

## *Romans 12:1~2, part 2*

The subject here is that of the *True Spiritual Worship of God*... There has always been *differences of opinion* among men, as to the manner of the *worship* of God, what it is and what it is not. Differences ranging from the style of music that is sang, whether it be traditional hymns, or the contemporary style. From the style of dress, to issues like tithing, the structure of the service, and on and on. But its important that we do not allow these things to become the focus, causing us to loose sight of what worship really is. Rather than being matters of worship, many of these are matters of preference.

Paul writes using the metaphoric language of “*Temple Worship*.” During the time Paul was writing, the Temple was still in service and offerings were made at the temple twice a day. Temple worship was a big part of Jewish life. It had been since the days of Moses, immediately after giving the Law on Mt. Sinai, God instructed Moses to build a tabernacle, a place of worship. The tabernacle became a house of worship, where the Israelites would offer up sacrifices according to the conditions set forth in God’s Law. And this continued throughout their wandering in the wilderness, until they finally reached the Promised Land, where God instructed Solomon to build a Temple. From the days of Moses throughout every generation, to the days that Paul is writing this letter, animal sacrifices were made to God. The purpose of animal sacrifices was that the blood of these animals served as an atonement for the sins.

Having said that, Paul has declared that all those animal sacrifices were a “shadow” of the offering of Christ. Paul declares that through the offering up the body of Jesus, for man’s sin, that there is no longer a need for the sacrificing of animals. The shadow has faded away, and the reality has come. Paul declares that Jesus was the precious Lamb of God, who was offered up for our sins, to make atonement for us. Paul declares here that going to the temple to offer to God the *bodies of dead animals* is not what constitutes worship, *true worship* is the offering to God *our bodies!*

Its vital to understand “**WHAT**” Paul is saying here... What we see happening here is the establishment of “*true spiritual worship*.” Paul is establishing the “*pattern of worship*” by those who follow Christ, the *worship* of the church. Paul declares that as followers of Christ, we are to set forth the example, showing the world what the “*true worship of God*” is.

The contrast here is to that of the empty, meaningless worship of Israel, to that of the sincere, heartfelt worship of the followers of Christ, *by the offering up of ones life* as an act of worship.

Paul says...<sup>1</sup>*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

...*reasonable service* carries several meanings...reasonable means logical, rational. Suggesting that rather than being an extreme request, the request of offer our bodies is simply the only logical conclusion, given what God has done for us. If Jesus died for us, the least we can do is live for him. It also could be translated, “*your spiritual service,*” or “*your spiritual work.*” Which is interesting when you consider what Paul has been talking about throughout this letter, the works of the Law. Here, Paul is saying that the “*fruitless works of the Law,*” the offering up of “*dead animals*” does not constitute true worship, but rather the “*works of true worship*” is that of the offering up to God “*our bodies,*” the offering up of ones life.

<sup>2</sup>And be not conformed to this world:

Here, the context is not that of being “*Worldly minded.*” Paul is not speaking here, of living *worldly lives*. The “**world**” that he speaks of here is not the word used to describe the allurements of this world to that of the flesh. The word Paul uses here for *world* is *Aion*... and it refers to “*an age,*” a “*period of time.*” Specifically (*Jewish*) a *Messianic period*. The “**world**” that refers to worldly living, is *Kosmos*.

**(1John 2)** <sup>15</sup>Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup>For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. <sup>17</sup>And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abides forever.

**Kosmos**...order, arrangement, ornament... adornment. It refers to its attraction, its beauty, its allure to the FLESH. The “Flesh” is not a reference to literally the “Skin,” but rather, it is the name Paul ascribes to man’s *sinful nature*. It seems to be a metaphoric term that Paul uses to help clearly differentiate between the *carnal man* and the *spiritual man*. To say that someone is “**walking in the flesh**” is to say that person is living to lust and desires of the sinful nature. It describes someone who lives their life to please themselves, rather than God. Living to self-will, self-ways, living in pursuit of the things of this world, is following the ways of this world, etc.

The opposite of that is someone who is “**walking in the spirit**,” those who have denied the lust and desires of the flesh, they have turned from their own will, own desires and is living his/her life to the will of God.

John simply reiterates the words of our Lord...“*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*” To love this world *is to not love God*...and to love God *is to not love this world*. They are mutually exclusive. Jesus said, you couldn’t serve God and mammon, (riches of this world). To love this world simply manifest that a man *is yet in his sin and is walking in the flesh*. It’s important to understand, that John is writing concerning the Pharisees’ and scribes of his day. Even though they participated in the worship activities of God, *they revealed* they were still in bondage to the flesh, the sinful nature, *by their love for this world*.

Simply put...John was stating that the Law had not changed their heart! If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. They had never been changed by God’s Grace, for if they had, they would have no longer loved this world. The only thing to turn our hearts is the Grace/Love of God, and if that has not happened, then the only thing that man can do is love this world...

John used the word Kosmos, which is a completely different word than the one Paul uses here in Romans 12. Paul uses Aion (world)...and it refers to “*an age,*” a “*period of time.*” *Specifically (Jewish) a Messianic period.*

<sup>2</sup>And be not conformed to “this age:” Given the context, it might be stated...  
...“*and do not pattern yourselves after this generation.*”

Listen very closely...I want to suggest to you, that Paul is referring to Israel...  
Rather than exhorting us not to be conformed to the “*Ways of this World,*” I am persuaded that Paul is referring to the “*Ways of Israel.*”

**Do not pattern** your worship after the worship of Israel... Its important for the follower of Christ not to pattern their worship after Israel, simply for the fact, even though Israel had a “*form of righteousness,*” a “*form of worship,*” by their deeds in the law, it still was not true spiritual worship! Remember what Paul told us in Romans 10:1~3? Israel is worshiped God in ignorance. Knowing that, do not pattern yourselves after them. The followers of Christ, the CHURCH will set the standard of what true spiritual worship is, what righteous living is, by the offering of “*their own bodies*” in spiritual service to God.

In this passage, Paul chooses a very interesting set of words in making his point.  
“**Conformed**” carries the meaning of *to fashion or shape one thing like another*. It stresses the *outward configuration*, taking on the *same shape and form* of another object. Do not “*pattern*” yourselves after this

world. Interestingly, in the definition of this word, it stresses that this word cannot be used of “*Inward transformation*.” It emphasizes that it refers to that of *outward* change, *outward* reshaping only.

**(Illustration: Conform-Transform)**

While “**Transformed**” is just the opposite word, in that it stresses just the opposite, emphasizing “*Inward*” change. **Transformed** is the Greek word “*metamorphoo*” from which we get our word “*metamorphoses*.” Which is best understood in the process of the butterfly. During the process of metamorphoses, there is a tremendous transformation that takes place. What went in as an ugly worm comes out a beautiful butterfly?

*Conform* and *Transform* both speak of change, they both mean to reshape, to take on another form. But one speaks to the outward reshaping, while the other speaks to the inward reshaping. Looking at the butterfly we see there is no *conforming* at all...but rather a complete transformation, a complete change of shape, a whole new thing. The caterpillar doesn't attach wings to itself, and put on some antennas, etc... That would be **conforming**. It would take more than the outward reshaping of a caterpillar, *to make it a butterfly*.

<sup>2</sup>And be not conformed to “**this age**.” Do not pattern your worship of God after the ignorance of Israel...Rather than offering to God the bodies of dead animals as Israel is doing, we are to “**Present our bodies a living sacrifice.**”

<sup>2</sup>And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed... Paul is contrasting the useless and empty works of the Law in changing a man's life. A man can “*do all the right things*,” and outwardly have a form of rightness, but it does nothing for the inside man. **Transformed** speaks of the inward change that comes about when we yield our bodies to God... By denying our selves, by turning from self-will, self-desire, and yielding to God our bodies, the very “*Life of Christ*” will shine forth from this body. Like a beautiful butterfly that comes out of the caterpillar, this new life, the very life of Christ will come forth in us.

<sup>2</sup>And be not conformed to this world, (*this age, this generation*) but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Paul says, rather than simply having the “*form*” of worship, we as Christians are to manifest the “*content*,” of what true worship really is, what righteous living really is!

...that ye may **prove** what is that **good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**

The word “**Prove**” means to show what is “*authentic*,” to manifest the “*real stuff*.” Beloved, we are to be “*examples*” of what the *true worship* of God is... Paul says we do this by laying aside our self will, self desires, and “*presenting our bodies*” to God as a “*living sacrifice*.” In doing so, we *make clear*; or we *show the true standard* of what God expects of all men!

I'm convinced that's what the Cross is all about. To follow Christ means to “*take up a cross*,” and live *crucified lives*, putting to death the desires and lust of the flesh, self... thus “*Setting the pattern*” for others to know God's standard of righteousness. Righteous living is not attained in keeping the Law, but in carrying the cross.

...that ye may **prove** what is that **good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**

“**Good**” & “**Acceptable**”...are best understood together. Good means that “*which benefits*” that which “*has quality*.” While acceptable refers to that which is “*pleasing*,” that which is “*accepted*.” In the

context here, it refers that God doesn't want the empty, useless dead bodies of animals. They are not what is pleasing to Him! What would God need of dead animals? God is not interested in the THINGS that the worship of this world offers to Him...God desires not the offering, but the offeror, the man himself. The "*Good and Acceptable offering*" to God, is that we "*present our bodies a living sacrifice*" to God.

The word "***Perfect***" signifies "*having reached its end,*" "*finished or complete.*"  
The purpose of the gospel is to bring people to a "*True spiritual worship of God.*"

When mankind, (*as a result of hearing the gospel,*) repents of his sin, turning from self will, laying it down on the altar as a sacrifice to God, to follow the will of God for his life, then and only then has that man been reconciled back to God. The gospel has reached its desired end, the gospel has finished its course, it has accomplished what God set it out to do... That of restoring fallen man back to where he belongs...a worshiper of the one, true living God.