

Should We Worship Jesus?

By Sean Finnegan

Introduction

1. There is only one God; His name is Yahweh; Jesus is not God; Jesus is not Yahweh¹
2. Be a Berean (Acts 17:11)
 - a. Neither accepted nor rejected the message
 - b. Until they checked it against the Scriptures
 - c. Whatever the Bible says is what I want to believe

Worship Vocabulary

1. Bowing: *shacha* (שָׁחָה) or *proskyneō* (προσκυνέω)
 - a. Of gods (Judges 2:12)
 - b. Of humans (1 Samuel 24:8; Revelation 3:9)
 - c. Of Jesus
 - i. As respectful greeting (Matthew 8:2; 9:18)
 - ii. As submission/honor (Matthew 18:26; Mark 15:19)
2. Serving: *avad* (אָבַד) or *latreuo* (λατρεύω)
 - a. Of God (Acts 24:14)
 - b. Of a nation (Jeremiah 27:6)
3. Often used together
 - a. Deuteronomy 5:8-9; Matthew 4:10

Worship Acts

1. Submission: bowing, kneeling, prostrating (Hebrews 1:6)
2. Adoration: love, devotion, gratitude (1 John 5:1)
3. Veneration: respect, reverence, fear (Ephesians 6:5)
4. Praise: recounting attributes, deeds, tongues (2 Peter 1:16-18)
5. Meditation: contemplating, communing, fellowship (1 John 1:3)
6. Sacrifices: animal, cereal, wine, candy, hair, money (Luke 8:1-3)
7. Sacred texts: reading, reciting, chanting, memorizing (~25 references to SOM in James)
8. Serve: follow laws, seek to please, lifestyle (Colossians 3:23-24)
9. Singing: to/about (Revelation 5:9-10)

Objections²

1. Isn't worshipping anyone other than God idolatry?
 - a. Two definitions of idolatry
 - i. Worshipping a statue/representation of a god

¹ Yahweh is one (Deuteronomy 4:35, 39; 6:4). The Father is the only true God (John 17:3; 1 Timothy 2:5). Jesus agreed with the standard Jewish monotheism of his day (Mark 12:28-34). Jesus considered the Father to be his God (John 20:17). The Old Testament teaches that Yahweh is not the same as His servant/anointed (Isaiah 49:5-6; Psalm 2:2). The apostles likewise clearly distinguished Jesus from Yahweh (Acts 3:13-15; cp. Exodus 4:5). For more information on Christian monotheism, including explanations to difficult verses, visit christianmonotheism.com.

² For an excellent treatment of this subject from a fellow non-Trinitarian viewpoint, check out Dale Tuggy's fine video on YouTube (search "Tuggy worship"). His careful reasoning has influenced my thinking on this considerably.

- ii. Devotion that “takes attention away, detracts from, or takes the place of the glory of the only true God”³
- b. God has exalted Christ to His right hand, above the angels (Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 2:10; 1 Peter 3:22)
- c. Worshipping Christ actually gives God glory as the indirect recipient
 - i. Philippians 2:9-11
 - 1. In light of Phil 2:9-11 and Hebrews 1:6, Patrick Navas writes, “In fact, it would be fair to say—in accord with Scripture—that the worship, honor, glory and respect attributed to Christ is something that God not only allows but commands, is pleasing to him, and God himself is glorified in this...Yet the honor and adoration given to Christ is, in the ultimate sense, an honor and adoration given through Christ to *the Father*, the ultimate source of every blessing in Christ.”⁴ (1 Peter 4:11; Hebrews 13:15)
 - ii. Christ’s transparency
 - 1. Christ’s words were really God’s (John 12:49-50)
 - 2. Christ’s actions were really God’s (John 5:36)
 - 3. Christ did the Father’s will (John 6:38)
 - 4. Christ admitted he could do nothing on his own (John 5:30)
- 2. Doesn’t Romans 1:25 forbid worshipping any created thing?
 - a. Actually it says, they “worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator”
- 3. Didn’t Jesus say to worship God alone? Matthew 4:10
 - a. Actually he said to bow to and serve God alone
 - b. But people bow to others and serve others...but not other gods!
 - c. Furthermore, Jesus was not yet exalted at that time
- 4. Didn’t an angel refuse worship and tell John to worship God alone? Rev 22:8-9
 - a. Actually he said, “Worship God!” not “Worship God alone”
- 5. Isn’t worshipping Christ taking away from God who is jealous?
 - a. No, b/c everything Christ did and does is empowered by and authorized by God
 - b. For example, praising Jesus for dying for our sins, ultimately gives glory to God whose plan it was in the first place

Limitations

- 1. Worship should be truthful
 - a. Shouldn’t sing songs that call Jesus God or credit him with actions he never did
 - b. Here is a subtle example where the first verse of the song makes you think of Jesus
 - Water You turned into wine
 - Open the eyes of the blind
 - There's no one like You
 - None like You

But the song is really about God the whole time as is evidenced by the chorus:

 - Our God is greater, our God is stronger
 - God You are higher than any other
 - Our God is Healer, awesome and power
 - Our God, Our God...

³ Patrick Navas, *Divine Truth or Human Tradition* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2006), p. 346.

⁴ Navas, pp. 343, 347.

2. Exclusive worship belongs to God alone
 - a. These lyrics are problematic:

We're coming back to the heart of worship
And it's all about you,
It's all about you—Jesus
 - b. Cannot say Jesus is the only one who deserves worship
3. Solely focusing on Jesus as if he is the source
 - a. Jesusolatry, christomonism in mainstream Christian music
 - b. Making Jesus into the primary object of worship flips everything upside down