



Rhythms of Grace: Worship Worship As Time Travel

Which mountain for worship?

John 4vv19-26: Not Gerizim or Zion, but “in Spirit and in Truth....”

19 The woman said to him, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.” 21 Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” 25 The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.

Acts 17v28:

‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

Albert Einstein’s Theory of Relativity

Vastly oversimplified: Time and space are not absolute, but are contingent upon observer’s motion and presence of mass and energy.

Einstein: Time and space are modes by which we think and not conditions in which we live... The distinction between the past, present and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion.”

When you sit with a nice girl for two hours, it seems like two minutes; when you sit on a hot stove for two minutes, it seems like two hours, that’s relativity.

Liturgical Aside: Today is Christ The King Sunday, the last Sunday in Ordinary Time before the beginning of the new church year at the first Sunday of Advent.

[For more reading click here.](#)

The Mountains of God

Throughout the scriptural story, mountains are meeting place between God and humanity. This is a theme that is not unique to the Bible, but present in most

ancient cultures in their religious rites and practice. In the scriptures, mountains serve as key settings for monumental moments in the story.

I've written elsewhere about the mountains in Isaiah:

One of the great themes in the book of Isaiah is the mountain of God (Isaiah 2, 6, 25, 65). Isaiah contrasts the height of God's dwelling place and the effect of his reign with all that seeks to exalt itself. God is seen consistently "cutting down" in Isaiah. The first Jerusalem temple was situated on the temple mount. This remains, in our own day, a nexus point of division and strife between the Jewish people, followers of Islam, and Christians. At its highest point it reaches about half a mile above sea level.

Isaiah elevates this highest point in Jerusalem to higher than Everest proportions, not only is it the height of Zion, it is the highest point in the world because of the presence of the Almighty. The mountain passages of Isaiah are a vision of an entirely redeemed cosmos. There are few more evocative and beautiful visions in all of scripture as the shalom of the world is both restored and expanded.

For more reading on the mountains of God, you can read [this doctoral thesis](#).

Thesis for this sermon:

In worship, we hold **past, present, and future together**, blessing God in Spirit and in truth and we enter into God's space-time. Worship folds the time-space continuum into God's story by ushering us into God's time-space.

Past

- Eden as mountain-

Ezekiel 28vv12-14

You were the signet of perfection,
full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

13

You were in Eden, the garden of God;
every precious stone was your covering,
carnelian, chrysolite, and moonstone,
beryl, onyx, and jasper,
sapphire, turquoise, and emerald;

and worked in gold were your settings
and your engravings.
On the day that you were created
they were prepared.
14
You were a cherub;
I placed you on the holy mountain of God;
you walked among the stones of fire.

- **Eden as priestly worship**

- **Offering back creation to God [Genesis 2vv8-14]**

8 And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10 A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. 11 The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold, 12 and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. 13 The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. 14 The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

- **The native tongue of the Sons of Adam and Daughters of Eve: Worship [Genesis 2vv18-23]**

18 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." 19 So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air and brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all cattle and to the birds of the air and to every animal of the field, but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. 21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken."

Present

What story did you carry in here today?

- **Calvary as mountain**

- Jesus becomes lowly, emptying himself [Isa. 2v2]

*In days to come
the mountain of the Lord's house*

*shall be established as the highest of the mountains
and shall be raised above the hills;*

Philippians 2vv6-11

*Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own
advantage;*

7

*rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.*

8

*And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!*

9

*Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,*

10

*that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*

11

*and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.*

- **Calvary as salvation**

- *Jesus on the cross is God saving us, doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves [Hebrews 9vv11-15]*

11 But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. 12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. 13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that

he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

- **Calvary as priestly worship**

- Jesus restores vocation of humanity by offering creation back to God in worship [Luke 23vv44-46]

44 It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, 45 for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. 46 Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

Thomas Merton:

In every liturgical mystery we have this telescoping of time and eternity, of the universal and the personal, what is common to all ages, what is above and beyond all time and place, and what is most particular and most immediate to our own time and place. Christ in his infinite greatness embraces all things, the divine and the human, the spiritual and the material, the old and the new, the great and the small, and in the liturgy makes Himself all things to all [people] and becomes all in all...

The works which Christ accomplished in time and eternity....by the liturgy while remaining in time, we enter into the great celebration that takes place before the Lamb in heaven, in eternity...Time is baptized and sanctified by the infusion of the divine light hidden in the liturgical mysteries, a light which flows forth to penetrate our living and our actions and to fill them with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Key Point: In worship, we ascend the mountain of God's holy space and enter into God's holy time. Past, present, and future converge together and they heal. It is often said that time will heal wounds. But this isn't the case. The gospel tells us that by his wounds, time is healed.

Future

New Jerusalem as mountain [Revelation 21vv9-14]

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." 10 And in the spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. 11 It has the glory of God and a radiance like a very rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal. 12 It has a great, high wall with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates are inscribed the names that are the names of the twelve tribes of the Israelites: 13 on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of

the city has twelve foundations, and on them are the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

New Jerusalem as Temple [Revelation 21vv15-27]

- Strange Physics [Revelation 21vv15-21]

15 The angel who talked to me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. 16 The city has four equal sides, its length the same as its width, and he measured the city with his rod, twelve thousand stadia; its length and width and height are equal. 17 He also measured its wall, one hundred forty-four cubits by human measurement, which the angel was using. 18 The wall is built of jasper, while the city is pure gold, clear as glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city are adorned with every jewel; the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates are twelve pearls, each of the gates is a single pearl, and the street of the city is pure gold, transparent as glass.

- Priestly Worship Restored [Revelation 21vv22-27]

22 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 is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. 25 Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. 26 People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. 27 But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

- New Jerusalem as time restored [Revelation 22vv1-4]

22 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; 4 they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

The already/not yet [Inaugurated Eschatology]

Isaiah 65

For I am about to create new heavens
and a new earth;

the former things shall not be remembered
or come to mind.

18

But be glad and rejoice forever
in what I am creating,
for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy
and its people as a delight.

19

I will rejoice in Jerusalem
and delight in my people;
no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it
or the cry of distress.

20

No more shall there be in it
an infant who lives but a few days
or an old person who does not live out a lifetime,
for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth,
and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.

21

They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

22

They shall not build and another inhabit;
they shall not plant and another eat,
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

23

They shall not labor in vain
or bear children for calamity,
for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord—
and their descendants as well.

24

Before they call I will answer,
while they are yet speaking I will hear.

25

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together;
the lion shall eat straw like the ox,
but the serpent—its food shall be dust!
They shall not hurt or destroy

on all my holy mountain,
says the Lord.

Interstellar

The last scene- love is the key!