**R772\_Rumination for 24 Nov. 2019**

The **T**heme: **Afar Off** [[berita-bethel-ung.com](http://www.berita-bethel-ung.com/)](http://www.berita-bethel-ung.com/)

The **T**ext: *And He said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD…and worship ye* ***afar off.***Deut. 4:24

The **T**hots:

1. **The People Were to Worship God from *Afar Off*. Exo. 24:1, 2**
2. The **P**eople were to Worship **G**od away from the Mount – ***Afar Off***. Exo. 19:12

*And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:*

1. The **P**rincipal Leaders were to **G**o *up* the **M**ount to worship God, but **A**way from the Mountain Top.

*And He said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu,*

*and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off.*

1. However, **G**od **P**ermitted **M**oses **A**lone to draw near – *Moses alone shall come near the LORD:*

*but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him.*

1. **Abraham saw the Place to Worship God from *Afar Off*. Gen. 22**
2. Abraham was to **P**rove His Love for God in **S**acrificing His **S**on at a **M**ount in **M**oriah. Gen. 22:1-2, NKJV

*God tested Abraham…"Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land*

*of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."*

1. Abraham **P**repared to do so. *On the third day* [he] *lifted up his eyes, and saw the place* ***afar off*.** 22:4
2. That was the **P**lace where He would **P**erform the Sacrifice and Worship God. 22:5, 10

*Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here…and I and the lad will go yonder and worship…*

*And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to* ***S****lay his* ***S****on.*

1. But he was **P**rohibited from doing so as God had **P**rovided Him with a **S**ubstitute to be Slain! 22:13

*Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns:*

*and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.*

1. That was a **P**redictive **P**icture of God sparing *not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.* Rom. 8:32
2. **Peter followed Jesus *Afar off*.** Matt. 26:58

*Peter Followed Him* ***afar off****…and sat with the servants, to see the end.*

1. Earlier Jesus had **F**oretold that **P**eter would deny Him: Matt. 26:34

*Jesus said…Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice.*

1. But Peter **F**latly said*…Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny thee.* Matt. 26:35
2. Later *Peter* ***F****ollowed Him* ***afar off****…and sat with the servants, to see the end.* Matt.26:58
3. It was then that he **F**ailed and denied Jesus the third time: Luke 22:60-62

*And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.*

*And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord,*

*how He had said…Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*

1. Peter **L**earned his **L**esson and **L**ater wrote to the believers not to **F**ollow Jesus ***afar off***… I Pet 2:21

*because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should* ***F****ollow His steps:*

1. **The Women Beheld the Proceedings on the Cross Afar Off. Matt. 27:55**

*And many women were there beholding* ***afar off****, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto Him:*

1. These were **F**aithful women – they **F**ollowed Jesus and ministered to Him from beginning to **F**inish!
2. They were not **F**earful but were Discrete to observe what was happening to their Lord from ***afar off.***
3. And later they were the **F**irst to know that the Lord was Risen. Mk.16:1-8

*And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun….And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man…And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him. But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you.*

*And they went out quickly…and were amazed:*

1. The Lord honoured the women by appearing **F**irst to Mary Magdalene after His Resurrection. Mk. 16:9 *Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene…*
2. **Today we who were once *Afar off* are no more so**

**and we are to Draw Near to Worship God.**

1. We who were once ***afar off*** have now been *made near* and invited to *draw near* to Worship God.
2. *But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were* ***far off*** *are made* ***nigh*** *by the blood of Christ*. Eph. 2:13
3. *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,* Heb. 10:19, 20

*By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.*

1. ***Let us draw near*** *with a true heart in full assurance of faith.* Heb. 10:22

 *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.* Jn. 4:23

*Draw me nearer, nearer blessèd Lord, To the cross where Thou hast died.*

 *Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer blessèd Lord, To Thy precious, bleeding side.* [Fan­ny Cros­by](http://www.hymntime.com/tch/bio/c/r/o/s/crosby_fj.htm%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

**REFLECTIONS FOR THE WEEK R772**

1. When Paul was in Athens, he found the Athenians very devoted to their gods. In order not to cause any offense to any god that they might have left out inadvertently, Paul observed:

*For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription,*

*TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship,*

*him declare I unto you.* (Acts 17:23)

They raised that altar to the unknown god, because they would not want to be found guilty of unknowingly not worshipping this or any other god and suffering his wrath.

This reminds me of my younger days before having known the One True God.

As with the Athenians, I was fearful of offending any unknown god or spirit in the locality I was. Therefore before engaging in any dubious activity that might cause offense to such a one in that area, I would lift up my hands to pray to all around to respect them. I would pray for forgiveness in advance in case I unknowingly offend that particular deity.

Such then was my ignorance, my fear, and my superstition. I believe that today this attitude and act still prevails. I can still see passers-by at a roadside praying to trees or objects that they believe could have been inhabited by a deity or before dipping oneself into the sea to swim lift up one’s hands to pray and turning all round to ensure every direction of the compass is covered in case one may miss out any spirit or deity.

As Paul declared: the god that the people did not know, Paul would now declare unto them. He therefore, went on to say: - (Acts 17:24-31, HCSB)

*The God who made the world and everything in it—He is Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in shrines made by hands.  Neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives everyone life and breath and all things.
From one man He has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live. ⌊He did this⌋ so they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’ Being God’s offspring then, we shouldn’t think that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image fashioned by human art and imagination. “Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has set a day when He is going to judge the world in righteousness by the Man* [Jesus Christ] *He has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead.”*

Do you know this God Who can dwell in your heart this day if you invite Him in?

You need not have to pray to or fear any Unknown god to you!

Come near and know this God for yourself through Jesus Christ! **REFLECT**

1. When Jesus was on earth, He had a conversation with a Samaritan woman on true worship

 Jn. 4:20-24 (NKJV)

The Woman said: “*Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.”*

*Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know…*

*But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.* ***God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth****."*

**Samaritan Worship** confined to a mountain is **F**alse because God is not physically limited to a Locality. He is Spirit and is everywhere.

**Jewish or Jerusalem** **Worship** was **F**igurative – it prefigured the true Worship to come.

**Spiritual Worship** is **F**aith-Worship. It is true because it needs Faith to Worship God in Spirit and in Truth. It exercises Faith in God with access to Him by Faith in Jesus Christ.

*For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father*. (Eph. 2:18)

Are you in Faith worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth? **REFLECT**

**Points To Ponder: *T****rust in the God Who is* ***T****ruth.**Draw Near and Worship Him.*