

The Church: Worship

1. In the OT there was a narrow “sacred” worship at the sanctuary which was to overflow into all of life

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Deuteronomy 6:4-5; cf. Isaiah 1:12-17; Micah 6:6-8)

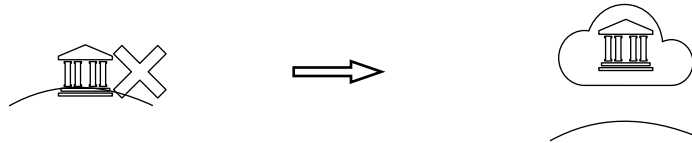


➔ So don't compartmentalise worship

“...to love [God] with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbour as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” (Mark 12:33)

2. In the NT worship is now centred on the heavenly sanctuary, and believers join in with heavenly worship

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... (Hebrews 12:22-24; cf. Revelation 4-5.)

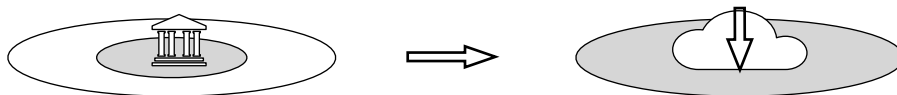


➔ So we don't need special places

²⁰ Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” 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...²³ But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. (John 4:20-23)

3. The prophets looked forward to a time when all of life would be as sacred as narrow worship

And on that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, “Holy to the Lord.” And the pots in the house of the Lord shall be as the bowls before the altar. (Zechariah 14:20 cf. Exodus 28:36-38. Ezekiel 48:35)



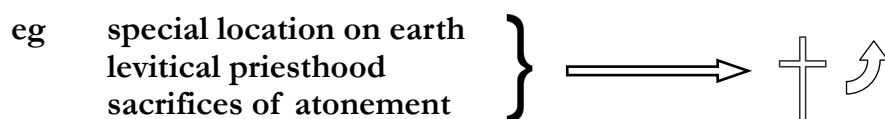
...these prophecies find their ultimate fulfilment in the New Creation

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God...²² And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. (Revelation 21:2, 22-23 cf 22:3-5)

➔ So look forward to unrestricted enjoyment of the Lord's presence!

So is there still narrow worship in the NT?

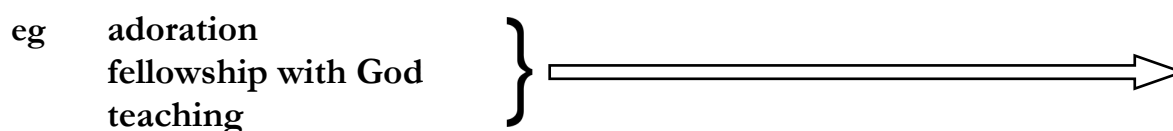
4. In the NT many aspects of OT narrow worship are fulfilled in Christ



For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. ²⁵ Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own ²⁶ ...But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Hebrews 9:24-26)

➔ So we don't need earthly priests, or sacrifices of atonement

5. ...and some aspects of OT narrow worship persist



While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (Acts 13:2; cf Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19)

...[if] an unbeliever or outsider enters...²⁵ the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you. (1 Corinthians 14:24-25)

The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? (1 Corinthians 10:16)

➔ So gathering is still really important, especially to build one another up

What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. (1 Corinthians 14:26)