

# Leviticus 6 to 9

## I. What is Worship?

- A. Most people wrongly believe that worship is the musical part of Sunday, or a genre of music.
  1. They say things like, "Let's start worshipping," or "I go to church to worship."
  2. Not to nitpick, but when we say these things we are really propagating a false understanding of what it means to worship God
- B. We were created as the image of God
  1. Within the trinity, God is continually worshipping within his trinity
    - a) Fully satisfied in his own worship and glory
    - b) He is constantly pouring out within himself unceasing communication, unending love, deep friendship and indestructible joy → there is a circuitous nature to their worship and fellowship
    - c) God is worshipping himself all the time
      - (1) That sounds conceited if I said it about any of us, but when stated about God it is good and right
      - (2) God is the creator, the sustainer and worthy of all worship
  2. Since we are made as the image, in the likeness of God, we too are continually worshipping and fellowshiping (vertical and horizontal)
    - a) That doesn't mean that we always are singing, but that there is an essence of worship that we exude as image bearers
  3. As Harold Best writes, "We were not created to worship, we were created worshipping"
  4. So what is worship? *Worship is the continuous outpouring of all that I am, all that I do and all that I can ever become in light of a chosen or choosing god.*
- C. Adam and Eve walked in untarnished worship, but when they rebelled against their king and listened to the serpent, that beam of worship was redirected
  1. They were still worshipping, but they were no longer worshipping YHWH
  2. Cain was still a worshipper when he killed his brother, but he was worshipping himself
  3. Nebuchadnezzar was worshipping himself when he made an image in his likeness, demanding that others bow down to it
  4. The pagan nations in the ANE worshiped the gods Ba'al, Ashtaroth, Marduk, and others
- D. Much of the choosing of Israel to be God's special nation is about restoring worship to its proper place.
  1. Specifically, it is about God redeeming worship to be directed at YHWH and executed according to his standards.
  2. E.G. Just b/c other nations sacrificed babies to worship their gods didn't mean YHWH wanted that kind of worship!

- E. So we see two ideas in a theology of worship that play out in Leviticus and the entirety of Scripture → That of Spirit and of Truth
    - 1. Worshipping the right God in the right way.
  - F. These next four chapters of Leviticus are about these exact things - worshipping the right God in the right way with the realization that disregarding this is catastrophic
- II. Scripture: Leviticus 6:8–7:38
- A. *[8] The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [9] “Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt offering. The burnt offering shall be on the hearth on the altar all night until the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it. [10] And the priest shall put on his linen garment and put his linen undergarment on his body, and he shall take up the ashes to which the fire has reduced the burnt offering on the altar and put them beside the altar. [11] Then he shall take off his garments and put on other garments and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. [12] The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not go out. The priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and he shall arrange the burnt offering on it and shall burn on it the fat of the peace offerings. [13] Fire shall be kept burning on the altar continually; it shall not go out.*
    - 1. The fire of the altar had to always be burning. It couldn't go out because it was a holy, integral part of the worship of God
    - 2. The Lord is worthy of unceasing worship.
      - a) Unceasing worship doesn't mean always singing
      - b) Unceasing worship means doing life with a Godward heart (do all things as to the Lord, not to man)
      - c) Tending the fire, for the priests, was worshipping YHWH, but if they ignored it or did it begrudgingly, they were worshipping something else (ease, convenience, self, etc)
    - 3. Also, notice the priests had to change outfits for different parts of this process. As we see throughout this entire section, God doesn't just say, “Hey come worship me any way you want. As long as I am being worshipped, I don't care.”
      - a) In the modern church, the gathering has become viewed as giving the consumer what he wants (style, music, etc), but the big fallacy is that in worship we are not the consumer, God is
    - 4. So the two key concepts I mentioned earlier are both here
      - a) **Worshipping the right God (Spirit)**
      - b) **Worshipping him in the right way (Truth)**
  - B. *[14] “And this is the law of the grain offering. The sons of Aaron shall offer it before the LORD in front of the altar. [15] And one shall take from it a handful of the fine flour of the grain offering and its oil and all the frankincense that is on the grain offering and burn this as its memorial portion on the altar, a pleasing aroma to the LORD. [16] And the rest of it Aaron and his sons shall eat. It shall be eaten unleavened in a holy place. In the court of the tent of meeting they*

*shall eat it. [17] It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it as their portion of my food offerings. It is a thing most holy, like the sin offering and the guilt offering. [18] Every male among the children of Aaron may eat of it, as decreed forever throughout your generations, from the LORD's food offerings. Whatever touches them shall become holy."*

1. These verses underscore that the grain offering is most holy and must therefore be eaten by holy people (the sons of Aaron) in a holy place (the court of the tent of meeting)
2. The priestly duties and responsibilities were holy and they had to respect them as such.
3. The most holy status of the offering had to be respected. To disrespect the offering is to disrespect God.
4. **Why? We must worship the right God in the right way (Spirit and Truth)**

C. *Let's skip ahead to 7:19ff, [19] "Flesh that touches any unclean thing shall not be eaten. It shall be burned up with fire. All who are clean may eat flesh, [20] but the person who eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of the LORD's peace offerings while an uncleanness is on him, that person shall be cut off from his people. [21] And if anyone touches an unclean thing, whether human uncleanness or an unclean beast or any unclean detestable creature, and then eats some flesh from the sacrifice of the LORD's peace offerings, that person shall be cut off from his people."*

1. Cut off from his people either means to be kicked out of his family or death. In either case, it was a severe penalty indeed.
2. Why? It isn't enough to just worship the right God (good intention). He is holy. He must be worshiped in the right way.

D. Now in chapter 8 we see the priestly Ordination of Aaron and His Sons.

1. We get an elaborate description of the ordination process as commanded in Exodus 28-29 broken into seven parts with a repeated phrase "as the LORD commanded" (Lev. 8:4, 9, 13, 17, 21, 29, 36).
2. ESV Study Bible points out that "The number seven often symbolizes completion in the OT, and in this chapter the sevenfold layout signifies that, by the end, the installation of the priests is fully done."
3. You could say, "Yea but why this and why that? Why the ear lobe, why the bands, why the breastpiece?"
4. Beyond what is written, all we can do is conjecture, but this we know without a doubt: **We worship God as he requires, not as we decide.**
5. This reality is underscored in chapter 9 when the priesthood is accepted by God, and chapter 10, when the first priests get killed for violating God's commands (more on that next week).

III. In John 4, a Samaritan woman is debating Jesus. She tells him that yes, the Jews and Samaritans worship the same God, but the Jews worship him (according to the Samaritans) on the wrong mountain. In other words, the Spirit is there, but the truth is off

- A. *John 4:22–23, [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. (ESV)*
- B. To worship God “in spirit” means a lot of things:
1. That it must originate from within, from the heart;
  2. It must be sincere, motivated by our love for God and gratitude for all he is and has done.
  3. That it cannot be spiritless - going through the motions in a mechanical or formalistic kind of way
  4. Also, by the Holy Spirit. It's the Holy Spirit who awakens in us an understanding of God's beauty and splendor and power, who stirs us to celebrate and rejoice and give thanks, and who opens our eyes to see and savor all that God is for us in Jesus. (Cleans our space)
- C. To worship God “in truth” means that our worship must conform to the revelation of God in Scripture. It must be informed by who God is and what he is like.
1. Our worship must be rooted in biblical realities and formed by what is true, not what feels good.
- D. Both/And
1. Some prefer to worship only “in S/spirit” but couldn't care less about truth. In fact, they think focusing on truth has the potential to quench the Spirit.
  2. Others prefer to worship only “in truth” and are actually offended when they or others feel anything or experience heightened emotions.
  3. Truth without emotion produces dead orthodoxy
  4. Emotion without truth produces shallow people
  5. We must worship the right God with the right Spirit and in accordance with his truth, on his terms.
- E. There is surely at least one person right now who is wondering, “So do we need to do all this stuff if he commanded it? What if we worship God in the wrong way?” → Great questions
1. We are going to talk more about this next week, so read Leviticus 10 and Acts 5 for preparation
  2. For today, I want to underscore this idea that we are called to worship the right God in the right way, and how Jesus made this kind of worship possible.
  3. Jesus' death, burial and resurrection purifies our spirit so that we can worship him. His truth shows us that the only way to worship him is by his death, burial and resurrection. Of course there are lots of other things we can learn as well, but for today - that is the perfect foundation.
  4. The only way to actually worship God as he demands is through Jesus.
    - a) This means that Jesus is the only true way to worship God
    - b) Jesus is the only way to heaven
    - c) Jesus is the only name by which we can be saved

- d) Every other attempt is either lifeless religion (truth without spirit) or misguided good intentions (spirit without truth)
- e) Since “Worship is the continuous outpouring of all that I am, all that I do and all that I can ever become in light of a chosen or choosing god.”
- f) Accurate worship is that continuous outpouring of all that I am, all that I do, and all that I can ever become in light of a God who has chosen me and empowered me to worship him in Spirit and in Truth

GO DEEPER:

1. In your own words, what does it mean to worship God “in Spirit?”
2. What does it mean to worship God “in truth?”
3. Have you ever given much thought to how you should worship God and if there is a wrong way to do so? What are some examples?
4. In preparation for next week, read Leviticus 10, 2 Samuel 6, Acts 5, and 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. How do these passages change your answers?