

Worship 2

Jn. 4:19-26

Introduction:

1. In our study last Sunday morning we surveyed some of the terms used to describe “worship” in the O.T. and the N.T. We noted that the words used carried a variety of concepts. “Bowing down,” “serving,” “kissing the earth,” “fear,” and “falling on one’s knees” were all associated with “worship.”
2. From Jn. 4:19-26 we learned that acceptable worship had to be revealed from God, that worship originating from our own thinking is insufficient. Jesus said, “We (Jews) worship what we know.” Samaritans, He said, “Worship what you do not know.” Knowledge of the object of worship is critical to acceptable worship. If you do not know God you cannot worship Him appropriately.
3. From this same text we observed that a transition occurred with the coming of the Messiah. The woman said, “He will declare all things to us.” Jesus acknowledged this as the truth when He confessed that He was the Messiah.
4. Worship in ignorance is not a good thing. In Athens Paul observed that the people were very religious, but their worship was in ignorance. Paul said, “What you worship in ignorance, I proclaim to you” (Acts 17:23).
5. In this study we will contrast pagan (unrevealed worship) with worship that is revealed by God. We will question our own perceptions of God. Are those perceptions consistent with what is revealed about God in Scripture? How does our understanding of God affect the way we worship?

Discussion:

- I. The objective of pagan worship involves trying to get in good favor with the gods, while revealed worship communicates a gracious God.
 - A. The origin of Samaritan worship reveals an attempt to find favor with the “god of the land” (2 Kings 17:24ff).
 1. It seems to have been a customary practice for the Assyrians once they overpowered a particular people to take them away and settle them in another place.
 2. They would take people from another conquered region and settle them in a new place.
 3. This effectively broke down the political and military structure, revamped the culture and destroyed resistance. (This is the effect of chaos.)
 4. Once Samaria was conquered Assyria brought people from Babylon, and other places and settled them in the cities of Samaria in place of the sons of Israel.
 5. The king of Assyria sent one of the priests of Israel to teach the people the “custom of the god of the land.” (Note that is the work of priests to teach

the people. Cf. Mal. 2:6-8.) But they still made gods of their own (29-33). They just added the Lord to their pantheon. You might say the priest did not teach them properly. But he had a difficult task.

- B. The author of Kings assesses the situation in 34-41.
 - 1. He commends revealed worship (note v. 40 in particular).
 - 2. The Lord is defined as the one who brought you up from Egypt. The one and only God. He communicated Himself (35-39). But they did not listen (40).
 - C. This is the worship of Mt. Gerizim and the Samaritan woman. It is worship characterized by ignorance.
 - 1. Do you see the problem with weak or false teaching?
 - 2. God said in Mal. 3 that He would send a messenger to clear the way and the Lord would come. Do you see a connection here with what the Samaritan woman and Jesus said?
 - 3. Mal. 4:5-6 alludes to the coming of John the Baptist (Matt. 11:10ff; Mk. 1:3; Lk. 1:17). Do you see a connection here to what Zacharias was praying for (Lk. 1:10-11, 67ff)?
 - D. True worship involves the communication of a gracious God.
 - 1. He is a God who calls for repentance that men might receive forgiveness.
 - 2. He is a God who comes to us (Mal. 3; Heb. 2:14-18; Phil 2:6-8).
 - 3. He is a God who sacrifices Himself for us. The Father did not kill the Son for us. God took the penalty of our sin upon Himself.
- II. Pagan (unrevealed) worship does not understand the nature of the God of the Bible.
- A. It limits Him to a particular place (2 Kings 17:26; Jn. 4:21; Acts 17:24). Contra. Psa. 130:7ff; Isa. 66:1ff.
 - B. Pagan gods are limited (Jer. 10:1ff; Psa. 115:3-8).
 - C. The folly of idolatry (Isa. 44:9ff; 46:1ff).
 - D. Contrast the golden calf (Ex. 32) with the glory of God (Ex. 32:30-35; 33:18ff; 34:6-7).
 - E. Knowing the Lord is the foundation of a covenant relationship with Him (Jer. 31:31-34). Knowing the Lord results in forgiveness.
- III. The more we understand about who God is the better our worship becomes.
- A. God is Creator (Acts 17:24-26a).
 - B. God is Ruler (Acts 17:26b-29).
 - C. God is Communicator, Judge and Forgiver of the repentant (30-31).

Conclusion:

1. Who is the God that you worship?
2. Do you understand who He is?

3. Your worship is defined by your understanding of the nature of God. Is it defined by what God reveals of Himself or by some notion conceived by the art and thought of man (Acts 17:29)?