



**THE INSTITUTE FOR
WORSHIP STUDIES**

**Learning To Worship
With All Your Heart (V):
A Study In The
Biblical Foundations
Of Christian Worship**

Old Testament Forms And Structures

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REVIEW

WEEK 1 - Worship and Deed

Worship is a celebration of God's mighty deeds, especially of salvation, culminating in Jesus Christ.

- God speaks and acts;
- We respond.

- the ongoing challenge of consumer attitudes

WEEK 2 - Worship and Covenant

- God speaks/acts in context of Covenant:

"I will be their God and they shall be my people."

Worship is a re-proclaiming of God's covenant with us.

- connects humanity to His divine mercy
- "No covenant, no worship"

WEEK 3 - Biblical Directives In Worship

How does the Word of God shape our worship?

1. **Adiaphora** (Lutheran)
 - focused on human freedom
2. **Regulative Principle** (Puritan/Reformed)
 - focused on divine direction

- Also looked at various worship words, which brought us into contact with themes of:
Attitude, Obedience, Leadership, Offering,
Relationship, Activity, Noise, Music.

WEEK 4 - Biblical Directives In Worship

- Sense of Awe in worship; the transcendence vs imminence of God
- Names of God (Father, Son & Spirit)
 - what they mean
 - how we use them in worship

QUESTIONS?

PUSHING AHEAD

Old Testament Forms And Structures

Onward, then, to the fifth of our six-week series:

1. The event of worship - recollecting God's deeds
2. Covenant and Sacrifice in worship
3. Biblical directives in worship
4. The Awesome One we worship - a study of His names
5. **Old Testament Forms And Structures**
6. Temple, Synagogue and NT worship patterns.

Note - most material from *Enter His Courts With Praise* by Andrew Hill, Baker Books, 1993

Worship On Earth

Transcendence And Imminence Of God

TRANSCENDENT

- One of the names of God - *God of Heaven* (Jonah 1:9)
- understood to dwell beyond the earth
- even the "heavens" cannot contain Him (1 Chron 6:18)
- from "beyond" creation He looks down on it (Ps 113:4-6); His being and ways far beyond those of mortals (Is 55:9)

IMMINENT

- "Where can I flee from your presence?" (Ps 139:7)
- stooping to help poor and weak (Ps 113:7-8)

The greatness of God, therefore, can be honored at all times and places (Ps 16:8; 34:1)

For this is what the high and lofty One says - He who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I will live in a high and holy place, but also with Him who is contrite and lowly in spirit...." (Is 57:15)

COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS

Theophany And Sacred Space

- *Theophany*: God's self-revelation to humanity; divine manifestation
- Common in Paradise; a rare event because of the Fall (Gen 3:14-24)
- Examples:
 - S voice (Gen 4:9; 6:13)
 - S dream (Gen 15:12)
 - S flame in bush (Ex 3:2-6)
 - S lightning and fire (Ex 19:18-20)
 - S cloud and fire (Ex 40:34-38)
 - S human form (Judges 13:8-20)
- altars often built at these sites (Ge 12:8; 13:18; 22:9)
- or stone pillars (Jacob @ Bethel, Gen 35:14; 12 stones @ Gilgal, Josh 4:1-9)
- natural features noted (oak trees @ Shechem and Mamre, Gen 12:6, 18:1)
 - worship response for the one visited
 - marks site for future worship
 - a teaching memorial
- Sinai, in particular, became a sacred spot
 - the Mountain of God (Ex 19:9-25)
 - God called "One of Sinai" (Ps 68:8)
 - a place of pilgrimage (Elijah, 1 Ki 19:8)

Sacred Space And Worship

- Preconditions for worship
 - The reality of God's overwhelming holiness set the agenda
 - Preparations for worship at these spaces was necessary (Ex 19:9-16)
 - incl. ritual washing, new clothes, sacrifice, celebracy
 - heart purity was central (Ps 24:3-6); as was lifestyle (Ps 15:1-5)
- Pilgrimages
 - journey made to sacred place as an act of devotion
 - Patriarchs to Bethel (Gen 12:8; 31:13; 35:18)
 - Shiloh & Tabernacle (1 Sam 1:3)
 - Mosaic festivals (Passover; Harvest; Booths)
 - celebration
 - teaching moment
 - national unity (cf rival "high places" in Northern Kingdom)
- Teaching Memorials
 - rehearsing God's history to teach essential truths
 - (His holiness & power; Josh 4:6; 24:1-15
 - covenant obligations; Gen 35:1-15)
- Gathering Places For Worship
 - awareness of obligations for loyalty to the Lord and service to each other
 - (Ex 23:1-9)
- Sense Of "God Is With Us"
 - a sense of hope in the face of the Fall
 - God again dwells with His people (Ex 25:8)
 - God's grace brings His presence; idolatry and sin brings His abandonment (1 Sam 4; Ezek 8-10) – the longing of Isaiah for Immanuel (Is 7)
- Implications of these points for Christian Worship
 1. **Prepare** to meet your God. Liturgically, consider
 - a. silence: remove distractions, acknowledge God's majesty (Hab 2:20)
 - b. processional: symbolic pilgrimage, under "God My Banner" (*Jahweh-Nissi* Ex 17:15)
 - c. greeting: God's dialogical action that invites response
 - d. repentance: necessary cleansing (Is 6:5)
 2. **Coming** to meet God.
 - pilgrimage was central to Hebrews & early Christians
 - symbol of life as pilgrimage (Heb 11:13-16)
 3. **What** do these stones mean?
 - Deut 6: seize every moment of life to teach
 - the Passover teaching tradition
 - Communion, Baptism, Cross, Festivals
 4. **Spiritual** House
 - The Church as God's house (1 Peter 2:4-10)
 - benefits in identifying the meeting place of "God's Dwelling"
 - reinforces corporate identity

- encourages public and regular gathering
- a silent witness through the week of God's presence

5. Immanuel

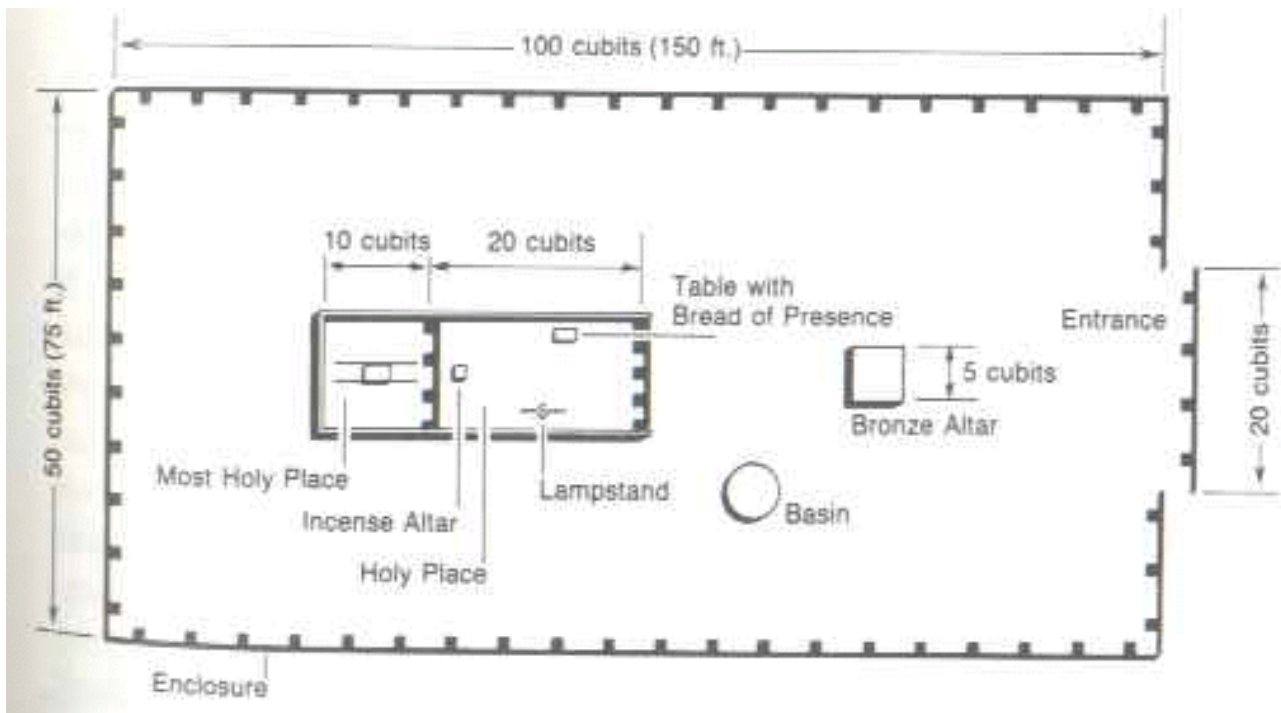
- the Word has become flesh (John 1:14)
- Immanuel **IS** with us (Mt 1:23)
- we are NOT abandoned (John 14:18)
- look forward to the NEW Jerusalem (Rev 21-22)

COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS??

A Place To Worship

The Tabernacle Structure

Worship movement was from the camp; through the gates; through the outer court; in the Holy



Place; finally into the Holy of Holies.

THE GATES - separated daily life affairs from meeting with God

THE OUTER COURT - sin was atoned for here at the Bronze Altar; washing for purity happened at the Basin.

THE HOLY PLACE - Prayers were offered at the Incense Altar; Show Bread signified God's covenant meal with His people; Lampstand symbolized the revelation of God

THE MOST HOLY PLACE - The most sacred presence of God; only the High Priest could go here.

1. Worshipper would ceremonially prepare.
2. Worshipper approached the tabernacle with an offering
3. The priest would welcome the worshipper, leading him to the Bronze Altar. The family would watch.
4. After prayers of confession, sins were transferred to the animal, who was killed; blood collected; skinned and cut into quarters
5. The worshipper would step back and watch the priest burn the sacrifice, while offering silent prayer, or chanting or singing
6. Priest would dismiss worshipper with blessing; fellowship meal eaten with priest or taken home and eaten with family; remnants destroyed by fire.

DISCUSS -

What flow do you see happening here, liturgically?

What guiding principles may this present to our worship today?

Expressions Of Worship In The Psalms

“Come, let us bow down in worship” (Ps 95:6)

Lying on the ground prostrate before the Lord was a symbol of humility. It was both an act of repentance (Ps 38:6) and of worship (Ps 138:2)

“In your name I will lift up my hands.” (Ps 63:4)

Hand gestures express attitudes of the heart and may symbolize praise (Ps 134:2), prayer (Ps 28:2) or meditation (Ps 119:48)

“Play skillfully on the lyre” (Ps 33:2-3)

Hebrew worship was enriched by a variety of musical sounds, featuring brass and stringed instruments and tympany (Ps 150)

“Blessed are those who have set their hearts on pilgrimage” (Ps 84:5)

The great pilgrimage feasts reminded the Hebrews of their status as “aliens.”

“Give thanks to the Lord who gives food to every creature” (Ps 136:25)

The family meal was a time of expressing gratitude for God’s goodness, and for teaching children the law of God

“Shout to God with joy, sing the glory of His name.” (Ps 66:1)

Spontaneous joy and gladness erupted quite naturally in Hebrew worship as response to the Lord the Creator and Redeemer (Ps 95:1-2)

“I delight in your decrees, I will not neglect your word” (Ps 119:16)

The reading, teaching, and memorizing of God’s law was central to OT faith - this was Israel’s life and praise.

DISCUSSION

- What is regulative/normative? What is optional/suggested? What is merely cultural?
- How can/may we see these expressed in worship today?