

“What is Worship?”

John 4:20-26

Hello friend and welcome to *Hope for Today*. My name is J. Mark Horst; I’m your friend and Bible teacher. The program you’re listening to is produced by Heralds of Hope, an international Gospel radio and literature ministry.

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The Bible is the only source of lasting hope. It is God’s Holy Word. You know as well as I do that we cannot rely on the words of men because men change. But God is unchanging, His Word is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The Psalmist, David, said in Psalm 119:89, “*Forever, O Lord, Your Word is settled in Heaven.*” My friend, you can depend on God’s Word.

In a few moments, Dr. Yoder will speak to us from John 4:20 to 26. But right now, let’s pray together.

Heavenly Father, we come to you in the precious name of Jesus, your Son, and our Savior. We praise you that you have revealed yourself to us in the pages of Holy Scripture. For those of us who are your children, we understand that faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

In a few moments Dr. Yoder will share his teaching from the Word, and I pray that you will open my heart and the heart of my friend who is listening to receive that Word. I pray that each one listening will gain a better understanding of the true meaning of worship. And I pray this in His name, Amen. Now, here’s Dr. Yoder.

King David once wrote these words: “Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” But another king long before David asked this question: “Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?” Who the Lord is and what David meant when he said, “Oh worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” will help us to understand WHAT IS WORSHIP?

I would say worship is acknowledging who God is. One man explained worship as looking or gazing at God. But then, how are you going to get that visual image of God? How are you going to see God?

Together we are going to have a blessing. We will go to a part of the Bible, the Gospel of John, the fourth book in the New Testament, and read John 4:20-26.

- 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.*
- 25 *The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.*
- 26 *Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.*

In this text Jesus talked about worship. The story opens with a woman talking with Jesus regarding worship. I want to talk to you about the idea of how to worship God.

There are no people in the world who have no desire to worship. Oh, there are certain countries and lands where they've tried to outlaw it but still the desire to worship is there. There are different methods and different objects but people all over the world have a desire to worship.

We may wonder what the right way to worship is. I am sure that everybody who has heard about Jesus is convinced that He was a great teacher. You can't read the Gospel records without being impressed with the way Jesus was able to teach the truth. He taught as no one else taught. In fact, the people of His day said, "No man ever spoke like this man." Even people who did not agree with Him had to admit that here was somebody who stood tall as a teacher. He had a way of teaching that got the truth across.

Therefore, I want you to pay close attention to this Scripture in which Jesus comments about worship. From His words we find the ANSWERS to the deep question we have of how to worship God.

There is **The Answer of Place**.

The woman asked a very important question, “Our fathers worshiped in this mountain but you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” You might wonder why these Samaritan people insisted on worshiping in that mountain. Even today there are still a few Samaritans living in the same place where this woman lived. Today they worship on Mt. Gerizim. God had told Moses they were to read the law to the people of Israel from that mountain when they got into the land of promise. So the Samaritans chose that as the place to worship.

Later the Jewish people set their temple in Jerusalem. David took Jerusalem from the Jebusites a thousand years before Christ. Solomon set the temple there on Mount Moriah where Abram offered Isaac. It was the place God had chosen.

So, the woman said, “We’ll worship here, you worship there.” There are many people who think it is important in which city you worship, for example, Rome, Bombay or Mecca. Places are really important to some people.

Jesus said they had mistaken the whole purpose of worship. He said, “The time is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem are you going to be worshiping the Father.” By that He did not say you can worship God nowhere, but He said you can worship God anywhere. It’s not so much this mountain or that mountain or any other place; it is that you are worshiping the Father. So, Jesus gave an answer to the question of place.

Then He gave **The Answer of What**.

He asked, “Do you know what you are worshiping?” When He said that, He answered clearly for many people, because many are worshipping in their ignorance; they do not know what they are worshiping. In my study of religions of the world I have found that many people are like that. They worship in ignorance. That is not criticism but simply to point out that just as Jesus remarked about this woman, there are many others in the world today who worship but have no idea what they worship.

Then Jesus said, “We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.” Now, my friend, you can’t rewrite Bible history. The history of revelation has it this way. God chose the sons of Jacob and their descendants. He gathered them at Mount Sinai many years ago and came down in revelation to them. They had the prophets. They were the ones to whom God spoke. He spoke to

the world through them. God chose one people to receive the revelation of Himself. They are the Jews. Jesus said, “Salvation is of the Jews.”

Now, my friend, these words cannot be changed. Maybe some people would like to change them but they cannot be changed. The God of revelation is the true God. Jesus said that God came to the people of Israel in salvation. Salvation is of the Jews. So, in that He answered the question of what.

He gave a third answer to the question of worship when He gave **The Answer of Whom**.

All religions are not the same, my dear friend. Jesus defined the Father in this Scripture. He said you are going to worship the Father and the Father seeks worshipers. He is a spirit; therefore, we must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

The physical is important but not all important. That is why Jesus said it is not this mountain or this city or that city or that mountain, but we must worship God in spirit and in truth.

The woman responded with a tremendous statement, “We know that the Messiah is coming and when the Messiah has come, He will tell us all things.” Now listen carefully—Jesus said, “I that speak unto you am He.”

I would think, dear friend, that what Jesus said about worship, since He is the Messiah, would have some bearing on our thought of how to worship God. We must listen to Him because He understands who God is. How shall we worship God? Jesus answers we can worship God anywhere; not in this mountain or that city but wherever we are we can worship God. He said we know what we worship for we have the revelation; salvation is of the Jews. He gave the answer of whom we worship; He said the Father, God. So, it’s all put together for us. Praise the Lord! Are you worshiping the true God?

Thank you, Dr. Yoder for that helpful teaching. My friend, whom do you worship? A lifeless idol made of wood or some precious metal? Do you worship nature, plants, trees, flowers, and animals? What can they do for you? The shocking answer is – nothing. All gods except the true God in Heaven are worthless.

Do you have questions about the true God, the God of the Bible? If so, write to us. We will take your questions to the Word of God and find answers that will help you learn about the true God, Jehovah. So, if you have questions write to us today.

The quickest way for you to contact us is to send an e-mail to mail@heraldsofhope.org. That e-mail address is mail@heraldsofhope.org. That email address again is, m-a-i-l@heraldsofhope.org. Or you may write to *Hope for Today*, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Remember too, you can request a printed manuscript or an audio CD of this teaching, “What is Worship?” I’d be happy to send one to you.

And friend, if you do not have a Bible, and you cannot afford to buy one, please let us know. We will gladly send a copy to you without charge. This offer is only for those who DO NOT have a copy of God’s Word and cannot afford to purchase one. If you meet those qualifications, you may request a copy of the Scriptures from us without cost.

Once again, the quickest way for you to contact us is to send an e-mail to mail@heraldsofhope.org. Or you may write to *Hope for Today*, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Remember; you can request a free copy of this teaching, “What is Worship?” It’s available in print or on an audio CD. And if you don’t have a Bible and can’t afford to buy one, you may ask us to send one to you.

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Now friend, I urge you to tune in next week as we continue study in the Gospel of John. In his teaching, Dr. Yoder will show us how to “How to Test What is Important.” And until then, keep looking for that blessed HOPE.