

## **Question: What did Jesus mean by worshipping God "in truth"?**

Last week we touched on the first part of Jesus' statement in John 4:24, that God "must" be worshipped "in spirit." In this article, we want to explain the second part of Jesus' statement, which is that God "must" also be worshipped "in truth." What did Jesus mean by the phrase "in truth"? Most of us understand it to mean "according to God's commands," and while that is true, that is only part of the meaning.

Remember that Jesus made a contrast between Old and New Testament worship as he talked with the Samaritan woman. The Jews who worshipped according to the Old Testament had to worship "according to God's commands", and Jesus said the Jews were doing that very thing (Jn 4:22). Therefore, the contrast is NOT between "true" and "false" worship, but between eternal (spiritual) and temporary (physical) worship.

The physical ordinances of Old Testament worship which explained the Temple furnishings, the altars for animal sacrifice, and the separate priesthood were simply shadows, symbols and copies of the "true" (eternal, spiritual) things in Heaven (cf. He 10:1; He 9:24; He 9:11-15). Christ Jesus paved the way to make it possible for "true worshippers" to approach God the Father and worship Him "in truth."

Old Testament worship was merely a "shadow of good things to come." It was physical in nature; it emphasized earthly objects. New Testament worship, on the other hand, is spiritual in nature and is today what God expects of His "true worshippers." Worship employed "in truth" pursues what is eternal and spiritual, "the good things to come..., which are in heaven itself."

This, of course, does not leave the door wide open for man to decide "how" he will worship God "in truth." We must still look to the New Testament for instruction on "how" to worship the "living and true God" (Ac 2:42).

Recently, people paid homage to the remains of a young woman who had been dead for many years. Some said they felt closer to God by being near her casket. In other words, being near the casket was to them an act of worship. Considering what we have discussed in this article, how would you characterize a form of worship that gives honor to the remains of a dead person, as a means of drawing closer to God? Is that worshipping God "in spirit and in truth," or is it placing emphasis on physical and earthly things?

Allow me to show you a passage of scripture that should clear up this issue in your mind. Jesus said, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him" (Jn 14:23). Friends, you cannot get any closer to God than to have Him live with you, and that is only possible through obedience to the word of Christ. Man simply cannot draw near to God by any other means, and it is futile to try.

Will you not today draw near to God today through faith in Jesus Christ (Jn 8:24) -- repenting of a life of sin in defiance of God (Lk 13:3) -- confessing your faith in Christ (Mt 10:32), and being baptized (immersed) in water for the remission of your sins (Mk 16:16)? If you will take these simple steps, Jesus will add you to His body the church (Ac 2:41, 47) and you may begin worshipping God "in spirit and truth."

Study your Bible and search the Truth. The Holy Scripture contains "all truth" regarding our duties to serve and worship God (Jn 16:13; 2Ti 3:16-17). If you wish to enroll in a Bible correspondence course by mail, you may notify us by telephone, mail or email. Thanks for reading and have a happy holiday!