

Proskyneō Worship

The English word "Worship."

The English word "worship" is commonly used to translate two main Greek words: (1) *proskyneō*, and (2) *latreuō*. There is, however, a very significant problem. The English word "worship" is not equivalent to either of these Greek words; it doesn't mean exactly the same thing as either of these two Greek words. That is one problem but there is yet another. The English word "worship" also means various things to various people. For some, the word means all the activities of a Sunday morning church service. For others, it might simply mean a kind of praise and adoration which we would only give to God and nobody else. But these two Greek words mean neither of these two things. There is no Koine Greek word equivalent to our modern English word "worship." The Greek word *proskyneō* (or *proskuneō*) simply refers to a submission to a higher authority whether that authority is God or angels or men. The Greek word *latreuō* is the verb form of the noun *latreia* and refers to a kind of service. The idea here is more liturgical than an offering of praise and adoration. It implies doing service, work. The word *latreuō* comes from a classical Greek word which refers to hired work for pay. By the first century, it appears that this kind of language was used to primarily refer to religious service to deities. With respect to God, the main idea is religiously serving God in the sense that Israelites had served in the Temple. As such, the English word "worship" is not equivalent to either of these two Greek words. While there is some overlap between the English word and both Greek words, the English word "worship" reflects notions which these Greek words do not reflect.

This article is intended to demonstrate how the Greek word *proskyneō* functions in the Scriptures and thereby illustrate what this word really means.

How the Greek word *proskyneō* is used in the Bible.

The following examples show how the Greek word *proskyneō* and its correlating Hebrew word *shachah* were understood by ancient minds. *Proskyneō* was the Greek word the ancient Jews used to translate the Hebrew word *shachah* in their Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures known as the Septuagint a century or two before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. This Jewish translation of the Old Testament into Greek is vitally important because it shows how ancient Jews before Christ understood the word *proskyneō*. Their use of the word *proskyneō* plainly shows Trinitarians are falsely claiming that this word referred to an act one should only do toward the God of Israel. The facts clearly show the Trinitarian claim is shamefully false.

As you read through these examples, bear in mind that the word in question in the following examples is the word Trinitarians are translating as "worship" in the New Testament. This word is translated by Trinitarians in two main ways: (1) to bow down [before], and (2) worship. Both are used below to illustrate clearly the serious problem with the Trinitarian claim.

1. Old Testament Testimony: Hebrew *shachah*, Septuagint Greek *proskyneō*

Lot "worships" two angels

The two angels came to Sodom in the evening and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and **bowed himself with his face to the earth**, and said, "My **Lords**, turn aside, I pray you, to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise up early and go on your way. (Genesis 19:1-2).

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up early and
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way.
(Genesis
19:1-2).

Abraham "worships" the Hittites

Abraham rose and **bowed
down before the Hittites**,
the people of the
land.....then Abraham
bowed down before the
people of the land.
(Genesis 23:7,12).

Abraham
rose and
worshiped
the Hittites,
the people of
the
land.....then
Abraham
worshiped
the people of
the land.
(Genesis
23:7,12).

*Isaac blesses Jacob to have everyone
"worship" him*

'Let peoples serve you
and nations **bow down to**
you. Be lord over your
brothers, and may your
mother's sons **bow down**
to you. Cursed be every
one who curses you, and
blessed be every one who
blesses you!' As soon as
Isaac had finished
blessing Jacob, when
Jacob had scarcely gone
out from the presence of
Isaac his father, Esau his
brother came in from his
hunting. (Genesis 27:29).

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Jacob "worships" Esau

And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two maids. And he put the maids with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all. He himself went on before them, **bowing himself to the ground seven times**, until he came near to his brother. But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. He lifted his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said, "Who are these with you?" So he said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." Then the maids came near with their children, and they **bowed down**. Leah likewise came near with her children, and they **bowed down**; and afterward Joseph came near with Rachel, and they **bowed down**. And he said, "What do you mean by all this company which I have met?" And he said, "To find favor in the sight of my Lord." (Genesis 33:1-4).

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Joseph came
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And he said,
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(Genesis
33:1-4).

Joseph's brothers will "worship" him

Now he had still another
dream, and related it to
his brothers, and said,
Behold I had still another
dream; and lo, the sun
and the moon and eleven
stars were **bowing down
to me.** He related it to his
father and to his brothers
and his father rebuked
him and said to him,
"What is this dream that
you have had? Shall **I
and your mother and
your brothers** actually
come to **bow ourselves
down to the ground
before you?** (Genesis
27:9-10).

Now he had
still another
dream, and
related it to

his brothers,
and said,
Behold I had
still another
dream; and
lo, the sun
and the
moon and
eleven stars
were **bowing
down to me.**
He related it
to his father
and to his
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his father
rebuked him
and said to
him, "What
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Shall **I and
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you?**
(Genesis
27:9-10).

The **ten brothers of
Joseph** went down to
buy grain from Egypt.
But Jacob did not send
Benjamin, the brother of
Joseph, with his brothers,
for he said, "I am afraid
that harm may befall
him." So the sons of
Israel came to buy grain
among those who were
coming, for the famine
was in the land of Canaan
also. Now Joseph was the
ruler over the land and he
was the one who sold to
all the people of the land.
And Joseph's brothers
came and **bowed down
to him with their faces**

to the ground. (Genesis 42:3-6).

The **ten brothers of Joseph** went down to buy grain from Egypt. But Jacob did not send Benjamin, the brother of Joseph, with his brothers, for he said, "I am afraid that harm may befall him." So the sons of Israel came to buy grain among those who were coming, for the famine was in the land of Canaan also. Now Joseph was the ruler over the land and he was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and **worshiped him.** (Genesis 42:3-6).

When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present which was in their hand and **bowed to the ground before him.** Then he asked them about their welfare, and

said, "Is your old father well, of whom you spoke? Is he still living?" They said, "Your servant our father is well; he is still alive." They **bowed down to the ground before him**. (Genesis 43:26-28).

When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present which was in their hand and **bowed to the ground before him**. Then he asked them about their welfare, and said, "Is your old father well, of whom you spoke? Is he still living?" They said, "Your servant our father is well; he is still alive." They **worshiped him**. (Genesis 43:26-28).

However one is not to "worship" anyone else as his God but our Jealous God.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.

You shall not **bow down before them** or serve them; for I, YAHWEH your God, am a jealous God.
(Exodus 20:4-5).
(Leviticus 26:1).

You shall not **bow down before their gods**, nor serve them. (Exodus 23:24).

They have already turned away from the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf, and have **bow down before it** and have sacrificed to it and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.' (Exodus 32:8).

You shall not make for yourselves idols, nor shall you set up for yourselves an image or pillar, nor shall you place a figured stone in your land to **bow down before it** for I am YAHWEH your God.

Ruth "worships" Boaz

Then Ruth fell on her face, **bowing to the ground** and said to Boaz, 'Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?' (Ruth 2:10).

Then Ruth fell on her face, **worshiping** and said to Boaz, 'Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?' (Ruth 2:10).

Abigail "worships" David's servants.

When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they said to her, 'David has sent us to you to take you as his wife.' She arose and **bowed with her face to the ground** and said, "Behold, your maidservant is a maid to wash the feet of my lord's servants. (1 Samuel 25:40-41).

When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they said to her, 'David has sent us to you to take you as his wife.' She arose and **worshiped them** and said, "Behold, your maidservant is a maid to wash the feet of my lord's servants. (1 Samuel 25:40-41).

Saul "worships" the dead man Samuel

And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he **bowed with his face to the ground before him**. (1 Samuel 28:14).

And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he **worshiped him**. (1

Samuel
28:14).

A man "worships" David

Now after the death of
Saul, when David had
returned from the
slaughter of the
Amalekites, that David
remained two days in
Ziklag. On the third day,
behold, a man came out
of the camp from Saul,
with his clothes torn and
dust on his head. And
when he came to David
that he **fell to the ground
and bowed down before
him**. (2 Samuel 1:1-2).

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And when he
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him. (2
Samuel 1:1-
2).

*Mepibosheth, the son of Jonathan,
"worships" David*

And Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came unto David, and **fell on his face, and bowed down before him**...And he **bowed down before him**, and said, What is your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I am? . (2 Samuel 9:6-8).

And Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came unto David, and **fell on his face, and bowed down before him**...And he **worshipped him**, and said, What is your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I am? . (2 Samuel 9:6-8).

A woman "worships" David

And when the woman of Tekoa spoke to the King, she fell on her face to the ground, and **bowed down before him**, and said, Help, O King.... And the King said to Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing. Go therefore, bring the young man Absalom back. And Joab **fell to the ground on his face, and bowed down before him**, and blessed the King (2 Samuel 14:4).

And when the woman of Tekoa spoke to the King, she fell on her face to the ground, and **worshipped him**, and said, Help, O King.... And the King said to Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing. Go therefore, bring the young man Absalom back. And Joab **fell to the ground on his face, and bowed down before him**, and blessed the King (2 Samuel 14:4).

The sons of the prophets "worship" Elisha

And when the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho over against him saw him, they said, 'The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.' And they came to meet him, and **bowed themselves to the ground before him**. (2 Kings 2:15).

And when the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho over against him saw him, they said, 'The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.' And they came to meet him, and **worshiped him**. (2 Kings 2:15).

David "worships" the Temple

But as for me, by the abundance of your lovingkindness I will come into your house. In your fear will I **bow down before your holy temple**. (Psalm 5:7).

But as for me, by the abundance of your lovingkindness I will come into your house. In your fear will I **worship your holy temple**. (Psalm 5:7).

2. The New Testament Testimony: *proskyneō*

King of Israel, King of the Jews.

Now the Magi also bowed down (*proskyneō*) before the man Jesus. And of course this was just as acceptable here as it was in the Old Testament. He was the King of the Jews. God promised David he would put his seed on the throne. In fact, we are **explicitly told** that this is why the Magi bowed down before Jesus. They came to "worship" the King of the Jews. The very fact that these Magi came to bow down before (*proskyneō*) **the King of the Jews**. They did not come to "worship" God as if these pagan men were the first Trinitarians. They were non-Jewish pagan astrologers who had seen Jesus' star in the heavens. They came to bow down before, and to, a human baby, the King of the Jews, clearly demonstrating that this kind of *proskyneō* "worship" was very befitting human beings. In

fact, it was ***Peter*** who first confessed that Jesus was the ***Son*** of the Living God, not the Magi, and so to presume they knew they were bowing down before God is just a bit ridiculous especially in light of the fact they were not looking for God but the human King of the Jews.

Where is He who has been born ***King of the Jews***? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship ***Him***. (Matthew 2:2)

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish ***the throne of his Kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son.*** (2 Samuel 7:12-14).

And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High and the Lord God will give Him ***the throne of His father David and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.*** (Luke 1:32-33).

Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the ***King of Israel.*** (John 1:41).

And over his head they put his charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus the ***King of the Jews.*** (Matthew 27:37)

And Herod sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and ***bow down before*** (*proskyneō*) Him." After hearing the King, they went their way and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. After coming into the house they saw

the child with Mary his mother; and
**they fell to the ground and
 worshiped Him.** (Matthew 2:8-11).

Israel worshiped King David

Observe how King David himself sat on the throne of YAHWEH and the people of Israel "worshiped" God and King David. This is the very same Hebrew and Greek word.

Then **King David** said to the entire assembly... Then David said to all the assembly, "Now bless YAHWEH your God." And all the assembly blessed YAHWEH, the God of their fathers, and **bowled down low and worshiped (LXX *proskyneō*) Yahweh and the King....** Then Solomon of Yahweh as King instead of David his father. (1 Chronicles 29:20,23).

All Israel worshiped (*proskyneō*) both God and King David/Solomon. This is because David and Solomon sat on the "throne of YAHWEH" (1 Chronicles 29:23). They were anointed to exercise Yahweh's authority over Israel just as the resurrected man Jesus was anointed to be over the angels (Heb 1:9). It should be clear to any reasonable person that the Greek word *proskyneō* was used to bow down in submission to any higher authority.

Why the Angels bow down to the risen Jesus.

The Trinitarian claim at Hebrews 1:6 is highly misleading. Jesus being a man had been made a little lower than the angels but now this man has been exalted to the right hand of the throne of God and sits on his Father's throne (Rev 3:21). In this way, we are told that he **had become** superior the angels having **inherited** a better name than the angels (1:4). God doesn't become superior to his angels or inherit a better name than angels; that is something which happens to a human. The reference here is to the resurrected man Jesus who is exalted above all angelic rule with all the angels subjected to him (1 Peter 3:22). Because he **had loved righteousness** God says to him, "God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness

above your comrades," namely, the angels. Because the man Jesus had ascended to the throne of God, his positional authority was now over the angels and they were therefore commanded to bow down before Jesus in subjection to him. God's throne signifies His authority and because he now sits on that throne, Jesus is executing God's authority in God's name. Angels must bow down to the throne of God and Jesus now sits on God's throne (Rev 3:21).

At Hebrews 1:6, it is common for Trinitarians to claim that Jesus must be God because all the angels must bow down before him. But notice carefully what Hebrews chapter one is about. It is about Jesus exaltation to the right hand of the throne of God with all authority in heaven and earth, God having "made him Lord" (Acts 2:36), and that is why the angels are to bow down before him. (cf. Matthew 28:18; 1 Peter 3:22). They must bow down before him because he now has, in his risen glory, the authority of sitting on his Father's throne (Rev 3:21). The risen man Jesus, having once been positionally lower than the angels, has now become positionally superior to the angels in terms of authority. And this is why they must bow down to him.

Jews worshiping the Philadelphian Christians.

At Revelation 3:9, Jesus uses the word *proskyneō* to refer to Jews worshiping Christians.

I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept my word, and have not denied My name. Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie - I will make them come and **worship** (*proskyneō*) at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you.

Concluding Remarks

Despite the overwhelming wealth of Scriptural facts which show the word *proskyneō* was not confined to "worship" of God, Trinitarians continue to ignore the facts and perpetuate this

particular lie which they manufactured lie for the sake of Trinitarian propaganda.

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