

Sermon Notes

Second London Baptist Confession Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day (Chapter 22)

The worship wars! Traditional or contemporary?

“For the most part the modern debate over the “how” of worship focuses on categories which supposedly lie at opposite ends of a spectrum, with “traditional worship” on one end and “contemporary worship” on the other end. Historically, however, these are not the categories which have governed the debate over worship. And the reason for this is simple. The terms “traditional” and “contemporary” do not place the focus of the debate where it needs to be, which is on the question, “Is our manner of worshipping God warranted by the Word of God?””
– Dr. Robert Paul Martin

The question that relates to worship is not antiquity, but authority. By what authority do we worship God the way we do? Who regulates our worship? How shall our worship be regulated?

“Now, when the Westminster and Savoy men and our Reformed Baptist forefathers answered the authority question in the way that they did, they separated themselves from the “traditional” worship of the Church of England (and of course from the Church of Rome as well) and followed their consciences in a form of worship which was regarded by many in their day as a “contemporary” innovation.” – Dr. Robert Paul Martin

I. The light of nature shows that there is a God and that He is to be worshiped (1a)

- A. There is a God
 - 1. Who has Lordship and sovereignty over all
 - 2. Is just, good, and does good to all ~ Matt. 5:45; Rom. 2:15

- B. Therefore, He is to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served with all the heart and all the soul, and with all the might. ~ Jer. 10:6-7; Acts 17:24; Rom. 1:20
 - General revelation teaches us there is a God (nature, conscience)
 - Human beings were created to be worshipers of God.
 - The fall does not erase the innate desire to worship, it only perverts it.

II. Scripture Alone Reveals How God is to Be Worshiped (1b)

- A. There is an acceptable way to worship God
Corollary – there are unacceptable ways to worship God!



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- B. The acceptable way to worship God is
1. Instituted by Himself ~ Deut. 12:29-32
 2. So limited by His own revealed will ~ John 4:21-24
1.6 applied to worship
- C. The unacceptable way to worship God is
1. According to the imagination
 2. The devices of men ~ Lev. 10:3; Matt. 15:9; Col. 2:20-23
 3. The suggestions of Satan ~ Matt. 4:9-10
 4. Under any visible representations ~ Ex. 20:4-6; Deut. 4:15-20
 5. Or any other way *not prescribed* in the Holy Scriptures
 - This deals with the “What is not prohibited is permissible.”
 - This is called the “normative principle.”
 - The position of the Confession is “The Regulative Principle of Worship.”

III. The Only True Object of our Worship (2)

- A. Worship is to be given to the Triune God alone

And the universal faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. – Athanasian Creed

- B. Worship is not to be given to angels, saints, or any other creature
1. Angels ~ Col. 2:18; Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9
 2. Saints ~ Acts 10:25-26
 3. Any other creature ~ Rom. 1:25
- C. Worship must be mediated through Christ alone
John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; Eph. 2:18
Trinitarian but conscientiously Christ-Centered.

“Christo-centrality commits us to honor Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by worshiping them in the context of the redeeming work that culminates in Christ... We make our worship Christ-centered not by failing to mention Father or Spirit, but by honoring them with the gospel pattern that reflects their will and purpose.” Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 114.

