

John 4:3-29

Sec 6. “Neither prayer, nor any other part of religious worship, is now, under the gospel, either tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed: ...”

A. As we just read, the Samaritan woman who spoke with Jesus besides Jacob’s well repeated her people’s often-used apologetic why the Samaritans were right & the Jews were wrong: **In 4:20 “Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, & you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.”¹**

1. She said that her Samaritan fathers held to Mt *Gerizim* in Samaria as the divinely consecrated place of worship, but the Jews said that *Jerusalem* is the proper place.
2. Let us us imagine that instead of Jesus being here, there was some Jewish rabbi, scribe, or priest listening to her statement.
 - a. Both sides likely could have debated for hours which place was ordained & approved by God.
 - b. Both sides had patriarchs they could have cited as authorities.
 - c. The Samaritans only accepted the Pentateuch— the 5 books of Moses. It is hard to come to an agreement if they do not even have an agreed-upon holy book as an authority. The Samaritans still reside upon Mt. Gerizim with some concerned that they may die off as a people. There are 3 men to every woman who live there and they must have regular genetic testing because of too many close relations marrying one another.
3. Well what about us Christians in America? We do not worship in either place. That is because of a fulfillment of what Jesus foretold in **vv 21-24**. Turn there.

- a. There is not an acceptable “holy” place in the world where the children of God must worship.
- b. **2 Chron 6:6 “I have chosen Jerusalem that My name might be there, & I have chosen David to be over My people Israel.”**

1. During a time in history, before the coming of Christ, Jerusalem was that place God had chosen.
2. The temple was the only place where God accepted animal sacrifices, yet the ultimate sacrifice of Christ did away with all that.
3. The book of revelation foretold of the destruction of Jerusalem within a generation in which it was written.

Sec 6 “under the gospel [good news of Jesus Christ] true worship of God is not tied “towards [a place] which it is directed.”

— **Daniel 6:10 “Daniel... entered his house** (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); **& he continued kneeling on his knees 3 times a day, praying & giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.”**

1. Muslims have adopted a similar practice.
2. Jesus in **John 4** taught that true worship is not tied to a particular place. Neither Jerusalem nor Rome is more holy than Pineville, LA.

¹ Many writers point out that her statement in **v20** is to deflect away from how in **v18** Jesus pointed-out her immorality: **“you have had 5 husbands, & the 1 whom you now have is not your husband.”**

Sec 6: Picking-up on the words of Jesus from **Jn 4:23** , **WCF 21, sec 6** goes on to teach “... but God is to be worshiped everywhere, in spirit & truth; as, in private families daily, & in secret, each 1 by himself; so, more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly or willfully to be neglected, or forsaken, when God, by his Word or providence, calleth thereunto.

A. Jesus said that **“an hour is coming, & now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit & truth” (v23).**

1. True worship through the God-ordained mediator Jesus Christ is what ultimately mattered.
2. In Uganda, our missionaries often worshipped under mango trees. There is absolutely no Scriptural prohibition to that.

B. worship “in private families daily, & in secret, each 1 by himself”

1. I believe we have freedom to be creative in our private worship.
2. We can pray outdoors as we behold the beauty of God’s creation. Yes, you can do so even with your eyes opened. If you live in a house with children, it may be a challenge to find a quiet time alone to be with the Lord. For my wife, it works best for her in the bedroom before getting up to tend to the kids.

C. Worship of our Triune God is not to be “carelessly or willfully to be neglected, or forsaken, when God, by his Word or providence, calleth thereunto.”

1. The mention of “providence” here can pertain to what an individual church has for its called upon times & place for worship.
2. WCF 1, sec 6 “The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith & life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good & necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture ... there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, & government of the church, common to human actions & societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, & Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.”

a. I believe Christian prudence says that we ought not to worship outside on a Louisiana summer day with 100°F heat & 100% humidity.

b. There are “some circumstances concerning the worship of God” that are “common to human actions & societies.” I believe this is a very realistic teaching from the confession.

1) Pews vs chairs

2) American dress in worship

D. What is most important is Who we worship in accordance to the ordinary, God-ordained means He has given to us in Holy Scripture.