



## 2023 Q2 Three Cosmic Messages: Lesson 7 Worshipping the Creator

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### SABBATH

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Before we get into the lesson today, I think it's important that we look at the whole context.

We're still looking at the verses regarding the first angel's message, found in Revelation 14:6-7:

Then I saw another angel flying overhead, with the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation and tribe and tongue and people. And he said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship the One who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and the springs of waters."

Based on what we talked about in previous lessons, we know that the "eternal gospel," the eternal "good news" is what? –the truth about God's character. This is really important, because this truth is the context of the first angel's message. If we don't keep the context in mind, we can misinterpret the message. The context is, essentially, a measuring stick we can hold up next to the message to help us understand it.

So, let's look at the message, piece by piece, remembering the context.

#### "Fear God"

What two ways could this be translated?

- to be afraid of God. The root word, *phobos* could be translated terrified of, be afraid of, to be seized with alarm.
- The same word can also mean "to reverence, venerate, to treat with deference or reverential obedience, to regard with great respect."

So, let's look at these two options using the measuring stick – the context of the good news about God's character. Does the first option of being terrified of God fit with the context? Is it good news? Definitely not!

What about the second option? When we measure it against our context, does it fit? Yes! If we understand God's character of love, it makes sense that we would react to Him with reverence and admiration.



## “and give Him glory”

What does it mean to give God glory? What is glory, and how do we give it to God? Let’s look at a few texts to see if we can understand this more clearly.

There are a number of references to glory that are similar, all referring to the second coming. One example of this is Matthew 24:30:

At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

What can we learn about glory from this passage? That God’s glory is NOT His power! If it was, it wouldn’t be listed separately, would it? Let’s look at another verse:

Luke 2:9-10a: An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid.”

What can we learn about glory here? That it’s bright, it can cause a fearful reaction, but according to the angel, we don’t have to be afraid! Let’s look at another passage:

Exodus 33:18 Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory”  
Exodus 34:6-7 (ESV) The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands,<sup>[a]</sup> forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.”

So what did Moses want to see? God’s glory. And what did God show him? His character!

So if God’s glory is His character, how do we “give Him glory” as it says in the angel’s message? What does that mean?

- It could mean give God praise...if that’s the case, what would we be praising Him for?
- It could also mean give God character...If so, how would we give God character?

2 Cor. 3:18 (GNT) All of us, then, reflect the glory of the Lord with uncovered faces; and that same glory, coming from the Lord, who is the Spirit, transforms us into his likeness in an ever greater degree of glory.

Perhaps the reflection of His character in our healed & restored hearts?

With this understanding, how then, could we translate the phrase, “give Him glory”?



“recognize and praise God for His true character, and let Him recreate it in us.”

**“for the hour of His judgment has come.”**

Again, there are two ways to understand this phrase. What are those two ways?

- the hour has come for God to come and judge US.
- the hour has come for us to judge Him correctly.

Which of these two options fits our measuring stick, the context of good news about God’s character?

So, if we were to re-write the first part of the angel’s message, with our understanding of the context, it could say, “Revere God and understand, praise, reflect, and share His true character, for it is time for us to judge Him correctly, understanding His true character of love.”

**“Worship him”**

Why does God want us to worship Him? What reasons could we come up with (good and bad) that He would want us to worship Him? One option could be because He’s selfish and wants all that worship to make Him feel important. Does that fit our measuring stick, the truth about His character, the eternal good news?

So how does our context, our measuring stick, change how we view this part? It helps us to understand that because of His character, there has to be a reason that’s good for US when we worship Him. What would that reason be? The law of worship! He loves us, and He knows that we become like who or what we worship. If we worship Him, we have the possibility of infinite growth ahead of us.

What happens if we worship something else? We become warped in our thinking, seared in our consciences and characters, until we are no longer open to God.

**”who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”**

What is important about worshiping Him as the one who created? If we didn’t understand the context of this message, how might we interpret it? Is it possible that we would think God was pointing us to creation so we would remember the Sabbath, and turn that into an arbitrary test of obedience to Him? If that is what we believed, then what would that make us think about God? Perhaps that His law is just like ours? Imposed rules that require punishment if they are broken? Perhaps that we just need to keep the rules without understanding them? Perhaps even that our behavior is more important than our hearts?



How does our measuring stick, the context about the eternal good news change how we look at this passage? What do we learn about God when we look at creation with our context in place? What does the context tell us that we are looking for? The truth about God's character, as revealed by creation...so why specifically the list provided: the heavens (in this context, most likely the sky), the earth, the sea, and the springs of water. Do those things specifically tell us something about God? What does the movement of water tell us about the One who designed that process? That everything that He made, is designed to operate on the principle of love, others-centered giving, and God is love. We see His character when we look at the cycle of giving as the sea evaporates, gives its water to the air, which then falls to the earth, fills the springs, streams, and rivers, and flows back into the sea. It's a never-ending cycle of giving. God's design, which flows out of His character, and everything that was made is designed to live in harmony with that design.

Does this idea remind you of any other passages that talk about God, His character, and creation?

Romans 1:20 – For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

So what can we learn from “what has been made”? – we learn about God's power, and His nature. What are some of the things we learn about God's nature from the world He created? We learn how design laws work: law of giving, law of exertion, etc.

Isn't it interesting that God clearly *wants* us to examine the world around us, learn from it, and learn about Him through it? Does this sound like a God who just wants people who hear and obey? No! He wants people to come and reason with Him.

So now we know that God wants us to know His true character, and to worship Him as the designer, that His laws are design laws, not like ours. There's one more question stemming from the passage that we need to answer: What does it mean to worship?

What does the world say about worship?

According to [vocabulary.com](http://vocabulary.com), “To worship is to show a lot of love and adoration for something. Religious believers worship gods, and people can worship other people and things too. Worship is an extreme form of love — it's a type of unquestioning devotion. If you worship God, then you love God so much that you don't question him at all.”

Does that sound right to you? Definitely not! So, let's take a moment to practice discerning truth and using our reasoning powers... Let's work on figuring out what's wrong with this definition? And how do we explain why it's wrong? (Can you tell what law lens the writer was thinking through?)

First, there's the claim that “worship is to show a lot of love and adoration for something.” Do you love your family? Do you love your children, your spouse, your parents, siblings? Does that mean you worship them? No. At least not if you love them in a healthy way. Does God love us? In fact, does



God love us with what we might consider an “extreme form of love”? Does that mean that God worships us? Of course not.

Now, is there an aspect of love in worship? Sure, but it’s a piece of the definition, not the whole thing.

There’s also the claim that it’s “a type of unquestioning devotion. If you worship God, then you love God so much that you don’t question him at all.” Really? Is that what God wants? No! If it was, God would never have invited us to come and reason with Him. What’s described in this definition is the kind of “worship” that turns off the brain, stunts the ability to grow, and warps the character.

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines worship as this:

- 1) Reverence offered a divine being or supernatural power; also: an act of expressing such reverence
- 2) A form of religious practice with its creed and ritual
- 3) Extravagant respect or admiration for or devotion to an object of esteem

What do you think about that definition? Do you think that’s closer to true? Does it seem to you as if many ignore the first and third options, and stick to the second one? So for them, worship is something they do once a week. But true worship...shouldn’t it be more than that?

What does it mean to offer God reverence?

Could it mean putting God first in our affections? Could it mean putting Him first in everything?

What would you say are the “acts of expressing such reverence?” What would that look like?

What does the Bible say about worship? Do any verses come to mind?

When Jesus was in the wilderness, how did He respond when Satan suggested that Jesus bow down to him in worship? “Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.” (Matt 4:10)

This tells us of course, who should be our object of worship: God alone. It also reveals one of the tactics of the enemy: to substitute something else to worship in place of God. What kinds of things are we often tempted to put in place of God? Is it possible to worship something (or someone) other than God and not even realize it? Have you ever experienced what it’s like when you put something else (or someone else) above God? What was that like? Can you look back and see how that affected your mind?

What else does the Bible say about worship?

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.  
Worship the Lord with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.  
Know that the Lord is God.



It is he who made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.  
Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.  
For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations. (Psalm 100)

So one way to worship is to praise God, to sing...or for some...to “make a joyful noise.” Why do you think we are told to do this? What happens when we praise God, when we express gratitude to Him?

According to Dr. Arlene Taylor, of the four core emotions, Joy, Anger, Fear, and Sadness, only one emotion can be on stage at the same time. So when fear steps in, whether it’s for a real fear, or an imagined one, your emotion that was previously in charge is pushed “off the stage” so that you can collect the information that fear is trying to give you, and respond appropriately. Unfortunately, often, the fears are imagined, not real, and so we have to learn to manage or overcome those fears in order to get what we want to be our primary emotion, joy, back on the stage. Do you know the best thing to do to get rid of fear? Gratitude. Dr. Taylor says, the antidote to fear is gratitude, which is one of the aspects or features of the core emotion, joy. (see her presentation on Managing Fear for Success at <https://www.arlenetaylor.org/selected-videos/9086-managing-fear-for-success>)

Have you ever had a time when you were experiencing fear, and gratitude knocked it back off the stage? I have. I remember one day when I was outside unloading groceries from my car, and I noticed that there was a car with two men in it, passing slowly past my house. They then turned around just past where I live, and came back, stopped in front of my neighbor’s house, and sat there watching me. I looked directly at the car, so they’d know I had noticed them, and went inside to watch through my front windows. When I did that, they went past my driveway, then parked across the street where they were a little bit behind some trees, but they backed in so they could still watch my house. Well, this triggered the start of a panic attack. I happened to be on the phone with my mom, which was good, because fear doesn’t help you think well, and she realized what was happening. She, being the wise woman she is, told me to hang up the phone, go to my piano and start playing. She knows that the book I usually play from has a lot of praise and worship songs in it. So I did. I started out pretty shaky, but I played. I couldn’t sing at first, but after about 5 minutes, I had gotten a lot calmer, and I was able to start singing. Five more minutes into that, I was totally immersed in praising God through my favorite songs, and the panic attack was completely gone. Now, I don’t know if you have ever experienced a panic attack, but to go from the start of one to back to normal in 10 minutes, is astonishing. Gratitude is an antidote to fear.

Do you think God knew what He was doing when He urged us to “give glory to Him” and to “worship the Lord with all gladness”? He designed us. He knows how our brains work. So He provides us with an antidote to one of our biggest problems: fear. And of course, we know that fear leads to selfishness, self-preservation, me-first thinking.





Of course, there's also appropriate fear, where there is a legitimate danger that requires a response. But for that, it's meant to be a helper in that moment. It's not an emotion we want to have controlling us, right? What happens when we live with fear constantly "on the stage"? It's a terrible thing to live in a constant state of fear, and it's not where God wants us to be. When we are afraid, we can't think well, we make poorer decisions, and our relationship with God and others suffers. All of this is just another of the reasons God urges us to worship Him.

So let's look at another Bible verse on worship, when Jesus was talking to the Samaritan woman at the well:

"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23-24)

What does it mean to worship God in spirit? –note the context: she was asking which was the more appropriate place of worship, their mountain in Samaria, or the one in Jerusalem. Jesus pointed her to the larger reality, that location doesn't matter. We can worship God anywhere, because God is everywhere.

What does it mean to worship God in truth?

The word translated truth here, means truth, but not merely truth as spoken; truth of idea, reality, sincerity, truth in the moral sphere, divine truth revealed to man, straightforwardness.

If we worship God in truth, we're worshipping the reality. And again, why does God want those who worship Him in truth? Because if we let go of the reality, the truth, the only thing left is a lie. There are only ever two camps. In Revelation 13:8, we find that "All the inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world." So there are only two choices, worship the beast, or worship God.

So what other verses come to mind when you think about why we should worship in truth?

John 14:6 – Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

When we understand that the character of the Father is the same as Jesus' character, our ability to worship Him increases. Love brings forth love.

John 3:21 – But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.

The truth shines its light on us, and God uses that to heal our hearts and minds back in harmony with



His design, we show His character.

John 8:31-32 – To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

How does the truth set us free? How does worshiping in truth set us free?

So we know more about what worship is, but practically speaking, what does it mean to live it out? Are there any Bible texts that offer some suggestions?

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Romans 12:1-2a)

Notice, that we offer ourselves to God as an act of worship, we let go of the patterns of this world, and let God transform and renew us. Does this tie back into the idea of “giving God glory?” Based on the text, how often are we to offer this sacrifice? In other words, how much of our lives is this supposed to affect?

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17)

We are to offer our worship to God in everything! Doing everything in the name/character of Jesus. And we come back to why God wants this for us.

As we worship God, as we grow and mature in His ways, our characters become more and more like His. We therefore, bring God glory, as we show in our own lives and hearts how He has healed and restored us. This is what ties the whole passage together. We learn who God is, we revere Him, understand His character, see His design, praise Him, and live a life of worship, putting Him first in everything, reflecting His glory back to Him as well as to those around us.

Here's how Ellen White describes a worshiper in Acts of the Apostles pages 132-133:

Cornelius was a Roman centurion. He was a man of wealth and noble birth, and his position was one of trust and honor. A heathen by birth, training, and education, through contact with the Jews he had gained a knowledge of God, and he worshiped Him with a true heart, showing the sincerity of his faith by compassion to the poor. He was known far and near for his beneficence, and his righteous life made him of good repute among both Jews and Gentiles. His influence was a blessing to all with whom he came in contact. The inspired record describes him as “a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.”





Believing in God as the Creator of heaven and earth, Cornelius revered Him, acknowledged His authority, and sought His counsel in all the affairs of life. He was faithful to Jehovah in his home life and in his official duties. He had erected the altar of God in his home, for he dared not attempt to carry out his plans or to bear his responsibilities without the help of God.

What do you think about that description? Does that sound like the result that God is pointing us toward from the angel's message?

## **SUNDAY**

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### **A Companion in Tribulation**

How does worshiping God the way we've discussed change how we approach the trials and difficulties of life? Remember what Jesus said,

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

Why does Jesus tell us that "in this world you will have trouble"? What is it that causes that trouble?

Because we don't live the way the world does. We value the principles of God's kingdom, that are not the principles of the world. When we live out His principles in our lives, we shine light in a dark world, and often the darkness does not react well to light.

When Jesus says he has overcome the world, what did He mean? –that he conquered using the methods of God, providing the remedy for us, so that we can do the same.

So should we be afraid of potential trouble? No! What gets us through it? The power of God at work in us. When trouble comes, we can look at it differently, because we understand what is happening. When we live in harmony with God's design, by His power, we can love even those who are attempting to hurt us.

## **TUESDAY**

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### **A God Who Is Close**

Can you think of any verses that talk about how closely God knows us, how attentive He is to us?

John 15:4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.



Matthew 10:29-31 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care (knowledge). And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Ephesians 2:19-22 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Psalm 139:15-17

My frame was not hidden from you  
when I was made in the secret place,  
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.  
Your eyes saw my unformed body;  
All the days ordained for me were written in your book  
Before one of them came to be.

God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' (Acts 17:27-28a)

How does knowing how close God wants to be to us affect how we worship Him?

## **THURSDAY**

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### **The Creator on the Cross**

From Thursday's lesson, next to last paragraph:

The first angel's message to worship the Creator came after the Cross, after it had become known to the onlooking universe and to Christ's followers that the One who "made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water" is the same One who, though being God, took "the form of a bondservant, and [came] in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (*Phil. 2:7, 8, NKJV*).

How does knowing the lengths that God would go to heal and restore us affect how we worship Him? What do His actions before, during, and after the cross reveal to us about His character?



## FRIDAY

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### Further Thoughts

The worship of God is central in the Scriptures and has always been a bone of contention for humans and for God's people. Throughout the Old Testament the prophets reprimanded the people of God for worshiping other gods or for worshiping the Lord using the worship practices of the pagan world. The conflict between worshiping God and worshiping other gods belongs at the very center of the cosmic conflict and comes accompanied by conflict over disregard for the law of God.

Notice that the same tactic Satan used in the Old Testament, he still uses today. Mixing pagan ideas into the theories and doctrines of those who claim to be God's people.

What are some of the other ways that Satan uses to move us away from worshiping God?

“Worship addresses the most fundamental aspect of human existence in that it has to do with what humans as living creatures should do when confronted by the presence of the Creator. Only those who are alive can worship the Lord; the dead cannot praise and worship Him. The One who created us invites us to surrender our lives in the act of worship in order to receive them back from Him enriched, to be used for the benefit of others. Worship has to do with the very nature and purpose of our existence and with the need for having a center outside of ourselves that frees us from selfishness. Not to worship God is to lose our reason for existence; it is to exist in a state of disorientation and therefore to be dying, heading to total extinction because we are disconnected from the very source of life.”—Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, “The Closing of the Cosmic Conflict: Role of the Three Angels’ Messages,” unpublished manuscript, p. 42.

VERY well said!