

BETWEEN THE LINES

A Deeper Look...

#973- WORSHIP RITUALS: Approaching God Appropriately

In discussing fit/kosher worship rituals there are several facets we should consider... the posture of worship, the location of worship, and worship leadership. Let's tackle these in one at a time.

The Posture of Worship: As we have discussed in our radio broadcast the best definition of worship is found in simply tearing apart the Greek word translated to be "worship" throughout the New Testament text- προσκυνεω (pronounced **pros- kuun- e- oh**).

The first part, προσ- means "to fall prostrate". The second syllable, κυνεω, means "to kiss". The definition of worship then (at least according to the New Testament writers) is to bow down in adoration before the object of your affection or awe.

Understanding that let's see how this concept plays out in various stories of the Scripture where someone does come to truly worship.

- Exodus 3- Moses is forced to his knees by the awareness of the divine Presence .
- Joshua 5- Joshua also falls in acknowledgment of the sacred.
- Judges 13- Samson's parents bow before the eminent heavenly apparition.
- II Samuel 24- David falls before the Presence as he pleads for mercy.
- Job 42- Old Job expresses the posture of worship in his repentance.
- Isaiah 6- Probably the best-known description of a human driven to worship posture.
- Isaiah 46- You'll naturally come to that posture before any god you choose!
- Daniel 3- A pagan king expects that enactment- even before an image on the plain.
- Matthew 4- Satan understands and it's the attitude that he demands too.
- Matthew 6- It's easy to fall to worship One who commands elements to silence.
- Matthew 17- A desperate father approaches the Lord in a worship attitude.
 - Three apostles are driven to their knees/faces before the vision.
- Mark 5- When your young daughter is dying this posture is natural.
- Mark 7- Even Syrophenician women understand the correct role.
- Mark 10- A rich young ruler abases himself as he seeks Jesus' attention.
 - A blind man knows the right position before the Lord.
- Luke 8- Even demons acknowledge Him with that posture.
- Luke 17- A grateful Samaritan leper easily finds himself on his knees.
- Luke 8- An arrogant Pharisee doesn't understand, but a humble publican does.
- John 18- Even the pronouncement of "I Am" by the Lord will drive you down!
- I Corinthians 14- Honesty before God demands that we fall to kiss.
- Revelation 3- Eventually the world will acknowledge God's people that way!

In Conclusion: Do you see the common thread? Do you feel the tenor of προσκυνεω as the Bible expresses it? Synonymous or complimentary words would be "awe", "fear", "respect", "adore"... Little wonder we are admonished to-

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

Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool; for He is holy.

We will go into His tabernacles: we will worship at His footstool.

Psalm 95, 99, 132

The Location of Worship: Once the permanent temple site was established in Jerusalem it became the central focal point of worship. But it was not exclusively so for we do have evidence of God's people seeking Him apart from that location during the period of the exile.

Here are a few of those events...

- Esther 4- God's people set themselves to prayer and fasting in Persia.
- Daniel 6/7/8/9- The prophet often sought the Lord in Babylon.
- Nehemiah 1 - A grieving Nehemiah falls before the Lord in the Shushan palace.

Due to the lack of Scripture text covering the period between the exile and the Gospels it's difficult to completely explore this concept but we do know from Luke 4, Matthew 12, Luke 13, and many other references that Jesus did not feel confined to worship only in the temple. He often resorted to worship with the faithful in the synagogues.

Of course this all became mute when the veil was rent in two on the day of the Crucifixion. Jesus' words to a Samaritan woman (John 4) came to pass as we moved from being centered on a "temple cult" to finding that true worship is done "in spirit and in truth".

Worship Leadership: Not all the priests, scribes, and Pharisees were condemned. Many of them led God's people in wonderful worship...

- Genesis 14- Melchizedek
- Exodus 40- Aaron
- Numbers 20/Joshua 14 - Eleazar
- Joshua 22- Phineas
- I Chronicles 15- Abiathar
- II Chronicles 12- Zadok
- II Chronicles 15- Azariah son of Oded
- II Chronicles 22/3- Jehoiada
- II Chronicles 26- Azariah (not the same)
- II Chronicles 31- Azariah (again, a different Azariah)
- II Chronicles 34- Hilkiah
- Zechariah 3- Joshua
- Inter testament- Simon the Just
- Inter testament- Mattathias, father of the Maccabee rebellion
- Inter testament- Simon, grandson of Mattathias
- Luke 1 - Zechariah, father of John the Baptist
- Acts 6- Many sincere priests who accepted Jesus to be the Christ