

WORSHIP FROM GOD'S HOLY TEMPLE

Part 1

We will study the acts of worship in song, prayer, the word and giving that the Lord has established for His Church and that we therefore perform during our gatherings for worship. Our emphasis will be on the reasons revealed in scripture for *why* the Lord has established these acts of worship from His holy people. We begin with considering certain fundamental principles relevant to studying the acts of worship given to the Church.

I. Principles Guiding Our Study of the Acts of Worship

Our study of the acts of worship is not merely an exercise in identifying what acts the scriptures shows the New Testament Church offering in worship to God. Rather, why these acts of worship were given, and why we must adhere to the form of worship revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures, is first a matter of certain fundamental truths about God, His people and the purpose of worship that we see revealed in the Bible.

A. Three fundamentals to our understanding of worship

1. Only God is worthy of worship. (Deut 6:13; 1 Sam 7:3; Matt. 4:10; Rev. 22:8-9)
2. God is the center and object of worship. (Psalm 29:2; Psalm 89:7)
3. God alone determines proper worship.

B. The church as God's holy people and temple

1. The Church is God's sanctified people in Christ Jesus (Exo 19:5-6; Lev 20:26; Phil. 3:3; 1 Pet 2:4-10)
2. The Church, collectively and individually, is the temple of God in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:9, 16; 1 Cor 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Tim 3:17; Hebrews 3:6; 1Peter 2:5)

C. The purposes of worship

1. To keep God holy and set part before His people and the world (Lev. 10:3; Num 20:12)

WORSHIP FROM GOD'S HOLY TEMPLE

Part 1

2. To glorify the Lord. (Psalm 22:23; Psalm 89:6; Rom 15:6; 1 Cor 6:20; Rev 15:4)
3. To strengthen the Church (1 Cor 14:4-5, 12, 26)
4. To instruct God's people. (Eph. 5:19; Col 3:16)
5. To provoke to love and good works (Heb. 10:23-25)

D. Differences in the Old and New covenants

The New Testament reveals to us that Christ's New Covenant differs in kind from the Mosaic Covenant. While God's covenant with Israel through Moses was a covenant of shadows and types pointing men to the New Covenant God would bring through His Son, Christ's New Covenant is the true substance of God's heavenly promises.

1. Jeremiah 30:31
2. Colossians 2:17
3. Hebrews 8:1-2
4. Hebrews 9:24
5. Hebrews 10:1

E. The proper spirit in worship

Scripture also reveals to us that man is to approach worship with the proper spirit ordained by God.

1. Consecrated to worship. (2 Chron 30)
2. Purified in spirit by the blood of Christ. (Psalm 24; John 4:23-24; 1 Peter 1:18-19)
3. Desiring to worship. (Ps. 27)
4. Recognizing God's holy and powerful nature and His steadfast love, we revere Him and seek to offer the worship that He desires. (Ps 63; Is 66:1-2.)
5. Offering acceptable sacrifice through Jesus Christ (1 Pet 2:4-5).
6. Looking for the "city to come" and continually offering worship in sacrifice to God. (Hebrews 13:14-15)

F. God's purposes for revealed patterns

God at certain times has revealed patterns to His people for His purposes:

WORSHIP FROM GOD'S HOLY TEMPLE

Part 1

1. That God may dwell with His people in worship.
 - a. Exo 25 (v. 8, “let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst”; v.22, “there I will meet you”; v.40, “And see that you make them after the pattern for them, which is being shown you on the mountain.”)

2. As a “witness” for God’s people would be faithful and obey Him.
 - a. Joshua 22 (v.27, “that it may be a witness between us and you...that we might do the service of the Lord before Him”)
 - b. 1 Chron 28 (v.9, “if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; v.19, “All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.”)

3. To call God’s people to repentance that He may dwell with them.
 - a. Ezek. 43 (v.11, “shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern”; v.11, “shew them the form of the house... write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them”)

4. To reveal God’s redemption in Jesus Christ.
 - a. Heb. 8 (v.5, “Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount”)
 - b. Heb. 9 (v.23, “It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.”)

5. To show the grace and mercy of Jesus to sinners.
 1. 1 Tim 1 (v.16, “for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.”)

6. Christians are encouraged to follow, in the faith and love of Christ, the pattern of the apostles’ instruction, which allows them to share the

WORSHIP FROM GOD'S HOLY TEMPLE

Part 1

apostles' confidence in the salvation of Christ and to be encouraged in living for the gospel.

- a. 2. Tim. 1:8-14 (v.13, "Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.")

II. Worshipping God in Song

Under both the Mosaic Covenant and the New Covenant, God's people worshipped Him in song. While recognizing the differences in the Covenants is essential to a proper understanding of Christian worship, we can learn from the songs of Israel the proper spirit and focus of singing offered in worship. Consider the wording of these songs given to us in scripture.

A. *Exodus 15:1-18* The song of Moses after deliverance from Pharaoh

Moses' language focuses on God's powerful and glorious nature and His sovereignty over all peoples. It also expresses the humility and thankfulness of God's people.

v. 6 Your right hand, LORD, was majestic in power. Your right hand, Lord, shattered the enemy.

v. 11 "Who is like you— majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?"

v. 18 "The Lord reigns for ever and ever."

B. *1 Chron 16:8-36* David's Song of Thanks

David sang this song of thanks before Israel upon the return of the Ark of the Covenant.

vv. 9-10 "tell of all his wondrous works!
Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice!"

v. 14 He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth.

vv. 23-25 "Sing to the LORD, all the earth!
Tell of his salvation from day to day.
Declare his glory among the nations,

WORSHIP FROM GOD'S HOLY TEMPLE

Part 1

his marvelous works among all the peoples!
For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised,
and he is to be feared above all gods.”

v. 29 “Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering and come before him!
Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness”

v.36 “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting!”

Then all the people said, “Amen!” and praised the LORD.

C. Revelation 5:9-10

John’s vision of the new song of the twenty-four elders

⁹“Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation,
¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth.”

D. Revelation 15:3-4 The Song of Moses and the Lamb

John gave his vision of the victorious song of Moses and the Lamb sung by
the saints who overcame Satan’s power.

³“Great and amazing are your deeds,
O Lord God the Almighty!
Just and true are your ways,
O King of the nations!
⁴ Who will not fear, O Lord,
and glorify your name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come
and worship you,
for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

Question 1: From the examples of these songs, what should properly be the focus of
our song worship?

WORSHIP FROM GOD'S HOLY TEMPLE

Part 1

III. God's purpose in commanding song worship

Christians are expressly commanded by God to worship Him in song. We therefore worship the Lord by song in our assemblies. We will consider each of these instructions and the context in which they appear. We will also consider other New Testament passages that present singing praise to the Lord in relation to Christ's salvation to appreciate the significance of song worship to God.

A. Romans 15:8-13

vv. 8-9 "For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God truthfulness, in order to confirm he promise given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentile might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, 'Therefore, I will praise you among the Gentiles and sing to your name.'"

Question 2: How is song worship presented in relation to Christ's universal offer of salvation?

B. Hebrews 2:10-18

vv. 10-12 "For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, 'I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.'"

Question 3: How is song worship linked to God's fellowship with the saints?

C. Ephesians 4:3, 15-16; 5:1, 8b-10, 17-21

4:3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace...15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16From him the whole body, joined

WORSHIP FROM GOD'S HOLY TEMPLE

Part 1

and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children...8b Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

5:17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. 19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Questions:

- (4) What commands does Paul give in Eph 4:1-3, 15-16 and 22-24?
- (5) What overall instruction does Paul repeat in vv. 5:8-10 and 17?
- (6) What is the purpose of Paul's instruction that brethren "speak to one another" in 4:15-16 and 5:19-21?
- (7) To what is the Spirit connected by Paul in 4:3 and 5:21?

D. Colossians 3:12-17

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms,

WORSHIP FROM GOD'S HOLY TEMPLE

Part 1

hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Questions:

(8) What spirit must be present for Christians to admonish in song? vv. 12-16a

(9) What purpose is achieved through singing by the Church? vv. 15-16

(10) What commitment must the Church make to Christ? v. 17.

E. Hebrews 13:10-15

10 We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat. 11 The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. 12 And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. 13 Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. 14 For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. 15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise--the fruit of lips that confess his name.

Questions:

(11) What is the basis for our song worship? v. 10.

(12) How should our song service “acknowledge His name”? How should we view our song worship as the “fruit of our lips” offered to God?

IV. Conclusion

Only God is to receive our worship. He has ordained for us how we must worship so that we may have fellowship with Him in that worship. We therefore offer our

WORSHIP FROM GOD'S HOLY TEMPLE

Part 1

worship according to His commands. We sing to the Lord as a “sacrifice of praise” to the Lord from the holy temple *He* created through Jesus Christ.