



JOHN 4:4-30 | JESUS IN SAMARIA, PART 1: THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

- Verses 4-6 – *see session 16*
- Verses 7-9 – *these notes also on session 16 but not covered in the video*
  - The Lord needed her to **give me to drink** (v. 7) not because the disciples were not present (v. 8), but because, in their absence, Jesus had **nothing to draw with, and the well is deep** (v. 11).
  - Note: If the disciples are in town, was there an eyewitness to this story? The account reads as if it was from an eyewitness, though such is not required. However, the eyewitness argument gives credence to the idea of another author rather than John.
  - Note the continued habit of the author to give running commentary to the reader as the author explains that **the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans** (v. 9). The Greek for **dealings** is συγχράομαι [sunchraomai], which is the prefix “together” with the root “to make use of.” It is only used here in the New Testament, and is believed refer to “friendly interaction” rather than doing business together (see v. 8).
- Verse 10 –
  - Presumably the statement of v. 10 is associated with the comment of v. 9.
    - This would be the natural reading of the words, **Jesus answered**.
    - That is, the woman said, **Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans** and *Jesus responded to that statement by saying, If thou knewest the gift of God...*
    - The plain reading of the words are, “since you do not know the gift of God, nor **who it is that saith to thee, Give me a drink**, you are therefore not responding in the best way for the situation at hand.”
  - The Jewish people certainly understood **living water**.
    - In its most basic and physical understanding, this is water which is fresh and flowing rather than held in a cistern and potentially stagnant.
    - However, in its spiritual meaning, **living water** is the gift of God’s presence among His people. See, for example, Jeremiah 2:13, 17:13, and Zechariah 14:8.
- Verse 11 –
  - Jacob’s well was a spring (which is the word used in vv. 6 and 14, translated **well**). Here the word **well** refers to the shaft. The woman was, in effect, saying, “this is living water (in the physical sense, because it was from a spring), but you cannot get to it).
  - Her response shows the accuracy of Jesus’ previous remarks. She clearly does not know the **living water** of which Jesus speaks.
- Verse 12 –
  - Continuing in her confusion, she shows two things.
    - The Samaritan people considered themselves to be descendants of **our father Jacob**, just as the Jews. This is accurate, except for mixed marriages.

- She asks a question which mostly appears to be a statement: *you are not greater than Jacob*. From the grammar, it is difficult to conclude that this may have been a serious question rather than a negative statement.
  - Note from Josephus on the Samaritan's Jewish heritage: *for such is the disposition of the Samaritans, as we have already elsewhere declared, that when the Jews are in adversity they deny that they are of kin to them, and then they confess the truth; but when they perceive that some good fortune hath befallen them, they immediately pretend to have communion with them, saying, that they belong to them, and derive their genealogy from the posterity of Joseph, Ephraim, and Manasseh.* (Antiquities, XI, viii, 6, 341).
- Verses 13-14 –
  - Jesus makes it clear that He is not speaking of the water from the well. This **water that I shall give** would be a spring that would spring **up into everlasting life**.
  - The promise of **eternal life** is not indication that this woman could “accept Jesus Christ as her savior” here and now. Rather, she could become part of the covenants and commonwealth of Israel and look to Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, who would provide *living water* from the throne (Zech. 14:8), and the eternal life of the Kingdom.
- Verse 15 –
  - The word **Sir** is κύριος [kurios], which is often translated *Lord*. It is a word requiring the interpretation of context, and **Sir** is the best translation in this context (as in verse 11).
  - The woman still does not appear to recognize the spiritual discussion but is interested in the physical.
- Verses 16-18 –
  - Likely, Jesus asked the question about the husband in order to push the discussion to the higher level. This is the second time in the Gospel that we have seen the omniscience of Jesus (see also Jn. 1:48).
  - While it is difficult (if not dangerous) to assume *tone* in the written word, it appears that Jesus speaks with some degree of condescension in His reply to the Samaritan woman.
- Verse 19 –
  - The word **perceive** is θεωπέω [theoreo], from which we get *theory*.
  - Because Jesus knew that which He could not have known, the woman makes what seems to be the only logical conclusion: **thou art a prophet**. She knows that prophets receive knowledge from God, and this knowledge must have come from God.
  - She fails to *theorize* that it was the *Son of God* who stood before her.
- Verse 20 –
  - If Jesus has a connection with God, she wants to know the answer to an issue that had separated Jews from Samaritans for hundreds of years. Namely, where **is the place where men ought to worship?**
  - The Samaritans worshiped **in this mountain**, that is, Mt. Gerizim. The Jews, of course, worshiped in Jerusalem. The worship at Mt. Gerizim started 1,000 years before Christ, with the division of the Kingdom.
- Verse 21 –
  - It is likely that Jesus is predicting the destruction of Jerusalem along with Judea and Samaria that would conclude in 70A.D. This verse is often taken to mean “people will worship wherever they happen to be,” but the verse doesn’t actually say that. I take the verse to say, “You better get things right now, because soon you won’t be worshipping anywhere!”