

## How Should We Worship? – Patriarchal Worship

### The \_\_\_\_\_ that is Called Upon

- A. God's name isn't just a word formed with letters, God's name is who He is as He makes Himself \_\_\_\_\_ to us.
1. The children of Seth called upon the name of Yahweh (Gen. 4:26).
  2. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all called upon the name of Yahweh.
  3. And yet when we come to Exodus chapter six, we read:
    - **Exodus 6:2–3, 6** — God spoke further to Moses and said to him, "I am Yahweh; and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, Yahweh, I did not make Myself known to them... Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am Yahweh, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.'"
  4. God's covenant name (Yahweh) is revealed progressively as God works out His redemptive plan in history.
    - a. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob knew the name of God (Yahweh) more \_\_\_\_\_ than did Seth or Enoch or Noah, but they couldn't yet know the name of God as the Israelites would know that name when God \_\_\_\_\_ them from their slavery in Egypt (Exod. 3:13-16).
    - b. Even the Israelites couldn't know God's covenant name as we know that name today in \_\_\_\_\_ (cf. the Hebrew equivalent, Joshua [*yehoshua*], which means "Yahweh saves").
- B. When Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob called upon the name of Yahweh, the point was never the name itself as though it were something invested with magical properties.
1. They were calling upon a name that was being more and more fully revealed to them in the unfolding of God's redemptive plan.
  2. When they called upon the name of Yahweh, they were calling upon God as He was \_\_\_\_\_ Himself to them.

### The Dialogical Principle of Worship

- A. In the Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob narratives building an altar and calling upon the name of the Lord is always a \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord's *appearance* and revelatory *word* of promise.
- B. **Genesis 12:7–8; 13:3–4** — The LORD *appeared* to Abram and *said*, "To your descendants I will give this land." *So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.* Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent... and *there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD...* [Abram] went on his journeys from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, *to the place of the altar which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.*
1. The point is not that Abram could never worship unless he had a "fresh" revelation from God. The point is that Abram was never the initiator in worship.
  2. When Abram built an altar and called upon the name of the Lord, he was always calling to mind and \_\_\_\_\_ to God's prior self-revelation and word of promise.

- C. **Genesis 13:14–18** — The LORD *said* to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you.” Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, *and there he built an altar to the LORD.*
- D. In Genesis chapter twenty-one Abimelech, the Philistine king, and Phicol, the commander of his army came to Abraham and acknowledged that God was with Abraham in all that he did (21:22). Because they could see God’s blessing on Abraham they wanted Abraham to enter into a covenant with them and swear that he would deal kindly with them insofar as they had dealt—and would continue to deal—kindly with him. Abraham saw in this a reminder of God’s faithfulness to His prior word of promise. In Genesis twelve, God had promised to bless Abraham and make his name great (12:2). In Genesis seventeen, God had promised to establish His covenant with Abraham and his descendants after him “throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to [him] and to [his] descendants after [him]” (Gen. 17:7). Having been freshly reminded by the approach of Abimelech and Phicol of God’s word of promise, we’re not surprised to read as the conclusion to the story:
- **Genesis 21:33** — Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God [the God whose covenant promises are everlasting].
- E. **Genesis 26:23–25** — [Isaac] went up... to Beersheba. The LORD *appeared* to him the same night and *said*, “I am the God of your father Abraham; Do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you, and multiply your descendants, For the sake of My servant Abraham.” So [Isaac] *built an altar there and called upon the name of the LORD.*
- F. When Jacob fled from his brother Esau, the Lord appeared to him in a dream standing above a stairway with its top reaching to heaven (Gen. 28:10-12). The Lord gave to Jacob, at that time, all the covenant promises that He had given to his father Isaac and His grandfather Abraham before him (Gen. 28:13-15). Jacob responded to the Lord’s appearance and word of promise by naming that place “Bethel” (“house of God”) and vowing that if God would be with him and keep him on his journey and bring him back to his father’s house in safety, then the Lord would be his God (Gen. 28:18-22).
1. **Genesis 33:18–20 (cf. 28:20-21)** — Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and camped before the city. He bought the piece of land where he had pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem’s father, for one hundred pieces of money. Then he erected there an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel [God the God of Israel].
  2. Jacob’s altar-building at Shechem was his \_\_\_\_\_ to the revelatory word of promise that God had given to him at Bethel.
- G. **Genesis 35:1, 6–7** — Then God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and live there, and *make an altar there* to God, *who appeared to you* when you fled from your brother Esau.” ... So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. *He built an altar there*, and called the place El-bethel [God of Bethel], because *there God had revealed Himself to him* when he fled from his brother.

- H. **Genesis 46:1** — Israel set out with all that he had, and *came to Beersheba*, and *offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac*.
1. Jacob is about to leave behind the land of promise on his way to Egypt. Before he leaves, he calls to mind the promises that God had given to his father Isaac at this very place (Beersheba; cf. Gen. 26:23-25).
  2. At Beersheba, Jacob was \_\_\_\_\_, even as his father had, to God's word of promise.
- I. In the patriarchal narratives we see how inseparably external worship is tied together with God's revelatory word. External worship is always man's response to God's initiative.
- God Himself prescribed this \_\_\_\_\_ for worship in the altar-building instructions that He gave to Israel.
- J. **Exodus 20:24** — You shall make an altar of earth for Me [or unshaped stones; v. 25], and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen; *in every place where I cause My name to be remembered* [called upon; worshiped], I will come to you and bless you.
1. "Build my altar wherever I cause my name to be remembered [self-revelation], and I will come to you and bless you" (NLT).
  2. The altar-building of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in every place where God had caused His name to be remembered, was simply their faithfulness in following the pattern that God had prescribed for His worship.
- K. Here are three additional examples of this divinely ordained pattern for external worship via the building of an altar:
1. **Exodus 17:14-16** — The LORD said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." Moses built an altar and named it The LORD is My Banner; and he said, "The LORD has sworn; the LORD will have war against Amalek from generation to generation."
  2. **Exodus 24:3-5** — Then Moses came and recounted to the people all *the words of the LORD* and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, "All *the words which the LORD has spoken* we will do!" Moses wrote down all *the words of the LORD*. Then he arose early in the morning, and *built an altar* at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. He sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD.
  3. **Judges 6:22-24 (cf. 6:25-26)** — When Gideon saw that he was the angel of the Lord, he said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face." The LORD said to him, "Peace to you, do not fear; you shall not die." Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace.
- L. Worship is always responsive. God speaks, and then worship is, as it were, our "\_\_\_\_\_ " to the word that God has spoken.
1. True worship can only happen in the context of a \_\_\_\_\_ that God has initiated.
  2. God makes His name known to us and we respond by calling upon that name.
  3. This fundamental biblical truth needs to permeate all our thinking and undergird our whole \_\_\_\_\_ of worship.

## Conclusion

- A. What will this biblical theology of worship mean for our \_\_\_\_\_ of worship?
- B. Worship should be \_\_\_\_\_ around that Inscripturated Word in which God has revealed Himself to us through His Son.
- C. An Order of Worship rooted in a Theology of Worship
- D. How much of the church's modern-day practice subtly—or not so subtly—communicates the idea that *in worship* we are the ones \_\_\_\_\_?
- E. True freedom in worship is found only when our worship carefully affirms the reality that it is God who initiates and we who then obediently and joyfully respond.
- It is God who \_\_\_\_\_ to us His name and then we who obediently and joyfully respond to this revelation by \_\_\_\_\_ that name.
- F. In our **practice** of worship, may we always be seeking to faithfully reflect this biblical theology of worship.  
May the way that we \_\_\_\_\_ this time each week faithfully reflect this biblical theology of worship.