

WHEN JESUS WAS WORSHIPED

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Matthew 2:1-2 says, “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.” These wise men were guided by God at that time. Hebrews 1:6 also says, “And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.” Thus, it was God’s will for the angels also to worship Christ when he was born into the world. There are some who teach or practice the worship of Christ today, but is that an acceptable practice for us to follow? We need to search the scriptures to find out if we have authority from God for doing so, as Colossians 3:17 compels us to have the Lord’s authority for everything we do in word or deed.

When Christ was in the presence of his disciples

As we have seen in Matthew 2:1-2, Jesus was worshiped by believers during his lifetime on the earth from the time of his birth. Christ was also worshiped by the disciples to whom he appeared after his resurrection. For example, Matthew 28:9 says that when the women who had found Christ’s empty tomb “went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.” Verse 17 of the same chapter also says, “And when they saw him, they worshipped him.” At his final appearance to them, his disciples worshiped him as he ascended to heaven (Luke 24:50-52). Without question, Christ received worship from mankind while he was upon the earth (see also Matt 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; Mark 5:6; John 9:35-38). This was appropriate because Jesus is Divine (Gen 1:26-27; 11:7-8; Exod 3:14 + John 8:58; Psa 45:6-7 + Heb 1:8-9; Isa 6:5-8 + John 12:36-42; Isa 8:13-14 + 1 Pet 2:4-8; Isa 61:1,8 + Luke 4:17-21; Isa 40:3 + Matt 3:3; 11:10; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 1:17,67-79; 3:3-6; 7:27; John 1:23; Zech 13:7; John 1:1-3; 1 Thes 4:14-17; 1 Tim 3:16; Titus 2:13). But Jesus was literally and directly in the presence of his disciples on all of the occasions where they worshiped him. It

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should also be noted that when Stephen was being stoned to death, and he spoke directly to Christ, he “*saw* Jesus standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55-59). Unlike all those other cases, Jesus is not directly in our presence today, and we do not have an example of Christians addressing him directly or worshiping him when he is not present.

Only the Father

Jesus does have all authority in heaven and in earth (Matt 28:18).

But Jesus has not authorized us to worship him today. He has authorized us to go to the Father *through* him. In John 14:6, Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Concerning prayer (which is an act of worship), Jesus says, “*And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you*” (John 16:23). We are not authorized to pray directly to Christ (or to the Holy Spirit, who is also Divine, Acts 5:3-4). We are only authorized to pray to the Father. The same principle extends to worship in all its forms. We are only authorized to worship God

(Matt 4:10; Luke 4:8; Acts 17:23-25; 24:14; Rom 1:25; 1 Cor 14:25; Php 3:3; Rev 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:16; 14:7; 15:4; 19:4,10; 22:9).

Worshiping Satan (Matt 4:9-10; Luke 4:6-8; Rev 13:4), devils (1 Cor 10:7,20-21; Rev 9:20), or Satan’s other servants (Rev 13:4,8,12,15; 14:9,11; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4) is prohibited by God. Such is also the case with worshiping idols (Acts 7:43; 15:20,29; 17:16,22-31; 21:25; Rom 1:18-23; 2:22; 1 Cor 8:4-6; 10:14; 12:2; 2 Cor 6:16-18; Gal 5:19-21; Col 3:5-7; 1 Thes 1:9-10; 1 Pet 4:3; 1 John 5:21; Rev 2:14,20; 9:20). Worshiping the creation is contrary to the will of God (Acts 7:42; Rom 1:25). We must not worship men (Acts 10:25-26), nor may we worship angels (Col 2:18; Rev 19:10; 22:8-9). And specifically, as long as we are on this earth (and this could change when we are in Christ’s direct presence in the next life), we are only authorized to worship the Father (John 4:19-24). There is no authority for us in any New Testament passage to worship Christ (or the Holy Spirit) today.