

**LESSON 98**

**Egermeier's Story:**

Page 356 – An Angel Visits Mary

Page 357 – A Baby Named John

**Memory Verse:** James 5:16b "...The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." NASB

**Scripture:** Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-80

**Teaching Resource:**

New Testament Overview Section 2 The Birth of John and The Birth of Jesus

Bible Study Guide for All Ages Lessons 22-23

**Object Lesson:**

We want to explain to the students what worship is. One way to do it is to bring to class a picture of some person the students may know, possibly a sports figure or a celebrity. Bring some facts about this person—the more the better. List the facts as you hold the picture up in front of the students. Explain that you have not met this person, but you would really like to because of all the neat things this person has done. The idea is to impress upon the students that you are really taken by all the great accomplishments this person has achieved. Then explain that this is what worship is. It might be helpful to hold up another picture of someone that nobody knows. Explain that it is hard to show respect or have any thoughts about this person because you just don't know anything about the person.

In order to have an attitude of worship, we must know something about the object of our worship. In order to appreciate the character, greatness, and worth of our Heavenly Father, we must know something about Him. As we read and study the Bible, we begin to know the wonder of God's awesome character. We can appreciate the power of His creative abilities when we look upon His creation in nature.

## Doctrinal Emphasis: Worship

**Key Theme:** *The worship of God is the attitude of the heart that recognizes and appreciates His character, greatness, and worth.*

Worship of God is the attitude of man that recognizes God's character, position, authority, and deity. Whenever men acknowledge the greatness of God and His right to rule over humanity, worship comes from the heart. One of the words in the New Testament for worship is the Greek word *proskuneo*, which means "to prostrate oneself before a person and kissing his feet, the hem of his garment, the ground, etc." It also means to "fall down and worship, to do obeisance to, to prostrate oneself before, to do reverence to, to welcome respectfully." This word refers to the physical act of a person with reverence for an earthly authority. But from the perspective of the New Testament, the reverence exhibited by the believer to God is from the heart. I Samuel 16:7 states that man looks at what men do outwardly, but God looks at the attitude of men's hearts.

It is important to note that while *proskuneo* is defined as the act of prostrating oneself before someone or something in an attitude of worship, the act of prostration does not in itself demonstrate true worship. Worship is an attitude of the heart which cannot be false as the visible act of prostration could, for "The Lord looks at the heart (I Samuel 16:7)." What one believes or the attitude of one's heart may be hidden from man, but it cannot be hidden from God. Thus, it is important to realize that when John writes that the Father seeks men to worship Him, he is saying that God the Father is seeking men who will recognize His deity, authority, and position within their hearts. God does not desire that men merely fall on their faces in a "show" of worship without really recognizing within their hearts and lives His rightful position. We must recognize God and Jesus Christ as the ultimate authorities and have an attitude of "prostration" within our hearts.

Two other words for worship in the New Testament are the Greek words *sebomai* and *eusebeo*. The first word, *sebomai*, refers to the act of worship, or showing reverence or respect for someone. All but one of the uses of this word in the New Testament have an object, that is, the respect is directed at a specific object or person. This word shows reverence for who God is and what He has done for mankind.

The other word, *eusebeo*, shows the recognition of the value of the object. Paul uses this word in Acts 17:16-34, where he describes the Athenian attitude

toward a god which was unknown to them but to whom they wished to show reverence in order to avoid offense.

Little is found in the Scriptures that explains *how* we are to worship except that it is to be “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24), and we are given even fewer directives as to *when* or *where* we are to worship. The clear emphasis in Scripture is on what is involved in worship (recognition of God for who and what He is) and who we are to worship (God and His Son, Jesus Christ). It is also evident that there is to be service with worship (Romans 1:9), that we are to become servants of God (Romans 6:22), and that we can worship properly only through heeding the Word of God through “obedience to the truth” (I Peter 1:22). This obedience is worship to God in that we declare His sovereignty by it. Obedience to God and to His Word will take on outward manifestations as we seek to live our lives in acceptance of His will, but we must take care not to reverse the priority and assume that the outward act can take place of the inward attitude.