

## Land and *The Dreaming*

The Aboriginal population of Australia is made up of around 500 tribes and nations, each with their own sacred places, animal totems and other items in the geographic area known as their 'country'.<sup>[2]</sup>

Sacred sites are places within the landscape that have a special significance under Aboriginal tradition. Hills, rocks, waterholes, trees, plains and other natural features may be sacred sites. In coastal and sea areas, sacred sites may include features which lie both above and below water. Sometimes sacred sites are obvious, such as ochre deposits, rock art galleries, or spectacular natural features. In other instances sacred sites may be unremarkable to an outside observer. They can range in size from a single stone or plant, to an entire mountain range.<sup>[3]</sup>

*The Dreaming* refers collectively to Aboriginal religious beliefs. **These beliefs endeavour to explain the questions of ultimate human reality, including the origins of humans and animals.** The Dreaming is an ongoing phenomenon, incorporating the past, the present and the future. Aboriginal people believe that the Spirits who initially inhabited the land were their ancestors and their identity is derived from the Spirits from whom they descended. Particular tribes have their own totem which is an animal often native to their tribe's territory. **Their traditional way of life is based on their relationship with the land, which they believe to be their origin, sustenance and ultimate destiny. They believe it is their duty to look after the land and take only what is needed. The beliefs of the Dreaming are diverse and various. They depend on an individual's tribe, gender, location and totem.**

Sacred sites are places within the landscape that have a special meaning or significance under Aboriginal tradition. Hills, rocks, waterholes, trees, plains, lakes, billabongs and other natural features can be sacred sites. In coastal and sea areas, sacred sites may include features which lie both above and below the water.

Sacred sites derive their status from their association with particular aspects of Aboriginal social and cultural tradition. This body of tradition is mainly concerned with the activities of ancestral beings, collectively known as '**Dreamings**' whose travels across the land and sea created the physical and social world that people now inhabit.

Aboriginal sacred sites are recognised and protected as an integral part of the Northern Territory's and Australia's cultural heritage, under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (Land Rights Act) and the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act (Sacred Sites Act) 1989*.

### Home » Sacred Sites » Why protect sacred sites?

Sacred sites are important to the cultural fabric and heritage of the Northern Territory. They are important to all Australians. They are an intrinsic part of a continuing body of practices and beliefs emanating from Aboriginal laws and traditions. Sacred sites give meaning to the natural landscape. They anchor cultural values and spiritual and kin-based relationships in the land.

Aboriginal people know that sacred sites can be dangerous places and can play an important part in their health and well-being. Urban industrial development, construction projects and other ground disturbing works can cause significant harm to sacred sites.

Activities such as cutting down a sacred tree or digging into sacred ground may disturb the Spirit Ancestors, and this may have consequences both for the person causing the disturbance, and for the Aboriginal people who are custodians for that place.

### Exodus 12:12 King James Version (KJV)

<sup>12</sup> For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD

# THE MEANING OF WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION: One writer notes that:

"Worship in our time has been captured by the tourist mind set. Worship is understood as a visit to an attractive site to be made when we have adequate leisure. For some it is a weekly jaunt to church. For others, occasional visits to special services.. Some, with a bent for Christian entertainment and sacred diversion, plan their lives around special events like retreats, rallies and conferences. We go to see a new personality, to hear a new truth, to get a new experience and so, somehow, expand our otherwise humdrum lives. We'll try anything -- until something else comes along."

Does this describe our attitude toward worship? What is worship all about?

## I. WHAT IS WORSHIP?

A. A look at both the original language and the origin of the word in English will help us understand the meaning.

1. The primary Hebrew word for worship.

a. Shachah - "to depress, i.e. prostrate (in homage to royalty or God): bow (self) down, crouch, fall down (flat), humbly beseech, do (make) obeisance, do reverence, make to stoop, worship."

2. Three Greek words.

a. Proskuneo - "meaning to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand), to fawn or crouch to, homage (do reverence to, adore): worship." It occurs 59 times in the New Testament. It originally carried with it the idea of subjects falling down to kiss the ground before a king or kiss their feet.

b. Sebomai - "to reverence, hold in awe." Used 10 times in the New Testament.

c. Latreuo - "to render religious service of homage." Used 21 times in the New Testament.

3. The word in the English language.

a. Literally means to ascribe worth to something.

4. True worship begins with a deep respect or reverence for God, a frame of heart, an attitude. This must be fixed in one's mind before we go further. An "act" of worship is an act proceeding from or the result of that attitude.

B. The Bible talks about several "kinds" of worship.

### 1. Ignorant Worship--Acts 17:22-31

a. Acts 17:23 - "<sup>23</sup> For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

b. Paul perceived that they were very religious but he warned them that their religious service was not pleasing to God for it was done without knowledge of what God wanted or even who God was.

c. Ignorant worship is like throwing darts at a bulls eye while blindfolded--sure you might hit the mark but more than likely you will do a lot of damage

d. Ignorant worship is not pleasing to God for he is not glorified by accident, but by a conscience praise of His name.

e. Such worship will never be pleasing to God, for His will has been revealed (John 4:24). <sup>24</sup> God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

f. God does not wink (tolerate) ignorance - Acts 17:30. <sup>30</sup> And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

## **2. Vain Worship**

a. Matthew 15:7-9 <sup>7</sup> Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

<sup>8</sup> This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

<sup>9</sup> But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

b. The Pharisees made their worship Vain (useless) because they had layered on the commandments of men to their practices.

c. This is the attitude which changes what God has said, does not respect what God has said, and does not obey what He has commanded. See Leviticus 10:1-11. <sup>10</sup>

And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. <sup>2</sup> And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. <sup>3</sup> Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace. <sup>4</sup> And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said unto them, Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp. <sup>5</sup> So they went near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp; as Moses had said. <sup>6</sup> And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled. <sup>7</sup> And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses. <sup>8</sup> And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, <sup>9</sup> Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: <sup>10</sup> And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; <sup>11</sup> And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.

## **3. Will Worship**

a. Colossians 2:23 - Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh. (KJV)

b. These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in a self-imposed religion, a false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

c. This is worship that centers in satisfying self. This is the same type of worship that we often have today, which calls for "audience centered" worship.

## **4. True Worship.**

a. John 4:23-24

<sup>23</sup> But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

<sup>24</sup> God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

## **II. THE CORRECT ELEMENTS OF WORSHIP**

### **A. Worship is God centered.**

1. Psalms 95:6 - Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.

2. Acts 17:23 - <sup>23</sup> For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

3. Hebrews 13:15 - <sup>15</sup> By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

4. One of the great errors in modern worship is making it worshiper centered. Worship is to be centered on praising God, not entertaining ourselves.

a. We need to understand that the blessings we receive from worship are a by-product of our worship and not the focus. In worship we come to do and give, not receive.

b. The effort to "get more" out of worship has led to all types of artificial, superficial, and unscriptural gimmicks to "liven up" worship periods. Such IS NOT WORSHIPING GOD; it is bowing to altar of the social gospel.

c. Our problem is that we have determined that we have a problem but have not correctly diagnosed the problem. The problem is not with the content of our worship. The problem is with our hearts. We are so materialistic and carnal minded that we cannot center our minds of praising God and need artificial stimulation to "feel" spiritual.

### **B. The correct place of our worship.**

1. Any place where God's people dwell.

2. Acts 17:24-25 <sup>24</sup> God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

<sup>25</sup> Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

3. This is the truth that Jesus revealed to the Samaritan woman.

a. John 4:20-21 <sup>20</sup> Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

<sup>21</sup> Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

C. There must be a combining of reverence toward God and worshiping according to the truth of God's will.

1. John 4:24 <sup>24</sup> God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

2. Joshua 24:14 - <sup>14</sup> 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.

**CONCLUSION:** The child of God does not need special stimulants to bring about proper worship. He centers his life on pleasing God, therefore he is always happy to come before the throne of grace in praise to the King.