

In one of the weekly papers in Humphrey's County there was an advertisement that was inviting people to come worship at a certain "church". Now this "church" ran an advertisement that stated there would be, and I quote, "Mechanical bull riding, Quick draw paint ball, and a chili cook-off." The title of the advertisement was, and once again I quote, "Cow Tipping". Now I ask you reader, is this the type of worship God has intended for the first day of the week? Is this the type of worship that pleases God and glorifies Him or is it man's ideas to just put people in the seats? I think this article will answer that question. Please read the following article by Mike Scott and you make the decision based on the scriptural evidence. Is what we see many denominational "churches" doing during worship acceptable to God?

What kind of worship does God require? **John 4:23-24**, "23 But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." Now that's exactly what the scriptures make clear to us; that we must worship Him in spirit and in truth and that makes us true worshipers of God. The context of this text is a discussion that Jesus has with the woman at the well. She correctly recognizes Jesus as a prophet and asks him a question regarding the appropriate place to worship God. Jesus teaches that the place for worship was of no consequence to God. It does not matter whether we worship in the city or in the country. It does not matter whether we are in a house or in a tent, or in an open field. The place where we worship has nothing to do with whether the worship is acceptable to God.

Jesus reminds the woman that since she was a Samaritan she could not have been taught the truth about the Worship of God. The Samaritans had parts of the Old Testament which they recognized as inspired, (i.e. the Pentateuch), but they rejected all of the prophecies of the Old Testament. Since they rejected the prophecies of the Old Testament they also rejected the prophecies concerning the coming Messiah. Salvation was coming to the world through the Jews. **In verse 23** Jesus says: "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers." Notice the contrast here between the "true worshipers" and the Samaritans who followed their own traditions rather than the Word of God. This verse clearly demonstrates that God **SEEKS** true worshipers. There is such a thing as false worship, or ignorant worship. The Samaritans were guilty of ignorant worship. Jesus contrasts this with "true worship."

**True Worship** is characterized by two things. 1) It is in spirit or from the heart, in other words it is sincere. 2) It is in truth, that is it is according to the dictates of the Word of God, which is the TRUTH (Jn. 17:17). Our text says: **John 4:24**, "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." The nature of God is spirit. All spirits are invisible to human eyes. We are unable to see the human spirit when it leaves the body to return to God who gave it (Ecc. 12:7). Paul says of Jesus in Col. 1:15 & 1 Tim. 1:17: **Col. 1:15**, "15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." **1 Tim. 1:17**, "17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." So, one of the things we must remember about God is that He is spirit, and therefore invisible. This text also indicates to us that God's nature is NOT material. God is NOT matter. The word "spirit" is the opposite of matter. Since God is a spirit, since He is both invisible and immaterial, He requires worship of a similar nature. In other words He requires "spiritual worship" and NOT material worship.

"**Spiritual Worship**" involves two things: 1) Worship in spirit. To worship God in spirit means that our worship must come from the heart. Worship must be a conscious thought process which is sincere. It must be free from insincerity, distractions, wandering thoughts. It is the result of deep meditations of the heart. Formality and ceremonialism cannot be substituted for worship in spirit. This requires the worshiper to take control of his mind while praying. We must not allow our thoughts to be distracted, or to wander. While studying the Word of God in worship we must NOT allow our minds to wander or to be distracted. While singing to God in worship we must NOT allow our minds to wander or be distracted. Our thoughts must be upon God in all of our worship activities. When we partake of the Lord's Supper we must discern properly the Lord's body. 2) **Worship in Truth**. We must also worship God in truth. Regardless of how sincere a person may be, if his worship is NOT in truth, or according to the truth (i.e. the Word of God, Jn. 17:17) his worship will not be acceptable. In the Word of God we are given specific instruction as to how to worship Him. We engage in these items of worship as the Word of God instructs in order to worship God in spirit and in truth. If we add to the items found in the Word of God our worship is vain. This was indeed the problem the Samaritans had with worship. Today some teach that any act which they feel sincere about is acceptable to God. Let me remind you that this passage teaches us that such a position is error. One must NOT ONLY be sincere, but his worship MUST be directed by the word of God. To do something in worship which is not taught in the Word of God is make the

*same mistake that the Samaritans made in Jesus' day. Remember, since God is a spirit, we must worship Him in "Spiritual Worship" which involves the whole mind and heart engaging in sincere and deliberate acts of worship as directed by the Word of God.*