

## THE AIM OF WORSHIP

(John 4:23-24)

### 1) Having an awareness of God.

- a) The apostle Paul stayed in the city of Athens for a short time and was moved with sadness because of the many idols which were all around the city (Acts 17:16).
  - i) Despite the dangers that faced him, he began to preach.
  - ii) On one occasion, there were philosophy students of two different ideas that heard him preach (Acts 17:18).
  - iii) The Epicureans believed that chance controls life and that the good in life is whatever made you happy
    - (1) Their philosophy was summed up for us by Paul.
    - (2) 1 Corinthians 15:32.
  - iv) The Stoics believed that fate controlled life and that fate was impersonal and merciless.
  - v) Both groups had no concept of the true God of heaven, so they worshiped a pantheon of gods and goddesses.
- b) Paul had the opportunity to preach on Mar's Hill in Athens and preached one of the greatest sermons on the existence of God.
  - i) He began that sermon by pointing out they were very religious but ignorant.
  - ii) They even worshiped the unknown god and Paul set out to introduce that God to them.
- c) As knowledgeable and wise as those people were, they were ignorant and incapable of worshiping God because they did not know who God was.
- d) We too, are ignorant if we attempt to worship God but not know Him.
- e) There are only two ways to get to know someone and this is true of God as well: association and communication.
  - i) We can associate with God through reading His word, being with His people, looking at both nature and God's word.
  - ii) We communicate with God through reading His communication to us, His word, and through prayer.
  - iii) We also communicate with God when we offer our worship to Him.
- f) The truth is, we can and must know God.
  - i) John 17:3.
  - ii) 1 John 2:3-4.
- g) We show that we know God when we keep His commandments.
  - i) His commandments are found only in His word.
  - ii) This shows the necessity and importance of studying His word.
- h) We can't truly show God His worth to us, which is the idea of the word "worship", if we don't know God.
  - i) It's not just a knowledge that God exists.

- ii) It's a true knowledge of Who God is and what God has done.
- iii) If we have that kind of knowledge, we can't help but offer our worship to God.

## 2) Understanding the authority of God.

- a) Once we have an awareness of Who and what God is, we must then gain an understanding of His authority.
- b) God has authority over life itself because He is the Creator of it.
  - i) Paul mentioned this aspect to the Athenians.
  - ii) Acts 17:24-25.
- c) God is worthy of our worship because He is the Creator of all of us and of all that is around us.
  - i) The Psalmist understood this long ago (Psalm 95:1-6).
  - ii) Psalm 100.
- d) God has the authority since He is the Creator of us all.
  - i) Our Lord told the apostles that the Father had given Him all authority.
  - ii) Matthew 28:18.
  - iii) Because our Lord has all authority whatever we do is to have His authority (Colossians 3:17).
- e) This includes the worship that we offer God.
- f) Whatever we offer in worship has to be authorized by God and this has always been the case.
  - i) God accepted Abel's sacrifice because it was offered by faith (Hebrews 11:4) and the only way that faith is created is through God's word (Romans 10:17).
  - ii) Cain's sacrifice was not accepted by God because Cain offered something that God did not want.
  - iii) God accepted worship in Jerusalem when conducted by those from the tribe of Levi that were authorized to offer the sacrifices.
  - iv) God did not accept worship in Dan or Bethel after Jeroboam changed the place of worship and the ones who conducted the religious ceremonies because God did not authorize the change in place or people.
  - v) God rejects worship today that is not offered according to His word (Matthew 15:9).
- g) Remember what was read for us (John 4:24).
  - i) Those that worship God must do so in spirit and in truth.
  - ii) God has authorized a certain way to worship Him and it is a must that He be worshiped in that way.
- h) It is not only authority in worship but in all manner of religious things.
  - i) God authorizes through His word and it is His word that must be followed because it is the standard of judgment (John 12:48).
- j) Whatever we do in word or action is to be done by God's authority as we noticed from Colossians 3:17.