

1.3

2. In the Old Testament there are four words that are translated as "worship" in the KJV. The chief one of these (shachah) contains the idea of prostrating oneself before another. In this posture one honors the recipient of his worshipful act. He falls before him and by hiding his own person exalts the party he is giving homage. His mere physical position exalts the other party. To worship, then, is to bow oneself willingly in the presence of another to whom you wish to give prominence. The act may be public or private but it minimizes the worshipper in order that the one worshipped may have a dominant place. The act witnesses voluntary reverence and humility before the one worshipped and obeisance and love on the part of the worshipper.

1.4

3. In the New Testament, the KJV shows about eleven Greek words translated as "worship." Many of these are used just a time or so and the chief word (proskuneo) has in it the idea of presenting oneself to kiss the hand of another. It is worship in the sense of paying particular favor or courtesy to the other party. This necessitates giving place to another in preference to yourself.
4. In all of these words, the voluntary idea is plain. God can humble a foe and make him submissive. But worship is the willing yieldedness of an open heart. A king may command his adherents to fall before him and thereby "manufacture" some amount of honor. But while this may build his feeling of importance, it will not make him a more admired, honored, or respected person. Those emotions must come willingly from the heart.

True worship, while many other things may be said of it, is the voluntary and happy honoring of God as the heart reaches out to love and adore His person.

C. Some notes on the history of worship as contained in the Scripture as a means of illustrating these and other basic ideas.

1.5

1. Illustrations from Genesis: the first worship scenes.

a. Genesis 4:1-4

From the Cain and Abel sequence we learn a general truth...the method and means of worship are prescribed by God in their basic expression. What he calls for cannot be forgotten although it may be "embellished" or "enriched" as a simple altar may give place to a brazen altar, etc.

b. Genesis 8:20

Worship is the logical way of showing God thanks for His provision and care for us.