

Good Evening! Welcome to week 3 of our series on “What is Worship?” I hope that you’ve been enjoying this as much as I have, but more than that I hope that this has been helpful for you.

Alright - we did this last time and I'm going to do it again - **raise your hand if you were here last week. Now let's have a few of you keep your hand raised and share some things that you took away from our time last week.**

Does anyone remember the phrase that we talked about last week?

Everything Has Changed and Nothing Has Changed

Everything has changed, but nothing has changed! Last week we spent our time talking about how when everything else is stripped away, the core of what God requires of us in worship is the same all throughout the Bible. He requires our entire selves - that we serve him, love him, obey him, fear him, keep his commands. That has not changed from Old to New - BUT... this week... we're going to flip the script and talk about how with the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of the scriptures, EVERYTHING has changed.

Before we get too far into that, however, let's begin our time together with prayer. Pray with me.

There is one central figure in the Bible, who if you were to just take him out, the whole thing wouldn't make any sense at all. One man that makes this whole book - 66 different books in total, written by different authors from different time periods in different regions of the world - but we can take these 66 individual books and call them ONE book because it is held together in one Person - **who is that person? - Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ.**

If we are to understand worship - that's what we're spending our time thinking about tonight, then we have to understand it in light of the person Jesus Christ.

I hope that last week we started to understand part of the unity between the Old and the New Testaments. I think it's tempting for us to just focus on one and disregard the other. But there is a thread that runs from Old to New that holds them both closely together and again, that thread is Jesus Christ.

Everything that we see in the Old Testament - whether there is explicit prophecy of a coming Messiah or not, **is written in a mood of anticipation of that coming Messiah.** We've seen this in Genesis this past week, haven't we? God promised Eve that one of her seed would triumph over the enemy. Cain and Abel come, there's a sense of hope - maybe, just maybe one of these sons will be the promised one, but how did that work out? Not Good! And that sense of anticipation just grows and grows, and as you progress through the Old Testament **God gives greater clarity on what this coming Messiah will look like** - but again, he's not just doing this

in words of prophecy, but every page of the Old Testament in some way looks forward to and anticipates the coming of this Savior Jesus Christ.

So when we consider a topic like worship in the Old Testament, we don't just look at it in a vacuum, do we? What I mean is that we cannot fully understand something like the temple, or the priesthood, or animal sacrifice, unless we connect the dots to what all of these things were pointed towards, which is the person Jesus Christ.

Last week we used the phrase "the lens of Christ" - we have to read the Old Testament through that lens if we are to understand what it has to say to us in this room today.

Let's take a look at what Jesus has to say about this- **look with me to John chapter 5. And I'm going to read verse 39 and 46.**

Jesus says,

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me. . . . If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me."

And at first glance you might think, that's strange, isn't it? Did Moses write Jesus' name anywhere in the first five books of the Old Testament? No! But Jesus says he wrote of him. And if you truly understand what Moses wrote, then you'll look to Jesus Christ and believe him.

Here's another one - Matthew 5:17-18 - Jesus says "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; **I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.**

Jesus didn't just come to hit the reset button and start over, he came to fulfill all that was written about him.

SO, what does that have to do with worship? Well, what I want to do with the rest of our time tonight is look at some key topics in Old Testament worship, and see how they are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. And what we'll see is that **the way that the saints worshiped in the Old Testament HAS NOT gone away - but everything has changed.**

Ok, so first up is an act of worship - sacrifice. And what I want to do is draw a line from the OT, to Jesus, to us. Ok?

So first, **Sacrifice. Right at the beginning of Genesis we run into a problem. Things are going pretty well right up until chapter 3, when God's creation rebels against him and separates themselves from Him. The rest of the Bible is spent answering the question - How can sinful man reunite with a Holy God? How can sinful man be in his presence? How can sinful man please him? How can sinful man worship him?**

And one of the first pictures we get of how man can come offer something to God is sacrifice.

SACRIFICE - OT

Let's look at Leviticus chapter 4 - turn there with me.

Y'all, the Bible is a bloody book. I want to read the whole chapter but I don't know how well I'd keep your attention for that, so I'll just give the first line of each paragraph here.

Verse 3 - "If it is the anointed priest who sins, thus bringing guilt on the people, then he shall offer for the sin that he has committed a bull from the herd without blemish to the Lord for a sin offering"

Jump down to Verse 13 - "If the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they do any one of the things that by the Lord's commandments ought not to be done, and they realize their guilt, when the sin which they have committed becomes known, the assembly shall offer a bull from the herd for a sin offering..."

Verse 22 - "When a leader sins, doing unintentionally any one of all the things that by the commandments of the Lord his God ought not to be done, and realizes his guilt, or the sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring as his offering a goat, a male without blemish

Verse 27 - "If anyone of the common people sins ... he shall bring for his offering a goat"

And then finally, look down to the end of verse 35 - "And the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin which he has committed, and he shall be forgiven.

So, what is the common reason for all of these sacrifices? **SIN!** Sacrifice is needed because God is holy and we are not - and in God's wisdom he ordained that the means by which we can be restored to right relation with him is through **sacrifice!**

Hebrews 9:22 - "Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."

But here's the kicker - were these sacrifices effective? **They were temporary. Whatever sin they covered, eventually would have to be covered again.** Man keeps sinning, and the blood of the sacrifices keeps flowing. It's a temporary solution to a big problem.

So what's the answer? What's the ultimate sacrifice?

JESUS CHRIST

You're going to notice that we're spending a decent amount of time in the book of Hebrews - I love this book. It gives such a helpful explanation of how Jesus fulfills the Old Testament.

Hebrews 13:11-12 - "For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify (make holy) the people through his own blood."

So remind me - what was the purpose of OT sacrifice? The removal of sin. To remove the barrier between God and man so that God might be worshiped.

The purposes of the Old Testament blood sacrifice are fulfilled completely in Jesus Christ - so do we still come to God through a sacrifice? YES - but not one of bulls and goat, one that is eternally effective - the blood of the perfect lamb of God.

Hebrews 10:12 - "But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God"

So sacrifice is revealed in the Old Testament, fulfilled in Jesus Christ, but **now let's take this a step further - let's draw the line to us.**

We no longer offer the blood of bulls and goats, Jesus has made the one time, final sacrifice that secures our relationship with God, Do we offer sacrifices to God?

Well, let's look at what the Bible has to say.

Staying here in Hebrews 13 - let's look at verses 15 and 16.

"Through him - that is, Jesus - let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." - Hebrews 13:15-16

Ok, so do we still offer sacrifices today? Yes! But it looks different, doesn't it? Jesus' sacrifices transforms the way we worship and offer sacrifices to God.

BECAUSE Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice, and he lives in us and us in him, then we are to live our lives as sacrifices as well.

Let me say that another way to help us understand this because it is so important - because we are united to the ultimate sacrifice, we are also to follow after the example of Jesus and live our lives as sacrifices for God.

This is why Paul says in Galatians - "**I have been crucified with Christ! Therefore I no longer lives, Jesus Christ now lives in me.**"

Now let's look at this passage in Hebrews 13 and I want you to help me out.
I see two categories here - Two ways that we are told to offer sacrifices to God.

What's the first way we are told to offer sacrifices to God?

1. With our lips. With our words. With our praise.

What's the second way here in verse 16?

1. With our actions. Pleasing God with the way we live our lives, doing good.

Now think about this with me - the words we say and the things we do - is this a part time job or a full time job, what do you think? **Full time job!** How often does he say we ought to offer this kind of sacrifice to God - look at verse 15 - **Continually! And how is it done - first words in verse 15? - THROUGH HIM** - through the finished sacrifice of Christ, our lives are now lived as sacrifices for God.

Look with me to Romans 12:

Rom. 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

So for us in this room, we are to worship God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, by offering up ourselves as sacrifices for his sake.

Now let me pause here for any questions before we move on to the next one

Let's move on to the person who OFFERS the sacrifice - who is that in the Old Testament?

OT - Priest.

What is the function of a priest in the Old Testament? What does the priest do?

The priest stands in the gap between God and man. The priest is authorized by God to enter into his presence and represent a sinful people to a holy God.

Was just anyone allowed to be a priest? No. Was just anyone allowed to offer sacrifices? No. There were certain men who were set apart to be priests before God - and even then, there was the office of the High Priest - he was the only one who was allowed to enter into the Holy of Holies in the temple. The High Priest had exclusive access to the presence of God and was the chief representative of God's people in the house of God.

Now, just like sacrifices, the GOAL of the priesthood is to enable and encourage to worship of the Lord. **Look with me to Leviticus 9:6-7. Here we see Moses talking with Aaron, the first High Priest of Israel.**

“And Moses said, 'This is the thing that the LORD commanded you to do, that the glory of the Lord may appear to you.' And Moses said to Aaron, 'Draw near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and for the people, and bring the offering of the people and make atonement for them, as the Lord has commanded.'”

So - from verse 6 - what's the end goal of the priest offering the sacrifice? That the glory of the Lord be revealed, and verse 7 -that sin be atoned for.

Then jump down to verse 22 - **“Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting, and when they came out they blessed the people, and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.”**

The function of the priesthood is to stand between God and man and offer acceptable sacrifices to God, that his **glory may be revealed** to the people, **that atonement can be made** for their sin, and ultimately - verse 24 - **That God may be worshiped.**

This teaches us something of the seriousness of our sin, doesn't it? Our sin is so great that we cannot come before God on our own. We need representation. Holy God, sinful man - we need someone to stand in between and represent us to God and also represent God to us.

But what's the problem with the OT priesthood? What's the wrong with our representation in the OT?

They are sinners! Just like us! And something crazy keeps happening - these priests keep dying! So you have to go get a new priest. And all of this tells us that this is not a permanent solution - we need better representation!

And who might that be?

Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Great High Priest.

How does Jesus reveal the glory of God?

- He is God incarnate!

How does Jesus make atonement for our sin?

- He offers up a true and lasting sacrifice

How does Jesus enable worship of God?

- He represents God to us and us to God, he removes the sin barrier between us and God

How does Jesus represent us before God?

- He became man. He became one of us - that he might live as we should and then represent us before God.
- Hebrews 4:15 - For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Look with me to Hebrews 7 - and I'll say it again, y'all need to go home and study the book of Hebrews it is magnificent!

We're going to start with Hebrews 7:23 and you're going to need to have your Bibles open because I'm just going to keep reading because this is so good. This is telling us why Jesus is the High Priest of a better covenant. Look for reasons why Jesus is the Great High Priest.

7:23 - "The former priests were many in number, because they're prevented by death from continuing in office, but **he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever**. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for him"

So let's pause here for a minute - we talked about this already- **what is this saying about how Jesus is a better High Priest than those who came before him?**

- He lives! He never stops representing us before God!

What's another reason - verse 25

- He is able to save to the uttermost! His salvation is complete! The purification that we need is completely accomplished in Him.

Let's keep going - verse 26:

"For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself."

- So what is this saying about why Jesus is a better high priest? **He's holy! And his sacrifice is final! Once and for all.**

Now Keep going into chapter 8:

“Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus is it necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. **They serve a copy and a shadow of the heavenly things.** For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, ‘See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.’”

Now this is where it gets a little complicated so I’m going to try my very best here but I want you to take a stab at it:

What is this saying about why Jesus is a better High Priest?

- Because he is the **true** high priest who ministers in the **true tent**.

The Old Testament tent of meeting, where Moses came in and out before the presence of the Lord and represented the people to God and came out and represented God before the people - **this was patterned after something.** It wasn’t the true reality - it was a picture of what is actually going on in heaven.

Hebrews 8:5 - "the priests serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things."

So try and track with me here because I know this is stretching.

Earthly priests sit in the presence of God on Earth but Jesus sits where? Chapter 8 verse 1. **At the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.**

Earthly priests ministered in the earthly holy place in the earthly tent set up by man, but Jesus ministers as a priest where? Verse 2 - in the real Holy place, in the true tent that the Lord himself set up, not man.

Jesus is the great High Priest because Jesus fulfills the true reality of what the priests were doing here on Earth.

Hebrews calls the Old Testament system of sacrifices and the Old Testament priesthood a shadow - what does that mean? Wherever there is a shadow, there is something real - concrete. The shadow is not the actual reality it’s just a blurry similarity to the real thing. Hebrews is telling us that Jesus actually functions as a priest in heaven, representing us to God and God to us.

Now I know there has to be some questions on that.

Jesus perfectly fulfills the Old Testament shadow of the heavenly reality.

When a priest offers a sacrifice there are essentially 4 parties involved. Who can name them for me?

God

Priest ——— Sacrifice

Man

Which of these does Jesus fulfill? Where is he in this picture?

So let's transition to us. What about us? How does this affect us today?

Remember our pattern here - Old Testament - fulfillment in Christ - application for us.

Old Testament Sacrifices — Jesus is the great and ultimate sacrifice — Our lives are sacrifices

Old Testament Priesthood — Jesus is the great and ultimate High Priest — We are priests.

The New Testament tells us that not only is Jesus our Great High Priest, but in Him, we are all priests for one another.

1 Peter chapter 2:9 - "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Who is Peter talking to? Believers! Christians! Anyone who is In Christ Jesus, the Great High Priest, is by virtue of our unity with him, a Priest.

How is it that you and I can be living sacrifices? It's because we are united by faith to the true living sacrifice, Jesus Christ. How is it that you and I can be a royal priesthood? It's because we are united by faith to the Great High Priest, Jesus Christ. And as we will see next week - how is it that we can be called the living temple of God? Because we are united to the true temple - the one who said if you tear this temple down I'll rebuilt it in three days.

So the fulfillment of the Old Testament scriptures extends to us who are united to Christ, who is the fulfillment of the scriptures.

In other words, in Christ Jesus, you and I are part of what the Old Testament was foreshadowing.

You know what Peter was referencing here? God's promise to the Israelites in Exodus chapter 19 - look there with me. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."

Did Israel obey his voice and keep his covenant? No. Have you and I obeyed his voice and kept his covenant? No. Who has? Jesus Christ.

Because we are in Jesus Christ, who perfectly obeyed and earned these promises, because we are in him, WE are the recipients of these great blessings. WE are the kingdom of priests. WE are the treasured possession of God among all peoples, WE are a holy nation

This promise is fulfilled in Christ Jesus for the church. So now all who belong to him are priests for one another.

Look with me to **Revelation 1:6**.

What does this look like? How are you and I to function as priests?

How do we represent one another before God?

- Prayer. We are to pray for one another. Intercede for one another. We are responsible for the spiritual well-being of one another.

How do we represent God to one another?

- Holy living, speaking truth to one another in love, walking with Him arm in arm with one another
- What about sacrificial living on behalf of one another?
- This applies primarily to the church, but also to the outside world as well.

Any questions here?

I want to close with a passage from Hebrews - anyone surprised by that?

Hebrews 10:19-25

Next week: The Location of True Worship

Sing: Before the Throne
