

# In The Beginning Was The Word

## John 4:1-19

### INTRODUCTION:

John stresses the deity of Jesus Christ.

Samaria. In 721 B.C. the Northern Kingdom of Israel finally collapsed under the onslaught of the armies of Assyria. A large portion of the Hebrew population was deported into captivity. In the years that followed, refugees from other Assyrian conquests were resettled in this area so that they eventually began to intermarry with the surviving Hebrew population.

In 586 B.C. the Southern Kingdom of Judah fell to the Babylonian armies of Nebuchadnezzar and now these Jews also suffered a deportation to a foreign land. However, the Babylonian Empire declined quickly in the years that followed and its fall came in 539 B.C., brought about through the conquests of Cyrus the Great.

Under Cyrus and his Persian Empire, the Jews were allowed to return to the land of Judah and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. When the Samaritan population offered to help in this rebuilding program, they were refused. This sparked off a feud that was to last for the next 500 years.

In the years that followed, the Samaritans built their own temple on Mount Gerizim and instituted their own priesthood. They rejected all of the Old Testament except for the Torah and they claimed to have a copy of the latter which was older than any possessed by the Jews. The Jews responded in kind, fanning the flames of prejudice. In 128 B.C. John Hyrcanus, the Hasmonean King of Judah, destroyed the temple at Gerizim. On another instance, the Samaritans sneaked into the temple and left a dead pig on the altar, thereby polluting that sacred place.

The Roman conquest of Palestine did nothing to quell the hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans. By the first century A.D. the Jews considered the Samaritans to be even lower than the Gentiles, for they were not even permitted to proselyte to Judaism.

It is upon this scene that we open our study of John 4. It is the story of a Jew breaking the barrier of 500 years of prejudice. It is the story of the incident which occurred at Sychar.

### A. The Samaritan woman.

#### 1. (1-4) Jesus travels from Judea to Galilee, passing through Samaria.

#### John 4:1-4

<sup>1</sup>When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, <sup>2</sup>(Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his

disciples,)<sup>3</sup> He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.<sup>4</sup> And he must needs go through Samaria.

1. **When the Lord knew...He left Judea**: Jesus knew that because of His rising reputation and fame, there would soon be a confrontation with the religious establishment (among who were **the Pharisees**). Yet, Jesus knew that the time was not yet right for a confrontation in Jerusalem, so He returned to Galilee.

2. **Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples)**: This shows that Jesus regarded baptism as a demonstration of repentance and preparation for the work of the Messiah as important. It also shows that Jesus did not regard baptism to be of ultimate or primary importance, because He left that work to His disciples.

3. **He needed to go through Samaria**: Although the road through Samaria was the shortest route from Jerusalem to Galilee, self-righteous Jews often avoided it. They did so because there was a deep distrust and dislike between many of the Jews and the Samaritans.

A. When the Babylonians conquered the southern kingdom of Judah, they took almost all the population captive, exiling them to the Babylonian Empire. All they left behind were the lowest classes of society, because they didn't want these lowly regarded people in Babylon. These people that were left behind intermarried with other non-Jewish peoples who slowly came into the region, and the Samaritans emerged as an ethnic and religious group.

B. Because the Samaritans had a historical connection to the people of Israel, their faith was a combination of law and ritual from the Law of Moses, and various superstitions. Most Jews in Jesus' time loathed the Samaritans, even more than Gentiles - because they were, religiously speaking, "half-breeds" who had an assorted, mixed faith.

C. It says that Jesus needed to go through Samaria. The need wasn't because of travel arrangements or practical necessities, but because there were people there who needed to hear Him.

## **2. (5-6) Jesus comes to a well in Sychar of Samaria.**

<sup>5</sup> Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

<sup>6</sup> Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

1. **Now Jacob's well was there**: Sychar was ancient *Shechem*, and was the capital city of the Samaritans.
2. In the OT it tells us of this piece of ground that was purchased by Jacob.

## **Genesis 33:19**

<sup>19</sup> *And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money.*

## **Joshua 24:32**

<sup>32</sup> *And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.*

- ✓ This is where Abram first came when he arrived into Canaan from Babylonia. (Genesis 12:6)
- ✓ This is where God first appeared to Abram in Canaan, and renewed the promise of giving the land to him and his descendants. (Genesis 12:7)
- ✓ This is where Abram built an altar and called upon the name of the Lord (Genesis 12:8)
- ✓ This is where Jacob came safely when he returned with his wives and children from his sojourn with Laban. (Genesis 33:18)
  
- ✓ This is where Jacob bought a piece of land from a Canaanite named Hamor, for 100 pieces of silver (Genesis 33:19)
- ✓ This is where Jacob built an altar to the Lord, and called it *El Eloe Israel* (Genesis 33:20) This established the connection between Jacob and what became known as **Jacob's well** there in Sychar.
- ✓ Sychar (Shechem) was also the place where Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, was raped - and the sons of Jacob massacred the men of the city in retaliation. (Genesis 34)
- ✓ This is where the bones of Joseph were eventually buried when they were carried up from Egypt (Joshua 24:32)
- ✓ This is where Joshua made a covenant with Israel, renewing their commitment to the God of Israel and proclaiming, *as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* (Joshua 24)

2. **Being wearied from His journey**: John records Jesus' weariness. He truly submitted to our human limitations.

**Philippians 2:**<sup>6</sup> *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*<sup>7</sup> *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*<sup>8</sup> *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

3. **It was about the sixth hour**: This was about noon, during the heat of the day. Jesus, being tired and hot, would have wanted a refreshing drink.

### **3. (7-9) Jesus speaks with a Samaritan woman.**

<sup>7</sup> There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.<sup>8</sup> (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)<sup>9</sup> Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

A. **A woman of Samaria came to draw water:** This woman came for water at an unusual hour and she came alone. Typically, women came for water earlier in the day and in groups. Perhaps there was a sudden need, or perhaps she was a social outcast.

1. Whatever the reason it was a divine intervention that would have a significant outcome.
2. Jesus knew the need and he was there to help her.

B. **Jesus said to her:** But by the way.....

By tradition, a rabbi would not speak with a woman in public, not even with his own wife. It was also very unusual for a Jewish person of that time to ask a favour or accept a drink from a Samaritan's cup. Jesus' request truly surprised the woman. The disciples were also surprised (John 4:27).

**John 4:27<sup>27</sup>** *And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?*

C. **How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?** Immediately, the woman was startled by the friendliness of Jesus. This was probably the first time she had ever heard a kind greeting from a Jewish man, for generally speaking, for the **Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.**

1. John felt this was so well understood in his day that he needed no further explanation.
2. The following verses out of Ezra 4:1-5 tells us a little bit about the conflict between the Jews and the Samaritans.

### **Ezra 4:1-5 ff.**

*4 Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel;*

*<sup>2</sup> Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.*

*<sup>3</sup> But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves*

together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.

<sup>4</sup> Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building,

<sup>5</sup> And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

2."The deadly hatred that existed between these two nations is known to all.

3. The Jews cursed them, and believed them to be accursed. Their most merciful wish to the Samaritans was, that they might have no part in the resurrection; or, in other words, that they might be wiped off the face of the earth forever.

- ❖ **Read Acts 10:1-37 about God being no respecter of persons. The vision of things from Heaven that Peter saw. (this has nothing to do with food by the way.**
- ❖ **This is why Jesus went to all nations with the Gospel.**

#### **4. (10-15) Jesus interests the woman in living water.**

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

<sup>11</sup> The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

<sup>12</sup> Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

<sup>14</sup> But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

<sup>15</sup> The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

**A. If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, "Give Me a drink":** Jesus drew the woman into conversation, making her curious about several things:

1. He made her curious about the things of God (**If you knew the gift of God**)
2. He made her curious about who Jesus is (**who it is who says to you**)

3. He made her curious about what He could give her (**He would have given you living water**).
4. He made her curious as to how he would give her this "living water" if he had nothing to draw it with from the well?
5. He made her curious in her thinking?

B. **Living water**: In ancient times they called spring water **living water** because it seemed alive as it bubbled up from the ground. At first glance, it might seem that Jesus told this woman about a nearby active spring. But Jesus used a play on words with the phrase "**living water**," because He meant the spiritual water that quenches our spiritual thirst and gives life.

C. **Are you greater than our father Jacob**: It is hard to tell if the woman asked a sincere question, or if she was a sceptical critic? - But she did come to belief at the end of her encounter with Jesus.

D. In the OT the Samaritan woman would have known about living water.

**Jeremiah 2:13**<sup>13</sup> *For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me **the fountain of living waters**, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.*

❖ Lets continue on in our text this morning.....

#### **5. (13-15) Jesus describes the effect of the living water He offers.**

<sup>13</sup> *Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:<sup>14</sup> But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*<sup>15</sup> *The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.*

A. **Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again**: Jesus knew that this woman - and everyone in the village - had to come to this well daily to satisfy their natural thirst. Jesus used **thirst** as a picture of the spiritual need and longing that everyone has.

#### **B. Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst:**

Jesus gave an amazing offer. What he offered - to this woman and to anyone who would drink - was something to give *lasting* satisfaction. The key is to drink **of the water that Jesus shall give you**. The water of everlasting life.

1. It's common for people to try and satisfy their God-created inner thirst for many things, or anything except for what Jesus gives.
2. People are *thirsty* - they want, they long, they search, they reach; but only what Jesus gives satisfies to the deepest levels of man's soul and spirit.

3. Drinking and thirst are common pictures of God's supply and man's spiritual need. Drinking is an action, but an action of receiving - like faith, it is *doing* something, but it is not a merit-earning work in itself.

4. "What does a thirsty man do to get rid of his thirst? He drinks.

- ✓ Perhaps there is no better representation of faith in all the Word of God than that. To drink is to receive; to take in the refreshing drink; and that is all.
- ✓ A man's face may be unwashed, but yet he can drink; he may be a very unworthy character, but yet a mouthful of water will remove his thirst.

4. Someone might object: "I drank of what Jesus offers, and I feel thirsty and empty again."

- ✓ The answer is simple: drink again!
- ✓ It isn't a one-time sip of Jesus that satisfies forever, but a continual relationship with Him.

C. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life:

- ✓ The effect of this water does much more than simply satisfy the thirst of the one who drinks it.
- ✓ It also *creates* something good, something life-giving in the heart of the one who drinks it.
- ✓ It *becomes* a **fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.**

D. Sir, give me this water:

- ✓ The response of the Samaritan woman was logical, yet not spiritual.
- ✓ She wanted to avoid the work of coming to the well every day.
- ✓ "Jesus, if you want to make my life easier and more convenient, then I'm all for it. Give it to me!"
  
- ✓ The woman needed to realise that she was a sinner in sin. If she could not see this and identify with it as being a sinner she would not understand the message of salvation.

**6. (16-19) Jesus speaks of her sinful life.**

<sup>16</sup> *Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.* <sup>17</sup> *The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: <sup>18</sup> **For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband:** in that saidst thou truly.* <sup>19</sup> *The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.*

**A. Go, call your husband, and come here:**

- ✓ This was not a strange request. In this extended, public conversation with the woman, Jesus was straining the boundaries of cultural correctness.
- ✓ The conversation would be more culturally appropriate if the woman's husband were present.

**I have no husband...you have had five husbands:**

- ✓ The woman claimed to have no husband - which was technically true, but Jesus knew - supernaturally - that there was much more to the story of the woman's marriage history.

**And the one whom you now have is not your husband:**

- ✓ Jesus brought up this embarrassing issue because her sinful life had to be confronted.
- ✓ This woman had to decide what she loved more:
- ✓ Her sin or the Messiah.

**Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet:**

- ✓ This was an obvious observation from the woman.
- ✓ She was no doubt surprised; perhaps stunned that Jesus had supernatural knowledge of her life.
- ✓ He has knowledge of your life too.

Just remember that.

PRAYER.....CLOSE