

John 4:21-24 The Spirit of Worship

Because the Father is seeking people to worship Him, Jesus gives His people the living water of the Holy Spirit to make our worship fitting for God according to His fulfillment of God's redemptive purposes.

1. The Father has sought and saved you to be true worshipers.
 - a. The question about worship is not a distraction, but is at the heart of Jesus' mission.
 - b. "The hour is coming" —climax of Redemptive History/Covenant of Grace
 - c. "neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem" —not merely alternative sites, but alternative religious approaches
 - i. "You worship what you do not know" —Jesus declares Samaritan worship apostate; Samaritan Pentateuch corrupted
 - ii. "we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews" —not an endorsement of temple practice at the time of Jesus (cf. 2:13-22); but temple worship as revealed in Jewish Scriptures accurately prophesies/foreshadows "salvation"
 - d. "true worshipers . . . the Father is seeking such people to worship Him" —seeking is parallel to salvation pointing to the grace of God to seek and save for the purpose of having true worshipers
 - e. Ephesians 1:6, 12 —"to the praise of His glory/glorious grace"
 - f. Your salvation is fundamentally about worship. Worship is about the glory of God. Why do you worship?
2. Jesus gives you the Holy Spirit for fitting worship.
 - a. "God is Spirit" —not merely a statement of God's incorporeal or immaterial or intangible essence (though not excluding this); more a statement of God's absolute existence; He has life in Himself (John 5:26); therefore, He is not "worshiped by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything" (Acts 17:25)—Therefore, it is wrong to worship God, as the Pagans worshiped their idols and imaginations, implying that we are meeting some need in God or fulfilling God in some way. So, how can we properly worship God such as He is?
 - b. "Those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth" —this is why Jesus offers the woman the gift of the Spirit (vv. 10-15; cf. 7:37-39); Spirit and Truth is matched by Spirit of Truth in the farewell discourse (14:17; 15:26; 16:13); necessity of Spirit for new birth (3:5) is paralleled by necessity of Spirit for true worship (4:23); OT antecedents of Spirit and Word (Neh. 9:20:30; Psalms 33:6; 147:18; Isa. 59:21; Ezek. 36:27)
 - c. All of our worship must be in the Spirit: prayer (Eph. 6:18); singing (Acts 4:15; Eph. 5:19); preaching, teaching, and administrating (1 Cor. 12); hearing (Rev. 3:6)
 - d. Why do we have an invocation, a prayer of thanksgiving after the collection of tithes and offerings, a prayer for illumination, and a benediction?
3. The Holy Spirit unites you to Christ for true worship.

- a. “in Spirit and Truth”—nouns united by single preposition; “Truth” in John refers to Jesus, not so much in contrast to what is false as to what is incomplete: True light (1:9); True bread (6:32); True food, True Drink (6:55); True vine (15:1); The Truth (14:6).
- b. John’s gospel follows 3 years of festival cycles, deliberately casting Jesus as the fulfillment of these religious feasts (1:29; 2:23; 6:4-14; 13:1; 18:39; 19:14, 31, 42—Passover; 7:2, 37-39—Feast of Booths; 10:22-11:54—Feast of Dedication).
- c. The Temple is fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ (2:13-22; 7:37-39; 14:2-3; 19:34-37).
- d. The Priesthood is fulfilled in Jesus’ offering (10:17-18).
- e. The Atoning Sacrifice is fulfilled in Jesus’ death (1:29).
- f. True worship is worship in the Spirit through Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the Father’s redemptive purpose. Jesus went to the cross and sent the Spirit so that we could worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- g. How can the unclean, immoral Samaritan woman become a true worshiper? She becomes one the only way anyone can, by the Spirit who unites us to Christ, the One who touches the unclean and makes them clean.