

Title:           **FIVE HUSBANDS OR ONE**

Text:            John 4:16-22

Subject:       False Religion and True

Date:            Sunday Morning — 2008

Tape:            John #28

Reading:       *2 Kings 17:1-41*

Introduction:

The title of my message this morning is — **FIVE HUSBANDS OR ONE**. You can have five husbands for your soul, or you can have one. If you choose the five, you can never have the One; and the five you choose will be no husband to your soul. But if you choose the One, you will forever despise the five. Does that seem a little bewildering? Turn with me to John 4; and, before I'm done, it will be perfectly clear.

(John 4:16-22) “Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. (17) The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: (18) For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. (19) The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. (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.”

### **SAMARITAN ORIGINS**

Did you ever wonder who the Samaritans were, where they came from, or why the Jews had no dealings with them? — When Shalmaneser, the King of Assyria, conquered the ten tribes of Israel and carried them into bondage, he dispersed the Jews throughout his realm and sent his own subjects from Assyria to occupy and cultivate the land of Israel.

These Assyrians were pagans, idol worshipping pagans. They worshipped gods they could carry from one place to another! When they came into the land of Israel, they brought their own gods with them into the land. In time the Lord God sent lions into the land to devour these idolaters. Terrified of

**FIVE HUSBANDS OR ONE**

the lions, they asked the King of Assyria to send them a priest to teach them “*the manner of the God of the land,*” which he did.

Once they had learned “*the manner of the God of the land,*” they adopted Jehovah as their God, hoping to turn away his wrath; but they continued to serve their own gods. In other words, they professed to worship the Lord God of Israel because they were afraid of him; but they were not converted to him.

In time, these pagan Assyrians intermarried with the Jews. They became known as Samaritans, a mongrel race with a mongrel religion, with whom the Jews had no dealings. You may recall that in Nehemiah’s day, these Samaritans attempted to unite with the Jews in rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem, but Zerubbabel, Joshua and the rest of the faithful refused their assistance, saying, “*Ye have nothing to do with us*” (Ezra 4:3). Israel’s faithful rulers at the time would not allow the Samaritans to join them in their work, not because they were a mixed race, but because they were a people with a mixed religion. Their religion was a mongrel religion. Like multitudes today, they were very religious, full of religious activity, but they knew not what to worship. In the last verse of our text, the Lord Jesus says of these people, “*Ye worship ye know not what!*” — The Samaritans represent sham conversion, false faith, and religious hypocrisy.

Let’s look at this passage (John 4:16-22). The Samaritan woman was now thoroughly confused. She perceived that the Lord Jesus was a prophet; but she did not understand what he was saying to her. She knew that the Jews’ religion excluded the possibility of her being saved, because she worshipped different gods, in different places, and in different ways, and the Jews worshipped Jehovah, who alone is God. Yet, the Lord Jesus was talking to her about salvation, eternal life, and acceptance with God; and, with the same breath, he told her that her religion was a religion of uselessness, ignorance, and idolatry.

Since he never went to Bible College or seminary, and since he was not trained as either a politician or a preacher, our Master never learned the art of compromise or the trick of talking out of both sides of his mouth. These days, when preachers are confronted with such plain, stark contrasts in religions and religious opinions, they appeal to a vague spirit of ecumenism, and attempt to point to areas of agreement between mutually opposing ideas. Our Lord Jesus Christ was not such a man.

**FIVE HUSBANDS OR ONE**

In fact, by the standards of modern religion and political correctness, he would be considered a rude, uncouth, bigot. Instead of dodging the issue, instead of attempting to be polite, the Lord Jesus seems to have stopped this Samaritan woman right in the middle of her words to drive the truth of God home to her heart. He shoots a straight arrow at the very core of her hope. He lays the ax to the root of the tree under which she was hiding. He rips down the venerable walls of her refuge of lies, and tears up the very foundation of her religious house.

He says to her, as she was attempting to defend her religion, “*Ye worship ye know not what!*” In other words, he said, “Woman, what I am telling you is this. — You don’t know God or anything about God, his worship, his people, or his salvation.” Then, he proceeded to tell her that...

**Proposition:** All who truly worship God and obtain his salvation know who he is. — **True worship is worship based upon and arising from revealed knowledge, the revealed knowledge of God himself!**

Now, I have a question, which I want you to answer, and answer honestly, for your own soul’s sake. — **Do you know who you worship?** Is your religion nothing more than that which has been passed along to you by flesh and blood, by human tradition, and religious ceremony, or do you know the living God? Is your religion the result of you being taught of a man, or the result of you being taught of God?

**MANY FALSE RELIGIONS**

There are many false religions by which the souls of men are deceived and damned. This woman’s religion was the religion of the world. The Samaritans were a mongrel race with a mongrel religion. You can see this in the passage we read at the beginning of our service (2 Kings 17). It was about 750 years before our Lord’s conversation with this woman that the ten northern tribes of the Jewish nation, Israel, were taken captive by the Assyrians.

When the original inhabitants of Samaria were exiled from their land by Shalmaneser, the Assyrian king, sent people from five different places in Babylon, each group with its own god, to inhabit the land of Samaria. The Jews who were left in Samaria intermarried with these people and

**FIVE HUSBANDS OR ONE**

incorporated the worship of their gods into the worship of the Lord. While they continued to claim that they feared and worshipped the Lord, and convinced themselves that they did, they became base idolaters and forsook the worship of God altogether. Look at **2 Kings 17:29-33**.

- 29 Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put *them* in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt.
- 30 And the men of Babylon made Succothbenoth,<sup>1</sup> and the men of Cuth made Nergal,<sup>2</sup> and the men of Hamath made Ashima,<sup>3</sup>
- 31 And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak,<sup>4</sup> and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.<sup>5</sup>
- 32 So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.
- 33 They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence. (2 Kings 17:29-33)

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<sup>1</sup> *Succothbenoth was a god worshipped under the image of chickens, or Pleiades (the seven stars). For whom the women of Babylon and Assyria prostituted themselves at least once during their lives to any man who asked them to do so, in the temple of Venus.*

<sup>2</sup> *Nergal was the image of a great dog, the god of hunting and of war among the Cuthites.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ashima was the god of Hamath, worshipped under the image of an ape or a goat with no fur.*

<sup>4</sup> *Nibhaz was a dog, representing a demon. Tartak a jackass, representing the prince of darkness. Both were probably made of gold.*

<sup>5</sup> *Adrammelech was the sun god, in the form of a man. Anammelech moon god with the representation of a woman. They were images of Molech, to whom men and women offered their own children as sacrifices in fire.*

**FIVE HUSBANDS OR ONE**

These five gods, like the five husbands this Samaritan woman had had, were all false gods of whoredom. As those men were not this woman's husbands, (They took everything from her and gave her nothing!), so the gods of the heathen were not God and were not husbands to her needy soul. But he who was her Husband, the Lord Jesus who had espoused her to himself from eternity had come “*to take the names of Balaam out of her mouth*” and to teach her to call him alone “*My Husband*” (Hosea 2:16-17). O may he do that for you!

After a while, the southern tribes of the nation, Judah, were taken captive and carried away into Babylon for seventy years. But they never lost their distinct identity as Jews, and stoutly refused to worship the gods of Babylon.

When Judah was delivered from Babylon and began to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem (about 450 BC), the mongrel Samaritans offered to help them; but the faithful men of Judah refused their help. The Samaritans, in anger, built their own temple in Mount Gerizim; and the Jews and the Samaritans had no dealings with one another from that day forward. **With the Samaritans, this was a matter of offended pride.** The Jews would not accept them as the people of God. (Nothing more enrages a man than to be told plainly that he is lost, that his religion, the religion of his fathers is a false religion, and that his god is an idol.) **With the Jews, at least when the rift occurred, this rift with the Samaritans was a matter of spiritual integrity.** They could not embrace the Samaritans and their gods without becoming idolaters themselves

- The Samaritans, like the people of this world, had many gods, many religious ceremonies, and many different names for their religion.
- Yet, like the many religions of the world today, all the Samaritans embraced one another as brethren and worshippers of Jehovah, though they refused to worship in the temple of God, at the altar of God, with the people of God.
- Though they wore many names and had different religious symbols and ceremonies, the religions of the Samaritans, were all essentially the same, just like the many religions of the world today (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).

(Proverbs 14:12) “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.”

**FIVE HUSBANDS OR ONE**

(Proverbs 16:25) “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.”

- Every man worshipped as he chose.
- The religions of Samaria, like the religions of Danville, KY, were religions based upon human merit, not divine mercy.
- Being of human origin, all the religions of Samaria, like the religions of this world, were man centered, designed to please, entertain, and indulge the lusts of men.
- Just in case you are missing my point, let me state the matter plainly. — **All free will, works religion is idolatrous and damning.**

The adherents of such religion may claim to fear the Lord, walk in moral integrity, and talk incessantly about Jesus, God, the Holy Spirit, blood redemption, and salvation by grace, but all who make salvation to be dependent upon or in any way determined by the will, works, and worth of man, rather than the will, worth, and work of Christ alone, are base idolaters.

All who seek to establish righteousness by something they do are ignorant of God, ignorant of the righteousness of God in Christ. Refusing to be saved by Christ alone, through grace alone, — refusing to count their personal righteousness dung and their religion idolatry, they grope about in darkness, superstition, and ignorance on their way to hell, not knowing what they worship. — They go to their high places Sunday after Sunday, observe their holy days, burn their incense, and make great sacrifices to their gods. But they are totally ignorant of the true and living God, totally ignorant of who Christ is and what he has done as the sinners’ Substitute.

**If we would be married to Christ, we must be made to see that the gods of this world are false gods and the religion of this world is wicked, abominable, and adulterous.** There is no salvation for any sinner who refuses to repent of his dead works, whose conscience is not purged from the dead works human religion by the blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:14). No Pharisee can ever be saved until he is made to see, as Paul declares (Philippians 3:1-9), that his righteousnesses are filthy rags, obnoxious to God, and his religion is nothing but dung. That is right, dung! **False religion is not just gutter religion. It is outhouse religion!**

**FIVE HUSBANDS OR ONE**

**Hebrews 9:14** — How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

**Philippians 3:3-10**

- 3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.
- 4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:
- 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;
- 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.
- 7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.
- 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,
- 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:
- 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.

This Samaritan woman, this poor sinner could not be married to Christ (spiritually) until she acknowledged that her Samaritan religion was adultery (whoredom), that her former gods were her adulterous lovers (whoremongers), and that her preachers were prostitutes. The same is true of all idolaters. — **She had five husbands; but she had no husband. The same is true of the religious people of this world.**

**You may think I am stretching the allusion just a little. I am not stretching it at all.** Let's see if this is not exactly what the Scriptures tell us about all free will, works religion.

- Does not the Holy Spirit call the preachers of works dogs (male prostitutes)? **“Beware of dogs,”** Paul said. Then he identified the dogs

**FIVE HUSBANDS OR ONE**

as those who mix works and grace in the business of salvation — “*the concision.*”

- Does not the Lord command us to abandon the adultery of false religion, to come out of Babylon, lest we be partaker of her sins and of her judgment? (See Revelation 18:4; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1.)

**Revelation** 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

**2 Corinthians** 6:14 – 7:1

- 14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?
- 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?
- 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
- 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,
- 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

**ONE GOD,**  
**ONE CHRIST,**  
**ONE TRUE RELIGION**

The fact is, **there is only one true and living God, one Christ, one Savior, one Holy Spirit, and one true religion, and one true salvation.** Our Lord spoke as plainly to this Samaritan woman as I am speaking to you, both about her spiritual ignorance, and about God’s salvation.

**FIVE HUSBANDS OR ONE**

**John 4:19-22** — 19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 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.

**John 14:6** — Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Let me wrap this message up by speaking as plainly as I know how about this matter. Oh, may God speak to your hearts by his Spirit through his Word, for Christ's sake. **The world in which we live is under the delusion of antichrist!** Are you listening to me? Arminianism, free willism, works religion, it matters not whether it wears the name Protestant or Papist, Baptist or Buddhist, is damning religion. The Spirit of God calls all religion that has for its center-piece the will of man "*will worship*" (Colossians 2:23). And will worship is damning religion!

If this Samaritan woman would drink from the Fountain of living water, she must give up her broken cistern and its polluted waters. If she would have Christ to be her Husband and his salvation her Husband's provision, she must abandon her former husbands. If she found acceptance with God, she must disown the gods, the temple, and people of Samaria. And you and I must do the same. **If you would be saved...**

- **The Lord himself must come to you and make himself known to you.**
- **You must worship God alone in his true character, as he has revealed himself in this Book, in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.**
- **You must worship God in Christ — The only true Christ!** — By His Priest (Christ)! — At His Mercy-Seat (Christ)! — On His Altar (Christ)! — By His Sacrifice (The Lamb of God)! — In His Temple (Christ)! — At His Throne! — In His Way! — **Christ Alone** (1 Corinthians 1:30-31) — **Grace Alone** (Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Timothy 1:9) — **Faith Alone** (Romans 4:16)

**Romans 4:16** Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only

**FIVE HUSBANDS OR ONE**

which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all.

And I'll tell you something else. — **If you would be saved, like this Samaritan woman, you are going to have to identify yourself with Christ, his gospel, his worship, and his people.** This identification is made initially in believer's baptism; but it is a constant, life long thing. Believer's baptism, like good works, has nothing to do with salvation. And our identifying ourselves with Christ does not contribute one iota to our salvation. Yet, those who refuse to make such an identification with Christ are not saved (Matthew 10:32-33).

**Matthew 10:32-33** Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.  
33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

As in the Old Testament men and women found acceptance with God and had a Scriptural basis for claiming refuge and salvation in him, only when they became Jews, so today, no sinner has a biblical basis for assurance, a biblical basis for claiming grace and salvation in Christ, except those who come into God's kingdom, circumcised in heart, and are numbered among God's Israel.

- **Ruth the Moabite became Ruth the Jew** (Ruth 1:16).

**Ruth 1:16** And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God.

- **Naaman the Syrian idolater became Naaman the worshipper of Jehovah,** once the Lord poured out his grace upon him (2 Kings 5:17).

Elisha sent him to wash in Jordan. The act meant he had to heed God's Word by his prophet and disown the far more physically attractive rivers of his own land, as well as the fake healers who had tried (in the names of their gods) to heal him. **The great Naaman had to stoop to be healed God's way, in God's land, among God's people, or perish in his leprosy. The same is true of you!**

**FIVE HUSBANDS OR ONE**

Once the healing was done, when Naaman went back to Syria, he carried in his great caravan, as much of the dirt of Israel as two mules could carry back to Syria, because he had become a Jewish convert, a worshipper of God. — He worshipped God on God's altar of earth!

**2 Kings 5:17** And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for **[BECAUSE]** thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD.

Though he lived and died in Syria, Naaman knelt to pray in Syria on Jewish soil, bowing toward the altar of God and the mercy-seat in the temple of God at Jerusalem, as a Jew, a sinner saved by grace alone, through the merits of that Savior of whom the altar, mercy-seat, temple, and the sacrifices were types!

- **In the days of Esther, after Haman was hanged on the gallows he had built for Mordecai, many of the Persians became Jews, because the fear of God fell upon them** (Esther 8:17).

Do you know who you worship? I do. I worship him who is the Salvation of the Jews, the Seed of Abraham, the Covenant of the people, the Christ of God, the Savior of the world! — I have no righteousness but Christ. — I have no atonement but Christ. — I have no access to God but Christ. — I have no hope but Christ. — Christ is my soul's Husband. — Christ is enough!

Amen!