

INTRODUCTION

In our text, we find that the ten northern tribes of **ISRAEL** had been conquered by **ASSYRIA** and most of them were carried away into captivity in **ASSYRIA and other of its provinces**.

In their place, **ASSYRIA** imported captives from other conquered provinces to live in **SAMARIA**, the northern kingdom of **ISRAEL**.

Here in our text we see that these people brought in their own *gods* with them. What we see is **the worship of a mishmash of false gods!**

And, because none of these people groups feared the **LORD GOD of ISRAEL**, the **LORD** sent lions among them that were killing people. So, these people complained about this to the **ASSYRIAN** king who sent them a **PRIEST** from the **JEWISH** captives to teach these people the manner of the **LORD GOD of ISRAEL**.

Instead of dropping their gods and serving the **LORD GOD of ISRAEL**, they added the worship of the **LORD GOD** with their worship of their gods in order to try to placate the **LORD GOD of ISRAEL** and hopefully stave off the lion attacks!

The problem is that such a worship is **UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP** to the **LORD God!** We began to look at this matter of **UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP... we first saw...**

I. UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP IS BASED ON THE WRONG KIND OF FEAR!

There Is An Improper Kind Of FEAR Of The LORD!

An attempt to placate the **LORD** to keep bad things from happening!

There Is A Proper Kind Of Fear Of The LORD!

It is the kind of **AWESOME REVERENCE** towards **GOD** that motivates one to turn away from evil and serve **GOD**, and **HIM** alone, faithfully at all times.

Drawing close to **GOD** through **OBEDIENCE** and serving **HIM** out of **LOVE** and not just a **FEAR OF JUDGMENT!**

II. UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP IS BASED MORE ON FORM THAN ON SUBSTANCE!

John 4:24–“They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”

A. These Samaritans Hearts Were Not In Their Service To The LORD!

1. This is shown by the fact that they continued to serve their *"graven images"*. (*Vs 29, 33-35, 41*)
2. What service they did render to the **LORD** possessed **FORM– i.e.** They were going through the motions. **However their WORSHIP lacked any real SUBSTANCE!**

B. The Same Type Of Worship Can Be Observed Today!

1. There is a lot of **FORM**, but not very much **SUBSTANCE** in much of what is called **WORSHIP** today.
2. Now don't get me wrong, there is a need for some **FORM** in our **WORSHIP!**
 - a. Because we possess both a **PHYSICAL** and **SPIRITUAL NATURE**, we need **PHYSICAL** ways to express our **SPIRITUAL DEVOTION** to the **LORD**.
 - b. That is why **GOD** has provided us with **PHYSICAL EXPRESSIONS** even in our **NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP**.
 - c. **SINGING, PRAYING, GIVING, SAYING “AMEN!”**, participation in **THE LORD'S SUPPER**—these all have **"FORM."**

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- d. But for us to go through the **FORM of WORSHIP** without the **PROPER SUBSTANCE (A RIGHT HEART ATTITUDE and SPIRIT)** is **HYPOCRITICAL**. Is it not?
Look at *Matthew 15:7-8*
3. As **BELIEVERS**, are we guilty of **WORSHIPING GOD** in the wrong way?
- a. Do We Sing “*Trust and Obey*”, But We Do Neither?
- b. Do We Sing “*Rescue the Perishing*,” But Never Do Anything To Rescue Those Who Are Perishing?
- c. Do We Sing “*Amazing Grace*,” But It Is No Longer Amazing to us?
4. **WORSHIP** that has both **FORM** and **SUBSTANCE** will follow the example of the psalmist David.
- a. *Psalm 138:1*—“*I will praise thee with my whole heart ...*”
- b. *Psalm 146:1-2*—“*Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.*”
- c. *Psalm 147:1*—“*Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.*”
- C. We Need To Ask Ourselves, “Is Our **WORSHIP** One Of Simply Going Through The Motions?” “Is It Mostly Just **FORM** With Little, Or No **SUBSTANCE**?”

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If all we have is **FORM**, and our **HEART** is not really in what we are doing, then our **WORSHIP** is no more pleasing to **GOD** than that of these **SAMARITANS** was!

UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP IS BASED ON THE WRONG KIND OF FEAR...IS BASED MORE ON FORM THAN ON SUBSTANCE!

III. **UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP IS BASED ON FUTILE EFFORTS! (i.e. VANITY)**

John 4:24—“*They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*”

A. **The SAMARITANS Had The LORD And They Had “gods.” (Vs 41a)**

They gave the **LORD** lip service, but they gave their “*gods*” their true service. The result is that their **WORSHIP** of the one true **GOD** was **useless, pointless, empty, worthless, and ineffective, because it wasn’t based in truth.**

Our **GOD** is a jealous **GOD!** **HE** will not share **HIS** glory!

B. **The Same Thing Can Happen To Believers Today!**

1. **There are many who seek to “serve GOD” while also serving worldly ambitions!**

Their *idols (gods)* are not graven images, but rather possessions, pleasures, promotion, power and other such things that are not normally thought of as *gods*.

Anything that takes the rightful place of **GOD** in our lives—whether it takes the *time, treasure, or devotion* that belong to **HIM** alone—has become an *idol*.

Many say “*GOD has a place in my life!*” But, an examination of their lives reveals that **though GOD may have a place, HE does not have not first place!**

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What did JESUS say about this?

Matthew 6:24– “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

When people try to serve both the world and GOD, the world always wins and GOD loses out!

2. **There are others who seek to “serve GOD” while their lives are full of known sin!**

These folks seek to rationalize and minimize their disobedience.

C. **Compromise In The Areas Of Service And Sin Are Unacceptable With GOD!**

1. **GOD Requires Our Total Commitment To HIM No Matter The Cost!**

Deuteronomy 6:5– “And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”

Deuteronomy 6:14-15– “Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you; (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.”

Jesus said in Luke 14:33– “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

2. **For GOD Not To Have Our Total Commitment Is To Commit Spiritual Adultery!**

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James 4:4– “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God..”

3. **We Must Heed What JESUS Said In Matthew 6:33– “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...”**

CONCLUSION

We need to search our own heart today and be honest before GOD.

Is our worship closer to these SAMARITANS than it should be?

In an earlier time, ELIJAH said in *1 Kings 18:21– “. . . How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.”*

How is your WORSHIP? Do you fear the LORD and serve other gods? GOD is waiting on our WORSHIP to conform to His design for WORSHIP.

What is that design? In *John 4:24– “They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”*