

**WORSHIPPING IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH: AN EXEGETICAL
STUDY OF THE JOHANNINE PERSPECTIVE OF WORSHIP
IN JOHN 4:19 - 26**

226.5
Nw980w
NBTS
MTH

**A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
OGBOMOSO**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF THEOLOGY**

**BY
CHARLES ONYEONORO NWACHUKWU**

**J. C. POOL LIBRARY
N.B.T.S. OF OGBOMOSO**

JUNE, 2002

03-352

ABSTRACT

This study, "Worshipping in Spirit and Truth: An Exegetical Study of the Johannine Perspective of Worship in John 4: 19 – 26" is an attempt to explore the use and meaning of the phrase (worshipping in Spirit and truth) as it applies to the Johannine Christians. Indeed it had an illuminating significance for John and his community. Their understanding of this manner of worship of the Father affected greatly their inclination to worship practices in Judaism and God's plan of salvation in Christ Jesus. In fact, for the community Jesus replaces and fulfills the traditional worship feasts and institutions of the Jews. Furthermore, the community's belief emphasized a realized eschatology found in Jesus and a universal salvation to all who by faith acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah.

This work is presented in five main chapters, with the sixth chapter as the conclusion. Chapter one deals with the introductory matters. Chapter two is a review of works on either the passage or the theme of worship (or maybe Spirit and/ or truth) in the fourth Gospel.

Chapter three is mainly a survey of the two worship institutions specifically mentioned in the pericope. Chapter four focuses on the content to the revelation in the focal passage and the exegesis of this focal passage.

Chapter five discusses the life application of findings from the exegesis. Chapter six summarizes and also makes a few recommendations. It concludes by stating that John's perspective of worship as found in Jn. 4: 19 – 26 is unto the Father, not localized, for God is Spirit and the manner of worshipping him must be in Spirit and truth wholly centered in the knowledge of the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

B. Recommendations

Jesus prophetic declaration regarding worship of the Father, which must be in spirit and truth, has suffered many setbacks as a result of wrong application mentioned in Chapter V (Application). This writer therefore recommends that Christian churches and individual believers seeking to experience true worship should avoid:

1. Wrong Theology and Wrong Practices: The woman illustrates this principle. She suffered for a long time in a worship setting that could not transform her life because the theology and practice were adulterated. Until her life was put right and its failures addressed, true worship could not happen to her. Israel suffered the same error right through the Old Testament period. Thus, the assumption that if the externals of worship were in place, God would be satisfied. He was not, and is not today (Am 5:22-24; cf. ps. 51:17).²⁹
2. Wrong priorities: This was the error of the Jews and Samaritans who were locked in conflict over where worship should take place while still ignorant of the presence of the long-awaited Messiah. Today, in many

²⁹ Bruce Milne, The Message of John, (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993), p. 89.

Christian Churches, interest has shifted to mostly signs and wonders and ecstatic dancing in worship. Little attention is given to genuine proclamation of the word of God which is indispensable to conversion and salvation³⁰

3. ' Wrong perception: This is particularly about who God is and his relationship to worshippers. Since God is Spirit, worship of him must be in Spirit and through his channel of self-revelation (Jn. 14:6)³¹

Furthermore, believers must not marginalize or create barriers in their evangelistic endeavours. The model should always be Christ who over looked unnecessary traditions, antagonisms, and ignorance to meet all who would respond to the invitation of the Father.

D. Conclusion

It is therefore the conclusion of this writer that the purposes for embarking on this work as mentioned in chapter one has been achieved. Hence, John's perspective of worship as found in Jn. 4:19-26 has also been proved to be unto the Father, not localized for God is Spirit, and the manner of worshipping him must be in Spirit and truth wholly centred in the knowledge of the Saviour, Jesus Christ.