



THE MEANING OF WORSHIP

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1

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

- Debates
- Our familiarity with John 4:23

SOME BASICS

- Words
 - השתחוה hishtachavah
 - προσκυνεῖν proskunein
- Both of these have a basic sense of ‘bowing down’
- The form of the Hebrew verb also suggests a voluntary bending.

SOME BASICS

- In the ESV the first place the Heb. word is translated as “worship” is in Gen 22:5—
“I and the boy will go over there and **worship**” (ESV)
- But it already occurs 2x in Genesis prior to that
 - bowed himself (Gen 18:2 ESV)
 - bowed himself (Gen 19:1 ESV)
- “Bow down” –but not just to God
 - bowed to the Hittites (Gen 23:7 ESV)
- But in Gen 22:5, Abraham clearly means more than “bow down”. He intends to build an altar and offer a sacrifice!

SOME BASICS

Not merely the physical gesture, but the underlying attitude. See the distinction of two words for bowing down.

- And all the king's servants who were at the king's gate **bowed down** (*kara^c*) and **paid homage** (*hishtachavah*) to Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai did not **bow down** or **pay homage**. (Est 3:2 ESV)
- **bowed**, and **reverenced** (KJV)

SOME BASICS

The physical gestures merely illustrate the inner attitude.

- I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house.

I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you.

(Psa 5:7 ESV)

- Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker! (Psa 95:6 ESV)

SOME BASICS

- The physical gestures acknowledge the greatness or superiority of the one(s) before whom one bows or kneels
 - With people it can be merely a sign that you respect them

THE MEANING OF WORSHIP

- To worship God, then, is to acknowledge His greatness and His Holiness (i.e., the things that set him apart from all creatures).
 - The gestures are evidences of internal acknowledgement
 - There is also more than one aspect of divine greatness that we acknowledge in worship

ACKNOWLEDGING GOD'S GREATNESS

- Revelation 4

- And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,
- "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, **for you created all things, and by your will they existed [came to be] and were created.**" (vv. 9-11 ESV)

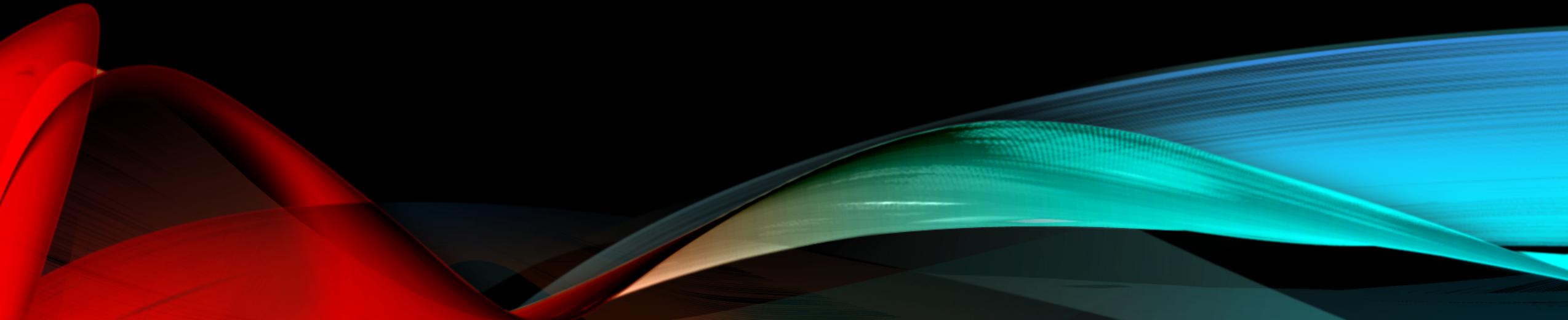
ACKNOWLEDGING GOD'S GOODNESS

- Revelation 5

- ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for **you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,** ¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, **and they shall reign on the earth.**" (vv. 9-10)
- And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" ¹⁴ And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped. (vv. 13-14 ESV)

WORSHIP IS THE OUTWARD
EXPRESSION OF AN INNER REALITY
OF OUR REGARD FOR GOD.

If the inner reality is lacking, there is no worship.





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#2
REVIEW

FROM MAY 5, 2020



THE WORDS

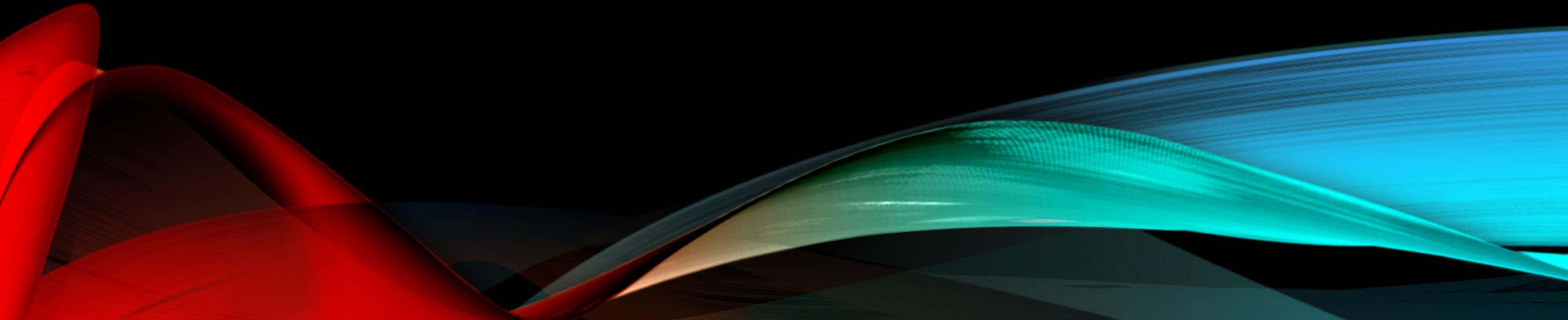
- A basic word used in the OT for worship (and its NT counterpart) have the basic sense of 'bowing down'
- Not merely the physical gesture, but the underlying attitude.
- (There are additional words translated worship, typically having to do with idea of rendering service, such as in the Tabernacle/temple)

THE MEANING OF WORSHIP

- To worship God, then, is to acknowledge His greatness and His Holiness (i.e., the things that set him apart from all creatures).
- There is also more than one aspect of divine greatness that we acknowledge in worship.
 - that God is awesome in His grandeur, majesty, holiness
 - that God is awesome in His goodness, benevolence, kindness

WORSHIP & SACRIFICE

Or, The Role of Sacrifice in Connection with Worship



WORSHIP & SACRIFICE

- Sacrifice is linked to worship although sacrifice also has other associations.
 - Now this man used to go up year by year from his city **to worship and to sacrifice** to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh (1Sam 1:3 ESV)
 - And the LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day **and worship with sacrifice and offering**, and they will make vows to the LORD and perform them. (Isa 19:21 ESV)
 - ...**Present your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, **which is your spiritual worship** (λατρείαν). (Rom 12:1 ESV)

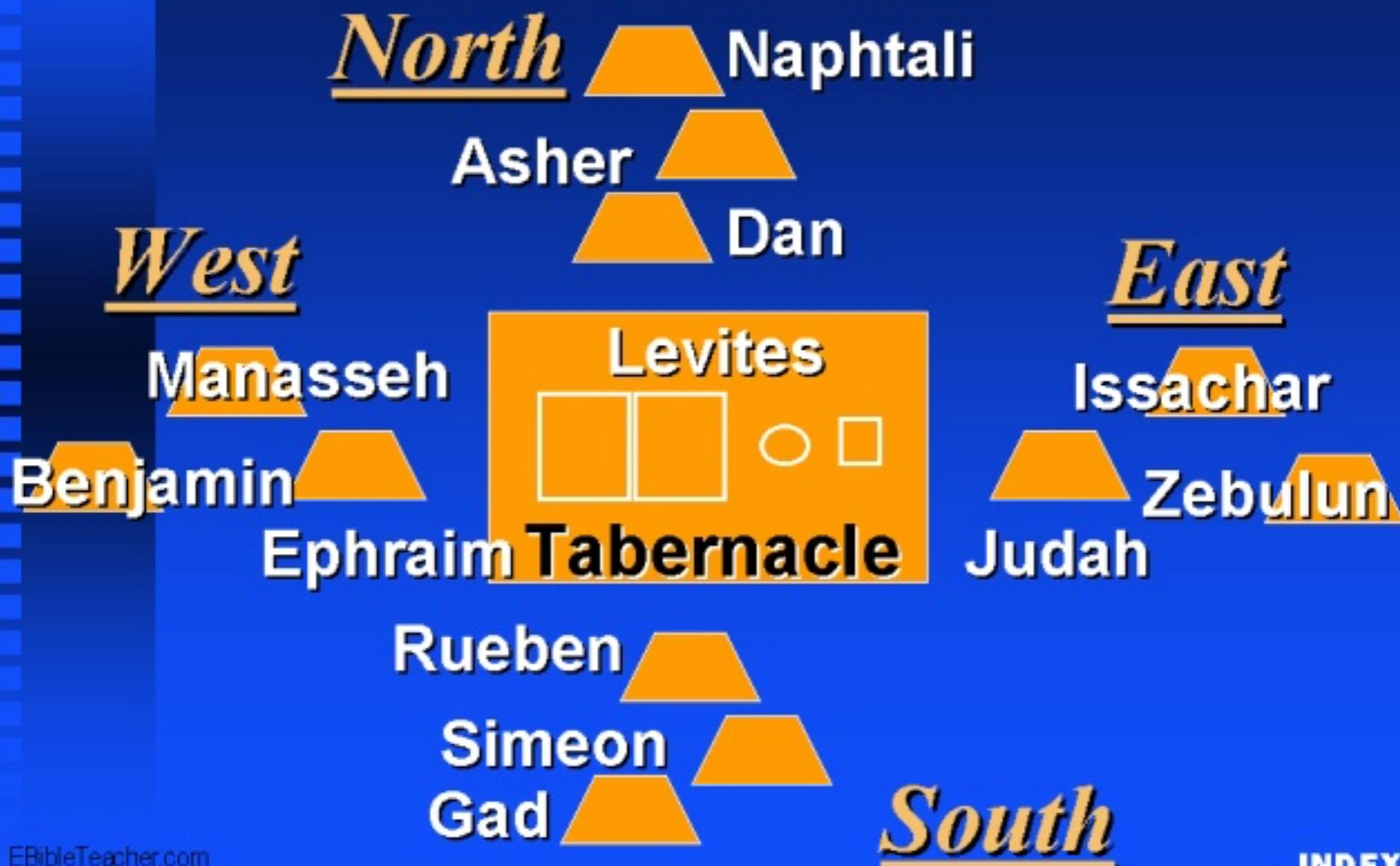
ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICES

- Freedom in approaching God or the lack thereof
- A change with the Fall
- The idea of sacrifice was there from the earliest post-Fall times, even before the Law of Moses
 - Cain & Abel
 - Noah
 - Abraham
- The Law clearly stipulates requirements for a sacrifice to be acceptable

THE PURPOSE BEHIND SACRIFICES

- Pedagogical: to teach us about holiness
 - None shall appear before me empty-handed. (Exo 23:15; 34:20 ESV)
- To permit fellowship of sinful man with a holy God
 - The Tabernacle in the wilderness journey

Israelite Camp & Tabernacle





THE PURPOSE BEHIND SACRIFICES

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 - The Tabernacle in the wilderness journey
- Not to be misconstrued as God having need of what we bring to Him
 - Contrast pagan notions

PSALM 50:7:15

- ⁷ "Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your God.
⁸ Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt offerings are continually before me.
⁹ I will not accept a bull from your house or goats from your folds.
¹⁰ For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.
¹¹ I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine.
- ¹² "If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine.
¹³ Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?
- ¹⁴ Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High,
¹⁵ and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." (ESV)

THE PURPOSE BEHIND SACRIFICES: LESSONS FROM LEVITICUS

- Leviticus 1-6
 - The (whole) Burnt Offering
 - The Grain Offering
 - The Peace/Fellowship Offering
 - The Guilt Offering (unintentional sins)
 - The Trespass Offering (defilement, becoming aware of guilt)
- The lessons from the offerings

LIFE AS WORSHIP

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

(Eph 5:1-2 ESV)



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The background features a dark, almost black, space filled with dynamic, flowing waves. On the left side, there are vibrant red waves that curve and ripple. On the right side, there are bright cyan and blue waves that also flow and ripple, creating a sense of movement and depth. The waves appear to be made of a translucent, liquid-like material.

#3

REVIEW

FROM MAY 5 & 12, 2020

THE MEANING OF WORSHIP

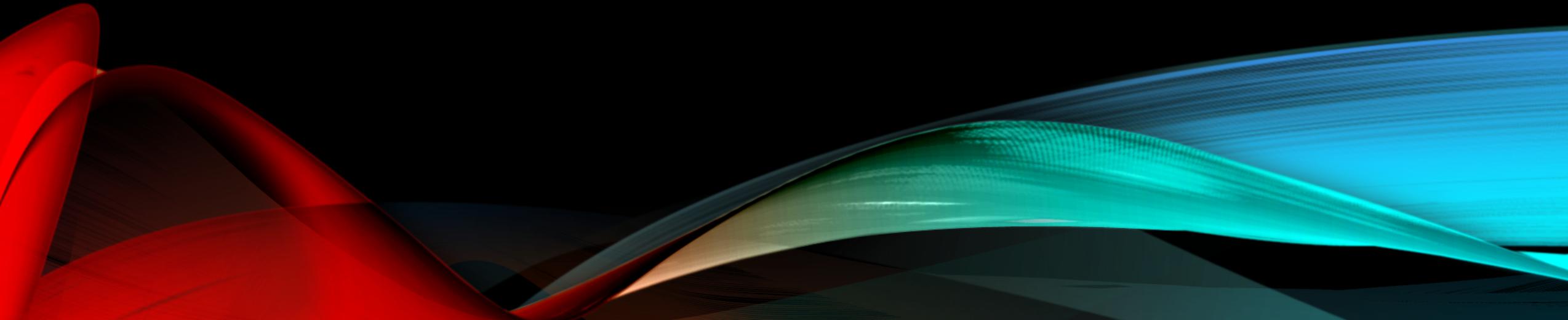
- To worship God is to acknowledge His greatness and His Holiness (i.e., the things that set him apart from all creatures).
 - God is awesome in His grandeur, majesty, holiness
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WORSHIP & SACRIFICE

- Sacrifice is linked to worship. It pictures several truths
 - The breach in our fellowship/relationship with God
 - The acknowledgement of our failure and sin
 - The opportunity
 - To thank God
 - To be restored in relationship with God
 - To have fellowship (to share in some way) with God

WORSHIP IN SPIRIT & TRUTH

Or, What is essential for worship to be acceptable?



TRUE WORSHIP

- ¹⁹ The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. ²⁰ "Our fathers worshiped **in this mountain**, and you people say that **in Jerusalem** is the place where men ought to worship."

²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when **neither in 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 an hour is coming, and now is, when the **true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth**; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. ²⁴ "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:19-24 NAU)

UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP

- Even when offered in the Jerusalem temple
- Even when it consisted of the prescribed things

ISAIAH 1:11-15

- "What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats. ¹² "When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts?"
- ¹³ "Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. ¹⁴ "I hate your new moon *festivals* and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing *them*.
- ¹⁵ "So when you spread out your hands *in prayer*, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood.

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- ¹⁵ "So when you spread out your hands *in prayer*, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. **Your hands are covered with blood.**

ISAIAH 66:3-4

- ³ "But he who kills an ox is *like* one who slays a man;
- He who sacrifices a lamb is *like* the one who breaks a dog's neck;
- He who offers a grain offering is *like* one who offers swine's blood;
- He who burns incense is *like* the one who blesses an idol.
- As they have chosen their own ways, And their soul delights in their abominations, ⁴ So I will choose their punishments And will bring on them what they dread.

AMOS 5:21-26

- ²¹ "I hate, I reject your festivals, Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. ²² "Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept *them*; And I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings.
- ²³ "Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps.
- ²⁴ "But **let justice roll down like waters And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.**
- ²⁵ "Did you present Me with sacrifices and grain offerings in the wilderness for forty years, O house of Israel? ²⁶ "You also carried along Sikkuth your king and Kiyun, your images, the star of your gods which you made for yourselves.

MICAH 6:6-8

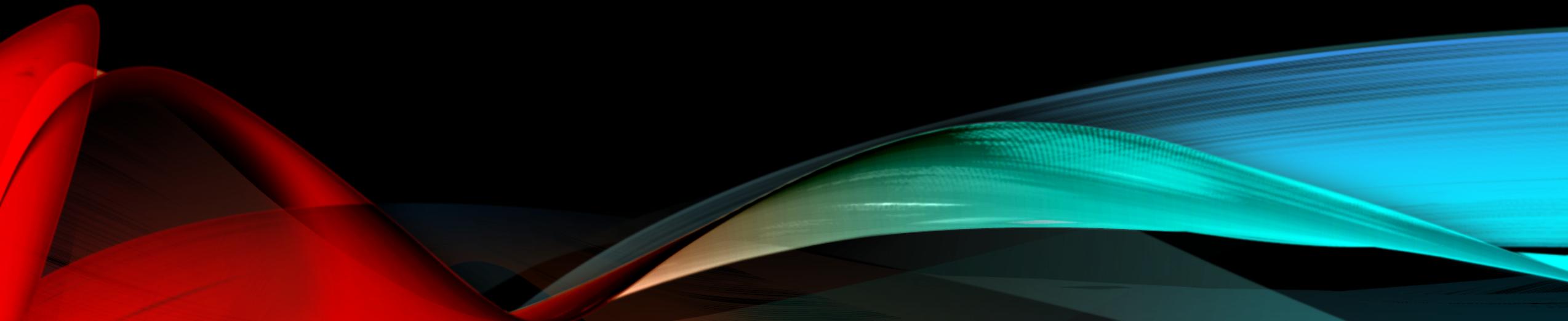
- ⁶ With what shall I come to the LORD And bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, With yearling calves?
⁷ Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams, In ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
- ⁸ He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But **to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?**
- Where did he tell them?
- "Now, Israel, **what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good? ¹⁴** "Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. (Deut 10:12-14)
So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer. (10:16)

CAIN AND ABEL

- And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; ⁵ but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. (Gen 4:4-5)
- By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous (Heb 11:4 NAU)

TRUE WORSHIP

... true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. ²⁴ "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."





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WORSHIP & SACRIFICE

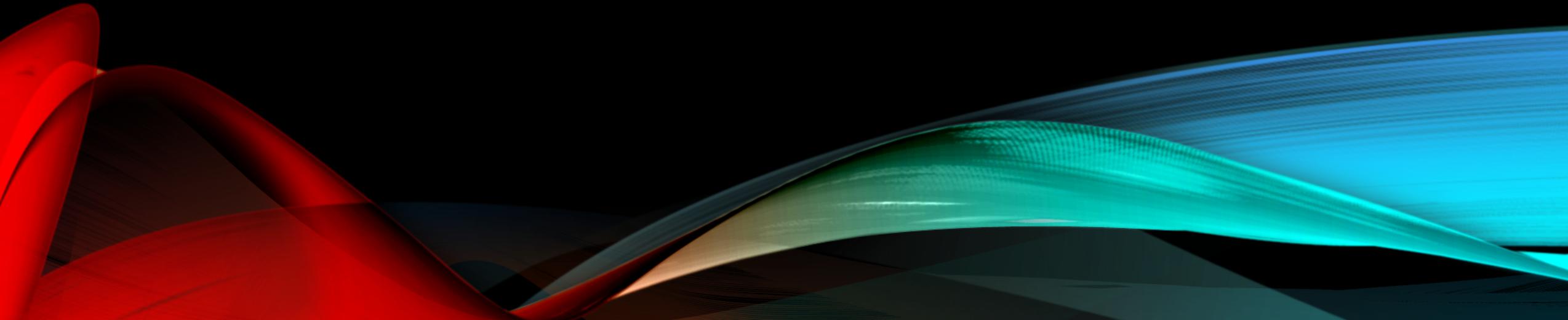
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TRUE AND ACCEPTABLE

- For worship to be right it should be of the living and true God
- For worship to be acceptable, the worshipper also has to be right
 - Even when the right offerings are made, they are not accepted by God if the person is not acceptable
 - Practicing ungodliness while simultaneously participating in worship insults God and provokes His wrath
 - For worship to be accepted by God, the worshipper needs to be accepted, which is through faith and obedience
 - Unacceptable conduct includes our treatment of people

WORSHIP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

What kinds of activities are regarded as worship?



ON DEFINING THINGS

- Frequently, theological debates are based on personal opinions, not biblical teaching
- To formulate opinions on what is right or wrong, we should turn to how the Bible views things
 - Otherwise, it is just one person's opinion or preference over another's
- As regards worship, if our concern is to worship God rightly, we should see what all things are connected by God's word to worship.

ON DEFINING WORSHIP

- We should look at things to which the words for 'worship' are applied
- We can also look at things which are represented as offerings or sacrifices to God, because that is connected with worship

THE PLACES OF WORSHIP: OR, WHERE WORSHIP TAKES PLACE

- The church, i. e., the assembly of those who belong to Christ, is a locus of worship
- The individual Christian indwelt by the Spirit is also a temple, and thus, a locus of worship

THE CHURCH AS A TEMPLE

- Ephesians 2:19-22
- ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but **you** are fellow citizens with the saints and **members of the household of God**,
²⁰ **built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole **structure**, being joined together, grows into **a holy temple** in the Lord.
²² In him you also are being built together into **a dwelling place for God by the Spirit**. (ESV)

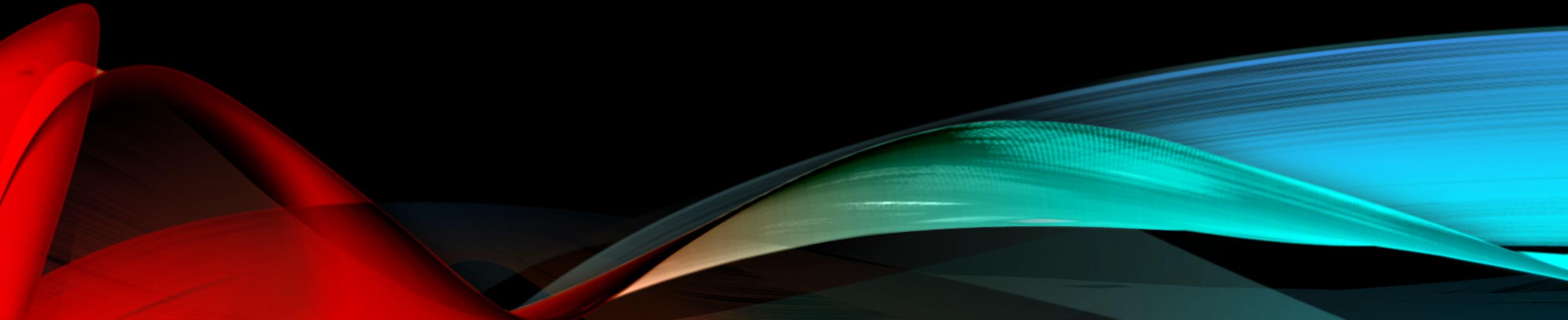
THE CHURCH AS A TEMPLE

- 1 Peter 2:5
- you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (ESV)

THE INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER AS A TEMPLE

- 1Co 6:19-20
- Or do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you**, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (ESV)

THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH TAKES
VARIOUS FORMS



VERBAL PRAISE OF GOD AS WORSHIP

- Heb 13:15
- Through him then **let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God**, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. (ESV)

CHRISTIAN SERVICE AS WORSHIP

- Heb 13:16
- Do not neglect to **do good** and to **share** what you have, **for such sacrifices** are pleasing to God. (ESV)

CHRISTIAN SERVICE AS WORSHIP

- Philippians 2:17
- Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. (ESV)

even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith (NAU)

- The apostle's life is being offered as a sacrifice and service to God for the benefit of the faith of the Philippians.

CHRISTIAN LOVE AS WORSHIP

- Ephesians 5:1-2
- Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.
 ² And **walk in love**, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, **a fragrant offering and sacrifice** to God. (ESV)

CHRISTIAN GIVING AS WORSHIP

- Philippians 4:18
- I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus **the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.** (ESV)

EVANGELISM AS WORSHIP

- Romans 15:15-16
- But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God ¹⁶ to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles **in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable,** sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
(ESV)

??

- Strangely enough, the meeting of the church to remember the Lord is not described in the NT as “the worship meeting.”
- However, the fact that it is not so named does not take away from the fact that in remembering the Lord worship (adoration, praise, acknowledgement of the greatness and the goodness of God) should happen. Compare Rev. 5.

INDIVIDUAL LIFE AS WORSHIP

- Romans 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.** (ESV)

TRUE WORSHIP

... true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. ²⁴ "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

