**Theology of Worship**



**A Course Offered by
Ambassador International University
Chongwe, Zambia**

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**Slides on who I am**

**The Theology of Worship
Ambassador International University Zambia**

Welcome to this unique course on the Biblical and Christian Theology of Worship. We consider this course unique because, while much is written on worship in the local church, very little time is spent examining what the Bible says about the theology behind worship. Worship has a theology behind it that is found throughout Scripture. In this course, you will find that it is, well, a fun course of study. It is not solely experiential in that it will go beyond the mere practices or forms of worship. But it is not a heavy theological study alone. It will combine both experience and theology. I think you will enjoy it.

This course will be held over the next eight school days and you will spend five hours a day in the classroom. You are also expected to spend time outside of class in reading and preparing of the individual and group assignments.

**Course Objectives:**

1. The student should discover a broad horizon of genuine worship.
2. The student should gain an understanding of the Biblical pattern of the dialogue of worship: revelation and response.
3. The student should gain a broad acquaintance with the historical development of Christian worship.
4. The student should develop a knowledge of the various elements of worship and their application in the worship service of a local church.
5. The student should be able to develop a Biblical and systematic theology of worship.

**The grade you will receive will depend on the following five requirements:**

1. Class Attendance / Participation: Each student will be expected to attend class faithfully and participate in class discussions. Unexcused absences will diminish one’s grade; tardiness may also result in the loss of points on the final grade.
2. Read the Textbook: The textbook for this course is the Bible and the book *Worship Is A Verb* by Robert Webber (available at the library). Daily reading assignments will be given, and it is expected that the student will have read the assignments and be prepared to discuss in class.
3. Test and Quizzes: To determine whether the student is learning the material covered in the textbook and class lectures, tests and quizzes will be given. Tests and quizzes will be based on the reading assignments and the lectures.
4. Worship Services: The class will be divided into small groups. Each group will design a 15-minute worship service which will display the elements of worship as learned in class. Each group will present its worship service and the entire class will participate in each service.
5. Worship Passage Presentation: Each student will choose an Old Testament or a New Testament passage and give a five-minute oral presentation on the passages, describing how worship takes place in the passage. describing how worship takes place and answering these questions:
	1. Is there someone worshiping in this passage? Describe the context of the passage (location, people involved, etc.)
	2. What is the attitude of the worshiper? (penitent, joyful, sad, etc.)
	3. How does revelation and response take place?
	4. Are there any commands in the passage?
	5. Any promises or spiritual lessons to learn?
	6. Are the elements of worship used (music, prayer, scripture, etc.)?
	7. Any outcomes/results from the time of worship?

Some suggested passages include:

I Chronicles 16 Luke 10:38-41

II Chronicles 7 John 4:21-24

Nehemiah 1 I Corinthians 14

Psalm 95 Ephesians 5:18-21

Exodus 20 Colossians 3:16

Isaiah 6 James 4:8-10

Ezra 9 Revelation 4-5

Genesis 22:12-14 Acts 16:24-26

Genesis 32:22-30 Luke 22:41-43

**Your grade for the course will be determined by:**

Daily Quizzes – 20%

Final Exam – 20%

Worship Service Groups – 20%

Individual Scripture Presentation – 20%

Attendance – 20%

The grading scale will be in accordance with the standard set by AIU

**Prescribed Textbook: (Available at the AIU Library)**

Webber, Robert E. 2004. Worship Is A Verb: Eight Principles for Transforming Worship, Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, LLC; ISBN: 978-1-56563-242-4.

**Planning the Work and Working the Plan:**

This course syllabus is divided into seven days. You are already in *Day One.* The syllabus includes many blanks in sentences that you will fill in as you listen to and participate in the lecture.

DAY ONE:

* Introduction and Scope of the Subject
* Definitions and Meanings
* Weber’s Five New Insights to Worship
* Six words of Worship
* Weber’s Eight Principles
* Old Testament Foundations for Worship

DAY TWO:

* Worship in the Book of Psalms
* Writers of the Psalms
* Different kinds of Psalms
* Hebrew Parallelism
* The Worship Actions of Psalms
* Old Testament Temple Worship
* Levitical Offerings
* Biblical Jewish Feasts and Traditional Jewish Feasts
* Day of Atonement

DAY THREE:

* Worship in the New Testament
* Four Parts in a Worship Service
* Elements in New Testament Worship
* Changes from Old Testament to New Testament Worship
* New Testament Sacrifices

DAY FOUR:

* Sacrifice of Material Possessions
* Sacrifice in Service to Others
* Worship is an Act of Communication
* Two Primary Symbols: The Word of God and Communion
* Worship is Response to God and Others
* Theological Foundations of Worship
* Jesus Christ
* The Holy Spirit

DAY FIVE:

* The Bible in Worship
* The Church in Worship
* Bring People back to Worship
* Structure and Process of Worship
* All Creation Joins in Worship
* A Psychology of Worship
* Man’s Response in Worship
* Man’s Needs in Worship
* Opinions in Worship

DAY SIX:

* Worship as a Way of Life
* Worship as the Primary Activity of the Church
* Baptism (Seven Baptism in the Bible)
* Infant Baptism
* The Lord’s Supper

DAY SEVEN:

* Insights in Worship (Blackaby)
* John 4 Jesus and the Woman at the Well
* Old Testament Worship
* Worship and the New Birth
* God’s Standard for Acceptable Worship
* Why God Requires a Sacrifice
* Our First Response in Worship – Faith
* Obeying God in Personal Worship
* Obeying God in Corporate Worship

**DAY ONE (continues)**

**Introduction:**

Consider the following: **Exodus 33:15-16**

Moses is wanting God to go with him and the people as they travel to the promise land:

*Then he said to Him, If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here. For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?*

1. **There** is no presence like God’s presence
2. **There** is no absence like the absence of God’s presence
3. **The** presence of God is what distinguishes us from ALL other people on earth. **Presence – Personal -- Relationship**

Moses desired the assurance that God would be where he was going and with him on the way. The presence of God was of the utmost importance to Moses; it should be the same with us!

As we seek God’s presence, it will produce in us an insatiable appetite to know Him more – to know God is to want more of Him. We want to learn more and spend more time with Him in worship. The glory of God is both the immediate goal and the ultimate purpose of all true worship.

**The Scope of the Topic:**

The first reference to worship in the OT is found in Genesis 18:2 with Abraham

The final reference to worship is the NT is in Revelation 22:9 as an angel instructs John to follow the Word of God and worship only God

So, the scope of biblical worship is from the beginning to the end of Word of God

**What Is Worship?**

1. Worship in its simplest meaning is a meeting with God.
2. Worship is the event of interacting with God either in an individual or corporate basis.
3. Worship is the response of an adoring heart to the magnificence of God.
4. It is man’s loving response in personal faith to God’s personal revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ.
5. Genuine worship is always transformational in terms of God transforming the worshiper as we cannot transform ourselves.

If we are not meeting God in worship, then we are not worshiping. We may be an attender, spectator, participant, etc. but not a worshiper. This meeting consists of intimate communion with God, a heart-to-heart kind of meeting. Worship is intended as an authentic conversation with God. This conversation expresses a personal relationship with God where we experience His presence.

As we seek God’s presence, it will produce in us an insatiable appetite to know Him more – to know God is to want more of Him. We want to learn more and spend more time with Him in worship. The glory of God is both the immediate goal and the ultimate purpose of all true worship.

Worship has always been a part of our human nature. We have the need and the desire to worship – this is simply the way God created us. In fact, every one of us is a worshiper of something or someone. That which is most important to us, which we value the most, is the object of our worship, and it is to that object or person we will give our allegiance, our interest, our time and our affection (read Matthew 6:21).

(Webber) The focus of worship is not human experience or a lecture or entertainment but Jesus Christ – His life, death and resurrection. A FOUNDATIONAL PURPOSE OF WORSHIP IS TO GLORIFY GOD AS OUR CREATOR.

**Meaning of the Word *Worship:***

The English word “worship” comes from the Anglo-Saxon word “weorthscipe” (“worth” and “ship”) meaning one worthy of reverence and honor. When we worship, we are declaring God’s worth – that He is worthy of our praise and honor.

The principal Old Testament word translated “worship” is the Hebrew “shachah,” which means “to bow down” or “prostrate” oneself. The idea conveyed here is an attitude of mind or body or both. It is an inward attitude. It is not so much something we do as much as it is someone we are. It really is an attitude of the heart. Passages that illustrate this attitude of the heart: Exodus 4:29-31, I Chronicles 29:10-20, Nehemiah 8:5-6 & Ps. 95:6-7. These Scriptures describe the kind of heart God desires in those who approach Him in worship.

(Webber) *Worship is a verb* – it is not something done to us or for us, but by us.

The NT Greek word most often indicating worship is “proskuneo”, meaning literally to “kiss the hand” or to “prostrate oneself” before another in reverence. The term “liturgy” is derived from the Greek leitourgia, translated “ministry” or “service.” Literally is means an “action of the people” and more particularly the service which the Christian renders to God in faith and obedience. For the apostle Paul, true leitourgia is shown in a life of faith and surrender (Romans 12:1 – “worship” = “leitourgia”). Today “liturgy” is used to refer to the order of worship in churches.

**Webber shares five new insights in thinking about worship:**

1. The primary work of the church is worship. Evangelism and other functions of ministry flow from the worship of the church.
2. Worship is a source for spiritual renewal. It is a celebration of what Christ has done (and is doing) in me.
3. Worship should become an active experience for the worshiper, a participatory event where we can respond to the Scriptures, prayer, fellowship and communion.
4. There should be a better balance between the Word of God and the Table of the Lord.
5. There is a need (or room for) for a return of the arts in worship. Use of the various arts (music, banners, liturgical dance, drama, color, etc.) can enhance and encourage worship.

**Worship can be described with the following terms:**

1. Mystery – Worship is both revelation and mystery. Man, experiences God through revelation and yet stands in awe of God in mystery. We can be conscious of God working in our lives, but we can never understand God completely. We should approach worship with a deep sense of mystery, awe and wonder in light of preparing to encounter the one true living God.
2. Celebration – Worship is a celebration of the acts of God in history, from creation through the manifestation of His power through the coming of the Holy Spirit. In worship we are celebrating God for what He has done for us as well as who He is.
3. Life – For the Christian, worship is not limited to a ceremony or ritual. Life itself – every day with its experiences – becomes an act of worship. Every area of life belongs to the kingdom of God. If worship is encountering the presence of God, then His omnipotence and omnipresence declares that He is with us at all times and thus each day can become an act of worship. Worship is practicing the presence of God in every experience of life.
4. Dialogue – Worship is both revelation and response; God takes the initiative in revelation and man responds in worship. God reveals Himself through the written Word, the fellowship of believers and through His Spirit – man responds to God through words and music and acts of celebration and dedication.
5. Giving – The purpose of worship is not primarily to receive blessings from God but to make offerings to God. The offering of our total selves to God is the result of worship. Our outward gifts are the result of our inward dedication. What God really desires is ourselves, given to Him without reservation.
6. Eschatological Fulfilment – Our worship is a reminder of God’s coming redemption of His church. We are commanded to continue worshiping our Lord until His return (I Corinthians 11:26). Worship causes us to remember the hope that we have in Jesus and the joy that awaits believers in Him.

**Webber’s eight principles of worship (p 15):**

1. Worship Celebrates Christ
2. Worship Tells and Acts Out the Christ-Event
3. In Worship God Speaks and Acts
4. Worship Is an Act of Communication
5. In Worship We Respond to God and Each Other
6. Return Worship to the People
7. All Creation Joins in Worship
8. Worship as a Way of Life

**Principle 1**– **Worship Celebrates Christ** – Worship should be a celebration of Christ’s life, death and resurrection for our salvation and for the salvation of the world. OT worship centered around the Exodus-event while NT worship centered around the Christ-event.

**Three parallels between OT and NT:**

1. God reveals Himself (OT - Exodus event; NT - Christ event)
2. God has come to redeem His people
3. The creation of a people in order to create a worshiping community as a sign of His redeeming work.

(Webber) We don’t go to worship to celebrate what we have done. We go to worship to praise and thank God for what He has done, is doing and will do. God’s work in Christ is the focus of worship. Worship can be a dramatic retelling and reenactment of Christ’s life, death and resurrection. The various parts of the worship service (preaching, communion, hymns, prayers, etc.) can help to portray this retelling and reenactment of the Christ-event.

**Biblical Foundations for Worship: Worship in the Old Testament**

The chief difference between pagan worship in the ancient world and the worship of God by the Israelites is the fact of God’s revelation of Himself to a particular people and His choice of them for his service. The worship of Israel differed from other civilizations in that:

1. Israel’s God was the only God; most ancient peoples had many gods and Israel’s monotheistic religion was unique among the nations of that time
2. The God of Israel was a personal God who intervened in history
3. Israel had no image in its worship.

The examples of Cain and Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Isaac show the necessity for worship early in Israel’s history.

The story of the Exodus is the centerpiece of the Old Testament. For the Hebrews (now THE JEWISH PEOPLE or THE NATION OF ISRAEL) this is the most important event in the world. It is THE event of human history.

The Mosaic period of Israel’s history continued the development of corporate worship.

With the building of the tabernacle, congregational worship was established as an institution.

The first worship leaders were chosen as God directed Moses to consecrate Aaron and his sons to the office of priesthood (Ex. 28:2-3).

The people were to bring offerings unto God continually as an act of worship (Ex. 29:30).

During the period of the Judges, Gilgal was likely the first place established for the worship of Jehovah in the new land of Canaan; several passages refer to altars being built there (Judges 2:1, 6:24, 18:29-31, II Sam. 5:3 & I Kings 3:4).

However, in Solomon’s Temple at Jerusalem Old Testament worship reached its climax. This structure became the central sanctuary of Israel with its elaborate furnishings and magnificent vessels dedicated for worship. The many religious feasts and ceremonies which were celebrated by the Israelites (such as the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Passover, Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Booths) were developed to remind the people of their sinfulness and also of God’s mercy and love.

* **The ministry of MOSES and the EXODUS** demonstrates what the nation of Israel **was to be**
* **But the PROPHETS reveal** to us what they **never became.**

As the people fell into insincere and false worship, the prophets of the Old Testament called for a return to a heartfelt and sincere worship of God. The classic example of worship in the Old Testament is found in Isaiah’s experience before God (Isaiah 6).

Confronted by God in all His holiness, Isaiah confessed his sins, received cleansing and committed himself to the will of God. In regard to worship, we find a vast record of personal worship in the Psalms. Many of the Psalms were written to be used in common worship but most have a personal feel to them. Over the centuries, many believe the Psalms have become the core of personal prayer and corporate worship for all forms of Judaism as well as all churches of Christendom.

**So, what are the main takeaways or** **principles we learn about worship from the story of the Exodus and worship in the Old Testament?**

1. God is SOVEREIGN over the affairs of His creation including all people. When we understand, believe and embrace this truth it creates HUMILITY and a sense of REVERENCE and AWE in us and ultimately affects how we relate to God in worship. This is related very much to the idea of FEARING GOD.
2. God DELIVERED His people so that they might worship Him in the MANNER and the PLACE that He had chosen. God initiated all of that. God prescribed how he was to be worshiped which is what we see in the later part of Exodus as well as in Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. For us today, under the New Covenant, we also have been delivered from sin, death, hell and destruction that we might worship and praise God from a heart of gratitude and devotion.
3. Central to the book of Exodus and the OT is the concept of REDEMPTION. Israel was redeemed from bondage in Egypt and into a covenant relationship with God. (Key verse – Ex.6:6)
4. The story of the Exodus and the OT is a FORESHADOWING or a PICTURE of the deliverance we would experience in Christ redeeming and delivering us from the power of sin and death.
5. Our RESPONSE should be to WORSHIP God for WHO HE IS and WHAT HE HAS DONE on our behalf.

**DAY TWO:**

**The Book of Psalms: Israel’s Manual for Worship**

THE PSALMS GIVE VOICE TO PRAYERS AND OUR PRAISE

Background Information

1. The book of Psalms is the longest book in the bible. It is technically not a book but rather, a collection. There are 150 of them. They were written over period of about 1000 years.
2. The Hebrew word for Psalms means songs of praise or praises. Psalms is a collection of lyrical poetry often intended to be sung. Therefore, it is common to refer to the psalter as Israel’s hymn book. The Psalms were collected and used for worship and in many cases, were written expressly for such use. In addition, the Psalms are considered as Israel’s prayer book. The Psalms were used in the Temple sanctuary in Jerusalem as an offering of song to accompany the offering of sacrifices. As synagogues became local gathering places for worship, the singing of the Psalms joined the recitation of the Torah and the Prophets. Jesus and his disciples worshipped with the Psalms. Many churches read or sing them weekly.
3. You will notice that many of the Psalms have an additional heading like *mizmor*, *maskil*, *Song of Accents,* and so on. In many cases these are musical directives but because of the ancient nature of these terms, the clear definition or intention is not always clear and, in some cases, unknown. A great example of this would be the word Selah (71x’s). Most theologians and scholars have taken this to mean *pause* or *rest* but again this is an educated guess.
4. The book of Psalms is very likely the most read book of the bible (according to www.biblegateway.com). For example, does anyone know what the most famous Psalm that even non-Christians have read, heard frequently and can even quote part of? Psalm 23 For many not familiar with the bible at all, they know and can even quote in part *The Lord is my shepherd . . .*
5. **Writers of the Psalms:**
	1. 73 were written by King David
	2. 12 by the song master Asaph who was appointed by David
	3. 12 by the Levitical family of the sons of Korah working under David
	4. 2 by King Solomon
	5. 1 each by the music masters Heman (88) and Ethan (89) who were probably appointed by David and Solomon
	6. Psalm 90 was written by Moses

Thus, we see the strong association of the name DAVID with the Psalms. According to 2 Samuel, David was called Israel’s singer of songs. The story of David’s life is chronicled in 1 and 2 Samuel if you want to read his amazing story.

1. The psalms are organized into five books or collections. They were probably collected gradually, as corporate worship forms developed along with temple worship. It is likely that by the time of Ezra, the books of the Psalter were organized into their final form. Each section concludes with a doxology, with the entire Psalter capped by Psalm 150, a grand doxology. Your bible reflects those divisions by labeling each section as Book 1, Book 2 and so on. Some theologians have seen in this a close similarity to the first five books of the bible, the Pentateuch.
2. The book of Psalms contains the longest chapter in the bible which is Psalm 119. Interestingly, the focus of Psalm 119 is the Word of God. This again points to THE BIG IDEA of this course that the heart of God is revealed in the Word of God. Psalm 117 is the shortest chapter in the bible. Psalm 118:8 is the center of the bible - 8 *It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man.*
3. Jesus Christ quotes this book more than any other Old Testament book – 11x’s and just as an aside, Jesus references every book of the Pentateuch, plus several of the prophets. Right at the end of Jesus’ life he reminds his disciples:

Luke 24:44 (NIV) *He said to them, this is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.*

Acts 13:32-33 (NIV) *We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors 33 he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: You are my son; today I have become your father.*

Do you see why studying the Word of God is so critical and foundational to our lives as Christians? It unlocks our understanding of who God is and what He has done so that we will worship him properly.

1. **There are different kinds of Psalms** that express different feelings, emotions or truths. These are not always hard and fast categories as sometimes there are mixed elements in one Psalm.
	1. Messianic Psalms – These are prophetic in that they look ahead to Jesus (Ps. 2, 16:9-10, 22:1, 6-8, 16-18, 69:19-21
2. Royal Psalms refer to Israel’s king or Israel’s Messiah (Ps. 20)
3. Imprecatory Psalms invoke judgement or curses on one’s enemies (Ps. 58, 79:6, 12; 109)
4. Pilgrim psalms or Songs of Ascent were used for pilgrimages “going up” to Jerusalem for three annual festivals (Ps. 42:1-4, 122)
5. Psalms of Praise, also called hymns, portray an offering of direct adoration to God (Ps. 33:1-3, 66, 95, 100)
6. Psalms of Thanksgiving usually reflect gratitude for a personal (Ps. 30) or communal (Ps. 65) deliverance or provision from God.
7. Psalms of Lament express the personal (Ps.3, 4;1) or communal (Ps. 44) crying out to God in difficult circumstances.
8. One of the **fundamental characteristics of Hebrew poetry** is thought rhyme or **parallelism.** In its simplest form, it means that the second line (sometimes a second verse) reinforces, supports or repeats the idea of the first.

Psalm 103:10 is a good example of this.

*He does not treat us as our sins deserve*

 *or repay us according to our iniquities.*

Psalm 145:18 is another example:

*The LORD is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.*

1. **TYPES OF PARALLELISM:**
2. Synonymous Parallel: Two lines that have almost the same meaning. Psalm 3:1, 7:17, 22:18
3. Synthetic Parallel: The building or increasing of an idea. Takes a line then in the second line furthers the idea or thought. Psalm 95:3
4. Antithetical Parallel: The second line is an opposite thought or a contrast to the first line. Psalm 1:6
5. Emblematic Parallel: Uses an image or illustration. Psalm 42:1, 23:1
6. Climactic Parallel: Repetition of a portion of a line. Psalm 29:1
7. Formal Parallel: Two lines joined by meter. Psalm 2:6
8. Alphabetical Parallel: Psalms Divided by the Hebrew Alphabet. Psalm 9, 10, 25, 34, 111, 112, 119, 145
9. The **actions of worship in the Psalms:**

It's captivating to read through the Psalms and see the variety of ways in which David worshiped. When we pause to ask ourselves what we are doing during our worship times today, we are often faced with several questions. How do we worship? What are we able to do and still be reverent before the Lord? What is God's desire for our worship? Does God give us the right to pick and choose how we worship?

The Psalms have given us nine different expressions of worship, and these expressions stem from David's desire to worship the Lord wholeheartedly and without reservation. Oddly enough, these expressions are not foreign to us, but we fail to practice them in our corporate worship for one reason or another.

Listed below are eleven expressions of worship. They can be broken down further into three physical expressions.

1. The spoken voice
2. Speaking – Ps. 26:7, 34:1, 35:28 109:30, 111:1, 145:2
3. Shouting – Ps. 27:6, 33:3, 47:1, 47:5, 66:1, 71:23, 81:1, 98:4, 118:15
4. Singing - Ps. 5:11, 7:17, 9:2, 13:6, 21:13, 30:4, 33:1 & 3, 47:6-7 to name a few!
5. Our posture
6. Bowing – Ps. 5:7, 22:27, 95:6 (Parallelism or are they different?), 138:2
7. Kneeling – Ps. 95:6, 66:4, 138:2,
8. Lying prostrate – No examples in Psalms but there are examples in other parts of Scripture: Numbers 24:4 & 16, Deuteronomy 9:18 & 25, I Kings 18:39, Rev. 4:10, 5:8 & 14
9. Standing – Ps. 119:120
10. Dancing – Ps. 30:11, 149:3, 150:4
11. Our Hands
12. Playing Instruments – Ps. 33:2-3, 68:25, 81:2, 150:3-5
13. Clapping – Ps. 47:1, 98:8
14. Lifting Hands – Ps. 28:2, 63:4
15. I want to encourage you to consider reading through the book of Psalms monthly. You can do this easily by simply taking the day of the month and reading that psalm and then add 30 to that chapter number, read that psalm, add 30 to that and so on. Each day you’ll read 5 psalms and that way you can cycle through them each month. You will find this to be of great help to your personal worship and private time with God that will, I believe, eventually be reflected in your corporate or public worship experience. I’d encourage you to try it!

**TO SUMMARIZE:** The Psalms may be aptly summarized by five key words

1. Praise: The Psalmist worships, extols, and with heart-filled gratitude, thanks the sovereign God of Israel for His Person, His Word, and His mighty works in regard to both creation and redemption.
2. Prophecy: The Psalmist often writes of the coming Messiah, foretelling His zeal, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, high priestly work, and coming millennial reign.
3. Pain: The Psalmist describes in graphic fashion his personal doubts, fears, pain and problems.
4. Petition: The Psalmist offers up many requests, crying out for relief, forgiveness, reassurance, direction, protection and strength.
5. Poetry: The Psalmist pens his words in poetic fashion meant to be sung.

**Old Testament Temple Worship:**

In the Age of Israel there was a set place for collective worship, the Tabernacle and then the First and Second Temple.

Although a person could individually worship anywhere, any place other then the Temple as a place of collective worship was heretical.

1. **Tabernacle**: 1440 to 960 BC, Moses to (David) to Solomon
2. The **Ark of the Covenant**
3. **The First Temple:** 960 to 586 BC
4. The **Second Temple:** Post Exilic, built by Zerubbabel, 516 BC – 20 BC
5. The **Second Temple Phase 2**: Herod’s Temple, 20 BC to 70 AD
6. The **Third Temple** of the Anti-Christ and False Prophet: In the Tribulation
7. The Millennial **Temple, Built by the Lord Jesus Christ** at the beginning of the 1000 year reign.

**Specific Personnel** for Leading Worship: **The Priesthood**

1. Levitical
2. Aaronic order

**Levitical Offerings** (All Look to the Person and Work of the Messiah):

1. Sin Offering: Celebrated Future Results of Cross
2. Guilt Offering: Sin Against Others (20% penalty)
3. Burnt Offering: Total Dependence on the Lord
4. Peace Offering: Thanksgiving at the Temple, a Family Feast
5. Grain Offering: Gratitude
6. Drink Offering: Sign of God’s Victory and His Joy in the Results of the Cross
7. Trespass Offering: Recognized God’s Acceptance of the Payment of Jesus’ Death at the Cross
8. First Fruits Offering: Faith Offering

**Seven Jewish Feast:**

1. Passover
2. Unleavened Bread
3. Pentecost
4. Tabernacles
5. Trumpets
6. First Fruits
7. Atonement

**Additional Jewish Feasts and Holy Days:**

1. Shevat: (January 31) New Year for nature
2. Ta’anit Esther: (February 28) Esther became Queen
3. Purim: (March 2) Deliverance of Jewish people from Haman
4. Lag B’Omer: (March 31 – May 19) Birth of Jewish Mysticism
5. Shavuot: (May 19-21) Giving of the Torah to Moses at Sinai
6. The Three Weeks: Fast of Tammuz (July 1) and Fast of Tish B’Av (July 21) Mourning over the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD
7. The 15th of Av: (July 27) One of the great festivals
8. Rosh Hashanah: (August 12-September 12) Jewish New year
9. Chanukah: (December 12-20) Rededication of the Temple after the victories of the Maccabees

**Day of Atonement**

1. Falls between September 14 to October 14
2. Sacrifice and Offering to atone for the sins of the nation
3. All sins were read out loud (all 613)
4. Two Goats:
5. Scapegoat went into the wilderness
6. Other was sacrificed

**DAY THREE:**

**Worship in the New Testament:**

Early Christian worship was rooted in Jewish practices, as the first Christians were first of all Jews who had been faithful in their worship at the Temple and in their synagogues. Thus, early Christian worship was a combination of the practice, teaching and symbolism of the Temple and synagogue together with the special practices and teachings of Jesus. However, **the early church began to develop its own distinctive practices in worship:**

1. The early Christians used writings of their own leaders (Paul’s epistles, the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ life) which soon took precedence over the Law and the Prophets.
2. Although the Psalms were used in worship, new hymns were added by Christian writers, such as those found in Paul’s letters.
3. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper were distinctive additions to Christian worship.
4. There was a spirit of zeal in Christian worship produced by the fact of the resurrection which led to an unbounded enthusiasm with emphasis upon the presence of the risen Christ.
5. Christian worship also differed from Jewish worship with regard to times and places. For the early church, the first day of the week became the Christian day of worship in commemoration of the Resurrection. Although the early Christians at first worshiped in the Temple and the synagogues, they later met in homes or “house-churches”.

**(Webber) Principle 2** – Worship Tells and Acts Out the Christ-Event. Essentially, worship tells and acts out the life, death, resurrection and imminent return of Christ through the proclamation of the Word and the Table (communion). The story of Christ is communicated in two parts: the word of God and the Table of the Lord. In the course of time, two other parts were added: Entrance to worship and Dismissal to serve.

**Aspects of NT / CA Worship:**

**Acts 2:42**  *They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

1. Entrance – a preparation for worship; worshipers can prepare to worship and hear the Word. A time to focus on God and on worshiping Him.
2. The Word of God – Two Initiating Parts: the **reading** and **preaching** / **teaching** of the Word

Then the Believer’s **Response** to the Word:

Remember, all worship is a response to God’s provision which is always by grace:

1. Singing: Lyrics must be biblical
2. Prayer: As God speaks to us through His Word, we speak to God in prayer
3. Praise and Thanksgiving: Through prayer and Testimony
4. Giving: We not only give according to the CA principles taught in the Word, but also, we give responding to what God has done and established on our behalf (the local church and its teaching pastor).
5. Testimony: Sharing with others what God is actively doing in the lives of His people
6. The Table of the Lord – Communion (the Lord’s Supper) symbolizes Jesus’ experience at the Last Supper. It is a reminder of Christ’s sacrifice for us and His coming return. Frequency of having communion? Webber suggests a weekly observance but there is no Biblical command as to the frequency of having communion, only that it be done in an orderly manner (I Cor. 11:17 – 34).
7. The Dismissal – The church goes forth to be a witness to the world (II Cor. 5:19-20). In various churches this dismissal is done in different ways; however, the intent is the same: to send the church out to serve others in Jesus’ name and to be a light in a dark world.

**The four parts of worship:**

1. Entrance – a preparation for worship; worshipers can prepare to worship and hear the Word. A time to focus on God and on worshiping Him.
2. The Word of God – this part of the service has two parts: the reading and preaching of the Word and the response to the Word. Throughout history God revealed Himself, then the people responded. We repeat this same sequence in worship today.
3. The Table of the Lord – Communion (the Lord’s Supper) symbolizes Jesus’ experience at the Last Supper. It is a reminder of Christ’s sacrifice for us and His coming return. Frequency of having communion? Webber suggests a weekly observance but there is no Biblical command as to the frequency of having communion, only that it be done in an orderly manner (I Cor. 11:17 – 34).
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These four parts have a Biblical basis (Acts 2:42, I Cor. 11:20-22, 33-34) and an historical basis as the church has celebrated the Word and the Table in worship through the ages. Webber points out the need for balance between these two elements in worship.

**(Webber) Principle 3** – In Worship God Speaks and Acts.

Webber quotes a fellow minister in saying, *Our worship is too man-centered; we need to discover that it is God who is at work in worship*. He also points out that *the primary importance in worship is not what I do, but what God is doing.*

God had spoken throughout the OT through various signs (clothing Adam and Eve, the rainbow after the flood, the covenant with Abraham and the sign of circumcision, the tabernacle and the temple) and these signs were reminders of God’s presence and love. The NT tells us that these signs of the OT were to be “a shadow of the good things to come” (Heb. 10:1). Jesus fulfills the promise of all these OT signs.

The Bible occupies a central part in Christian worship. Both the OT and NT have numerous passages where Scripture is read and used in worship. As Webber states, the Bible is *The record of God’s covenant with us. It is a record of how God has initiated a relationship with me, sought me out and brought me to Himself*. The Bible is so much more than an historical record of God’s works but *a living and dynamic activity of God’s grace, communicating His actions on my behalf now, in the present*. The reading of Scripture should be treated with respect, not as a preliminary to worship. Webber suggests that the way we read Scripture is important and that we should recruit good readers to read the Scriptures.

God also speaks and acts through the Table – in communion. Webber states that the Biblical basis for the Lord’s Supper is found in the Old Testament Passover, which the Lord’s Supper replaces. Jesus showed His disciples that the Christian meaning of the Passover was to be found in His death and resurrection. It is probable that the early Christians celebrated the Lord’s Supper at every meeting of worship. Various terms for the Table: Breaking of Bread (Acts 2:42), Lord’s Supper (I Cor. 11), Communion (I Cor. 10:16), Eucharist (I Cor. 14:16). The Lord’s Supper has a unique meaning for believers in a personal sense – a strong personal experience in the midst of corporate worship.

**Discussion Questions:** How significant is the role of Scripture in the worship of your church? Do you have a personal experience when God communicated to you through the Scriptures in worship? How is the Lord’s Supper celebrated in your church? How often does your church have the Lord’s Supper and why?

**Elements of New Testament Worship**

The following elements of worship can be found throughout the New Testament:

1. Music had a central place in the Christians’ expression of praise (Ephes. 5:18-21, Col. 3:16, I Cor. 14:15) and various hymns can be found in the New Testament (Lk. 1:46, Lk. 2:29-32, Lk. 1:68 & Rev. 5:9, 12-13, 12:10-12 and 19:1-2, 6)
2. The reading of the Scriptures was definitely an element in early Christian worship. Jesus stood up in the synagogue to read the Scriptures (Lk. 4:16) and Paul makes numerous references to the reading of the Scriptures (Col. 4:16, I Thess. 5:27, I Tim. 4:13). Selections from the Old Testament were also used, especially from the Prophets and the Psalms.
3. There is abundant evidence of prayers in early Christian worship. Many references to prayer can be found in Paul’s letters and the early church devoted themselves to prayer (Acts 2:42). Jesus gave the Model Prayer (Lord’s Prayer) as an example of prayer to His disciples.
4. The people’s *Amens* are seen in numerous places in the New Testament (I Cor. 14:16).
5. The sermon or exposition of the Scriptures seems to have been an important part of early Christian worship (Acts 2:40, II Tim. 4:1-4).
6. Exhortation was held to be essential in worship. Paul urged his fellow Christians to exhort one another and to reprove one another with authority in the Lord (I Thess. 3:2, II Thess. 3:12 & Titus 2:15).
7. It was customary for Christians to give offerings in public worship. Paul exhorted the Christians at Corinth to share their material goods with their less fortunate brethren in Philippi (I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 9:6-7, 10-13) and he pointed out that Jesus modeled giving in that He became poor so that by His poverty believers might become rich (II Cor. 8:1-8). Jesus commended the poor widow for presenting her offering in sincere worship, for out of her deep poverty she gave all she had (Mark 12:42).
8. New Testament worship is filled with doxologies. In the midst of his letters Paul continually breaks forth with doxologies unto God. Two examples of this are Ephesians 1:3 and I Tim. 6:16.
9. Open confessions seem to have been a practice of Christians in the early church. There was the public confession of one’s sin in the presence of witnesses (I Tim. 6:12) and confession of faith in Jesus Christ with one’s lips is a part of the process of salvation (Rom. 10:9). James urged his fellow Christians to confess their sins one to another and to pray for one another (James 5:16).
10. Christian worship included the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Baptism followed immediately upon one’s belief in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; it was an act of confession that Christ is Lord (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38-41; Gal. 3:27). The Lord’s Supper had an important place in early Christian worship. At the institution of the Supper Jesus commanded his disciples to practice the observance of the Supper in remembrance of Him (Matt. 26:26-28). Paul deals at length with the observance of the Lord’s Supper (I Cor. 11:20-34).
11. Neither Jesus nor Paul laid down a particular order for worship. However, both of them implied that there is a logical order for public worship. The Model Prayer seems to suggest a logical and orderly sequence of attitudes in worship. Paul insists upon orderliness and thoughtfulness discipline in the worship service (I Cor. 14:40).

**Changes in Worship in the New Testament:**

It is common for churches to say that their first priority is the worship of God. This usually means that the corporate worship service on Sunday morning is the most important activity in which the church engages. Is this all there is or is there more to it than that?

A closer examination of the relevant biblical material affirms that worship is indeed the first priority of the church, but **the New Testament defines worship in a very different way.**

1. A Change in Sacrifices

Read 1 Pet. 2:5. This verse (along with vs. 9) teaches that all Christians are priests. Whereas in the Old Testament, only select Levites had this privilege, every Christian now has this privilege. Understanding the Old Testament sacrifices helps us create a canvas of understanding for the cross.

1. What do priests do?

In the Old Testament period, their main function was to carry out the worship of God through the offering of sacrifices. There were essentially two different kinds of sacrifices: sin offerings, which were offered for moral offenses, and thank offerings, which were offered to express gratitude for God's goodness and blessing.

The New Testament tells us that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament sin offerings through his death (Heb. 9:11-14; 10:1-14); therefore, we need never make such sacrifices to God again. But as Christians who have benefited from his sacrifice, we have the privilege to express our gratitude to God for Christ's work in many ways. Peter refers to this in 1 Pet. 2:5 when he says that we "offer up spiritual sacrifices to God." Peter does not specify here what these sacrifices are, except that they are spiritual, not physical.

By studying other passages in the New Testament, however, we discover several different "sacrifices" by which the Christian may worship God. It is important to note that no one way is viewed as more spiritual than the others; all are important if we want to have full-orbed spiritual lives.

**Discussion Question:** Do you think we can go so far as to say that churches who practice a liturgy are wrong on that point?

**Different** ***Sacrifices* for Worship from Old Testament to New Testament**

1. Offer God Your Whole Self

**Romans 12:1** *I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable by God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

1. When an Israelite had received a blessing from God, he could have a priest offer up an animal as a *whole burnt offering* to show God his gratitude. God was pleased by this costly sacrifice and expressed this by calling it a *soothing aroma.* (see Lev. 3:5,16)
2. Paul says that as Christians, we have received the mercies of God through Christ's work - a gift so fantastic that he spent the previous eleven chapters of this letter describing it. How can we say, *Thank you!* to God for such a fantastic gift? Not by offering an animal, but by presenting to God something much more precious--our very selves. We can *sign over the title deed* of our lives and say *God, I want the rest of my life and every part of my being to be one long expression of my gratitude for the gift that you have given me*.
3. We may think that this sacrifice is not very great because we have so many problems and faults, but God says that it is *holy* and when in fellowship he promises to accept it. Notice that according to Paul, this sacrifice is our *spiritual service of worship.*
4. The Greek word for *service of worship* is the word from which we get the term logical. Paul is saying that the elaborate worship service enacted by the Old Testament priests no longer has a place in Christian worship; it is now replaced by this very personal sacrifice and this is logical.

**Ask:** What are some lines of thinking which oppose a person's movement toward offering his or her whole self to God?

1. Offer God Your Praise

**Hebrews 13:15** *Through Christ then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of the lips that give thanks to his name.*

1. Here is another spiritual sacrifice which pleases God--praising him and thanking him for all that he is and all that he does for us. The practice of thankfulness to God is stressed over and over again in the New Testament (see 1 Thess. 5:16-18; Col. 3:15-17). Why is this? Does God need our gratitude so that he can feel good about himself?
2. Such a view obviously does not befit the God of the Bible--he is the only being in the universe who is completely self-existent and therefore needs nothing. We add nothing to God by praising and thanking him. God is indeed pleased by our gratitude, but the ones who benefit from this practice are us!
3. As we choose (often against our present feelings and circumstances) to recall God's blessings and then to thank him for these, we are keeping ourselves properly aligned with reality. Rather than buying into the lie that we are mistreated and unfortunate, we are by faith asserting the truth--that we are fantastically blessed beyond anything that we could ever deserve! In spite of our rebellion against God which deserves his wrath, he has forgiven us, adopted us into his family, guaranteed us eternal life, given us a significant role in his purpose, indwelt us with his Spirit, provided us with Christian friends-- and the list goes on and on.
4. The author's emphasis here is that we should worship God in this way *continually.* The idea that Christian worship takes place only (or especially) in a corporate worship meeting is utterly foreign to this verse. Because of Christ's payment for our sins, we have the privilege to draw near to God and communicate to him in this way at any time: in the morning when we wake up, on the way to work, during the busy day, when we are together with other Christians, alone in our room, etc.
5. It is wonderful to praise God with other Christians in song (Eph. 5:19), but this should be only the *tip of the iceberg* of our thanks to God.

**Ask:** What do you think erodes thankfulness in Christians? What do you think promotes thankfulness in Christians?

**DAY FOUR**

1. Offer God Your Material Resources

**Hebrews 13:16** *And let us not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*

1. The author touches on two more ways in which we can worship God: doing good and sharing. Sharing probably refers to the generous giving of our material resources to God's people and God's work. This is explicitly identified by Paul as a sacrifice which pleases God: *But I have received (your money gift) in full, and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.* (Phil. 4:18)
2. Many Christians regard giving financially to God in the same way that they pay their taxes to the to the Tax Bureau - they have to do it, and they look for ways to give as little as possible. Paul's view is very different from this. He says that giving is a privilege (2 Cor. 8:4) and something that we should do generously (2 Cor. 9:6), as an expression of our commitment to God (2 Cor. 8:5).
3. When we give our money to God in this way by supporting our local church, other Christian workers and ministries, and helping the needy, God regards this as an expression of worship, fully as spiritual as praising him. This is because giving of our money represents a giving of ourselves, since money represents the time and effort and creativity that we have invested in order to gain it. Such giving is also an expression of our trust in God's faithfulness to continue to meet our material needs--which Paul tells us God will fully supply (Phil. 4:19).

**Ask:** How can a Christian make the transition in his or her thinking from the Tax Bureau outlook on giving to the *privilege* outlook on giving?

1. Offer God Your Service to Others

**Hebrews 13:16** *And let us not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*

1. The other sacrifice mentioned in this verse is *doing good.* This phrase refers to ministry--performing deeds of loving service to other people as representatives of Christ. When we relate to the people God brings into our lives with Christ-like, sacrificial love, God regards this as an expression of our worship to him. *. . . walk in love, just as Christ loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice as a fragrant aroma*.
2. God is pleased by this kind of life-style not only because he wants to love people through us, but also because this demonstrates that we are living with an attitude of faith or trust in his love for us. We are motivated to love others because we understand and believe in the love that God has for us (1 Jn. 4:16-19).
3. Every day, God gives us dozens of creative opportunities to say *thank you!* to him in this way-- serving our spouses, caring for our children, performing deeds of service for those in need, showing and sharing the love of Christ to our neighbors, those at work or school--the examples are endless.
4. We also have the special privilege of worshiping God through the exercise of our spiritual gifts. Paul speaks of his own apostolic ministry in this way: *. . . because of the grace that was given to me from God, to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, that my offering of the Gentiles might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit*. (Rom. 15:15,16)
5. After urging us to present our lives to God as an act of worship in Rom. 12:1, Paul goes on to urge us to express that worship through the use of our spiritual gifts (vs. 6-8). As we discover our spiritual gifts and exercise them regularly in the service of others, and give God praise for the fruit of this ministry, we discover a form of worship that is uniquely satisfying!

**Ask the group:** What differences do you think it would make for you when facing situations (mentioned in the previous sentence) that you consciously thought about serving the Lord himself via serving this person? (Responses might include: less fear, more boldness, more respect, more energy and resolve, deeper care about what you're doing, etc.)

**Discussion Questions**

1. What if we emphasize one form of worship to the virtual exclusion of another?
2. Consider the different mixes of exclusions, the possible motives behind each mix, and the possible outcomes of each.
3. Prior to this study, which of these forms of worship did you understand the least and why? Which do you think is your strongest/weakest? Why?

**Conclusion**

It should be clear from this study that worship in the New Testament is a lifestyle made up of many kinds of activity and not just a weekly corporate meeting.

Why is this so important? When Christians view worship as the most important priority (which is correct) but have a superficial view of what worship is, the result is often a superficial and dichotomized Christian life. Such Christians are faithfully committed to attending the Sunday worship service, but because they view that as the essence of worship, they fail to develop a lifestyle of whole- hearted commitment to God, thankfulness, financial stewardship and ministry. God is more pleased, and we are more fulfilled when we develop lifestyles characterized by the full-orbed worship described in the New Testament.

**Webber: Principle 4** – Worship Is an Act of Communication

**Worship communicates in two ways:**

1. Verbally
2. Symbolically.

New insights in neuropsychology show us that the left hemisphere specializes in verbal skills (more word-oriented) while the right side of the brain centers on nonverbal and inductive skills (more symbolic and creative). Webber points out that we should seek to achieve a balance between the verbal and symbolic means of worship so that the whole person is inspired to worship. Since some people favor more verbal communication and others prefer a more symbolic style of communication, we need to include and improve on both methods of communication.

Since worship is a dialogue between God and man, communication with words and symbols goes both ways. God longs for His children to communicate with Him.

**Ask:** Compare communication among family members with communication with God. What similarities do you see? Differences?

We need both verbal and symbolic communication in worship. The experience of worship is something that is done, not just talked about. This is communication that occurs through doing. We need both transmission communication (verbal) and cultural communication (symbolic) in worship.

**Ask:** Have you ever been in worship where there was only verbal or symbolic communication involved? Share your experience.

The **Word of God and Communion are the two primary symbols** used in worship that communicate God’s presence and love to us.

1. The Word of God reminded the Israelites of how God chose Israel and brought them out of Egypt. In the Christian church, the reading of the Word illustrated the history of creation, the working of God through His people and the love of God as shown through Jesus Christ. Webber encourages more Scripture reading by the people and advocates various ways in having Scripture read in the worship service. The result is to get the people more involved in worship.

**Ask:** How do you involve people with the Scriptures in worship? How can we get people more involved in reading the Word in worship?

1. The Table of the Lord (Communion) dramatizes the story of redemption and reminds believers of Jesus’ death and resurrection. The bread and the cup are God’s testimony to us of His redemptive work; they remind us that God came for us and did everything necessary for our salvation. When we take the bread and cup, we eat and drink as a symbolic way of accepting what God has done for us. The physical taking of communion involves the worshiper and is a symbol of acceptance of God’s work on our behalf.

Webber suggests that we put more emphasis on what God is doing through Communion and less emphasis on the sinful state of the worshiper, to celebrate communion more often, to use a single loaf and cup, to have people come forward to take the bread and cup, and to sing hymns and songs during communion which reflect God’s work and our response. Ask: What do you think about these suggestions?

**Webber also suggests that**

1. Personal preparation should occur before worship begins
2. Preparation and Dismissal are symbols which should be a part of worship,
3. Body language can be a significant symbol used in worship (kneeling, bowing in prayer, greeting one another).

**Ask:** What do you think about these suggestions?

**(Webber) Principle 5** – In Worship We Respond to God and Each Other

Response is a necessary element in the communication that takes place in worship. We respond to God as the King and Ruler of all. Therefore, we must realize that our response should be that of awe, reverence and with a great sense of His majesty and omnipotence. We cannot approach God with a nonchalant attitude; we must humble ourselves before Him and recognize that He is Lord of all.

**Ask:** How can we lead people in our churches to recognize God in His majesty and greatness – to help people to develop a greater reverence for Him?

We respond in worship to what God has done for us – His actions which we have only begun to understand. As we worship, we should pray for and seek (Webber) *a fresh visitation of the Holy Spirit’s presence and power each time we worship.* We have gathered, as Webber says, in worship to be met by God Almighty, the Creator of the universe and we respond to Him as we make every song or prayer from our hearts instead of a dry ritual or routine practice. We must realize that worship is more than singing or a sermon; it is responding to God’s invitation to meet with Him with all we have – heart, soul, mind and strength. Worship is our response to God – who He is and what He has done for us in Jesus Christ. Response is always to something specific and concrete. It is also not a ritual or routine but arises from the heart and from the innermost part of our being. Thus, spontaneity in worship can occur even within the most ordered or sequential order of service.

**Ask:** **Describe the mood of your church –** would you characterize the dominant mood as one of awe and reverence?

1. In what sense do you feel the Holy Spirit moving in your congregation?
2. Explain how you measure response – what effect does your perception have on your worship?
3. How does the order of your service encourage a response to what God has done, is doing and will do? How can the order of your service be changed to allow a strengthened response?

**Theological Foundations for Worship**

Worship is the experience of conscious communion with God and theology is the effort to describe the meaning of the experience. Thus, the two go hand in hand; we worship and experience the presence of God and our theological views are the way in which we try to understand and explain what we have experienced. It has been said that worship is revelation and response: God reveals Himself through the person of Jesus Christ and by faith man responds to God’s grace as he encounters God in worship.

**God, Worthy of Worship**

Christian worship is God-centered. God took the initiative in worship by creating man for fellowship with Him. As such, God is the source and sustainer of life. As man responds in worship, God allows him to experience new manifestations of His goodness and love.

**Characteristics of God:**

1. God is a personal God. He is a personal and spiritual Being, not an ideal, philosophy or metaphysical principle. He desires to have a personal relationship with men. Even though He transcends all our understanding and experience, He is a thinking, purposing, loving Person who is continually invading our lives.
2. God is a transcendent God. In all His attributes and ways, He is higher than man. “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord” (Isaiah 55:8). His holiness is a mystery to man and His magnificence is beyond description. The more that we experience God, the more we begin to humble ourselves before Him, crying out with Isaiah, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory” (Isaiah 6:3).
3. God is an immanent God. God is constantly present in the life of man. Paul said, “He is not far from each one of us, for ‘In him we live and move and have our being’” (Acts 17:27-28).
4. God is a trustworthy God. God is for us and can be trusted. By His grace He has elected men to be saved (Romans 8:30-31) and nothing can separate us from His love (Romans 8:37-39). The central thing in Christianity is not our hold on Him but His hold on us – He chose us, holds us in His hand and allows us to know Him.

**Jesus Christ, Object of Faith:**

The primary distinction between Christianity and the other major religions of the world is found in the person of Jesus Christ. Only through Christ can we have a relationship with God.

1. Manifestation – God took on flesh and made Himself manifest to us in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus declared Himself to be God in the flesh (John 10:30, 14:9).
2. Identification – Jesus identified with man in every area of man’s life. He was born as a man (Phil. 2:7) and lived as a man in the flesh. In the real humanity of Christ God came the whole way to man.
3. Redemption – Christ’s death brought the atonement that man needed to be reconciled with God. In the cross man sees God express His concern for mankind through the act of suffering love.
4. Living lordship – Jesus gave Himself for the church by His death, but He also gives Himself to the church in worship. (Phil 2:9-11) With the resurrection, Christ became the eternal answer to the power of sin and death. He is Lord of all.

**Holy Spirit, the Dynamic of Worship**

1. Every spiritual achievement is the work of the Holy Spirit. Too often we fail to recognize the Spirit’s presence and power. He is God at work in the church.
2. God’s personal Presence – God is present in man’s worship in His Spirit. Paul said that the Spirit is the mark of every Christian (Rom. 8:9) and the sign of God’s ownership (Eph. 1:13-14; II Cor. 1:22). To quench the Spirit of God is to refuse the power of God in worship.
3. God’s transforming power – Man’s salvation is made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit is seen in making man aware of his sin (John 16:8) and to make Christ known and make His truth clear to men (John 16:14-15). Through the Spirit’s power it is possible for man to live the life in Christ (Gal. 2:20).
4. Source of life in the church – It is the Holy Spirit’s function to inspire and guide the church in its worship and work. The Spirit is the “power source” of the church. Only as we walk and live by the Spirit can we bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-25). Moreover, the Spirit inspires the singing, praying, teaching, preaching and worship of the entire body (I Cor. 14:36, Rom. 8:26-27, Acts 4:31 & Eph. 5:18-20). The church is dependent upon the Holy Spirit for the reality of its worship.

**DAY FIVE**

**The Bible, the Eternal Word Through Words**

1. The Bible is the life book of the church. Its truths point man to God, the source of truth and life. As such, the Bible must be kept central in the church’s worship. The Bible gives guidance for living the spiritual life.
2. The heart of God is revealed through the Word of God.
3. A record of divine history – The Bible is the story of God in history. History is seen as the process of divine revelation. The written Word of God makes known to man the living Word of God. The Bible is a historic witness to God’s continuous action in the life of man.
4. A witness to Jesus Christ – The New Testament is a record of God fulfilling His purpose of revealing Himself through the person of His Son against the backdrop of the Old Testament. Jesus’ birth, life, death and resurrection are found in the Bible, so it is through the Bible that Christ can be known in history. God’s redemptive plan can be clearly seen in the Scriptures.
5. A record of human experience – The Bible is a record of human experience in the worship of God. Scripture tells the story of man’s response to the God who controls history. The Bible shows man in his need for redemption and his rebellion as well as God’s love through Jesus Christ and how man’s redemption was won through Jesus’ love on the cross.
6. The Word of the Spirit - There must be inspiration not only in the Scriptures themselves but also in the reader and interpreter of those same Scriptures. The Bible has the power from the Spirit that inspired it to speak to correct man’s distortions of the Scriptures. Worship needs to be biblically centered and rooted. The Word of God fuels and informs the worship of God.

**The Church, the People of God**

1. The church is formed in worship and its vitality is sustained in proportion to the authenticity of its continuing worship. A local church is part of the entire body of Christ and exists not simply as an organization but more as a living organism indwelt by the Spirit and led by Him.
2. A redemptive fellowship – The church is a unique fellowship of people redeemed by God and under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The church exists as a redeemed fellowship and also as a redeeming fellowship – to draw others into its fellowship. Worship renews the church and helps to open its doors to everyone who would join the ranks of the redeemed.
3. A living organism – The church at worship is not merely a reminder that Jesus once lived but also a witness to the living presence of the risen Lord. As a worshiping organism the church must always be subject to change. There must be constant renewal and re-creation in the church.
4. A worshiping congregation – A church can remain alive only as it continually comes to God in worship. Worship becomes the primary activity of the church in order to remain the witness to God’s saving grace. The church is completely dependent upon the leading of the Holy Spirit; otherwise, it ceases to be that vital, vibrant witness God intended it to be.
5. A holy priesthood – The New Testament presents the church as a “holy priesthood” (I Pet. 2:5). The doctrine of the priesthood of believers, suggested by the “holy priesthood” of the church, implies that every member of Christ’s body is responsible to worship Christ by offering spiritual sacrifices. Every believer has the privilege and obligation to worship God for himself and to serve as a priest unto God for his fellowman. Yet this doctrine cannot be taken to the extreme; a man can worship God only as he is rightly related to his fellowman.

**(Webber) Principle 6** – Return Worship to the People

Webber states that he has found *an increasing desire* among evangelicals to return worship to the people. He points out that many people think of the pastor as having some special relationship with God and that they cannot participate in worship because they aren’t as *qualified* as the pastor.

**Ask:** Have you found this attitude among the people in your church?

Congregational action needs these **two conditions:**

1. The congregation must understand what they are doing and
2. They must intend to make the responses that are part of worship. The patterns or forms we use in worship are the outward forms through which our inward and heart-felt praise of God are communicated.

**Ask:** Are there *rituals* or actions in your worship that you are comfortable with? How can we keep various rituals or patterns within worship from becoming dry or repeated with a lack of meaning and vitality?

Worship is a meeting with God; Webber says that as he participates in the worship service, worship is not just going on outside of him or around him, but within him. Thus, getting people involved in worship allows them to more fully participate in worship and fully experience the presence of God.

Increasing congregational participation in worship also restores the doctrine and practice of the priesthood of all believers. As people get involved in worship and the spirit of worship envelopes them, they come alive in worship and the entire body of believers worships together. Webber states, “Order without freedom may become mere unthinking ritual. On the other hand, freedom without order may become equally unthinking and even chaotic.”

In addition, **we should keep two things in mind:**

1. That everything should be done to build up the body of believers (I Cor. 14:26)
2. Everything should be done in a proper (fitting, decently) and orderly manner (I Cor. 14:40)

**Ask:** How can we achieve spontaneity within a worship service?

**Structure / Process**

1. The Entrance (preparation) serves not only to begin the worship service but to **bring the body of believers together,** to collect themselves, to focus on who God is, who we are and why we have gathered; to establish the mood for worship.
2. Next, the purpose of the reading of the Word is to **let God speak**. The reading and preaching of God’s Word allows the believer to hear what God has to say.
3. Webber suggests prayer as a way of allowing **people to respond to the Word**, to pray and intercede on behalf of others.
4. Then the Table **reminds the believers** of Jesus’ sacrifice on our behalf and His resurrection and victory over death.
5. The Dismissal **sends believers out with the commission** to share the love of Jesus with those who haven’t given their lives to Him. We are dismissed, not simply as an end to the worship service, but to go into our world to reach the lost for Christ.

**Ask:** How do you prepare yourself for worship? Can you improve this practice? How? How do you handle the Entrance in your church?

What are some ways to get people involved in your worship service? (prayers, responsive readings of Scripture, testimonies, altar prayer times, etc.)

What are some ways to present the Lord’s Supper that would allow for more congregational involvement?

How do you handle the Dismissal in your church? Can you think of some ways to creatively change this time in your church?

**(Webber) Principle 7** – All Creation Joins in Worship – Part 1

Webber questions the idea (p. 159) of using the morning worship service to focus entirely on Mother’s Day, Memorial Day or other secular holidays or events. Instead, he says that the morning worship is a time to celebrate Christ’s living, dying and rising again for our salvation. Ask: What do you think?

Webber suggests that we should follow the church year as a spiritual discipline, thus avoiding using secular guidelines to shape our church calendar.

**Ask:** Do you follow the church year on a personal basis? What would your church gain by following the sequence of the church calendar?

**Ask:** What is the only church holiday mentioned in the NT? (Acts 20:16 and I Corinthians 16:8)

**A Psychology of Worship**

Worship is basically a person-centered experience. Worship involves the whole person, not just a part of his personhood. Worship touches the mind, soul, spirit, body and heart of a person.

**Ask:** What would worship be like without one’s mind involved? Without one’s heart? Without one’s spirit? Without the body? What would be missing in worship without one of these elements?

Worship is a conscious act in which the worshiper understands God’s revelation toward him and in which the worshiper knowingly turns toward God. Worship involves three kinds of conscious activity on the part of man – a feeling attitude (emotion), a knowing attitude (knowledge) and a willing attitude (will). The act of worship involves the recognition of an object with which the worshiper is in relation (knowledge), the experience of various emotions during worship (feeling) and the decision and commitment as shown in outward activity (will).

**Man responds in worship:**

1. With his senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch); the music of worship, the sanctuary and its décor, the aroma of incense in some churches, the Lord’s Supper.

**Ask:** Name some ways the senses are involved in your worship service.

1. With his mind (John 4:24 – “in spirit and truth”). God created man to be a thinking being. Worship that isn’t understood isn’t genuine worship. We are to have the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5) and our minds renewed (Rom. 12:1-2).

**Ask:** Have you ever been in a worship experience where you couldn’t understand what was going on? How did you feel?

1. With his emotions; man was created to respond in worship with his emotions. We are commanded to love God with our entire being (Matt. 22:37). There should be a balance between unbridled emotionalism and cold objectivity in worship.

**Ask:** Have you experienced worship in either of these extremes? How was the spirit of worship there?

1. With his will; man encounters God in worship and is challenged to accept or reject God’s will. To follow Jesus is to commit oneself completely and totally to His leading – there is no “cheap grace” as we have been bought with a price (I Cor. 6:19-20).

**Ask:** What does total commitment mean? What has it meant to you in your spiritual journey?

**Man’s Basic Needs for Worship**

Augustine said, “Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our souls are restless until they find their rest in Thee.” We have the need to worship. The desire to worship lies in these basic feelings:

1. A sense of finiteness seeks the infinite.
2. A sense of mystery seeks understanding.
3. A sense of insecurity seeks refuge.
4. A sense of loneliness seeks companionship with God.
5. A sense of human belongingness seeks mutual fellowship with other worshipers.
6. A sense of guilt seeks forgiveness and absolution.
7. A sense of anxiety seeks peace.
8. A sense of meaninglessness seeks purpose and fulfillment.
9. A sense of brokenness seeks healing.
10. A sense of grief seeks comfort.

People enter a worship service with various attitudes. An attitude is a combination of an emotion, a thought or idea and a deliberate commitment to a particular action or decision. Worship can help to change one’s attitudes so that that person is drawn closer to God and desires to live according to God’s will. **Attitudes conducive to worship:**

1. Adoration – a spirit of reverence and awe of the beauty, splendor and mystery of God. Adoration is expressed in praise; many examples are found in the Psalms of adoration expressed in terms of praise.
2. Gratitude – an attitude of thankfulness for all of God’s graciousness toward us. Thanksgiving arises when we think of His blessings, the realization that God is the source of our blessings and His redemptive love through Jesus Christ.
3. Repentance – an attitude of humility and confession. Repentance involves dying to self and confessing (agreeing with God) our sin to Him. Confession also includes acceptance of God’s forgiveness so that the believer has assurance of forgiveness.
4. Dependence – an attitude of acknowledging that God is the source of everything, and that man is dependent upon Him for his every need. Man learns to call upon God for his needs and to intercede for others, asking God’s blessings on them (Jesus’ prayer in John 17; Paul’s request that intercession be made for all men in I Tim. 2:1)
5. Submission – an attitude of surrender. Every significant worship experience calls for submission and surrender to the will of God. As we submit to God’s will, we do so with a joyful attitude, not one of resignation or reluctance.
6. Commitment – an attitude of active, willful dedication to God. This act of the will calls the believer to action in doing the will of God.

**(Webber) Principle 7** – All Creation Joins in Worship – Part 2

The use of art forms in worship and the extent of such use is a subject that has been debated for centuries.

**The issue comes down to a** **difference of opinion:**

1. Orthodox – use of senses in the OT and Jesus as God incarnate should allow use of various forms of art, music, etc.
2. Protestant – the 2nd Commandment seems to forbid any images as a part of worship (although use of candles, vestments, musical instruments, stained glass windows, etc. is allowed)

Webber states that we cannot hope to *solve an age-old controversy here* (and he is right!)

1. Calvin and Luther: Luther believed whatever is not explicitly rejected by Scripture may be used in worship; Calvin held the belief that only what is explicitly taught in the NT is allowed in worship.

The function of art in worship helps to assist in setting the mood, helping to create an atmosphere for worship. Art is not necessary for worship, yet it is not necessarily a hindrance to worship. Likewise, music is certainly a part of worship and the Scriptures attest to the value of music in worship. Art, dance, drama (especially drama that tells a story), space (our sanctuaries, worship facilities, etc.) and color are among the various arts and aesthetic elements that can be used to enhance our worship.

**DAY SIX:**

**(Webber) Principle 8** – Worship as a Way of Life

**Worship becomes a part of all of** life as we learn to see worship as a way of life, not just a part of our lives to be acted upon once a week.

**Worship is the primary activity of the church** (the *summit*) as we go to God with our needs and concerns, seeking His healing. Worship is the source of healing for us; worship also empowers us to face the realities of life in the world around us with the assurance that Jesus’ resurrection is the last word and the ultimate victory over sin, death and evil.

1. As worship becomes a way of life, we begin to see that there is a connection between public worship, private prayer and all of life.
2. Making the church year and its special days a part of family life helps to integrate worship in the church with worship in the home and worship from the heart.
3. In relation to our daily work, worship can encourage believers to live out their Christian values in the workplace, giving a witness to their faith among nonbelievers.
4. Another result is that believers can accomplish their work without compromising Christian ethics and thus fulfill the command of doing all things for the glory of God (I Cor. 10:31, Eph. 6:7-8, Col. 3:17) and defeating the powers of evil in the workplace (Eph. 6:12).
5. As Christians our worship should naturally lead us into the world to help the poor and needy and to correct any social injustices or wrongs, we find.
6. Evangelism is also a natural result of worship as we invite others to worship and they have the opportunity to hear about Christ, His death and resurrection and the victory over sin and new life in Jesus we have in Him.

Thus, worship plays a part in all of life. As Webber says, *. . . worship is never an end in itself nor does it stand alone apart from our life in the world. Worship is central to all that we do*.

In bringing change into worship, change usually does not happen easily or quickly. Even when there is a desire for change in worship and more heartfelt worship, it will not happen overnight!

Many believers like a passive style of worship service; others may be afraid of too much change so that the church’s character will be completely altered.

Changes in a church’s worship should be made slowly and with much prayer and consideration. Using an approach like Webber suggests (Preparation, Word, Table and Dismissal) or using the church year to organize your worship services should be undertaken carefully and prayerfully.

Every church is different and must decide how to enhance and renew its worship.

If genuine worship is the goal, then the pastor and his people must work together to accomplish this goal. As Webber states, *God has called us to worship Him and worshiping Him throughout all eternity is what we will do.* In that case, it is worth the time and effort to help our churches become more active in their worship and develop genuine worship on both the corporate and individual levels. Worship is a verb!

Christians all around the world practice two symbolic acts that can seem, at first glance, to be very odd:

Baptism and the Lord’s Supper (also known as “Communion” or “Breaking Bread”).

These same Christians practice them a little differently from each other and even believe a little differently about why they do it at all. We will take a look at these important acts of worship and what the Bible has to say about them.

**Baptism**

**Real Baptisms in the Scriptures (4):** Actual identification, a person or persons identified with something real, DRY.

1. MOSES', I Corinthians 10:2 And all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and the sea.

Children of Israel were identified with Moses as they passed through the parted Sea and with the cloud that represented the Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. FIRE, Luke 3:16 . . . He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with Fire.

Unbelievers identified with judgment at the end of the Tribulation, at the Second Advent.

First Advent: Baptize with the Holy Spirit

Second Advent: Baptize with Fire, judgment

1. CROSS or CUP, Luke 12:50 Jesus speaking of the Cross said, I have a baptism to be baptized with.

Matthew 26:39 *Jesus said If it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will but as thou wills.*

Also, Matthew 20:22, John 18:11

Jesus at the Cross identified himself with our sins and the sins of the world were put into a cup and poured out upon Christ by the Father and he was judged in our place.

1. HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM, Acts 1:5, *But ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.*

Also, Romans 6:3-4, I Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:26-28, Ephesians 4:5

1. Mechanics: The Holy Spirit identifies the believer with Christ at the moment of salvation.
2. Only occurs in the current dispensation, the Church Age
3. Was prophesied by Christ, John 14:20
4. Baptism of the Spirit unifies believers, Ephesians

Ephesians 4:5 *There is one Baptism.* Whereas water baptism has become a point of confusion and division.

1. Signaled the start of the Church Age, Acts 1:5, compared with Acts 2:3
2. Basis of our current position in Christ, Ephesians 1:3-6
3. It is not an experience of any kind.

**Ritual Baptisms (3):** Water is used which represents something else. Immersion was the mode:

1. BAPTISM OF JESUS BY JOHN, unique and one of a kind.
2. Water represented the Father's plan for salvation
3. Christ identified himself with this plan
4. JOHN'S BAPTISM, a new thing in Israel. Normally only for Gentile converts
5. Water represented the Kingdom
6. Believers identified with the coming kingdom and thus the coming king.
7. BELIEVER'S OR **CHRISTIAN BAPTISM**
8. The water represents the body of Christ
9. Identification with Christ and His Death
10. Illustrates retroactive positional truth in that the believer in going under the water is identified with Christ in his death and coming out of the water is identified with Christ in his resurrection.
11. Illustrates that which Holy Spirit Baptism does in actuality.
12. Occurs after personal salvation and is not to be confused with salvation
13. It is not following the Lord in His baptism because his baptism was unique
14. Has nothing to do with church membership
15. Was practiced by the post apostolic church as a means of teaching Baptism of the Holy Spirit and our identification with Christ.

**Throughout the New Testament,** we see that baptism was an opportunity for someone who had become a follower of Jesus to stand before the church community and publicly profess their faith in Christ.

Unfortunately, some misunderstand this declaration and think that the act of baptism is necessary for salvation. But the Bible couldn’t be clearer that salvation is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8-9) that comes when someone puts his or her faith in Christ (Romans 3:21-22; John 1:12). Sin caused a separation between God and us. Our broken relationship with God was mended because of the finished work of Jesus on the Cross. It was on the cross that Jesus took all of our sin onto Himself and for those who respond to His finished work, He makes them righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The big theological term that is taught in the New Testament about this idea is the term *justification.* Justification simply means that because of Jesus death for sin and our appropriation of his gift to our life, the imputation of God’s righteousness, God rendered us *not guilty* for all eternity.

All of that was said to press the point home that we cannot do anything to earn God’s favor.

Baptism doesn’t become something we do to earn God’s forgiveness, because again that’s impossible to do apart from responding to Jesus’ death on the cross for our sin.

So, what is baptism and why would we do it if it doesn’t save us?

The New Testament teaches that baptism is a picture or a symbol of what has already happened to someone who has put his or her faith in Jesus **(1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Colossians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 5:17).**

**Romans 6:1-4** *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

The **word for baptism in Greek** is the word *baptiso*, which means, *to identify* and also to *immerse*. The idea that Paul was presenting was that when you had been immersed into Christ you were immersed into his death.

1. As followers of Jesus, when we put our faith in Christ, the old self is crucified with Jesus (Galatians 2:20).
2. As a person goes under the water, this symbolizes that they are dead to their old life
3. When raised up out of the water to walk in newness of life. Baptism, in a sense, is a Christ follower saying to their church community: *I have believed in Jesus, and I am putting to death the old life and will live the resurrected life of union with Jesus.*

That’s an essential part of the symbolism of baptism and it’s why we practice baptism by immersion. Baptism was viewed in the New Testament times as symbolic of the inner work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Titus 3:6 says, a *washing and renewal.* The death, burial, and resurrection to newness of life pointed to one’s identification with both Christ and His church. As Robert Saucy has pointed out, *One is not united to the Head (Jesus) without at the same time being united with the body.*

Apart from the mode being connected with the significance of baptism, another key reason why we do it is found in the New Testament. Followers of John the Baptist were baptized ***in*** the Jordan River (Mark 1:5). Jesus’ baptism was one of immersion. Matthew writes that in Matthew 3:16 that *after being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water* showing that his body was fully immersed. The other evidence that we have for full immersion baptism comes from two other places in the New Testament (John 3:23; Acts 8:36). Both references refer to baptisms taking place because there was sufficient water available to fully immerse the person being baptized.

The primary reason for being baptized is faith / obedience. Jesus, after His resurrection, gave a commission to all of those who would follow Him:

Matthew 28:18-20 *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

Baptism is part of faith obedience to Jesus in making disciples. God would not give a command that we would teach to others, but ourselves not obey. That would be hypocrisy. Secondly, baptism is a chance to proclaim to the church that you belong to Jesus. It’s a chance to proclaim your identity as a child of God, and that your desire, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is to live for Jesus.

**What about Infant Baptism?**

1. Unknown in the New Testament
2. Irenaeus, about 180 AD referred to: All through Christ who are born again to God, infants and children boys and youth and old men . . . .

He must not have liked girls or women.

This is the source many use for Baptism of infants but with all the writings we have that pre-date this, no mention of infants.

1. The issue is dispensational having those who promote infant baptism bringing the Jewish ceremonies of circumcision, proselyte baptism, and the later baptism of John the Baptizer into one sacrament, Infant Baptism.
2. However, if we rightly divide the Word of Truth we will leave Jewish ceremonies with the Age of Israel and look to the Epistle for our standard of practice and we find no mention of infant baptism.
3. While dedicating a Child or more correctly charging Christian parents with their responsibility to raise their child in a Christian environment and providing Christian God parents to assume this responsibility in the event of the death of the parents has practical merit, it should not be viewed as a sacrament nor confused with baptism.

CONCLUSION: Baptism in the Church is for individuals who have personally put their faith in Jesus Christ. It is for those who request it and then only once it is understood to what it represents and more importantly, what it doesn't represent.

**LORD’S SUPPER**

Besides baptism, the other decree that Jesus gave the church was the Lord’s Supper, often called Communion. We take the Lord’s Supper during worship **for several reasons:**

1. As a symbol of remembrance of Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection

Jesus, as he was in the upper room sharing the Passover meal with his twelve closest friends, took bread, broke it and said this:

Matthew 26:26-28 *Take, eat; this is my body*. And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, *Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*

Jesus used bread and wine as a symbol or an illustration of what His death on the cross would mean for anyone who would respond to Him by faith. The bread and the cup, according to Luke’s account, were to be taken as a way of remembering.

All throughout the Bible, God gave His people ways to remember Him. In the Old Testament, He instructed His people to build monuments when they experienced God. Why would God command His people to do certain activities as a way of remembering? It’s because we’re prone to memory lapses. We’re prone to forget Jesus and just how amazing His death, burial, and resurrection was for our lives. The Apostle Paul wrote this short verse to his friend Timothy:

II Timothy 2:8 *Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel.*

Look at the church in Galatia. They struggled to remember what the gospel was all about. They were turning to a false gospel – one that had to do with doing something to make them acceptable with God. Just like the Galatians, we’re prone to forgetting too.

That’s why Jesus gave us the Lord’s Supper – to regularly refresh our memory about the truth of the gospel.

1. To celebrate our unity in Christ

When we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, we’re proclaiming Jesus’ death for ourselves and other Christians. We’re reminded that the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is core to the faith. We may disagree about minor issues, but if we agree on the gospel, we agree on the most important of matters. As a church, we talk about open-handed and close-handed issues. Open-handed issues are issues where there’s freedom to disagree or have a different perspective. These would be things like color of carpeting in the church, style of worship music. Close-handed issues are matters that relate to the gospel and salvation (Questions like: Who is Jesus? Was His death enough to pay for all my sin? Is there any other way to God besides Jesus?). Those close-handed issues are the ones that we’re reminded that we agree on as we celebrate the Lord’s Supper.

1. To anticipate His return in victory

Often during the Lord’s Supper, this passage from 1 Corinthians is shared: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

*For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, this is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.*

Paul ends this passage with the phrase *you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes*. The Bible is clear that Jesus is returning for His church. His first appearance provided salvation for all who believe. Through the Lord’s Supper we proclaim His death until He returns. In this proclaiming, we remind those who have put their faith in Christ that our hope is to one day be with Christ. We remind Christians that He is returning and that His return will be the end to sin, suffering, and death – a day that Christians wait for in anticipation.

**DAY SEVEN:**

**Insights About Worship (Henry T. Blackaby**) Canadian, pastor, over 25 published books

1. To God worship is so vital that to fail to experience genuine worship is fatal.
2. Yet it is possible to go through life thinking we have worshiped without ever having done so.
3. In Romans 12:1-2 we find the kind of worship God is looking for – the presentation of our bodies as living sacrifices which is our *spiritual act of worship.* Verse 2 in that passage defines what is necessary to worship completely – the renewing of our minds.
4. In worship the criterion is never how people are responding to us but how they are responding to God. Both Solomon and Elijah (II Chron. 7; I Kings 18) did everything that God had commanded them; they were more concerned with what God would do than how people reacted. In both cases the fire fell, and genuine worship took place. Where there is no *fire*, there has not been an acceptable offering. The issue in worship is not how much we can orchestrate excitement, but rather, has the *fire* fallen? Is it obvious to all that God is present in our worship? Are the worshipers’ lives being transformed by their encounter with God?

**Ask:** Do you feel genuine worship takes place in your church? Have you felt a time when genuine worship was not taking place?

1. Nothing is higher on God’s agenda for Himself and for His people than true worship.
2. Therefore, nothing is higher on Satan’s agenda than to deceive God’s people in worship, create substitutes for true worship and distort and change true worship.

Some of Satan’s deceptions may include: the tradition of men, the words of men, the persuasions of men, the pleading of men, the perpetuated fads of men or even the allure of popularity with men (crowds, numbers, etc.).

1. As we depend on God’s Word and the Holy Spirit (which is always in harmony with God’s Word) to lead us, our worship will be a genuine encounter with God.

**John 4 The Woman at the Well:**

Jesus told the woman at the well that *a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth . .* **(John 4:23).** He was making a direct reference to our inner being, or our human spirit being empowered by the Holy Spirit. He was telling the woman that wherever God’s children gathered they could offer the Father the worship He was seeking as long as it was *in spirit* – it would flow from their inner being as empowered by the Holy Spirit (Ps. 103:1). Worship comes from within. God is not at all impressed with our outward expressions of worship that do not come from our hearts, no matter how excellent we may think they are. Our worship must come from the heart (Matt. 15:8-9).

**In worshiping *in spirit*,** five basic truths about us will be evident:

1. We will be born of the Spirit; we will have given our hearts to Jesus and our spirits will be alive to God.
2. We will recognize the importance of the Holy Spirit’s working in our lives and yield our hearts to His control because He is the One who sparks worship for God in our spirit.
3. We will respond to the Holy Spirit’s conviction and correction, maintaining a repentant and contrite heart toward God.
4. Our focus will be on God; we must not allow the music, people or anything else to become the focus of our worship. God is both the subject and the object of worship. We must worship God with an undivided heart (Psalm 86:11).
5. Fulfilled in Ephesian 5:18-19 Worship follows the Filling of the Holy Spirit

**To worship *in truth*** means to worship with our minds as well as our spirit.

1. Worship is more than an emotional exercise.
2. To worship in truth means that our worship will be based on God’s revelation to us in His Word. As such, we need to have a correct view of God in order to offer Him acceptable worship (I Tim. 1:17, Ps. 104:1).
3. To worship in truth also means that the preaching and teaching of God’s Word will be indispensable in our worship services. As noted earlier, the Bible occupies a central place in our worship (Ex.: Nehemiah 8:2-3, 5-6 – the people’s response to the reading of the Word).
4. To worship in truth also means that we as individual worshipers will study God’s Word (Ps. 119:11 – keeps us from sin; v. 18 – there are treasures to be found in His Word).

**Ask:** How is our desire for His Word?

1. Fulfilled in Colossians 3:16 Worship follows the indwelling of the Word in the believer.

**Old Testament Worship Review:**

As noted earlier, the principal Old Testament word translated “worship” is the Hebrew *shachah*, which means *to bow down* or to *prostrate* oneself.

It is an inward attitude. It is not so much something we do as much as it is someone we are.

This Hebrew word for *worship* is first found in Genesis 22 and is linked with two other words first found in this chapter, *love* and *obedience*. These three words are inseparable with regard to true worship because the kind of worshipers God wants don’t worship Him out of duty but out of love.

**Ask:** Is it love for God that motivates our worship? Have we started to leave our first love (Rev. 2)?

**Consider this quote:**

*I am not worshiping God because of what He will do for me, but because of what He is to me. When worship becomes pragmatic, it ceases to be worship. R. G. Letourneau used to say, If you give because it pays, it won’t pay. The principle applies to worship; if you worship because it pays, it won’t pay. Our motive must be to please God and glorify Him alone.* (Warren Wiersbe).

**Obedience is central to worship:**

**BUT WITHOUT FAITH first** there is no obedience that honors God. **Hebrew 11:6** tells us that apart from faith nothing can please God.

Abraham demonstrated his love for God in his obedience to His command (Genesis 12). If we are not eager to obey what God asks us to do, we are not ready to worship. When we worship God out of our love for Him, obedience naturally follows. Faith-Obedience is central to worship.

**From Old Testament to New Testament:**

OT worship took place through the high priest, who was the only one allowed to enter the holy of holies once a year to offer a blood sacrifice on behalf of the Jewish nation.

In the NT, however, we no longer have to go through an earthly high priest or make blood sacrifices anymore (read Hebrews 9:11-12 & 14). The attitude of heart that God looks for has not changed but only the method.

All blood-washed children of God are received into God’s presence through the One who purchased them with His blood. Instead of a man-made tabernacle or temple, God’s dwelling on earth is now *in* His people. Our High Priest is Jesus, who lives, and intercedes, in heaven on behalf of His people. Jesus’ sacrifice opened the door to Heaven’s throne room and made it possible for us to know God and His love for us.

**Worship and the New Birth** (John 9:35-38):

1. Though the man was physically healed, he was not yet a believer. The man’s response showed that he did not really know who Jesus was.
2. Revelation precedes salvation. Until Jesus reveals Himself to us and we see Him as our only hope of salvation from eternal death, we remain lost.
3. There is no redemption without an attitude of worship. The man responded by addressing Jesus as *Lord* and then he worshiped Him.
4. There is no salvation without repentance. The man had a worshiping heart which is also a repentant heart.

**God’s Standard for Acceptable Worship**

1. Why does God require a sacrifice? Sin had to be paid for; a sin offering needed to be made. God planned from the beginning to redeem His creation:
2. It began with a lamb for a **man** (Gen. 4:4); the blood of one lamb was sufficient for the sins of one man.

Job 19:25 *As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth.*

1. At the Passover in Egypt it became a lamb for a **family** (Ex. 12:3,5). God told the people that when He passed by that night He would spare every family where the blood had been applied to the doors of their dwelling places (Ex. 12:23).
2. In Leviticus, God continues to reveal further dimensions of the sin offering as it becomes a lamb for a **nation** (Lev. 16:34). Now a lamb will be used to atone for the sins of a nation.
3. Now the story of redemption reaches a climax as the sin offering becomes the Lamb for the sin of the **world** (John 1:29, John 3:16 & I Pet. 1:19).
4. What kind of sacrifice does God want now?
5. A sacrifice that has been prepared (I Pet. 2:1-3, Ps. 15)
6. A sacrifice that is Christ-centered and Christ-honoring (I Pet. 2:4).
7. The corporate sacrifice of *living stones* that make up a household of faith (I Pet. 2:5). In Him we are being built up into a spiritual house with Jesus as the chief cornerstone (I Pet. 2:6-8).
8. At the heart of NT worship is the offering of ourselves completely to God (Rom. 12:1-2)
9. The sacrifice God is looking for is a complete one, one that costs and counts (everything we are) (read I Chron. 21:18-26; this passage defines giving).
10. The sacrifice we make will be a living one – a continual presenting of ourselves to God; to keep on putting ourselves on the altar, dying to self and living to God.
11. The sacrifice we make will be a holy one (I John 1:9). Forgiveness and cleansing are the preparations for a holy sacrifice. God wants us to be in fellowship with Him, filled with the Holy Spirit
12. The sacrifice we make will be an acceptable one; we never have to worry as to whether or not God will accept our sacrifice of self. This is His promise to us, we are accepted.
13. The sacrifice we make will be a transforming one; the worship which we offer to God will transform us (our character, our minds and bodies, knowing and understanding God’s will for our lives). We cannot truly worship or know God’s will for our lives unless we place ourselves on the altar.

**Our Response in Worship** – First response is Faith / Trust (Hebrews 11:6)

1. In Submission – there is no true worship without submission. Jesus pointed out that submission was necessary to show that we love Him (John 14:15). Submission means to lay oneself flat in humility (Revelation – the elders do this repeatedly). References to humility in Scripture – Is. 57:15, Matt. 5:3, I Pet. 5:5. Also, II Chron. 7:14 – humbling of self, precedes everything else, even the offering of prayers. Lk. 18:9-14 reveals the heart attitude that God is looking for in our worship.
2. In Abdication – (Rev. 4:9-10) So many people (even many believers) are demanding their *rights* these days. It is a sensitive issue to many and is the root of many problems in our society today (individual, family, church, nations). Yet Jesus gave up His *rights* to pay our debt of sin that we could never have paid. We have been bought at a price (I Cor. 6:19-20) and need to have the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:6-8).

**Ask:** What would it be like if we lived like this – to abdicate the thrones of our lives and laid our crowns at the feet of Jesus like the elders in Revelation?

1. The Culmination or Climax of Worship – Is. 6:1-8. The climax (result) of worship is service. Isaiah had encountered the presence of God and was overcome by Him and by the realization of his sin. After his cleansing Isaiah hears God’s call and responds from his heart to go where God would send him. This is the expression of a servant’s heart, of one who has humbled himself, surrendered his rights and is willing and ready to serve his Master at all costs. This is the life of a true worshiper.

Everything comes from worship (which is meaningless without faith) – the building of the Body of Christ, spiritual growth and training, missions, even evangelism.

**What must we do to obey God in personal worship?**

1. Each Christian must choose (by faith) to live a lifestyle of worship (Matt. 7:7-8 as a way of life).
2. A Christian must anticipate fresh encounters with God constantly (Scripture – John 14:26, 16:13 – approaching the Scriptures in an attitude of worship; Prayer – Heb. 10:19-22 – expecting a full encounter with God in worship; Seeking the enabling (filling) of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-15)
3. A true worshiper must know the voice of God and know when He is speaking (through the Word, through other Christians, through His still, small voice).
4. A Christian must come to worship by faith with a heart and life committed to obey God out of every encounter. An obedient heart is essential for true worship and is an act of the believer’s will.

**What must we do to obey God in corporate worship?**

1. We must choose (by faith) to be with God’s people as a way of life, wherever the body may gather (in a home, in a church, in the workplace, on the street).
2. God’s people must choose not to forsake meeting together (Heb. 10:25). Every time when God’s people meet together, each gathering holds infinite potential with God.
3. Each believer must be an active seeker after God when Christians meet in corporate worship. God does things with His people corporately that He does not do individually. Every believer must come expecting God to move as the church meets for worship.
4. Each worshiper must come with a commitment to by faith to obey God’s commands. Every worshiper must have an attitude of *Yes, Lord!* even before knowing God’s will or hearing His voice.

A transformed life that comes out of true worship is the greatest testimony there is for a watching world. May God be greatly glorified, and the world drawn to Him through Jesus as we truly worship Him!

**Here I Am To Worship\***

Light of the world, You step down into darkness.
Opened my eyes let me see.
Beauty that made this heart adore you hope of a life spent with you.

[Chorus]

And here I am to worship,

Here I am to bow down,

Here I am to am say that you're my God,

You're altogether lovely,

Altogether worthy,

Altogether wonderful to me.

King of all days,

Oh so highly exalted Glorious in heaven above.

Humbly you came to the earth you created.

All for love's sake became poor.

(Chorus)

I'll never know how much it cost to see my sin upon that cross.

I'll never know how much it cost to see my sin upon that cross.

And I'll never know how much it cost to see my sin upon that cross.

No I'll never know how much it cost to see my sin upon that cross.

(Chorus)

So Here I am to worship,

Here I am to bow down,

Here I am to say that you're my God.

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