

The True Worshippers Will Worship the Father in Spirit and Truth
John 4:20 – 24

1. The contrasts:
 - a. Jesus' primary contrast is "location" versus "spirit and truth."
 - b. Secondly, John contrasts a God who has revealed Himself versus one without evidence.
2. "In spirit"
 - a. In the heart rather than in the Temple?
 - b. The right attitude versus the right place?
 - c. Worship by our eternal part (our spirits) as opposed to worship through symbolic rituals?
3. "In truth"
 - a. Reality in contrast to symbolic ritual?
 - b. The revealed versus the supposed?
4. Reasons given by Jesus:
 - a. God is Spirit, therefore worship in spirit, not physically.
 - b. God is seeking worship by spirits, not worship by physical bodies.
5. Related passages about "spiritual" worship and reality (truth).
 - a. John 1:14, 17 Jesus demonstrated (not just illustrated) the character (glory) of God and reality (truth). This is contrasted with the Law of Moses (which was "holy, just and good," Romans 7:12) in which the character of God was symbolized (Hebrews 9:9) and reality was veiled (2 Corinthians 3:7 – 18).
 - b. Hebrews 7:24 – 8:5 Jesus is our High Priest in the Temple in heaven in which the glory of God is present, not symbolized, which is the ultimate reality.
 - c. The worshippers in the church are fundamentally different from those of the Law (Hebrews 8:7 – 13)
6. The ditches
 - a. Therefore, all symbols are to be discarded.
 - 1) It not, which are to be preserved? Jesus gave no exceptions.
 - 2) Will different groups have different rituals? (Colossians 2:16 – 23, Romans 14:1 – 6)
 - b. Therefore, any form of worship is acceptable to God.
 - 1) Claims are worthless (*e.g.*, the Samaritans). If my spirit, in God's reality, worships the Eternal Spirit, then it is acceptable. God's reality is the benchmark, not my perception of it.
 - 2) If my mind and body are not connected to my spirit, my attempts to worship are as ignorant as that of the Samaritans.
 - c. My spirit worships, so the actions of my body are irrelevant (Gnosticism).
 - 1) Our bodies (behaviors) are symbols of the Temple (1 Corinthians 6:19). Behavior that God does not like is inappropriate.
 - 2) Many passages advocate moral behavior for Christians.
 - 3) The reason for moral behavior is not to qualify for heaven, but
 - a) To demonstrate God's character to unbelievers as Jesus did.
 - b) Because a connected mind, body and spirit are a tree that produces good fruit (an oft repeated illustration from the New Testament).

- d. True worship is now enacted by new, spiritual rituals that have been described by God.
 - 1) No passage in the New Testament connects worship and the assembly.
 - 2) All such lists of authorized rituals are based on assumption.
 - 3) “In spirit” is redefined as “what we do in church.”

7. The point:

- a. Each Christian must make connection between the earthly part (intellect and body) and the eternal part so that our eternal part can worship the Eternal Spirit both in spirit and in truth. The eternal part then controls the mind and the body.
- b. This is why the purpose of the assembly is not worship but edification. The assembly is how we each learn to make the connection, Jesus being the example of that connection. Having established that connection, at least in its rudimentary stages, worship in spirit and truth becomes possible.
- c. Understanding the symbols of the Law (Galatians 3:24), as well as the symbols of the Lord’s Supper and baptism, aids in connecting to the reality of God’s character.