

Day 2: Worship in the Old and New Testaments and in the Early Church

20 minutes, 40 in translation

Break

20 minutes, 40 in translation

Session goals:

1. Review
2. Key Terms
3. Worship in the Old Testament
4. Worship in the New Testament
5. Tying this back to last week. Worship: free beings recognizing the Triune God of Israel for who he really is, and enjoying him!
6. Primitivism, Technology, and Contemporary Concerns

Outline

1. Review
 - a. The Triune nature of God means that God's desire for worship is other-oriented.
 - b. Human beings are uniquely images of God, and perform a special function in the world. We are the only beings who can truly "worship"!
2. Key Terms
 - a. Glory – In Hebrew and Greek, conveying the sense of weightiness; importance
 - b. Worship – "worth-ship"; actively acknowledging that the deity is worth of glory
 - c. Holiness – Moral perfection; or, set aside for a special purpose.
 - d. Music – Can be part of worship; different kinds of music contribute in different ways
 - e. Liturgy – An order of service.
 - i. *Gr leitōs + erga* – Works of public service, ministry to a group
 - ii. Every organized worshipping community has liturgy! Some communities have more traditional and set/rigid liturgy; other communities are more free and innovative. What are the strengths and dangers of each?
3. Worship in the Old Testament
 - a. Early examples: No music or liturgy presented, but rather food shared with God!

General points from Leviticus 1–7

- Sacrifices were not just for "sin" or even ritual impurity, but also for thanksgiving and celebration
 - Because most of us are far-removed from the slaughter of animals for our meat, we focus on the sadness of the animal being slaughtered. But for most people throughout human history, slaughter was a common act, and as part of a ritual it could be celebratory. It means we're gonna eat some meat!!
- Sacrifices involved "sacrifice," i.e., giving up something that was mine.

- There are gradations of animals for the rich and the poor—the sacrifice is proportional and must cost something (cf. 1 Chr 21:22–24, David)
- Sacrifices are participatory: the worshiper, the priest, and the deity all do something together
- The sacrifices for sin were symbolic, not magical, and not eternally propitiatory
 - Ps 50:12-13 “If I were hungry I would not tell you, For the world is Mine, and all it contains. Shall I eat the flesh of bulls Or drink the blood of male goats?”
 - Isa 1:11 ““What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?” Says the Lord. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats.”
 - Hebrews 10:1–4
- Sacrifices teach of the holiness of God and celebrate His created order
- Danger: “hyper-typers” who see too much Jesus in all the details!

Schnittjer: The portions of the animal (306-309)

- “The philosophy of life was enacted through the system of worship, from the structure of the sacrifice” (306).
- The animal is placed legs up in the air, with its head lower than hindquarters, to drain the blood. The legs, underbelly, and reproductive organs are exposed heavenward.
- First part: The fat surrounding the kidneys, the liver, and the entrails
 - “The fat belongs to YHWH” (Lev 3:16c)
 - The kidneys are the seat of the emotions and the innermost being; cf. Ps 139:13
- Kidneys divided the rest of the animal into what was “above”—the hind legs, the entrails, the reproductive organs—and what was “below”—the body and head
- Second part: “below” the kidneys was reserved for the worshiper and his family
- Third part: “above” the kidneys was reserved to be burned or to be eaten by the priests (in certain sacrifices)
 - Entrails and genitals: “This part of the animal symbolized fertility and life. After it was washed, it was placed on the top of the sacrifice, depicting the Creator’s life-giving power.” (308)
 - i. Gen 4:3–5 Cain and Abel
 - ii. Gen 8:20–22 Noah and his sons
 - iii. Gen 12; 13; etc Patriarchs
 - iv. Lev 7:11–18 the *šelem*, well-being offering. Meat, bread made with flour and oil.
 1. The Lord’s Supper and Offerings are direct descendants of the *šelem*.
 - v. Exod 24 A meal shared with God
 - vi. Deut 12:10–12; 14:27–29 Offerings shared by the worshiper, the priest, the Levites, the poor/widow/orphan/foreigner.
- b. Music incorporated into worship
 - i. Exod 15; Judg 5 Songs of Moses and Miriam, and of Deborah. Special occasions of celebration after deliverance.
 - ii. 2 Sam 6, bringing up the ark; David and others sing and dance.
 1. 1 Chr 15–16 version: A more orderly incorporation of the Psalms.

- iii. 1 Chr 25: Levites assigned for the temple, to “prophesy with” instruments (composition, performance in worship). Represents a time when the Psalms have been collected into books and were regularly used in some sort of organized way.
- iv. Psalms 120–134 are called “Songs of Ascents,” sung when going up to Jerusalem to worship
- v. Book of Psalms: All different types of prayers that God has given his people to sing to him!
 - 1. Praise psalms/hymns
 - 2. Royal psalms
 - 3. Lament psalms
 - 4. Hopeful psalms of deliverance
 - 5. Etc.
- c. Prayer was typically aloud and public!
 - i. First example of someone praying in his/her heart: Hannah, 1 Sam 1—Eli thought she was drunk.
 - ii. Daniel 6:10 After the destruction of the temple, personal prayer became one of the most important ways to connect to God.
- d. Scripture reading in worship
 - i. Most people didn’t have written scriptures; most people couldn’t read. Interesting area of study for me: What was the role of written texts in an oral culture?
 - ii. Public reading for the purpose of confession: Neh 8:1–3, 8; 9:3; 13:1
- 4. Worship in the New Testament
 - a. Offerings
 - i. “occasional,” for a specific purpose
 - 1. 1 Cor 16:1–4 Paul asked for offering to be collected in advance: Gentile churches giving to help persecuted Jewish believers in Judea
 - 2. Rom 15:22–33 Paul asks for offering from Roman Christians to support him on his mission to Spain
 - ii. Regular offerings, “in-kind” and money
 - 1. Acts 4:32–5:11 Gifts administered by apostles
 - 2. Acts 6:1–7 Appointment of deacons
 - 3. 1 Cor 9 Paul expects that he could live off of the offerings of the people
 - iii. Purposes
 - 1. To share the Supper together!
 - 2. To support the apostles (or overseers/elders?)
 - 3. To provide for the poor
 - 4. People would process to the altar before the celebration, bringing all sorts of foodstuffs, and other fruits of their labor. “Seven altars” in one text of the early church, for all the offerings on a particular feast day.¹
 - b. Central: The Lord’s Supper
 - i. Combines imagery of Passover *and* the Day of Atonement

¹ Josef Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy: To the Time of Gregory the Great* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1959), 171–172.

1. Passover meal was a *šelem*; confirmed to Israel that they were God's people; "rolled away their shame" (Josh 5)
2. Day of Atonement: Heb 8–10; covering moral transgressions; creating right relationship between God and his people
- ii. Typically involved the church coming together to eat a full meal!
 1. 1 Cor 11:17–22 The practice was to eat a whole meal together
 2. Jude 12 "love feasts"
- iii. Other important texts; emphasize the "Passover" aspect of the Lord's Supper (eating a meal with God)
 1. Jesus is New Moses: Luke 22:17–20
 2. Jesus is the Passover Lamb: John 6:53–56
- iv. Four-fold process (1 Cor 11:23–27)²
 1. He took (oblation) – tangible things that we made (or paid for) are set aside for special use (consecrated), and given to God.
 2. He gave thanks (eucharist) – we acknowledge that all that we have comes from God; he has met the needs of the entire person: body (bread), soul (salvation), and community.
 3. He broke the bread (fraction) – Jesus's body was broken and given to many. We are all fed from the same loaf, we are all branches on the same vine, we are all part of the same body.
 4. He gave (communion) – We receive and participate in God in some mysterious way through this gift of himself that he has given us.
- c. Discursive worship (with words): Music, prayer, tongues, prophecy, scripture
 - i. Words give meaning to the motions that we perform! Without scripture, prayer, song, prophecy: how would we know what the signs of the Lord's Supper and the Offerings represent?!
 - ii. Throughout the New Testament: understanding of the Jewish Scriptures (OT) is assumed and promoted.
 1. Most commonly-used books: Psalms, Isaiah, Deuteronomy
 2. Not every local community had a complete copy of the OT (still using scrolls! Expensive), but all of the Apostles taught in continuity with the OT. E.g., 1 Cor 15:3–4
 - iii. Eph 5:18–20 Instead of being drunk with wine (communion wine?), fill our hearts with psalms (songs that God has provided), hymns (songs of the established church?), and spiritual songs (given to us by the Spirit?). "To the Lord"
 - iv. 1 Cor 14:14–15 Sometimes the people sang spontaneous songs (in tongues), and sometimes previously-composed songs of the church
 - v. Sometimes people prayed and sang in tongues, and sometimes people prophesied. (1 Cor 11; 14)
 1. Different views on this topic: Continuationists, vs. cessationist. I think that prophesying was only for the early church, until the NT scriptures were written and collected. Tongues + interpretation = prophecy.
 2. However, regardless of your view, the important principle regarding tongues and prophecy is: Human beings hearing,

² Thomas C. Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, 105–126.

understanding, and acknowledging the God of Israel—that's what worship is!

a. Acts 2:11

b. 1 Cor 14:19–25

5. Tying this back to last week. Worship: free beings recognizing the Triune God of Israel for who he really is, and enjoying him!

6. Primitivism, Technology, and Contemporary Concerns

a. Primitivism: The mistaken belief that everything earlier was better, and that we should try to get back to the earliest practices and beliefs.

i. Not true! Lots of problems in the NT church, and in the first three centuries, and beyond

ii. Lots of great benefits of technology: more people have access to Scripture, great prayers, great music. We can all check the Scriptures to ensure that what the pastor is saying is true.

iii. Anyway, there is no way to go back to the way things were. So, we should carefully study the past, take its lessons, and try to innovate in ways that are consistent with the best of tradition.

b. Offerings

i. Are we giving?

ii. When are we giving, and how?

c. Lord's Supper

i. I'm in favor of weekly communion! But I recognize not everyone is in favor of that. What is the danger of doing it weekly?

d. Music

i. How does our music, scripture reading and prayer provide meaning to the other acts of worship?

Scriptures Read Aloud:

1 Chron 21:22–24
Isaiah 1:11
Hebrews 10:1–4
Leviticus 7:11–18
Deut 14:27–29
Daniel 6:10
Nehemiah 8:1–3
1 Cor 16:1–4
Acts 4:32–37
1 Cor 11:17–22
John 6:53–56
1 Cor 11:23–27
Ephesians 5:18–20
1 Cor 14:14–15
Acts 2:11
1 Cor 14:19–25

1 Kronikų 21:22–24
Izaijo 1:11
Hebrajams 10:1–4
Kunigų 7:11–18
Pakart. Įstat. 14:27–29
Danieliaus 6:10
Nehemijo 8:1–3
1 Kor 16:1–4
Apaš. Darb. 4:32–37
1 Kor 11:17–22
Jono 6:53–56
1 Kor 11:23–27
Efez. 5:18–20
1 Kor 14:14–15
Apaš. Darb. 2:11
1 Kor 14:19–25