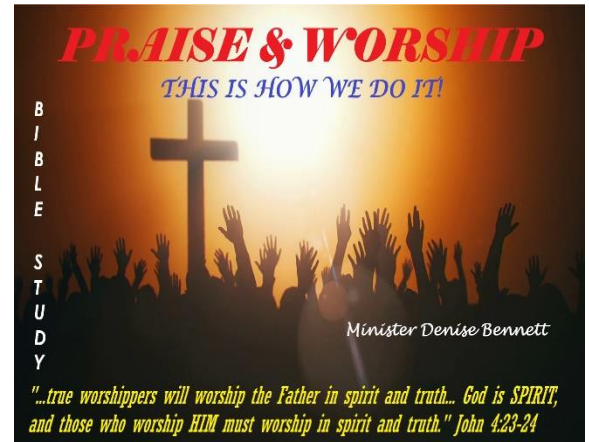


Introduction

You will not find an explicit definition of “worship” in Scripture. Like many other doctrines, we understand the meaning and application of truth from the careful contextual study of the relevant biblical usages in the Old and New Testaments. We discover by studying God's word that true worship is an attitude and a lifestyle; a formal or informal act; a structured or spontaneous response that is active and not passive; motivated by love and not a duty; and directed to the Creator and not His creation. God's purpose, plan, and provision of worship are revealed from Genesis to Revelation. Studying the Hebrew and Greek terms translated into the English word *worship* provides insight into Scripture's spiritual meaning and contextual understanding of worship.



Worship comes from two Old English words: “*Weorth*,” which means “*worth*,” and “*scipe*,” or “*ship*,” which means something like *shape* or *quality*. Therefore, worth-ship is the quality or condition that someone or something has worth/value or is worthy. When we worship God, we are saying **GOD has worth; GOD is worthy**.¹ A central part of a Christian's calling is to declare that God is worthy – that He is worth more than everything else.

Words Illustrating Praise” and “Worship” in Old Testament Scriptures²

As you read each scripture below, respond to the following:

- a) How is praise/worship offered? (Describe the action)
- b) Name or describe the object of their praise/ worship.
- c) Name or identify the worshipper(s) in the text.
- d) Where did the praise/worship take place?

- A. The **Hebrew** word for “worship” is “**shachah** (*sha-kha*),” meaning “to kneel, stoop, prostrate oneself, or throw oneself down, in reverence.”
 - **Genesis 22:5** - Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship (*shachah*) and come again to you”
 - **Psalms 96:9** – “Worship (*Shachah*) the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!
- B. **Hebrew Words for “Praise,”** on the other hand, carries a different insight. It is one of the elements of worship that involves noisemaking and raucous shouting, singing and playing musical instruments, hand-clapping, and dancing. Various words for praise are listed below.
 1. **Shabach** (*sha-vakh*)- “to shout to the Lord.”
 - **Psalms 47:1** - O clap your hands, all peoples; shout (*shabach*) to God with the voice of joy (or triumph).

¹ [What is the origin of the word worship? – Heimduo](#)

² The Hebrew and Greek words for “worship” and “praise” retrieved from Strong’s Concordance: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>

- **Other references:** **Judges 16:24**; 2 Samuel 14:25; 2 Chronicles 7:6; Ezra 3:10-11; **Isaiah 12:6**
- 2. **Barak** (ba-rak) means "to kneel down, to bless God as an act of adoration, to salute."
 - **1Chronicles 29:20** - Then David said to all the assembly, "Now bless (*barak*) the Lord your God." And all the assembly blessed (*barak*) the Lord, the God of their fathers, and bowed low and did homage to the Lord and to the king.
 - **Other references:** Judges 5:2; Psalm 72:15, 95:6, 96:2, and **103:1-2**.
- 3. **Yadah** (ya-da)- "to worship with uplifted hands."
 - **Psalm 63:1** - "So I will bless thee as long as I live; I will (*yadah*) lift up my hands in Thy name."
 - **Other References:** **Genesis 29:35**, 49:8; Psalm 67:3, 107:15, 108:3; Isaiah 12:1,4; and Jeremiah 33:11.
- 4. **Halal** (ha-lal)- to "praise ye Yahweh" It is the base word for "*hallelujah*," which is translated in English as "**praise the Lord**," It means "to be clear, to praise, to shine, to boast, show, to rave, celebrate, to be clamorously foolish."
 - **Psalms 150:1-6** – "Praise (*Halal*) the LORD! Praise (*Halal*) God in His sanctuary; Praise (*Halal*)Him in His mighty firmament (expanse) ...!
 - **Other References:** Judges 16:24; 2 Samuel 14:25; 2 Chronicles 7:6; Ezra 3:10-11; Nehemiah 5:13;
- 5. **Tehillah** (teh-hil-la)- "to sing spontaneous songs of praise."
 - **Psalm 22:3** Yet Thou art holy, O Thou who art enthroned upon the praises (*tehillah*) of Israel
 - **Other References:** Exodus 15:11; Deuteronomy 10:21; Nehemiah 9:5; Psalms 9:14 and 22:25.

Words Illustrating "Praise" and "Worship" in New Testament Scripture³

A. The Greek Words for Worship

1. **Proskuneo** (pros-ku-ne-o): means to express deep respect or adoration to the divine or human authority—by kissing the hand towards the person, expressing words of honor, or prostrating oneself.
 - a) In **John 4:20 – 24** - "Our fathers worshiped (*proskuneo*) on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship..."
 - **Other References:** **Acts 8:27** and **Revelation 11:1**,
 - **1 Corinthians 14:25** – "And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship (*proskuneo*) God and report that God is truly among you."
 - * In **Matthew 27:29** – In carrying out their mockery of Jesus, they placed a crown of thorns on His head, placed a reed in His right hand, and bowed their knee. It was to ridicule Jesus' claim as King of the Jews.
2. **Latreuo** (lat-ryoo-o): is continuously used in reference to religious rituals. It means to perform religious services or to carry out cultic duties. Worshippers direct their service toward God or something considered as god or divine.
 - **Matthew 4:10** – Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'you shall worship (*proskuneo*) the Lord your God, and serve (*latreuo*) Him only.'"

³ Strong's Concordance: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>

- **Acts 7:7** – “And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve (*latreuo*) me in this place.
3. **Sebazamai** (seb-ad'-zom-ahee): means to revere; be in awe by one's own *twisted* definition of what deserves reverence worship. It is used only in Romans 1:25. “Who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped (*sebazamai*) and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”

B. The Greek Words for Praise

1. **Ainos** (*i-nos*) – a saying, proverb, praise, admiring discourse.
 - **Matthew 21:16** - and said to Him, “Do You hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes. Have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise (*ainos*)’?”
2. **Aineo** (*i-ne-o*) – to praise, extol, to sing praises in honor to God; to promise or vow.
 - Revelation 19:5 - Then a voice came from the throne, saying, “Praise (*Aineo*) our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!”
3. **Ainesis** (ah'-ee-nes-is) is the Greek word for “praise.” It means to praise or commendation.
 - **Hebrew 13:15** - "therefore let us offer the sacrifice **of praise** (*ainesis*) to God continually, that is, the fruit" of our lips giving thanks to his name.
4. **Épainos** (*ep-i-nos*) - commendation that *fits* or is appropriate
 - **Ephesians 1:12** – “that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise (*epainos*) of His glory.”

Our praises and worship of God are more than just the song we sing or the motions we express in worship. Genuine praise and worship require an intimate relationship with God that displays an inward conviction of our love for Him. A sacrificial surrender to God takes place in the heart (a place of thought, will, and decision in humankind), and worship happens as we yield to God's indwelling Spirit and become more like Jesus Christ. The Almighty God is Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent; therefore, worship honors God for “**Who He Is,**” and praise honors God for “**His Mighty Acts.**” **ALL OF OUR PRAISE AND WORSHIP BELONG TO GOD!**

Next Week: Adam’s Call to Worship in the Garden of Eden

- **Read Genesis, Chapter 2 and 3.**