

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

The Holy Spirit

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

In Spirit & In Truth

Reading:
John Chapter 4

Introduction

True religion is more than simply learning about **Truth** and **Error**. Indeed one may say that learning the truth is one of the easier steps a believer takes in his/her walk with God. In a few months, or years at most, ignorant adults can - if they so wish - learn most of the fundamental teachings of Scripture. Basic concepts about **sin**, **repentance**, **forgiveness**, **faith** and **obedience** etc. are not difficult to grasp **if a person is really keen to learn**. Fundamental truth is of course **vital to salvation**. But there is something else as important, if not more so, than the **knowledge of the truth**. It is **worshipping in spirit**. Consider this verse:

John 4: 23: *"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the **true worshippers** shall worship the Father **in spirit and in truth**: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*
24: *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him **in spirit and in truth**."*

Two mandatory parameters

Here, then, we have the **two mandatory parameters** for effective worship. Leave either of them out and one's worship of the Most High is futile. To engage in effective worship a believer must worship **'in spirit'** and **'in truth'**. Notice that the phrase **'in spirit'** precedes **'in truth'**. This is significant. But what do the terms **'in spirit'** and **'in truth'** mean?

1. In Spirit

'In spirit' means, amongst other things, **to be moved by the Holy Spirit** and to have the **right attitude**. In this context that means the attitude of **faith, humility, reverence, repentance, gratitude, with a proper sense of the holiness of God and also of one's own unworthiness**. If this attitude is missing, then all worship of the Most High, whether by a professed Christian or an outright heathen, is **mechanical and meaningless**. It may initially be interesting and even entertaining to behold; but in fact it accomplishes nothing of real value. **It is impotent and barren**.

No doubt many of us have attended religious services which are faultless in their presentation and musical content, colourfully costumed and rich in ritual; but we have come away **spiritually empty** and somewhat saddened, because the **Spirit of the Holy One of Israel** was absent. Something vital was missing. It's like

visiting a wax museum where every exhibit is perfect in every detail, but also perfectly dead. **Obviously this is not worship worthy of the Creator. Indeed, the Almighty loathes such worship and most sensible people eventually tire of it.**

2. In Truth

In Truth means, ‘**according to the divinely prescribed manner.**’ That is, according to Yahweh's commandments as recorded in Scripture. Millions of tracts and booklets are devoted to teaching people how to worship ‘**in truth.**’ All such instruction is important, vitally important; that is why we in **A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada** engage in it. But it is not as important as my next point.

3. The Father's Search

Yahweh is keen to attract the worshipful trust and obedience of a **certain type of believer.** He is not looking at the colour of the skin, or at the educational standards of His worshippers; or even at their knowledge of His Word. He is searching for something else. In Scripture it is called the ‘**reins and the heart.**’ He searches and tests ‘**the reins**’ in order to bless and work through those who yearn to meet His standards. I would go so far as to say that the term ‘**reins and the heart**’ is merely a Biblical term for the ‘**human will.**’ In other words the Almighty is taking the measure of **every believer's will.** He is not concerned with what we possess, or even with what we say, but with our **wills**; with what we **secretly want to do!** The **human will** is like the steering wheel in a automobile. The **LORD** God of Israel wants us to hand the **steering wheel** of our lives - our **reins** - over to Him!

Satan is also battling for the control of the human will and mind; and you and we have the choice of who wins, the Holy Spirit of the **God of Israel** or the deceptive spirit of **Satan.** That is the choice of every person on earth. It is the God-given human right to freedom of choice. In short: Your **reins are what you secretly want to do.** And it is the Spirit that controls ‘**your reins.**’ And it is ‘**your reigns**’ - ‘**your will**’ - that controls the **real YOU.** Once a person has decided to surrender his/her **will (reins)** to God, to do His will, all subsequent thoughts, words, actions and understanding, **especially the understanding of Scriptural doctrines,** are motivated by the Spirit of God. That is what the Saviour meant when he said:

John 7: 16: *“Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.*

17: ***If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.”***

4. The Reins of the Heart

Consider these vital texts concerning the reins and the heart.

1 Samuel 16: 7: *“But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but **the LORD looketh on the heart.**”*

Jeremiah 17: 9: *“**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?** 10: **I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins,** even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.”*

Jeremiah 11: 20: *“But, O LORD of hosts, that judgest righteously, that **triest the reins and the heart,** let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I revealed my cause.”*

Psalms 139: 23: *“Search me, O God, and **know my heart:** try me, and know **my thoughts:** 24: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

Psalms 26: 2: *“Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; **try my reins and my heart.**”*

Yeshua's search

Yahweh's only begotten Son Yeshua, (Jesus) is also searching and testing the **reins and hearts** of men and women. And, like his Father, the Saviour also rewards according to our works.

Revelation 2: 23: *“And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.”*

5. What are the Reins?

What, you may well ask, constitutes a man's reins? Reins, as you all know are used to direct animals; horses, donkeys, bullocks, camels and sledge dogs. Without reins a rider has virtually no power over the horse he is riding or the team he is driving. Reins are lines of communication between man and animal, between God and man. Reins give total control.

Strange as it may seem we humans are also controlled by reins - the **human will**. Yes it is your will that controls your actions. The word **heart** is also another term for your **innermost inclinations, desires and will** - the **real you!** When you hand over the **reins of your heart** to the Almighty, you are, in fact, handing over **your will** to Him. He then has total control of the **real you**. And that is what the Almighty seeks - **total control** - albeit but with your permission. True to His high regard for personal freedom, the Almighty will never take over the **reins of your heart** without your consent. You must be willing to hand them over, else He will not take control of your will. That is why He continually requests your permission and invites you to accept His authority and control.

Isaiah 1: 18: *“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.
19: **If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:**
20: **But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.”***

6. Give Me thy Heart

The Most High is not only searching, testing and trying the hearts of men and women, but He is continually inviting souls to hand over their reins to Him; to let Him take control of their lives. And though He has commanded that we love and serve Him with all our heart, with the total strength of our innermost beings; He still seeks our permission before taking over the **reins of our hearts**. Consider these amazing texts about the steps to success. We could call them the **three Rs**.

1. The Requirement:

Deuteronomy 6: 5: *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy might.”*

2. The Request:

Proverbs 23: 26: *“My son give me thine heart.”*

3. The Result:

Psalms 1: 1: *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
2: But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.
3: And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and **whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.**
4: The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
5: Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
6: For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”*

When the God of Israel finds a heart that is receptive to His Spirit and one that is **willing** to be controlled (**reined**) by Him, He blesses that person with **His Presence**. No greater blessing is possible to the sons and

daughters of men - than **Yahweh's Presence**. And no better qualification can be found than to have it said:

Yahweh is with him, or Yahweh is with her.

7. Summary

You will see from the foregoing that to **worship in spirit and in truth** is a process whereby a true believer:

1. **Hands over the reins of his heart to the Almighty's control.** This is real conversion.
2. The second step is to **learn Yahweh's will, to get to know His law.**
3. The third step is to **obey the Almighty's will.**

The result of this progressive process will be that the God of Israel will imprint His commandments, which are simply a written transcript of His own character, on your mind. Then and only then is it possible to worship **in Spirit** and **in Truth**. All other forms of worship are vain and futile.

Hebrews 8: 8: *“For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:
9: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.
10: For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; **I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.”***

AMEN!

In the Son's Name — For the Father's glory.

Elder: *Max W. Mader*

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