

Reformation Covenant Church Adult Sunday School

Worship & Liturgy

Week 2: Covenant Renewal Worship & the Call to Worship

I. Worship as Covenant Renewal

a. Exodus 24:4b-11: *And he rose early in the morning, and **built an altar** at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who **offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen** to the Lord. And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient." And Moses **took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant** which the Lord has made with you according to all these words." Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity. But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. **So they saw God, and they ate and drank.***

II. Covenant – a \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ bond

a. The development of God’s Covenant

Covenant	Personal / Access to God	Structural / Command
Adam	Garden / Tree of Life	Don't eat TOKOGAE
Noah	Preservation of Earth	Don't intermarry
Abraham	Land & Seed	Circumcision
Moses	Tabernacle / Land	Law
David	Temple / Song / Everlasting Kingdom	Correction w/ rod of men (2 Sam 7)
Christ / New	Temple of the HS	Law on Hearts / Law of Love

b. Jeff Meyers' Five-Fold Structure of Covenant Formation and Renewal

- i. As covenant Lord, God \_\_\_\_\_ of His creation to do something new with it
- ii. The Lord effects a \_\_\_\_\_, transforming what he has grasped from one state to another, from old to new. God gives the new creation a new \_\_\_\_\_, which implies a new relationship.
- iii. A new \_\_\_\_\_ is given by the Lord, a new way of life fit for the new covenant.
- iv. The Lord offers a fellowship \_\_\_\_\_. He gives the gift of signs and seals and sets forth blessings for grateful faithfulness and curses for ungrateful disobedience.
- v. The Lord arranges for the future \_\_\_\_\_ of the covenant.

c. The Five C's of Covenant Renewal Worship

- i. **Call** to worship – God calls us out of the world to gather \_\_\_\_\_, and He takes hold of us and brings us near
- ii. **Confession** and Forgiveness – God reminds us what He has done for us in Christ. We confess our sins and He \_\_\_\_\_ us of guilt. He reminds us that we bear the name of Christ and are members of His family. He tears us from \_\_\_\_\_ and renews His love for us in Christ.
- iii. **Consecration** – We are set apart for holy service as God speaks to us and teaches us through His Word. We respond by giving \_\_\_\_\_ and our \_\_\_\_\_ as fitting offerings.
- iv. **Communion** – God invites us to commune with Him at his covenant \_\_\_\_\_, and we remember His covenant and enjoy His provisions.
- v. Benediction and **Commissioning** – God BLESSES us and charges us to extend His kingdom into the future and the world, making disciples of all nations. WE are dismissed renewed and equipped to do that.

d. The pattern of OT Levitical sacrifices

III. The Call To Worship

- a. Heb. 4:9-11a - ***There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest.***
- b. Heb. 4:16 - ***Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.***
- c. Eph. 2:4-6 - ***But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus***
- d. The privilege of the call

IV. Changes

- a. Preparing our hearts for worship

- b. Processional

## Additional Resources

### **On the usefulness of OT sacrifices as a pattern for NT worship**

*Jeff Meyers, The Lord's Service, pp. 81-90*

### **On God's call as the mark of God's people, and the expansion of His call to the Church**

The first act of worship of Abraham, the father of believers, is only a response to a call from God who makes himself known to his servant and causes him to hear his word. "And the Lord appeared unto Abraham and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord" (Gen. 12:7-8 KJV). Again, having received the divine promises with regard to his posterity, Abraham built an altar to God at the oaks of Mamre (Gen. 13:14-18). His first sacrifice mentioned in the scriptures is offered by God's own command as a sign of covenant (Gen. 15). The same is true of the sacrifice which the patriarch wanted to make of his son Isaac (Gen. 22).

Abraham is only the first fruits of this election and call directed to a whole people. The promises God made to him are verified in the history of his descendants; the 'house of Israel' is the society of men whom God has called to know him and to serve him as he wants to be served. The cultic ordinances of Exodus are presented to us as a command from God. It is by divine mandate that the assembly of Israel is called together for the religious ceremony of the consecration of Aaron and his sons (Lev. 8:3) and for the consecration of the Levites (Num. 8:9). Likewise it is God who commands the people to assemble for the various religious feasts. For

this reason Chapter 23 of Leviticus is significant; the expression 'holy convocation' comes back like a refrain and it is God himself who orders the cultic gatherings of the sabbaths and of the feasts. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts (verses 1-2) ... These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons' (verse 4).

The institution of the Levitical priesthood in its entirety and of the sacrificial rites is God's gift. In this respect biblical thought is clear. Nothing may be invented by pious human fantasy; everything is fixed by divine decision even to the smallest detail. So the ascending movement of the ceremonies and sacrifices is only the second beat of the rhythm of which the first is the condescending grace of God himself who indicates and gives to man the means of serving him. Only then may man, without fear and uncertainty, without con-scious scruples and false security, offer his worship to the Lord. "And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying . . . Ye have seen how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself . . . And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation' (Exod. 19:3-6). "I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift' (Num. 18:7). So God's free grace has granted to poor people a royal priesthood, a holiness or "sacrality," with the right for this whole chosen people to come near their God in order to speak and pray to him. God himself bears them up "on eagles' wings" (Exod 19:4) and brings them to himself. The worship of this people can now rise to God like a sweet smelling sacrifice, although "God is in heaven, and you upon earth" (Eccles. 5:2).

When the time had fully come God widened his call and extended his summons to embrace all men without any distinction of race. He sent his Christ, the living incarnation of the divine Word, who calls and gathers men together. Christ is the shepherd who came to make his voice heard

among the multitudes of men scattered and left to themselves, "being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12). Through Christ, the children of God, scattered throughout the world are gathered into one single body (John 11:52). Hence the church appears, a word which means etymologically 'an assembly formed upon call.'

Since there is only one Christ, there is only one church. When the New Testament speaks of churches, it is in a geographic sense. The church which is at Antioch, the church which is at Corinth, of the church which is at Rome, are only local segments of the unique and single Church of God. The dogmatic and liturgical Pauline passages speak of the church in the singular: "God hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church which is his body" (Eph. 1:22). "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus" (Eph. 3:21). And when Ignatius of Antioch at the beginning of the second century described the church as "universal", he was only making explicit the biblical notion of the uniqueness and unity of the church. By this he was expressing the unanimous, not the individualistic, character of faith in Christ; **to be a Christian is to be in the church. It is impossible to be saved by Him who is the head, without being integrated into His body.** It is Christ-in-his-body who saves, justifies and reconciles sinners.' Paralleling the divine declaration of the old covenant about the people as priests is that of the new covenant in the words of the apostle Peter: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up as a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 2:5). The new people of God, which is the church, - more so and better than the old - can present themselves before their Lord with confidence and with the assurance of being received, heard, and accepted. A Christian "liturgy" is possible and legitimate as a transposition of the Judaic "liturgy" on the ground of the Holy Spirit and in full truth.

The eucharistic liturgy of the ancient church shows full awareness of the fact that worship is a privilege one owes to the grace of God and not a human achievement valid on its own. The oldest complete eucharistic formula we possess, and which reflects the situation in the third century, says, 'We offer to thee the bread and the cup, thanking thee that thou hast judged us worthy of presenting ourselves before thee to serve thee.'" The same idea is expressed in most of the ancient liturgies in still more concrete manner with regard to the sacramental elements: "We offer to thee that which is thine and which comes to us from thee."

In worship then everything comes from God, entirely from his first prevenient grace, which draws man out of his darkness, raises him from the dust of a very small and sinful creature, and tears away the veil which hides from him the knowledge of his Creator and Savior. It is the Lord who calls together his people, it is he who holds assembly with them. and it is he who leads the divine service of his church. Without this primacy of God, who gives grace to whomsoever he wishes and who determines himself the manner of encounter with his children, and without the sovereign liberty of the Holy Spirit, worship would be merely a human "work," a fiction deprived of value and efficacy. **Worship is a dialogue but the initial call comes from God who begins the conversation.**

*Richard Pacquier, Dynamics of Worship, pp 4-8*