

John 4:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Analysis

The woman raises the ancient dispute about worship location—Gerizim versus Jerusalem. This theological deflection is classic: when convicted of personal sin, we often shift to doctrinal debates. Yet Jesus will use her question to teach profound truth about worship in Spirit and truth, showing God's patience with our evasions.

Historical Context

Samaritans built a temple on Mount Gerizim (visible from Sychar) around 400 BC, destroyed by Jews in 128 BC. The controversy reflects the deep Samaritan-Jewish schism over proper worship location, a debate rooted in Deuteronomy 12 and differing textual traditions.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do we sometimes use theological questions to avoid personal spiritual application?

2. What does Jesus' willingness to engage her deflection teach about patient evangelism?

Interlinear Text

οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἐν τούτῳ τῷ ὅρει προσκυνεῖν
G3588 fathers Our in this mountain to worship
G3962 G2257 G1722 G5129 G3588 G3735 G4352

καὶ ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἔστιν ὁ τόπος
and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place
G2532 G5210 G3004 G3754 G1722 G2414 G2076 G3588 G5117

ὅπου δεῖ προσκυνεῖν
where men ought to worship
G3699 G1163 G4352

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 11:29 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal.

Deuteronomy 27:12 (Parallel theme): These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin:

2 Chronicles 7:12 (Parallel theme): And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice.