

Scripture Readings

*The Old Testament Scripture reading is received from **The Second Book of Kings** chapter **17** verses **24-41**, which can be found on page **431** in the **old testament** of your pew bible.*

²⁴Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and settled them in the cities of Samaria in place of the Israelites; so they occupied Samaria and lived in its cities. In the early years of their settlement they did not pay homage to the Lord; and the Lord sent lions among them, and the lions preyed upon them. The king was told that the deported people whom he had settled in the cities of Samaria did not know the established usage of the god of the country, and that he had sent lions among them which were preying upon them because they did not know this. The king of Assyria, therefore, gave orders that one of the priests deported from Samaria should be sent back to live there and teach the people the usage of the god of the country. So one of the deported priests came and lived at Bethel, and taught them how they should pay their homage to the Lord. But each of the nations made its own god, and they set them up within the hill-shrines which the Samaritans had made, each nation in its own settlements. Succoth-benoth was worshipped by the men of Babylon, Nergal by the men of Cuth, Ashima by the men of Hamath, Nibhaz and Tartak by the Avvites; and the Sepharvites burnt their children as offerings to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. While still paying homage to the Lord, they appointed people from every class to act as priests of the hill-shrines and they resorted to them there. They paid homage to the Lord while at

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the same time they served their own gods, according to the custom of the nations from which they had been carried into exile.

They keep up these old practices to this day; they do not pay homage to the Lord, for they do not keep his statutes and his judgements, the law and commandment, which he enjoined upon the descendants of Jacob whom he named Israel. When the Lord made a covenant with them, he gave them this commandment: 'You shall not pay homage to other gods or bow down to them or serve them or sacrifice to them, but you shall pay homage to the Lord who brought you up from Egypt with great power and with outstretched arm; to him you shall bow down, to him you shall offer sacrifice. You shall faithfully keep the statutes, the judgements, the law, and the commandments which he wrote for you, and you shall not pay homage to other gods. You shall not forget the covenant which I made with you; you shall not pay homage to other gods. But to the Lord your God you shall pay homage, and he will preserve you from all your enemies.' However, they would not listen but continued their former practices. While these nations paid homage to the Lord they continued to serve their images, and their children and their children's children have maintained the practice of their forefathers to this day.

*The New Testament Scripture reading is received from **John** chapter 4 verses 1-26, which can be found on page 114 in the **new testament** of your pew bible...*

¹A report now reached the Pharisees: 'Jesus is winning and baptizing more disciples than John'; although, in fact, it was only the disciples who were baptizing and not Jesus himself. When Jesus learned this, he left Judaea and set out once more for

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Galilee. He had to pass through Samaria, and on his way came to a Samaritan town called Sychar, near the plot of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph and the spring called Jacob's well. It was about noon, and Jesus, tired after his journey, sat down by the well.

The disciples had gone away to the town to buy food. Meanwhile a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' The Samaritan woman said, 'What! You, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a Samaritan woman? Jesus answered her, 'If only you knew what God gives, and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.' 'Sir,' the woman said, 'you have no bucket and this well is deep. How can you give me "living water"? Are you a greater man than Jacob our ancestor, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, he and his sons, and his cattle too?' Jesus said, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water that I shall give him will be an inner spring always welling up for eternal life.' 'Sir,' said the woman, 'give me that water, and then I shall not be thirsty, nor have to come all this way to draw.'

Jesus replied, 'Go home, call your husband and come back.' She answered, 'I have no husband.' 'You are right', said Jesus, 'in saying that you have no husband, for, although you have had five husbands, the man with whom you are now living is not your husband; you told me the truth there.' 'Sir,' she replied, 'I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews say that the temple where God should be worshipped is in Jerusalem.' 'Believe me,' said Jesus, 'the time

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is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem.

You Samaritans worship without knowing what you worship, while we worship what we know. It is from the Jews that salvation comes. But the time approaches, indeed it is already here, when those who are real worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Such are the worshippers whom the Father wants. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.' The woman answered, 'I know that Messiah' (that is Christ) 'is coming. When he comes he will tell us everything.' Jesus said, 'I am he, I who am speaking to you now.'

May the Lord God help us to apply this scripture in our lives.