

WORSHIP AND PLACE OF WORSHIP

Along the centuries, from paganism to Judaism to Christianity and Islam, men have invented cults and places of worship - pagodas, temples, churches, mosques - to worship the multitude of gods or the Unique God. The monotheists adopted pagan cults in their veneration of the Unique God: the Jews in the Temple of Jerusalem with sacrificial cults of diverse animals, incense, etc... and in the synagogues with ritual gestures; Christians in the churches, and Muslims in the mosques do the same. Buddhists, Hindus, etc... practice their cults in their various high places, pagodas etc...

When God revealed Himself to man, He repeated many times, through the prophets, that the unique cult that is dear to Him is love, the seat of this cult being a man's heart. This rendered the materialistic cults and their practice in the various places of worship - and still is today - void. Man, is still not able to detach himself from the material cult offered in stone buildings. And this, is due to different reasons, most important of which being the prestige and money they offer the religious leaders of the different cults. They like this, so to keep their "faithful" in a state of submission and ignorance, which renders them immature and dependent on various religious hierarchies.

Here are some divine interventions through which the Creator rejects the places and offerings of material cults, specifying that the unique place of worship that He agrees to, is a man's heart and the offering of his love:

1. When David wanted to construct a temple to God, God sent him the prophet Nathan: "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus Yahweh speaks: Are you the man to build me a house (*temple*) to dwell in? ... did I say to any one of the judges of Israel... Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' ..." (2 Samuel 7,4-13). Also, when this temple was constructed by Solomon, it was destroyed two times.

2. When Jesus came, He foretold the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, so that the Spiritual Temple be built: "Destroy this sanctuary (*the temple of Jerusalem*), and in three days I will raise it up.' ... He was speaking of the Sanctuary that was his Body", resurrected after three days (John 2,19-22).

3. To the Samaritan that said to Jesus: "'Our fathers worshiped on this mountain (*mount Garizim in Samaria*), while you say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.' Jesus said: 'Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem... But the hour will come—in fact it is here already—when **true worshipers** will worship the Father in spirit and truth; that is the **kind of worshipers the Father wants**. God is Spirit, and those who worship must worship in spirit and truth.'" (John 4,20-24)

These words deserve a meditation: "Believe me woman", Jesus said. As it is difficult to believe in spiritual worship, this one is practiced neither in Jerusalem, nor in Rome, nor in Mecca, etc... "**True worshippers**" offer this cult in their hearts; here are "the kind of worshipers the Father wants", not man. Jesus revealed this 2,000 years ago. His disciples have not yet understood the depth of this revelation, and continue to worship God by dressing themselves in purple and practicing material worship in ignorance, in disregarding the Holy Scriptures and the biblical prophecies therein. Now, here lies the essence of worship in spirit as desired by God: a cult through knowledge and love for what God has revealed. Those who seek to educate themselves and instruct - with prudence and discernment - others (their children, their entourage, the ones who wish to listen), offer the Almighty a true adoration in spirit and truth.

4. The prophet Micah (VIIIth century B.C.) had already revealed that the unique cult desired by God is the spiritual one: love. In fact, He says: "'With what gift shall I come into the Lord's presence... with burnt holocausts, with calves one year old? Will he be pleased with rams by the

thousand, with libations of oil in torrents? Must I give my first-born for what I have done wrong? ... What is good has been explained to you, man; this is what God asks of you: **only this**, to act justly, **to love** (*God*) tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6,6-8). God also revealed through the prophet Hosea: “what I want is **love**, not sacrifice; **knowledge** of God, not holocausts” (Hosea 6,6).

5. The Creator also expressed Himself through the mouth of the prophet Amos: “I hate and despise your feasts, I take no pleasure in your solemn festivals. When you offer me holocausts, I reject your oblations, and refuse to look at your sacrifices of fattened cattle. Spare me the din of your chanting, no more of your strumming on harps. But let justice flow like water, and integrity like an unfailing stream” (Amos 5,21-24).

6. Jeremiah, after Micah, revealed that God had never prescribed sacrificial worship: “For when I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, I said nothing to them, gave them no orders about holocaust and sacrifice. These were my orders: Listen to my voice, then I will be your God and you shall be my people... But they did not listen, they did not pay attention... they have grown stubborn and behaved worse than their ancestors...” (Jeremiah 7,21-28).

Then, where do all these prescriptions of the Law (Torah) in the Books of Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy come from? God answers through Jeremiah that He is not for nothing: “How dare you say: We are wise, and we possess God’s law? But look how it has been falsified by the **lying pen** of the scribes!” (Jeremiah 8,8). It is therefore the biblical scribes of the past, plus the different religious chiefs of all confessions, who imagine and impose prescriptions of worship to satisfy, in the name of God, their proper pride and material interests. And this still continues today...

Jeremiah additionally reveals that God will establish a **New Covenant with His true worshippers**, of which the center is man’s heart: “The days are coming—it is God who speaks—when I will make a New Covenant... Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it **on their hearts**... There will be no further need for one to try to teach each the other, to say: ‘Learn to know God!’ No, they will all know Me...” (Jeremiah 31,31-34).

This New Covenant was instituted by Christ’s sacrifice: “This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood...” Jesus had said (Luke 22,20).

Thus, the only worship that pleases God is the one inspired by this New Covenant. It is practiced freely today by the independent believers, in the intimacy of their homes and in simplicity, just as the first disciples of Christ did in the past (Acts 2,42-47).

It is for this purpose that Jesus, in our Apocalyptic times, himself chooses a non-traditional “kingship of priests” (Revelation 1,6 & 5,10). This category of the faithful, is formed from those who hear Jesus knocking on the door of their hearts and open to Him, so that He can enter and share the matrimonial Meal with them (Revelation 3,20 / Luke 12,35-37). This is the best of the best worship that is desired by the Father.

7. God, in the Gospels, invites us to take conscience of the fact that the place of worship is not a building of concrete and stones, in a specific geographic place, but the heart of the believer himself:

“Do you not realize that you are a Temple of God with the Spirit of God living among you?... God’s Temple is sacred, and **you are that Temple.**” (1 Corinthians 3,16-17)

“The Temple of God has no common grounds with idols, and that is what we are—the Temple of the living God. We have God’s word for it: ‘I will make My home among them and live among them; I will be their God and they shall be My people.’” (2 Corinthians 6,16)

“... you are citizens like all the saints, and part of God’s household. You are part of a building that has the apostles and prophets for its foundations, and Christ Jesus himself for its main cornerstone. As every structure is aligned on him, all grow into one holy temple in the Lord; and you too, in Him, are being built into a house where God lives, in the Spirit.” (Ephesians 2,19-22)

8. Thus, the worship to offer God is a spiritual act. It is totally different from material worship: animal sacrifices, incense, etc... St. Paul “worships spiritually by preaching the Good News of His Son” (Romans 1,9).

The Holy Scriptures reveal a new time defined as being “the New Heaven and the New Earth, and the New Jerusalem, coming down from Heaven” in which “there was **no temple in the city**, since the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb **themselves were the Temple**” (Revelation 21,1 and 21,22).

9. The Holy Qur’an, in its turn, invites true worshippers to that of the spirit, and to renounce animal sacrifices in favor of piety. Speaking of sacrifices, we read:

“Their flesh and their blood shall not reach up to God; rather, it is your piety that will reach Him.” (Qur’an XXII; The Pilgrimage,38)

In conclusion, the unique worship desired by God is **man’s attitude**: to grow in knowledge and love of God and of man. He desires worshipers with no complexes of different rites. The unique place of this worship is the heart of the man who expresses himself around the Divine Table of Jesus in the intimacy of the homes. The Bible and the Qur’an invite us to it (see the text “[Jesus restores the Priesthood](#)”).

“When you pray”, recommended Jesus, “go to your private room shut yourself in, and so pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6,6)

The writer of these verses, as well as the readers who impregnate themselves with it, render a spiritual worship to the Eternal Father in the Temple of their souls.

“These are the kind of worshipers the Father wants.” (John 4,23)

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