

What is worship?

Confessional foundations

- The light of nature shows that there is a God, who has lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and does good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture. (Westminster Confession of Faith 21.1)
- [The law after Adam's fall] continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables: the first four commandments containing our duty towards God; and the other six, our duty to man. Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly, holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the New Testament. (Westminster Confession of Faith 19.2-3)

Biblical foundations

- Adam in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15)
- Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:3-8)
- First and Second Commandment (Exodus 20:2-6)
- Tabernacle/Temple worship (Exodus 25-31; 35-40)
- Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10)
- Saul's unprescribed sacrifices (1 Samuel 13:8-14; 15)
- Jesus and the Pharisees (Matthew 15:1-9; 23:23)
- Jesus and the Samaritan Woman at the Well (John 4:20-26)
- Our bodies a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1)
- Orderly, comprehensible, and edifying worship (1 Corinthians 14)
- Paul's repudiation of "will-worship" (Colossians 2:16-23)

Theological foundations

- The nature of God
- The Creator/creature distinction
- The nature of revelation
- The centrality of the Word
- The doctrine of Christian freedom
- Our tendency toward idolatry
- The testimony of church history

Recommended reading

- Philip Ryken, Derek Thomas, and Ligon Duncan, editors, *Give Praise to God: A Vision for Reforming Worship* (P&R, 2003).