

How Should We Worship? – New Covenant Worship

New and Old

- A. Because in the New Testament the covenant has changed, therefore some of the basic covenantal forms of worship have also changed (or, better, have been _____).
1. Altar/sacrifice (Heb. 13:10-12)
 2. Temple (Jn. 1:1-4, 14; 2:19-21; Col. 1:19; 2:9)
 3. Priesthood (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:11-28; 9:14, 24; 10:12)
- B. The newness of New Covenant worship is seen not only in external form and substantive fulfillment, but also in the _____ of worshipers who, because of their union with Christ, now worship in spirit and in truth (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5).
1. **John 4:23-24** — Jesus said to her, "...an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."
 2. **Philippians 3:3** — [W]e are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.
- C. Temple worship must still be _____ by the covenantal, communal, and dialogical nature of worship.
- Under the New Covenant, God is present with His people gathered for worship in and through His _____. Worship is as it has always been the response of God's people to His revelatory initiative as they _____ and call upon His name.

The Parts of New Covenant Worship

The Lord's Supper

- A. Because worship is covenantal, it is right that the covenant meal should be observed weekly.
- "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." "This is My body which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. 11:24-25).
- B. "In remembrance"
1. The point is not simply mental recollection, but rather that exercise of the mind and the heart that is itself the whole-hearted response to what is remembered.
 2. To remember the name of the Lord is, therefore, to _____ Him.
 - a. **Exodus 3:15** — God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, '[Yahweh], the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations."
 - b. **Exodus 20:24** — You shall make an altar of earth for Me... in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you.
 - c. **Psalms 102:12 (Ps. 30:4; 97:12; 135:13)** — You, O Yahweh, abide forever, and Your memorial-name ["Your name by which You are remembered/worshipped"] to all generations.
 - d. **Psalms 45:17** — I will cause Your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore the peoples will give You thanks forever and ever.
 3. To partake of the Lord's Supper is to engage in a covenantal act of _____.
- C. "As often as you drink it" means "every time you drink it." The assumption is that we will want to be "remembering" and worshipping Jesus in this way as often as we are gathered for covenantal worship.
- D. The Lord's Supper epitomizes the dialogical nature of worship.
1. The Lord's Supper is a visual _____ that God speaks to us (accompanied by the written/spoken word) and that we hear and apprehend by faith (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

2. In the Lord's Supper, God assures us that since we have been made partakers of Christ through faith (cf. 1 Cor. 10:16), we now have a spiritual and eternal life that is being nourished within us unto the resurrection (cf. Jn. 6:22-59).
3. We respond to this word that God speaks by partaking of the meal with thanksgiving (prayer).
 - a. "Do this in remembrance of Me."
 - b. **Luke 22:17, 19 (cf. Mat. 26:26-27; Mk. 14:22-23; 1 Cor. 11:24)** — And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves" ... And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

E. The Lord's Supper epitomizes the communal nature of worship.

- **1 Corinthians 10:17 (cf. 11:28-29)** — Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread.

F. A biblical theology of worship will help us to see that the Lord's Supper, as the "remembrance" of Jesus, is in a very real sense *the* _____ act of all New Covenant temple worship.

Baptism

A. Baptism is covenantal insofar as without the New Covenant revelation of the Triune God there could be no such thing as baptism.

- **Matthew 28:18-20** — And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

B. Baptism is dialogical insofar as it is simultaneously a visual gospel _____ that God speaks to us (accompanied by the written/spoken word) and a sign of our calling on His name.

1. In baptism, God assures us that He washes away our sins and makes us clean (Acts 22:16) and that He joins us to Christ in His death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12).
2. We respond to this word that God speaks by calling on His name.
 - a. **Acts 22:16** — Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.
 - b. Peter equates baptism with "an appeal to God for a good conscience" (1 Pet. 3:21).

C. Baptism is communal insofar as Paul says that all true believers are united by the Spirit in "one baptism" (Eph. 4:1-6) and that "by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:12-13).

- In the baptism of a new believer the members of the congregation are not simply spectators or witnesses, but participants as they see and hear afresh God's Gospel word to them and as they respond to that word by always calling on His name.

The Reading and Preaching of the Word

A. The responsive nature of worship means that temple worship should be centered around the reading and preaching of the Word. This is confirmed in the New Testament not only by **principle** (cf. John 1:1-18; Acts 11:14; Phil. 2:16) and **precedent** (cf. Acts 2:1-42; 6:4; 1 Cor. 4:17; Jm. 3:1-2), but even by explicit command and **precept** (cf. Mat. 28:18-20; 1 Tim. 2:11-15; 3:2; Titus 1:7-9; Gal. 6:6).

1. **1 Timothy 4:13-16 (cf. 1 Tim. 3:14-15)** — Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.
2. **1 Timothy 5:17** — The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

The Congregational “Amen”

- A. The congregational “Amen” is theologically appropriate in light of the communal and dialogical nature of worship. It is biblically appropriate in light of the following examples:
1. **1 Chronicles 16:36** — Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting even to everlasting. Then all the people said, “Amen,” and praised the Lord.
 2. **Nehemiah 8:6** — Then Ezra blessed the Lord the great God. And all the people answered, “Amen, Amen!” while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.
 3. **Psalms 106:48** — Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting even to everlasting. And let all the people say, “Amen.”
 4. **1 Corinthians 14:16** — [I]f you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the “Amen” at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying?
- B. The congregational “Amen” ought to be a joyful expression of agreement and of wholehearted congregational _____ in temple worship.

A Scriptural, Historical & Confessional Summary

- A. **Acts 2:42** — They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.
1. God speaks (the apostolic _____), and man responds (the _____).
 2. “The fellowship” refers to the union that believers have with one another in and through their union with Christ.
 - a. **1 John 1:3** — What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.
 - b. When the early believers devoted themselves to “the fellowship,” they did so by gathering to listen together to the apostles’ teaching, to break bread together (the Lord’s Supper), and to engage in “the prayers” together.
 3. Because all of the prescribed elements of worship (fellowship with God) are engaged in communally, the result of this worship is by default a unique and powerful experience of the fellowship that we have with one another.
- B. Writing an apology for (or a defense of) Christianity in the middle of the second century, Justin Martyr gives the following description of early Christian worship:
- “And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine [mixed with] water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given [the eucharistic elements], and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons.”
- C. Fifteen hundred years after Justin Martyr, the London Baptist Confession offered this summary description of the various parts of religious worship:
- “The reading of the Scriptures, preaching, and hearing the word of God, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord, [and “prayer... with thanksgiving”]; as also the administration of baptism, and the Lord’s Supper, are all parts of religious worship of God, to be performed in obedience to Him, with understanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear; moreover, solemn humiliation, with fastings, and thanksgivings, upon special occasions [cf. Acts 13:1-3], ought to be used in an holy and religious manner.”
- D. What we have in these “parts of religious worship” is the formal maintenance of — and enjoyment of — the covenant _____ in covenant dialogue between God and His people.
- What greater privilege could there be than to gather every Sunday in the special presence of God to engage in this most holy of all activities — _____.