

TEACHING GOAL

To study the importance of purity in worship.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

- Q. Which is the second commandment?
- A. The second commandment is, “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”
- Q. What is required in the second commandment?
- A. The second commandment requires the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God has appointed in his word.

S.C. 49-50, L.C. 107-108, W.C. of F. XIX, Savoy 19, Young 82

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

- Study Passage:** Deuteronomy 12:1-32
- Support Passages:** Ephesians 5:18-19; Colossians 3:15-16; Malachi 3:8-9; Acts 15:21; II Timothy 4:2; Deuteronomy 17:18-20

BIBLE STORY

John 4:1-30: Worship and the woman at the well of Samaria.

MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

"God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24, ESV)

APPLICATION

The worship of YAHWEH is not optional, it is absolutely necessary and the correct manner of worship is crucial. It must accord with the Word of God in order to please Him and to render as credible, our faith in Jesus Christ.

SUMMARY

In the account of Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well of Samaria, we find a unique statement concerning the necessity of worship. It, in fact, is the only command as such to worship God.¹ Many passages forbid false worship as does the second commandment, but here in John 4 we find a very strong statement indeed. Literally, we are told that it is **necessary** to worship God. Speaking to those who are worshipping God, Jesus says that you **must** worship.

Because God is who He is we must worship Him. Moses, who heard God say, "YAHWEH, YAHWEH, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness..."² made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship. Job, after having lost all his possessions and family, tore his robe and shaved his head, and fell to the ground and worshipped, saying, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. YAHWEH gave and YAHWEH has taken away. Blessed be the name YAHWEH".³ Glory is due God because He is the creator and because He is holy.⁴

The true and living God must also be worshipped properly. As He told the woman at the well, "An hour is coming when neither in the mountain, nor at Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father".⁵ We are thus pointed to the fact that it is not the place or accommodations that are important to pure worship but rather the manner of worship. It must be done "in spirit and in truth." To worship in spirit is to focus our worship on YAHWEH and on no other, in the most exalted and purest manner possible to mankind. All too often our worship is flippant and irreverent. It is often not focused on God but on experiences we have as human beings.

The Pharisees were careful to wash their hands before they ate, in order to rid themselves ceremoniously of Gentile filth. Christ, speaking to this said, "but in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men."⁶ He went on to say that it isn't what enters the mouth and stomach that defiles a man, but what comes from his heart; "evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders." Purity of worship involves separation from these things. To worship God in truth, then, necessitates conformity to God's word which is truth. We are to worship the Living and True God in the manner prescribed by the Bible alone known as the regulative principle of worship.

The study passage (Deuteronomy 12) teaches that we must not be indifferent toward false worship of God. We are by nature inclined to live and

let live yet true worship requires us to be deeply concerned about the presence of idolatry. The foundations of our nation would seem to require religious tolerance, and accordingly the nation tolerates every form of idolatry and false religion known to man. We do well to be opposed to Communism and to oppose it with all our might but what of false worship? Do we resist the Devil at times such as Halloween? Do we pay homage to Santa Claus or the Easter bunny?

"You shall tear down their altars, and smash their sacred pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods, and you shall obliterate their name from that place." "You shall not act like this toward YAHWEH your God." Is this passage without any relevance to our generation? Surely we are to do whatever is in our power to hinder the spread of false worship and to disenfranchise it. We are to keep it out of our domain, out of our sphere of authority. By freedom of religion our nation's forefathers did not mean freedom to commit sin. They believed that true liberty is not the freedom to do as we please, but to do as we ought. May God in His mercy strengthen His people to prevail against the gates of hell!

¹ δεῖ προσκυνεῖν, *It is necessary to worship* is found only in John 4:20 and 24

² Exodus 34:6 ESV

³ Job 1:20-21

⁴ Psalm 95:56

⁵ John 4:21

⁶ Matthew 15:9