

Study 7

COLOSSIANS 2:16-23

A DIFFERENT WORSHIP

‘Religion’ is based on a set of beliefs about God and how these beliefs shape how we view the world, treat each other, and regard our purpose. The heart of any religion is revealed by what it teaches about worship, particularly *how* it is to be done and *why* it should be done.

1. According to James 1:26, what makes a person’s religion *worthless* or *futile*?
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2. What does James state is a characteristic of pure and undefiled religion? (James 1:27)
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Christianity introduced to the world a new way to worship.

3. What elements of Christian worship are mentioned by the Apostle Paul in Colossians 3:16, which we today take for granted? How do you think this compared to the way people of other religions worshiped when Paul wrote this epistle?
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Worship is how we express our surrender to God. It can involve *praise* which can involve music and singing — something almost unique to Christian worship. While some people see music as essentially evil and promoting immorality, Vishal Mangalwadi, in his book, *The Book That Made Your World*, argues that it was the Bible, and Christianity in particular, that redeemed music as a means by which a worshiper could glorify God. He writes, “Music is, of course, integral to the Bible, in

which the longest book is Psalms. The last psalm, for example, asks creation to praise the Lord with the trumpet, lute, harp, tambourine, strings, pipe, and cymbals” (Mangalwadi 2011, 12). He goes on to describe how one of the church’s earliest thinkers, Augustine, wrote a six-volume philosophy of music called *On Music*, in which he saw the close parallel between mathematics and music. Since, Augustine reasoned, the universe displays *mathematical* orderliness, music must therefore be ordained by God and its appreciation must be built deep into the soul of every person. Mangalwadi goes on to reflect that strict Islam forbids music (p.10), as does pure Buddhism (p.11).

4. Paul was concerned that the Colossians were being confused by some Jewish converts to Christianity (known as *Judaisers*), who were insisting that all Gentiles needed to become Jews first, *in order to become* Christians. Read Colossians 2:16 and note some of the things these Judaisers must have been telling the Colossians to do that was necessary for their salvation.

5. How does Paul describe these things in Colossians 2:17 and what did he mean by this? (Note Hebrews 8:5; 10:1)

6. Who did Jesus say that the Father is looking for and how are they to relate to God? (John 4:23-24)

7. According to Colossians 2:19, how does a person become truly spiritual and then grow toward spiritual maturity?

8. Note what Paul lists as *religious* practices in Colossians 2:20-21, and then how describes in Colossians 2:22-23.

9. What lessons can we learn for how we worship from this passage in Colossians?

Amen.