

TRUE WORSHIP AND TRUE WORSHIPPERS

Jno.4:5-26

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Perhaps the greatest conversation ever recorded on the subject of worship:
 - a. Took place in Samaria and not in Jerusalem.
 - b. Took place on the side of Jacob's well, and not in the temple or a synagogue.
 - c. Took place with a worldly, immoral woman, and not with a holy man.
2. This matter on true worship and true worshippers is part of the conversation that Jesus had with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well recording in Jno.4:5-26.
3. From this conversation Jesus had with the Samaritan woman, we learn the meaning of true worship, a conversation which reveals to us that:

II. DISCUSSION

A. TRUE WORSHIP IS THAT WHICH GOD DEFINES.

1. V.24: "God is a Spirit (or, "is Spirit") and they that worship him must worship him *in spirit and in truth.*" (emp. added)
 - a. To define something is to outline it clearly – to mark the limits or boundaries of it.
 - b. Jesus here makes it clear that worship that is acceptable to God, who is Spirit, must be "in spirit and in truth."
 - c. But what does that mean? What does that encompass? Involve?
2. Our worship to be acceptable must be in recognition of the fact that "God is Spirit."
 - a. Hence, not material, of the flesh, or of fleshly limitations.
 - b. For this reason he is not to be regarded as restricted to mountains, to valleys, to temples, or to holy shrines, etc. Cf. Ac.17:24,25.
 - c. He is communed with "in spirit," as a spiritual being. He is worshipped spiritually; that is, the opposite of mere external rites which pertain to the flesh; it is to give to

God the homage of an enlightened mind and an affectionate heart.

- d. He is thus the object of rational and intellectual response, and is not simply or solely approached by physical action. Worship must proceed strictly and solely from the heart Cf. Mt.15:8,9; Rom.12:1.
 - e. Our worship of God must be in harmony with his nature and this is to do so rationally, spiritually, sincerely, as his written word directs; not as men may dictate!
3. In Jno.4:23,24 three vitally important aspects of true and acceptable worship are required.
- a. All true worshippers must worship God; he alone is to be the object of true worship. Cf. Mt.4:10; Ac.14:11-15; Rev.19:10; 228,9.
 - b. Must worship God “in spirit,” i.e., rationally, spiritually, sincerely.
 - c. Must worship God “in truth,” i.e., “as his written word directs; in a manner suited to the written revelation he has made of himself.
 - (1) Thayer, 26, “in truth, truly...according to fact: Mt.22:16; Jno.4:23,24; 2Cor.7:14; Col.1:6; Cf. Col.3:17.
 - (2) It must be both “in spirit” and “in truth” to be true and acceptable worship of God. One without the other is insufficient, no matter which one is present; one without the other constitutes vain worship.
 - d. To worship God “in spirit” and “in truth” are not two different kinds of worship, but two aspects of the same worship.
4. This vital truth about worship of God is in our day either sadly misunderstood of sorely and deliberately neglected, or both.
- a. For much of what is termed “worship” today by professed believers is fleshly in nature, or an appeal to the flesh, rather than spiritual; and is external and spectacular, rather than internal and reverential.
 - b. So much of modern-day worship is built around entertainment of the so-called worshippers of God.
 - c. We cannot worship God by admiring grand architecture, or by listening to the peals of a costly organ, or the

anthems of a highly trained choir, or the music of the best orchestra available.

(1) To whom do the chorus sing? To God, or to the people?

(2) All of it is an appeal to the flesh!

- d. We cannot worship by gazing at pictures or statues, or smelling of incense, or counting of beads!
 - e. We cannot worship with our eyes or ears, noses or hands, for they are all “flesh,” and not “spirit”.
 - f. Spiritual worship must be distinguished from merely emotional worship – there is a difference!
 - g. The only music in worship of God that ever passes beyond the roof of the place where worship is rendered is that which issues from true worshippers who “sing and make melody in the heart to the Lord,” and “sing with grace in their hearts unto the Lord.” Cf. Eph.5:19; Col.3:16.
 - h. The more spiritual our worship is the less formal and the less attractive or appealing to the flesh it will be! Every thing that attracts the flesh and its senses, detracts from real worship in spirit and in truth!
 - i. Modern-day “worship” of professed believers so often is chiefly designed to render it pleasing to the flesh: a “bright attractive service,” with beautiful, elaborate, surroundings, appealing instrumental music, and entertaining choirs and/or choruses and/or oratorical, philosophical talks.
5. This divine definition of true worship which God seeks of true worshippers helps us to understand the true purpose of worship. That it is:
- a. Not entertainment, not to please men. Cf. Gal.1:10.
 - b. Not a display of talent in singing, praying, preaching, etc. Cf. Rom.12:3.
 - c. To honor God. Cf. 1Cor.10:31; Eph.3:21.
 - d. To remember Jesus. Cf. Lk.22:19; 1Cor.11:24.
 - e. To comfort, edify, and instruct one another, 1Cor.14:31,26; Col.3:16.
6. Article: **WORSHIP AND ITS REALITY TO ME**

B. TRUE WORSHIP AS DEFINED IN JNO.4:23,24 IS THAT WHICH GOD DEMANDS.

1. “God is Spirit: And they that worship him **MUST** worship him in spirit and in truth.”
2. By all means, don’t overlook that all important word “must” in this verse.
 - a. A word used to refer to that which is required; not optional.
 - b. Worship is required. Cf. Mt.4:10. It is a part of man’s duty to fear or reverence God and keep his commandments. Cf. Eccl.12:13,14.
 - c. But God, as we have noted in the previous point discussed, has defined – thus directed and limited or marked the boundaries of that worship.
 - d. God did not leave it to man to decide the how or when or what would constitute true and acceptable worship. Cf. Mt.15:9.
3. Only those who thus both worship God and who worship him as he specifically directs are assured of divine approval.
 - a. Some of whom we read in the N.T. worshipped God, but did not do so acceptably. Cf. Mt.15:1-9; Ac.17:23; Col.2:20-23.
 - b. It is also true today!
4. Notice how emphatic Jno.4:23,24 is: They **must** do this!
 - a. There is no alternative, no other choice in the matter. This “must” is final!
 - b. There are three “musts” in the gospel of John, equally important and unequivocal, and which identify the children of God who can worship God as Jno.4:24 directs.
 - (1) Jno.3:7, “Ye **must** be born again,” which has reference to the work of God, the Spirit, in effecting the new birth by means of the word.
 - (2) Jno.3:14, “The Son of God **must** be lifted up,” which has reference to the work of God, the Son; for he was the One who had to die on the cross for the remission of sins, making the new birth possible.

- (3) Jno.4:24, “God must be worshipped in spirit and in truth,” which has reference to God, the Father; for he is the object of worship, the One who “seeketh” true worshippers.
- c. Thus true worship of God is the activity of redeemed people. Worship is a redeemed heart occupied with God, expressing itself in adoration and thanksgiving. Cf. The Redemption Song of Exo.15.

C. TRUE WORSHIP AS DEFINED AND DEMANDED IN JNO.4: 24 IS WORSHIP WHICH THE FATHER DESIRES AND SEEKS.

1. V.23: “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.”
2. While God, the Father, doesn’t need anything that man can offer him (Psa.50:10; Ac.17:25), he does want, seek, and require something from man.
 - a. He both desires, seeks, and requires man to worship him, Prov.15:8; Mt.4:10; Ac.14:11-18; Rev.19:10; 22:8,9.
3. What a great privilege it is for us as God’s creation, and his redeemed children, to be able to give God what he desires and seeks from us.

D. TRUE WORSHIP, AS DEFINED, DESIRED AND DEMANDED IN JNO.4:23,24, IS WORSHIP WHICH GOD DESERVES, Vv. 19-24.

1. Note the repeated use of the designation “Father” with reference to God in Vv.21,23,24.
 - a. And, of course, the Bible repeatedly teaches that fathers are deserving of honor, Exo.20:12; Heb.12:9; Eph.6:2.
 - b. As the “one God and Father of all” according to Eph.4:6, surely there is honor due him. (1Chron.16:29; Mt.6:9; 1Cor.10:31).
2. It is from the standpoint of what God deserves to receive from man but does not always receive, even from his covenant children, that God condemned the worship of many in Malachi’s day, Mal.1:6-10.

3. God forbid that we should be condemned for failing to worship God in spirit and in truth; for failing to render to God that which he deserves, and which he so lovingly seeks.

III. CONCLUSION

1. In harmony with the teaching of Jno.4:23,24, we must include and consider the five elements of the worship in the public assembly of the N.T. church.
 - a. The saints assembled by divine direction for public worship, Heb.10:25, which they were not to forsake.
 - b. The Lord's supper, instituted by Jesus Christ, was observed on the 1st day of the week to proclaim his death till he comes again, Ac.20:7; 1Cor.11:23-26.
 - c. Singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs was one of the five acts of public worship, Eph.5:19; Col.3:16; 1Cor.14:15.
 - d. Public prayer was another act of public worship, Ac.2:42.
 - e. Giving of material means, or laying by in store as prospered, on the 1st day of the week, was another act, 1Cor.16:1,2; Ac.2:42.
 - f. Preaching and edification of the assembled saints was also practiced as another act, Ac.2:42; 20:7, etc.
2. Furthermore, there are certain rules established in the N.T. that are to govern the public worship of the N.T. church.
 - a. Anything done in public worship must be done for edification, exhortation, and comfort, 1Cor.14:3.
 - b. That which is spoken should be "words easy to be understood," this includes preaching, teaching, prayers, and worship in song, 1Cor.14:9,15,16,19.
 - c. All things must be done "unto edifying," 1Cor.14:26.
 - d. Women are to "keep silence" in the assemblies, i.e., they are not allowed to speak or preach publicly as do the men, 1Cor.14:34,35.
 - e. All things are to be done decently and in order, 1Cor.14:40.