

The Gospel of John

The Woman at the Well

John 4:1-42

Christ's mission was to “seek and to save that which is lost”. Here is a tremendous story of Him seeking out an outcast to share God's love for them.

The Setting

- As we open the chapter, Christ's popularity is rising which draws the attention of the Pharisees – vs. 1-2
- He departs Judaea and heads into Galilee – vs. 3
- He “must” travel through Samaria
 - Samaria is a region west of Jordan and between Galilee and Judaea
 - B.H. Carroll on the Samaritans:
 - The design of John's Gospel (John 20:31) was (1) to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, and (2) that, believing on him, one might have everlasting life. This is beautifully illustrated in the incident of the Samaritan woman by which the gospel was introduced into Samaria. But this involves the history of the Samaritans as a background of the story. In 975 B.C. Jeroboam revolted and carried with him the ten tribes of Israel who afterward established their capital at Samaria, but in 721 B.C. the ten tribes were all led away captive to Assyria, except a small remnant of the very poorest of the population. The Assyrian government drafted a population from the heathen nations to fill the vacancy caused by this removal and then sent a priest to teach them of God, but they feared the Lord and served other gods. The descendants of this mixed population of Jews and heathen constituted the Samaritans of Christ's day. In 588 B.C. Judah was captured and carried away to Babylon, upon which the poor was left in the land as in the case of Israel, but in 536 B.C. Judah returned under Zerubbabel and Joshua, after which the hierarchy was established by Ezra. When they went to build the Temple the Samaritans asked to help, but they were refused with scorn. Here the hostilities between the Jews and Samaritans commenced. The Samaritans built a temple on Mount Gerizim to which the woman referred in her conversation with Christ. They also preserved the Pentateuch, with some corruptions, as their Scriptures. The hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans lasted till Christ's day. The Samaritans would not receive the Jews into their homes if they were going toward Jerusalem, but they were more hospitable to those going north, or away from Jerusalem. This accounts for their reception of Christ and his disciples on their way to Galilee, as recorded in John 4.
- Sychar
 - Is either a village near Shechem or another name for Shechem.
 - Located at the foot of Mt. Gerizem and Mt. Ebal.
 - Location of Jacob's Well (see Genesis 33:18-20) and Joseph's Tomb (Joshua 24:33)

The Story

- Christ stops at the well at noon as disciples go to buy food – vs. 6
- A woman comes, which is not customary for that time of day – vs. 7
- The woman is shocked at his request of a drink because of the relations between the Jews and Samaritans – vs. 7,9
- Jesus turns the conversation to the Spiritual and the “Living Water” - vs. 10
- The woman is puzzled that Christ's offer – vs. 11-12
- Christ talks further of the Living Water – vs. 13-14
- The woman is only concerned with her physical needs – vs. 15
- Christ shows her spiritual need – vs. 16
- Christ shows His omniscience – vs. 17-18
- The woman thinks Christ is here to rehash the old debates – vs. 19-20
- Christ moves past the petty arguments – vs. 21-22
- Christ reveals the true way to worship and serve God – vs. 23-24
- The woman points that the Messiah is coming – vs. 25
- Christ tells her who He is – vs. 26
- The disciples return and marvel at Christ talking to a Samaritan, and a woman at that! – vs. 27
- The Woman tells everyone who she has found – vs. 28-30
 - NOTICE – The disciples just left that town with no converts, but she had many!
- The superiority of the spiritual – vs. 31-34
- The task at hand
 - The time is now – vs. 35
 - The goal is fruit, no matter who works on it – vs. 36
 - Everyone should do their part in reaching the goal – vs.37-38
- Many believed the woman's witness – vs. 39
- They wanted Jesus to stay! – vs. 40
- Many more believed Jesus after meeting Him – vs. 41-42
- Jesus stayed two days where others would not spend two minutes – vs. 43