

True Worship

Scripture Reading — Isaiah 44:6-23

“I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.”

Isaiah 44:6 —

My parents practiced ancestor worship before they became Christians. So when we were young, on New Year’s Day and during other festivals, we would burn incense, paper cars, and paper houses for our ancestors. We would prepare good food and drinks for them, and then afterward our family would eagerly eat and drink these things.

In our reading for today, the prophet Isaiah rebuked the Israelites for similar behaviors. He said it was ridiculous to use half a piece of wood to kindle a fire, and then use the other half to make an idol for worship.

The rationale behind ancestor worship is actually very practical: if you treat your ancestors well, they will in return bless you with their power from beyond the grave. It’s almost like trying to do business with the spirit world.

But this is all wrong, for “the God who made the world and everything in it ... does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else” (Acts 17:24-25). What God asks of us is simply to worship him “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

Are you worshipping the one true God? With the right motives and attitude?

Prayer

Thank you, Jesus, for your love. ¶Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small. Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.¶ Amen.

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