

## What is Worship

The word that is frequently used in the Old Testament for worship is the Hebrew word "shachah" (Gen 22:5) which literally means "to bow down, to depress, to prostrate oneself".

As for the New Testament, the Greek word "proskyneo" ([Matt 2:11](#)) is used and this means to "kiss the hand towards the one, in token of reverence".

## What is Praise?

The word that is often used for the word praise is "yadah" (Gen 29:35) which is Hebrew for "to throw, shoot, cast, cast down" or "throw down" but sometimes the Hebrew "halal" (2 Chron 7:6) is used which means "to shine, to flash forth light." As for the New Testament usage of the word praise it is often "epainon" (Eph 1:6) and means "commendation, approbation." So to praise God is to throw down one self, to cast down, and to shine or flash forth light, or to cast or throw words of worthiness to God.

*Psalm 150:1-6 "Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!"*

*Ephesians 5:19 "addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart.*

When we address "one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" if you use the psalms, we can know that its right for these are the very inspired words of God. So there is great value and power in singing scripture:

"the Lord is gracious and compassionate,  
slow to anger and rich in love"

Psalm 103 v 8:

.....and then the words of the chorus to this song are also scriptural.....

"Praise the Lord, O my Soul"

Psalm 103:1

.....here the psalmist is instructing his soul to praise the Lord, in response to the Lord's grace, compassion and love.

## The Sacrifice of Praise

**Hebrews 13:15** "Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name."

Here we see that praising God is a sacrifice to God and one that is pleasing to Him.

**Psalms 22:3** "Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel."

The literal rendering of this verse is that God is dwelling in the praises of Israel and if He dwells or inhabits (lives in, abides in) in the praises of Israel, He will surely abide in our praises of Him too. Anytime that we get down or are going through a trial, start praising God and thanking Him for all that He has done already for us and when we start praising Him, we have His Word that He is dwelling in these praises. What an incredible thought.

**Colossians 3:16** "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Paul wrote that the word of Christ can dwell in the Colossians richly, and in us as well, in the teachings and the admonitions of one another but there's an unexpected source of these teachings and admonitions: It's contained in the psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, and in the singing to the Lord. It seems that Paul was actually writing about the Old Testament psalms and there is little doubt that these psalms were still being sung in the church of the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

**Psalms 95:6** "Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!"

Here the invitation is to take a posture which reflects our heart response to the Lord. For some this is easy to do publically, and is to be encouraged. We can all try this at home, on our own. Why not try to sing some of your favourite worship songs either face down or kneeling on the ground.

## **Story about the connecting power of sung worship**

If you go to church with any regularity, you may have heard your music minister say, "God inhabits the praises of his people". I always thought that statement was nothing more than a way to get me to sing the praise choruses that so many of our churches use now.

The truth is we should heed that advice. It's not just that it's scriptural. It's one of God's principles that work when we apply it. Many of you probably did not know Roger Bennett. Roger Bennett was a Southern Gospel piano player and songwriter who made a living serving the Lord in the ministry of music. Unfortunately, he succumbed to cancer last month after an 11-year battle.

The last several years were not particularly easy ones for Bennett. He had leukaemia, which he thought was in remission, only to see it rage back in his life with vengeance. He fought it valiantly, but realized that the disease was winning so he decided to take a stand and underwent a bone marrow transplant at the M. D. Anderson Cancer Centre in Houston, Texas – the first of three.

Bennett wrote about his experiences on his website, Roger Bennett's Midnight Meditations. "I am convinced," he told his readers, "that our enemy stalks us exactly in the way the Bible describes him, a roaring lion. He hides in the bushes waiting for any sign of weakness and then he strikes."

Bennett admitted that his faith became weak in the loneliness that is associated with bone marrow transplants. He mentioned one particular night when he "bottomed out".

"He didn't strike me physically," Bennett wrote. "That had been accomplished for him by the chemo. He struck a more critical part of my being – my joy, my confidence, my hope. Every thought I turned toward heaven bounced back to me as if it were made of brass. Every time I tried to 'look on the bright side', I ended up imaging a very dark future. Then he threw his most effective dart at me – Doubt. 'You call yourself a Christian,' he said. 'What a hypocrite! You wrote, Don't Be Afraid, and yet you are more afraid now than you've ever been. You wrote about joy and yet now you are filled with despair. So much for your faith, Mr. Gospel Singer.'" Indeed, Bennett had hit rock bottom. "I believed everything Satan said," he admitted. "I tried everything I knew to pull out of it – all to no avail. I thought if I could just doze off, this will pass by morning. But the clock seemed to move in slow motion. Sleep was

nowhere near. I tried to lose myself in the Bible, but the words blurred to my eyes and I couldn't make any sense of them."

Finally, Bennett had an epiphany, a revelation of sorts. He thought about the story told in Acts when Paul and Silas were in jail. "They didn't despair," he said. "They sang...It became their weapon."

So Bennett began singing. "One after another these old songs came to my memory and I sang them to my empty room. It wasn't a great performance, but it may have been the most powerful blessing I've received in my life."

Roger Bennett realized just how true God is to His Word. He really does inhabit the praises of his people.

When it begins to rain in your life, take Roger Bennett's (and God's) advice – Sing the Gospel and allow it take root in your heart. You may not sing your blues away, but I'll bet you'll feel the presence of a pretty powerful friend.