

A THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP

SESSION 1

February 9, 2025

- I. The goal of this study is to build a biblical and historical theology of worship
 - a. We are not seeking to be critical of what we are currently doing
 - b. *Semper Reformanda* – The church reformed, always reforming
 - i. Every generation of Christian must take a step back and ask if our traditions are shaped by scripture
 - ii. When we pass the torch to our children, they must ask the same question of our generation
 - c. “What does God say about worship?”
- II. Our homework is to think about the following things as we gather on Sundays (or when you visit another church)
 - a. How did the service begin and does that say anything about how the church views worship?
 - b. What message does the way the service is ordered send to those in attendance?
 - i. Is the service organized in a way that things flow together or do things seem to be random (we sing one song about one topic, another about a different topic, a sermon about a completely different topic)?
 - ii. Does the service have a central element to it (preaching, invitation, singing, Lord’s Supper)? If so, what is that element? Why do you think that is what the service is focused on?
 - c. How much prayer and scripture are practiced in the service?
 - i. What are the prayers about?
 - d. What does the space (the sanctuary) of the worship say about the worship?
 - i. Are there symbols employed in the room?
 - ii. Does the space promote human voices or is it geared to dampen sound for louder music?
 - iii. What is the lighting like during the worship and who was it focused on? Why is it done that way?
 - iv. What items/furniture are placed central to the room in the front (pulpit, Lord’s Table, an “alter,” etc.) and why?
 - e. What are the songs focused on?
 - i. What are the songs being sung composed to do (praise God, educate in theology, edify, create an emotional reaction, etc.)?
 - ii. Are the songs biblical?
 - f. Do you feel that you were a participant in the worship or were you more of a bystander?
 - i. Was there any time public reading of scripture or prayer?
 - ii. Whose voices were you hearing in the singing?
 - iii. How much did entertainment play a role in the service?
 - g. Were there any distractions in the service?
 - h. What was the central theme of the sermon?

- i. Did the preacher teach the scriptures or speak about any doctrine?
 - ii. Was his sermon dominated with stories and applications?
- i. What were the closing moments of the service like?
 - i. What was it focused on?
- j. Did you take the Lord's Supper?
- k. Which of the following would you say the whole of the service was centered around?
 - i. Worship of God
 - ii. Evangelism of the lost
 - iii. Conviction of the Christian (morality)
 - iv. Two or more of the above

A History of Baptist Worship

The Reformation and the Seventeenth Century

- III. The Reformation
 - a. The Reformation began in 1517 when Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany
 - b. The Reformation was not an attempt to break off from the Catholic Church but to reform it and the reformers saw themselves as the church catholic renewed by the scriptures
- IV. The Church of England
 - a. In England, King Henry VIII was married to Catherine of Aragon, but because she didn't give him a son, he wanted to divorce her for Anne Boleyn, but the Catholic Church would not give him a divorce
 - b. Through the Act of Supremacy in 1534, Henry broke all ties with the Roman Catholic Church placing the headship of the Church in England with the King
 - c. The Church of England still retained much of the Catholic worship
- V. Puritans in England
 - a. The Reformation spread and the preaching of Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, and many others transformed the religious world
 - b. Parties of Englishmen who would become known as the Puritans, sought to purify the church by reforming the Church of England by seeking:
 - i. Simplified worship
 - ii. Presbyterian polity over the episcopal model
 - iii. Calvinistic doctrines
 - c. At first, these groups did not intend to separate from the Church of England but to change it from the inside
 - d. However, many groups ended up separating from the Church and starting their own
- VI. The First Baptists
 - a. One such group which started under the leadership of John Smyth (c.1570-1612) would separate and the first General Baptist church would form in 1609
 - b. A second group that would form in 1633/1638 would be called the Particular Baptists under the leadership of John Spilsbury

VII. Worship of the General Baptists

- a. Worship had to be spontaneous
- b. Nothing was allowed to be read, even the Bible in some cases
- c. Singing was very restrictive, and congregational singing was not allowed
 - i. Group singing was not allowed
 - ii. No musical instruments were allowed
 - iii. Only men were allowed to sing, and they had to sing solo
 - iv. Only biblical texts could be sung because the use of hymns was viewed as manmade
 - v. Singing had to be loud and clear
- d. Their order of service looked like:
 - i. Prayer
 - ii. Reading of scripture
 - iii. Prayer
 - iv. Preacher 1
 - v. Preacher 2
 - vi. As many preachers to follow that time would allow
 - vii. The first preacher would conclude with prayer
 - viii. Offering collection
- e. These services lasted from 8:00 AM to 12:00PM and again from 2:00PM to 6:00PM
- f. The oldest record of Baptist worship comes from a letter to Smyth from his cousins, Hughe and Anne Bromhead

“The order of the worshippe and government of oure church is .1. we begynne wth A prayer, after reade some one or tow chapters of the bible gyve the sence thereof, and conferr vpon the same, that done we lay aside our bookes, and after a solemne prayer made by the .1. speaker, he propoundeth some text owt of the Scripture, and prophecieth owt of the same, by the space of one hower, or thre Quarters of an hower. After him standeth vp A .2. speaker and prophecieth owt of the same text the like tyme and space, some tyme more some tyme less. After him the .3. the .4. the .5. & as the tyme will geve leave, Then the .1. speaker concludeth wth prayer as he began with prayer, wth an exhortation to contribute to the poore, wch collection being made is also concluded wth prayer. This Morning exercise begynes at eight of the clocke and continueth vnto twelve of the clocke the like course of exercise is observed in the afternowne from .2. of the clock vnto .5. or .6. of the Clocke, last of all the execution of the goverment of the church is handled.”¹

VIII. Worship of the Particular Baptists

- a. While the Particular Baptists emphasized baptism for believers only in opposition to their Puritan contemporaries, they did not diverge from them in the structure of their worship
- b. Much of their theology was by John Calvin and other major reformers

¹ McBeth, *Sourcebook*, 21.

SERVICE OF THE WORD	SERVICE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
Preparatory Scripture	Preparatory Scripture and Psalms*
and Psalms	Votum* (Ps. 124:8)
Votum (Ps. 124:8)	Confession*
Confession	Psalm*
Psalm	Prayer for Illumination*
Prayer for Illumination	Lord's Prayer*
Lord's Prayer	Scripture*
Scripture	Sermon*
Sermon	Intercessions*
Intercessions	Words of Institution
Psalm	Exhortation
Benediction or the Grace	Prayer of Thanksgiving
Dismissal*	Distribution
	Scripture
	Prayer of Thanksgiving
	Psalm 103 or another Psalm of Thanksgiving
	Benediction or The Grace

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IX. Baptist Hymn-Singing Controversy

- a. The first major conflict in Baptist history occurred within the Particular Baptist communities over whether scripture allowed for congregational singing of hymns or not
- b. One of the most prominent influences upon Baptist hymn singing was Benjamin Keach who first introduced his children's song book to his congregation at Horsleydown in 1664 and did not convince his congregation to sing hymns until 1684 with twenty-two of the members leaving over the decision
- c. There was so much division over singing in the Particular Baptists that most believe that this controversy is what kept the Calvinistic Baptists from becoming a nationally organized denomination in England in the seventeenth century
- d. The General Baptist Assembly met in 1689 and declared hymn-singing as a "foreign to evangelical worship" and would not accept hymn-singing until the eighteenth century

X. Baptists in America

- a. We do not know who the first Baptist was in America, but the first Baptist church in America was officially formed in 1639 by Roger Williams in Providence, Rhode Island

² 1. Jonathan Gibson and Mark Earngley, eds., "Middelburg Liturgy," *Reformation Worship Book*, accessed January 30, 2025, <https://reformationworship.com/middelburg-liturgy/>.

- b. The second Baptist church in America was founded in Newport, Rhode Island in 1644 by John Clarke
- XI. Seventeenth Century Baptist Worship
 - a. Worship was informal with great emphasis upon the Bible
 - b. Pastors were bi-vocational and what education they had received before coming to America
 - c. Since most Baptist churches were founded by immigrants from England, singing was controversial in America as it was in England
 - d. It seems that some of the churches tried singing the Psalms but laid them aside

The Eighteenth Century

- XII. The Enlightenment and Baptist Decline in England
 - a. In the eighteenth century, an intellectual revolution that would later be known as “The Enlightenment” changed peoples’ views on God, humanity, and the universe
 - b. The General Baptists would decline greatly as they began to accept unorthodox doctrines into their church
 - i. In 1715, there were around 146 churches and by 1750, there were only 65
 - c. The Particular Baptists would decline due to extreme Hyper-Calvinism
 - i. In 1715, there were around 220 churches, but by 1750, only 146 remained
- XIII. The Great Awakening
 - a. In 1738, John Wesley, his brother, Charles, and their friend, George Whitfield would begin a movement of “revival” that changed Christian churches for good and for bad
 - b. This movement would change worship across the world and bring back a new sense of morality and participation in missions, Sunday School, and evangelism
 - c. Though this movement did not originate in Baptist churches, Baptists benefited the most from it
- XIV. The Baptist Mission Movement in England
 - a. Andrew Fuller was made pastor in Kettering Church in 1783
 - b. Though he was a Calvinist himself, he taught a Calvinism that made room for evangelism and missions
 - c. He is one of the leading voices who helped lead the Particular Baptists out of Hyper-Calvinism
 - d. One of Fuller’s closest friends was William Carey (c. 1761-1834)
 - e. Under Fuller’s leadership and a push by Carey, the association of Particular Baptists formed the “Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen”
 - f. It would also be called the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS)
 - g. William Carey would be the first missionary of this society sent out into India where he would spend the rest of his life
- XV. Baptist Revival in America
 - a. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, there were 24 Baptist churches in America with 839 members
 - b. By 1790, there were 979 churches with 67,490 members and at least 42 associations discussing a national organization

- c. Though no one can deny the massive impact of this revival, not everyone saw the Great Awakening as a good thing
 - i. The preaching of men like Whitfield was a new style of preaching that was filled with zeal and a lot of shouting
 - ii. This style of preaching was considered “shallow, overly emotional, and without lasting effect”³
 - d. This division over revival would lead to a disagreement in the Particular Baptists
 - i. The Regular Baptists who did not like the revival for fear that they were manipulative and emotional
 - ii. The Separate Baptists who saw the revivals as God’s work in the church
 - iii. These two groups were both Calvinistic groups and weren’t divided as much on doctrine but mostly on the impact of revivals
 - iv. The Separates would end up having the biggest influence in the southern colonies
 - e. The Sandy Creek Tradition
 - i. In 1755, the first Separate Baptist Church was formed in the south in Sandy Cree, North Carolina
 - ii. The church grew from 16 members to 606 members in a few years and had spread throughout the south planting similar churches
 - iii. The following list were commonly shared among the Sandy Creek Tradition:
 - 1. Very emotional preaching and services and “shouting, weeping, and falling down in a faint were not uncommon”⁴
 - 2. Most held to the nine rites: baptism, Lord’s Supper, love feast, laying on of hands, foot washing, anointing the sick, the right hand of fellowship, the kiss of charity, and dedicating children
 - 3. Pastors did not have an education for if God wanted educated pastors, he would call them
 - 4. Many opposed paying a pastor any salary
 - iv. The Separates devised the method of the “evangelical invitation”
 - f. The Charleston Tradition
 - i. While the Separate Baptist churches in the South are referred to as the “Sandy Creek Tradition,” the Regular Baptists are typically categorized within the “Charleston Tradition” from the Baptist church that was founded in Charleston, SC in 1696
 - ii. Some historians have distinguished the two groups with the expressions ORDER and ARDOR
 - 1. ORDER – The Charleston tradition favored liturgical order in their worship and stately hymns, educated ministers, and ecclesiological order
- XVI. Baptist Worship in the Eighteenth Century
- a. Most services focused on preaching of the Word from an elevated pulpit
 - b. Instruments were extremely rare, typically viewed as unscriptural

³ McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 203.

⁴ McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 230.

- c. By 1750, most Baptists accepted congregational singing, though some still resisted
- d. There were no professional music leaders
- e. “Lining out” the hymns was the common practice
- f. After congregational singing was accepted, the next disagreement would be over what to sing
- g. Many hymnbooks were produced in the eighteenth century from hymnists like Nahum Tate, Nicholas Brady, and Isaac Watts
- h. Those in the Sandy Creek Tradition fully accepted singing and were well known for their enthusiasm while those in the Charleston Tradition were more restrained in their manner of singing psalms and hymns

Nineteenth Century

XVII. Triennial Convention

- a. Due to the efforts of Luther Rice, a colleague of William Carey, American Baptists formed the General Mission Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions in 1814
 - i. This convention is called the Triennial Convention because they met every three years
 - ii. The convention was formed around missions
- b. Society Plan vs. Convention Plan
 - i. Most of the northern Baptists wanted mission support to be through an “society plan” in which independent groups, unconnected to the churches, would support missionary efforts
 - ii. The southern Baptists wanted a “convention plan” in which the mission efforts based on the churches which would send delegates and contributions to organize missions
- c. Northern and Southern Divisions
 - i. The Triennial Convention at first chose a mixture of the two plans, but, by 1826, had moved only to a society plan and moved the convention location from Philadelphia to Boston
 - ii. The southern churches also felt that the convention was not sending a fair amount of home missionaries into the South from the Baptists societies that formed
 - iii. The biggest dividing factor between the two sides was over slavery
- d. American Baptists Split
 - i. In 1841, the Convention voted on a neutral stance on slavery, saying that their purpose was missions and not to control Baptist churches
 - ii. In 1844, a resolution was introduced at the Home Mission Society meeting that owning slaves would not be a barrier to appointment as a missionary, a resolution which was accepted by the HMS
 - iii. Georgia Test Case
 - 1. The Georgia Baptists nominated a slave owner named James E. Reeve, for appointment as a home missionary and raised the funds

for his support to test the HMS and see if they would honor their neutrality

2. The HMS decided not to act on the test case because they felt it would go against their neutrality, so they neither voted yes or no, they just didn't vote

iv. Alabama Resolutions

1. The Baptist State Convention of Alabama wrote a strongly worded letter to the Triennial Convention asking if slaveholders would be appointed as foreign missionaries
2. The resolutions stated that the power to appoint missionaries was shared by churches and not just the board
3. The board responded by saying that the appointing power was confined only to the acting board and would remain there

v. The Southern Baptist Convention Forms

1. Division was inevitable for the convention and the Northern Baptists chose to separate from the Southern Baptists rather than cause division in the North
2. On May 8, 1845, delegates from various Southern Baptist churches met in Augusta, Georgia
3. The Southern Baptist Convention was born, and William Bullein Johnson was elected the first president
4. At its formation, the SBC had 4,126 churches and 351,951 members

XVIII. The Second Great Awakening

a. Three stages

- i. In New England under leaders such as Timothy Dwight (1752-1817), grandson of Jonathan Edwards, who promoted renewal among young Christians
- ii. Along the Erie Canal in Upstate New York under the leadership of Charles Finny (1792-1875)
- iii. In central Kentucky and Tennessee in camp meetings
 1. One such camp meeting is known as the Cane Ridge Revival (1801) led by Barton Stone (1772-1844)
 2. At this camp meeting, thousands of pioneers were in attendance and there are records that "signs and wonders appeared all around, as hundreds of worshipers, slain in the Spirit, barked like dogs, jerked uncontrollably, fell into trances, danced, and shouted"

b. The New Measures

- i. Anxious Meetings where a person or group would be invited to have a "personal conversation with anxious sinners, and to adapt instruction to the cases of individuals, so as to lead them immediately to Christ"
- ii. Protracted Meetings that would last for days "in order to make a more powerful impression of divine things upon the minds of the people"
- iii. The anxious seat was a chair or a bench that was placed at the front of the meeting place where "the anxious may come and be address particularly,

and be made subjects of prayer, and sometimes be conversed with individually”

XIX. Baptist Worship in the Nineteenth Century

- a. The revivalism movement and the push for missions transformed Baptist worship into an evangelistic worship
- b. Singing was taking a greater place within the church and many churches were beginning to use choirs
- c. Sacred harp singing was popular in the South and led to more emotional hymns that are used today
- d. Instruments were being introduced, but not widely popular
- e. There was a strong push to improve places of worship
- f. The church life itself became busier with organized ministries now forming
- g. “Now a great change has taken place. Music is conducted chiefly by choirs. These are composed largely of the young and volatile, and led by choristers, some of whom are not even professors of religion. The tendency is, more and more, to make church music a matter of taste and amusement rather than of devotion. The aim is, in many cases, to exalt the choir rather than the Redeemer, and the congregation are expected simply to hear and praise the music. The singing is an exhibition, not religious worship.”

- *The Recollections of a Long Life*, Dr. Jeremiah Bell Jeter (c. 1802-1880)