

How Should We Worship? – Primeval Worship

Introduction

- A. External worship may be engaged in at any number of different places or times (“in private families” and “in secret each one by himself”).
1. **Matthew 6:6** — “But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”
 2. **Acts 10:9** — Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray.
 3. **Acts 10:30** (cf. 10:1-4) — Cornelius said, “Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour...”
 4. **Acts 21:5** — When our days there were ended, we left and started on our journey, while they all, with wives and children, escorted us until we were out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another.
- B. This “private” worship, whether alone and in secret or with the family at home or with friends on the beach, is not simply the random or informal offering up of a silent or spoken prayer (cf. Neh. 2:1-5).
1. Jesus speaks of going into the inner room and closing the door. Peter sought out a specific place likely at a specific time to pray (cf. Dan. 6:10). Cornelius was praying specifically at the “hour of prayer” (cf. Acts 3:1). The disciples on the beach knelt down to pray (cf. Lk. 22:41). Jesus regularly set aside times to pray alone (cf. Lk. 5:16; 6:12; 9:18), 28). The assumption in all of these cases is that even these private times for external worship were treated _____ than other times.
 2. In the Bible, prayer may be accompanied by fasting. Mealtimes are skipped in order that one might continue in the activity of prayer and show how serious he is about laying hold upon God (cf. Judg. 20:26; 1 Sam. 7:6; 2 Sam. 12:16-23; Ezra 8:21-23; Neh. 1:4; 9:1-37; Ps. 35:13; Isa. 58:3; Jer. 14:12; Dan. 9:3; Joel 1:14; 2:12; Lk. 5:33; Acts 13:2-3; 14:23).
 3. Even when we’re not fasting, shouldn’t private worship (prayer) be a time _____?—a time not for the satisfying of our fleshly appetites, but devoted exclusively to the pursuit of God?
 4. The general principle to be observed is that eating and drinking and worship and prayer are two different activities with times appropriate to each.
 5. Even in our private homes there ought to be a place for the distinction between the _____ and the _____.
- C. External worship may be engaged in at any number of different places or times. There is a special sense, however, in which “external worship” is associated with those times when God’s people are *gathered together* expressly for “the observance of [God’s] instituted ordinances” (“more solemnly in the public assemblies”).
1. This “external worship” in the context of the gathered assembly can be called external temple worship because it’s that “more solemn” worship that happens at the “temple” or “in church” and generally on a specific day (the “Lord’s Day”).
 2. We could say that this worship is _____ holy. Not only is it *external* worship, it’s external *temple* worship.

“Calling upon the Name of the Lord”

- A. The earliest worship is described in terms of “building an altar,” “bringing an offering,” and then—in connection with these offerings on the altar—“_____ upon the name of the LORD.”
- B. **Genesis 4:3-4** — It came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions.
- C. **Genesis 8:20** — Noah built an altar to the LORD... and offered burnt offerings on the altar.
- D. **Genesis 4:26** — To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then men began to call upon the name of the LORD.
1. This doesn't mean that prior to Seth—or even prior to the birth of Seth's son, Enosh—Adam and Abel and Seth had never called upon the name of the Lord.
 2. The point is that it was the line of Seth (in contrast with the line of Cain; Gen. 4:16-25) in which the true worshipers of God were preserved.
 3. It's in the line of Seth and not in the line of Cain that we find men engaging in this special activity of “calling upon the name of the Lord.”
- E. “Calling upon the name of the Lord” is a synonym for _____, whether prayers of petition (cf. Ps. 116:4; Lam. 3:55) or prayers of thanksgiving (cf. Ps. 116:13, 17; Isa. 12:4).
- Calling upon the name of the Lord is the expression of that which the creature owes uniquely and exclusively to the Creator. It is that _____ that expresses, at the most basic level, our posture before God and the way that we're called to relate with Him.
- F. To call upon—or invoke—the name of the Lord” is, in Scripture, a technical or a formal expression for _____.
1. **Psalm 79:6** (cf. Ps. 14:4) — Pour out Your wrath upon the nations which do not know You, and upon the kingdoms which *do not call upon Your name*.
 2. **Psalm 99:6** — Moses and Aaron were among His priests, and Samuel was *among those who called on His name*.
 3. **Zephaniah 3:9-10** (cf. Ps. 116:17; Zech. 13:9) — “I will give to the peoples purified lips, that all of them may *call on the name of the LORD*, to *serve Him* shoulder to shoulder. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia *My worshipers*, My dispersed ones, will *bring My offerings*.”
 4. **Acts 9:20-21** — [Paul] began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” All those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, “Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed *those who called on this name...?*”
 5. **1 Corinthians 1:1-2** — Paul... to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with *all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...*
- G. When we're told that in the days of Seth, men began to call upon the name of the Lord, what we have is a description of external worship, and in particular of that external worship which was connected with the offerings on the altar.
1. **1 Samuel 1:3** (cf. Gen. 22:5-6, 13) — [Elkanah] would go up from his city yearly to *worship* and to *sacrifice* to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh.
 2. **Isaiah 19:21** — The LORD will make Himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day. They will even *worship* with *sacrifice* and *offering*.

Natural Worship and Religious Worship

- A. Insofar as worship is “prayer,” man’s knowledge of this worship was hardwired into him by God when God created him as His own image.
1. “Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one part of *natural* worship, is by God required of *all men*” (LBCF).
 2. Every unbeliever knows that he is obligated to worship God, to pray to Him and to call upon His name.
- B. After the fall, however, men had to be taught how to worship God acceptably.
- It wasn’t Adam who initiated relationship with God after the fall. It was the holy God who graciously initiated relationship with sinful men by revealing to them the _____ to approach Him (altar) and assuring them that He would be pleased with the offerings they brought in accordance with His will.
- C. In the Bible, whenever sinful men invent their own ways and means of approaching the holy God, this is the height of sinful _____.
1. **Leviticus 10:1–2** (cf. 10:3) — Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.
 2. **Jeremiah 30:21** — “*I will bring* [the leader of Israel] near and he shall approach Me; for who would dare [of himself] to risk his life to approach Me?” declares the LORD.
 3. **Exodus 20:24** (cf. **Gen. 35:1**) — “You shall make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen...”
 4. How dare Cain or Abel presume that the Creator of the universe would be pleased to accept their meager gifts – who were not only mere creatures, but now also sinful creatures?
- D. The altar itself is a divinely ordained type that is fulfilled in Christ.
- **Hebrews 13:10–12** — We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.
- E. Just as Christianity is a revealed religion, so also worship, for it to be acceptable to God, must be _____ and made known to us by God.
1. External worship is not an arena for human _____ and _____. External worship is not a place for individualistic self-expression.
 2. External worship is uniquely and exclusively the _____ of God and must therefore always be engaged in according to His rules and in the way that He has prescribed.
 - a. We see this principle illustrated in the fact that God would not allow His people to design or embellish their own altars with tools. Any use of tools on the stones of the altar profaned the altar (Exod. 20:25).
 - b. When God’s people did build a tabernacle or a temple (with its accompanying altar), they were only to build according to the detailed pattern given them by God (Exod. 25:9, 40; 26:30; Num. 8:4; 1 Chron. 28:9-19; Ezek. 43:10-12).

- F. **Genesis 4:3-5** — It came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. *And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard.*
1. Under the Mosaic law, God required not only the *firstborn* of the flock (Lev. 27:26; Num. 18:17; Deut. 12:6) with their fat portions (Lev. 3:16; 7:23-25), but also the *first fruits* of the ground (Exod. 23:19; 34:26).
 2. At Sinai, God was formalizing in the covenant something He had long ago revealed and ordained.
 3. It wasn't just the heart that made Cain's sacrifice bad, but the deficiency of the sacrifice that proved Cain's bad heart.
 - **Hebrews 11:4** — By faith Abel offered to God *a better sacrifice* than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, *God testifying about his gifts...* [By faith Abel obeyed...; cf. 11:7-8, 17]
- G. Noah, when he went out from the ark, built an altar to the Lord and took some of every *clean* animal and every *clean* bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar (Gen. 8:20; cf. Gen. 7:2).
1. Noah could only have known what that worship was that was acceptable to God because of God's gracious, redemptive revelation.
 2. When God separated the animals into categories of clean and unclean in Leviticus 11, He was formalizing in the covenant something He had already prescribed and revealed.
- H. "Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one part of natural worship, is by God required of all men. But that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of the Spirit, according to His will; with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance" (LBCF).
1. Natural worship is that which is known even to every unbeliever as a binding obligation by the law of his _____, but a worship that no man performs by reason of the fall (Ps. 14:1-4; Rom. 3:9-18).
 2. Religious worship is that which can be known only by special, _____ revelation.
 3. Only a special revelation from God accompanied by the working of His Spirit can make us willing to call upon His name and show us how to do so in accordance with His will and so in a manner acceptable to Him.
 4. In no other activity are we more wholly _____ upon God than we are in worship.

Conclusion

- A. External worship is "to call upon (invoke) the name of the Lord." This external worship (particularly external temple worship) is uniquely and exclusively the domain of God and must always be engaged in according to His will and in the way that He has prescribed.
- B. It is not God who needs our worship, but we who need God to reveal Himself and His _____ to us (cf. Ps. 50:7-15; Acts 17:24-31).
- C. May this fundamental biblical truth permeate all our thinking so that it undergirds entirely our _____ of worship.
- D. May this fundamental biblical truth rid us of all presumption and fill us with a glad humility and _____ as we approach this time each Sunday morning.