

## THE WORD OF WORSHIP

Tonight we'll be unpacking the word "WORSHIP". In the O.T., there are 3 Hebrew words that are translated as worship. We'll be looking at the one used the most, and that word is...



SHACHAH. If you look in a concordance, you'll find the definition for worship to basically mean "to bow down". That can certainly apply to how we approach God and this definition is pretty accurate for most places where SHACHAH is used in the O.T., but

honestly, that just seemed pretty basic and didn't really do a good job at showing the fullness of worship.

Searching the Paleo-Hebrew wasn't much help. Not every Paleo-Hebrew word has a significant meaning in how the letters are arranged, and this is one of those words. So, no luck there. In case you're wondering, the letters are SHIN (destroy), KHET (fence), HEY (behold).

For such a powerful word, there seems to not be a whole lot of power in the actual word. Sort of anticlimactic. But prayer and digging deep always reveals depth that isn't easily seen on the surface, and so it has here also.



Not to bore you with too much history, but we need to set the stage so we can get the big picture. In 70 AD, the Second Temple was destroyed.

When the Romans destroyed it, they burned everything, including most of the copies of the TANACH, what we call the O.T. They scattered the people and almost destroyed Judaism, which was really their goal. Judaism survived, but it was changed.

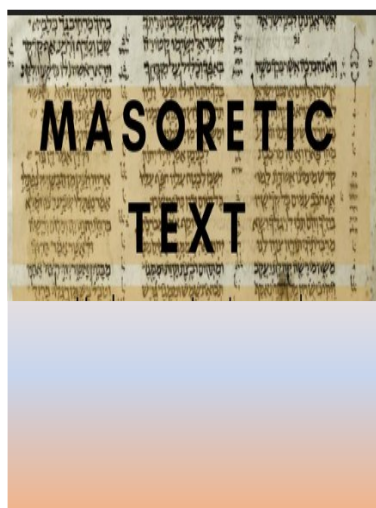
Over the next few centuries, the ability to read and write the ancient texts of the TANACH fell into disuse, with most Jews being unable to make much sense of ancient Hebrew text or to even speak Hebrew. Most rabbis and teachers used both the oral and written tradition, but their desire was to make the TANACH more accessible without corrupting the original language, and that way, preserve it before it was completely gone.

Around the 700's AD, Judaism was under the same attack that Christianity was suffering from, which was the infiltration of the Greco-Roman culture and philosophy being pushed into the sacred beliefs and teachings of their religion. We know that Christianity was hijacked during those years, but what about Judaism?

During this time, a group called The Masorites decided to preserve the O.T. in ancient Hebrew and used both the oldest scrolls they could find AND the oral tradition of the Rabbis. Although there already existed an O.T translation in Greek, called the Septuagint, they rejected it and worked to create an authoritative work written in Ancient Hebrew. What they produced is called the Masoretic Text, and it's where Christians and Jews still get our translation of the O.T.

Now, the Masorites were meticulous in their work, but they weren't inspired by Holy Spirit, they were motivated by a sense of survival. Remember, Hebrew was a dying language, both spoken and written. There were no written vowels in ancient Hebrew and much of what they translated came from oral tradition, not the written word, so sometimes there were words that didn't get the best version of itself.

Not that the word was wrong, but maybe the emphasis wasn't placed exactly where it should be, which then slightly changed the meaning of the word. Kinda like if I say EN**VELOP**, that means to wrap around something, but an EN**VELOPE** contains mail.



Case in point... SHIN or SIN. When transcribing the word WORSHIP, the Masorites pointed the first letter up as a Shin by putting a dot to the right of the letter. Many rabbis argue that they should have pointed this

first letter of worship as a Sin instead of a Shin by putting the dot on the left side. This would slightly change the way the word was pronounced and its meaning. Instead of SHACHAH meaning to bow down, it would change to SACHAH, meaning to be swimming or surrounded by overflowing water.

Here are the words SACHAH and SHACHAH side by side. You can see they're written exactly the same, except for the placement of that little dot.

שָׁחָה		שָׁחָה	
Transliteration	Pronunciation	Transliteration	Pronunciation
śāḥā	saw-khaw'	śāḥā	shaw-khaw'
Part of Speech	Root Word (Etymology)	Part of Speech	Root Word (Etymology)
verb	A primitive root	verb	A primitive root
Dictionary Aids		Dictionary Aids	
TWOT Reference: 2247		TWOT Reference: 2360	
KJV Translation Count — Total: 3x		KJV Translation Count — Total: 172x	
The KJV translates Strong's H7811 in the following manner: swim (3x).		The KJV translates Strong's H7812 in the following manner: worship (99x), bow (31x), bow down (obedience) (9x), reverence (5x), fall down (3x), themselves (2x), stoop (1x), crouch (1x), miscellaneous	
Outline of Biblical Usage [?]		Outline of Biblical Usage [?]	
/ to swim		/ to bow down	

Since these dots were not found in the original inspired version, we can say that both meanings would apply. Worship is not only bowing down to God but letting God surround us with His love and presence so that we are overflowing with his beauty and joy. So let's explore that concept.

**Judges 7:8-15** So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley. 9 It happened on the same night that the Lord said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. 10 But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, 11 and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp.

12 Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude. 13 And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed." 14 Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp." 15 And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he **worshiped**. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand."

So here's Gideon, sneaking into the enemy's camp and surrounded by people that want to destroy him. He hears this prophetic dream from one of the Midianites and realizes that God has shown him he and his 300 will have the victory. So, he SINGS SOME PRAISES AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS?! He falls to the ground from his hiding place and bows before God in the middle of the enemy's camp, hoping no one sees him?

What if, in that moment, in his spirit, he praised YHWH and felt His presence surrounding him and he spiritually swam in the presence of God, knowing that everything would be ok. Have you ever felt like that? Being right in the be middle of a huge trial, maybe even surrounded by the enemy, and felt God's presence reassuring you that He was in control. And you trusted Him. That is the heart of true worship. There's no one right way to worship God, but there are many wrong ways...

**Genesis 4:4-5 And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. 4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.**

The first time in Scripture that we can easily recognize an act of worship is found here in Gen 4. It's also the first of many times in Scripture where God rejects man's worship.

The most common explanation for why God rejected Cain's sacrifice is that it was a bloodless sacrifice, but the Bible never tells us why. I'd like to add another layer to consider. You'll notice it says that Abel brought the firstborn of his flock. But it doesn't say Cain brought the first fruits of his field. It says Abel also brought the fat for his offering, but it doesn't say Cain also brought the grain for his offering. This speaks to motive and heart position. Abel truly loved God and wanted to offer his best. Cain offered only out of obligation and only the bare minimum.

When we sacrifice to God and for God, that's a form of worship. Whether it's our tithes, our skills, our time, or our obedience. But it has to be born from our love of God with the intent of bringing Him honor. The essence of the word worship, is not so much a physical act but the motive behind the act, which is to be completely surrendered and/or surrounded by God, to literally be swimming in the presence of God where you are totally protected by His power and bowing to His authority. Now let's look at worship in the N.T.

**John 4:17-26** *The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." 19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. Did you catch that?*

Christ basically told the woman at the well that there's a time coming when it won't matter WHERE you worship God. Right here, with this woman, He's explaining the heart of worship. Continuing on...

*22 You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 **God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.**" 25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." 26 Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."*

The word here in these verses is the Greek word **PROS-KOO-NAYO**

#### **Strong's Definitions**

**προσκυνέω proskynéō**, pros-koo-neh'-o; from [G4314](#) and a probable derivative of [G2965](#) (meaning to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand); to fawn or crouch to, i.e. (literally or figuratively) prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore):—worship.

What's really interesting in this definition is the concept of a dog kissing its master's hand.

It's not implying that we are like dogs to God, but that He is our master. A master that loves and provides for us. And our

worship is how we show Him our adoration. And just like the O.T. definition, the power of that worship comes from its motivation. Is our worship born out of love or obligation? Are we engaged spiritually with the Truth of God's Word, or are we just going through the motions? Do we offer God our best or just sacrifice out of obligation.

Worship isn't an act, or even an action. It's a lifestyle. God gave all of us abilities and talents. When we use those for Him, singing, playing an instrument, preaching, teaching, helping, serving, cooking, cleaning whatever it is we're good at, we're good at it because God gave it and when we use those talents and abilities to glorify His name we are literally swimming in His presence and kissing the Master's hand. AMEN.