

## WORSHIP

Harmony M.B.C., September 16, 2007; August 28, 2016  
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### John 4:6-29

#### I. A look at the religious and worshiping history of man:

God probably instituted worship by sacrifice in killing the animals to cover Adam and Eve. There is a lot that went on among the sons of men that is not recorded in the bible. (Our text chapter even indicates this where the Samaritan woman tells the men of the city "Come see a man who told me all things that ever I did..." (V. 29) Apparently more conversation passed between the woman and Christ than is recorded by John.)

- ❖ We see soon after the worship of Cain and Abel - in it Abel is imbued with grace and obedience and offers the firstlings of the flock, but Cain thinks to improve on worship and offers the fruit of the field. Abel's offering is accepted, Cain's offering is rejected
- ❖ In the house of Abram's father we read that there are teraphim - **Genesis 31:34** (small images or idols representing a god) because Laban, the brother of Abram has them.
- ❖ In the account of the captivity of Israel we read about all kinds of gods that are worshiped by the Egyptians - we know that the Israelites picked up these practices because as soon as they are in the wilderness and Moses is gone up to Mount Sinai, they build a calf to worship.
- ❖ This worship is not of a calf but of Jehovah in the image of a calf :
  - **Exodus 32:4-5** And he received *them* at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, **These *be* thy gods**, O Israel, **which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.** 5 And when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow *is* a **feast to the LORD.**
- ❖ Even after God's mighty works among the Egyptians and in saving the Israelites from them, they had difficulty worshiping in spirit, much less in truth.
- ❖ Later, when the Israelites are in the Promised Land we see the inhabitants obsessed with the worship of every kind of idol
- ❖ They do not know Jehovah and don't even have the understanding about worshiping in spirit and truth
- ❖ We see the Israelites drawn again and again into idolatry by their association with the people and the idols - even with the knowledge of Jehovah, they drift off into idolatrous and false worship
- ❖ We see Solomon himself accommodate idol worship - Israel at the pinnacle of its glory has difficulty worshiping in spirit and in truth - **1Kings 11:4** For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, *that* **his wives turned away his heart after other gods:** and **his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God,** as *was* the heart of David his father.
- ❖ At the height of this degradation of Jehovah, the children of Israel are scattered and carried away and the king of Assyria who is one of the rulers used by the Lord to do it repopulates the area called Samaria with a mixed-race population from a lot of places. These people are mixed with the remaining Israelites and during that era, the worship of God gets so corrupted and mixed with idolatry that the judgment of God comes upon it. That is noticed by the ruling government and word is brought to the king of Assyria in **2Kings 17** that because the people of the land do not know, understand and serve the God of that land, that God is judging them.

- The king of Assyria sends back a priest from the tribe of Levi to teach the people about Jehovah.
- We have reason to suspect that this priest was corrupted in his religion; because he had been brought from Samaria where all the worship of Jehovah had been corrupted by worship of the calves.
- But, I want you to notice the account of all this because it sets the stage for the kind of confrontation Jesus has with the Samaritan woman at the well. Read **2 Kings 17**:
- ❖ **Conclusion:** Even with the priest teaching the people, they are unable to worship in spirit and in truth.
- ❖ Even in the face of God's judgment, they will not, they cannot find how to worship in spirit and truth
- ❖ **Critical Question: Why do humans find it hard to worship in spirit and in truth?**
  - Because man is in a fallen state
  - Worshiping in spirit and truth is alien to the unregenerate being
  - Regenerate humans have difficulty with it because it is not compatible with the carnal being; that being that still houses our new spiritual being.
- ❖ My intent this morning is to state that few people worship God in spirit and in truth. With all the religion and worship in the world, most of it is devoid of spiritual life. There are more ways to pursue worship on this earth than we can even count. It may be one of the reasons why there is such a famine for spiritual worship. It is also the natural direction taken by a natural world inhabited by natural humans who follow natural and depraved tendencies.
- ❖ As we look further at this, I think it is important for me to emphasize a warning to true believers.
  - Lost people are not the only ones who are pursuing spiritless worship this morning.
  - It is a great poison of people everywhere and one of the greatest tragedies among humans today is that a lot of God's people are conducting spiritless worship and most of the time are not aware of it.
  - I hope this morning to bring this home to us so that when we contemplate worship of God, we will be inspired to make it worship in spirit and truth.

## II. The Samaritan woman's statement about worshiping in "this mountain" stands as a broad summary of ways that people offer worship that is not in Spirit and in truth

- ❖ Jesus' pronouncement may seem harsh, but it comes from His knowledge that those Samaritans had corrupted the meaning of God and had actually rejected the prophecies of the Jews concerning the coming of Messiah.
  - A. Spiritless worship is any that substitutes an object of the physical world for a spiritual concept.
  - B. The church pew, the pulpit, this hymn book, this musical instrument, this building, all can become physical substitutes for a spiritual concept
  - C. Habits of religious worship can become physical substitutes for a spiritual endeavor -going to church; singing a song; reading your bible; saying your prayers

## III. Notice Things That Identify Worship in Spirit and Truth

- ❖ The Absolute Necessity for This Type of Worship Was Settled With Finality at the Coming of Christ ("The hour cometh, **and now is.**")
- ❖ It Separates Worshipers from Worshippers: "...**true worshipers** shall worship the Father..."
- ❖ It Supplants a "Place" (like a mountain or a synagogue) "...in spirit and in truth..."

- (Emphasize the fact that spirit and truth are not bounded by any building, any circumstance, any time, any place, any formalism or program)
- ❖ The Specific Worship is in spirit and in truth
  - (Emphasize that these are the two ruling elements of this kind of worship)
- ❖ They go hand in hand:
  - True Worship in truth without the spirit is an oxymoron (a paradox expressed by words; like jumbo shrimp, wise fool, ignorantly learned, laughing sadness,
  - True Worship in the Spirit without truth is an oxymoron
  - You can have worship that presents the truth, but without the Spirit it is unacceptable
  - You can have a spirit in your worship, but without the truth, it cannot be the Holy Spirit
- ❖ God Takes an Active Role in This Enabling of People to worship in spirit and truth
  - “...the Father **seeketh** such to worship him.”
    - **Luke 19:10** - For the Son of man is come to **seek** and to save that which is lost.”