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## CHAPTER 6

### Worship and Praise

#### Associated with Speaking, Singing, and Music

##### Worship Associated with Speaking

The Bible mentions worship fifteen times in a context where someone speaks. Statements vary from asserting Jesus' identity to ascribing a blessing, from offering thanks and praise to asking a question or confessing a sin, from all-inclusive prophetic declarations to exhortations that urge expressions of praise or gestures of worship.

Only one biblical narrative describes Jesus' disciples worshipping Him before His resurrection. After walking on the water, Jesus returned to a boatful of awestruck disciples. They finally saw Him as more than a prophet, more than a distinguished Rabbi, and more than a miracle worker. They worshiped Jesus as God's Son saying essentially what demoniacs had said when they fell on their face before Him.

*And those [Disciples] who were in the boat **worshipped** [proskuneo] Him, **saying, "You are certainly God's Son!"** (Matthew 14:33 NAS)*

This biblical narrative does not mention the disciples bowing or falling facedown. However, demoniacs fell down and made similar statements long before the disciples voiced this revelation.

*And whenever the unclean spirits beheld Him [Jesus], they would fall down [prospipto] before Him and cry out, saying, "**You are the Son of God!**" (Mark 3:11 NAS)*

Words spoken in biblical narratives that mention worship usually convey why God deserves this response of reverence, i.e., they extol the value of His worth.

Speaking Associated with Worship (15 references)				
Worshiper	Times	Hebrew or Greek	Association	NAS Verse
Joshua	1	Shachah	Fell [naphal] on his face and bowed down, then asked a <b>question</b>	Jos 5:14
David	4	Shachah	An <b>exhortation</b> to worship in a psalm that offers <b>thanks</b> and <b>praise</b>	1 Chr 16:7-36
		Shachah	An <b>exhortation</b> to worship followed 7x's by "the voice of the Lord"	Psa 29:2-9
		Shachah	An <b>exhortation</b> to worship and speak "to the nations"	Psa 96:9-10
		Shachah	Bowed in bed and <b>blessed</b> the Lord	1 Ki 1:47
Israelites	2	Shachah	Bowed and spoke <b>praise</b>	2 Chr 7:3
		Shachah	<b>Thanks, praise, confession,</b> and worship	Neh 9:3
Jehoshaphat and Judah	1	Shachah	Jehoshaphat and Judah worship facedown as Kohathites <b>praise</b> loudly	2 Chr 20:18-19
Disciples	1	Proskuneo	Worshiped Jesus <b>asserting</b> His identity as <b>God's Son</b>	Mat 14:33
Elders	2	Proskuneo	Fell down [pipto], worshiped, cast crowns, and spoke of God's <b>worth</b>	Rev 4:10-11
		Proskuneo	Fell [pipto] on their face, worshiped God, and gave <b>thanks</b>	Rev 11:16-17
Elders and Living Creatures	2	Proskuneo	Living creatures spoke <b>blessings</b> as the Elders fell down worshipping God	Rev 5:13-14
		Proskuneo	Fell down [pipto] and worshiped God saying, " <b>Amen. Hallelujah!</b> "	Rev 19:4
Angels, Elders, Living Creatures	1	Proskuneo	Fell facedown and worshiped saying, " <b>Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God....</b> "	Rev 7:11-12
An Angel	1	Proskuneo	Announced a <b>prophetic proclamation</b> asserting that all nations will worship	Rev 15:3-4

### Worship Associated with Singing, Music, and Praise

This may come as a surprise, but the Bible rarely mentions worship in the same context with singing, music, or praise. Worship, bowing, or falling before God appears eleven times in this context. Despite our habitual vernacular, the Bible does not emphasize playing musical instruments or singing as an expression of worship. When praise and worship appear together in the Bible (apart from descriptive narratives), the text often asserts a prophetic proclamation highlighting future expressions by multitudes of people.

Five of the ten Psalms that mention praise and worship together include a prophetic proclamation emphasizing an all-inclusive future response.

1. ***“all the families of the nations will worship*** [NIV renders shachah as bow down] *before You.”* (Psalm 22:27 NAS)

Verses 25-26 include references to **praise**

*“From You comes my praise in the great assembly... Those who seek Him will praise the Lord.”*

2. ***“All the earth will worship*** [NIV renders shachah as bow down to] *You, And will sing praises to You; They will sing praises to Your name.”* Selah. (Psalm 66:4 NAS)

3. ***“All nations whom You have made shall come and worship*** [shachah] *before You, O Lord, And they shall glorify Your name.”* (Psalm 86:9 NAS)

4. ***“Worship*** [shachah] *the LORD in holy attire; Tremble before Him, all the earth.”* (Psalm 96:9 NAS)

*“For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared...”* (Psalm 96:4 NAS)

5. *“I will bow down* [shachah] *toward Your holy temple And **give thanks*** [yada also means to laud or **praise**] *to Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; ... All the kings of the earth will give thanks* [yada] *to You, O LORD, When they have heard the words of Your mouth.”* (Psalm 138:2, 4 NAS)

In heaven, John saw a renowned assembly holding harps on a sea of glass. They sang the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. Having prevailed over the beast and his image, they spoke a prophetic proclamation emphasizing an all-inclusive future response.

***“All the nations will come and worship*** [proskuneo] ***before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”*** (Revelation 15:4 NAS) [verses 2-3 involve music with **harps** and **singing**]

Without mentioning music, singing or praise, three additional prophetic proclamations emphasize an all-inclusive future response of bowing.

1. ***“All mankind will come to bow down*** [shachah] *before Me,”* says the Lord. (Isaiah 66:23 NAS) [Isaiah 66 does not mention praise]

2. ***all the coastlands of the nations will bow down*** [NIV renders shachah here as worship] *to Him, everyone from his own place.* (Zephaniah 2:11 NAS) [no mention of praise]

3. *For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, **every knee shall bow** [kampto does not denote worship] to Me, and **every tongue shall give praise** [exomologeō literally means to confess] to God.”* (Romans 14:11 NAS)

Despite the scarcity of praise coinciding with worship in biblical narratives, epic all-inclusive gatherings are yet to come. The future will arrive just in time to fulfill its prophetic summons. These prophetic proclamations are rallying multitudes of worshipers to illuminate the present and define the future with glorious praise.

### **Five Biblical Narratives Describe Praise Converging with Worship**

The biblical record describes worshipers on **earth** bowing or falling facedown before God three times in the same context with singing and/or music, and two times in a context of spoken praise. In **heaven**, the biblical record mentions worshipers bowing or falling facedown before God two times in the same context with singing and/or music, and four times in a context of spoken praise.

Though the Bible does not emphasize singing praise or playing musical instruments as an expression of worship, it conveys an integrated association historically and prophetically.

<b>Worship or bowing with singing, music, and/or praise—On Earth</b>				
<b>Worshippers</b>	<b>Times</b>	<b>Hebrew</b>	<b>Association</b>	<b>NAS Verse</b>
Israelites at David’s Tabernacle	1	Shachah	An exhortation to worship in a context where singing occurs and musical instruments play	1 Chr 16:7-36
Israelites at Solomon’s Temple	1	Shachah	Facedown worship occurs in a context where musical instruments praise the Lord	2 Chr 7:3-6
Jehoshaphat and Judah with Levites before battle	1	Shachah	Jehoshaphat and Judah worship facedown as Kohathites praise in a loud voice without music or singing	2 Chr 20:18-19
Hezekiah and Judah establish God’s house	1	Shachah	The assembly worships facedown while the Levites sing to trumpets sounding	2 Chr 29:28-30
Nehemiah, Ezra, Israel, and Levites at restoration of Feast of Booths	1	Shachah	Israel confessed sins, gave thanks, and worshiped as Levites exclaimed praise without music or singing	Neh 9:3,5

### **Worship Narratives Associated with Praise on Earth**

Most of the time, the Bible describes acts of worship apart from praise. When the two gestures occur together in a narrative, they highlight exceptional mo-

ments in history. On earth, descriptions of praise and worship appear in the same context on four occasions. David's Tabernacle offers a fifth occasion where an exhortation to worship occurs rather than an act of worship. Based on 6,000 years of biblical history, these five occasions represent about one instance for every 1,200 years.

1. David's Tabernacle (1 Chronicles 16)
2. Solomon's Temple (2 Chronicles 7)
3. King Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20)
4. King Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29)
5. Ezra & Nehemiah (Nehemiah 8-9)

Worship appears in conjunction with praise on earth during two dedications, one preparation for battle, and two national gatherings. Simultaneous expressions probably occurred at other times in history both privately and publicly. However, the Holy Spirit inspired these accounts for the biblical record. Each narrative emphasizes a clear distinction between praise and worship.

### 1. David's Tabernacle (1 Chronicles 16)



The first reference in the Bible to worship in a context of praise occurs after Israel had gathered to celebrate the placing of the Ark of the Covenant in David's Tabernacle on Mount Zion. At this national gathering, praise gained an indirect association with worship.

David had appointed skilled Levites to celebrate the event by giving thanks and praise to the Lord before the Ark of the Covenant.<sup>1</sup> As the Levites played harps, lyres, and loud-sounding cymbals, other priests continually blew trumpets.<sup>2</sup> The psalm assigned for this occasion encouraged participants to sing praises.<sup>3</sup> This psalm only mentions one reference to worship in the form of an exhortation. The account in 1 Chronicles 16:29 (NAS) includes the phrase:

*“worship [shachah] the Lord in holy [qodesh] array [hadarah]”*

*“Holy array”* means holy adornment, splendor, or glory. The NKJ renders this same phrase as *“the beauty of holiness”*. This Hebrew phrase only occurs one other time (2 Chronicles 20:21) where it refers to praise. Before facing his enemy

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Chronicles 16:4 NAS

<sup>2</sup> 1 Chronicles 16:5-6 NAS

<sup>3</sup> 1 Chronicles 16:9 NAS

on the battlefield, King Jehoshaphat *“appointed those who sang to the Lord and those who praised Him in holy attire [qodesh hadarah]”* (NAS).

When describing the Tabernacle of David in 2 Samuel 6, the biblical text does not include a Hebrew word for worship. Neither narrative in the Bible mentions individuals or groups expressing gestures of worship in or around this Tabernacle.

## 2. Solomon’s Temple (2 Chronicles 7)



Solomon’s Temple represents the first biblical account where distinct expressions of worship and praise converge (without the mention of music or singing). This reference occurs after King Solomon’s prayer to dedicate the temple. All Israel watched as fire consumed their offerings while the glory of the Lord appeared. In response to this sudden supernatural activity, spontaneous expressions of facedown worship followed.

*All the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of the LORD upon the house [Solomon’s Temple], **bowed down** [kara`] on the pavement with their **faces to the ground**, and they **worshipped** [shachah] and gave **praise** [yadah] to the LORD, **saying**, “Truly He is good, truly His lovingkindness is everlasting.”* (2 Chronicles 7:3 NAS)

## 3. King Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20)

Sixty-one years after King Solomon, praise and worship converged as military troops assembled for international warfare. This occasion followed a detailed prophetic message from Jahaziel, which emphasizes praise. When a vast army of Moabites, Ammonites, and some Meunites united against Judah from Edom, King Jehoshaphat led his nation in a public gesture of demonstrative worship by bowing down. The priests subsequently arose from the ground to express praise with a very loud voice.

*Jehoshaphat **bowed** [qadad] his head with his **face to the ground**, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem **fell down** [naphal] before the Lord, **worshipping** [shachah] the Lord. The Levites, from the sons of the Kohathites and of the sons of the Korahites, stood up to **praise** [halal] the Lord God of Israel, **with a very loud voice**.* (2 Chronicles 20:18-19 NAS)

In response to Jahaziel's prophecy, appointed singers and praisers led the troops into battle giving thanks and praise to the Lord. Apparently, the singing and praise became a spiritual force multiplier for an unconventional victory. Judah's military did not fight in this battle because the Lord set an ambush to destroy the opposing force. Their enemies from Edom destroyed one another, leaving no survivors.<sup>4</sup>

*When he [Jehoshaphat] had consulted with the people, he appointed those who **sang** [rinnah, a ringing cry or entreaty] to the Lord and those who **praised** [halal] Him in holy attire [qodesh hadarah], as they went out before the army and said, "Give **thanks** [yadah] to the Lord, for His lovingkindness is everlasting." When they began **singing** [rinnah] and **praising** [tehillah], the Lord set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were routed. (2 Chronicles 20:21-22 NAS)*

#### **4. King Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29)**

Hezekiah became king in 715 BC about 250 years after praise and worship converged in Solomon's temple. During Hezekiah's reign, structured expressions of praise mingled with deliberate facedown gestures of worship at a national gathering.

King Hezekiah ordered priests to sing songs of praise accompanied by music. Specific commands, established by the Lord through His prophets, inspired the words of these songs. Hezekiah *"stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with harps and with lyres, according to the command of David and of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for the command was from the Lord through His prophets."*<sup>5</sup>

King Hezekiah and his officials then ordered Levites to:

*sing **praises** [halal] to the LORD with the words of David and Asaph the seer. So they sang **praises** [halal] with joy, and **bowed down** [qadad] and **worshipped** [shachah]. (2 Chronicles 29:30 NAS)*

Evidently, the assembly worshiped the Lord while designated Levites sang to the sound of trumpets. This account represents the only description in the Bible where musical instruments and singing appear together in association with stated gestures of worship.

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<sup>4</sup> 2 Chronicles 20:23

<sup>5</sup> 2 Chronicles 29:25 NAS

While the whole assembly **worshiped** [shachah], **the singers also sang and the trumpets sounded**; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. (2 Chronicles 29:28 NAS)

### 5. Ezra & Nehemiah (from Nehemiah 8-9)

During another national gathering, praise coincides with worship at a time of exceptional spiritual renewal. The significance of this event points to the historic restoration of the Feast of Booths with “*very great gladness*”.<sup>6</sup> Israel had not built booths and lived in them since the days of Joshua the son of Nun.

Marked with fasting, repentance, and humility, Israel stood erect for a fourth of the day while reading from the law of the Lord. For another six hours, “*they confessed* [yadah means to confess sins or to confess the name of God; it also means to praise and more commonly to give thanks] **and worshiped** [shachah] *the Lord their God*”.<sup>7</sup> Afterward the Levites exalted God’s name by exclaiming “*Arise* [implies a change of position], *bless the Lord your God forever and ever! O may Your glorious name be blessed And exalted above all blessing and praise* [t<sup>e</sup>hil-lah]!”<sup>8</sup> The next several verses in this narrative record the praises spoken by Levites.

### Worship Narratives Associated with Praise in Heaven

Worship in heaven coincides with praise eight times, three in the same context with singing and/or music and five in a context of spoken praise. When describing gestures of worship along with praise, heavenly narratives outnumber earthly ones eight to five.

<b>Worship or Bowing with Singing, Music, and/or Praise—In Heaven</b>				
<b>Worshippers</b>	<b>Times</b>	<b>Greek</b>	<b>Association</b>	<b>NAS Verse</b>
24 Elders	1	Proskuneo	Fall facedown and worship God, cast their crowns, then speak praise	Rev 4:8-11
Living Creatures and Elders	1	Proskuneo	Fall down and worship God singing praises	Rev 5:8-14

<sup>6</sup> Nehemiah 8:17 NKJ

<sup>7</sup> Nehemiah 9:3 NAS

<sup>8</sup> Nehemiah 9:5 NAS

<b>Worship or Bowing with Singing, Music, and/or Praise—In Heaven</b>				
<b>Worshippers</b>	<b>Times</b>	<b>Greek</b>	<b>Association</b>	<b>NAS Verse</b>
Angels, Elders, and Living Creatures	1	Proskuneo	Fall facedown and worship God saying praises	Rev 7:9-12
24 Elders	1	Proskuneo	fall facedown and worship God saying praises	Rev 11:13-17
24 Elders	1	Proskuneo	Fall down and worship God saying, "Hallelujah"	Rev 19:4
Heavenly Host	1	Shachah	Levites exhort Israel to praise stressing that the heavenly host bows down	Neh 9:5-6
Angelic Exhortation	1	Proskuneo	Multitude sings praise as an angel exhorts people on earth to worship	Rev 14:7
Proclamation	1	Proskuneo	Multitude sings praise proclaiming that all nations will worship God	Rev 15:3-4

Five times, John saw elders in heaven fall down and worship God.<sup>9</sup> Each celestial narrative portrayed by John includes expressions of praise without using a specific Greek word for praise. In addition to John's descriptions in the Revelation, Nehemiah depicts eight Levites exhorting Israel to praise God while stating that the heavenly host bows down.

### **Worship and Praise in Heaven**

#### **1. 24 elders (Revelation 4:8-11)**

After falling facedown in heaven to worship God, 24 elders cast their crowns before His throne and then speak praises.

*Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders **fall down** before him who sits on the throne, **and worship** [shachah] him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and **say**: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." (Rev 4:9-11 NAS)*

#### **2. Four Living Creatures and 24 Elders (Revelation 5:8-14)**

<sup>9</sup> Revelation 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4

The 4 Living Creatures and 24 Elders worshiped the Lamb in heaven. They sang praise and asserted distinctions about God's worthiness as multitudes praised the Lamb along with many angels and elders who fell down and worshiped.

*When He [the Lamb] had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders **fell down** [pipto] before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they **sang** [ado, a song of praise] a new song, saying, "**Worthy** are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." Then I looked, and I heard the **voice** of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, **saying** with a **loud voice**, "**Worthy** is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard **saying**, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders **fell down** [pipto] and **worshiped** [proskuneo]. (Rev 5:8-14 NAS)*

### **3. Angels, elders, and living creatures (Revelation 7:9-12)**

After an innumerable multitude in heaven stood and shouted praise, the angels, elders, and living creatures fell facedown and worshiped God speaking praise.

*And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they **fell** [pipto] **on their faces** before the throne and **worshiped** [proskuneo] God, **saying**, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen." (Rev 7:11-12 NAS)*

### **4. 24 Elders (Revelation 11:13-17)**

Twenty-four elders **fell facedown** in heaven and **worshiped God** while **speaking** thanks and **praise** in response to an angel sounding the seventh trumpet after a great earthquake as loud voices announced, "*The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.*"

*And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, **fell** [pipto] **on their faces** and **worshiped** [proskuneo] God, **saying**, "We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign." (Rev 11:16-17 NAS)*

## 5. 24 Elders and Four Living Creatures (Revelation 19:4)

Hallelujah makes its biblical debut in the New Testament near the end of Revelation. This Hebrew word literally means, “Let us praise the Lord”. In the Psalms, most translators render Hallelujah as, “*praise the Lord*”, or “*praise God*”. Without ever mentioning a Hebrew word for worship, various Psalms use this exclamation in songs of praise and expressions of gratitude.<sup>10</sup>

Revelation 19 repeats “*Hallelujah*” four times in verses 1, 3, 4, and 6. In a praise-charged atmosphere, multitudes in heaven shout *Hallelujah* three times while the 24 elders and four living creatures fall down and worship God saying, “*Amen. Hallelujah!*”

*And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures **fell down** [pipto] and **worshipped** [proskuneo] God who sits on the throne **saying**, “Amen. **Hallelujah!**” (Rev 19:4 NAS)*

## 6. Proclamation by Levites (Nehemiah 9:5-6 NAS)

After confessing and **worshipping** God for a fourth of the day, eight Levites exhort Israel to **stand up** and praise the Lord for His creative and life-giving accomplishments. They also proclaim that the heavenly host bows down. The NIV translates this phrase, “*the multitudes of heaven worship you.*” The Levites Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah and Pethahiah praise God saying:

*“You alone are the LORD. You have made the heavens, The heaven of heavens with all their host, The earth and all that is on it, The seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them. And the heavenly host **bows down** [shachah] before You.” (Nehemiah 9:5-6 NAS)*

References to praise and worship converge two other times in heaven where the Bible mentions a word for worship but does not describe a gesture associated with it.

## 7. An Exhortation by an Angel (Revelation 14:2-3,7 NAS )

Jesus stood on Mount Zion as 144-thousand saints sang a new song accompanied by a harp with thunderous voices from heaven. In this context, an angel flying in mid-heaven issued an exhortation with a loud voice saying,

*“**worship Him** who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters”. (Revelation 14:7 NAS)*

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<sup>10</sup> See Psalm 106:1; Psalm 111:1; Psalm 112:1; Psalm 113:1; Psalm 117:1; and Psalm 135:1

## 8. Proclamation by a Victorious Multitude (Revelation 15:2-4 NAS)

A multitude, “victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name,” stood on the sea of glass. They held harps and sang the praise-filled song of Moses and the Lamb saying,

“Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; For **all the nations will come and worship before You**, for Your righteous acts have been revealed”. (Rev 15:3-4 NAS)

### Worship and Praise in the New Testament

In the New Testament, praise and worship do not appear together until John describes them in heaven. However, Paul’s letter to the Romans may imply a convergence of praise and worship:

For it is written, “AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, **EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW** [kampto] **TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.**” (Romans 14:11 NAS)

Seven hundred years before Paul wrote this epistle, Isaiah prophesied that every knee will bow and every tongue will “swear allegiance” (Isaiah 45:23 NAS). Paul repeats this phrase in Philippians 2:10-11 where the NAS renders it “every tongue will confess”.

at the name of Jesus **EVERY KNEE WILL BOW** [kampto], of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that **every tongue will confess** [from the Greek word *exomologeō*] that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:10-11)

Paul also quotes Isaiah 45:23 in Romans 14:11. Rather than translating *exomologeō* as “confess” however, the NAS uses “give praise” instead. Though the NAS translates *exomologeō* differently in these two epistles, the NKJ, NIV, and ESV remain consistent, each rendering it as “confess”.

Regardless of how translators render *exomologeō*, the New Testament does not emphasize praise and worship converging together.

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