

True Spiritual Worship **12-14-14PM**

In John 4, Jesus met a woman at a well in Samaria, and revealed to her the wonderful news of the kingdom. In particular, He explained that the worship in the kingdom would be different than it had been in the past. Jesus tells her that the new worship would be one that is "in Spirit and in Truth". Therefore, we can deduce that the old worship was not.

This new worship was prophesied by the Old Testament prophets as something that the Messiah would bring. This is how the woman at the well knew that Jesus was talking about something the Messiah would change (vs, 25). In Jeremiah 31:31-35, the prophet spoke about the new covenant the Messiah would create. In it, people would worship God with knowledge.

What is Worship? In a general sense, it is a feeling or expression of reverence and adoration towards a greater power. We are warned that anything we serve by desire we are worshipping; thus covetousness is idolatry. We might refer to our personal works of service (Romans 12:1-2). We might also even call our midweek Bible studies worship, such as those found in Acts 2:46. However, there is a specific communal worship instructed and shown to be of the new covenant church that we offer every first day of the week (Acts 20:7) that is specific to the word "worship". This is our assembly for the partaking of communion discussed in 1 Corinthians 11:20, the main (but not exclusive) reason for our coming together.

The context of John 4 is to communal worship (although the general principles would apply to service worship too). Jesus is trying to make a distinction between the OLD Worship and the NEW Worship. The Old Worship was physical (with physical instruments of worship, physical places, physical priests, etc). It was indirect and impersonal, using the priesthood to approach God. Finally, it was worship that did not fully understand the purposes of God.

Jesus said that the New Worship is in Spirit. We can call this "Spiritual", and discern that it is the opposite of worldly or physical. It is not based in physical items, but makes spiritual offerings, sacrifices, temples, priesthoods, etc. The New Worship is in Truth also; it is the opposite of ignorant. It requires knowledge of God and mental understanding of the purposes of acts in worship.

Old Testament Prophets predicted this new worship. They said it would be with total understanding (Habakkuk 2:14). They spoke about the commitment and mindfulness it would demand (Jeremiah 31:31-35). They said it would be one where everyone would be directly involved in it (Zechariah 14:16). This was the focus of New Testament writers in places like 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 and Hebrews 10:19-29. They spoke about the danger of not understanding the purpose and intent of the new worship.

A great danger we face is reverting back to the characteristics of the old worship. If we begin making it physical, indirect, impersonal or unknowing, we corrupt the purpose of God in creating a new worship.

Conclusions: with New Worship we need to distinguish personal or church worship, and understand that both are demanded by God. As well, we must understand the differences between old and new worship. The new worship, like the new covenant, is so much superior, and we need to embrace this worship.