

Swept off your Feet

Beyond Worship-as-Usual

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CHAPTER 9

Worship and Praise

Associated with David and Psalms

David's fame as a worshipping superstar extends far and wide. Nonetheless, the biblical record only describes David worshipping God two times—both in reference to a child born to Bathsheba. Neither account implies any reference to singing praise or playing a musical instrument. David wrote 75 to 80 Psalms; yet less than 10 mention a Hebrew word for worship in reference to God.



King David Jerusalem Cenacle 2012

The first description of David worshipping comes after he received news that his child, conceived in adultery and born to Bathsheba, had died.

*So David arose from the ground [after the death of his first child with Bathsheba], washed, anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he came into the house of the Lord and **worshipped** [shachah]. Then he came to his own house, and when he requested, they set food before him and he ate. (2 Samuel 12:20 NAS)*

The second description of David worshipping came while on his bed near the end of his life. Circumstances involving David's second child born to Bathsheba prompted him to worship God. After his servants blessed Solomon (who was about to assume Israel's throne), David bowed in worship at the foot of his bed.

“Moreover, the king's servants came to bless our lord King David, saying, ‘May your God make the name of Solomon better than your name and his

*throne greater than your throne' And the king **bowed** [shachah, rendered bowed in worship in NIV] himself on the bed."* (1 Kings 1:47 NAS)

In two Psalms, David declared his intention to worship God by saying:

*"I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will **bow** [shachah] **in reverence for You**"* (Psalm 5:7 NAS)

*"I will **bow down** [shachah] toward Your holy temple And give thanks [yadah]"* (Psalm 138:2 NAS)

In two additional Psalms, David extends an invitation for others to worship God by declaring; *"let us **worship and bow down**"* (Psalm 95:6 NAS) and *"let us **worship at His footstool**"* (Psalm 132:7 NAS). This language implies that David worshiped God at other times and led others to do so. It also confirms the fact that he employed gestures of bowing in his worship. David's terminology in the Psalms clearly distinguishes gestures of worship from expressions of praise.

David Bowed before Jonathan and Saul

On separate occasions, David bowed before Jonathan and later before King Saul in what appears to be a cultural expression of honor and respect. In Jonathan's case, circumstances suggest the possibility that David may have extended himself in worship toward God rather than Jonathan his friend.

...David rose from the south side and fell [naphal] on his face to the ground, and bowed [shachah] three times. And they [David and Jonathan] kissed each other and wept together, but David wept the more. (1Samuel 20:41 NAS)

With Saul, David's bow appears to venerate the office of the King rather than in worship to God.

David arose and went out of the cave and called after Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed [shachah] with his face to the ground and prostrated [shachah] himself. (1Samuel 24:8 NAS)

Bowing before David

With striking distinction, the Bible describes eleven people bowing down to David on fourteen occasions. Abigail, Bathsheba, Mephibosheth, the woman of Tekoa, Joab, Absalom, Ziba, Ahimaaz, Araunah, Nathan, and Ornan all rendered homage to him. Translated from the Hebrew word *shachah*, which also denotes worship, they bowed or prostrated themselves before David both before and after he assumed Israel's throne as King. Other people inevitably bowed before David as King in keeping with this custom adopted from other nations. In a separate

account, an entire assembly bowed before the Lord and David simultaneously, yet he did not object.

*Then David said to all the assembly, "Now bless the Lord your God." And all the assembly blessed the Lord, the God of their fathers, and **bowed low** [qadad] and **did homage** [shachah] to the Lord and **to the king**. (1Chronicles 29:20 NAS)*

Throughout the Bible, angels refused to share this expression of homage with God. Twice, John fell down to worship at the feet of the angel. Each time the angel rebuked him saying, *"You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers...Worship God!"*¹

Praise and Worship in the Psalms

David and other psalmists emphasize praise over worship by a margin greater than ten to one. Words for praise appear in Psalms over 150 times in 147 verses. In addition, many psalms convey praise for God without using a specific word for praise in the Hebrew text. For example, Psalm 145 praises God with the following words of descriptive adulation:

*The LORD is gracious and merciful; Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness.
The LORD is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works.
(Psalm 145:8-9 NAS)*

In contrast, only 12 psalms (out of 150) mention a Hebrew word for worship in reference to God, Psalms 5, 22, 29, 45, 66, 86, 95, 96, 97, 99, 132, and 138. Of these 12 psalms, ten mention a Hebrew word for worship and praise together. Only six psalms mention a Hebrew word for worship and singing together in the same context: Psalms 22, 66, 95, 96, 132, and 138. Two psalms, 5 and 29, mention worship alone without using a Hebrew word for praise.

NAS translators render the Hebrew word `abad (ä-väd') as worship in six out of 290 references pertaining to God. Translators for the NKJ, ESV, NIV, and RSV all render `abad as "serve" in Psalm 2:11. However, the NAS deviates from them and from its own convention in this psalm. Rather than translating `abad as serve, it chose the word worship. Instead of *"Serve the LORD with reverence"*, they use:

*"Worship [`abad] the LORD with reverence And rejoice with trembling."
(Psalm 2:11 NAS)*

¹ Revelation 19:10 and 22:9 ESV

According to the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament and others, the Hebrew verb, `abad (pronounced ä-văd') acquired the notion of worship and obedience from its Arabic root. However, the Old Aramaic root suggests service instead because it means to do or make.²

In Psalms 100 and 102, the NAS reverts back to its convention by rendering `abad as “serve”. The NIV however, reverses itself by rendering `abad as worship in both Psalms.

Serve [`abad] the LORD with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing.
(Psalm 100:2 NAS)

When the peoples are gathered together, And the kingdoms, to serve [`abad] the LORD. (Psalm 102:22 NAS)

Six Prophetic Proclamations Emphasize an All-Inclusive Response

Knowing the past clarifies the present
and often illuminates the future

Five Psalms and one song sung in heaven mention worship and praise together in a future context, emphasizing an all-inclusive response. Psalms 22, 66, 86, 96, 138, and Revelation 15 assert prophetic proclamations waiting for fulfillment.

6 Prophetic Proclamations Involving Multitudes that <u>will</u> Worship or Bow in a Context of Singing, Music, and/or Praise				
Worshippers	Times	Hebrew/Greek	Association	NAS Verse
All Inclusive Multitudes	6	Shachah	All the Families of the Nations	Psa 22:25-27
		Shachah	All the Earth	Psa 66:4
		Shachah		Psa 96:4, 9
		Shachah	All Nations	Psa 86:9
		Proskuneo		Rev 15:2-4
		Shachah		All Kings

1. **all the families of the nations will worship** [NIV renders *shachah* as bow down] *before You.* (Psalm 22:27 NAS) [vss. 25-26 include references to **praise**]
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)

² Harris, Archer, Waltke, Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1980, p. 639. Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1979, p. 598.

3. **All nations** whom You have made **shall come and worship** [shachah] before You, O Lord, And they shall **glorify** [kabad, to honor] Your name. (Psalm 86:9 NAS)
4. **Worship** [shachah] the LORD in holy attire; Tremble before Him, **all the earth**. (Psalm 96:9 NAS) [vs. 1,2 **sing**; vs. 4 encourages **praise**]
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)
6. **All the nations will come and worship** [proskuneo] **before you**, for your righteous acts have been revealed.” (Revelation 15:4 NAS) [vss. 2-3 involve music with harps and songs]

Three All-Inclusive Prophetic Proclamations (without praise)

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* 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] to Me, and **every tongue shall give praise** [exomologeo] to God.” (Romans 14:11 NAS)

Previous Chapter: Worship and Praise Converge in Heaven

Next Chapter: Worship and Praise Distinguished in Principle Blended in Practice

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