

Wednesday's Wisdom

a weekly short note from Mike Minear

Worshiping in Spirit & Truth

By Mike Wilson

Last week we begin discussing "Why Worship Must be God-Centered". I feel this is a very important topic, remember Cain and Able in Genesis? Able made the mistake of thinking that his sacrifice would be pleasing unto God. When you worship, are you worshiping the way God has asked you to by command and example from the New Testament? Below is part 2 of Mr. Wilson's article

The Dictionary of New Testament Theology says that those who worship God in spirit and in truth are not merely "those who worship in sincerity and inwardness. The Samaritans are not criticized for lacking sincerity. True worship is that which accords with reality, which men grasp on the basis of revelation" (Vol. III, p. 890-1). The Samaritans who worshipped at Mount Gerizim, whose temple had been destroyed by John Hyrcanus around 128 B.C., worshipped the LORD, emphasized circumcision, kept the sabbath, observed kosher laws, and even looked for a Messiah. Yet Jesus said, "**You worship that which you do not know.**"

If God really has objective reality, and is not just a product of our idolatrous imaginations, then we must be open to the idea that He communicates exactly how He wants to be served. In the Bible, He does just that. He gently tells us, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither My ways your ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8,9). The problem is, as Helmut Thielicke acutely observed, "When God's thoughts are actually higher than our thoughts, we regard him as being refuted. For under all circumstances we want our thoughts to be the program according to which God operates."

In perhaps no greater way do we manipulate a "god" of our own imaginations than when we propose to dictate what kind of service we will and will not render. This certainly includes the terms on which acts of worship are offered. However it makes us feel, worship is "**vain**" if it does not conform to the will of Christ (Matthew 15 :9). **True** worship honors God, not self.