Articles by W. N. Brooks

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Christ in the Pentateuch (Oct 1955)

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The consideration of Bible types with their corresponding antitypes provides one of the most interesting forms of Bible study. Generally speaking the types are found in the Old Testament, and the antitypes in the New. In the types lie hidden the foreshadowings of characters, events, and accomplishments; whereas, in the antitypes are revealed the actual characters, events, and accomplishments. Scriptural typology is very important because it emphasizes the Divine authorship of the entire Bible, and the organic oneness of the two Testaments. Moreover, it demonstrates the great purpose of God in Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ, His person and work, is the centre of Divine Revelation. He, Who was typified in the Old Testament, is clearly revealed in the New, for He is the glorious substance of the partially defined shadows.

The Holy Spirit of God typifying Christ in the Old Testament does so in the manner most appropriate to the needs of God's beloved children. In the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, the sacrifice of Christ is presented from five different view-points.

The Father's Phase Of Calvary:

In Genesis, the Book of Beginnings, the origin of our salvation is traced to the very heart and purpose of God, "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering," (Gen. 22:8). In Chapter 22, the father, Abraham, and the son of his love, Isaac, are alone, yet they enjoy the sweetest fellowship; they go their way to

the place of sacrifice, “They went both of them together.” Isaac did not know what was to happen, yet, trustingly, he went with his father. Here is a lesson in contrast as well as in comparison. Of Christ we read, “Jesus therefore knowing all things that should come upon Him went forth.” The Lord Jesus had a perfect understanding of the purposes of God, and thus alone with the Father He was to glorify, He trod the rugged way to Calvary. It was Abraham, the father, who laid the wood on His son, who carried the fire and the knife in his hand, who placed his only son upon the altar, and who raised his hand to slay the son he loved. At Calvary, over and above the men who crucified and slew Christ, over and above Satan who entered into and energized these men in their eternally infamous deed, it was God the Father who purposed the sacrifice of the cross. He, who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, guided the men to fulfil Scripture, and brought the Atonement to pass at Calvary. In prophetic language, Christ addressed the Father, saying, “Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death,” (Psa. 22:15). Doctrinally we know that God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, that He laid on Him the iniquities of us all, that He sent fire from above into the Saviour’s bones, and that He spoke the word to awaken the sword to smite the Shepherd. This first typical view of Calvary is the Divine side, the Eternal Father’s viewpoint of the sacrifice of Christ.

The Believer’s Phase Of Calvary:

In Exodus, the Book of Redemption, chapter 12, we have a picture of a lamb provided for each person under condemnation. The Divine sentence had gone forth,

“About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die,” (chap. 11:4-5). For the condemned person, finally sheltered by the blood of the slain lamb, the little animal had to be caught and pierced, and its blood shed in death, in order that a substitute die for him. “For there was not a house where there was not one dead,” (chap. 12:30), either the firstborn or the lamb, his substitute. This is the first sight of Calvary that the saved sinner sees, the vision by faith of God’s glorious Son as a lamb slain instead of the condemned one. By Christ, the whole of wrath Divine was completely borne and a full, free, and eternal salvation was provided. Like the passover lamb, Christ our Passover was taken (v. 3), was selected by God in a past Eternity; was kept (v. 6), was proved suitable by His perfect life; and was killed (v. 6), was sacrificed for us. When the shed blood was applied to the doorpost (v. 17), it brought safety from wrath (v. 13). In like manner, when the death of Christ is appropriated by faith, salvation becomes a blessed experience, and, as the declaration, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you,” gave peace to Israel, even so does God’s Word today give assurance to the Christian.

Not only is eternal safety provided for the saint, but also sustenance for the way. This is typified by Israel gathered around and feasting upon the roast lamb. The believer’s side of Calvary is the consciousness that Christ died for him, and that through the substitutionary work of the Lamb of God both salvation and satisfaction are provided.

The Priest's Phase Of Calvary:

In Leviticus, the Book of Worship, directions are given which govern the class of offering the Lord desired. In the first five chapters, a five-fold typical description of the Sacrifice of Christ is presented. This is pre-eminently the offering the Lord expects from the priesthood of believers, they must offer in worship, Christ in all His sacrificial and moral glories. "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name," (Heb. 13:15).

With this sacrifice of praise, a secondary offering is sought by the Lord, "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased," Heb. 13:16). This is pictured for us in the last chapter of this interesting Book of Worship (Lev. 27). According to this chapter our persons (27:2), our possessions (27:9, 14-16), and our tithes (27:30), are all presented to God as the reasonable act of priestly ministry.

It has been suggested that the burnt offering aspect of Christ's death is Godward, and that the sin offering is manward, but let it also be noted that everyone of the offerings was presented "unto the Lord." In fact, although the bodies of those animals presented as sin offerings were burnt with fire outside the camp, their fat was burnt on the brazen altar as a sweet savour unto the Lord: This would suggest that Christ was never more pleasing to God than when made sin for us, than when He was enduring the consuming fire of God's judgment. God delights in every aspect of Christ's death, so let us worship by presenting to God all five aspects of the sacrifice of Christ.

In another respect each offering was for the worshipper. In the burnt offering he was accepted, and in the sin offering he was forgiven. Both of these offerings made atonement for him. Surely, as it has been taught by others, the five offerings, with their variations, portray Christ as our substitute: The burnt offering, Christ the substitute for what man should have done, the will of God; the meal offering, Christ the substitute for what man might have been, holy, anointed, and fragrant; the peace offering, Christ the substitute for what man could have enjoyed, fellowship and peace with God; the sin offering, Christ the substitute for what man is, sinful as to nature; the trespass offering, Christ the substitute for what man does, trespass and sin against God.

The view-point of Calvary for the Christian priest is that of praise, worship, and sacrifice, the sacrifice of his all, (Rom. 12:1).

The Pilgrim's Phase Of Calvary:

In Numbers, the Book of the Wilderness, in Chapter 19 provision was made for purification from defilement contracted along the way. The sacrifice of the red heifer (19:9) was offered, and her ashes were kept as a memorial of a once for all sacrifice for sin. The ashes, mingled with water, were sprinkled upon the person defiled by contact with a dead body. By this means the unclean was cleansed and restored to the fellowship of the congregation. In the ceremony the unclean person had first to acknowledge his need of purification (confession Vv. 17-20), and then cleansing was effected by a clean person. Today, the Christian, in like manner, comes in contact with spiritual death, and thereby contracts defilement. Such a condition hinders his

fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. Thank God, the cross-work of Christ provides cleansing for every defilement suffered by the way, as well as pardon for the guilt of the past. “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). The pilgrim’s view-point of Calvary is to secure daily cleansing through the blood of Jesus Christ God’s Son, and thus to maintain communion with God.

The Servant’s Phase Of Calvary:

In Deuteronomy, the Book of Responsibility and Obedience, the offering of sacrifice is linked with the place of God’s choosing (Deut. 12:5-6). God has always been particular about the gathering centre for His people, and the place in which to offer His sacrifices. This place was to bear the name of the Lord, to be honoured by His presence, and to be the centre of the gatherings of His people. How illustrative this is of the New Testament truth, “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them,” (Matt. 18:20). The site upon which God’s name rested was to be the place of worship (12:6), “Thither ye shall bring your sacrifices and your tithes;” the place of fellowship (12:7), “And there ye shall eat before the Lord;” they were to receive as well as to give, and there to rejoice before the Lord. It was also to be a place of separation from the religion of the world (12:13), and the ways of the world (12:30), “Take heed that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest.” The Word of God was to be the only guide for His people

in the manner and association of their worship, “Whatsoever I command you, observe to do it,” (12:32).

The phase of the work of Calvary for the obedient servant is to yield to God’s command concerning worship, “Let us go forth (obedience) unto Him (the centre) without the camp (separation) bearing His reproach (fellowship).” “Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks in His name,” (Heb. 13:13 and 15).

Divine Worship (Part 1) (Sept 1959)

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Nelson Brooks

There is a significance to the idea I of worship that, although given much emphasis in Holy Scripture, generally is overlooked by the saints. Real worship, according to this scriptural significance, is our response to the divine claim for reverence and godly fear. This import is seen in our Lord's answer to the devil's temptation, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:10). When we refer to this Old Testament Scripture, we read, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God" (Deut. 10:20). Worship, in the conception of our Saviour, was an act expressing the fear of the Lord, an act of rendering homage to Deity. The devil knew this act was performed by prostration before the person being worshipped, for the devil asked Jesus to fall down and worship him.

Worship in the Old Testament

In our survey of this important subject, let it be understood that wherever a specific description is given in the Old Testament of the mode of worship or of how a person is worshipped, bodily prostration is mentioned.

According to Dr. Young's Concordance, we find this idea conveyed numerous times and in various degrees, thus: ten times, persons fell down and worshipped; six times, they bowed their heads and worshipped; four times, they bowed themselves and worshipped; three times, they bowed their faces to the ground and worshipped;

twice, they fell on their faces and worshipped; once, they bowed to the earth and worshipped; and once, they bowed their heads to the earth and worshipped.

The meaning of worship readily is seen in such references as Dan. 3:5-6, where the three Hebrew youths are commanded to fall down and worship the golden image; that is, to give to that image homage appropriate to a deity. Furthermore, we read in Isa. 44:15-17, of a man who makes a graven image and falls down to it and worships it. That worship is homage in recognition of Deity is made clear in Psa. 95:6, “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God.”

A very interesting picture of worship is drawn in Isa. 51:23, “Bow down (The word ‘shachah’ used here is the same Hebrew word rendered into English, ‘worship’), that we may go over; and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.” The picture is of one bowed so low that he could not be lower.

The true meaning of worship is also readily seen in the usage of the Hebrew word “shachah,” the principle Hebrew word translated into English by the infinitive, “to worship.” Dr. Young gives the meaning of “shachah” as to bow self down, and lists the following translations and occurrences: worship, 99 times; bow selves, 35 times; bow down, 9 times; bow down selves, 8 times; do obeisance, 5 times; do reverence, 5 times; make obeisance, 4 times; fall down, 3 times; fall flat, once; make to stoop, once; crouch, once; humbly beseech, once.

Please note that only one of the above translations suggests anything other than a rendering of homage; in that case it is a beseeching (2 Sam. 16:4). Worship as described in the Old Testament is a prostration before God, not a presentation to God; it is a rendering of homage (as J. N. Darby translates it), not a giving of praise.

Some may object, and ask, did not the priest worship at the golden altar in the tabernacle? Undoubtedly, this has been taught, but nowhere do we find in Scripture that a priest worshipped. Aaron worshipped with the elders in Ex. 24:1, but that was before he was separated to the priesthood. In fact, not once in the Book of Leviticus, the book some have called, "The Book of Worship," is the word worship to be found. Furthermore, there is no record of any one worshipping in the holy place of either the tabernacle or the temple. Saints did worship in Old Testament times, but not in the holy place. The priests' activities in the holy place are called services and ministries before the Lord (Ex. 28:35; 29:30. Num. 18:7, etc.), but these are not called worship, for in their performance they did not bow down. However, we do read of individuals (not priests) worshipping, some privately, as Abraham's servant during his journey, "And the man bowed down his head and worshipped the Lord" (Gen. 24:26-28); and others publicly, either by worshipping toward the temple, that is bowing down toward the temple (Psa. 138:2), or by going up to the locality where God had placed His name and worshipping (bowing) before the altar (2 Kings 18:22).

To summarize: to worship according to the Old Testament is to engage in an act of homage given to no other God but Jehovah, and this act is a bowing to the

ground before Him, not a giving of praise to Him, although that is good, but a prostration before Him.

Worship in the New Testament

Now, in the New Testament worship has a similar meaning. The first worshippers were the wise men who fell down and worshipped the child Jesus, and afterwards opened their treasures and presented unto Him their gifts. Worship is the rightful claim of Deity as in Matt. 4:10, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God.” That the primary meaning of worship in the New Testament as well as in the Old is homage, can be seen in the usage of the word, and in its lexicographic meaning. At least 12 times in the New Testament, it is stated that the worshipper either fell down or bowed down to worship. For the definition of the Greek word “proskuneo,” which is translated “to worship,” let us consult The Expository Dictionary by W. E. Vine. The Greek word “proskuneo,” rendered into English by the phrases “to make obeisance, to do reverence to,” expresses an act of homage or reverence to God (Matt. 4:10), to Christ (Matt. 2:2), to a man (Matt. 18:26), to the dragon (Rev. 13:4), to the beast (Rev. 13:4), to the image of the beast (Rev. 13:15), to demons (Rev. 9:20), and to idols (Acts 7:43).

In The Dictionary of the Bible by Davis, under the heading “Worship,” it is stated: “Respect and honour shown to a person. This sense of the word worship has become obsolete; respect which implies that the object thereof possesses divine attributes.”

J. N. Darby, in his translation of the New Testament, attaches this note to Matt. 4:10, “ ‘proskuneo’ — an act of personal reverence and homage. What in modern

language is called worship is ‘latrueo’ as ‘serve’ in verse 10.”

From the above we see that, although modern language has broadened the meaning of worship to include praise and church service, nevertheless, its original meaning of rendering homage to Deity or to man is maintained in Scripture.

Some may still object, and say, is not the sacrifice of praise in Heb. 13:15, worship? As in the Old Testament, the sacrifice of praise is more properly defined as priestly service; it is the Greek word “latrueo” as mentioned by Mr. Darby. This is the word used in Matt. 4:10. “And Him only shalt thou serve.” This is the word that Mr. Newberry translates “religious service” in Rom. 12:1, “Which is your intelligent religious service,” or as in Phil 3:3, “We are the circumcision which religiously serve God in the Spirit.” This word also occurs in Heb. 9:1-6, “The priest went always in to the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.”

To worship one must bow. The literal meaning of the Greek word, “proskuneo” (to worship) is to kiss (the hand or the ground) toward. We all probably have seen a picture of the Mohammedans at worship on their knees with their heads on their hands on the ground. Such is the idea conveyed by the Greek word. Notice the posture of John in Rev. 19:10; 22:8. He says, “I fell down (in order) to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: … worship (do obeisance to) God.”

The Spiritual Application

This examination immediately raises the question whether or not we, when met in assembly capacity, should bow literally to the ground. What saith the Scriptures?

Firstly, in the Gospels, in the bodily presence of our Lord, saints literally bowed before Him both before and after His resurrection (Matt. 2:1; 28:9). Secondly, in the glory according to the Book of the Revelation, if not angels, then saints prostrate themselves before Him (Rev. 1:17; 4:10). However, in the Epistles where we expect to find guidance on Church practice, there are only two occasions in which the word worship appears with any assembly connection. The one is found in Phil. 3:3, and already has been noted as more properly translated “religious service.” The other reference is in 1 Cor. 14:25, where the unlearned or unbeliever, after being convicted by the ministry given by the local prophets, will fall down on his face and will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. Here worship results from the realization of the presence of Deity, and is expressed by prostration and doing obeisance, and is caused by the preaching of the word. However, it is an unlearned man who so expresses himself, presumably in a manner similar to that which he was accustomed when doing obeisance in his former religion. It is also noteworthy that after Christ’s resurrection as recorded in Matthew’s Gospel, literal bowing is mentioned, but in John’s Gospel, in which we know not Christ after the flesh, when Thomas acknowledged the Deity of Christ with the words, “My Lord and my God,” no mention of posture is recorded. Furthermore, it is in John’s Gospel we are told that God

desires spiritual worship (John 4:24). They that do homage to Him must do homage to Him in spirit and in truth. The absence of physical bowing in the Epistles, and the emphasis upon the spiritual aspect of worship and service in this Church age, suggests that we are to bow in spirit, that physical homage was only a shadow of the spiritual reality. The spirit of reverence, obeisance, of bowing in humility before God, is still called for among the saints, for “the Father seeketh such” (John 4:23). On the other hand, if any physical posture accompanies worship, it should be that of bowing. For example, why do saints bow when they have just entered the assembly meeting? Is it not an acknowledgement of the Divine Presence?

“Where is My fear?” demanded the Lord of Hosts of His people in a past dispensation (Mal. 1:6). “Fear God” is a present exhortation for the saints (1 Pet. 2:17). Although we have the liberty to address Almighty God as our Father, let us not be contemptuously familiar, for hallowed is His name. What homage is due to God! In 1 Chron. 29:20, the honour due our earthly sovereign is compared to the honour due to our God. We read of the people of Israel, “And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord, and the king.” When homage is paid to any king or queen, only one form is acceptable that of kneeling and kissing the hand. A song of praise alone would not do; there would have to be bowing. When homage is paid to our God only one posture is acceptable, the humble prostration of ourselves before Him. Brethren, if we have not bowed in spirit as we have been overwhelmed by the realization of His greatness,

grace and glory, and of our own nothingness, we have not worshipped.

In the Old Testament, bowing in worship and priestly service were two separate acts, but when we worship in spirit, the physical act becomes a spiritual attitude of reverence which accompanies priestly praise and prayer. Notice that in Rev. 4:10 they fell down before speaking, in Rev. 5:8, they fell down before singing, and in Rev. 5:14, in silence they fell down as they contemplated the Enthroned One. The singing and speaking were actually not worship; the worship was the attitude that preceded and accompanied the presenting of praise in word and song.

We worship when our silence, speech and singing are characterized by that spirit of reverence which becomes the presence of our Lord and our God.

Divine Worship (Part 2) (Oct 1959)

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Nelson Brooks

This is the second section of a detailed and somewhat technical investigation into the biblical concept of worship, particularly in its New Testament application. These papers merit an attentive reading in order that with a better understanding, Christians engage in worship.

From the many references to Scripture in the first section of this study, it was established that to worship means to bow with reverential fear before God, and that this bowing is incumbent upon the Christian because of his relationship to God as His child and property (Psa. 95:6-7). Just as a king may rightfully claim the homage, submission, and devotion of his subjects as indicated by a physical bowing before him, so God may rightfully claim the homage which honours Him and expresses true reverence.

The Lord Jesus epitomizes the doctrine of worship for the Church age by telling the Samaritan woman, “The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him” (John 4:23). He placed the emphasis upon the bowing of the spirit. Worshippers in Old Testament times similarly worshipped in spirit, otherwise their physical homage would have been a mockery. Our Saviour intimates in this passage that true worship is now divorced from physical motions. The physical act of worship in Old

Testament eras, in the full light of New Testament truth, becomes a spiritual bowing. Note, however, that although our relationship to God according to the New Testament is that of children to the father, He still insists that we bow before Him with reverential fear, “For the Father seeketh … worship.”

There is a statement of the Apostle Peter which substantiates this fact, “And if ye call on the Father, Who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Peter 1:17).

The facts concerning Christian worship may be illustrated by numerous references to pictures in the Old Testament. These illustrations indicate that the attitude of worship is not confined to any particular congregational activity, but that it may be manifest in every phase of personal life as well.

Individual Worship

Let us investigate the possibility of the Christian worshipping in the many different circumstances of life.

Worship in communion: Abraham worshipped when Jehovah drew near to commune with him, according to the record of Genesis 18, for he recognized in one of the three visitors the Divine Person; consequently, he bowed himself toward the ground, (Hebrew, “shacheh,” elsewhere translated “to worship”), and addressed that One by the divine title, Lord. In this early reference to worship, we learn that its object is a person, a Divine Person. We may be moved to worship by thoughts of grace and glory, but it is to the person of God, the Son or the Father, the source of all grace and glory, that we

render homage. The sphere of worship is where we are personally conscious of the presence of God, not necessarily where His visible presence is seen, as some later illustrations will show. Physical surroundings are secondary considerations; there was no altar or temple on the occasion when Abraham met the Lord, nevertheless, he knew God was present. The manner in which he worshipped was to bow toward the ground, not with the body only, but with the spirit and the will, for Abraham accompanied his worship by confessing the supreme lordship of the heavenly Visitor. He addressed the Man, according to Mr. Newberry, as “My Sovereign Lord,” a divine title, and called himself a servant of the Divine Visitor. Abraham in his worship laid himself in the dust and put himself completely at the disposal of Jehovah. Do we know anything of this kind of worship?

Worship in sacrifice: God eventually tested Abraham’s confession of lordship, and commanded him to offer up as a burnt offering the dearest object of his affection, his son Isaac. (Gen. 22). Abraham stated to his servants that he and the lad would go and worship. In purposing to offer up Isaac, Abraham bowed himself without reservation to the Person and the will of God; he did not withhold his best from God.

The meaning of worship on this occasion is summed up by the angel of the Lord, who said, “Now I know that thou fearest God.” Abraham’s action was motivated by a reverential fear of God which led him to obey God even in the dark.

Frequently, we read of worship being linked with service and sacrifice. Priestly service and sacrifice are not in themselves worship, but true service and acceptable

sacrifice arise from a bowed, obedient, and worshipful attitude in the soul. Accordingly, it is from a worshipful person that God accepted the offering of the first-fruits with the confession that all was a gift from Himself (Deut. 26).

Worship because of benevolence: Abraham's servant was faced with a very difficult problem, the finding of a suitable bride for his master's son from among persons with whom he had no acquaintance (Gen. 24). He stood and prayed about the matter, but these acts are not called worship. When in amazement he saw the Lord guided exactly to the right well, the right house, and the right woman, he bowed down his head and worshipped the Lord. He acknowledged by bowing, the personal presence and intervention of God, and expressed his dependence upon the mercy, truth, and guidance of the Lord. The place of worship in this case was on a public road, the road of God's leading.

The Lord's hand was further seen in His moving upon the hearts of the parents of the bride to give their consent. They agreed to let Rebekah go with the unnamed servant, and to her becoming the wife of a man she had never seen, the beloved and only son of his father. Upon hearing this, Abraham's servant again bowed to the earth in worship, acknowledging that all had proceeded from the Lord through His planning and providence. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake" (Psa. 115:1). "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psa. 29:2).

Worship amidst conflict: As Joshua approached his first battle in the Land of Promise, he found that the Lord was not only invisibly with him, but that, as the Captain of the Lord's host, He personally appeared to take command and to lead Israel in triumph (Josh. 5:13-15). Immediately, on understanding this, Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship in reverential recognition of the heavenly origin of this Warrior, and in submissive acknowledgement of His right to command. Joshua said, "What saith my Lord unto His servant?" A worshipping person is one who bows before the Lord and awaits His command. A worshipper in this dispensation is one who in very truth bows to the lordship of Christ. "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). "Servants obey … in singleness of heart, fearing God:And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord" (Col. 3:22-23).

Worship in service: Gideon, the wheat thresher, had been chosen by the Lord to deliver God's people from the evils of strife, as these are pictured by the Midianites. This was so formidable a task that he was still fearful even after the Lord's promise, "Surely, I will be with thee," after, also, two very remarkable answers to prayer in connection with the fleece. Notwithstanding, God graciously strengthened his faith by causing him to hear the very enemy report what God would do by him. On hearing this, Gideon worshipped. His bowing to the Lord evidenced at last his readiness to obey God in the service to which he had been called. Consequently, he immediately returned to the host of

Israel and said, “Arise: for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.”

How often a worshipful spirit was seen in Paul, whose first words after his conversion were, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”

Worship in spite of trials: After David had penitently confessed in 2 Sam. 12:13 that it was against God he had sinned, the Lord graciously pardoned him, but in governmental discipline sent the message that evil against him would arise from within his own house. The first sorrow was to be the death of an infant son. David wept and prayed for the child’s life, and asked to be delivered from the guilt of blood, (Psa. 51:14, margin). Nevertheless, the child died. David on learning this, came into the house of the Lord and worshipped. He in effect said, “I bow me to Thy will, O God.”

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise” (Psa. 51:17). In similar circumstances of sorrow, Job, stunned by the report of the sudden death of his seven sons, fell down upon the ground and worshipped and said, “The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job. 1:21).

From the foregoing illustrations of personal worship, we may conclude that true worship consists of:

First: the bowing before God in homage and reverential fear to the honour of His person as God, Creator, and Lord.

Second: the bowing before God in acceptance without reservation of His will in service, suffering, and sacrifice.

Third: the bowing before God in acknowledgement that every blessing has been provided by His mercy and faithfulness.

Divine Worship (Part 3) (Nov 1959)

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Nelson Brooks

In our examination of the subject of worship as presented in the Word of God, we must now consider collective worship in the assemblies of the saints.

Congregational Worship

This aspect is illustrated by the several occasions on which the children of Israel gathered together for worship. These occasions suggest that worship may occur in different relationships.

Worship and Ministry: To Israel, in deep trial and affliction in Egypt, two messengers were sent from the Lord with a ministry of comfort and hope. This message embraced:

God’s faithfulness, “The Lord God of your fathers.”

God’s presence, “Appeared.”

God’s interest, “I have surely visited you.”

God’s sympathy, “And seen that which is done to you.”

God’s comfort, “I will bring you up out of the affliction.”

God’s power, signs that they could believe.

When the reality of the Lord’s presence and sympathy were believed by the congregation, they bowed their heads and worshipped (Ex. 4:31). What a blessed ministry! It brought to their hearts the realization of the presence and power of God. Moreover, what a blessed response on the part of the audience! The entire

congregation bowed in reverence, wonder, and thankfulness before their God. This truly is the ultimate objective of all Spirit-led ministry.

Worship and Evangelism: The provision of the passover lamb (Ex. 12) is one of the clearest types of the gospel in all the Old Testament. Moses held a good news or gospel meeting on the occasion (Ex. 12:21). He told the children of Israel that a way of salvation was available, a means of saving their condemned firstborn children. As the people heard that the Lord would pass over their blood-sprinkled doors and that He would protect their little ones, they worshipped and obeyed. “The people bowed the head and worshipped. And the children of Israel went away, and did as the Lord commanded Moses” (Ex. 12:27-28). The people’s bowing in reverence before Jehovah is linked with their obedience of faith. A similar response to the gospel of Christ is necessary for salvation today. “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. 10:9, R. V.).

Worship and Prayer: A great prayer meeting is described in 2 Chron. 6. It was held at the dedication of Solomon’s temple. “When Solomon had made an end of praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering. When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and how the glory of the Lord came upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth forever” (2 Chron. 7:3). During Solomon’s great prayer in which he presented the nation’s need to Jehovah, no mention of worship is made although

Solomon kneeled down. Nevertheless, when the visible evidence of God's presence was seen in the fire and in the glory cloud, the people bowed to the ground in worship. This act of homage, of obeisance, of bowing was incumbent upon a people who were consciously in the presence of their God. After thus rendering their homage, they praised and sacrificed to God (2 Chron. 7:4-6). "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of His saints and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him" (Psa. 89:7). It is striking that the glory of the temple building, which was the most magnificent palace on earth, is given no superlative description; all the wonder is directed to the glory that excelleth, the glory of the Lord's presence.

Worship and Remembrance: The presentation of the burnt offering in the Old Testament portrays the death of Christ in a manner similar to the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup in the New Testament. In the burnt ofering there was the shedding of blood and the giving and breaking of the body of the victim, for it was divided into its pieces and laid on the altar. Christ's New Testament promise, "There am I in the midst of them," was paralleled by Jehovah's promise concerning the altar of burnt offering, "There I will meet with the children of Israel" (Ex. 29:43).

A splendid forepicture of a New Testament remembrance meeting may be seen in 2 Chron. 29, "And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began … And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: And all this continued until the burnt offering was finished" (2 Chron. 29:27-28). On this occasion, as the priests presented the burnt offering, the congregation

prostrated themselves before the altar of Jehovah's presence in worship (2 Chron. 32:12). The Levites at the east end of the altar (2 Chron. 5:12) praised the Lord with singing, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever." Other priests blew silver trumpets over the burnt offering in accordance with the instructions of the Lord (Num. 10:10).

Trumpets speak so frequently of the ministry of the Word of God. In this instance they were blown over the burnt offering in order to draw attention to its importance. The blowing of the trumpets marked the day as a glad day, a solemn day, a memorial day. Such also is the Christians' remembrance feast at which the public reading of the Word of God is most important to draw attention to the value of the great offering of our Lord Jesus. The Levites also sang to bring to remembrance (to record), to thank, and to praise the Lord God of Israel (1 Chron. 16:4).

In this beautiful illustration, we have pictured:

Hearts presenting Christ to God.

Hearts prostrating themselves before God.

Hearts praising the mercy of God.

Hearts proclaiming the virtues of Christ's sacrifice.

In the Old Testament passage, three different ranks of persons performed these functions, but in the New each saint has the high privilege of performing all four functions. We, as holy priests (1 Pet. 2:5), have liberty to draw near to offer the sacrifice of praise, giving thanks to His name. As God's peculiar people, a people of God's own possession (1 Pet. 2:9 and 1:17), we prostrate

ourselves in spirit in the presence of God to the honour of His Deity and Kingship. As redeemed and separated saints (1 Pet. 1:18, 22), pictured by the Levites, we can, through the experience of redemption, sing of the mercy of the Lord to us. Finally, as royal priests (1 Pet. 2:9), we may open the Scriptures and proclaim the virtues of Him Who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

To praise the Lord Jesus in song, and co magnify Him with thanksgiving will please the Lord more than an ox or a bullock. Furthermore, the Father Himself also seeks that His saints honour Him with homage. The Lord Jesus said, “The Father seeketh such to worship Him” (John 4:23).

The proper spiritual response to the presence of our Lord in the midst of His gathered people was given by Thomas when he bowed in spirit and worshipped saying, “My Lord and My God.”