

# In The Beginning Was The Word

John 4:39-54

## INTRODUCTION:

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 dispute that was to last for the next 500 years.

1. In the years that followed, the Samaritans built their own temple on Mount Gerizim and instituted their own priesthood.
2. They rejected all of the Old Testament except for the Torah and they claimed to have a copy of the Torah which was older than any possessed by the Jews.
3. The Jews responded in kind, fanning the flames of prejudice.
4. In 128 B.C. John Hyrcanus, the Hasmonean King of Judah, destroyed the temple at Gerizim.

The Roman conquest of Palestine did nothing to pacify 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, and they were not even permitted to convert 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.

- The Samaritans had been worshiping on Mount Gerizim for hundreds of years. It was here that they had built their own temple, the ruins of which still lay at the top of the mountain.

**The Samaritan woman and Jesus discuss worship. (V 20-26)**

**John 4:20-26**

<sup>20</sup> *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.*

**The Samaritan woman and Jesus examine worship**

**A. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain:**

1. It is possible that this was a genuine source of confusion and a stumbling block to her.
2. But it is more likely that this simply was an evasion, trying to avoid the issue of her many prior husbands and her current non-husband.
3. The Lord has always guided and told the Jewish people where and how to worship him. Here in Deut 12:5 we see the Lord laying down his command of worship.

**Deuteronomy 12:**<sup>5</sup> *But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:*

**B. You worship what you do not know:**

- i. The Samaritans believed that Moses commissioned an altar on Mount Gerazim, the mountain of blessing - this was their justification of their system of worship on that mountain.
- ii. But like all faith that tries to combine elements of different religions, they **worship what they do not know**.
- iii. The Lord was specific when he told Isaiah.

**Isaiah 2:3**

<sup>3</sup> *And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

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Now as we continue this morning from where we left off the last Lords day. In verse 39 to verse 54.

Let us now focus on the facts that came about as a result of Jesus witness with the Samaritan woman at the well.

The Sychar ministry is a well known ministry of how people can change once they are exposed to the Word of God.

<sup>39</sup> ***And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.***

1. Jesus affected many of the Samaritans “of that city”.
2. These Samaritans were so affected by Him that they “believed on him”.
3. Jesus knows and speaks the truth regardless of the situation. He knows all that we have ever done.
4. Our testimony to others of how the Lord has changed us and had an effect on us can bear fruit that others might also believe.
5. You will never quite know how your testimony of how the Lord has changed you may affect others to come to salvation.

#### **A. (39-42) Many Samaritans believe on the Savior of the world.**

<sup>39</sup> *And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.*

<sup>40</sup> *So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.*

<sup>41</sup> *And many more believed because of his own word:*

<sup>42</sup> *And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

1. **He told me all that I ever did**: The woman was amazed not only that Jesus knew the facts of her life, but that *He loved her* even knowing the facts of her life.
2. We sometimes fear that if someone knew **all that I ever did**, they could not love us - but Jesus loved this woman.
3. **We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world**: The people of this Samaritan village came to faith in Jesus as the **Christ**.

#### ➤ **After the account with the Samaritan woman the Lord returns to Galilee.**

This is where we pick up on the next miracle that Jesus did.

#### **B. Healing of the nobleman's son: the second sign (2<sup>nd</sup> miracle after Jesus had turned the water into wine at Cana.**

1. (43-48) Jesus comes to Galilee and is greeted by a request. His return from Samaria to Galilee proves his need to have visited Samaria and not to just pass through it.

<sup>43</sup> *Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.*

<sup>44</sup> *For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.*

<sup>45</sup> *Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.*

<sup>46</sup> *So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman (government official or officer in Herod's service), whose son was sick at Capernaum.*

<sup>47</sup> *When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought (urged) him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.*

<sup>48</sup> *Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.*

1. Here was the second miracle in waiting that the bible will reveal.
2. There were also many other miracles that Jesus did do whilst he was in Jerusalem at the feast day in John 2:23.

### 1. **A prophet has no honour in his own country:**

Galilee was Jesus' **country** - where He grew up.

Because these people felt so familiar with Jesus, they did not honour Him the way they should have.

In this we recognize that they *really* were not familiar with Jesus; if they were, they would have honoured Him all the more.

- i. It can be said that "There is such a thing as a *false* familiarity with Jesus;
- ii. A dangerous feeling that we know all about Him. Such a dangerous feeling in fact leads to a lack of **honour** towards our Lord Jesus.
- iii. Such a familiarity could breed contempt. You have heard that saying before.
- iv. And this is true if you try and lower the status of a person who is in charge over you. Be it a teacher, an army officer, or the Lord.

### 2. **Having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast:**

It was customary for the Jews in Galilee to go to Jerusalem for the feasts (fulfilling Exodus 23:14-17).

But in this particular time they remembered all that Jesus had done in Jerusalem.

- i. Perhaps they remembered when Jesus turned the merchant's tables in the outer courts of the temple (John 2:13-27).
- ii. Jesus also predicted His own miraculous resurrection (John 2:18-22) and performed many other unspecified signs during this time in Jerusalem (John 2:23-25).
- iii. Nevertheless they remembered all these things which Jesus did, and that is why they came.

A. **Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe:**

Jesus rebukes those who depend on signs and wonders before they will believe.

It might seem that Jesus was harsh towards this man, who wanted his son healed, but He encountered many in Galilee who were only interested in His miracles –

He therefore questions this man for that reason.

- i. Signs and wonders can lead a person towards belief in God, and can validate a heavenly messenger - but they can also have no effect on a person, and Satan can also use lying signs and wonders.  
**(2 Thessalonians 2:9).** *Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,*
- ii. Signs and wonders from God are obviously good things, but they should not form the foundation of our faith. We should not depend on them to "prove" God to us.
- iii. By themselves, signs and wonders cannot change the heart;
- iv. Israel saw incredible signs at Mount Sinai and even heard the very voice of God (Exodus 19:16-20:1), yet a short time later they worshipped a gold calf (Exodus 32:1-6).
  - The Jews were always seeking signs to try and prove everything.

**1 Corinthians 1:21-23**

<sup>21</sup> For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.<sup>22</sup> For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:<sup>23</sup> But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

**C. (49-54) Jesus heals the nobleman's son.**

<sup>49</sup> The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, **come down ere my child die.**

<sup>50</sup> Jesus saith unto him, **Go thy way; thy son liveth.** And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

<sup>51</sup> And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.

<sup>52</sup> Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

<sup>53</sup> So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: **and himself believed, and his whole house.**

<sup>54</sup> **This is again the second miracle that Jesus did**, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.

A. **Sir, come down before my child dies!** The nobleman's plea comes from a deep need, but did he ask in light of what Jesus said in John 4:48?

It was as if He perfectly understood what Jesus just said was not meant to discourage signs and wonders in themselves, but to discourage a carnal dependence on them.

- i. He was a **nobleman**, an officer most likely in Herod's service of high standing and stature. Even though his physical standing in the community seemed to be higher than Jesus, he still addressed the Lord as Sir. He knew in his heart that this man was greater than himself.
- ii. All of his status and importance seemed to matter nothing when he was at his point of need.
- iii. Sometimes when we or others are low we hope we will come to Him with this kind of deep need, and find that the ground is all level at the cross.

B. **Go your way; your son lives:** Jesus severely tested this man's faith, forcing him to believe in Jesus' word alone.

- i. By faith *the man took Jesus at His word and departed.*
  - ii. All Jesus gave him to trust in was His word, but real faith is simply that - taking Jesus at His word.
- What difference would it make in our lives if we really believed what Jesus says?

C. **Your son lives:** Why didn't Jesus use any dramatic effects in this healing?

- i. Many long to see dramatic effects in God's work; and sometimes God provides them. But to real faith, they are not necessary.
- ii. Maybe dramatic effects in healing can encourage weak and ignorant faith; but a mature faith does not need them.
- iii. That is why we are called to walk in faith.

**2 Corinthians 5:7** (For we **walk by faith**, not by sight:)

- And if by faith?, then what is faith?

**Hebrews 11:1**

*Now faith is the substance of things **hoped for**, the evidence of things not seen.*

- The result of the Nobleman's faith had a dramatic effect on his whole household.
- It would be a miracle in itself that his entire family embraced the Lord for salvation.
- The effect could only have come from knowing the Lord. The truth of the Lord's word had sustained his whole family.

D. **And himself believed, and his whole house:** The miraculous authority and power of Jesus developed greater faith.

- i. **And he himself believed:** Didn't this man believe before? Of course he did, but now his faith is deepened by his personal experience of God's power.
- ii. His previous faith and God's work led to more faith. We can take God's past blessing as a promise of future blessing.
- iii. It is essential that we believe God if we want to see His work done.

E. **And his whole household:** The whole group was touched by this nobleman's faith and God's power working through it.

- i. It is wonderful that these Jews from the region of Galilee believed; but they would not unless Jesus performed signs, and they were slow to believe even then.
- ii. These Jewish Galileans pale in comparison to the despised Samaritans who believed on Jesus without a sign - they believed at His word only (John 4:39-42).
- iii. **This is the second sign.** All of them are given that we might believe (John 20:30-31), and it isn't hard to see how this miracle specifically builds our faith.

### **John 20:30-31**

<sup>30</sup> *And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.*<sup>31</sup> *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

PRAYER.....CLOSE