

# THE WORSHIP THAT JESUS MAKES POSSIBLE

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## Introduction

- What Jesus makes possible is more than simply a new type of gathering for worship.
- The fundamental difference is the new way of relating to God that Jesus makes possible, seen against the background of OT teaching and practices.
- Church meetings must be understood and critiqued against this larger biblical-theological background.

## 1. THE UNIQUE ACHIEVEMENT OF JESUS

- What God ordained for Israel was 'a copy and a shadow' of what was to come in the Messiah (Heb. 8:5-6; 10:1-4).
  - a. Jesus as the New Temple
    - The ultimate revelation of God (Jn. 1:14)
    - The new meeting place between heaven and earth (Jn. 2:18-22)
    - The community of those joined to Christ (Eph. 2:18-22)
  - b. Jesus as the High Priest of the New Covenant
    - He entered the heavenly sanctuary 'once for all' (Heb. 9:11-12; cf. 9:15)
    - He always lives there to intercede for us (Heb. 7:23-25; cf. 8:1-2)

- He has opened the way for us to enter the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 4:14-16; 10:19-22; 12:22-9)

**c. Jesus as the sacrifice to end all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant (Heb. 10:5-14; cf. Ps. 40:6-8)**

- Fulfilled the purpose and function of all the sacrifices by his perfect obedience, leading to the shedding of his blood (Heb. 9:14)
- Provided the atonement, consecration and peace with God promised under the New Covenant (Heb. 10:14-18)

**2. THE CONSEQUENCES OF JESUS' ACHIEVEMENT FOR US: OUR RESPONSE**

**a. Homage is to be offered to Jesus Christ as Son of God and Saviour (the *proskynein* word-group)**

Mt. 14:33; 28:9, 17

Jn. 9:38 (cf. Rev. 14:6-7)

Rev. 5:8-14

**b. But Jesus is also the means by which the Father obtains 'true worshippers' from every nation, 'in spirit and truth'**

Jn. 4:23-4

Jn. 14:6 (the Truth)

Jn. 4:13-14; 7:37-9 (the Spirit-bearer)

- c. The Christian life is 'divine service' because of Jesus' saving work (the *latreuein/ douleuein* word-group)

Rom. 12:1; 1:9

Heb. 9:14; 12:28-29 (cf. 13:1-16)

Rev. 7:14-15

- d. Godly fear or reverence is expressed by those who have been given faith and hope through the saving work of Jesus and seek to express that in everyday obedience (the *sebomai/ phoboun* word-group)

1 Pet. 1:13-21

Rev. 14:7 (contrast Rom. 1:25)

### 3. THE CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR THINKING ABOUT CHURCH AND CORPORATE WORSHIP

- a. There is no place for an earthly 'cult', with sacrifices, priests, holy places and rituals for cleansing and sanctification - our 'cult' is in heaven and fulfilled in Christ. Nothing we do must hinder the expression of these gospel realities.

Heb. 12:18-24

- b. The whole of life is to be lived in relation to the crucified and exalted Jesus and the heavenly sanctuary. The local church is not the centre of life and worship but Jesus in heaven!

Heb. 12:25-9

Heb. 13:9-16

- c. Gatherings of believers on earth are primarily for the edification of the church, not 'worship' as something especially or exclusively offered 'in church'.
- d. Gatherings of believers on earth are anticipations of heaven and the worship of the new creation (1 Cor. 11:26; Heb. 10:25; Revelation 5, 7)
- e. The structure and pattern of our gatherings must reflect and express the truths of New Covenant worship (as previously outlined): how we approach God and relate to God in and through Jesus and the Holy Spirit
- f. Although the NT provides descriptions of early Christian gatherings (e.g. Acts 2:42-7; 1 Cor. 11:17-34; 14:26-40), these are not necessarily normative for us in terms of content and pattern