how to worship Him:

"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and **offered strange fire** before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said unto them, come near carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp. So they went near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp; as Moses had said. And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled. And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses."

(Leviticus 10:1–7)

God issued warnings in Deuteronomy:

"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."

Deuteronomy 4:2

"What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." Deuteronomy 12:32

These same warnings are repeated in the New Testament.

God rejected Saul for Saul's decision on how to worship
1 Samuel 15:22: Saul offered a sacrifice out of accord with God's instructions, he was rebuked with "to obey is better than sacrifice."

Let's look at 1 Samuel 15.

What did God say?

1 Samuel 15:2-3 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

What did Saul do?

⁹ But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

How did God respond?

¹⁰ Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying,

¹¹ It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

How did Saul react?

¹³ And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. ¹⁴ And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? ¹⁵ And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. ¹⁶ Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. ¹⁷ And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?

¹⁸ And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.

¹⁹ Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD? ²⁰ And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. ²¹ But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.

²² And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? **Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.** ²³**For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.** Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.



²⁴ And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. ²⁵ Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD. ²⁶ And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.

²⁷ And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. ²⁸ And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. ²⁹ And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.



³⁰ Then he said, I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God. ³¹ So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD.

³² Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. ³³ And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal. ³⁴ Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul. ³⁵ And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.