***The Doxology***

**The Lord’s Prayer, Summer 2023: Matthew 6:9-13 August 20, 2023**

***Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name . . .  
worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.***

**1 Chronicles 16:29 and Psalm 29:2**

**Praise from God’s own words**

*“Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven . . . .*

*“This, then is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,*

*10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

*11 Give us today our daily bread.*

*12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

*13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one,*

*for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.’ ”*

Matthew 6 (including alternate ending noted in the NIV)

*13 Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,*

*from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen.*

Psalm 41:13, doxology for Book I of the Psalms (and see 72:19-20)

*23 Sing to the Lord, all the earth;*

*proclaim his salvation day after day.*

*24 Declare his glory among the nations,*

*his marvelous deeds among all peoples.*

*25 For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;*

*he is to be feared above all gods.*

*26 For all the gods of the nations are idols,*

*but the Lord made the heavens.*

*27 Splendor and majesty are before him;*

*strength and joy in his dwelling place.*

*28 Ascribe to the Lord, O families of nations,*

*ascribe to the Lord glory and strength,*

*29 ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name.*

*Bring an offering and come before him;*

*worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.*

*30 Tremble before him, all the earth!*

*The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved.*

*31 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;*

*let them say among the nations, “The Lord reigns!”*

*32 Let the sea resound, and all that is in it;*

*let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them!*

1 Chronicles 16, David’s worship when the ark returned to Jerusalem (see also Psalm 29)

*10 David praised the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly, saying,*

*“Praise be to you, O Lord,*

*God of our father Israel,*

*from everlasting to everlasting.*

*11 Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power*

*and the glory and the majesty and the splendor,*

*for everything in heaven and earth is yours.*

*Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom;*

*you are exalted as head over all.*

*12 Wealth and honor come from you;*

*you are the ruler of all things.*

*In your hands are strength and power*

*to exalt and give strength to all.*

*13 Now, our God, we give you thanks,*

*and praise your glorious name.*

1 Chronicles 29

About the doxology

1. While the doxology is not in the earliest manuscripts, it was included in with the Lord’s Prayer very   
early in the life of the church

2. Doug’s “pretty sure” thought: This doxology reflects how the early church ended this prayer in   
public worship (see the *Didache*)

3. Doug’s “not quite as sure, but it makes a lot of sense” thought: Jesus, the Old Testament trained rabbi, would have expected his followers to supply a doxology to end this prayer!

**Heidelberg Catechism, Part III: Gratitude, Lord’s Day 52**

Q 128. What does your conclusion to this prayer mean?

A.  For the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours forever” means:

We have made all these petitions of you because, as our all-powerful king, you are both willing and able to give us all that is good;1 and because your holy name, and not we ourselves, should receive all the praise, forever.2

1 [Rom. 10:11-13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Rom.%2010:11-13&version=nrsv); [2 Pet. 2:9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Pet.%202:9&version=nrsv) 2 [Ps. 115:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ps.%20115:1&version=nrsv); [John 14:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2014:13&version=nrsv)

**A theology of worship**

*4 “You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God . . . .*

Exodus 20

*Then he said to Moses, “Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. You are to worship at a distance, 2 but Moses alone is to approach the Lord; the others must not come near. And the people may not come up with him.”*

*3 When Moses went and told the people all the Lord’s words and laws, they responded with one voice, “Everything the Lord has said we will do.” 4 Moses then wrote down everything the Lord had said.*

*He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. 5 Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the Lord. 6 Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar. 7 Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, “We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey.”*

*8 Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, “This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.”*

*9 Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up 10 and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. 11 But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.*

Exodus 24

*22 The Lord said to Moses, 23 “Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:*

*24 “ ‘ “The Lord bless you and keep you;*

*25 the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you;*

*26 the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” ’*

*27 “So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.”*

Numbers 6 (see Psalm

*11 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. 12 In a loud voice they sang:*

*“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,*

*to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength*

*and honor and glory and praise!”*

*13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:*

*“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb*

*be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”*

*14 The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.*

Revelation 4

1. Every time the door to the throne room of God is cracked open, we see doxology! (Isaiah 6;   
Acts 7;

2. The first great public worship is Exodus 24 where Kevin DeYoung identifies these elements of covenant renewal:

1. the Book of the Covenant

2. the blood of the covenant

3. the bread of the covenant

3. The doxology reflects our final response in the dialogue of worship

**Being a doxological people**

The last sentence is ***an ascription of praise****--*"yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory." We declare in these words our belief, that the kingdoms of this world are the rightful property of our Father--that to Him alone belongs all "power,"--and that He alone deserves to receive all "glory." And we conclude by offering to Him the profession of our hearts, that we give Him all honor and praise, and rejoice that He is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

J.C. Ryles

1. The goal of the life of praise is God’s glory

*5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

John 15

**Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?**

A. Man’s chief end is to glorify God, [a] and to enjoy him for ever. [b]

[a]. [Ps. 86:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.%2086.9); [Isa. 60:21](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.%2060.21); [Rom. 11:36](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.%2011.36); [1 Cor. 6:20](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.%206.20); [10:31](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%2010.31); Rev. 4:11   
[b]. [Ps. 16:5-11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.%2016.5-11); [144:15](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20144.15); [Isa. 12:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.%2012.2); [Luke 2:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%202.10); [Phil. 4:4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.%204.4); Rev. 21:3-4

**Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?**

A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, [a] is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him. [b]

[a]. [Matt. 19:4-5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.%2019.4-5) with [Gen. 2:24](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.%202.24); [Luke 24:27](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%2024.27), [44](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%2024.44); [1 Cor. 2:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.%202.13); 14:37; [2 Pet.1:20-21](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet.1.20-21); [3:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet%203.2), [15-16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet%203.15-16)  
[b]. [Deut. 4:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.%204.2); [Ps. 19:7-11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.%2019.7-11); [Isa. 8:20](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.%208.20); [John 15:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.11); [20:30-31](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2020.30-31); [Acts 17:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2017.11); [2 Tim. 3:15-17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.%203.15-17); [1 John 1:4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%201.4)

Westminster Shorter Catechism ([1647 edition](https://www.apuritansmind.com/westminster-standards/shorter-catechism/))

When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, ``Repent'' (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.

The first of Martin Luther’s “95 Theses”

2. The doxology reminds us whom we serve

*Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.*

*To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.*

Revelation 1, John’s opening greeting and doxology

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3. Like the rest of the Lord’s Prayer, doxology keeps God in the right place

*33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!*

*How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!*

*34 “Who has known the mind of the Lord?*

*Or who has been his counselor?”*

*35 “Who has ever given to God,*

*that God should repay him?”*

*36 For from him and through him and to him are all things.*

*To him be the glory forever! Amen.*

Romans 11 (and see 16:25-27 for Paul’s second doxology)

**Resources for further study**

The poster for Matthew does a good job of showing the 5 Parts of the gospel, reflecting a “new Torah”, can be found at [*https://bibleproject.com/downloads/posters/*](https://bibleproject.com/downloads/posters/)

Ryle has a commentary of Matthew 6 at [*https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/m06.htm*](https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/m06.htm)

J. C. Ryle also has a wonderful study of how believers should respond to the disciplining work of God at [*https://www.monergism.com/finger-god*](https://www.monergism.com/finger-god)

Here are some of our growing number of prayer resources:

The CRCNA’s Prayer Guide illustrates how to use the Lord’s Prayer as a guide to corporate prayer at

[https://www.crcna.org]( https://www.crcna.org › files › the_lords_prayer) *[› files › the\_lords\_prayer]( https://www.crcna.org › files › the_lords_prayer)*

Kevin DeYoung’s article at [*https://www.crossway.org/articles/what-does-it-mean-to-pray-your-kingdom-come/*](https://www.crossway.org/articles/what-does-it-mean-to-pray-your-kingdom-come/)

Lora Copely’s “Extraordinary Prayer” article at <https://www.abideproject.org/articles/extraordinary-prayer>

Becket Cook’s story of his mother’s prayer at [*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFWl9eWkmWg*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFWl9eWkmWg)

Kevin DeYoung has a great introductions to Christian worship at [*https://clearlyreformed.org/worship-as-covenant-renewal/*](https://clearlyreformed.org/worship-as-covenant-renewal/) and his summary of Reformed worship is very helpful at [*https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/a-theology-of-worship/*](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/a-theology-of-worship/)

D.G. Hart’s essay on “Reforming Worship” at [*https://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=08-04-017-f&readcode=&readtherest=true#therest*](https://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=08-04-017-f&readcode=&readtherest=true%23therest)suggests these principles:  
 1. Centrality of the Word of God  
 2. God is the audience  
 3. Worship is dialogue in which God speaks and his people respond  
 4. Simplicity  
 5. Reverence

R.C. Sproul has a wonderful essay on worship at [*http s://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/how-should-we-then-worship*](https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/how-should-we-then-worship)

I like [this interview with Tim Keller](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwi7ku-J4eeAAxUMHjQIHdTUDiUQFnoECA8QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fstatic1.squarespace.com%2Fstatic%2F53061a49e4b083d9ce69ae21%2Ft%2F53d075b7e4b056db8c5e4fe0%2F1406170551702%2FWhat%2Bit%2BTakes%2Bto%2BWorship%2BWell.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1fv54fH_tL5UE73yiSMe5S&opi=89978449) on what it takes to worship well

In this Getty team video, [John Lennox shows how our minds are hardwired](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-ILWFy9lSw) for singing and doxology

Larry Stockstill has a good summary of the pattern of the Lord’s Prayer at [*https://larrystockstill.com/blog/prayer-template*](https://larrystockstill.com/blog/prayer-template)

Keller has a good listen at [*https://gospelinlife.com/downloads/the-upside-down-kingdom-5106/*](https://gospelinlife.com/downloads/the-upside-down-kingdom-5106/)or the .pdf version at [*https://www.scribd.com/document/258555474/Upside-Down-Kingdom-Tim-Keller*](https://www.scribd.com/document/258555474/Upside-Down-Kingdom-Tim-Keller)

Keller also has an 8-part series on the Lord’s Prayer on .mp3 at [*https://www.monergism.com/lords-prayer-8-part-mp3-sermon-series*](https://www.monergism.com/lords-prayer-8-part-mp3-sermon-series)

[*Monergism.com*](file:///I:\Summer%202023\monergism.com) has many resources on the Sermon on the Mount at [*https://www.monergism.  
com/topics/sermon-manuscripts-mp3s-scripture/matthew/sermon-mount-ch-5-7*](https://www.monergism.com/topics/sermon-manuscripts-mp3s-scripture/matthew/sermon-mount-ch-5-7)

Bob Deffinbaugh has a sermon on this passage at [*https://bible.org/seriespage/fatal-failures-religion-3-externalism-matthew-61-18*](https://bible.org/seriespage/fatal-failures-religion-3-externalism-matthew-61-18)

Spurgeon has an interesting prayer take is at [*https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/the-secret-of-power-in-prayer/#flipbook/*](https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/the-secret-of-power-in-prayer/%23flipbook/)

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**6:13** πονηροῦ. {A}

The ascription at the close of the Lord’s Prayer occurs in several forms. In K L W Δ Θ Π *f*  *al* it is the familiar triple strophic form, whereas the Sahidic and Fayyumic (like the form quoted in the Didache) lack ἡ βασιλεία καί, the Curetonian Syriac lacks ἡ δύναμις καί, and the Old Latin k reads simply “for thine is the power for ever and ever.” Some Greek manuscripts expand “for ever” into “for ever and ever,” and most of them add “amen.” Several late manuscripts (157 225 418) append a trinitarian ascription, “for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit for ever. Amen.” The same expansion occurs also at the close of the Lord’s Prayer in the liturgy that is traditionally ascribed to St. John Chrysostom.

The absence of any ascription in early and important representatives of the Alexandrian (א B), the Western (D and most of the Old Latin), and other (*f* ) types of text, as well as early patristic commentaries on the Lord’s Prayer (those of Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian), suggests that an ascription, usually in a threefold form, was composed (perhaps on the basis of 1 Chr 29:11–13) in order to adapt the Prayer for liturgical use in the early church. Still later scribes added “of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

**13b. [For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.]** It is commonly held that, since these words are absent from the leading manuscripts, the rules of textual evidence do not favor their inclusion in the Lord’s Prayer. Without disputing the correctness of this view it is but fair to point out, however, that, in one form or another, the doxology is found in some rather ancient versions. Moreover, the *Didache* or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (VIII.2), by many regarded as having originated in the first half of the second century, contains the conclusion in the abbreviated form “for thine is the power and the glory forever.” A defense of the authenticity of the Greek words upon which the A.V. form of the conclusion is based is found in E. F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, Des Moines, 1956, pp. 97–102. His main argument is that from the earliest times in the worship of the church the conclusion was separated from the rest of the Lord’s Prayer. The body of the prayer was repeated by the people, the conclusion, exclusive of “Amen,” by the priest, after which the people responded, “Amen.” Because of this liturgical separation, so he argues, this conclusion “began to be regarded by some Christians as a man-made response and not part of the original prayer as it fell from the lips of Christ.”

Now it is true that even during the gatherings for worship, whether regular or on special occasions, both in ancient Israel and in the apostolic church, the scene was more lively and responsive, less formal, than in much of later Christendom (except for the modern trend). To be sure, the services were generally orderly. If they were not, the membership was apt to be duly admonished (1 Cor. 14:23–40). The control was definitely in the hands of the leader. There were, however, responses by the congregation (Deut. 27:15–26; 1 Chron. 16:36; Neh. 5:13; 8:6; 1 Cor. 14:16; cf. Rev. 5:14). Nevertheless, whether an argument of this type, based to a large extent on ancient liturgical practices, is sufficient to offset the considerable lack of manuscript support for the retention or insertion of the words in question (“For thine is, etc.”) is debatable. The evangelist Luke, in reporting the Lord’s Prayer, omits any mention of a concluding doxology.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that the A.V. conclusion reflects the spirit of both the Old Testament (1 Chron. 29:11; Neh. 9:5; the conclusions of Pss. 145–150) and the New (John 8:50; 17:4; 1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Tim. 4:18; Rev. 1:6; 4:11; 5:12, 13; 19:1 ff.). It would be difficult, indeed, to frame or devise a more fitting close. Is it not entirely appropriate that we, the supplicants, having concluded our humble *petitions,* as it were turn our eyes upward again (as in the beginning of the prayer) in adoration, and concentrate heart and mind on God’s majesty and love, which constitute the basis of our confidence that the prayer will be heard?

Viewing the words of the doxology, therefore, as being in any case in thorough harmony with the rest of the Bible, and as constituting an eminently suitable conclusion of this prayer, a few words of interpretation are in order. The phrase “For thine is the kingdom” can be regarded as pertaining to each of the preceding petitions, as if to say, “Hallowed be thy name, for thine is the kingdom,” that is, “for it is thy sovereign right as King that thy name be hallowed”; so also, “Thy kingdom come, for thine is the kingdom,” that is, “for it is proper that thy divine authority over hearts and lives be reverently acknowledged”; “Thy will be done, for thine is the kingdom,” that is, “for since thou art King thy will should be obeyed by us and by everyone”; and so on through the rest of the prayer.

Not only the Father’s *right* to grant the requests, since he is King over all, but also his *power* to do so is recognized (“and the power”), and this, too, is basic to each of the preceding petitions. Those who pray this prayer acknowledge that all power belongs to the Father, not only the power *over* the entire universe and all it contains, but even the power that resides *within* all: in the sun to glow, in winds to blow, in rivers to flow, in plants to grow, etc. Even the power exercised by sinister forces is his, though *they* are responsible for its evil use. If it were not his, how would he be able to overrule it for good?

Finally, since all of God’s virtues are reflected in his work of creation and redemption, in each according to its own nature, the children of this heavenly Father, deeply impressed with the manifestations of his power, wisdom, and goodness, add, “and the glory,” joyfully ascribing to the Father all these three—the kingdom, the power, and the glory—not only now but “forever.” With a reverend “Amen,” in attestation of the sincerity of their words and of their conviction that the Father will attend to their needs, they conclude the prayer.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Worship as Covenant Renewal**

Kevin DeYoung, March 24, 2022  
at [*https://clearlyreformed.org/worship-as-covenant-renewal/*](https://clearlyreformed.org/worship-as-covenant-renewal/)

Exodus 24 is a picture of covenant confirmation. After initiating the covenant (Exod. 19), establishing the constitutional obligations of the covenant (Exod. 20), and applying the constitution as case law (Exod. 21-23), God confirms the covenant with Moses. In addition to being a picture of covenant confirmation for Moses and the people of Israel, Exodus 24 provides a striking picture of worship as covenant renewal.

Exodus 24 begins with a call to worship as the Lord summons Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel to draw near. Moses then includes the people in what can be described as a service of worship–a ceremony of covenant confirmation (and later renewal) focusing on three elements.

The service centered on the *Book of the Covenant*. Moses told the people all the words of the Lord (the Ten Commandments) and all the rules applying those words (v. 3). Then later Moses repeated the essence of these instructions, reading to the people from the Book of the Covenant (v. 7). Importantly, we see that Moses was not just passing on oral tradition. Already at this early stage in redemptive history, Moses had written revelation to share (v. 4). Twice in this passage, the people respond to the word of God with a commitment of obedience. This is the heart of worship as covenant renewal. God’s word is read and taught–the stipulations, the promises, the blessings and curses. God’s people hear it, receive it, understand it, and respond.

The service also involved the *blood of the covenant*. With an altar (v. 4), sacrifices (v. 5), and sprinkling (v. 6), blood not only accompanies the administration of the covenant, it makes the provisions of the covenant possible. The shedding of blood represents substitution (there are twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel) and propitiation (hence the mention of burnt offerings and peace offerings). The blood of the covenant also pointed to consecration as the people were set apart by the word and set apart for obedience to the word (v. 8).

Finally, the service included the *bread of the covenant*. As Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the seventy elders beheld God in his glory, they ate and drank (v. 11). Covenant ceremonies often concluded with a meal (Gen. 26:30; 31:44, 46). Eating and drinking was an expression of fellowship, a sign and seal of the closeness the people had with each other and with their God.

Exodus 24 is a worship service, the first official gathering of corporate worship in the Bible. It contains the basic elements of a public service and sets the pattern for biblical worship. There is a call to worship, an approach to worship made possible by a bloody sacrifice, the reading of God’s word, a response to God’s word, a fellowship meal, and the promise of God’s presence as he draws near in worship. As we gather to rehearse the Lord’s covenant promises and provisions (1 Cor. 11:23-26), the same elements should be found in our services today.

The historic liturgy of the Christian church did not originate in evangelicalism, or in the Reformation, or in Europe. It grew out of Old Testament (and then New Testament) assumptions about what it meant for God’s people to gather and renew the covenant. The corporate gathering of God’s people is not mainly for community or for fellowship or for moral instruction, though all of these are present. “We gather each Lord’s Day,” Mike Horton reminds us, “not merely out of habit, social custom, or felt needs but because God has chosen this weekly festival as a foretaste of the everlasting Sabbath day that will be enjoyed fully at the marriage supper of the Lamb. God has called us out of the world and into his marvelous light: That is why we gather” (*A Better Way*, 24). Every Sunday, we come to worship our covenant-making God, be reminded of his covenant promises, and once again renew our covenant commitment. The deepest and richest and most biblical worship will have a liturgy that reflects these ancient, and continuing, realities.

# How Should We Then Worship?

R.C. Sproul at [*https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/how-should-we-then-worship*](https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/how-should-we-then-worship)

Three-quarters of the way through the twentieth century, Francis A. Schaeffer asked the question, “How should we then live?” His book of the same name answered the questions raised by the radical shift in our culture from modernity to post-modernity. The question that we face in our generation is closely related to it: “How should we then worship?” The “how?” of worship is a hotly disputed matter in our day. The issue has been described as the war of worship. If there has been a worship war in the church in America in the last thirty years, then surely by now its outcome has been decided. Far and away, the victorious mode of worship in our day is that form roughly described as contemporary worship. “Contemporary” in this context is contrasted with “traditional,” which is seen as being outmoded, passé, and irrelevant to contemporary individuals. Those who deem the contemporary shift in worship as a deterioration are in the minority, so it behooves us to explore the “how” question that Schaeffer first raised.

The “how” question is related to the other questions usually pursued by the journalists who seek to unwrap the details of a particular story. They ask the questions: “Who, what, where, when, and how?” In like manner, the best place for us to answer the “how” question of worship is to begin with the “who” question. Manifestly the most important question we ask is, “Who is it that we are called upon to worship with our hearts, our minds, and our souls?” The answer to that question at first glance is exceedingly easy. From a Christian perspective, the obvious reply is that we are called upon to worship the triune God. As easy as this answer is on the surface, when we see the concern given to this question throughout the Old and New Testaments, we realize that as fallen creatures it is one of our most basic and fundamental inclinations to worship something, or someone, other than the true God. It’s not by accident that the first four commandments of the Ten Commandments focus attention on the true God whom we are to worship according to His Being. The New Testament likewise calls us to honor God with true worship. Paul reminds us that at the heart of our fallenness is a refusal to honor God as God or to show proper gratitude to Him with praise and thanksgiving. So it is imperative that the Christian, at the beginning of his pursuit to understand what true worship is, gets it clear that the object of our worship is to be God and God alone.

When we move to the “where” question, it doesn’t appear to matter that much. We recall Jesus’ discussion with the woman at the well when He said that the New Testament church has no appointed central sanctuary where all true worship must take place. It’s not necessary for Christians to migrate to Jerusalem in order to offer authentic worship to God. Yet at the same time we notice throughout biblical history that people met together in a variety of locations, including house churches in the early years after Christ’s ascension. The house church phenomenon of the first century was not something intended to avoid institutional churches or to seek an underground church as such, but it was basically built on the foundation of convenience because the church was so small that the number of believers could easily meet in a home. As the church grew in number, it became necessary to find a place where a larger group could assemble for the solemn worship of God, as an act of corporate praise and celebration. So today it would seem that the obvious answer to the “where” question is that we should be worshiping together with other Christians as we gather in local churches.

The “when?” is also a question that is given attention biblically. Obviously, it is the obligation of the believer to worship God everyday, at all times. But God appoints special times and seasons for the gathering of His people in corporate worship. In the Old Testament, that special time was established early to be on the Sabbath. The term sabbath means seventh, or a cycle of one in seven. In the Old Testament economy, it was on the seventh day of the week. After the resurrection and the split of the Christian community from Judaism, it was changed from the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week, though the seven-day cycle remained intact. We understand that when the Christian community meets in solemn assembly, the communion of saints means that not only are Christians joined together locally in their own particular congregations, but that the worship of God goes beyond the walls of each individual church and incorporates churches around the nation and around the world, who, for the most part, are meeting at the same time. But the “where” and the “when” questions pale into insignificance when we return our attention to the “how” question. And the “how” question is ultimately determined by the “who” question.

We are to worship God how God wants us to worship Him. This is the apparent crisis in the revolution of worship in our day. The driving force behind the radical shift in how we worship God today is not because of a new discovery of the character of God but rather through pragmatic studies on what works to attract people to corporate worship. Thus, we devise new ways of worship that will accommodate the worship of the people of God to those who are outside the covenant community. We are told that churches ought to be seeker-sensitive, that is, they ought to design worship to be appealing to people who are unbelievers. That may be a wonderful strategy for evangelism, but we must remember that the purpose of Sabbath worship is not primarily evangelism. Worship and evangelism are not the same thing. The solemn assembly is to be the assembling together of believers, of the body of Christ, to ascribe worship and honor and praise to their God and to their Redeemer. And the worship must not be designed to please the unbeliever or the believer. Worship should be designed to please God. We remember the tragic circumstances of the sons of Aaron in the Old Testament, who offered strange fire before the Lord, which God had not commanded. As a result of their “experiment” in worship, God devoured them instantly. In protest, Aaron went to Moses inquiring about God’s furious reaction. Moses reminded Aaron that God had said that He must be regarded as holy by all who approach Him.

I believe that the one attribute of God that should inform our thinking about worship more than any other is His holiness. This is what defines His character and should be manifested in how we respond to Him. To be sure, God is both transcendent and imminent. He is not merely remote and aloof and apart from us. He also comes to join us. He abides with us. He enters into fellowship. He brings us into His family. We invoke His presence. But when we are encouraged to draw near to Him in New Testament worship, we are encouraged to draw near to a God who, even in His imminence, is altogether holy.

The modern movement of worship is designed to break down barriers between man and God, to remove the veil, as it were, from the fearsome holiness of God, which might cause us to tremble. It is designed to make us feel comfortable. The music we import into the church is music that we draw from the world of entertainment in the secular arena. I heard one theologian say recently that he was not only pleased with this innovative style of worship and music but thought that what the church needs today is music that is even more “funky.” When we hear clergy and theologians encourage the church to be more funky in worship, I fear that the church has lost its identity. Rather, let us return to Augustine who agreed that we can use a variety of music in our worship, but all that is done should be done with a certain gravitas, a certain solemnity, always containing the attributes of reverence and awe before the living God. The “what?” of worship, the “where?” of worship, the “when?” of worship, and especially the “how?” of worship must always be determined by the character of the One Who is the living God.

**Matthew chapter 6**

[J.C. Ryle](https://www.gracegems.org/23/ryle_sermons.htm), 1856 at [*https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/m06.htm*](https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/m06.htm)

*"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.  Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.  But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,  that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.*

*"And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.  But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.  And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.  Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.* [Matthew 6:1-8](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Matt%206.1-8)

In this part of the sermon on the mount the Lord Jesus gives us instruction on two subjects. One is that of giving alms. The other is that of prayer. Both were subjects to which the Jews attached great importance. Both in themselves deserve the serious attention of all professing Christians.

Observe that our Lord takes it for granted, *that* ***all who call themselves His disciples will GIVE ALMS.*** He assumes as a matter of course, that they will think it a solemn duty to give, according to their means, to relieve the needs of others. The only point He handles is the *manner* in which the duty should be done. This is a weighty lesson. It condemns the selfish stinginess of many in the matter of giving money. How many are "rich towards themselves," but poor towards God! How many never give a farthing to do good to the bodies and souls of men! And have such people any right to be called Christians, in their present state of mind? It may be well doubted. A giving Savior should have giving disciples.

Observe again that our Lord takes it for granted, *that* ***all who call themselves His disciples will PRAY.***He assumes this also as a matter of course. He only gives directions as to the best way of praying. This is another lesson which deserves to be continually remembered. It teaches plainly that prayerless people are not genuine Christians. It is not enough to join in the prayers of the congregation on Sundays, or attend the prayer of a family on week-days. There must be private prayer also. Without this we may be outward members of Christ's church, but we are not living members of Christ.

But what are the rules laid down for our guidance about almsgiving and praying? They are few and simple. But they contain much matter for thought.

In GIVING, ***everything like ostentation is to be abhorred and avoided.***We are not to give as if we wished everybody to see how liberal and charitable we are, and desired the praise of our fellow men. We are to shun everything like *display*. We are to give quietly, and make as little noise as possible about our charities. We are to aim at the spirit of the proverbial saying, "Don't let your left hand know what your right hand does."

In PRAYING, *the principal object to be sought, is to be alone with God.* We should endeavor to find some place where no mortal eye sees us, and where we can pour out our hearts with the feeling that no one is looking at us but God. This is a rule which many find it very difficult to follow. The poor man and the servant often find it almost impossible to be really alone. But it is a rule which we must all make great efforts to obey. Necessity, in such cases, is often the mother of invention. When a person has a real desire to find some place, where he can be in secret with his God, he will generally find a way.

In all our duties, whether giving, or praying, the great thing to be kept in mind is, *that* ***we have to do with a heart-searching and all-knowing God.*** Everything like formality, affectation, or mere bodily service, is abominable and worthless in God's sight. He takes no account of the quantity of money we give, or the quantity of words we use. The one thing at which His all-seeing eye looks is the nature of our motives, and the state of our hearts. "Our Father sees in secret."

May we all remember these things. Here lies a rock, on which many are continually making spiritual shipwreck. They flatter themselves that all must be right with their souls, if they only perform a certain amount of "religious duties." They forget that God does not regard the quantity, but the quality of our service. His favor is not to be bought, as many seem to suppose, by the formal repetition of a number of words, or the self-righteous payment of a sum of money to a charitable institution. Where are our hearts? Are we doing all, whether we give or pray, "as to the Lord, and not to men?" Do we realize the eye of God? Do we simply and solely desire to please Him, who "sees in secret," and by whom "actions are weighed?" ([1 Sam. 2:3](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Sam.%202.3).) Are we sincere? These are the sort of questions, with which we should daily ply our souls.

**MATTHEW 6:9-15**

*In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.  Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.  Give us this day our daily bread.  And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.  And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.  "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.  But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* [Matthew 6:9-15](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Matt%206.9-15)

Perhaps no part of Scripture is so well known as this. Its words are familiar, wherever Christianity is found. Thousands, and tens of thousands, who never saw a Bible, or heard the pure Gospel, are acquainted with "Our Father," and "Paternoster." Happy would it be for the world, if this prayer was as well known in the spirit, as it is in the letter!

Perhaps no part of Scripture is so *full*, and so *simple* at the same time, as this. It is the first prayer which we learn to offer up, when we are little children. Here is its simplicity. It contains the germ of everything which the most advanced saint can desire. Here is its fullness. The more we ponder every word it contains, the more we shall feel, "this prayer is of God."

The Lord's prayer consists of ten parts or sentences. There is one declaration of the Being to whom we pray. There are three prayers respecting His name, His kingdom, and His will. There are four prayers respecting our daily needs, our sins, our weakness, and our dangers. There is one profession of our feeling towards others. There is one concluding ascription of praise. In all these parts we are taught to say "we," and "our." We are to remember others, as well as ourselves. On each of these parts a volume might be written. We must content ourselves at present with taking up sentence by sentence, and marking out the direction in which each sentence points.

The first sentence declares ***to whom we are to pray****--*"Our *Father* who is in heaven." We are not to cry to saints and angels, but to the everlasting Father, the Father of spirits, the Lord of heaven and earth. We call Him Father, in the lowest sense, as our Creator; as Paul told the Athenians, "in him we live, and move, and have our being--we are also his offspring." ([Acts 17:28](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Acts%2017.28).) We call Him Father in the highest sense, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, reconciling us to Himself, through the death of His Son. ([Col. 1:20-22](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Col.%201.20-22).) We profess that which the Old Testament saints only saw dimly, if at all--we profess to be His children by faith in Christ, and to have "the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father." ([Rom. 8:15](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Rom.%208.15).) This, we must never forget, is the sonship that we must desire, if we would be saved. Without faith in Christ's blood, and union with Him, it is vain to talk of trusting in the Fatherhood of God.

The second sentence is ***a petition respecting God's name****--*"May your name be kept holy." By the "name" of God we mean all those attributes under which He is revealed to us--His power, wisdom, holiness, justice, mercy, and truth. By asking that they may be "holy," we mean that they may be made known and glorified. The glory of God is the first thing that God's children should desire. It is the object of one of our Lord's own prayers--"Father, glorify your name." ([John 12:28](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/John%2012.28).) It is the purpose for which the world was created. It is the end for which the saints are called and converted. It is the chief thing we should seek, that "in all things God may be glorified." ([1 Peter 4:11](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Pet%204.11).)

The third sentence is ***a petition concerning God's kingdom****--*"May your kingdom come." By His kingdom we mean first, the kingdom of *grace* which God sets up and maintains in the hearts of all living members of Christ, by His Spirit and word. But we mean chiefly, the kingdom of *glory* which shall one day be set up, when Jesus shall come the second time, and "all men shall know Him from the least to the greatest." This is the time when sin, and sorrow, and Satan shall be cast out of the world. It is the time when the Jews shall be converted, and the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in, ([Rom. 11:25](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Rom.%2011.25),) and a time that is above all things to be desired. It therefore fills a foremost place in the Lord's prayer. We ask that which is expressed in the words of the Burial service, "that it may please you to hasten your kingdom."

The fourth sentence is ***a petition concerning God's will****--*"May your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." We here pray that God's laws may be obeyed by men as perfectly, readily, and unceasingly, as they are by angels in heaven. We ask that those who now obey not His laws, may be taught to obey them, and that those who do obey them, may obey them better. Our truest happiness is perfect submission to God's will, and it is the highest charity to pray that all mankind may know it, obey it, and submit to it.

The fifth sentence is***a petition respecting our own daily needs****--*"give us this day our daily bread." We are here taught to acknowledge our entire dependence on God, for the supply of our daily necessities. As Israel required daily manna, so we require daily "bread." We confess that we are poor, weak, needy creatures, and beseech Him who is our Maker to take care of us. We ask for "bread," as the simplest of our needs, and in that word we include all that our bodies require.

The sixth sentence is ***a petition respecting our sins****--*"Forgive us our debts." We confess that we are sinners, and need daily grants of pardon and forgiveness. This is a part of the Lord's prayer which deserves especially to be remembered. It condemns all self-righteousness and self-justifying. We are instructed here to keep up a continual habit of confession at the throne of grace, and a continual habit of seeking mercy and remission. Let this never be forgotten. We need daily to "wash our feet." ([John 13:10](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/John%2013.10).)

The seventh sentence is ***a profession respecting our own feelings towards others****--*we ask our Father to "forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." This is the only profession in the whole prayer, and the only part on which our Lord comments and dwells, when He has concluded the prayer. The plain object of it is, to remind us that we must not expect our prayers for forgiveness to be heard, if we pray with malice and spite in our hearts towards others. To pray in such a frame of mind is mere formality and hypocrisy. It is even worse than hypocrisy. It is as much as saying, "Do not forgive me at all." Our prayer is nothing without charity. We must not expect to be forgiven, if we cannot forgive.

The eighth sentence is ***a petition respecting our weakness****--*"Bring us not into temptation." It teaches us that we are liable, at all times, to be led astray, and fall. It instructs us to confess our infirmity, and beseech God to hold us up, and not allow us to run into sin. We ask Him, who orders all things in heaven and earth, to restrain us from going into that which would injure our souls, and never to allow us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear. ([1 Cor. 10:13](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Cor.%2010.13).)

The ninth sentence is ***a petition respecting our dangers****--*"deliver us from evil." We are here taught to ask God to deliver us from the evil that is in the world, the evil that is within our own hearts, and not least from that evil one, the devil. We confess that, so long as we are in the body, we are constantly seeing, hearing, and feeling the presence of evil. It is about us, and within us, and around us on every side. And we entreat Him, who alone can preserve us, to be continually delivering as from its power. ([John 17:15](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/John%2017.15).)

The last sentence is ***an ascription of praise****--*"yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory." We declare in these words our belief, that the kingdoms of this world are the rightful property of our Father--that to Him alone belongs all "power,"--and that He alone deserves to receive all "glory." And we conclude by offering to Him the profession of our hearts, that we give Him all honor and praise, and rejoice that He is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

And now let us all examine ourselves, and see whether we really desire to have the things which we are taught to ask for in the Lord's Prayer. Thousands, it may be feared, repeat these words daily as a form, but never consider what they are saying. They care nothing for the "glory," the "kingdom," or the "will" of God. They have no sense of dependence, sinfulness, weakness, or danger. They have no love or charity towards their enemies. And yet they repeat the Lord's Prayer! These things ought not to be so. May we resolve that, by God's help, our hearts shall go together with our lips! Happy is he who can really call God his Father through Jesus Christ his Savior, and can therefore say a heart felt "Amen" to all that the Lord's Prayer contains.

**MATTHEW 6:16-24**

*"Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.  But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,  so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.  "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;  but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.  For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.  "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.  But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!  "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.* [Matthew 6:16-24](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Matt%206.16-24)

There are three subjects brought before us in this part of our Lord's sermon on the mount. These three are fasting, worldliness, and singleness of purpose in religion.

***Fasting****,* or occasional abstinence from food, in order to bring the body into subjection to the spirit, is a practice frequently mentioned in the Bible, and generally in connection with prayer. David fasted, when his child was sick. Daniel fasted, when he sought special light from God. Paul and Barnabas fasted, when they appointed elders. Esther fasted, before going in to Ahasuerus. It is a subject about which we find no direct command in the New Testament. It seems to be left to every one's discretion, whether he will fast or not. There is great wisdom in this. Many a poor man never has enough to eat, and it would be an insult to tell him to fast. Many a sickly person can hardly be kept well with the closest attention to diet, and could not fast without bringing on illness. It is a matter in which every one must be persuaded in his own mind, and not be hasty to condemn others, who do not agree with him. One thing only must never be forgotten. Those who fast should do it *quietly, secretly, and without ostentation*. Let them not "appear to men" to fast. Let them not fast to man, but to God.

***Worldliness***is one of the greatest dangers that beset man's soul. It is no wonder that we find our Lord speaking strongly about it. It is an treacherous, harmful, enticing, and powerful enemy. It seems so innocent to pay close attention to our business! It seems so harmless to seek our happiness in this world, so long as we keep clear of open sins! Yet here is a rock on which many make shipwreck to all eternity. They "lay up treasure on earth," and forget to "lay up treasure in heaven." May we all remember this! Where are our hearts? What do we love best? Are our chief affections on things in earth, or things in heaven? Life or death depends on the answer we can give to these questions. If our treasure is earthly, our hearts will be earthly also. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be."

***Singleness of purpose***is one great secret of spiritual prosperity. If our eyes do not see distinctly, we cannot walk without stumbling and falling. If we attempt to work for two different masters, we are sure to give satisfaction to neither. It is just the same with respect to our souls. We cannot serve Christ and the world at the same time. It is vain to attempt it. The thing cannot be done. The ark and Dagon will never stand together. God must be king over our hearts. His law, His will, His precepts must receive our first attention. Then, and not until then, everything in our inward man will fall into its right place. Unless our hearts are so ordered, everything will be in confusion. "Your whole body will be full of darkness."

Let us learn from our Lord's instruction about fasting, ***the great importance of cheerfulness in our religion.*** Those words, "anoint your head, and wash your face," are full of deep meaning. They should teach us to aim at letting men see, that we find Christianity makes us happy. Never let us forget that there is no religion in looking melancholy and gloomy. Are we dissatisfied with Christ's wages, and Christ's service? Surely not! Then let us not look as if we were.

Let us learn from our Lord's caution about worldliness ***what immense need we all have to watch and pray against an earthly spirit.*** What are the vast majority of professing Christians round us doing? They are "laying up treasure on earth." There can be no mistake about it. Their tastes, their ways, their habits tell a fearful tale. They are not "laying up treasure in heaven." Oh! let us all beware that we do not sink into hell by paying excessive attention to lawful things. Open transgression of God's law slays its thousands, but worldliness its tens of thousands.

Let us learn from our Lord's words about the "single eye," ***the true secret of the failures****,* which so many Christians seem to make in their religion. There are failures in all quarters. There are thousands in our churches uncomfortable, ill at ease, and dissatisfied with themselves, and they hardly know why. The reason is revealed here. They are trying to keep in with both sides. They are endeavoring to please God and please man, to serve Christ and serve the world at the same time. Let us not commit this mistake. Let us be decided, thorough-going, uncompromising followers of Christ. Let out motto be that of Paul, "One thing I do." ([Phil. 3:13](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Phil.%203.13).) Then we shall be happy Christians. We shall feel the sun shining on our faces. Heart, head, and conscience will all be full of light. *Decision* is the secret of happiness in religion. Be decided for Christ, and "your whole body will be full of light."

1. Metzger, B. M., United Bible Societies. (1994). [*A textual commentary on the Greek New Testament, second edition a companion volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (4th rev. ed.)*](https://ref.ly/logosres/tcgnt?ref=Bible.Mt6.13&off=0&ctx=%0a~6:13+%CF%80%CE%BF%CE%BD%CE%B7%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%85%CD%82.+%7BA%7D%0aThe+ascription+at+th) (pp. 13–14). London; New York: United Bible Societies. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). [*Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*](https://ref.ly/logosres/bkrc-mt?ref=Bible.Mt6.13b&off=0&ctx=The+Conclusion%0a~13b.+%5bFor+thine+is+the+ki) (Vol. 9, pp. 337–339). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)