

What does the New Testament say about worship?

Research method

1. Using a Strong's concordance with its Greek dictionary, look up "worship" and its related words.
 - a. Make a list of all the passages that contain "worship" or related word.
 - b. With each passage listed, write down the number of the Greek word which was translated "worship."
2. In the Greek dictionary, look up each number. Knowledge of Greek is not required. With each Greek word, after its pronouncing and root guides, a listing of all the English words that were used in the King James Version to translate that Greek word is given.
 - a. Make a list of the English words that have been used to translate the various Greek words in the list.
 - b. Look up the new English words in the concordance. Scan down the lists of the new words to find the passages that came from the same Greek word numbers. List the new passages with the "worship" passages.
3. Look up each passage and read its context. Write down what the context reveals about the key word.
4. Develop definitions from the combination of all contexts.

Results of the search:

1. Three main root words were found
 - 4352 – prokuneo - worship
 - 3000 – latreuo – serve, worship (and 2999 – latreia – service)
 - 4576 – seboimai – devout, religious, worship and its derivatives:
 - 4573 – sebazomai - worship
 - 4574 – sebasma – devotion, worship
 - 2151 – eusebeo – show piety, worship
 - 2318 – theosebēs – worshipper
2. One word is used once: 3511 – neokoros – worshipper (Acts 19:35)

4352 – *prokuneo* - worship

Matthew 2:2, 2:8, 2:11 The wise men came to worship the new king. "Fell down and worshipped."

Matthew 4:9 – 10, Luke 4:7 – 8 Satan wanted Jesus to "fall down and worship" him. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy, "You shall worship the Lord your God."

Matthew 8:2 A leper came and worshipped Jesus, which Jesus accepted. The leper then made a request.

Matthew 9:18 A ruler worshipped Jesus, which Jesus accepted, before making his request.

Matthew 14:33 After Jesus stopped a storm, the disciples worshipped Him saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Matthew 15:25 A Gentile woman came and worshipped Jesus, which Jesus accepted, before making her request.

Matthew 18:26 In the parable of the unforgiving servant, Jesus said that the indebted servant worshipped his master as he pleaded with him.

Matthew 20:20 The mother of James and John worshipped Jesus before making her request.

Worship

Matthew 28:9, 17, Luke 24:52 The disciples worshipped the risen Jesus.

Mark 5:6 The legion of demons who possessed a man worshipped Jesus before asking a question.

Mark 15:19 The guards torturing Jesus worshipped Him sarcastically.

John 4:20 – 24 Jesus and the woman at the well discussed where one ought to worship.

John 9:38 When the man born blind learned that Jesus is the Son of God, he worshipped Him.

John 12:20 Certain Greeks came to worship at the feast.

Acts 7:43 Those in the Exodus worshipped idols.

Acts 8:27 The Ethiopian eunuch came to Jerusalem to worship.

Acts 10:25 Cornelius fell down to worship Peter, but Peter would not allow it.

Acts 24:11 Paul had gone to Jerusalem to worship.

1 Corinthians 14:25 An unbeliever, after hearing his secrets revealed by a prophet, will fall down and worship God.

Hebrews 1:6 The angels worship the Messiah

Hebrews 11:21 Jacob worshipped in the context of blessing his sons.

Revelation 3:9 Those of the synagogue of Satan will worship at the feet of the Christians of Philadelphia.

Revelation 4:10, 5:14, 7:11, 11:16, 19:4 The angels, the four living creatures, and the elders all worship God.

Revelation 9:20, 13:4, 8, 12, 15, 14:9, 11, 16:2, 19:20 Bad folks worship demons, the beast, the dragon, and idols.

Revelation 11:1 Those worshipping in the Temple were measured by John

Revelation 14:7 An angel who announced the gospel included in it that all should worship the Creator.

Revelation 15:4 The song of Moses includes, “All nations shall come and worship You.”

Revelation 19:10, 22:8 – 9 In his vision, John tried to worship an angel, but the angel refused it.

Revelation 20:4 The faithful did not worship the beast.

Some observations about *prokuneo* (worship):

- Only God is to be worshipped.
- Jewish people were to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem.
- Jesus accepted worship.
- Angels refused to be worshipped.
- In the many letters to groups of Christians (individual congregations, groups of congregations, and Christians in general), no mention is made of group worship.
- In John 4:20 – 22, what did Jesus mean when He said, “True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth”?

3000 – *latreuo* – serve, worship ; 2999 – *latreia* – service

Matthew 4:10 You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only you shall **serve**.

Luke 1:74 To grant us that we...might **serve** Him without fear.

Luke 2:37 This woman...**served** God with fastings and prayers night and day.

John 16:2 Whoever kills you will think that he offers God **service**.

Acts 7:7 They shall come out and **serve** Me in this place.

Acts 7:42 God turned and gave them up to **worship** the host of heaven.

Acts 24:14 I **worship** the God of my fathers.

Worship

Acts 26:7 Earnestly **serv**ing God night and day.
Acts 27:23 The God to whom I belong and whom I **serve**.
Romans 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I **serve** with my spirit...
Romans 1:25 Worshipped and **served** the creature rather than the Creator.
Romans 9:4 The **service** of God
Romans 12:1 Present your bodies a living sacrifice...which is your reasonable **service**.
Philippians 3:3 We are the circumcision who **worship** God in the Spirit...
2 Timothy 1:3 I thank God whom I **serve** with a pure conscience...
Hebrews 8:5 Who **serve** the copy and shadow of the heavenly things
Hebrews 9:1 The first covenant had ordinances of the divine **worship**.
Hebrews 9:6 Accomplishing the **service** of God (KJV only)
Hebrews 9:9 Which cannot make him who performed the **service** perfect
Hebrews 9:14 Cleanse your conscience from dead works to **serve** the living God
Hebrews 10:2 The **worshippers**, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sin
Hebrews 12:28 Let us have grace by which we **serve** God acceptably.
Hebrews 13:10 We have an altar from which those who **serve** the tabernacle have no right to eat
Revelation 7:15 Those who came out of the tribulation “**serve** Him day and night in His temple”
Revelation 22:3 The servants of God and of the Lamb shall **serve** Him in the new heaven

Some observation about *latreuo* and *latreia*:

- *Prokuneo* and *latreuo* are sometimes used together as though they represented different facets of a relationship with God.
- The emphasis seems to be on the things that we do (service).
- No mention is made of a Christian version of the Temple service.

4576 – *sebomai* – devout, religious, worship

4573 – *sebazomai* - worship

4574 – *sebasma* – devotion, worship

2151 – *eusebeo* – show piety, worship

2318 – *theosebēs* - worshipper

Matthew 15:9, Mark 7:7 In vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men

John 9:31 If anyone is a worshipper of God and does His will, He hears him.

Acts 16:14 Lydia...worshipped God.

Acts 17:23 Considering the objects of your worship

Acts 18:7 Justus, who worshipped God...

Acts 18:13 This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.

Acts 19:27 The great goddess Diana...whom all Asia and the world worship.

Romans 1:25 Worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 Exalts himself above all that is called god or that is worshipped...

Observations about *sebomai* and its derivatives:

- May describe worship of either the true God or pagan gods.
- None of the contexts mention a gathering of Christians.

3511 – *neokoros* – worshipper Acts 19:35 Worshipper of the great goddess Diana

Worship

Key points:

- Worship and the Christian assembly are not found in the same context. So, it seems unlikely that a major purpose of the assembly is worship.
- John 4:20 – 22 True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.
- Romans 12:1 Present your bodies a living sacrifice...which is your reasonable service.
- Philippians 3:3 We are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit...
- Historically, the assembly began to be called worship as Jewish practices (priesthood, sacred buildings, rituals, incense, and such like) were being introduced into the church.
- The early Christians were called atheists because their religion had no facilities (holy places), no clergy, and no rituals. The pagans could not conceive of worship without those things.