



ΤΩ ΧΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ

“In the Nick of Time”



Occasional Essays
and Other Stuff
for Christian Students

Presented by the
President of

[Central Baptist
Theological Seminary
of Minneapolis](#)

American Christianity needs leaders. American Christianity needs *Christian* leaders. Christian leaders explain the Scriptures, bringing them to bear upon life's urgent questions. Christian leaders exemplify the life of faith, finding their ultimate satisfaction in God alone. They unite intellectual discipline with ordinate affection, turning their entire being toward the love of God. These essays are dedicated to the task of inviting today's Christian students to become tomorrow's Christian leaders.

—Kevin T. Bauder

“...Be instant in season,
out of season;
reprove, rebuke, exhort
with all longsuffering
and doctrine.”

X X X
February 3, 2006
X X X

Adoration

John R. Rice used to be fond of saying that “prayer is asking.” In the strict and technical sense, he was correct. The English verb *pray* means *ask*. The biblical concept of prayer, however, is much broader. It includes several related practices or modes of prayer. What they all have in common is that they are addressed to God.

Even the New Testament terms for prayer reflect certain distinctions. The most common terms are *proseuche* (prayer) and *deesis* (supplication). The word *proseuche* is the generalized term for prayer. It refers more or less to scheduled prayer, the sort of prayer in which one might engage during daily devotions. The word *deesis*, however, is a term for desperation prayer. It refers to the kind of prayer that we offer when the need is urgent and the answer cannot wait. Paul repeatedly links these two, speaking of the “prayer and supplication” that he offers to God.

The broader term *proseuche*, which refers to regular, scheduled prayer, includes several modes of praying. We might think of all the things that we do in our regular prayer life. Confession, thanksgiving, petition, and intercession are all aspects of *proseuche*. So is adoration.

Adoration is worship. It is praise. It is the acknowledgement of the perfections of God and the reflection back to Him of our wonder at those perfections.

Adoration is not the same thing as thanksgiving. We give God thanks for His gifts. Implicit in thanksgiving is the assumption that we have received some good from the hand of God. Thanksgiving is, first, the recognition that the gift comes from God, and, second, the expression of gratitude over what God has given.

Where thanksgiving is about God's gifts and our gratitude, adoration is about God's person and our awe. We give thanks when we recognize what we have received from God. We express adoration when we recognize who God is.

Adoration is praise or admiration, and we can admire and praise things from which we do not personally benefit. In fact, we can even admire and praise some things that work against us. For example, on the basketball court we might lose a game because the opposing team has a wonderfully gifted player. We may not be particularly thankful for such a player at the moment he is knocking us out of the playoffs—but if he is really a great athlete, we will not be able to help admiring him.

In the same way, we could and should admire God even if He never did anything for us. He would still deserve to be adored, praised, and worshipped simply because of who He is. Adoration is about His worthiness, not about our wealth.

Of course, God does do things for us. In fact, He showers us with undeserved kindness. When God does give us gifts, those gifts are also confirmations of His character. Therefore, we should never be content merely to thank God for what He does for us. His gifts should move to thanksgiving, but they should also move us to praise. We should admire God as the Great Giver. But we would also be obligated to admire Him if He never gave us anything.

Nature sometimes evokes a sense of admiration in us. When we come suddenly upon a beautiful rose or a surging waterfall or a mountain vista we are often moved to pause, direct our attention to the sight, and simply rejoice in it. The beauty itself deserves such a response. If we knew of a person who could not be moved by such beauties, we would think that something was wrong with that person.

Our God is infinitely beautiful and majestic in His person. We sometimes find ourselves face to face with His grandeur. Such moments may catch us as we read the Word, as we sing the great hymns, as we hear the Scriptures expounded, or as we ponder God's character in our meditations. When those moments arrive, our hearts should be forced to pause, contemplate the Divine Beauty, and rejoice with powerful wonder and admiration.

God's mighty deeds reveal His character. They show Him to be a Creator, Sustainer, Judge, Deliverer, and Redeemer. His acts in history reveal His wonderful power, holiness, justice, compassion, and love. Those deeds are recorded for us in the narratives of Scripture, and by reading the stories we can in a certain sense relive them in our hearts and minds. When we behold the goodness of God in creation, the justice of God at Sinai, the faithfulness of God to David, and the astonishing love of God on the cross, our hearts *have* to be moved. How can we not marvel at such a God?

The Psalms are filled with ponderings upon God's character. The prophets gaze deeply into the divine nature. The Gospels show us the astonishing mystery of God made man. In their letters, the apostles reason both from and toward the character of God. Throughout the pages of His book God places Himself on display. He shows Himself and sets Himself forth, not so that we might engage in disinterested inspection, but so that we can adore Him.

Every part of Scripture sets God before us in His goodness and greatness, His beauty and majesty. Every page of the book should lead us to see Him in His wonderful glory. We should not be able to read a chapter of the Bible without being moved to acknowledge His perfections and to reflect back to Him our sense of awe and admiration at who He is.

Adoration is not merely a useful adjunct to prayer. It is the very center of the prayer life. Unless we are motivated by a strong sense of adoration, the prayer life becomes grasping, selfish, and stunted.

Adoration is our first and highest calling. For this we were made. For this we were redeemed. Until our hearts find their rest, delight, and satisfaction in God, they will have no rest. We cannot glorify God in the world until we have glorified Him first in our hearts. X



PRAYER. (I)

George Herbert (1593-1633)

PRAYER the Churches banquet, Angels age,
Gods breath in man returning to his birth,
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,
The Christian plummet sounding heav'n and earth ;

Engine against th' Almightye, sinner's towre,
Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,
The six daies world-transposing in an houre,
A kinde of tune, which all things heare and fear ;

Softnesse, and peace, and joy, and love, and blisse,
Exalted Manna, gladnesse of the best,
Heaven in ordinarie, man well drest,
The milkie way, the bird of Paradise,

Church-bels beyond the stars heard, the souls bloud,
The land of spices, something understood. X

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This essay is by [Kevin T. Bauder](#), president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.



Georges de La Tour. *The Adoration of the Shepherds*. Detail. c. 1640



ΤΟΥΤΟ ΦΡΟΝΕΙΤΕ ΕΝ ΥΜΙΝ

