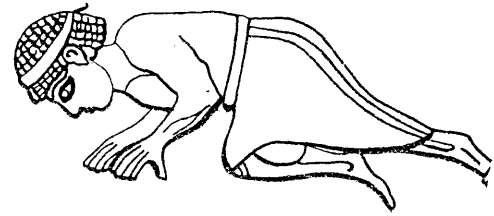


# WORSHIP: Spiritual Exercise or Selfish Extravaganza?

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.



## 1A. The Definition of Worship

### 1b. The English definition:

Worship is worth-ship, denoting the worthiness of an individual to receive special honor in accordance with that worth.

An acknowledgement of divine perfection.

### 2b. The pagan concept:

The idea of bowing down to an object of worship and kissing it.

### 3b. The Old Testament concept:

**\*\*Hebrew term**

*Shahah*—depress, bow down, prostrate

**\*\*Greek term**

*Proskuneo*—to kiss towards

The concept of genuine worship involves an outward act and an inward attitude.

### 1c. General worship of men:

#### 1d. Influenced by custom:

Genesis 18:2

And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground.

#### 2d. Based on family relationships:

Gen 49:8

Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

#### 3d. Dependent on station in life:

1 Kings 1:31

Then Bath-sheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever.

2c. Specific worship of God:

1d. It is honor rendered to God:

Exodus 24:1

And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off.

2d. It involves physical bowing down

1 Chronicles 29:20

And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the Lord your God. And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord, and the king.

Nehemiah 8:6

And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

Psalms 95:6

O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.



4b. The New Testament concept:

1c. The physical prostration: bowing in honor and reverence

2c. **It is an attitude of reverence and awe toward God, resulting in an acclamation of His uniqueness and worth.**

2A. The Demands of Worship:

1b. As indicated by the Savior—the **ETHICAL** aspect:

1c. Acceptable worship and ethical integrity are inseparable.

Matthew 5:21-26

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way *with him*; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.



26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

- 1d. Worship demands a forgiving spirit.
- 2d. Worship must be interrupted until the brother is reconciled. Reconciliation does not depend on whether the grievance is just or unjust.
- 2c. Acceptable worship and legalistic encumbrance are incompatible.

John 4:24

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

- 1d. Worship is a spiritual exercise.
- 2d. Worship is not dependent upon outward ritual to be genuine.
- 3c. Acceptable worship and doctrinal impurity are impossible.

John 4:24

"in spirit and in **TRUTH**."

True worship involves the **right doctrine** and the **right method**.

- 2b. As implied by the Scriptures—the **PUBLIC** aspect:

- 1c. Solemn, not trifling:

Psalm 89:7

God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.

- 2c. Simple, not pompous or ceremonial:

John 4:24

- 3c. Cheerful, not with forbidding aspect:

Psalm 100:2

Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

- 4c. Sincere, not hypocritical:

Isaiah 1:12-13

When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

Matthew 23:13



But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

5c. Pure, not superstitious:

Isaiah 57:15

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

6c. Spiritual, not external.

3b. As illustrated by the saints—the **PERSONAL** aspect:

1c. The frequency of worship:

"To worship" appears:

24 times in the Revelation

11 times in the Gospel of John

9 times in Matthew, the Royal Gospel

2c. The finality of worship:

1d. Worship is only due God:

Revelation 19:10

And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Acts 10:25

And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.

2d. Satan's desire is to draw worship to himself:

Luke 4:7-8

If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

3d. Worship is rejected by godly men

Acts 10:25-26

25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.

26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

(Also Acts 14:11-14)

4d. Worship is rejected by loyal angels:



Revelation 22:8-9

And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

### 3c. The form of worship:

#### 1d. In relation to the approach to God:



1e. Worship is directed toward His being. It is not a thanksgiving for His gifts.

2e. Worship is directed toward his works in general:

Creation	Rev. 4:11ff
Reign	Rev. 15:3ff, 16:5ff
Redemption	Rev. 5:8-10
Consummation	Rev. 11:15-18

#### 2d. In relation to the attributes of God:

Eternality, omnipotence, honor, wisdom, holiness, power, etc.

#### 3d. In relation to the acclamations of God:

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1e. "Thou are worthy!" | Rev. 4:11; 5:9, 12    |
| 2e. Salvation          | Rev. 7:10             |
| 3e. Hallelujah, Amen   | Rev. 7:12; 19:1, 3, 4 |

A mighty, universal strain permeates these expressions.

### 3A. The Delights of Worship

1b. It is the highest form of spiritual exercise.  
Although man is saved to serve, he is primarily saved to fellowship and worship.

2b. It is the best antidote to moral impurity.  
Dr. Paul R. Jackson, former president of Baptist Bible Seminary in Johnson City, New York, and national representative of the GARBC, asserted that whenever he was tempted, he contemplated the loveliness of the Savior, and temptation vanished.

The contemplation of our Savior involves, contrary to Roman Catholic and cultic practices, a focus on the person and work of Christ revealed in the Scriptures, rather than a veneration of images or statutes of the Savior.

Jews were forbidden to do. But, in opposition to this sentiment, let it be observed, that not only the Jews, but the heathens also, who never were subject to the law of Moses, are condemned in Scripture for this mode of worship; as in Romans, the first chapter, and in Acts xvii. 29, 30, where it is said—"Forasmuch, then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the time of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent."

522. The folly of making images or pictures of Christ is evident, because they are not true representations of the object, and have their origin solely in the imagination of the statuary or painter. The only account which antiquity has transmitted to us of the personal appearance of our Savior is of altogether doubtful authority. Beside this, however, there are more serious objections to such representations.

(the ancient source is unknown)

- 3b. It is the strongest weapon against individual self-centeredness. Selfishness and self-centeredness are the real enemies of morality. Worship lifts us to a higher plane of thought.
- 4b. It is the noblest form of personal involvement. Worship involves man's whole being: intellect, emotion, and will. Eavey rightly observes: worship is
  - \*"to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God,
  - \*to feed the mind with the truth of God,
  - \*to purge the imagination by the beauty of God,
  - \*to open the heart to the love of God,
  - \*to devote the will to the purpose of God" (*Practical Christian Ethics*, 51).

#### 4A. The Day of Worship:

##### 1b. The Sabbath Day:

- 1c. Its institution at creation:  
Apparently man was to conserve a day of rest from creation on.
- 1d. The institution of the Sabbath for Israel involved something unusual and sacred.
- 2d. It is unthinkable that man would work incessantly every day for thousands of years. Even in Babylonian and Assyrian societies, a special day of rest was set aside each week.
- 2c. Its institution at Mount Sinai:
  - 1d. There is no record that the Sabbath was kept from Adam to Moses.  
But there is also no mention of it from Moses to David.  
Likewise, the principle of monogamy of Genesis 2:24 was ignored.



2d. The Sabbath was a special holy day for Israel:

Nehemiah 9:13-14

Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments:

14 And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant:

3d. It is given to Israel as a sign of their God's covenant people:  
Ex 31:12-17

3c. Its importance to mankind:

1d. Even Adam in an unfallen state would have to keep it, Gen. 2:3.

2d. It is not a day of inactivity, Gen. 2:2; John 5:17.

3d. It is a day of cessation of the activity of the prior six days.

4d. It is a day of (1) rest, (2) refreshment and (3) rejoicing.

Genesis 1:31

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Exodus 31:17

It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

5d. It is a day beneficial for man. (See further Chafer, *Grace*, 240ff).

2b. The Lord's Day:

1c. The abrogation of the Sabbath Day:

1d. Its prediction in prophecy:

Hosea 2:11

I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.

2d. Its disappearance in the early church.

Nine times the Sabbath is mentioned in the book of Acts, but only in relation to unbelieving Jews.

3d. Its existence in the tribulation:

Matthew 24:20

But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

4d. Its reestablishment in the Millennium:

Isaiah 66:23

And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.

Ezekiel 46:1

Thus saith the Lord God; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened.

Deuteronomy 30:8

And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments, which I command thee this day.



2c. The appointment of the Lord's Day:

1d. Indications from the Old Testament:

Psalms 118:22-24

The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

23 This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

24 This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Acts 4:10-11

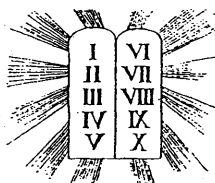
Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

2d. Legalistic confusion of the Sabbath and Sunday:

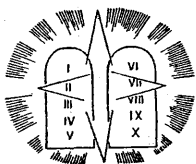
1c. There is no Christian Sabbath.

The law, including the ten commandments with its Sabbath directives, were abrogated when Christ died on the cross. (That which was written and engraven in stone has passed away, 2. Cor. 3:7-11)



2c. The first day was appointed to mark the glorious resurrection of the Lord.





3c. A change in the day of worship involves great symbolic significance.

3d. Events in the New Testament which happened on the first day of the week:

- 1e. The Resurrection Matt. 28:1
- 2e. Christ meets with His disciples John 20:19; Luke 24
- 3e. The the Holy Spirit descends Acts 2
- 4e. Paul preaches in Troas Acts 20:6ff
- 5e. The believers meet in Troas Acts 20:6-7
- 6e. John receives his revelation on the Lord's Day  
Revelation 1:10  
I was in the Spirit on **the Lord's day**, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,
- 7e. Special instructions are given for the ministry of the saints on the first day 1 Cor. 16:2

3c. The activity on the Lord's Day:

- 1d. Worship—Acts 20:6-7
- 2d. Fellowship—Heb. 10:25
- 3d. Stewardship—1 Cor. 16:2
- 4d. Rejoicing—Psa. 118:24



4c. The acknowledgement of the Church Fathers.

**Unanimous testimony from the early church that the first day of the week is the day of worship.**

**Eusebius**, A.D. 315, says, "There were synods and convocations of our Bishops on this question and all unanimously drew up an ecclesiastical decree in which they communicated to churches in all places—that the mystery of the Lord's resurrection should be celebrated on no other day than the Lord's Day."

**Tertullian**, A.D. 200, says, speaking of the "sun worshipers:" "Though we share with them Sunday, we are not apprehensive lest we seem to be heathen."

**Clement of Alexandria**, A.D. 194, says, "The old sabbath day has become nothing more than a working day (to Christians)."

**Irenaeus**, Bishop of Lyons, A.D 178, says: "The mystery of the Lord's resurrection may not be celebrated on any other day than the Lord's Day."

**Justin Martyr**, A.D. 135, says: "Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God having wrought a change in the darkness and matter made the world and J. C. our Saviour, on the same day, rose from the dead."

(Additional biblical and historical information is found in Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, IV, 120ff.)

5c. The rejection of the Lord's Day by the Seventh Day Adventists:

1d. Sunday worship is definitely the mark of the Beast.

2d. The answer to the Seventh Day Adventists:

1e. No day is holy in itself.

Colossians 2:16

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

2e. No one presently celebrates the Jewish Sabbath:

1f. It was from sunset to sunset.

2f. Regulations and penalties are not observed by the Seventh Day Adventists.

3e. The exact day which God instituted in Genesis 2:2-3 is quite unknown.

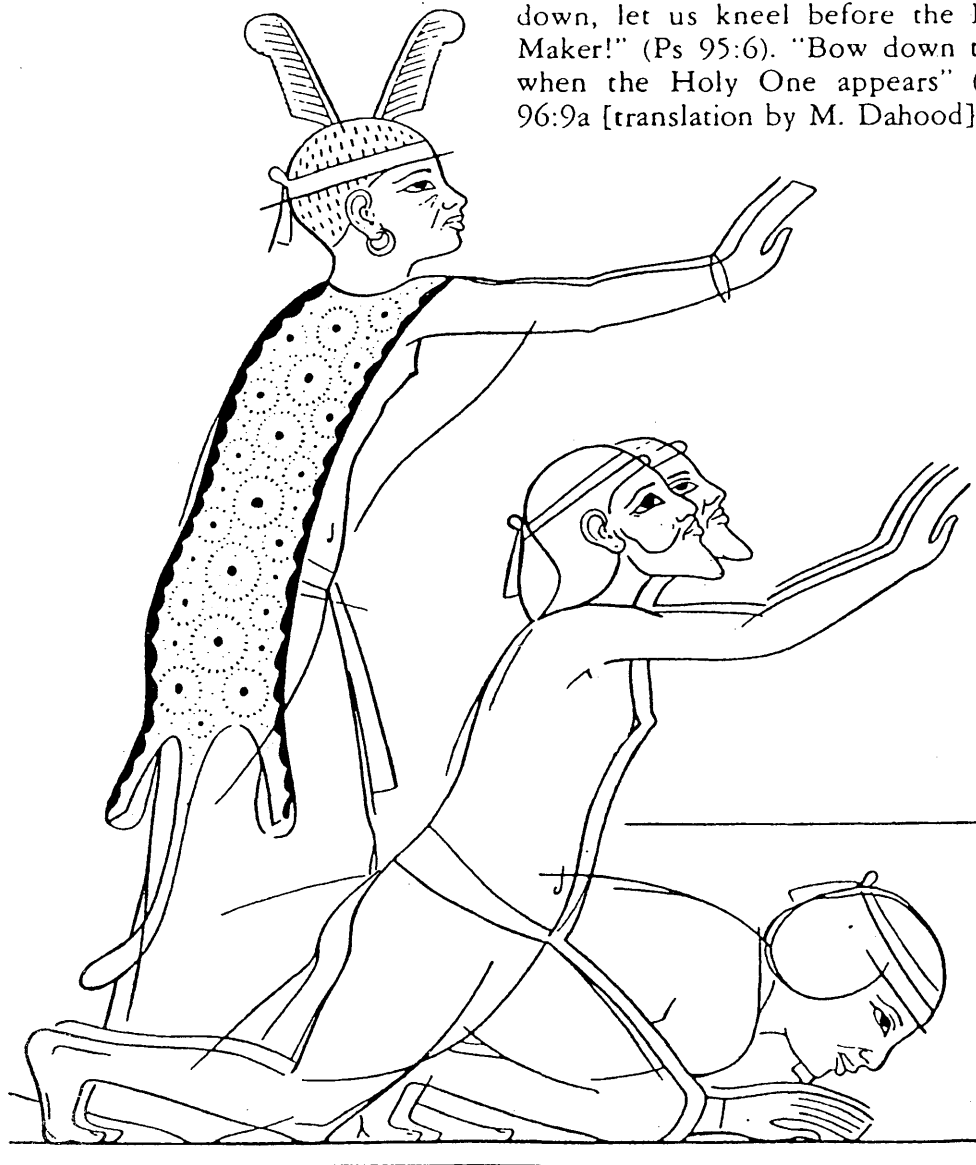
6c. The balanced approach:

1d. God instituted a day of rest for all men.

2d. God designated a day of rest for Israel which came with special regulations, penalties and customs.

3d. God appointed a new day of rest for the church:  
Psa. 118:22, symbolic of the new creation.

412. "O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!" (Ps 95:6). "Bow down to Yahweh when the Holy One appears" (Ps 29:2b; 96:9a [translation by M. Dahood]).



# The Church Worship Service

John 12:21b ...Sir, we would see Jesus

