

# Jesus Wins Over A Samaritan Woman

## I. Introductory Material

### A. Lesson objective.

1. The Samaritan woman, by the circumstances of things, was not favourably disposed towards listening to Jesus.
2. The purpose here is to analyse how the Lord went about the task of winning her round.

### B. Background.

1. The theme of ch. 4 - Jesus, the saviour of the world.
  - a. The scene comes to life with the woman being startled that Jesus would ask of her a drink of water, bringing the antagonism between Jew and Samaritan to the fore (4:9).
  - b. "whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst" (14).
  - c. When discussing the true worship of the Messianic age, this would be for anybody anywhere (20-24).
2. This ties in with Jn 3:16.

### C. The origin of the Samaritan people and the hostility explained.

1. A common heritage (4:12) but a corrupted lineage (2 Ki 17).
  - a. Israel was carried away captive and placed in Halah and Habor by the river, the siege though commenced by Shalmaneser was likely completed by Sargon (2 Ki 17:4-6). However some of the Israelites escaped capture which explains the connection back to Jacob.
  - b. These inter-married with those shipped in from elsewhere so that their descendants had mixed parentage. Those brought into the land "feared not God" so that God sent lions into the land. A priest was brought back from the captives to teach them how they should fear the Lord (2 Ki 17:25-28). This resulted in a people who feared the Lord and served other gods (29-33). The conquest therefore caused there to be a combination of races and religions living in the region known as Samaria in NT times.
  - c. Subsequent history further illustrates the antagonism.
    - 1) In Hezekiah's reforms, those of the north were invited to participate in the Passover but mostly the messengers were rejected and mocked (2 Chron 30:10-11).
    - 2) After the return from exile the inhabitants of the land are listed as being among the adversaries of the returning Jews (Ezra 4).

### 2. Jesus' attitude

- a. This antagonism together with her ethnicity accounts for the reaction of the disciples (27), a feeling which was reciprocated (Lk 9:51-54).
- b. Jesus just ignores it saying, "whoever drinks of the water that I shall give..." (14). He makes it clear that "salvation is of the Jews" (22) from whom the Messiah will come but the offer of salvation is open to all through that king who will come.

### D. The setting (4:1-7).

1. Jesus is travelling from Judea to Galilee through Samaria.
2. On His journey He came to Sychar that was close by a piece of land that had been given by Jacob to Joseph where Jacob's well was situated.
3. At about the sixth hour, about noon, Jesus being tired, rested by the well. He then proceeded to initiate the interaction with the woman who came to draw water.
4. The request and the reaction (7-9).

## II. The Bit-By-Bit Self-Revelation

A. First stage (10-15): He brought her to ask for some living water.

1. Bypassing the racial controversy, Jesus responds, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink...'" (10). From the outset Jesus sought to draw her attention to who was talking to her.
  - a. If she had known two things - the gift of God, i.e., the living water and the identity of the speaker.
  - b. ... then she would have been asking of Him...!
2. She doesn't understand (11-12).
  - a. It is easy in hindsight for us to think of her as slow on the uptake but at this stage she had limited information to work with concerning this lone traveller.
  - b. Additionally, there is a degree of justification for her not immediately latching on apart from the apparent outrageousness of Jesus' claim.
    - 1) This expression has a literal application as in "Living water... Running water like a spring or well supplied" (RWP).
    - 2) The expression living water is used many times in the OT for running or spring water as opposed to a cistern (Gen 26:1-9; 14:5).
  - c. However, it also had a metaphorical usage, God being referred to as the "fountain of living waters" (Jer 2:13; 17:13).
3. Thinking in physical terms as she was, Jesus provided more explanation about the living water that he could give (13-14). A supply that becomes a spring within; a continuing, inexhaustible source! "... A fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."
4. Finally, she asks for it though still not understanding what she is asking for (15).

B. Second stage (16-20): A display of prophetic knowledge which exposed her sinful and worldly life.

1. Jesus instructed her to bring her husband, to which she replied that she had no husband (16-17a).
2. The Lord then agrees to the truth of her statement laying out her marital history (17b-18).
3. The woman recognising that this knowledge could only come from God acknowledged Him to be "a prophet" (19) though at this stage not the Messiah (25).
4. Having thus concluded, she asked which was the right place to worship (20).
5. Why the question? Was it a genuine attempt to elicit a prophet's verdict or perhaps an effort to move the spotlight from her personal failings? I think no to both. It would better fit the flow of thought for the question to have been prompted by a genuine desire of the woman to deal with her sin. Where should she go to have her sins cleansed, in this mountain (Gerizim) or Jerusalem? Such would better align, be more consistent with her final conclusion (25).

C. Third stage (21-24): A discussion concerning worship in spirit and truth.

1. The time is coming when things are going to be different and this controversy would be obsolete/redundant/immaterial (21). Those days when His people were to gather at the place nominated where His name should dwell were passing (Dt 12:10-11; 16:16; comp. 1 Ki 8:16 with 1 Chron 6:5-10).
2. Notice that by using the plural "ye," the assumption is in-built that not only the Samaritan woman but also other Samaritans would worship the Father (21; see other versions e.g. KJV, ASV, RV to confirm plurality).

3. Regards the dispute, Jesus decided in favour of the Jews. The reason why they had this special knowledge was because the Messiah and through Him, salvation to the world would proceed (22).
4. Irrespective of this, it did not matter. The time was coming when the true worshipper would worship "in spirit and truth."
5. "Spirit and truth" is one concept.
  - a. In John truth is used to refer to the revelation of God being made through Jesus Christ (1:14, 17; 8:32; 14:6; 18:37). This is a revelation that was communicated by the Spirit in words (3:31-36).
  - b. The Spirit had come upon Jesus in His baptism (1:31-32) and after His glorification, that truth was made known through His apostles.
  - c. Spirit and truth here refers to the new revelation that was made through the agency of the Holy Spirit first through the words and actions of Jesus and then through His apostles (16:13). This refers to truth revealed in Christ through the agency of the Holy Spirit whether spoken by Jesus or subsequently by His apostles and prophets. It is a worship in the sphere of the revelation that God has made of Himself in Christ Jesus (comp. Heb 7:24-25; 13:15).
6. Therefore, true worship would not be a worship which has to be offered in Jerusalem but in Christ could be offered by any person anywhere.

#### D. Fourth stage (25-26): Complete revelation.

1. What made her mention the Messiah? Was it the Samaritan's ignorance in worship (22) or perhaps the imminence of the enlightenment concerning the true worshipper (24)?
2. Her concept concerning the Messiah would have been based on Dt 18:15-18. "The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things" (25).
3. In this non-Jewish territory, He states, "I am He."
4. The statement completes His self revelation.
5. Though un-stated, it is evident that on His disciples return, the Samaritan woman departed to tell those in the city (cf. 27 with 39).

#### **Conclusion**

1. Now being the gospel season, we are all busy thinking about how we can encourage friends and family to attend; despite the appealing titles a challenging prospect.
2. It is a given that we do not have the super natural insight possessed by Jesus but there are at least two things that we can do rather than just hurriedly handing someone a flyer.
3. Firstly we can pray before taking action. Secondly, after praying we can give thought to the personality and interests of the target as to the best approach and timing of our move.