

Worship: Bowing Down and Serving the Lord

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The Old Testament provides foundational insights into worship that help us rethink our understanding of worship throughout the scriptures and also help us more fully understand what worship means for us as Latter-day Saints. In the vocabulary of the Old Testament, the Hebrew verbs “bow down” (*hwh*) and “serve” (*abad*) are often translated “worship.” These verbs describe the physical expression of a relationship of submission to authority—to “bow down” and to “serve” (e.g., Exodus 20:5). In the practice of Old Testament temple worship, we see this embodiment of relationship when those worshipping the Lord in his holy house literally “bow down” and “serve.” In addition to these more narrow usages, the Old Testament also shows that “bowing down” and “serving” in worship is a way of life. It illustrates how obedience and covenant faithfulness is worship; lack of obedience and unfaithfulness to a covenant is betraying the relationship of submission and loyalty required of one who should be in the position of “bowing down” and “serving.”

In this paper I will first explore worship in the Old Testament vocabulary and usage and then examine what this suggests about worship in our day. Both

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the vocabulary and temple context of worship in the Old Testament give us a vision of worship as the embodiment of a true relationship of submission to God. These insights can transform how we experience ritual worship in our day and teach us how to live a life of worship by bowing down and serving the Lord in our daily lives.

As we look at these two verbs, keep in mind how they describe the concrete performance or embodiment of a relationship of submission to authority—to “bow down” and to “serve.” In other words, these verbs illustrate that worship is something that we do and that we are in a relationship with the one whom we are worshipping. Rather than merely being about what we think or feel, these Old Testament terms point us to an “embodied” understanding of worship—a way of life and a relationship with God expressed by the physical actions of bowing down or serving.

Bowing Down and Serving in the Old Testament

In the Ten Commandments the Lord directly forbids worship of other gods. God is to be in the sole position of authority in our lives: “I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:2–3). In the next verse we find two Hebrew terms that are commonly translated as “worship” in English: “Thou shalt not bow thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God” (Exodus 20:5). These two terms, “bow down” and “serve,” have important similarities, but each expresses distinct aspects of what worship is and what it means to worship God.

Scholars today believe that the Hebrew verb *hwh* is the root of the forms which express “bowing down” in the Old Testament.¹ A concise summary of the usage of the verb *hwh* captures the physical quality of this form of worship:

[*hwh*] always refers to the action/attitude directed toward a human or divine figure who is recognized (appropriately or inappropriately) as being in a position of honor or authority. Depending on the figure and the situation, it may be a gesture of greeting, respect, submission, or worship. The action may entail falling to one’s knees, in front of which one places the hands or between which one bows the face (nose, forehead) to the ground (or comparable gesture). . . . The gesture is an external sign of the inner spirit (though hypocrisy is possible); the

word can also simply express the inner attitude. The prayer posture (hands outstretched) normally does not entail prostration.²

So, simply put, in the Old Testament *hwh*—expressed in the noun form as *hishtach^avāh*—is a physical enactment of one’s relationship with a superior. It was understood as an outward expression of an inward attitude. Translations include “to bow,” “to prostrate oneself,” “to make obeisance,” or “to bend low.”³ This gesture of bowing down was widespread in ancient Near Eastern religious practice and was a daily part of the ritual worship of the gods in ancient Near Eastern temples. In Egyptian this prostration is expressed as “kissing the ground.”⁴

In the world of the Old Testament, people bowed down to physically embody a relationship of submission to the Lord, to other gods, and to mortals. Preuss notes that “very often we find *hishtach^avāh* in the sense of ‘homage to the king.’ Many of the occurrences belonging here make it clear that we are dealing with a gesture of submission or surrender.”⁵

We find examples of “bowing down” (*hwh*) to mortals as a sign of respect throughout the Old Testament. In Genesis 23:7, as Abraham was seeking for a place to bury Sarah, we read that “Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth” (see also Genesis 23:12). Likewise, when the three strangers appeared in the plains of Mamre, Abraham “ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground” (Genesis 18:2). Bowing down clearly indicates relative position in the story of Joseph and his brothers, both in his dreams and when they appear in Egypt. “And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph’s brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth” (Genesis 42:6). Another important biblical scene where bowing expresses relationships is the story of Esther, where Mordecai refuses to recognize the status and position of Haman. “And all the king’s servants, that were in the king’s gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence” (Esther 3:2). In all of these examples we can see the physical expression of a relationship of submission through the performance of bowing and prostration.

The second verb in the couplet of the Ten Commandments “Thou shalt not bow thyself to them, nor serve them” is the Hebrew term *‘ābad*, which,

when used without an object, is usually translated as “to work.”⁶ Those who work for another are in that person’s service and thus “with personal objects *‘ābād* means ‘serve’ and expresses the relationship between an *‘ēbed* and his or her *‘ādôn*, ‘lord, master.’”⁷ The lord is the one who is served, and the servant or slave is the one who does the work.⁸ This term brings with it an understanding of the submission and loyalty of a servant to his or her master that directly connects with “religious loyalty expressed through worship,” particularly in Deuteronomy.⁹ The Hebrew verb *‘ābād* naturally becomes paired with the verb *hwh*; serving and bowing down are the proper expression of a relationship of submission and subservience.

The Old Testament helps us understand why we should see ourselves as God’s servants, those who are grateful to bow down and serve only him. This insight comes in a simple passage in Leviticus, but it has already been hinted at in the Ten Commandments. Remember that the Lord told Israel, “I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:2–3). The Lord’s position as *our* Lord derives from his having brought us out from bondage to another lord. Because of the redemption, the Israelites became God’s *‘ābādīm*, his servants or slaves.

In Leviticus 25, in a discussion of slavery under the law of Moses, the Lord explains that Israelites who become slaves have a different status than foreign slaves. “For they are my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen” (Leviticus 25:42). In this chapter we learn that fellow Israelites cannot be “actual property,” as can a foreign slave, because “the Israelites themselves are actually Yahweh’s *‘ābādīm* whom he liberated from Egypt. The ultimate point of this is that, strictly speaking, no Israelite can really ever become the slave of another Israelite.”¹⁰ This sense of belonging to the Lord as his servants or slaves because of the redemption from bondage in Egypt is a foreshadowing of the spiritual principle taught by Paul, “ye are not your own . . . for ye are bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).

Paul elaborates this concept, explaining that since we belong to the Lord through the purchase price of the blood of Christ, we should not bow down and serve anyone else: “Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men” (1 Corinthians 7:23). In Exodus and Leviticus, the Israelites were being taught this principle that we need to understand as well—we have been bought out of bondage, but we are not free from obligation. We belonged to

another master, but now we have been delivered to be the servants of the Lord. Paul expresses the spiritual implications of Leviticus 25 by saying, “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Romans 6:17–18).

Bowing Down and Serving in a Temple Context

The social and cultural use of “bow down” and “serve” in the world of the Old Testament illustrates the sense of respect and submission that is owed to the one who is worthy of worship. These insights are complemented by an examination of how these terms function in the context of temple worship in ancient Israel where both “to bow down” and “to serve” have very clear roles in cultic activity (i.e., formal worship practice in the temple). In the enactment of “bowing down” and “serving” in the temple we can see the relationship of obedience and submission made visible.

The verb “bow down” (*hwh*) can be used in the context of divine worship to express gratitude both outside of the context of the temple and also within it.¹¹ In the setting of the temple “this action joins other forms of cultic activity, such as sacrifices and various types of music.”¹² An early usage of “bow down” (*hwh*) in the context of offering sacrifices can be seen in the story of Abraham preparing to offer up Isaac: “And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and *worship*, and come again to you” (Genesis 22:5; emphasis added).

Another early example of where the term *hwh* appears to describe bowing down as part of sacrificial worship is in the scene with the molten calf. While Moses was away, the children of Israel “turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have *worshipped* it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (Exodus 32:8; emphasis added). Here the verb *hwh* is used to indicate they bowed down.¹³

Other examples of *hwh* or bowing in worship can be seen in the book of Exodus. The Lord “said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and *worship* ye afar off” (Exodus 24:1; emphasis added). And once the Israelites had moved from worshipping on high mountains to worshipping at the tabernacle, we find the same verb describing how the people worshipped as Moses was in the tabernacle

speaking with the Lord: “And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and *worshipped*, every man in his tent door” (Exodus 33:10; emphasis added). Here the verb *ḥwh* expresses how the people showed their awe and reverence for the presence of the Lord in the tabernacle—they bowed down and prostrated themselves.

While the expression of prayer in the Old Testament was typically not prostration but rather the lifting up of the hands, other specific references show that there was a place for prostration, or bowing down, as part of the worship practices of the law of Moses. In Deuteronomy we learn that bringing the firstfruits was tied to prostration or bowing down: “And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and *worship* before the Lord thy God” (26:10; emphasis added). Within the Psalms we can find several examples of *ḥwh* in the context of worship in the temple: Psalm 5:7, “But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple”; Psalm 95:6, “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker”; Psalm 99:5, “Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.”

Just as the use of the root *ḥwh* illustrates how bowing down was an expression of worship in the temple, so the Hebrew term *‘abad*, “to serve,” very often has a cultic—or formal worship—usage.¹⁴ These connections can help us see how temple worship, temple service, and temple work are literally synonymous in the Old Testament—they share the same term. In certain verbal forms, *‘abad* was regularly used to describe the routine responsibilities of formal worship “of Israel in its service and care for the tabernacle, temple, its appurtenances, and its personnel.”¹⁵ We see this charge to the Levites in Numbers 3:5–8: “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle.” Doing the service of the tabernacle was the sacred responsibility for which the priesthood was given (see also Numbers 4:21–24).

In addition to the sacred charge to care for the sacred space and possessions of the temple, this verb was also “used specifically regarding sacrifices to

worship (*'bd*) Yahweh" as can be seen in Isaiah: "And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice [*'āḥād*] and oblation" (19:21).¹⁶ So, *'āḥād* "refers to the performance of the cult in the sense of worship, honor, serve in a purely religious sense, in addition to caring (*'bd*) for its physical upkeep and maintenance."¹⁷ Another scripture that captures this use of "to serve" as performing offerings in the temple is found in Ezekiel 20:40: "For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord God, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations, with all your holy things."

The identification between "serving" the Lord and formal worship with sacrifices in a sacred place is made explicit as seen in the Lord's explanation of *why* the children of Israel were to be redeemed from bondage in Egypt.¹⁸ When the Lord spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, he explained, "Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain" (Exodus 3:12). Israel was serving another master in bondage but was going to be brought out of Egypt to serve a new master. That this service was temple service is emphasized by the location—redeemed Israel was to serve the Lord "upon this mountain."

This relationship between the redemption and Israel's responsibility to serve and worship their true Lord is repeated in what Moses is told what to say to Pharaoh: "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: and I say unto thee, Let my son go, *that he may serve me*: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn" (Exodus 4:22–23; emphasis added). Serious consequences fell upon the Egyptians for refusing to allow the Israelites to perform the service that belonged to the Lord. This interchange highlights the central themes of idolatry and worship in the Old Testament. Simply put, "worshipping other gods is the antithesis to serving Yahweh."¹⁹

Throughout the Old Testament, Israel was warned that when they strayed from the service and worship of the Lord so that they could serve and worship other gods, they would receive the pay of him whom they had served: "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in

nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee” (Deuteronomy 28:47–48). Alma draws a similar message from Korihor’s fate for serving another master: “And thus we see the end of him who perverteth the ways of the Lord; and thus we see that the devil will not support his children at the last day, but doth speedily drag them down to hell” (Alma 30:60). Paul puts it even more simply: “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

On a happier note, the Lord’s invitation to serve and worship him is universal: “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing” (Psalm 100:1–2). All lands and all people were invited to be the Lord’s servants and to come before his presence in his holy house to worship and praise. “Bowing down” and “serving” the Lord in the context of temple worship is a commandment, but it is also an expression of love and gratitude for our redemption. In ritual action we express and enact the relationship with God so that we can go forward to live out that relationship in the rest of our lives.

As we have seen, both *hwh* and *’ābad* are consistently used in formal worship at the temple and help us understand temple worship with the enactment of a relationship of humility and submission in “bowing down” and of faithful obedience in “serving.” But worship is more than just the external, formal requirements of ordinances, although it does include them. The Savior reminded the religious leaders of his day that the diligent performance of externals alone would not suffice: “Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone” (Matthew 23:23).

It is important, however, that Christ notes we are “not to leave the other undone.” Formal religious behavior alone will not save us without a change of nature, but it is essential to the process of becoming changed. In the ritual action that reflects a relationship of obedience and submission, we learn about and learn to live out our true relationship with God. The world would have us believe that being in this relationship is demeaning and limiting, that we are free only when we are not bound by covenant obligations to serve and obey. The scriptures and the ordinances teach us instead that through taking on covenant obligations to serve and obey God, we are redeemed and brought back into his presence. The more often we have that reinforcing message and experience, the stronger we can stand against the siren call of autonomy,

individualism, and finally rebellion against God as a way of asserting ourselves and finding ourselves.

Thus the repetition of embodiment of our real and saving relationship with God, in our worship services and temple worship, becomes as critical for us as it was for ancient Israel to ritually “bow down” and “serve” in the Old Testament temples. In the ritual process of submitting our will to God through temple service, we can let our spirits and minds be changed and more truly learn what it means to worship not only in ritual context but also in a life of obedience and covenant faithfulness.

Worship as a Way of Life: Covenant Faithfulness

The term “to serve Yahweh” ([*bd*] *yhwh*) is found fifty-six times in the Old Testament, each instance “referring to worship, cultic service or faithfully keeping his covenant as his people.”²⁰ In the Old Testament, “serve” (*ābad*) means formal ritual worship of Jehovah or other gods, but it can also have “an extended meaning . . . in the sense of ‘venerate,’ ‘follow.’”²¹ Thus “serving” the Lord can mean both ritual worship practices and also a life of faithfulness and loyalty—living as a faithful servant. It is to this broader sense of “bowing down” and “serving” that we now turn.

The Old Testament teaches us that serving the Lord is not just formal worship, although it does include that. Many passages including “bow down” and “serve” illustrate how worship is a life of faithfulness and obedience. In Deuteronomy in particular, the joint usage of the Hebrew verbs *hwh* and *ābad* together show that “what is forbidden is not only the cultic worship of other gods, but a way of life that departs in general from that of the people of Yahweh.”²² The Israelites are warned, “Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you” (Deuteronomy 6:13–14). They are taught, “Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him” (Deuteronomy 13:4). Ringgren insightfully observes that serving (*ābad*) the Lord throughout Deuteronomy “far transcends any specifically cultic context. Thus we read in [Deuteronomy] 6:13: ‘Yahweh your God you shall fear; him you shall serve, and by his name alone you shall swear.’ . . . Hence here the correct posture toward Yahweh is circumscribed . . . and the issue is thus faithfully to worship Yahweh alone. . . . This is thus a religious

and ethical disposition encompassing a person's entire life, one coming to an expression especially in the obedient keeping of the commandments."²³ It is significant that Ringgren uses the language of embodiment, explaining that in the command to serve only God "the correct posture toward Yahweh is circumscribed."

When we live out a covenant relationship with God, it requires a whole-souled and embodied acceptance of our relationship as his servants, to live our lives for him—spirit and body. Embracing that covenant relationship of being the Lord's servant is a full reshaping of ourselves—our minds and bodies oriented to his worship and his service. "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deuteronomy 10:12).

One of the most sobering and consistent messages of the Old Testament is that there are other places we can choose to bestow our loyalty and service, but we are not to go down these paths. We are to serve the Lord. We are redeemed from the bondage of sin in order to serve the Lord, and we must be careful not to ignore or despise that obligation. We must watch ourselves to see if we are choosing to serve other gods, even if that god is in our own image. And when we begin to reap what we sow, we can remember the warning in Deuteronomy: "Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt: For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them" (29:24–26).²⁴ Covenant faithfulness requires complete fidelity.

When we understand that the Lord has redeemed us from the bondage of sin so that we can serve him in lives of righteousness, then we realize the privilege it is to serve him and leave the other gods behind. But even after we are redeemed, we must continue to choose to put away other gods completely and to cease serving and bowing down to anything other than the Lord. Joshua invites us as well: "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods

which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:14–15).

Worship as a Way of Life: The Example of the Servants

Because of contemporary cultural values, we may struggle to see ourselves as servants who should be bowing down to God by submitting our will to his. In our efforts to come to grips with the deep implications of being in a relationship of submission to God, the Old Testament offers us hopeful and inspiring models of servanthood and how we can live in a true relationship with God. In the Old Testament we can see a very positive status of a servant for redeemed Israel, the Lord's prophets, and the Suffering Servant.

While the noun form *'ebed* ("servant") generally "expresses the position of a human being before God,"²⁵ it can also have particular uses such as the servant who is an instrument in the Lord's hands to accomplish his work and bring about his righteousness. As we have seen earlier, this status of servant was particularly tied to the house of Israel who had been purchased or redeemed from the bondage of serving another master to become the Lord's servants exclusively. Likewise, the prophets were consistently referred to as the servants of the Lord and, the image of the Suffering Servant describes the redemptive role of Christ in the prophetic writings of Isaiah. Carpenter shares an inspiring vision of the servant that can help us appreciate all these usages of "servant" in the Old Testament and thereby help us gain a greater desire to more fully become God's servants in our own lives.

The "servant of God" is further singled out as one who had a specific task to perform. Moses the servant of God wrote the law of God (Dan 9:11). The one who was chosen as the servant of God always had a good Master, always had a task to perform that involved doing the will of the covenant God, did not speak or act on his own behalf, but solely at the behest of his divine Sovereign Master. To be a servant of Yahweh was an honor, raising the status of the person involved. It did not mean degradation but exaltation in Yahweh's service. To be a servant of God had no negative connotations for the servant, after all things were considered, even though his task might have been one of delivering a word or parable of judgment.²⁶

This principle—namely, the honor of being chosen, obedient, and working as representatives of God, the “good Master”—applies to the expectations for redeemed Israel, the example of the prophets, and the foreshadowing of the mission of the Suffering Servant.

In the Old Testament, *‘ebed* describes the one who lives in the true relationship with God—always obedient, always on the Lord’s errand. Another biblical scholar also captures the exemplary nature of the “servant of the Lord” in the Old Testament: “A true prophet and a true *‘ebed* YHWH does everything at the bidding of his God.”²⁷ In 1 Kings we see the example of Elijah as an obedient servant in the contest with the priests of Baal: “And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word” (18:36). With servants, the criterion is obedience. A good and faithful servant is an obedient servant, doing “all these things at thy word.”

President Benson invited all of us to seek to “do everything at the bidding of our God” by describing how “Paul asked a simple eight-word question” and stated “the persistent asking of the same question changed his life. ‘Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?’ (Acts 9:6).” This modern-day prophet promised that “the persistent asking of that same question can also change your life. There is no greater question that you can ask in this world. ‘Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?’ I challenge you to make that the uppermost question of your life.”²⁸ When we are asking that question, then we are seeking to be the Lord’s servant—to do his bidding and to be on his errand.

We do not need to have a messianic or prophetic mission in life in order to worship the Lord as his servants. In fact, recognizing that we are all called to be servants but given different missions is a humbling and also equalizing vision that can free us from envy, resentment, pride, or any desire to boast or compare. To the extent that we are all seeking to worship by doing the Father’s will, we can feel the meaning of John the Baptist’s address to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery: “upon you my fellow servants” (D&C 13:1). Our lives of worship as submissive and obedient servants puts us in a position of unity not only with the prophets, but with Deity. As we serve our Master, we come to know him, becoming aligned with his thoughts and the intents of his heart (see Mosiah 5:13). The Lord has explained that “he that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that abaseth himself shall be exalted” (D&C 101:42). The Son

came as the obedient servant of the Father, doing “always those things that please him” (John 8:29). As we become servants in Christ’s image, willing to bow down and serve, we find that our submission is the means of being raised up to an eternal unity of will and purpose: “that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us” (John 17:21).

Notes

1. For some additional background on how scholars’ understanding of the Hebrew term has changed, see Preuss, “*ḥwh*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 4:249, and Terence E. Fretheim, “*ḥwh*,” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 2:42.

2. Fretheim, “*ḥwh*,” 2:43.

3. Preuss, “*ḥwh*,” 4:249.

4. “The gesture designated by *hishtach*“*vāh*, which also expresses an inward attitude, is also familiar among Israel’s neighbors. It is attested both pictorially and in texts, since ‘prostration’ formed part of the cult of all deities (2 K. 5:18). Egyptian speaks of ‘kissing the ground’ . . . and obeisance was a common part of the daily ritual before the statues of the gods” (Preuss, “*ḥwh*,” 4:250).

5. Preuss, “*ḥwh*,” 4:251–52. While some might argue that the use of *ḥwh* is to express the relationship of worship through bowing down moved from human political and social spheres to the religious, Preuss argues that the sacred meaning does not come from the secular but probably the reverse.

6. Helmer Ringgren, “*‘āḥad*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 10:381.

7. Ringgren, “*‘āḥad*,” 10:383.

8. The relationship between ‘*‘ēbed*’ and ‘*‘ādōn*’ can have various connotations. Those who have no freedom are slaves that serve masters. Those who wish to be close to those in power are vassals serving their lord. Ringgren notes that the various nuances of this relationship “can be one of subjugation and dependence, or total claim on a person, or of loyalty. Indeed, all these nuances resonate, with one or another feature being more or less emphasized in any given case” (10:383). The different kinds of subordination potentially expressed by the term ‘*‘ēbed*’ can be seen in various positions: “slave, servant, subject, official, vassal, or ‘servant’ or follower of a particular god” (10:387).

9. “Especially in Deuteronomy and in the DtrH, ‘to serve’ is frequently used more generally to indicate religious loyalty expressed through worship. ‘To bow down’ to high-status humans is a sign of respect or submission. Used in the context of prayer or sacrifice, the verb describes the physical gesture of prostration. However, because the gesture reflects an inner attitude, ‘to bow down’ also signifies worship in a broader sense.” Richard D. Nelson, “Worship, OT,” in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2009), 5:924.

10. Ringgren, “*āḥad*,” 10:388.
11. Fretheim, “*ḥwh*,” 2:43.
12. Fretheim, “*ḥwh*,” 2:43.
13. Pruess notes that although bowing is not specified in verse six, the use of *ḥwh* in verse eight implies that prostration in worship “must have been a regular part of the sacrifice ritual” (4:254).
14. Ringgren, “*āḥad*,” 10:384.
15. Eugene Carpenter, “*bd*,” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 3:305.
16. Carpenter, “*bd*,” 3:305.
17. Carpenter, “*bd*,” 3:305.
18. See also Ringgren, “*āḥad*,” 10:384–85 on Exodus 3:12, why Moses brought the children of Israel out of captivity.
19. Ringgren, “*āḥad*,” 385.
20. Carpenter, “*bd*,” 3:306.
21. Ringgren, “*āḥad*,” 10:386.
22. Pruess, “*ḥwh*,” 4:254.
23. Ringgren, “*āḥad*,” 10:386.
24. “A passage such as [Deuteronomy] 29:24f. (25f.) shows that ‘serving other gods’ simultaneously means ‘forsaking Yahweh’s *bʿrit*’ . . . In a reverse fashion, serving Yahweh means keeping his covenant” (Ringgren, 10:386).
25. Carpenter, “*bd*,” 3:306.
26. Carpenter, “*bd*,” 3:307.
27. Ringgren, “*āḥad*,” 10:395.
28. Ezra Taft Benson, “Think on Christ,” *Ensign*, April 1984, 11.