

§30: THE DISCOURSE WITH THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

John 4:4–42

Jesus Arrives in Sychar of Samaria

4:4–6

4 Now He had to pass through Samaria.

5 So He came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the piece of land that Jacob gave to Joseph his son.

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, wearied from the journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

Living Water

4:7–15

7 There came a woman of Samaria to draw water.

Jesus said to her: Give Me to drink.

8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food-supplies.

9 The Samaritan woman therefore said to Him: How do you, being a Jew, ask to drink from me, being a Samaritan woman. (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

10 Jesus answered and said to her:

If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you: Give Me to drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.

11 The woman said to Him: Sir [lit., lord], you do not have a bucket, and the well is deep. From where then do you have the living water?

12 You are not greater than our father Jacob *are you*, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, and his sons, and his sheep?

13 Jesus answered and said to her: Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again.

14 But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall not thirst forevermore, but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well-spring of water springing up to eternal life.

15 The woman said to Him: Sir, give me this water, so that I will not thirst nor come here to draw.

Five Husbands

4:16–19

16 He said to her: Go, call your husband, and come here.

17 The woman answered and said to Him: I do not have a husband.

Jesus said to her: you have well said: I have no husband;

18 for five husbands you have had, and the one whom you now have is not your husband. This you have said truly.

19 The woman said to Him: Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.

True Worship

4:20–24

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and you *people* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one must worship.

21 Jesus said to her: Believe Me, woman, that an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you *people* worship the Father.

22 You *people* worship that which you do not know.
We worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

23 But an hour is coming, and now is,
when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth;
for also the Father seeks such people to be worshipping Him.

24 God is spirit,
and those worshipping Him must worship in spirit and truth.

The Messiah

4:25–26

25 The woman said to Him: I know that Messiah is coming, (He who is called Christ);
when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.

26 Jesus said to her: I am, He who is speaking to you.

Arrival of the Disciples

4:27

27 And at that time, His disciples came,
and they marveled that He was speaking with a woman,
though no one said: What do you seek?, or: Why do you speak with her?

Woman Reports to Men of Sychar About Jesus

4:28–30

28 So the woman left her water-jar and went into the city and said to the men:

29 Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done;
this is not the Christ, is it?

30 They went out of the city and were coming to Him.

Jesus Explains His “Food” to the Disciples

4:31–38

31 In the meanwhile the disciples were requesting Him, saying: Rabbi, eat.

32 But He said to them: I have food to eat that you do not know.

33 The disciples therefore were saying to one another: No one brought Him *something* to eat, did he?

34 Jesus said to them: My food is that I may do the will of Him who sent Me and accomplish His work.

35 Do you not say: There is yet a period of four months, and the harvest comes?
Behold, I say to you: Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, that they are white for harvest.

36 Already the reaper is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for eternal life;
that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

37 For in this the saying is true: The one is sowing and the other is reaping.

38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored;
others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.

Samaritans Believe

4:39–42

39 Now from that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him
because of the word of the woman testifying: He told me all things that I have done.

40 So when the Samaritans came to Him, they were requesting Him to stay with them;
and He stayed there two days.

41 And many more believed because of His word.

42 To the woman they were saying: No longer because of your speaking [i.e. what you said] do we believe,
for we ourselves have heard, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.

Notes

1. **He had to pass (4:4).** Other routes were available. We assume Jesus had to take the route through Samaria because it was God's will. On the background of the Samaritans, see 2 Ki. 17:3–6, 24–41; Neh. 4:1–2. For attitudes toward Samaritans in the N.T. see Jn. 8:48; Lk. 9:52–55; then see Lk. 10:33; 17:16; Acts 8:5ff. There is an ancient version of the Pentateuch known as the "Samaritan Pentateuch". In that version, Deut. 27:4 reads "Mt. Garizim" instead of "Mt. Ebal."
2. **Sychar (4:5).** Modern Askar, near Mt. Garizim, Nablus and Shechem. For the latter note Gen. 12; 34; 37:12–13; Josh. 21:21; 24; Judg. 9; 1 Ki. 12:25; Jer. 41:5.
3. **Piece of land (4:5).** See Gen. 33:19; 50:25–26; Josh. 24:32.
4. **Sixth hour (4:6).** If Roman time, it could be either 6 A.M. or 6 P.M.; if Jewish time it would be 12 noon.
5. **He was speaking with a woman (4:27).** Later Rabbinic tradition records the following (*Mishnah*, ca. 200 A.D., Danby edition, Oxford):

Jose b. Johanan of Jerusalem said: Let thy house be opened wide and let the needy be members of thy household; and talk not much with womankind. They said this of a man's own wife: how much more of his fellow's wife! Hence the Sages have said: He that talks much with womankind brings evil upon himself and neglects the study of the Law and at the last will inherit Gehenna. (*Aboth 1:6*, pg. 446).

But attitudes varied among the Rabbis. In the tractate of the Mishnah dealing with "The Suspected Adulteress" we have the following views expressed:

Certain merits may hold punishment in suspense for one year, others for two years, and others for three years; hence Ben Azzai says: A man ought to give his daughter a knowledge of the Law so that if she must drink [the bitter water] she may know that the merit [that she had acquired] will hold her punishment in suspense. R. Eliezer says: If any man gives his daughter a knowledge of the Law it is as though he taught her lechery. (*Sotah 3:4*, pg. 296)

6. **Harvest (4:35).** Harvest is in April. Thus, the narrative in John 4 takes place sometime in December or January.