

Hebrews 12:18-21 *18 For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest 19 and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. 20 For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." 21 Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." (ESV)*

1. Seeker-Sensitive Worship & the Extreme Holiness of God

Modern Basis of "Worship" - The Sinful Man is seeking...

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Isaiah 53:6a

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way...

Ephesians 2:5

...even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved...

Colossians 2:13

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses...

RPT2.8

The special work of the Holy Spirit is to apply to the elect the redeeming benefits of Christ's atonement. The outward and ordinary means through which He communicates the knowledge of redemption is the written Word, in which is infallibly recorded the will of God for man's salvation. He prepares for the reception of the Word and accompanies it with His persuasive power. He regenerates the elect by His grace, convicts them of sin, moves them to repentance and persuades and enables them to embrace Christ through faith. In regeneration He works secretly, supernaturally and effectually.

This work is in itself so distinct and necessary, that without it, no evidence of the truth of the Gospel, no power of argument, no persuasion of love or of terror, no human eloquence, no combination of the most favorable circumstances, can be effectual in producing salvation.

John 3:1-8; Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Sam. 23:2; John 7:39; John 16: 13; Titus 3:5; Ezek. 36:27; 1 John 4:2; Gal. 4:6; 2 Thess. 2:13.

John 6:44

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

[Context - Christ as the Bread of Heaven]

Motif of Biblical Worship - The Holy God is seeking...

Holiness

Basic Definition: "Apartness" or "Otherness"

God is holy because he is completely different than we.

Things/people are holy because of God's setting them apart.

Applied [to God] Definition:

God's pure & righteous actions - External righteousness

God's pure & righteous character - Internal righteousness

Isaiah 6 - God's Holiness Displayed to Isaiah

John 12:41-50 - Christ as Link to God

⁴¹ Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. ⁴²

Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the

Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the

synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

⁴⁴ And Jesus cried out and said, "Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. ⁴⁵ And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. ⁴⁶ I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

⁴⁷ If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸ The one who rejects me and

does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. ⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who

sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. ⁵⁰

And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me."

John 4:21-26 - The Father Seeks Worshippers

21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

25 The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things."

26 Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

Questions for Reflection/Discussion:

1. *Do I consider the general population of humanity as open to spiritual things?*
2. *How important do I think the work of the Holy Spirit is to my own spiritual life?*
3. *By what means did God draw me to Himself?*
4. *Each Lord's Day, do I process worship in terms of God's holiness? ...if not, which attribute of God do I find more dominant?*
5. *Isaiah saw Christ lifted high on His throne, how do I think of the glory of God? How does that impact/change/convict me?*
6. *As I am living the Christian life, what does it mean for me that God chose me, then sought me, that I might worship him?*

Hebrews 12:22-24 *22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. (ESV)*

2. Contemporary Worship & the Eternal Nature of God

Isaiah 57:15

For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:

"I dwell in the high and holy place,
and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit,
to revive the spirit of the lowly,
and to revive the heart of the contrite.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

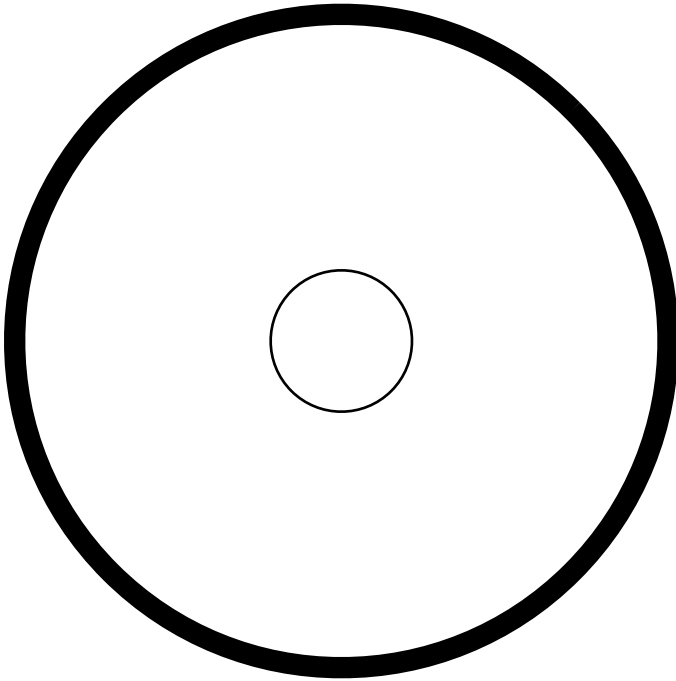
Romans 16:25–27

25 Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages 26 but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— 27 to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Eternal existence - existence without succession of moments

Temporal existence - existence with succession of moments

The Cosmic Doughnut of Time in relation to Eternity



God is eternal. Therefore, the worship of God spans time & eternity. It takes place in time (& in eternity... someday)... but its point of origin is eternity, not time...

Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

2 Timothy 3:16–17

16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

Colossians 3:15–17

15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

So... what of being "contemporary"?

The only way you can be truly "with the times" or "ahead of the times" is to transcend the times.

Questions for Reflection/Discussion:

1. *How is God's eternity connected to His holiness?*
2. *How do I believe time & eternity are related? Does it matter?*
3. *In what ways do I struggle against myself in our church's worship?*
4. *What can a biblical focus in worship accomplish in the lives of believers?*
5. *How can Reformed/Biblical worship address me and the times in which I live better than "contemporary" worship?*

Hebrews 12:25-29 25 See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. 26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." 27 This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, 29 for our God is a consuming fire. (ESV)

3. Creative Worship & the Redemptive Story of God

Modern Motif is for the worshipper to express themselves through worship, thereby setting the tone for the "moment" and setting the agenda of how God will speak to them.

Covenantal link between us & the saints of the OT - WCF 11.6

The justification of believers under the old testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the new testament.

Gal. 3:9, 13-14; Rom. 4:22-24; Heb. 13:8.

Calvin - Psalms are an "Anatomy of All Parts of the Soul"

The God who wrote the Psalms knows us better than we know ourselves... knowing which passages will cut us to the heart, cause reflection, confession, repentance, joy, ecstatic praise.

NT Passages which speak of Psalms are speaking of just that... PSALMS!!

- Colossians 3:15
- Ephesians 5:19
- Psalm 30:title A **Psalm** of David. A **song** at the dedication of the temple.
- Psalm 67:title To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments [**Hymn**]. A **Psalm**. A **Song**.

The Psalms ARE the story of the redeemed, therefore, the story of the church, therefore our story, and, therefore, MY story, for anyone within the church.

Psalms of the Mighty Acts of God in History... like Psalm 78.

Psalms of Confession, Repentance & Contrition... like Psalm 51.

Psalms of Mission... like Psalm 117.

Psalm of Discipleship... like Psalm 119.

Even the Imprecatory Psalms which seem "out of bounds"...

- Psalm 58
- Psalm 139:19-22

Questions for Reflection/Discussion:

- 1. Is worship my moment... or God's, do we set the tone/decide the content... or does He?*
- 2. How clearly do I see a connection between myself and the OT believers?*
- 3. Do I trust God to actually decipher my soul? Does that make me uncomfortable?*
- 4. What should the content of our songs of praise be?*
- 5. Do I connect the seemingly random topics & event in the Psalter to my spiritual life and position in Christ?*