

Worship in the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation

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- I. Worship in the gospels: Two *huge* shifts from the O.T.
 - A. **Jesus is worshiped as God** (Mt 14:25-33; Lk 19:38-40; Jn 12:41; 20:24-28)
 1. Matthew & Mark portray Jesus as God, both creator in the feeding the 5,000 and sustainer in walking on the water (Mt 14:27, 33; cf. Mk 6:48).
 2. The crowds “blessed” [*eulogeō*] Jesus, the Pharisees protested and Jesus affirmed them (Lk 19:38-40).
 3. Jesus is proclaimed as Yahweh himself
 - a. Jesus claimed it: “Before Abraham was, I AM” (Jn 8:58-59).
 - b. John wrote about it: Isaiah wrote chapter 6 about Jesus! (Jn 12:41).
 - c. Thomas confessed Jesus’ deity (Jn 20:24-28).
 - B. **Worship becomes spiritual** (Jn 4:23-24)
 1. We worship in spirit rather than merely with our souls (Rom 8:11).
 2. Two primary words for worship:
 - a. *Leiturgeō*: to serve as a priest.
 - b. *Proskuneō*: to show obeisance.
 3. This would include limiting worship to any particular location (e.g. church buildings), time, rituals (praying, singing, preaching), or bodily movements (kneeling, standing, clapping). “Worship services” (which are often neither worship nor service) may fit into this category.
- II. Worship in Acts: Patterns to Follow
 - A. The church service in Acts – they are strikingly few!
 1. Foundations of the church (Acts 2:42)
 2. Meetings were in homes and were primarily for edification.
 - a. This limits the congregation to 45-60 people.
 - b. This reconstructs the social systems of patron/client as well as honor/shame.
 3. Elements of the service
 - a. Teaching (Acts 20:18-38). Preaching was in the community.
 - b. Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7) was originally a full meal (cf. Acts 2:42, 46).
 - c. Singing (Mt 26:30; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16; 1 Cor 14:26)
 - i. There are a number of hymns actually embedded in the Epistles (Eph 5:14; Phil 2:6-11; 1 Tim 3:16)
 - ii. Many of the poems in heaven were songs (Rev 5:9, 12; 14:3; 15:3).
 - d. Financial sharing (Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35; 11:29-30; 24:17; cf. Rom 15:25-28; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8:1-4; Gal 2:10).
 - e. Prayer (33x’s), mostly in times of crisis (1:14, 24; 4:24-31; 7:59; 8:15, 22; 9:11, 40; 12:5; 16:25; 27:29; 28:8), but sometimes out of Jewish practice (Act 3:1; 10:2, 9; 16:13, 16; 22:17). It was foundational to ministry (Acts 2:42; 13:3), especially ordaining leaders (6:4-6; 14:23).
 4. Much of the church service was borrowed from the synagogue and yet much of it was diverse. **This seems to indicate that while there is a great deal of continuity with the past (tradition), there is also great flexibility under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to meet contemporary needs.**
 - B. Worship was not merely expressions to God but service to the body.

1. Acts 13:1-3, *leiturgeō* – service in the temple.
2. It always describes worship connected to the temple, whether Jehovah's (Lk 2:37; Rom 9:4; Heb 8:5; 9:1, 6, 9; 10:2) or an idol's (Acts 7:42; Rom 1:25).
 - a. Sometimes this worship/service is used metaphorically to describe Christian worship (Rom 12:1; Php 3:3, Heb 9:14; 12:28; 13:10 also Romans 12:1 in its noun form).
 - b. Ultimately this new worship will be exported to the New Jerusalem (Rev 7:15; 22:3) where there is no temple.
3. **Worship in the church is better measured by dirty hands than raised hands.**

III. Revelation

- A. Read the "praise" passages in Revelation (see Power Point).
- B. We learn here how to praise God
 1. **The definition of worship: Recognizing God's position.**
The definition of Praise: Recognizing God's characteristics and deeds.
 2. Two sides of
 - a. Masculine – What you did. "I Remember how you _____."
 - b. Feminine – Who you are. "Lord you are _____."
 3. We must differentiate praise from thanksgiving if for no other reason than the fact that thanksgiving is human-centered, not God-centered and therefore is, by default, an inferior expression of praise.
 4. Memory plays a critical role in praise.
 - a. All praise is about God's past actions when "sponsored" by humans.
 - b. All praise "sponsored" by God is about a new inbreaking in history. Should we be fortunate enough to witness such an event we will celebrate it with abject homage, trembling, stammering tongue (or silence), and stark fear.
 - c. This memory if reenactment and participation, not mere cognition.
- C. The ultimate experience of worship (for which we are now preparing!):
 1. **Every believer will serve as priests** (Rev 7:15; 22:3) but there's no temple (Rev 21:22). Because of the cleansing of Jesus' blood and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, every believer qualifies to lead out in worship.
 2. **Our worship will be diverse:** (Oddly, there is as much talk about worshipping the beast in Revelation as there is in worshipping God, 13:8, 12, 15; 14:9, 11; 16:2; 19:20).
 - a. 24 Elders (4:10; 5:8, 14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4)
 - b. 4 living creatures (4:8; 5:8, 14; 7:11; 19:4)
 - c. 10k x 10k angels (5:12; 7:11)
 - d. Every creature on earth, and under the earth and in the sea (5:13)
 - e. Slain martyrs from the great tribulation (6:10; 15:3) and 144,000 (14:3)
 - f. An innumerable multitude from every nation, tribe, people & language (7:10; 19:6)
 3. **Our worship will be aesthetic.** Our songs will be poetic and new (Rev 5:9, 12; 14:3; 15:3).
- D. Let's take a look at how this works through the template of Rev 4-5.