

Who Do We Worship?

Introduction

When the people of Israel were about to enter into the land that God had set aside for them after escaping Egypt (Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-17; Exodus 6:8), God warned them to not worship the gods or follow the religious customs of the nations that Israel was to displace (Exodus 34:11-17). According to the laws and ordinances that God had given to His people through Moses (the Law of Moses), they were to devote themselves to the living Almighty God, who was the Creator and God of their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 3:13-16; 20:1-7). Unfortunately, Israel as a whole did not do this—they disobeyed God and, throughout their history, worshiped the gods of His enemies (Isaiah 65:1-7; Ezekiel 2:1-7; Acts 7:35-53).

Who or what does the nonbelieving world worship today? As from the beginning they worship everything under the sun, as well as the sun and the universe. Everything, that is, except the Almighty God. Although everyone is seeking something, such as the meaning of life, inner peace, fulfillment, purpose, a higher power, etc., in truth *no one* is seeking for God through whom we can realize all these desires and more. Through their endeavors they often find or create a god of their imagination—someone or something on which they bestow attributes similar to the Almighty God—who or which seemingly suits their needs and desires.

As it is written, “There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one.” (Romans 3:10-12; see also Psalm 14:1-3)¹

Why is it that no one seeks for the one true, living Almighty God? Because mankind chose to worship the creation rather than the Creator, God gave them over to their sin (Romans 1:18-32). Every one of us inherited that sinful condition. We are by nature separated from God and His righteousness—we are sinners and enemies of God (Romans 3:23; 5:6-11). In fact, God considers us to be dead in sin and deserving of His judgment—we are children of disobedience (Satan) and without hope (Ephesians 2:1-3, 11-12; John 8:41-47).

Professing to be wise, they [*mankind*] became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image [*idol*] in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie [*changed the truth of God into a lie*], and worshiped and served the creature [*created things*] rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (Romans 1:22-25)

Because of Adam’s sin, when he disobeyed a direct command of God (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6-7), we were condemned to spiritual death (Romans 5:12-14, 18-19). Left to ourselves, we are in a hopeless position because whatever we may seek or do in life will not bring us to God. All we have to look

¹ All references are quoted from the *New American Standard Bible (NASB Side-Column Reference Edition, Copyright © 1996 by The Lockman Foundation)*. Nonbolded words in brackets are either equivalent words from the *King James Version (KJV)* or, if in italics, were added by me for clarification.

forward to, whether we realize it or not, is spiritual death—eternity in hell (Romans 6:20-23; II Thessalonians 1:6-10; Revelation 20:11-15).

Thankfully, God provided a remedy for our hopeless condition. He sent His Son Jesus to die for our sins (Romans 3:21-26; 5:10-11). Through the power of God that resurrected Jesus from the dead, God bestows eternal life to everyone who believes in that blessed work that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished at the cross (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 1:15-23). We do not need to do anything—in fact, we are not to do anything—other than to humbly believe the gospel (good news) of salvation.

What is the gospel of salvation? The gospel that we are to believe is that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised from the dead. God requires *nothing* else—not repentance, water baptism,² church membership, or any other religious work. Do you believe that Christ died for your sins?

Now I [Paul] make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. (I Corinthians 15:1-4)

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

When we believe this glorious gospel (truly believe it from the heart—Romans 10:8-10), we are acknowledging our sinfulness and our need for salvation. At the very moment of belief, we become children of God (Romans 8:14-17). Because we did not do anything to earn our salvation—it is a gift of God (Romans 4:4-5; 6:23)—we cannot lose our salvation. We are sealed by God’s Holy Spirit; that is, we permanently belong to God, and nothing can separate us from His love (Romans 8:38-39).

In Him [Christ], you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

From the very beginning, actually from a time *before* God created the earth, God planned to provide salvation from sin through Christ (Ephesians 3:1-12; Romans 16:25-27; I Corinthians 2:6-8; Colossians 1:25-27). Among the many blessings of God we receive when we believe the blessed work at the cross accomplished by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we automatically become members of the body of Christ, which the Bible refers to as *the church* (I Corinthians 12:12-13, 27; Ephesians 1:22-23).³ Through the working of God, we are in Christ and He is in us (Ephesians 2:4-6; Romans 8:1, 9-11; Colossians 1:27). This study is directed to members of the body of Christ, who I will also refer to as *believers, brethren, and children of God*.

² See my study **Should We Be Baptized?** that explains why God does not require water baptism in any form or manner for any reason now and also describes the *one baptism* spoken of by Apostle Paul that does apply to every believer today (Ephesians 4:4-6).

³ See my study **Salvation and Its Blessings** that identifies many of the blessings we receive as a gift of God the moment we believe the gospel of salvation.

Worship by Believers

Who are we to worship? One might think it is obvious. However, it apparently is not obvious to many brethren. For example, think about the following expressions or responses common among the brethren in words and songs:

- Do we express our praise by saying “Praise God” *or* “Praise Jesus”?
- Do we express our thankfulness by saying “Thank you, God” *or* “Thank you, Jesus”?
- Do we attribute something that we observe or understand as according to the will of God *or* according to the will of Jesus?
- Do we pray to God the Father *or* to Jesus *or* to both?
- Do we thank or glorify the Holy Spirit for a work we attribute to Him?

There seems to be uncertainty, or at least inconsistency, among brethren. Are we to focus our worship on God the Father, Jesus the Son of God, or both? Are we to worship God the Father, the Son, *and* the Holy Spirit? These appear to be important questions, but does it matter as long as we are worshipping *God*? What does Scripture say?

The Godhead

Scripture speaks of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The three aspects or persons of God form a whole, which is often referred to by man as the *triune God* or the *Trinity* (accurate descriptions even though the words are not in the Bible). In Scripture, the triune nature of God is called the Godhead or the divine nature (Deity) of God, depending on the Bible version.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. (II Corinthians 13:14)

For in Him [*Christ*] all the fullness of Deity [the Godhead] dwells in bodily form. (Colossians 2:9)

For since the creation of the world His [*God’s*] invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature [Godhead], have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they [*mankind*] are without excuse. (Romans 1:20)

(See also Romans 8:14-17; Ephesians 4:4-6; I Peter 1:2)

For some, this three-part character of our one God is easier to understand by examples in nature as part of God’s creation. All chemical elements and compounds have three phases: solid, liquid, and gas. The occurrence of each phase is dependent on temperature, pressure, or a combination of both. For example, a molecule of two hydrogen atoms bonded with one oxygen atom is commonly known to exist in the form of ice (solid), as water (liquid), and as water vapor (gas). Regardless of its form (phase), it is still water. Even gold has three phases, with the gas phase occurring when it *perishes* (I Peter 1:7) at a specific (very high) temperature. Before examining Scripture to see who we are to worship, let us *briefly* look at how the three persons of God are described.

God the Father

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:33-36)

God the Father is referenced by many names and titles in Scripture. Although this list probably is not complete, He is called *God* (Genesis 1:1), *God Almighty* (Genesis 28:3; 43:14), *Lord Almighty* (II Corinthians 6:18), *Almighty* (Genesis 49:25), *Creator* (Romans 1:25), *Jehovah* (Exodus 6:3—KJV), *Father* (Matthew 6:9; I Corinthians 8:6), *Lord* (Exodus 3:2-4; Matthew 1:20; 11:25), *Lord God* (Genesis 2:4), *Lord Most High* (Psalm 47:2), *God of gods and Lord of lords* (Deuteronomy 10:17), *King* (Psalm 145:1; I Timothy 1:17), *King of kings and Lord of lords* (I Timothy 6:15), *King of heaven* (Daniel 4:37), *King above all gods* (Psalm 95:3), *Sovereign* or *Potentate* (I Timothy 6:15), *Majesty* (Hebrews 1:3), *Savior* (Titus 3:4-5), and *Judge* (Hebrews 12:23).

God also calls Himself “the Almighty God” or “Almighty God” (Genesis 17:1; 35:11), “I AM” (Exodus 3:14), “the Lord” (Exodus 20:2), and “Jealous” (Exodus 34:14). He dwells in the heavens in unapproachable light and has not been seen, and cannot be seen, by any man (I Timothy 1:17; 6:13-16; Psalm 104:1-2). Many brethren also believe that God refers to Himself as the “Alpha and the Omega” (from Revelation 1:8), but we will investigate this further when discussing God the Son.

All these names may not be as straightforward as they seem. For example, the name *Jehovah* appears in the KJV four times (Exodus 6:3; Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 12:2; 26:4). The Hebrew word (*Yehovah* or *Yahveh*) is translated as *Lord* in all other uses in the KJV (more than 6,500 times). It is translated as *Lord* in most occurrences in the NASB, although it is sometimes translated as *God* (as it is in Isaiah 12:2 and 26:4); but never as *Jehovah*, however. It is not clear to me that all four verses in the KJV are referring to God the Father, or that one or more are referring to God the Son in veiled words. It is further possible that *Jehovah* refers to both God the Father and God the Son; *perhaps*, the name *Jehovah* was drawn from tradition and is not the best English translation of the Hebrew word.

Along this same line of thought, God said to Moses that His name is “I AM” in Exodus 3:14. Jesus also referred to Himself as “I am” in John 8:58. The question that comes to my mind is, “Who was talking to Moses?” Was it God the Father or God the Son? Or was it God the Father through God the Son? Could it have been the angel of the Lord speaking in his own voice (Acts 7:38)? I am not certain about the answer to the initial question, but I strongly suspect that it was God the Son who was personally communicating with Moses through the angel of the Lord because God the Father dwells in a place of unapproachable light and no one has heard His voice (I Timothy 6:13-16; John 5:37). This perspective is provided only as food for thought because Scripture is not definitive on this subject and I believe the answer does not alter how we are to worship God.⁴

One may wonder why I even consider the possibility that *Jehovah* could be referring to the Son of God or that it may have been Christ who was talking to Moses. Christ was prophesied throughout the Old Testament, including His death, burial, and resurrection, as He Himself revealed to His disciples

⁴ See my study **Christ in the Law of Moses** that goes into greater depth on how God communicated with His people and how He does so today.

(Luke 24:25-27, 44-47). However, He was also active during the Old Testament times as revealed to us through Apostle Paul. I will address this in the next section.

When we read verses about the King and Savior, we need to be careful to examine the context. Although we might assume that those designations always refer to Jesus Christ, God the Father is also referenced as *King* and as *Savior*. God has always been, and always will be, King over everything (I Timothy 1:17; 6:13-16) and the Savior of all His children (Luke 1:46-47; I Timothy 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 3:4-7; Jude 1:25). It is God the Father who chose us and drew us to Himself for salvation (John 6:37, 44; Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:3-6; II Thessalonians 2:13-14).⁵

God the Son

In the beginning was the Word [*Christ*], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. (John 1:1-4)

He [*Christ*] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him [*Christ*], and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. (Colossians 1:15-20)

Brethren, the triune nature of God is very complex, and I believe it is beyond our ability to fully comprehend it. For example, the above passages reveal to us that not only was the Son of God in the beginning with God, but He was God. Furthermore, He is the image of the invisible God and the firstborn of all creation. In a prophecy about His birth, a name of Jesus would be *Immanuel*, meaning “God with us” (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23). Our Lord Jesus Christ was indeed God in the flesh when He walked on this earth (John 1:14; Philippians 2:5-11). However, in the unfathomable ways of God, the Son of God has had, and will have, a different role in the Godhead than God the Father.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is also referred to by many names and titles in Scripture and, as for the names of God the Father, we must be careful to examine the context to determine whether it is God the Father or God the Son who is being referenced. In the New Testament He is referred to as *God* (John 1:1-2; Titus 2:13), *Jesus* (Matthew 3:13-17), *Christ* (Romans 5:6-8), *Jesus Christ* (and *Christ Jesus*—Romans 1:8; 3:24), *Lord* (Luke 2:11; I Corinthians 1:9), *Lord Jesus Christ* (Romans 5:1), *Beloved* (Ephesians 1:6), *Savior* (Titus 1:4; 3:6), *Messiah* (John 1:41; 4:25), *Immanuel* or *Emmanuel* (Matthew 1:23), *Son of God* (Matthew 14:33; Romans 1:4; II Corinthians 1:19), *Son of Man* (Matthew 12:40), *Son of David* (Matthew 15:22), *King* (Matthew 21:5), *King of the Jews* (Matthew 2:2), *King of Israel* (John 1:49), *King of kings and Lord of lords* (Revelation 17:14; 19:16), *Prince of life* (Acts 3:15), *Apostle and High Priest* (Hebrews 3:1), *Word* (John 1:1), *Word of God* (Revelation 19:13), *Lamb* (Revelation 17:14; 21:14), *Lamb of God* (John 1:29), *Shepherd* (Hebrews 13:20), *Rock* (I Corinthians 10:4), *Faithful and True* (Revelation 19:11), *Judge*

⁵ See my study **Salvation and the Sovereignty of God** for more on this subject.

(II Timothy 4:8), *the Alpha and the Omega* (Revelation 1:8; 22:13), *Amen* (Revelation 3:14), and perhaps other names. He is also addressed by several names in the Old Testament as will be shown below.

I would like to expand on a couple of these names. Besides being called *Christ*, He is also described as *the Christ* (Matthew 16:16, 20; 26:63; John 1:41; I John 2:22), referring to His position as the prophesied Messiah of Israel. Paul only spoke of Jesus as *the Christ* when trying to prove that fact from the prophetic Scriptures to unbelieving Jews (Acts 9:22; 17:3; 18:5, 28; 26:23). Except in Romans 9:1-5 where he referred to *the Christ* (NASB) according to the flesh for the sake of his Jewish kinsmen, Paul did not refer to Him as *the Christ* in his letters to members of the body of Christ (Romans through Philemon) because He is not the prophesied Messiah for us.⁶ Rather, He is our personal Savior and head of the church, which is His body (Ephesians 1:22-23).

Now some thoughts to consider regarding the name *Messiah*. Because John 1:41 says *the Messiah* translates to *the Christ*, some Bible versions erroneously replace many or most references to *Christ* with *Christ the Messiah* (or just *Messiah*), or *Savior* with *Messiah*. However, as noted above, there is a different meaning between the anointed Redeemer or Savior (*Messiah*) of Israel and the Savior from our sins. Also, the Greek word for Messiah (*Messias*) occurs only twice in the New Testament (John 1:41; 4:25), whereas the Greek word for Savior (*soteer*) is always correctly translated as *Savior* in the KJV and NASB (occurs 24 times).

By dying for our sins and being raised from the dead by God the Father (Ephesians 1:18-21), Christ became our intermediary between us and God (I Timothy 2:5-6; Romans 8:34) and became our Savior (II Timothy 1:8-10; Titus 3:6). He is currently seated at the right hand of God (Romans 8:34; Colossians 3:1), will call up the members of His body at *the rapture* (I Thessalonians 4:13-17; I Corinthians 15:51-52), and later will return to earth as the King of the Jews and reign as the King of kings and Lord of lords. At the close of His millennial kingdom, Christ will judge all the nonbelievers of all time at the great white throne and will turn His kingdom over to God the Father for eternity (Revelation 20:11-15; I Corinthians 15:23-28).⁷

Although not specifically called the Son of God in the Old Testament, He was active throughout that time. He was co-creator with God the Father (Genesis 1:26; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17) and accompanied Israel as it fled Egypt and sojourned in the wilderness (I Corinthians 10:1-5; Exodus 13:21-22). As suggested earlier, He *may* have been the form of God (or His direct representative) who walked in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:8) and who personally talked to specific men beginning with Adam (Genesis 2:16-17).

The Son of God was also prophesied as *Messiah the Prince* (Daniel 9:25-26), the Lord's *Anointed* (Psalm 2:2), *Savior* (as a deliverer or redeemer of Israel—Isaiah 19:20; 59:20), *Immanuel* (Isaiah 7:14), righteous *Branch* (Jeremiah 33:15), *David* (rather, the one who would sit on the throne of David—Ezekiel 37:24; see also Isaiah 9:7), and *King* (Psalm 2:6). Furthermore, He would be born, become the head of Israel's government, and be called *Wonderful Counselor* (or *Wonderful* and *Counselor*—KJV), *Mighty God*, *Eternal* (*Everlasting*—KJV) *Father*, and *Prince of Peace* (Isaiah 9:6). Jesus was not called the names

⁶ See my study **Is Christ Our Messiah?** that supports this statement and the following paragraphs.

⁷ See my study **The Mystery (God's Secret Plan)** for more on these events and the associated Scripture references.

prophesied in Isaiah 9:6 during His time on earth; however, they will apply to Him when He rules from new Jerusalem during the 1,000-year messianic kingdom and perhaps after that (Isaiah 9:7).

As with the names of God the Father, there are a couple of names of God the Son that demonstrate our limitations in understanding the depth and almighty nature of God. In Isaiah 9:6 we see that Jesus Christ will be called *Mighty God* and *Eternal Father*. I admit my lack of understanding on these names for Him as they also apply to God the Father, but I refer to John 1:1 and other passages regarding the unity of the Godhead and believe it by faith. He most definitely will be God the Father's representative on earth as He rules over the His kingdom and the earth. I humbly conclude that it is not up to us to try to decipher all the complexities of our triune God.

“My Father, who has given them [His sheep] to Me [Jesus], is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the [my] Father are one.” (John 10:29-30)

Now let us look at the name, or title, *the Alpha and the Omega* (simply *Alpha and Omega* in the KJV) that is recorded for us in Revelation 1:8. Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and omega is the last letter. Therefore, the name can be translated to mean *the first and the last, or the beginning and the ending*. I agree with the explanation that this refers to the One so named as being eternal. The quote in Revelation 1:8 is often attributed to God the Father. But is it?

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, [the beginning and the ending,]” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” (Revelation 1:8)

Yes, it appears obvious that this verse was spoken by God the Father, because it is attributed to the Lord God who calls Himself *the Almighty*. However, let us examine this more closely, keeping in mind the triune nature of the Godhead and the Deity of Christ.

It is absolutely true that God is eternal (Genesis 21:33; Psalm 41:13; 90:1-2).⁸ Many believers (perhaps most) think that the quotes in Revelation 1:8 are the words of God the Father describing Himself, perhaps as a parenthetical statement to close John's opening statement to the prophetic seven churches in Asia. However, the opening verse of the book of Revelation indicates that it was Christ who was revealing the word of God to John through the angel of God. I believe that subsequent passages in Revelation confirm that it was Christ who was speaking about Himself. He said that He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end, and the Alpha and Omega (Revelation 1:17-18; 2:8; 21:6; 22:13). Christ was in the beginning with God the Father and is God (John 1:1-3).

Furthermore, when we think of God the Father, we think of Him as the Almighty God, which He is (I Chronicles 29:10-13; Psalm 91:1; II Corinthians 6:14-18; I Timothy 6:13-16; Revelation 11:15-17). However, the Son of God is also the Almighty God as just noted. This verse also says that the one who is speaking—Christ—is the Lord God, as God is often described in the Old Testament (e.g., Genesis 2:4-9; 15:2; Exodus 23:17). I believe that it was Christ who was speaking through the angel of God to Moses, as He later did with John, as the Lord God (John 8:26-29; 12:49-50; Acts 7:38).⁹

⁸ Isaiah 41:1-4 and Isaiah 44:6-8 appear to be talking about God the Father as the first and the last but may be prophecies about Christ.

⁹ See my study **Christ in the Law of Moses** that examines Christ as being the Lord God who spoke to people.

There is another very important aspect of Jesus Christ that we must understand. As a man (God in the flesh—John 1:1-5, 14), Jesus ministered to His people Israel (specifically those of Judea—Matthew 10:5-6; 15:24) and spoke of their promised kingdom (Matthew 4:17, 23). Sometime after His ascension into heaven, Jesus Christ revealed Himself to Saul, who would later be known as Paul the apostle of the Gentiles (Acts 9:1-16; Romans 11:13). The message that our Lord revealed to Paul, who was chosen by God and our Lord Jesus Christ to be our apostle (Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1), was different than that which He preached while on earth and commanded His disciples to preach.¹⁰ Through Paul, we learn that although we know about Christ and His ministry as a man, we should now know and recognize Him as our resurrected, ascended, and glorified Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:5-11).

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live [believers] might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. (II Corinthians 5:14-16)

Brethren, this is a very important point regarding how we view our Lord Jesus Christ. We are not to think of our Lord Jesus Christ as a man who walks with us and talks to us (as He did with His disciples)—He is seated in glory at the right hand of God in the heavens (Colossians 3:1-3; Ephesians 1:18-23). Considering this fact, is it proper for us to focus our worship on Jesus, such as praising Jesus, praying to Jesus, or claiming that Jesus told me to do this or that, etc.? I hope to provide the answer to this question from Scripture.

God the Holy Spirit

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you [brethren] have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit Himself testifies with our [human] spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed [because] we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. (Romans 8:14-17)

In Him [Christ], you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge [earnest] of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own [purchased] possession, to the praise of His [God’s] glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

The third person of our triune God is the Holy Spirit (also called the *Holy Ghost* in the KJV). He is referred to as the *Spirit* (Genesis 6:3; Mark 1:10; Romans 8:5), *Holy Spirit* (Ephesians 1:13), *Spirit of God* (Genesis 1:2; Matthew 3:16; Romans 8:9), *Spirit of the Lord* (Isaiah 11:2; Luke 4:18; Acts 8:39), *Spirit of Christ* or *Spirit of Jesus Christ* (Romans 8:9; Philippians 1:19), *Spirit of His Son* (Galatians 4:6), *Spirit of truth* (John 16:13-15), *Helper* or *Comforter* (John 14:16, 26), and perhaps more names.

The Holy Spirit is called the *Spirit*, *Spirit of God*, and *Spirit of the Lord* throughout the Old Testament. As we learn in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of both God the Father and God the Son. The Holy Spirit has many roles including conveying the word of God to individuals in Old Testament

¹⁰ See my study **The Two Messages of Our Lord Jesus Christ**.

times (I Samuel 19:20; II Samuel 23:1-2; Ezekiel 3:22-27), enabling us to believe the truth of God (I Corinthians 2:12-13), sanctifying us and sealing our salvation in Christ (II Thessalonians 2:13; Ephesians 1:13-14), spiritually baptizing us into the body of Christ at the moment we believe the gospel of salvation (I Corinthians 12:12-13), and interpreting our prayers according to the will of God (Romans 8:26-27). The Holy Spirit dwells in all believers and gives us life through Christ (Romans 8:9-17). We are exhorted to live in a manner that demonstrates the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-26), and to avoid doing things that grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:25-32).

Additionally, for a time, the Holy Spirit enabled the disciples (and, later, Apostle Paul) to perform miraculous gifts such as speaking in tongues, prophesying, healing, and raising the dead (Mark 16:15-18; Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4, 43; 9:36-41; 19:11-13; 20:7-12). These gifts were a sign of God to prove to the people of Israel that the disciples and apostles were working in the name of God and of Christ (John 4:48; I Corinthians 1:22; II Corinthians 12:12). We know that the Corinthian believers also had some of the sign gifts for a while (I Corinthians 12:1-11), likely because there was a substantial number of Jews living in Corinth (Acts 18:1-8).

However, *all* the sign gifts passed away before the completion of Paul's ministry (I Corinthians 13:8-13) because Israel was temporarily, and to this day, set aside (blinded) by God due to its unbelief (Romans 11:25-32; Acts 13:44-47; 18:5-6; 28:23-29; Romans 10:1-3; II Corinthians 3:14-15). For example, toward the end of his ministry, Paul could no longer heal the sick (I Timothy 5:23; II Timothy 4:20), and he diminished the significance or usefulness of speaking in tongues well before that (I Corinthians 14:13-19).

In the future (sometime after the rapture), the disciples of Christ will again have the power of the Holy Spirit to perform the miraculous sign gifts, and God will put the Holy Spirit in the believing remnant of Israel to enable them to perfectly keep God's law and ordinances (Ezekiel 36:22-28; Jeremiah 31:31-34).¹¹ Brethren, despite what many believers, indeed entire denominations, believe and claim to be true, the Holy Spirit is not performing sign gifts through the children of God today.

Words Describing Our Worship

The people of God during the Old Testament times were not aware of God the Son—they only knew of God and the Spirit of God. Therefore, their focus of worship was to be on God (Exodus 20:1-7). Because the question of this study is about who we are to worship today, we will examine the New Testament, in which we become fully aware of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

To develop this study, the following words (and their forms) related to worship were investigated: *worship, praise, glory, bless, thank, and pray*. Most of these words are derived from multiple Greek words. Reference sources for this study consist of my personal copies of the following books:

- NASB and KJV Bible;
- *Comparative Study Bible: New International Version, Amplified Version, King James Version, and Updated New American Standard Bible* (Revised edition, Copyright © 1999 by Zondervan);
- *Abingdon's Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (James Strong, Abingdon Press, 1983);

¹¹ See my study **The Mystery (God's Secret Plan)** that discusses the rapture and subsequent events.

- *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries* (Robert L. Thomas, General Editor, Copyright © 1981 by The Lockman Foundation, Holman Bible Publishers); and
- *The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament* (George V. Wigram, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2002).

Greek words identified in this study are from *The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament*, and their associated definitions are abbreviated from *Abingdon's Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. The reference numbers associated with each Greek word (enclosed in parentheses) correspond to both of these sources as well as the NASB concordance.

Representative verses and passages for each Greek word are provided in the next sections and are quoted from the NASB (see Footnote 1 on Page 1). The English translations of the Greek words are in bold italics. My intention is to show the different ways the words are used because it has been my experience that we rarely can rely on one verse to understand a specific doctrinal point. By investigating how a Greek word is translated, which may be with more than one English word, it shows the importance of reading and understanding the context in which the word is used.

I have never been a student of the ancient Greek language, so I am depending on the Bible translators of the KJV and NASB to have rendered the correct meaning of the Greek words into English. Although I have found a few discrepancies in both versions that I perceive as errors because of the context of a verse or passage, I have learned the meaning of the Greek words by how they were translated. Consequently, I am thankful to God for how He has used the translators to serve His purpose whether they realized it or not. It is remarkable to me how very close the KJV and NASB translations are, when accounting for the differences between old and modern English and considering they are nearly 400 years apart. To me, this demonstrates how God has preserved His word through the millennia (Psalm 12:6-7; 119:89; Isaiah 40:8; II Timothy 3:16-17).

Quite a few verses have one or more uses of the pronouns *He* and *Him* referring to a member of the Godhead (these pronouns are capitalized in the NASB but not in the KJV). To help clarify who is being referred to when it is not necessarily obvious, I have added the specific person of the Godhead in nonbolded italic font within brackets. I have diligently tried to make the correct insertion based on the context of the verse or passage but admit that every instance may not be correct and ask you to check it out for yourself.

When I insert the name "God," I am referring to God the Father. You will see that I insert both "Jesus" and "Christ" to clarify the pronouns *I*, *He*, and *Him* that are referring to the Son of God. My choice is not random but, hopefully, consistent as I will try to explain. Paul rarely referred to our Lord simply by the name of *Jesus*, and when he did so it was usually referencing what He did as a man such as fulfilling prophecy during His ministry to the Jews (His people) and by dying for us and being raised up (Romans 8:11; I Thessalonians 1:10; 4:14). However, he overwhelmingly referred to Him as *Lord*, *Jesus Christ*, *Christ Jesus*, *Lord Jesus*, and *Lord Jesus Christ* in his letters to members of the body of Christ (us), in recognition of all that He accomplished at the cross and in accordance with His position in heaven. We, too, should recognize the Son of God as our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1-7; II Corinthians 5:16-21).

Therefore, I inserted *Jesus* in brackets when the verse or passage is a quote by or is about our Lord when He was in the form of man, that is, from His birth until His ascension into heaven after His

resurrection. I inserted *Christ* when the verse or passage is about what He accomplished for us at the cross and to recognize His current glorified position at the right hand of God (Ephesians 1:15-23; Philippians 2:5-11).

As you read the many verses and passages that are presented, as well as the referenced verses that are included within parentheses, not only consider who is being worshiped and in what manner, but who Jesus Himself worshiped. By doing so, I hope you will find the answer to the question, “Who do we worship?”

The Object of Our Worship

Who was Worshiped?

The following Greek words are translated as various forms of the word *worship* and similar words. The verses and passages demonstrate that *worship* has different meanings, depending on the context. For example, they describe our reverence to God (or gods) as someone or something we owe our existence to, as well as showing great respect, honor, or tribute—paying homage—to someone because of their title or position.

You will see that in Revelation 7:13-17 and 11:15-17, under the first two Greek words described below, that I am uncertain who the pronouns *He* and *Him* are referring to. I have inserted the name *Christ?* in these instances because I think they refer to Him. These passages pertain to the throne and who will be served. Because of the extensive symbolism in the book of Revelation, I sometimes find it difficult to discern between the throne of God in heaven and the throne from which Christ will be ruling over new Jerusalem and the nations during His millennial kingdom reign (Matthew 25:31-33).

In accordance with prophecy, Christ will reign forever (Ezekiel 37:24-28; Luke 1:32-33). However, in the context of the book of Revelation as I understand it, Christ will be sitting on the throne of God and representing God (Revelation 7:13-17; 22:1-5). Therefore, God will be reigning forever, also (Revelation 11:17; 21:1-7; 21:22-27). Consequently, the pronoun *He* in Revelation 11:15 might be referring to Christ or to God. Regardless, the 24 elders mentioned in Revelation 11:15-17 worshiped God (see also Revelation 4:1-11 and 19:4-5).

In Revelation 7:13-17 and 22:1-5, it appears to me that service will be rendered to Christ the Lamb of God who will be physically sitting on the throne of God in new Jerusalem, but that it is still God the Father who will be worshiped by His people during the millennial kingdom (see Revelation 7:9-12; 19:4-6). God the Father resides in unapproachable light, and no one has seen or can see Him (I Timothy 6:13-16). Therefore, I believe that only Christ will be present on the throne and not God the Father. I realize, however, that my understanding regarding the throne in the future kingdom is unclear. My uncertainty, however, does not affect my understanding regarding who I am to worship.

proskuneo (4352): to worship; to bow down in reverence (to pay homage)

This Greek word describes worship in the perspective of paying homage to someone. When translated as *worship*, it may be a holdover of the old English manner of greeting or honoring a king or other person of authority or high standing (royalty) with the salutation, “your worship.” In such cases, the person was not being worshiped as a god or as their God. However, the British monarch was

erroneously revered as the God-ordained representative or spokesperson of God (by *divine right*), historically beginning in the 1500s, and likely was worshiped by some constituents.

The following verses describe people who were paying homage, or rendering service, to Satan, Jesus, or God the Father. For example, the Gentile Magi did not go to Bethlehem to worship God or the Son of God, but to pay homage to the King of the Jews. They were a type (prophetic representative) of the kings of the nations who will go to new Jerusalem to give their due respect to Christ—the King of kings—during the millennium (Revelation 21:24; Psalm 72:8-11). Those future kings will not be going to worship Him as the Son of God or to worship God.

Even when the disciples *worshiped* Jesus, I believe they were paying homage to Him for who He was (the Son of God) and for the miracles He performed. After seeing their Lord ascend into heaven, the disciples worshiped Him and later were in the temple *praising God*.

Therefore, this Greek word as it stands alone does not give us a definitive answer as to which member or members of the Godhead we are to worship as God; the context of its use must be carefully considered. When all these passages are evaluated together, however, I believe that our worship is to be directed toward God the Father as demonstrated by Matthew 4:10, John 4:20-24, and Revelation 7:9-12, 11:15-17, 19:4-5, and 22:8-9.

“Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we [*the Magi*] saw His star in the east and have come *to worship Him*.” (Matthew 2:2; see also Matthew 2:11)

Then Jesus said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘You *shall worship* the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’” (Matthew 4:10)

And a leper came to Him [*Jesus*] and *bowed down before* [worshipped] Him, and said, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” (Matthew 8:2; see also Matthew 9:18)

Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him [*Peter*], and said to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” When they got into the boat, the wind stopped. And those who were in the boat *worshiped* Him, saying, “You are certainly God’s Son!” (Matthew 14:31-33)

But she [*a Canaanite woman*] came and began to *bow down before* [worshipped] Him [*Jesus*], saying, “Lord, help me!” (Matthew 15:25)

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, *bowing down* [worshipping] and making a request of Him. (Matthew 20:20)

And they [*Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph*] left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples. And behold, Jesus met them [*Mary and Mary*] and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and *worshiped* Him. (Matthew 28:8-9)

But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. When they saw Him, they *worshiped* Him; but some were doubtful. (Matthew 28:16-17)

While He [*Jesus*] was blessing them, He parted from them [*the disciples*] and was carried up into heaven. And they, after *worshipping* Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising God. (Luke 24:51-53)

“Our [Samaritan] fathers *worshiped* in this mountain, and you people [the Jews of Judea] say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to *worship*.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you *worship* the Father. You *worship* what you do not know; we *worship* what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers *will worship* the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His *worshippers*. God is spirit, and those who *worship* Him must *worship* in spirit and truth.” (John 4:20-24)

Jesus heard that they [the Pharisees] had put him [the healed blind man] out [of the synagogue], and finding him, He said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?” Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you.” And he said, “Lord, I believe.” And he *worshiped* Him. (John 9:35-38)

After these things I [John] looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb [Christ], clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying “Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and *worshiped* God, saying, “Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” (Revelation 7:9-12; see also Revelation 5:11-14)

Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord [God] and of His Christ; and He [Christ?] will reign forever and ever.” And the twenty-four elders, who sit on the thrones before God, fell on their faces and *worshiped* God, saying, “We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign.” (Revelation 11:15-17)

And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and *worshiped* God who sits on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!” And a voice came from the throne, saying, “Give praise to our God, all you His [God’s] bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great.” (Revelation 19:4-5; see also Revelation 14:6-7)

I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to *worship* at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. But he said to me, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. *Worship* God.” (Revelation 22:8-9; see also Revelation 19:9-10)

***latrūo* (3000): to minister; render religious homage; serve, do the service, worship**

As observed in the following verses and passages, this Greek word refers to both worship and service, which sometimes describe two different actions. In nearly all uses, the Greek word refers to the service to, or worship of, God the Father. As mentioned earlier, however, the object of service is not always definitive to me in the book of Revelation.

It is true that believers are considered to be bondservants of both our Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father (Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:10; II Timothy 2:24; Titus 1:1; James 1:1)—we were bought by God

through the shed blood of Christ (I Corinthians 6:19-20; 7:23; Ephesians 1:7; Romans 3:21-26). Therefore, we are to serve both Christ and God the Father. However, I believe that the following verses, when considered together and with the other verses in this study, demonstrate that our worship is to be directed toward God the Father.

Then Jesus said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’” (Matthew 4:10)

“The oath which He [*the Lord God of Israel—Luke 1:68*] swore to Abraham our father, to grant us [*Israel*] that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him [*God*] without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.” (Luke 1:73-75)

“But God spoke to this effect, that his [*Abraham’s*] descendants would be aliens in a foreign land, and that they would be enslaved and mistreated for four hundred years. ‘And whatever nation to which they will be in bondage I Myself will judge,’ said God, ‘and after that they will come out and serve Me in this place [*Canaan*].’” (Acts 7:6-7)

“Yet now I [*Paul*] urge you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.’” (Acts 27:22-24)

First, I [*Paul*] thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you. (Romans 1:8-10)

For they [*mankind*] exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (Romans 1:25)

I [*Paul*] thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day. (II Timothy 1:3)

For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:13-14)

Then one of the elders answered, saying to me [*John*], “These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?” I said to him, “My lord, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb [*Christ*]. For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him [*Christ?*] day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.” (Revelation 7:13-17)

Then he [*the angel*] showed me [*John*] a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb [*Christ*], in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will *serve* Him [*Christ*]; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads [see *Revelation 14:1*]. (Revelation 22:1-4)

diakoneo (1247): to be an attendant; minister unto, serve

This Greek word is included to help understand the use of the word *serve* in Matthew 20:28 and John 12:26. Five other representative verses are included to provide a better understanding of the use of this Greek word. The word occurs 36 times in Scripture but is never translated as *worship* in either the KJV or the NASB; instead, it always refers to some type of service to an individual or others.

But Jesus called them [*the twelve disciples*] to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave [servant]; just as the Son of Man [*Jesus*] did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:25-28)

“If anyone serves Me [*Jesus*], he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.” (John 12:26)

Then the devil [*Satan*] left Him [*Jesus*]; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him. (Matthew 4:11)

When Jesus came into Peter’s home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on [ministered unto] Him. (Matthew 8:14-15)

Many women were there looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee while ministering to [caring for] Him. Among them was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. (Matthew 27:55-56)

So the twelve [apostles] summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.” (Acts 6:2)

But now, I [*Paul*] am going to Jerusalem serving [to minister unto] the saints [believers]. (Romans 15:25)

sebazomai (4573): to venerate; worship

The Greek word *sebazomai* occurs only once in Scripture, in the following verse. This verse explains that, from the beginning, man has chosen to worship the creation instead of God our Creator. It is our nature to worship anyone or anything other than God (Romans 1:20-23; 3:9-18; 8:5-8; I Corinthians 2:14).

For they [*mankind*] exchanged the truth of God for [changed the truth of God into] a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (Romans 1:25)

sebomai (4576): to revere or adore; worship

There is a form of worship expressed in Scripture that only occasionally *appears* to refer to true worship of God; that is, we do not know if the worshipers were already saved before they heard and believed the message preached by Paul (as in Acts 13:43, Acts 16:14, and Acts 18:7). However, there are many false believers, some of whom sincerely profess to know and worship God, who actually worship someone in a religious manner that they understand to be God in their own mind (as in Acts 13:50; see also Acts 13:44-51; 18:4-6). The scribes and Pharisees, like many of our Christian leaders today, were overtly religious and were self-righteously convinced that they worshiped and obeyed God; Jesus showed them that their faith was in vain (i.e., they were not saved) by demonstrating their hypocrisy (Matthew 23:1-36).

Now when the meeting of the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and of the *God-fearing* [religious] proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God. (Acts 13:43)

A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, *a worshiper of God*, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. (Acts 16:14)

Then he [*Paul*] left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, *a worshiper of God*, whose house was next to the synagogue. (Acts 18:7)

But the Jews incited the *devout* women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. (Acts 13:50)

“Not only is there danger that this trade of ours [*idol makers*] fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis [*Diana*] be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world *worship* will even be dethroned from her magnificence.” (Acts 19:27)

Who was Praised?

The following Greek words are translated as various forms of the word *praise*, as well as *Hosanna*, an exclamation of praise or adoration. In nearly all instances, when praise is directed toward a member of the Godhead, it is given to God the Father. In the case of *Hosanna*, however, praise is directed to Jesus as addressed below.

ainesis (133): a praising

This Greek word occurs only once in Scripture, and praise is directed to God the Father.

Through Him [*Christ*] then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice *of praise* to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His [*God's*] name. (Hebrews 13:15)

aineo (134): to praise, praising

Eight of the nine references with this Greek word refer to *praise* or *praising* God. The other reference (Romans 15:11) contains “praise the Lord,” which is included in a quote from Psalm 117:1 referring to the Lord God. One would presume that because it is from the Old Testament that *the Lord God* is God the Father. However, as alluded to earlier, *the Lord God* in the Old Testament might be a

veiled reference to God the Son in some instances. In the context of Romans 15:11, though, praise appears to be directed to God the Father (see Romans 15:6-9).

“This will be a sign for you [*shepherds*]: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host *praising* God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.” (Luke 2:12-14)

The shepherds went back, glorifying and *praising* God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them. (Luke 2:20)

As soon as He [*Jesus*] was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to *praise* God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, shouting: “Blessed is the King [*Jesus*] who comes in the Name of the Lord [*God*]; peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” (Luke 19:37-38)

While He [*Jesus*] was blessing them [*the disciples*], He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple *praising* God. (Luke 24:51-53)

For I [*Paul*] say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision [*the Jews*] on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers [*Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*], and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written [*in prophecy*], “Therefore I will give praise to [*confess*] You among the Gentiles, and I will sing to Your name,” Again he says, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people [*Israel*],” And again, “*Praise* the Lord all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise [*laud*] Him.” Again Isaiah says, “There shall come the root of Jesse [*Christ, through David the son of Jesse—Matthew 1:1, 6*], and He who arises to rule over the Gentiles, in Him shall the Gentiles hope [*trust*].” Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:8-13)

And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!” And a voice came from the throne, saying, “Give *praise* to our God, all you His [*God’s*] bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great.” (Revelation 19:4-5)

(See also Acts 2:47; 3:8-9)

ainos (136): praise

This Greek word appears only twice in Scripture. In Luke 18:42-43, praise was being given to God the Father. In Matthew 21:16, however, Jesus is apparently referring back to a psalm of David in Psalm 8:2. Although the context of the psalm is the Lord God, Jesus’ reference to it suggests that the psalm is prophetically about Himself, which David would not have understood as he was writing it by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. I am not certain of this perspective, but it is supported by the praise of “Hosanna to the Son of David” in Matthew 21:15.

And Jesus said to him [*a blind man*], “Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him, glorifying God; and when all the people saw it, they gave *praise* to God. (Luke 18:42-43)

But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He [*Jesus*] had done, and the children who were shouting in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they became indignant and said to Him, “Do You hear what these children are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies You [*the Lord*] have prepared praise for Yourself?’” (Matthew 21:15-16)

humneo (5214): sing a hymn of praise; and *humnos* (5215): a hymn

The Greek word *humneo* only appears four times in Scripture. Twice, in Matthew 26:30 and its equivalent passage in Mark 14:26, it is used simply to refer to singing a hymn. The other two instances describe singing hymns of praise to God (Acts 16:25; Hebrews 2:12). The related Greek word *humnos* occurs twice and also refers to singing hymns with thankfulness to God the Father (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. (Acts 16:25)

For both He [*Christ*] who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He [*Christ*] is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, “I [*Christ*] will proclaim Your [*God’s*] name to My brethren, in the midst of the congregation I [*Christ*] will sing Your praise.” And again, “I [*Christ*] will put My trust in Him [*God*].” And again, “Behold, I [*Christ*] and the children whom God has given Me.” (Hebrews 2:11-13)

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness [*grace*] in your hearts to God [*the Lord*]. (Colossians 3:16)

hosanna (5614): an exclamation of adoration

The Greek word *hosanna* is translated as “Hosanna” in Scripture six times, five of which were directed towards Jesus during the time when He entered Jerusalem (in three equivalent passages). The only other usage appears soon afterwards when Jesus was in the temple (Matthew 21:15). As noted earlier, the praise in this case was also directed to Jesus.

The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He [*Jesus*] who comes in the Name of the Lord [*God*]; Hosanna in the highest!” (Matthew 21:9; see also Mark 11:9-10; John 12:12-13)

But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He [*Jesus*] had done, and the children who were shouting in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they became indignant and said to Him, “Do You hear what these children are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies You [*the Lord*] have prepared praise for Yourself?’” (Matthew 21:15-16)

Should we praise our Lord Jesus Christ in the same manner as the crowd during Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem and the children in the temple? Brethren, Jesus did not physically come to us in this dispensation of grace (Ephesians 3:1-12) as the Son of David and the King of Israel; instead, He is the ascended and glorified Lord who is head of the body—His body—in which we are members (Ephesians

1:18-23; I Corinthians 12:12-13, 27). It would not be correct, therefore, for us to praise Him in such a way.

To Whom was Given Glory?

Regarding the Godhead, giving glory and honor is directed to God the Father as a form of worship and in recognition of His sovereignty. There are numerous verses about Christ being glorified by the working of God (e.g., John 11:3-4; 12:16, 23; 13:31-32; Acts 3:13; II Thessalonians 1:9-12; Hebrews 2:7-8; I Peter 1:20-21), and through His glorification believers are also glorified (Romans 8:16-17, 28-30). However, after searching the Greek words for *glory* and its related words *glorify*, *glorified*, *glorifies*, *glorifying*, and *glorious*, I could find only one example of people giving glory to our Lord Jesus Christ, and it appears that those people did not believe who Jesus was (see Luke 4:14-15 under the Greek word *doxazo* below).

doxa (1391): glory, dignity, honor, praise, worship

In many of the following verses, it is apparent that glory is being given to God the Father as a form of praise or worship. Although some verses are not quite as straightforward (e.g., Hebrews 13:20-21; I Peter 4:11; II Peter 3:17-18), I believe that they are all referring to God the Father as the object of praise. This position is based on similar phrases pertaining to God the Father in Romans 16:27, Galatians 1:3-5, Ephesians 3:20-21, Philippians 4:20, I Timothy 1:17, Jude 1:24-25, and Revelation 1:6, 4:11, and 14:6-7 provided below, as well as in Matthew 6:13, Romans 1:25 and 11:33-36, I Timothy 6:13-16, and I Peter 5:10-11.

And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.*”
(Luke 2:13-14)

So the sisters sent word to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he [*Lazarus*] whom You love is sick.” But when Jesus heard this, He said, “This sickness is not to end in death, but for the *glory* of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.” (John 11:3-4)

To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the *glory* forever. Amen. (Romans 16:27)

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the *glory* of God. (I Corinthians 10:31)

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom [*God*] be the *glory* forevermore. Amen. (Galatians 1:3-5)

Now to Him [*God*] who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him [*God*] be the *glory* in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

Now to our God and Father be the *glory* forever and ever. Amen. (Philippians 4:20)

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and *glory* forever and ever. Amen. (I Timothy 1:17)

Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep [kingdom believers of Israel—see Matthew 15:24; John 21:15-17] through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His [God's] will, working in us that which is pleasing in His [God's] sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom [God] be the *glory* forever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21)

Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom [God] belongs the *glory* [praise] and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (I Peter 4:11)

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him [God—see II Peter 3:3-13] be the *glory*, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (II Peter 3:17-18)

Now to Him [God] who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be *glory*, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25)

And He [Christ] has made us [the believing remnant of Israel] to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him [God] be the *glory* and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 1:6)

“Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive *glory* and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.” (Revelation 4:11)

And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; and he said with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him *glory*, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him [God] who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.” (Revelation 14:6-7)

***doxazo* (1392): glorious, glorify, full of glory or honor**

According to how this Greek word was translated, glory was given to God by both believers who recognized the glory of God, and by nonbelievers who were merely astonished by the miracles or teaching of Jesus. In one instance, as recorded in Luke 4:14-15, Jesus was praised (glorified) by *all* in the synagogues. Because most people in the synagogues—who were there to religiously worship God—did not actually believe who Jesus was and what He said (John 1:11; Matthew 27:22-23; Acts 2:22-23), their praise was more in amazement because of His fame instead of true glorification of Jesus or God the Father.

So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they *glorified* the God of Israel. (Matthew 15:31)

And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news [fame] about Him spread through all the surrounding district. And He began teaching in their synagogues and was *praised* [glorified] by all. (Luke 4:14-15)

“But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,”—He [Jesus] said to the paralytic—“I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home.” Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God. They [the crowd] were all struck with astonishment and began glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen remarkable things today.” (Luke 5:24-26)

And Jesus said to him [the blind man], “Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him, glorifying God; and when all the people saw it, they gave praise to God. (Luke 18:42-43)

“Therefore if God gave to them [the Gentiles] the same gift as He gave to us [the Jews] also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I [Peter] that I could stand in God’s way?” When they [the apostles and brethren] heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, “Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.” (Acts 11:17-18)

Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, so that with one accord you [brethren] may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 15:5-6)

Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you [brethren] as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation. (I Peter 2:12)

Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom [God] belongs the glory [praise] and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (I Peter 4:11)

If you [brethren] are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if any suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name [Christ]. (I Peter 4:14-16)

***endoxazomai* (1740): to glorify**

This Greek word occurs only twice—in one passage in Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonian brethren. He was encouraging the brethren as they were experiencing terrible persecution (II Thessalonians 1:3-8; I Thessalonians 1:6-7; 2:13-16). Paul explained that God will judge the nonbelievers, in this case with specific reference to those who were persecuting the brethren, in that day when Christ will be glorified with His believers. At that time the name of our Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified in them (and us), and they in Him. However, the Thessalonian brethren were not exhorted to give glory to Christ.

These [nonbelievers] will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints [believers] on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed. To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, so that the name of

our Lord Jesus *will be glorified* in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (II Thessalonians 1:9-12)

Who was Considered Blessed?

From our position as members of the body of Christ, we are to consider God the Father to be blessed, and we are to bless Him in our praise and worship. The only time Jesus was blessed by people was by a crowd that included both His disciples and those who were not saved, and He was correctly blessed as the King of Israel in accordance with prophecy. Christ is not our King, however. We are not exhorted to bless Him, but we are to bless God from whom He came to die for our sins.

ūlogo (2127): to speak well of; to bless, praise

In its use regarding the Godhead, this Greek word is translated as both Jesus and God the Father being blessed or praised. However, in the case of Jesus being blessed, the praise is from a crowd, where it is doubtful that they were all believers (that is, true disciples of Jesus) because many referred to Him as the prophet Jesus instead of Jesus the Son of God (Matthew 21:9-11). It is also used to describe how we have been blessed by God (Ephesians 1:3-6) and that we are to bless others (Luke 6:28; Romans 12:14).

And at once his [*Zacharias*] mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak *in praise of God*. (Luke 1:64)

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it! Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you will not see Me until the time comes when you say, ‘*Blessed is He [*Jesus*] who comes in the name of the Lord [*God*]!’”* (Luke 13:34-35; see also Matthew 23:37-39)

As soon as He [*Jesus*] was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples [*followers*] began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, shouting: “*Blessed is the King [*Jesus*] who comes in the Name of the Lord [*God*]; peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”* (Luke 19:37-38; see also Matthew 21:9; Mark 11:9-10; John 12:12-13)

ūlogeetos (2128): blessed

Ūlogeetos appears eight times in Scripture, and it is always used regarding praise to God the Father. Even in Romans 9:5, which has some slightly awkward grammar, God is the one who is blessed because He brought forth Christ in the flesh through his chosen people of Israel.

“*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people.*” (Luke 1:68)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort. (II Corinthians 1:3)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (I Peter 1:3)

For I [*Paul*] could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises [*of God*], whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God **blessed** forever. Amen. (Romans 9:3-5)

(See also Mark 14:61; Romans 1:25; II Corinthians 11:31)

Who was Thanked?

Being thankful (or grateful) is more an attitude of humility than it is a form of worship. Whether to God or to people, our thankfulness demonstrates that we appreciate what someone has done for us. Although most uses of the following Greek words describe thankfulness to God the Father, we also see examples of how we should be thankful to our Lord Jesus Christ for what He has done for us.

ūkaristeo (2168): to be grateful; to express gratitude

When this Greek word is used in the context of giving thanks to the Godhead, thanksgiving is always directed to God the Father. In many instances, Apostle Paul was thanking God for what He had done or was doing for and through his fellow brethren. Through several verses, we are reminded that we can thank God directly because of what our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished for us at the cross; Christ is the mediator between us and God (I Timothy 2:5-6).

Having said this, he [*Paul*] took bread and gave *thanks* to God in the presence of all, and he broke it and began to eat. (Acts 27:35)

First, I [*Paul*] *thank* my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. (Romans 1:8)

I [*Paul*] *thank* my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus. (I Corinthians 1:4)

For this reason I [*Paul*] too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving *thanks* for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him [*God*]. (Ephesians 1:15-17)

I [*Paul*] *thank* my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. (Philippians 1:3-5)

Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving *thanks* through Him to God the Father. (Colossians 3:17)

We give *thanks* to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father. (I Thessalonians 1:2-3)

For this reason we also constantly *thank* God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. (I Thessalonians 2:13)

We ought always to give *thanks* to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater. (II Thessalonians 1:3)

But we should always give *thanks* to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (II Thessalonians 2:13-14)

I [*Paul*] *thank* my God always, making mention of you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints [*believers*]; and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake. (Philemon 1:4-6)

(See also Romans 7:25; Ephesians 5:18-20; Colossians 1:3; Revelation 11:15-17)

***ūkaristia* (2169):** gratitude; thankfulness, giving of thanks

Most of the uses of *ūkaristia* are translated as thanks or thanksgiving to God the Father. As shown in Colossians 2:6-7, however, we are also to express thanksgiving or gratitude to our Lord Jesus Christ because we are in Him and He is in us.

For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of *thanks* to abound to the glory of God. (II Corinthians 4:15)

Now He [*God*] who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing *thanksgiving* to God. (II Corinthians 9:10-11)

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with *thanksgiving* let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with *gratitude* [thanksgiving]. (Colossians 2:6-7)

***karis* (5485):** graciousness; gratitude

The Greek word *karis* appears often in the New Testament. Usually, it is used to describe the grace of God and our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 2:40; Acts 20:24; Romans 5:15; I Corinthians 1:3). When rendered

as thanks to the Godhead, it is directed toward God the Father except in one instance (I Timothy 1:12) where it is directed to God the Son.

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him [Christ] in every place. (II Corinthians 2:14)

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! (II Corinthians 9:15)

I [Paul] thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service. (I Timothy 1:12; see also Acts 9:1-16; 22:1-15)

I [Paul] thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day. (II Timothy 1:3)

Who was Prayed To?

Prayer is another expression of humility because we are (or should be) acknowledging our reliance on someone greater than us. To me, therefore, prayer is also a form of worship. In all uses of the Greek words for prayer to the Godhead, it is directed to God the Father (the self-righteous Pharisees also prayed, but to the *God* of their imagination for their own glory—Luke 5:33; Matthew 6:5). There are no examples of anyone praying to our Lord Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, Jesus prayed to His Father and instructed His disciples to pray to God (Luke 6:12; John 17:1-26; Hebrews 5:7; Matthew 6:6-13).

Because Christ is the mediator between us and God, we are able to pray directly to God the Father in and for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 15:30; Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:17; II Thessalonians 1:11-12). The other person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, also is deeply involved in our prayers because He interprets our prayers according to the will of God (Romans 8:26-27). This study is not about the purpose of prayer,¹² but please note what is said in the prayers that are provided for us and what people were praying for in the following example passages (see also Ephesians 3:14-21).

I will not try to explain the grammatical differences in the following Greek words regarding prayer because in most cases I do not know enough to do so. However, I will let the content of the verses speak for themselves. The following verses are not the only ones for these Greek words, but hopefully I have provided enough examples to demonstrate the point that we are to pray to God the Father instead of to our Lord Jesus Christ.

de-esis (1162): a petition; prayer, request, supplication

Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them [Israel—the Jews] is for their salvation. For I [Paul] testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. (Romans 10:1-2)

I [Paul] thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. (Philippians 1:3-5)

¹² See my study **Prayer** that describes its purpose.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and *supplication* with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

With all prayer and *petition* [supplication] pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with perseverance and *petition* [supplication] for all the saints [believers], and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me [Paul] in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains [prison]; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. (Ephesians 6:18-20)

I [Paul] thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy. (II Timothy 1:3-4)

ūkomai (2172): to wish; pray, will, wish

Now we *pray* to God that you do no wrong; not that we ourselves may appear approved, but that you may do what is right, even though we may appear unapproved. For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth. For we rejoice when we ourselves are weak but you are strong; this we also *pray* [wish] for, that you be made complete. (II Corinthians 13:7-9)

And Paul said, "I would *wish* to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you [King Agrippa], but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains." (Acts 26:29)

prosūkee (4335): prayer (worship); pray earnestly, prayer

It was at this time that He [Jesus] went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in *prayer* to God. (Luke 6:12)

For God, whom I [Paul] serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my *prayers* making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you. (Romans 1:9-10)

Now I [Paul] urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your *prayers* to God for me, that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient [do not believe] in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints [believers]; so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen. (Romans 15:30-33)

For this reason I [Paul] too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints [believers], do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my *prayers*; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him [God]. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His [God's] calling, what are the riches of the glory of His [God's] inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His [God's] power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His [God's] might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and

power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He [God] put all things in subjection under His [Christ's] feet, and gave Him [Christ] as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him [God—see Ephesians 4:6] who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:15-23)

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by *prayer* and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Devote yourselves to *prayer*, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. (Colossians 4:2-4)

We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our *prayers*; constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father. (I Thessalonians 1:2-3)

I [Paul] thank my God always, make mention of you in my *prayers*, because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints [*believers*]; and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake. (Philemon 1:4-6)

prosūkōmai (4336): to pray; supplicate, worship

“But you, when you *pray*, go into your inner room, close your door and *pray* to Your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:6)

“*Pray*, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]’” (Matthew 6:9-13; see also Luke 11:1-4)

And He [Jesus] withdrew from them [*the disciples*] about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to *pray*, saying, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.” Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. And being in agony He was *praying* very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. (Luke 22:41-44; see also Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42)

In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to *pray* as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He [God] who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He [*the Spirit*] intercedes for the saints [*believers*] according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27)

¹³ This clause is in the KJV but, according to my NASB column note, is not found in early manuscripts. Nor is it in the account in Luke 11:1-4 in either version.

We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *praying* always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints [*believers*]. (Colossians 1:3-4)

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to *pray* for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His [*God's*] will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His [*God's*] glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. (Colossians 1:9-12)

Rejoice always; *pray* without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (I Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Brethren, *pray* for us [*Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy—I Thessalonians 1:1*]. (I Thessalonians 5:25)

To this end also we *pray* for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus [Christ] will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (II Thessalonians 1:11-12)

Who Did Jesus Say to Worship?

As previously discussed, when Jesus was in their presence the disciples and others sometimes *worshipped* or bowed down before Him (Matthew 8:2; 9:18; 14:31-33; 20:20; 28:16-17; Luke 24:51-53). This was done either as a humble demonstration of respect or honor, or because He was recognized as the Son of God, the Messiah, and the King of Israel. However, this is not the same type of worship that they gave God the Father. They would not have given their praise to Jesus in the temple, which was the house of God (Luke 24:53). Nor would they have brought their offerings to be sacrificed to Jesus.

Jesus instructed His disciples and others (including Satan) to worship the Lord God—God the Father. He also recognized the authority of His Father by praying to Him and telling His disciples to pray to God. It seems logical that Jesus would not worship Himself and yet, through their words and actions, some brethren focus their worship on Jesus.

Then Jesus said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’” (Matthew 4:10)

“Our [*Samaritan*] fathers worshipped in this mountain, and you people [*the Jews of Judea*] say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit [a Spirit], and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:20-24)

It was at this time that He [*Jesus*] went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. (Luke 6:12)

In His Name

Everyone who calls on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ will be, or are, saved (Romans 10:13; Acts 9:13-14). However, no one actually calls out to the Lord to be saved, because it is God who does the calling (Romans 8:28-30; I Corinthians 1:2, 9, 22-24; Galatians 1:6-7; I Thessalonians 4:7; II Thessalonians 2:13-14; II Timothy 1:8-9)—no one seeks for God. Therefore, in this context, those who *call on the name of the Lord* are those who believe the gospel of salvation that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised from the dead.

At the moment of belief, we are acknowledging our need for salvation and recognizing the redemptive work of Christ at the cross for us, and we become fully identified with Christ. By the working of God, we are washed (cleansed from the consequences of our sins through the shed blood of Christ), sanctified, and justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—we are complete in Him (Colossians 2:9-10).

Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in [by] the Spirit of our God. (I Corinthians 6:11)

The apostles had the authority to perform miracles and to make exhortations and commands in accordance with the will of God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 3:6; 16:18; I Corinthians 1:10; 5:4-5; II Thessalonians 3:6). Their ability, and authority, to do so were proof of their apostleship (II Corinthians 12:12). Brethren, we do not have that authority; those who think that they do are falsely claiming authority that they do not have and are taking the name of our Lord in vain.

Despite various denominational teaching or traditions, there have been no apostles since Paul, who was chosen by God to be the apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 11:13; Galatians 1:1; I Timothy 1:1). However, there have been (and continue to be) false apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers who are not children of God and who are actually servants of Satan while conducting their self-righteous *ministry* in the name of God or Jesus (II Corinthians 11:12-15; Philippians 3:2, 18-19; Titus 1:10-16). Sadly, there are also brethren who, either through misunderstanding or misappropriation of the word of God, or through motivation of their own fleshly minds and desires, falsely claim the authority and ability to perform miracles and prophesy in the name of our Lord (Colossians 2:18-19; I Timothy 6:3-5; II Timothy 4:3-4).

So, what does it mean to worship God and live our lives in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ? We are exhorted to do all things and to give thanks to God for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:18-20). Jesus Christ is the mediator between us and God because of what He did for us at the cross (I Timothy 2:5-6; Romans 5:1-11; 8:33-34; Ephesians 2:13-18).

Furthermore, we are His ambassadors (II Corinthians 5:20). Doing things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ means that we are serving God by the authority, and as the representatives, of our Lord. By walking worthy of our calling, which is our salvation in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 1:9-12), the name of our Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified in us, and we will be glorified in Him. Brethren, this is a

tremendous responsibility, and we need to be careful not to walk (live our lives) in such a way that grieves the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30) and takes the name of our Lord in vain.

Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (Colossians 3:17)

To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus [Christ] will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (II Thessalonians 1:11-12; see also Philippians 2:12-13)

What About Angels?

It is not uncommon for nonbelievers, as well as some brethren, to worship angels. For some, angels are viewed in such a way that God (whether as the Father, the Son, and/or the Holy Spirit) is not even necessary or relevant. By listening to false teachers, the Galatian brethren had so distorted the gospel that was preached to them that they were in essence deserting God. Paul called them foolish and sternly warned them against listening to any gospel other than what they had been taught by Paul, even if they heard it from an angel from heaven (Galatians 1:6-10; 3:1-3). Furthermore, we are instructed not to worship angels; instead, we are to worship God.

Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize [completeness in Christ—Colossians 2:8-15] by delighting in self-abasement [false humility] and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen [figments of imagination], inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the head [Christ], from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. (Colossians 2:18-19)

I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. But he said to me, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.” (Revelation 22:8-9; see also Revelation 19:9-10)

Conclusions

So, does it matter if we worship God the Father, God the Son, and/or God the Holy Spirit as long as we are worshiping *God*? Brethren, according to Scripture, it matters who we worship. We are children of God and not children of Jesus or the Holy Spirit. We are saved by the choice and working of God because of what His Son Jesus Christ did for us at the cross.

To summarize, the verses and passages presented in this study tell us the following truths regarding who we are to worship:

- We are to worship God the Father for He is the Almighty God.
- We are to praise God the Father for what He has done and is doing for us and through us.
- We are to give God the glory.
- It is God the Father who is blessed for what He did for us through Christ.

- It is God the Father who we should thank for what He accomplished for us through Christ.
- We are to pray to God the Father.
- We are to do all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.
- We are not commanded or instructed to worship our Lord Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit.
- We are not to worship angels.

As we have seen, Jesus was worshiped during His earthly ministry, although not in the same way we are to worship God the Father. It was done out of respect for who He was or as thanksgiving for something He did. We must remember, however, that we are to know and recognize our Savior as the ascended and glorified Lord Jesus Christ and not as Jesus the man (His position of humility—Philippians 2:5-11) who ministered on earth (II Corinthians 5:14-16).

As Jesus told Satan, we are to worship God the Father (Matthew 4:10). We are able to do this because of what our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished for us at the cross. Brethren, it is God who raised Jesus from the dead (Acts 2:22-24; Romans 10:9; I Corinthians 6:14; I Thessalonians 1:9-10). It is God who saved us through the shed blood of Christ and blessed us with all spiritual blessings (Romans 3:21-26; 5:9; Colossians 1:19-20; Titus 3:4-7; Ephesians 1:3-7). It is God who reconciled us to Himself through the work of Christ (Romans 5:10-11; II Corinthians 5:18-19). It is God who is working through us according to His will (Philippians 1:6; 2:12-13; Romans 8:28).

Apostle Paul, who focused his worship on God the Father and instructed the brethren to do so, was also thankful to our Lord Jesus Christ for appointing him to be His servant. Brethren, consider what our Lord accomplished for us at the cross. We should be humbled and forever thankful for what He did for us. This is not the same as worshipping Christ, because we are to worship God the Father.

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service. (I Timothy 1:12)

Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude. (Colossians 2:6-7)

We are ambassadors for Christ, so we are His representatives on this earth—we are here in Christ's stead. Paul was a bondservant of Christ Jesus (Romans 1:1). We should live our lives as servants of Christ, also, because we were bought with a price—His shed blood for our sins (I Corinthians 6:19-20; I Timothy 4:6; II Timothy 2:24-26). Let us remember these things as we honor and worship God our Father—the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we [*believers—children of God*] are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you [*fellow brethren*] on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He [*God*] made Him [*Christ*] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (II Corinthians 5:20-21)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3)

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom [God] be the glory forevermore. Amen. (Galatians 1:3-5)

To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen. (Romans 16:27)

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