

The Restoration of Worship and Praise

By Joanne Cook Danner

The Lord indicated that He would restore the tabernacle of David in the last days (Amos 9:11). This poignant statement has relevant significance for the end-time church. It is pertinent, because we are now living in the days of spiritual restoration in the church. The church is His spiritual tabernacle in the earth.

The ministry of worship and praise played a major role in the Tabernacle of David. It will, likewise, play a major role in the end-time church and in our personal lives as Christians. One of the signs of the end-time restoration in the church will be the restoration of this ministry of pure worship and praise in the Body of Christ. It is one of the things that will mark the end-time revival. It is a sign of the Lord restoring His presence. His presence will be manifested in the church as a signet, or sign in the earth before men. It is a sign that His presence abides, or dwells with His people as it did in the former tabernacle of natural Israel. Haggai 2:9 conveys the thought that, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former." It will be greater, because His glory will dwell within the hearts of His people to a greater degree than ever before manifested in history. His presence will be manifested in the corporate body of the church.

In earliest recorded biblical history, music was used for the sole purpose of worship. The Lord placed an innate desire within humanity to worship Him. Music is one of the vehicles that he provided to humanity to express this God-implanted desire. When Israel came out of the Babylonian captivity to dwell again in Jerusalem, special attention was given to restore the ministry of music in the temple. It was the first ministry that functioned after the period of captivity. The heads of tribes, priests, and prophets gathered together with the people of Israel to worship the Lord even before the restored temple was completed (Ezra 3:10).

The ministry of music in Israel was meant to have a far greater purpose than the development of natural talents to sing songs and play instruments. The origin of music in the service of the Lord began with the prophets. During the time of the great prophet Samuel, music was a component of the school of the prophets and surrounded the companies of the prophets (I Samuel 10:5). Spiritual music was, therefore, prophetic in nature and was close to the heart of God. David caught a glimpse of the revelation that music expressed the burden of the Lord extended toward His people, and He incorporated this prophetic ministry into the service of the tabernacle. This is the tabernacle that the Lord is today restoring to the church, His spiritual tabernacle. The corporate Body of Christ will be immersed with the sounds of pure worship and praise. The sounds of the heartbeat of the Lord, the sounds of life, will quickly come again to the modern day spiritual Israel through the restoration of worship and praise. It is a sign of His presence dwelling among us.

The prophetic nature of spiritual music was meant to accomplish many things in the purpose of God. It is a tool in the hand of the Lord that is used to convey His anointing and release of His presence to minister in diverse areas of need. David's son, Solomon, promoted worship and praise in the great temple that he built in Jerusalem (I Kings 20:12). Hezekiah and Josiah also paid special attention to the restoration of this ministry as it was designed by the Lord to operate (II Chronicles 29:25 & 35:15).

Music was considered to be so important in Israel that it was not a ministry that people entered into lightly. Much training and preparation were involved before people were appointed for this ministry and functioned through music in the service of the temple. People who qualified for the ministry of music were not only trained musically, they were trained in the ways of the Lord. They understood the moving of His spirit. They understood the anointing. They were tutored by prophets in the Levitical order of the priesthood. David appointed spiritual men to oversee the ministry of music. People involved in the ministry of music were appointed, qualified, and separated for this ministry. It was not a ministry for the spiritual novice.

David appointed Chenanial as the administrator over all of the musicians involved in worship and praise. Chenanial was a master of music (I Chronicles 15:22, 27 & 26:29). Asaph, Jeduthun or Ethan, and Heman were chief musicians, second in command under Chenanial (I Chronicles 15:16-18). Asaph (II Chronicles 29:30), Jeduthun (II Chronicles 35:15), and Heman (I Chronicles 25:5), were all spiritual men and elders in Israel. They were Levitical priests and prophets of the Lord. Heman was referred to as the king's seer. Biblical names expressed the character and nature of individuals, and the names of these three leaders of music were a prophetic expression of their ministry. Asaph means "to gather, restore, recover, having the ability to build." Jeduthun means "praise giver." Heman means "faithful." Jeduthun and Heman were known for their wisdom. Their wisdom was compared to that of Solomon (I Kings 4:31). The names of these three men express qualities that worship leaders should possess when they are involved in any phase of spiritual music. They must be faithful, have the ability to restore, be a giver of praise, and express these qualities through spiritual wisdom and discernment.

As mentioned previously, a great preparation came prior to the execution of the ministry of music. Singers and musicians were instructed (I Chronicles 25:1-7). They were skilled (I Chronicles 15:22 & Psalm 33:3). They were equipped and appointed (I Chronicles 16:4-6 & 15:16-28). Musicians had the ability to perceive spiritual matters and execute their ministry with spiritual discernment. Their ministry was not merely a display of natural talents and abilities, it was rather a ministry that ministered through music unto the heart of the Lord. There were 4,000 Levites who praised with instruments (I Chronicles 23:5). There were 288 individuals instructed in the song of the Lord (I Chronicles 25:7). There were spiritual choirs in Israel.

The Book of Psalms was used in public worship. The Book of Psalms in Hebrew means "Book of Praise." Many of the Psalms were addressed to the chief musician for the purpose of leading the people into worship. Even the New Testament exhorts us to sing psalms, following the ordinance of David (Ephesians 5:18-19). The Levites led songs of thanksgiving (I Chronicles 16:4). Musicians prophesied upon the instruments (I Chronicles 25). Music was used to release the prophetic word (II Kings 3:15-16). Musicians took charge of business in the house of the Lord (Nehemiah 11:22). Musicians helped to bear

the Ark of the Covenant (I Chronicles 15:14-16). Through pure, spiritual music musicians today will help to bear the spiritual ark of God, the ark of His presence. The Levites were appointed to minister before the Lord in music every hour of the day and night before the ark of God (Psalm 134). The ark was in the holy of holies. Worship gave the priests access to enter within the veil (Ezekiel 40:44). Worship is one of the keys that will today bring us again within the veil.

The ministry of worship and praise had many expressions in Israel. The Lord used music to convey a message to His people. It was used in many instances as a key that would release the hand of God to move in behalf of His people. Spiritual music brought deliverance and victory. Women came out to meet men returning from battle with singing and dancing as an expression of victory (I Samuel 18:6-8). Spiritual music was used for warfare. II Chronicles 20:21-22 provides us with the account of musicians going before the armies of the Lord. As the musicians played, the intervention of God was manifested, and the enemies of the Lord were defeated.

King Saul was delivered from an evil spirit that vexed him through hearing the anointed singing and playing of David (I Samuel 16:23). There was a transformation that took place in the life of Saul when he went to meet the company of prophets who were playing instruments (I Samuel 10:5-6). As Saul stood in the midst of the prophets who were singing and playing instruments, the anointing of the Lord came upon him and he prophesied. People could see a change in Saul when he was exposed to the ministry of music (I Samuel 10:11).

Dancing was part of the expression of worship and praise. Miriam the prophetess led the women in a victorious dance of deliverance (Exodus 15:20). Psalm 149:3 gives the command to "let them praise His name in the dance." When the ark of God was brought from Kirjath-Jearim to its rightful place in Jerusalem, King David danced before the ark as an expression of his joy that the ark was returned to the people of God. This form of worship was so important to the heart of God that He made David's wife, Michal, barren because she criticized David for this expression of dance before the Lord.

Joy and rejoicing (I Chronicles 16:10, & 27), clapping (Psalm 47:1), shouting (I Chronicles 15:7-9 & Ephesians 5:18-19), were all part of the expressions associated with the established order of worship used by Israel that were given by the command of the Lord unto David. The Lord desires us today to continue to function in the patterns of worship that were previously ordained (I Corinthians 10:11). It is crucial for the modern church to understand that worship and praise are close to the heart of God. Zephaniah 3:17 informs us that the Lord himself will joy over us with singing.

The tabernacle of Moses was a type of the church. There were three levels in this tabernacle, the outer court, holy place, and holy of holies. The outer court had a gate, or door of entrance. The holy place was the area where the altar of incense was located, which represented worship. The holy of holies was where the manifest presence of God abode as a dwelling place with man. The three-fold typology in this tabernacle represented three levels of approach to God. In a spiritual sense, man still has three levels of approach to God as represented in the typology associated with the tabernacle. We come to God in an attitude of thanksgiving, which is as the gate or door of the spirit, the outer court.

We enter His courts with praise, the holy place, which is the place of starting an ascent to God in worship. Psalm 100:4 conveys to us that “I will enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise.” Praise will then lead us into worship, the holy of holies. Through worship, we enter into a spiritual realm behind the veil beyond the realm of the soul. We enter into the realm of the spirit. Our understanding is enlightened. We taste of His presence. We commune with God.

There is a difference between worship and praise. The Lord wants to illumine our understanding concerning this matter. When we have come to God motivated by thanksgiving for what He has done, we then enter the realm of praise. Praise is the fruit of our lips. It is a sacrifice unto God. Scripture speaks of the “sacrifice of praise.” Praise is our spiritual sacrifice (1 Peter 2:5, & 9). It is our duty before the Lord to praise Him. Praise is an act of our will or sacrifice. Through the new covenant, the old order of the priesthood was abolished. Jesus Christ Himself became our high priest, and we are a royal, spiritual priesthood with the duty of offering spiritual sacrifices before the Lord. Every New Testament believer should be a ministering priest, offering spiritual sacrifices before the Lord in His spiritual tabernacle, which is the church (Hebrews 13:15-16 & 1 Peter 2:5). Scripture speaks of many spiritual sacrifices, the sacrifice of joy (Psalm 27:6), the sacrifice of thanksgiving (Psalm 116:17, Leviticus 7:12, **Johah 2:9**), and the sacrifice of praise (Jeremiah 17:26 & 33:11).

When we praise, we acknowledge the works and benefits of the Lord. We praise the Lord for what He has done. We should praise Him regardless of our feelings or circumstances because He is worthy to receive our praise. Praise is an expression of approval, admiration, gratitude, and devotion for blessings received. It is the acknowledgement of His perfections, works, and benefits. Praise is related to the acts of God (Psalm 150:2). Scripture has much to say about praise. Scripture tells us that praise is comely, a thing to be desired. The word, Judah, means praise, and we are told that in Judah is God known (Psalm 176:1). Praise is not only the fruit of our lips, it is the door to worship, or platform to launch worship.

The word, worship, means “to revere, to do reverence to.” Worship brings a sense of awe, an attitude of devotion. We worship God for who He is, not for what He has done for us. The focus is Him, not us. It is God-centered not self-centered. The focus is spirit, not soul. The focus is holiness, not mixture. Worship is a direct acknowledgement to God of His nature and attributes. Worship is related to the acknowledgement of the ways of God, not His mighty acts. Worship also speaks of the fruit of our life as a spiritual offering to the Lord, not just the fruit of our lips as represented in praise. A life of worship is associated with those who have had the ways of the Lord worked into their being. A life of worship produces the character of the Lord formed within the inward parts of humanity. A life of worship will bring us into purity of heart and purity of motives. It is the tome to get our lives in order. Psalm 24:3-6 conveys the question of “who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place” The answer is “he that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who has not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of His salvation. This is the generation of them that seek thy face.” The Psalm declares, “This is the generation of them that seek thy face.” It is a prophetic declaration of our day. There is a generation in our day who are seeking Him for Himself. It is this generation who will begin to see His restoring hand at work. The condition that is laid before to make the ascent of the spirit unto the hill of

the Lord is a pure heart, a life of worship. We shall receive the blessing, the presence of the Lord, and righteousness, His character worked within our hearts.

Our worship in the congregation of saints is an aspect of worship that should flow from the devotion associated with the inner chambers of our hearts. Our worship should flow from a life lived in ministry unto the Lord. This is the expression that He now desires to come forth in the church. As we worship with a pure heart in the congregation, it will open our being to the Lord and allow Him to come into our lives to work in a new way. Through pure worship, there is a transformation that takes place within our lives. The Lord inhabits the praises of His people. The presence of the Lord dwells in worship (Psalm 22:3). It is in His presence that we are changed. The Lord is enthroned in our lives through worship. Worship opens up the realm of the supernatural, the realm of the manifest presence of the Lord. Worship makes us sensitive to His presence, sensitive to the supernatural. It is a realm of holiness. Zechariah 14:20-21 indicates that "in that day (or in the latter days) shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall no more be the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts." These verses relate to us the fact that there shall be holiness in the house of the Lord in the latter days. The Canaanite nation was doomed to destruction because of their sins. We see through this portion of Scripture that there will be a pure people in the end-time church because the Lord states here that there shall be no more Canaanites in His house. The Lord is jealous over His spiritual house, His spiritual Israel. He desires to bring forth pure worship and praise through consecrated devotion and holiness in His church. In times past, our worship and praise have often been fused together with the methods and ideas of man, which resulted in bringing forth mixture or strange worship rather than pure worship. A greater separation is now being required of us. The Lord is at work, and He is cleansing His temple. He is the God of the radiance of the fire.

Worship is one of the tools that the Lord is using today to usher in His manifest presence in the end-time church. When the singers and players of instruments in Israel came together to worship the Lord, the glory of God was manifested to such a degree that the priests could not stand to minister because of the great presence of the Lord that came in the midst of the people (II Chronicles 5:11-14). His presence was a sign of His favor. We can have the same presence of the Lord abiding in the church today because the Lord is restoring the meaning of true worship and showing us how to avail ourselves with the necessary preparations in our lives to be able to enter into His manifest presence through the blood of the cross. As we come before the presence of the Lord in worship, may we minister unto Him with a life lived as worship unto Him, with clean hands and a pure heart. Let us worship Him with the fruit of our lips, the fruit of our lives, and may His glorious presence be manifested in the church, His spiritual body on earth, as a sign that His spiritual habitation is again dwelling with His people. "Unto Him be glory in the church (Ephesians 3:21)." He has come to make his abode in his spiritual temple (Malachi 3:1).

"The Lord has done great things for us (Psalm 126:3)," was the cry of Israel when the Lord brought them out of their captivity. Today, the Lord is bringing us out of our spiritual captivity, out of

religious forms and the limitations that we have structured through the arm of the flesh. He is restoring His presence and anointing to the church. He is causing our lives to be a prophetic expression of His heart. There is a new dispensation coming upon the horizon, and with it will come the restoration of His abiding presence as a sign to us of the ushering in of the kingdom age. His governmental order and rule are coming, and His reign will first be established within our lives. We desire to see His majesty seated as king in our hearts.

The cry from our great high priest intercessor is beckoning to us through the dimensions of eternity. The pulsating intessory heart of the Lord, calls us to worship Him in spirit and in truth in our personal lives and in the congregation of the righteous. If we will hear His call, our eyes will behold the promise that John the Revelator penned in the Book of Revelation 21:3, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God." "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest" (Hebrews 8: 10,11).

The Lord holds the reins of this end-time movement. It is a movement of His manifest presence cloaked in holiness. The church has been undergoing an intense season of preparation. The Lord does not need to use us, He chooses to use us. His abiding presence in the church will be a sign that He dwells in the midst of His people. "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion (Isaiah 8:18). We were born to be the dwelling place of the Lord. It is our heritage. But this privilege must be on His terms and through His qualifying prerequisites. Everything that can be shaken is being shaken. He is rebuilding the foundation. It is a work of the spirit, not the work of man. Let us all perceive the seriousness of this hour. Let us all partake of the Holy call to worship Him in spirit and in truth in our personal lives and in the congregation of the saints. Let us heed the call to be bearers of the ark of His presence. He is calling out an army of worshipers. "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest until He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." (Isaiah 62:6-7).