

Bible Study relative to Mark Minnick's Address on "Deviant Worship"

Please note:

1. **Although Minnick sometimes quotes the NIV, all Bible references below are from the KJV.**
 2. **Minnick's comments are in regular text. My comments are in bold and are made only when I disagree with or need to clarify Minnick's comments (i.e., no comment means that I agree with Minnick's comment).**
1. There are three ways to recognize deviant worship due to their violation of a biblical absolute:
 - A) Directing people toward an alternative God ("Thou shalt have no other gods before me," Ex 20:3)
 - B) Approaching God in a wrong manner (Aaron's two sons Nadab and Abihu "offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not," Lev. 10:1)
 1. **But note that they were violating a specific biblical commandment – this was a matter of specific disobedience, not just an error in judgment about worship style/practice.**
 2. **This is a matter of following the protocol for sacrifice for atonement of sins, not a matter of worship.**
 3. **The severe response of God to their action was because as leaders their disobedience was getting the entire start of the Mosaic law off on the wrong foot. Sin is something serious, and God wanted to make clear that atonement for sin couldn't be accomplished through disobedience.**
 - C) Wrong motive (Prov 21: 27, "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?")
 1. **There are several reasons why this verse does not say what Minnick is trying to make it say, but it's a minor point not worth taking the space here.**
 2. **To make a more plausible argument Minnick is forced to quote the NIV. I won't take the space here, but I would argue that the KJV is a much more reliable resource for Bible study.**
 2. Applying these three to the example of Jeroboam's sin in 1 Kings 12.
 - A) "And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of

the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.” 1 Kings 12: 26-33

B) It may be that Jeroboam was instituting a worship of a false god, but that’s questionable, as the major shift of Israel to worship of Baal rather than the Lord didn’t occur until Ahab instituted it. Instead, Jeroboam directs attention toward God Himself and instead represents worshipping in the wrong manner and the wrong motive. When Jeroboam says, “behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt,” that Jeroboam was referring to the Lord despite the plural form of “gods.”

1. This is a clear error. Jeroboam and his altar in Bethel and his high places were clearly intended to worship other gods. “Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel ... thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes; But hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back.” (1 Kings 14: 8-9)

2. All of the KJV’s usage of “god” or “gods” refers to false gods; here Jeroboam is clearly duplicating Aaron’s sin and trying to deceive Israel into thinking that the gods represented by the calves rescued them from Egypt.

3. Therefore, the primary error of Jeroboam and the point of his story in the Bible is the sin of worshipping a false god.

C) Jeroboam clearly represented a wrong motive. “And Jeroboam said in his heart...”

D) Jeroboam clearly represented a wrong manner. This is the primary thing that the Bible fixes our attention on.

1. No; as always, the primary thing the Bible fixes our attention on is worshipping any god besides Him.

3. The importance of showing proper honor in worship

A) The example of Nadab and Abihu shows that proper honor (in other words, reverence) is required for assembling for worship in a local church. “I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.” Lev. 10:3

1. To rephrase this, “I will be sanctified by all who come near me”; when anybody approaches me I’m going to be holy and honored, and this was an innovation that failed to represent the command of the One who directs what goes on in worship.

2. **It seems to me Minnick’s paraphrase and resulting conclusion are incorrect. The context of Exodus, Numbers, and Leviticus show that “them that come nigh me” is referring to the priests – the only ones with access to the Holy of Holies – who should glorify God before all the people. This was not a case of not showing proper honor; it was a case of blatant disobedience.**

B) Six examples of reverential worship of Jesus:

1. Healed leper who returns to Jesus and fell on his knees.
2. After Lord filled Peter’s boat with fish, Peter fell on his knees.
3. After Jesus’ resurrection, the women who met him held him by the feet and worshipped him.
4. When John saw him in his resurrected state, he fell at Jesus’ feet as though dead.
5. In Revelation, the 24 elders fall down and sing a new song of his worthiness.
6. Phil 2 says that someday everyone will do that.

C) As a result of these six examples, Minnick says that reverence is a biblical absolute for worship.

1. **Let me point out that in each of these six examples, the worshipper is in the immediate, physical presence of the Lord and was in a state of being overcome by the awareness of Jesus’ power.**
2. **Yet Peter was with Jesus all the time, but seldom did he fall to his knees before him. The 24 elders are not constantly on the ground before Jesus (when John first sees them, they are sitting around the throne and are wearing gold crowns).**
3. **I do not disagree that worship should show reverence, but reverence does not always require being on your knees – otherwise, the typical Catholic Mass demonstrates more proper worship than the typical Baptist service. In the same way, reverence does not require wearing a suit or singing only hymns.**

D) “Casual worship” is an example of not approaching God in the right manner (reverence).

1. The fact that these people are *deliberately* being casual is demonstrated by their dress. They are not showing unique respect for a unique being. Minnick shares the example of a hotel meeting with then-VP George Bush and his wife Barbara, and that all 20 guests wore suits even though the setting was not formal.
 - a. **I would argue that they wore suits not to honor George Bush, but out of concern for what all 20+ people would think ... in other words, because custom required it. At that**

- point in history, nearly every company required men to wear suits to work.
- b. Today, business casual seems to be the most common professional attire. Yet still today, if you are meeting with someone, you try to determine what the appropriate dress will be for the situation: black tie, suit and tie, business casual, weekend casual, etc.
 - c. In 2004 when I stood on the side of the road and waved to George W. Bush as he passed by in his tour bus, I was wearing weekend casual. If I were meeting George W. Bush one-on-one (and was reasonably certain he would wear business casual) or was part of a large group observing him make a speech, I would wear business casual.
 - d. At Mio Baptist, it feels strange to me to wear a suit and tie on Sundays, because for me church worship has always been less formal. Nonetheless, because that's how the pastor and most men dress, I'm inclined to wear a suit and tie.
2. Malachi 1: 8 shows that if we would wear a suit for the VP, we should wear a suit for the Lord. "And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts."
 - e. Malachi is about how the priests and people are fooling themselves when they think they are serving the Lord, and it cites several examples where their disobedience to him demonstrates hatred for him.
 - f. This specific passage is addressing the priests, and it's not about acceptable worship – it is about acceptable payment for sin and is compared to acceptable payment of taxes to the governor (or perhaps it is saying that the value of the bread and animals they are offering to God is so low that to give it as a gift to the governor would invite displeasure rather than pleasure). By trying to get away with insufficient payment, they aren't just cheating God, they are showing despise rather than honor for God's name.
 - g. I do agree that this passage supports the statement that we owe honor to God, but all of Malachi is clear that the primary way he wants us to honor him is by obeying him.
 - h. We are in the presence of God every day, though it is not the immediate bodily presence of those six examples about Jesus. We do not wear a suit all day, every day, even though we recognize His presence.
 4. Romans 12: 1-2 says that our worship should not conform to this world. "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. And be not conformed to this world: 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.”

A) This is a passage about worship, because it says that presenting your bodies as a living sacrifice is your reasonable service of worship, with the following verses talking about the ministry of our gifts, and the whole context is a worship context.

1. **This is a blatant disregard for the actual context. I’m sure Minnick is sincerely trying to examine what the Bible says, but this is such disregard for the context that something must be preventing him from clearly reading it.**
2. **Perhaps part of the reason for Minnick’s confusion is that he abandons the KJV’s translation of “reason service” and instead looks to the NIV’s translation as “spiritual act of worship.” There is no basis in the Greek for this translation. Every time the Greek word is used, the KJV consistently translates it as “service” and not “spiritual.”**
3. **For the two chapters immediately preceding Romans 12, Paul has clearly been telling the Gentile Christians in Rome two things:**
 - a) **How he urgently desires that the Jews would be saved (“For I speak to you Gentiles ... If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.” Rom 11:13-14), and**
 - b) **How he desires that the Gentile’s example of the blessings of salvation in Christ would create jealousy within the Jews and inspire them to believe in Jesus. (“As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father’s sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.” Rom 11: 28-31)**
4. **He is asking the Romans to help try to save the Jews, the very people who are their “enemies” that are trying to kill them. For them to do so would make them a “living sacrifice” which is their “reasonable service” out of recognition for the gift of salvation they received. And the primary way they will attract the Jews’ jealousy is to prove the “will of God” (Rom 12: 2), which is to obey Jesus command to “love one another” (see Rom 12: 9-10).**
 - a. **Rom. 12:3 says they should not be proud of themselves and look down on each other. Rom 12:4-8 expand on this theme by saying that each of us has an important role given by God, so we should not look down on one another. Instead, we should focus on doing our best to serve each other with**

those gifts (prophecy, ministry, exhortation, giving, ruling, showing mercy). Rom 12: 9-10 concludes the “loving one another” portion, including the admonition of “in honor preferring one another.”

b. The rest of Rom 12-13 lists other ways to not be conformed and to demonstrate the blessings of salvation and so attract the Jews: not being slothful in business, being patient in tribulation, etc. None of these reference anything about worship.

c) Therefore, it is not at all about worship. It is about evangelizing the lost, even at the cost of sacrificing your life (literally, not just in a spiritual sense) as a result of their persecution.

B) Therefore, Paul is telling us to “be not conformed to this world” in regard to all the ways the world would prevent us from being an effective witness to the lost, and he gives several specific examples in the sentences that follow: pridefully comparing ourselves to Christians we believe have less-important spiritual gifts, showing insincere love, enjoying evil, seeking the best for ourselves rather than giving preference to fellow Christians, being slothful in business, lacking fervency in serving the Lord, losing hope, being impatient when faced with tribulation, not praying consistently, not sharing with God’s people in need, being inhospitable, cursing those who persecute us, not joining in others’ rejoicing and weeping as appropriate, giving preference to rich and important people, being conceited with our wisdom, taking revenge, not submitting and paying taxes to civil rulers, being in debt, not loving our neighbor as ourselves, being dishonest, and taking part in riotousness, drunknesses, wantonness, impurity, strife and/or envying.

B) In our worship, what would it mean not to be conformed to the world?

1. **Worshipping the true God, in and of itself, would be not conforming to this world.**
2. **To understand the directive to “be not conformed to this world” apart from the evangelistic nature of this passage would invite a wide variety of practices, such as adopting centuries-old customs in dress and lifestyle as the Amish do. Instead, we need to avoid conforming to the world’s ways that would fail to demonstrate the gospel to the unsaved. Examples that might apply to worship include: avoiding immodest dress, not showing too much concern for money, not trying to turn the worship leader into a “personality,” and not giving special treatment to wealthy or powerful people.**
3. Col 3: 16 (“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”) shows that our music is the direct outgrowth of whether we’re giving the Word a rich dwelling in our spirits
 - a) **I have no argument with this statement, which applies just as well to “praise and worship” as to hymns.**

- b) **I see no reason why “praise and worship” does not fall under the category of “spiritual songs.”**
4. Eph 5: 18-21 (“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”) shows that our music is an expression of whether we’re spirit-filled.
 - a) **I have no argument with this statement, which applies just as well to “praise and worship” as to hymns.**
 5. 1 Corinthians 8-10 and Romans 14 do not apply to this music tunes, because they’re about meat which is entirely different thing than music.
 - A) It’s true that these passages are about when Christians differ over things not directly mandated by scripture.
 - B) Meat has no effect on the spirit man – it is neutral. Music is not neutral.
 1. **This statement is simply Minnick’s opinion and does not reflect the Bible. A major portion of the Mosaic law was about what you can and cannot eat, and about what and how to offer meat as sacrifices to the Lord. That would not have been the case, and the Lord would not have needed to give Peter a vision in Joppa, and Paul would not have need to spend these chapters writing about it.**
 2. **In additions, these chapters are not just about meat – they also are about whether to hold certain days as special unto the Lord ... and more generally, to the issue that Paul constantly faced of people trying to impose circumcision and other rules on the believers. (“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body: not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.”**
 3. **These chapters carry much more relevance to worship music – without needing to pull them out of the context of Paul’s messages – than the handful of verses to which Minnick’s arguments point.**
 - C) “Sacred music” has been entirely composed and set aside for the use of God.
 1. **There is no reason why this definition does not also apply to “praise and worship” music.**
 - D) The text and tunes should be distinctive and actually reflect the kind of separateness that there is to God and our sacred worship.

2. **It is only a matter of opinion that only certain styles of tunes reflect God's holiness. Those same styles appear in non-rock secular music, so why are they uniquely sacred?**
6. If someone listens to CCM, they must be of the world, because 1 John 4: 5-6 says "They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."
 - A) **The world does not listen to CCM. Nearly every time I look up a CCM or "praise and worship" CD on Amazon.com, I see negative comments from non-Christians who hate this type of music.**
 - B) **By Minnick's logic, if I preach to a lost person and they listen to me and are saved, then I must be of the world. This is untrue. The "world" refers to the majority of people, all those who have not been saved – these people hate Christian music. The "world" does not refer to individual unsaved people to whom you are trying to reach with the gospel, unless they do not hear you.**
7. John 15:19 says, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."
 - A) **Again, the world does NOT love CCM or "praise and worship" music. Only Christians specifically come to a CCM concert. Only Christians or seekers come to a church that features "praise and worship" music – the world would never come to such a church.**