

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

BIBLE TEXT : John 4:1-42

LESSON 30 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" (Isaiah 55:1).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

John 4:1-42

^{4:1} When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,
² (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

³ He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.

⁴ And he must needs go through Samaria.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

⁸ (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ 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?

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

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

¹⁴ 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.

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

¹⁶ Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

¹⁷ The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Jesus' Brief Stay at Jacob's Well

1 He departs from Judea because of the enmity over the increase of His disciples, John 4:1-3;

John 3:26

And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him.

2 He goes by way of Samaria, the most direct route to Galilee, John 4:4

3 He arrives near Sychar and rests at Jacob's well, John 4:5, 6;

Genesis 33:19

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.

II The Arrival of the Woman to Draw Water

1 Jesus requests of her a drink, for His disciples were gone to buy meat, John 4:7, 8;

Matthew 10:42

And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

2 The woman brings up the hatred of the Jews for the Samaritans —"thou, being a Jew," John 4:9;

Luke 9:51-56

^{9:51} And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,
⁵² And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

⁵³ And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

⁵⁴ And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

⁵⁵ But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

⁵⁶ For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village.

3 Jesus brushes aside racial prejudice and brings up the subject of "living water," John 4:10;

Isaiah 55:1

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

III The Woman Awakened to Her Spiritual Need

1 The woman ponders about the "living water" of which Jesus spoke, John 4:11, 12

2 She finds herself thirsting for that satisfying "water" which Jesus can give, John 4:13-15;

John 7:37-39

hast well said, I have no husband:
18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.
19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.
20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.
21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.
22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.
23 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.
24 God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.
25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.
26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*.
27 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?
28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,
29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?
30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.
31 In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.
32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.
33 Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat?
34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.
35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.
36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.
37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.
38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye

7:37 In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

3 Jesus points to the wrongs of her marital life, to which she replies, "Thou art a prophet," John 4:16-19;

John 1:9

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

IV The Spirit of True Worship Revealed

1 The woman brings up the contention of the proper place to worship God, John 4:20;

Deuteronomy 16:2

Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there.

2 Jesus instructs her that true worship is no longer a question of "place" but of "spirit," John 4:21-24;

2 Corinthians 3:17

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

3 Jesus is revealed to her as the "Messiah" for Whom she looks, John 4:25, 26;

1 Corinthians 1:30

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

V The Woman's Conversion and Testimony

1 The disciples look with wonderment, but with reverence, that Jesus would talk to a Samaritan woman, John 4:27;

Acts 10:28

And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

2 Leaving her waterpot she hastens to the city, having found the Messiah called the Christ, John 4:28;

Isaiah 9:6

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

3 She testifies to her towns people of the Christ, and they believe her testimony, John 4:29, 30

Isaiah 52:7

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

VI The Great Revival in Sychar of Samaria

1 Jesus says to His disciples that His "meat" is to do the will of Him that sent Him, John 4:31-34;

Hebrews 10:6-7

10:6 *In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.*

7 *Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.*

bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

³⁹ 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.

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

⁴¹ And many more believed because of his own word;

⁴² 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.

2 He points His disciples to the fields already white unto the harvest, John 4:35-38;

Matthew 9:37-38

^{9:37} Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few;

³⁸ Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

3 The converts of Sychar testify: "This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world," John 4:39-42;

John 1:12-13

^{1:12} But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:

¹³ Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

NOTES:

One day the Jews came to John the Baptist and said, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, ... behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." This prophet of God took the news, as a man of God should, in a spirit of humility, and replied, "He must increase, but I must decrease." But when this same news reached the ears of the Pharisees, then trouble began. And for this reason Jesus left Judaea and departed into Galilee.

The most direct route into Galilee passed through Samaria, although Jesus and His disciples often took the longer route by way of the Jordan. This time, however, "He must needs go through Samaria," possibly because there was a soul there who needed help. And reaching Jacob's well, likely on the second day, He stopped to rest; for Jesus became weary, even as we do. He also hungered, for His disciples were gone into Sychar to buy meat. He likewise thirsted, for when the woman of Samaria appeared with her waterpot to draw water, He said, "Give me to drink." A certain traveler reports that the well is one hundred and five feet deep; and Jesus had no cord wherewith to draw.

The woman, observing that He was a Jew, replied, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, because the remnant of the Israelites, which was left in the land when the ten tribes were carried away into captivity, mixed with the Assyrian colonists who had been brought there from the East. And from this people the Samaritans were descended. For this reason the Jews renounced them as children of Abraham, counted them as no kindred of theirs, and despised and hated them because they were not Jews, and because their worship was different. And in return the Samaritans resented the hostile attitude of the Jews.

But Jesus, even though He was a Jew, in His ministry of love He was not concerned with racial prejudices or class distinctions. To Him the white, the black, the red, the yellow, the high, the low, the rich, the poor, the bond, the free, are all precious souls who stand in need of the help that He alone can bring. "The Son of man," He said, "is come to seek and to save that which was lost." From the depths of His soul He hates sin, but He loves the sinner.

Upon another occasion when He was passing through Samaria He sent messengers to a village to make ready for Him. "And they did not receive him, because his face was as

though he would go to Jerusalem." And James and John were so resentful of this rejection of their Master that they exclaimed, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" And the Lord replied, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." If we are His disciples, we need more and more to have the mind of Christ.

Jesus answered the woman, "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." This, no doubt, was a mystery to the woman, as it is to all who have never drunk at the Fountain which God has provided. Multitudes today are seeking at "broken cisterns," and are famishing for the want of the Living Water, like the Israelites of old. But we are not living in Jeremiah's time. This is the day of grace when God's gift is abounding, and springs of Living Water are breaking forth in desert wastes. And if men are missing it, the fault lies with them.

Isaiah was speaking prophetically when he cried, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters."

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." The Lord was here speaking particularly of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost was poured out, a wellspring of Living Water, which they of Old Testament times did not enjoy. The mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost was reserved for us in this dispensation of grace. And perhaps Jesus had this wonderful gift in mind when He said to the woman, "Whosoever drinketh of this water [in Jacob's well] shall thirst again: 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." And the woman replied, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."

But there was something this woman must do before she could even taste of that Water of which Jesus spoke. Her house had to be put in order. Her past life had to be straightened up. And the Son of God knew all about her life, even as He knows our lives. No secret sins are hid from God. Jesus therefore pointed her back to those five husbands, and this man whom she now had — who was not her husband. This all had to be fixed up, if she was to have the Gift of which Jesus spoke. The trumpet note of the forerunner, John the Baptist was, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." There is no entrance into it — no man can even see it — without repentance and restitution, for that heavenly Kingdom is made up of a clean, holy people.

With her life disclosed, this woman had a higher estimation of Who Jesus was: "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." And she took this occasion to bring up another dispute between the Jews and the Samaritans: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." In the early days the Samaritans built a temple upon Mount Gerizim, not far from Jacob's well, and this temple was later destroyed by the invaders. But the Samaritans, who believed in the Books of Moses and hoped in the promised Messiah, still worshiped on that

mount. And this question of the proper place to worship did not end with the Jews and Samaritans. For many centuries it has been a subject of contention among the various religious sects. Yet Jesus, brushing away again the contentions of men, settled the whole issue in a brief and beautiful statement: "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."

And at this point the woman said, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called the Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things." Heretofore Jesus had not disclosed His Messiahship — not even to the doctors of the Law in the Temple. But to this poor woman at the well He said, "I that speak unto thee am he." How penetrating to the listening ear can be just a sentence or a word from the Son of God! A great light dawned upon this woman. The promise of old was fulfilled. Here before her stood the Messiah for Whom she had looked.

Leaving her waterpot, she hastened back to the city with the testimony: "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" And forthwith a large company of her townspeople streamed out of the city for Jacob's well, to see this Man of Whom she spoke. And a great revival broke forth in Sychar. Their testimony to the woman was this: "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."

Some years later, shortly after the day of Pentecost, Philip the Evangelist went up into this same province of Samaria and preached Christ unto them, "And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." And when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God they sent Peter and John, who found a company saved and sanctified. Laying hands upon them, Peter and John prayed, and the believers received the mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost, poured out as on the day of Pentecost. And how do we know but that at some time in this great revival there came also this woman of Samaria with a company of her townspeople, among whom the Seed was sown, and they, too, received the mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost, rejoicing at the well of Living Water "springing up into everlasting life?"

QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did Jesus depart from Judaea at this particular time?
- 2 What was the most direct route from Judaea to Galilee?
- 3 What other route did Jesus and His disciples sometimes take?
- 4 For what reason did He go through Samaria at this time?
- 5 When He asked for a drink at the well, why did the woman hesitate?
- 6 What was Jesus' answer to this woman when she denied Him a drink?
- 7 In what way was this woman to receive the Living Water of which Jesus told her?
- 8 Why did Jesus at this point bring up her past life?
- 9 What was the woman's testimony when she went back to the city?
- 10 What were the results of her testimony to her townspeople?
- 11 Name the great truths which Jesus taught this woman at the well.