

The Gospel of John

The Gospel of John

Lesson #37

The Journey

Jim Hoffman

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The Gospel of John

- John 4:9 How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me? (man)
- John 9:11 The man called Jesus. (man)
- John 4:19 I perceive that you are a (prophet).
- John 9:17 He said, "He is a (prophet)."
- John 4:29 Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ? (God)
- John 9:38 He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. (God)

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The Gospel of John

• John 4:20 "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

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- On the heels of Jesus personal probes into the woman's life it appears as though she wants to change the subject. (will we like that at the Bema?)
- How else is it that you go from discovering the one in front of you is a prophet to resurrecting an old, old, argument between the Jews and Samaritans?
- **"Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship."**

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- Deuteronomy 27-28 play out on the plains of Moab where Moses is quite clear – obey and be blessed (Mt. Gerizim) or disobey and be cursed (Mt. Ebal).
- The juxtaposition of Gerizim and Ebal could not be more clear – one way of living leads to blessings and another way leads to curses.
- Sadly many of us live in the valley between blessing and cursing because all too frequently we lurch back and forth between Gerizim and Ebal.

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Deuteronomy 27 - 28



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• Deuteronomy 28:1 **“And if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments** that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. 2 And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God. 3 Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. 4 Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. 5 Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. 6 Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.....”

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• Deuteronomy 28:15 **“But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments** and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. 16 Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field. 17 Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. 18 Cursed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. 19 Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.....”

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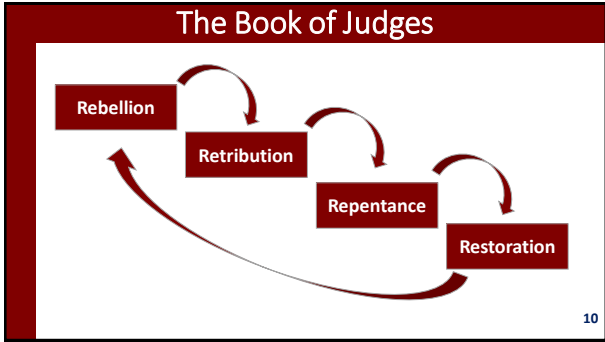
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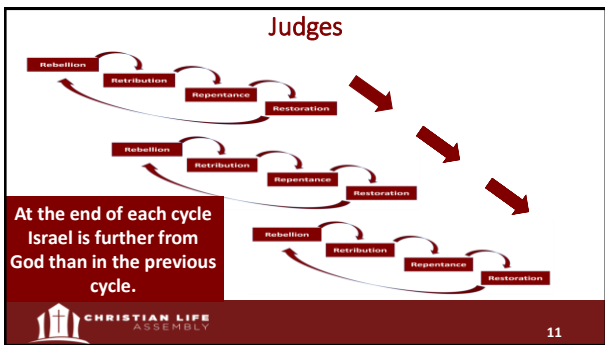
- Of course, we know from history how this went – Israel was far less than consistently obedient, and the book of Judges illustrates their fate perfectly.
- Israel in the Book of Judges is a sad simile of many Christian lives and of many times in the lives of the rest of us.
- Israel in the Old Testament had an excuse – they had but parts of the Bible and lacked the indwelling Holy Spirit, but we have no such excuse.

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- Do you know any Christians who live like Israel in the time when **“every man did what was right in his own eyes”**?
- If you are like me, you shake your head at times while rolling the question of **“are they really born again”** around in your mind.
- They say the right things when asked, but when observed objectively you have this giant **QUESTION MARK** hanging over their professions of faith.

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Our most painful "question mark people" are friends and family that we want desperately to be assured of their eternity. So, when they do or say anything even remotely Christian, we hang on to it as though it were the gospel itself all the while wondering why we don't see more.

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• "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship."

• Jerusalem was the prescribed place to worship although no Samaritan would agree with that – the Samaritans actually once built their own temple on Mt. Gerizim.

• But, in Jesus' conversation with the woman he does not want to debate – he wants to open her eyes to reality.

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• Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father."

• Jesus begins to point to something new that is ahead for all who believe in the Christ whether Jew or Gentile.

• The lesson for her and for us is that true worship is not tied to places and things – that is what the pagans around them did as do the ones around us.

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The time that was coming was post Pentecost where, setting aside the reality that God is omnipresent, the place of worship becomes irrelevant because God now inhabits the believer. You could say we no longer have to go to God because he has come to us – the very meaning of Immanuel.

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- *“You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.”*
- Ouch! That must have hurt – but then again maybe not because truth, when applied with grace has a way of making its own way into hearts and minds.
- The woman’s ancestors had fallen into a combination of religions that was so vague they actually didn’t know who or what they were worshipping.

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“To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, and to devote the will to the purpose of God.”

William Temple

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• *“the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.”*

• So, what does it mean to **“worship the Father in spirit and truth”**?

• This question is no small one at all because Jesus goes on to say that His Father **“is seeking such people to worship him”**.

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• There is so much to say here – God is seeking souls to worship him in spirit and truth, and it sounds so easy until we try to explain it.

• If you have a NIV Bible you will notice “spirit” is rendered “Spirit”, indicating the translators think that word is pointing to the Holy Spirit.

• No other popular translation capitalizes the “s” – I tend to think that if the article “the” preceded spirit then John was speaking of the Holy Spirit. (but “the” is absent)

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• To simplify just a bit, I like to think the admonition to worship in the spirit was Jesus’ way of telling us to forget places, people, and props.

• No longer would God meet with his people at the Mercy Seat, through a priest, carrying blood as an offering.

• The time has come (within a year or two at the most) when God’s people can worship him spirit to Spirit singing *“nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling”*.

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If only we could grasp the depth of the significance of our bowing before the King of kings with nothing to offer but our confidence in who he has self-proclaimed himself to be – that is trust and indeed an offering that pleases God. This is an intelligent and deliberate act of adoration on our part openly declaring Jesus as our only hope of heaven.

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- As for worshipping in spirit and truth – now that Messiah has come, the world would receive the whole counsel of God within just a few decades. (nothing on God’s timetable)
- Worship is a spiritual activity conducted around the truth of who God is – we worship when we can exalt his name without tools and without sacrifices.
- Our hearts may want to produce something for him, but for now our very best works are but filthy rags.

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We find ourselves yearning to do something for the Lord that would magnify Him, but such a thing is out of our reach – we must then satisfy our desires to elevate him by believing the truth of who he is as revealed in his word and by his Son. Both the Son and the Word are particularly identified as truth in John 14 and John 17.

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“the Father is seeking such people to worship him”

So what I tell you now I tell you as an application from our text today. It would not come out in a straight forward exegesis of the text, but it has proven to be useful to me. When you feel distant from God, begin to worship him and he will come and find you!

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Questions?

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