

In Spirit and in Truth

Keith Evan Schubert
Cornerstone Bible Baptist Church
Redlands, CA

The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 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. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

John 4:19-26, KJV.

Why did the woman at the well ask this question? Have you ever thought about that? It puzzled me for a long time. Even after I studied this passage and felt I had the answer I felt I was missing something. While studying for this sermon I think I have been lead to some of what I have been missing. The classic answer is that she was trying to deflect the gaze and light of Christ that was shining on her. She wanted escape, so she picked a hot topic of debate. The Mt. Gerazim or Mt. Moriah debate had been a major issue for 800 years, and is still debated by scholars in archeology. The Samaritans had modified the Torah to include a command to build a temple on Mt. Gerazim, which was most likely added to keep the people from worshiping in Jerusalem. This became a source of identity for the two nations. The woman picked an issue that was sure to spark the intrest of a devout Jew. Seems reasonable and I am sure that was running through her mind.

The deeper question is why did God allow it? God commands all things. I cannot breath without His willing it.

1 All Believers

Worship is fundamental to salvation.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Matthew 2:11, KJV.

And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

Matthew 8:2, KJV.

While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

(Matthew 9:18, KJV).

Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

(Matthew 14:33, KJV).

Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

(Matthew 15:25, KJV).

Then came to him the mother of Zebedees children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

(Matthew 20:20, KJV).

And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

(Matthew 28:9, KJV).

And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

(Matthew 28:17, KJV).

2 Spirit

Worship that is mechanical and spun to please us is not acceptable.

Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart.

(Jeremiah 9:26, KJV).

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

(Romans 2:28,29, KJV).

Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

(Romans 9:6-8, KJV).

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

(Colossians 2:11,12, KJV).

What is the point? Why are we to care?

Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

(Isaiah 1:9-15, KJV).

God is not pleased with the form of worship if it is not from a clean heart. God does not take pleasure in the worship of those who claim to believe but do not. More even than that, it is an offense and sin to Him to play at worship. To those who believe we must be about the work of worship. We must center our hearts and minds on Him. Nothing less is acceptable.

3 Truth

Worship must be totally for God and in God's way.

And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

(Hebrews 10:21-25, KJV).

Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness. For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts is his name.

(Isaiah 48:1,2, KJV).

And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Matthew 15:6-9, KJV.

How we have done it is not a justification. The accepted practices are not the basis of designing worship. Our personal likes and pleasures are worthless indicators.

By the thoughts and pleasures of men we have the arguement of hymns versus praise songs. The tune doesn't matter, we are never given one to follow in Scripture. What matters is the words and the attitude of the singer. Do you sing the song because you love the song? Then you sing wrong. You must sing because the song truly reflects the one you love.

Lord willing we will examine the aspects of worship as we do them and as they are described in the Scriptures. Let us diligently seek Gods truth that we will not be blaspheming when we worship. May we desire only God's truth, and may He reveal it to us.