

# Worship: Drawing Near

## I. The Centrality of Worship - John 4:19-24

### A. That which God seeks

1. God is never described anywhere else as seeking anything from man.
2. But here, God is said to be seeking *true worshippers*.  
*"For the Father is seeking such (true worshippers) to worship Him.*
  - a. This is not a seeking as though God does not know where to find true worshippers and so is looking for them.
  - b. This is rather a declaration of God's saving purpose, His aim in saving men.

### B. True worshippers

#### 1. Their description

*"We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews."*

- a. Those who worship what they **know**
- b. This knowledge is a result of **salvation**
- c. Thus,
  - i. **Salvation** entails a resulting right **knowledge** of God.
    - a) Note again the primacy of the intellect in God's saving work.
    - b) The implication is that those who are saved will grow in their knowledge of the true God.
  - ii. This knowledge of God which flows from our salvation produces in **true worshippers**.
  - iii. **This then reveals God's design in saving us -- that we might be true worshippers.**
  - iv. This also reveals that **worship is drawing near to the specially revealed presence of God.**

*God's special revelation of Himself via His commanded ordinances at the Temple in Mount Zion sharply contrasts that place as the proper location for worship (as opposed to Mount Gerizim).*

2. Their contrast
  - a. The Samaritans lack salvation
  - b. They therefore are ignorant and offer false worship ("what you do not know;")
  - c. Note that this lack of saving knowledge which results in false worship is revealed by their manifold disobedience!
    - i. The Scriptures revealed that God was to be worshipped by way of the sacrificial ordinances only in the Temple at Jerusalem, yet the Samaritans offered their sacrificial ordinances in Mount Gerizim.
    - ii. Denial and corruption of the Scriptures

## II. The Sacred Context of Worship

### A. The specific question

1. The woman had asked **where** are we supposed to worship.
2. Christ answers "at Jerusalem" and by necessary implication, on Mount Zion in the Temple rather than at the altar on Mount Gerizim.
3. The question revolved around specially **sacred geography** which principle, Christ says, is going away.

*"Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.... But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth."*

### B. Sacred space for worship

1. The principle of sacred space is seen throughout Old Covenant worship.

*Certain locations and objects are declared by God to be **holy** by reason of their proximity and utility to His self-revelation.*

- a. The ground at the burning bush (Ex. 3:5)
- b. Mount Sinai (Exodus 19)
- c. Israel - a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exodus 19:6)
- d. The Tabernacle and the Levitical / Aaronic Priesthood (Exodus 29:43; ch. 40; 2 Chron. 29: 31)

e. Appointed sacrifices and by implication the sacred locations in the Promised Land (Deut. 12)

f. Jerusalem, Mount Zion, the Temple

*Again, by reason of the presence of the Ark, the means of worship, the proximity to the self-revelation of God.*

i. 2 Chron. 3 (see v.8), 5, & 7

ii. 2 Chron. 8:11

iii. Ps. 78:68; 132:13

2. It is this principle of sacred geography that Christ indicates is passing away, and by implication, so are all those things uniquely tied to it.

C. Sacred time for worship

1. This concept is not unique to the Old Covenant, but is established by God in Creation and is common throughout redemptive history

2. The Sabbath Day

*Gen. 2:3; Ex. 20:8; Lev. 23:3; Isa. 56:6-7; 58:13-14; Matt. 12:8; Mark 2:27-28; Heb. 4:9-10*

a. All Sabbaths always involved a 'holy convocation' or 'sacred assembly' which was a worship gathering.

*Lev. 23; Num. 28-29; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17; Heb. 10:25*

b. The Sabbath frees us from our other lawful pursuits that we may have a whole day set apart for pursuing the immediate glorifying of God, especially through worship.

3. Worship as sacred time

a. Time that is set apart, marked out, by drawing near to the special self-revelation of God, especially in the sacred assembly.

b. 1 Kings 18:37-40; 2 Chron. 6:41-7:4ff; Isa. 6; Matt. 17:1-8; Rev. 1:10-20; Psalm 95, 100, etc.

### **III. New Covenant Transformation**

A. Sacred space has ceased along with all those things uniquely tied to Old Covenant worship.

B. Sacred time -- the Sabbath, worship, etc. -- continues, transformed by fuller revelation of God.

*The book of Hebrews discusses this extensively.*

1. Sabbath (Heb. 4:9-10)
  2. Worship (Heb. 12:20-29)
  3. High Priest (Christ, the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec Heb. 7-9)
  4. The Temple (1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 2:21; 1 Pet. 2:5)
  5. The priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5-9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10)
- C. God specially revealing Himself
1. God has always specially revealed Himself in His worship especially through the means of His worship ordinances.
  2. God especially reveals Himself by His Word (Ex. 33:19-34:8)
    - a. Christ, the Word, is the fullest revelation of God (John 1:1-5, 14; Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:1-4)
    - b. The New Covenant ordinances of Worship: Word Centred