

Spirit and Truth

John 4:20-24

Important Questions

- What does God require for his worship?
- Are there many ways to get into heaven?
- Can we agree to disagree?
- Does Christ care more about our hearts or outward performance?

Potential Dilemma

We might question the importance of truth when we discover others holding different doctrine and practice from our own, if they are:

- ancient commentators
- growing churches
- right on some points
- give glowing testimonies of their walk
- criticize our strictness
- live without fear or trouble (as Asaph wrote in Ps 73)

John 4:20-24

- 20. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.
- 21. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.
- 22. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.
- 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.
- 24. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Context of John 4

- Verse 1: “he must needs go through Samaria.”
- Jesus meets a woman of Samaria, near a city called Sychar
- At a well, Jesus begins a conversation with this woman
- She is surprised that he (a Jew) would ask her to give him water
- Jesus tells her about living water, and then shows his divinity
- The woman recognized that Jesus was at least a prophet
- Jesus lays out some fantastic truth, revealed for the first time
- She brings back many others from the city who also get converted

History of Samaria

- Samaria was a city of the ten tribes of Israel
- In 2 Kings 17, Assyria besieged Samaria and took it
 - Israel was taken captive to Assyria
 - The king of Assyria placed people from Babylon in Samaria during the captivity
 - Lions came in and ate some due to the idolatry of these immigrants
 - Thus, some Jews were brought back to teach Jehovah's religion
- These mixed people worshipped on Mount Gerizim, instead of Zion
 - Josephus indicates a temple on Mt. Gerizim was built to compete with Jerusalem
 - Here these Samaritans followed a Mosaic form of worship, as a few do to this day!
 - Those rejected from Jerusalem and temple worship for heresy or political reasons could find easy refuge and a similar religion just 30 miles away on Mt. Gerizim.

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

John 4:20

- Note “this mountain” = Mount Gerizim due to proximity to Sychar
- “Our fathers” vs. “ye say” reduce their conversation to tradition
- Our fathers were worse than these Samaritans
- Modern America is worse than our ancestors
- Tradition is worthless, if that tradition is not the apostolic tradition



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

John 4:21

- “Believe me” – Do you believe Jesus?
- Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life
- Jesus was about to lay brand new truth on this woman – a Samaritan!
- No one had heard this yet, not even the disciples
- 1500 years of the O.T. dispensation of worship was ending

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

John 4:22

- Is this too harsh? Jesus completely shuts down her worship
- Jehovah reveals truth to some, and not to others
- True worship is based on revelation, which the Jews had
- Is it right to praise the LORD for not revealing truth to others?
 - “He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD.”
 - Psalm 147:20

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.

John 4:23

- This hour is a new dispensation of God's worship
- Jesus said the hour was presently coming, and had already begun
- True worshippers implies that false worshippers exist
- Not all forms of worship are acceptable
- The Father seeks certain types of worshippers
- This is the earthquaking change in worship from Haggai 2 and Hebrews 12

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit
and in truth.

John 4:24

- God requires two things in his religion!
 - Worship must be in spirit and truth.
- Spirit means heart, mind, and passion.
 - This condemns the Jews
- Truth means correct doctrine and practice.
 - This condemns the Samaritans

Spirit does not Equal Holy Ghost

- God is not physical, so the best form of worship involves spirit
- The context is about ceremonial vs. something new
- This requires the word “spirit” here to refer to heart religion
- The reformation is the Jews no longer worshipping with carnal ordinances
- Israelites already had the Holy Spirit in many ways at different times
- The change is instead about the worshipper’s spirit

What is Truth?

- Truth = correct doctrine and practice
- It must be measured by Scripture
- There are no other real sources of truth
- Sincerity does not matter without this qualification also
- Everything that is not truth must be a lie, for every statement, idea, or opinion is one or the other
- We must oppose any alteration of N.T. scriptures
- There is another gospel and another Jesus

The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

Luke 16:16

- The time of reformation was from John Baptist to the destruction of Jerusalem
- This change of religion ran nearly 40 years from 30-70 A.D.
- More about the time of reformation can be found in:
 - Hebrews 8:6-13
 - Acts 17:24-30
 - Galatians 3:19-26
- Paul tells us more about this in Hebrews 9

Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

Hebrews 9:10

- The context before verse 10 is the first tabernacle of the O.T.
- The O.T. told you what you could or could not eat
- No pork or shellfish allowed!
- Aaron and the priests had their unique washings.
- One week a month for women, many washings.
- Washing included body, clothes, furniture, etc.
- The N.T. does not care about any of these things!
- This time of reformation entirely changed the form of worship

Religion Requirements

- In spirit
 - No instruments - why? Because the carnal religion of the Old Testament is no more
 - “Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”
 - Ephesians 5:19
 - “I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”
 - 1 Corinthians 14:15
- In truth
 - There are not 100 ways to heaven
 - We cannot agree to disagree
 - Varying at all from Scripture means your worship is not acceptable to God

Heart Importance

- Ceremonies and rituals of altars, incense, gold, candles, and such like do not match God.
- God was never properly worshipped with animal blood, temples of stone, and carnal ordinances.
- Church is not a building – we could worship anywhere
- We worship God acceptably in spirit by directing our heart and mind toward Him.
- The focus is now on internal affection, not external ceremony

Truth Importance

- Do we still love Psalm 119:128?
- God's truth from heaven has been revealed to you!
- Persons, popularity, circumstances, and costs do not matter
- It does not matter how ancient or sincere worshippers are – it is the word of God only that counts
- Jesus Christ asked the question: “when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

1 Corinthians 10:20

- Worship not in truth = worship of the devil
- The devil uses idolatry by many means to keep the world from truth
- Ensuring right doctrine is not a small thing
- Paul feared this of the Corinthians
- Do not let your minds be corrupted from Christ's simplicity
- Do not bear with preaching of another Spirit or another gospel
 - “The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so:”
 - Jeremiah 5:31

Conclusion

- John emphasizes the importance of truth in gospel and epistles
- Love the truth of Scripture
- This is about the Words of Jehovah God, not the truth of COG
- Appreciate details and salvation from error
- Changes to doctrine which appear small are not such
- If we are not thankful, God will take away truth
- Remember the call to contend for once-delivered faith

Conclusion (cont.)

- Do you want to be a true worshipper?
- Christ does not like half-hearted Christians
- He will spew them out of his mouth
- Passion always beats perfunctory
- Show others that your heart is united toward one goal
- Half of what God has done for you requires all your effort
- Give God your all for the cause of Christ

For Further Study

- [Spirit and Truth – 2016 \(PPT\)](#)
- [John 4 – 2016 \(Audio\)](#)
- [True Worshipers – 2011](#)
- [Bring it Back to the Bible! – 2006](#)
- [Contemporary Christianity – 2000](#)
- [Hebrews: Chapter 9 - 1988](#)