

GOSPEL OF THE MESSIAH  
Message 17  
Text: John 4:1-10  
Date: 6/22/2014  
Springs of Living Water

INTRO: I have greatly struggled to know how to handle so much material in one message in order to get somewhere in the four Gospels. It has been my decision to concentrate largely on the historical setting. I think that when you read through the Gospels, the historical setting and time in which the Gospels were written will be most helpful for you. It is my aim to go through chapter four of the Gospel of John this morning.

Let me just mention that if it were not for John's Gospel, we would have no information of the life of Christ from after Christ's temptation, until some months later, when He began to minister in the Galilee region. John fills in some of the information of that time. That information includes John 1:19 all the way through chapter 5. We are in chapter 4 this morning, and once more I must give you some historical information.

So, to introduce this chapter, let us read 4:1-4. To understand this chapter one must have some history. Samaria has a long history but we begin with the time of Solomon. Solomon reigned over all Israel but when he died, the kingdom split into the northern kingdom, known as Israel and the southern kingdom, known as Judah. So if you read of the kings, you will read of the kings of Israel, meaning the northern kingdom and the kings of Judah, meaning the southern kingdom.

The first major thing that went wrong in the northern kingdom is that the king, who was Jeroboam, decided to set up some calves to worship so that the people would not go to Jerusalem to worship, for then he might lose them. He set up one in the far north, the area of Dan, and one in Bethel, which is in the south. He got rid of all the Levitical priests and 2 Chronicles 11:15 says, "Then he appointed for himself priests for the high places, for the demons, and for the calf idols which he had made.

The northern kingdom had 20 kings over their time and none of them were good kings. The southern kingdom also had 20 kings, but over a much longer time span, and they had 8

good kings. And over the years, in the OT, God warned both kingdoms through the prophets when they went off track. The northern kingdom, after many warnings, came to an end in 722 BC and the southern kingdom in 586 BC.

The northern kingdom, the area in which Samaria of today's text is situated, was defeated by Sargon of Assyria. Now Sargon had a policy that went like this, "...depopulation, deportation, and reestablishment." When he conquered an area he would take many of those conquered people, that is depopulating; and deport them to other lands. Then he would take people from other lands and replace those he had taken out. And so, after some time those people intermarried and became a mixed people and there you have reestablishment. Let me read for you part of what he wrote so you will understand John 4. He wrote, "In the first year of my reign...the people of Samaria...to the number of 27,290 I carried away... The city I rebuilt -- I made it greater than it was before. People of lands which I had conquered I settled therein. My tartan I placed over them."

So, now you have an area of Jews who had been taught false worship, and then they had been depopulated, repopulated with Gentiles, and reestablished by intermarrying with these Gentiles. So they had mixed marriages and mixed religions, and thus they had become very odious to the Jews. And so, Jews from Judea who went to Galilee would detour around Samaria in order to go to and from Galilee. Eidersheim says that according to Josephus, the Galilean Jews still traveled through Samaria. However, John 8:48 gives us some idea of how the Jews felt about the Samaritans. They said to Jesus, "Are we not right when we say you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" So when Jesus was going to go to Galilee, what would He do? Our text says, "He needed to go through Samaria", and that is what He did.

We are gleaning evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. In this chapter we have two events that both give evidence for that. The first one is Jesus' acceptance of outcasts. The second is the healing of a noble man's son.

#### 6. Jesus' acceptance of outcasts

Well, with that bit of background we are ready to consider John 4. It is without doubt that this was an important event in the life of Christ as

John gives a whole chapter to it. So we have seen that Jesus left Jerusalem in chapter 3, and that His disciples baptized somewhere in Judea, the province in which Jerusalem is situated. And in chapter 4 He is now leaving Judea and heading for Galilee, the province in which the Sea of Galilee is situated. And we saw that He needed to go through Samaria, which most Jews from Jerusalem would not do. They rather detoured around Samaria. Now, Samaria was a city or town but it was a province as well.

Now it may be that the Lord sensed that the Pharisees might give Him trouble, having heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more people than John and that it is for this reason that He now leaves for Galilee. His work is not finished yet, and so He goes where it is safer for Him to work.

So look at verses 5-6 (read). Note that it says, "So He came to a city of Samaria..." Not the city OF Samaria, but to a city of Samaria. The name of this city was Sychar. It was that area that Jacob had given to his special son, the son with the coat of many colors, Joseph. And verse 6 says Jacob's well was there. In 1972 I had a drink of water from that well.

Now I want you to notice in verse six that Jesus was wearied from His journey. So He sat resting by the well at about the sixth hour. That would be 6 p.m. by Roman time, but 12 noon by Jewish time and I suspect it was 12 noon, although Eedersheim thinks John wrote using Roman time. Here we get one of those moments where we see the full humanity of Christ. He was tired. Though He was divine, He had taken on a human body with its weaknesses.

So let us read verses 7-9 (read). Not only was Jesus tired, but He was thirsty as well. The disciples had gone to the town to buy some food, and when a Samaritan woman, not from the town of Samaria, but the province of Samaria, comes to draw water, Jesus asks her for a drink. So look at her response in verse 9 (read). We understand

from our history lesson earlier why she responded like this. According to Josephus, among the Jews were sayings like, "May I never set eyes on a Samaritan", or, "May I never be thrown into company with him!" (401).

Now it is most important that we take note of the fact that Jesus did not skirt around Samaria. It is further noteworthy that He would converse with a woman, and a Samaritan woman at that. You see, the Jerusalem Jews did not even go through Samaria, never mind talk to anyone there, and especially not a woman. There is a lesson for us here from Jesus about how to treat outcasts.

But note now Jesus' answer in verse 10 (read). What is this gift of God Jesus is talking about? Some question if it means Christ Himself or salvation. I tend to think it refers to salvation because Jesus mentions two things she does not know. She does not know the gift of God AND who it is that is talking with her. So the gift is something separate from who it is that is talking to her. And Jesus' promise is that if she knew who He was she would have asked Him. And the question is what would she have asked Him for? And in the context, I think she would have asked Him for a drink, a drink of salvation. And He would have given to her living water.

Well, Jesus has aroused her interest, and here is a lesson in witnessing. The woman is now drawn to ask Him questions which gives Him the right to answer her. So look at what she says in verses 11-12 (read). This woman sees some problems with what Jesus is claiming. First, He has nothing to draw with. So where would He get this living water from? Second, does He think He is greater than Jacob who originally dug this well, and drank from it himself?

So we go to Jesus' answer in verses 13-14 (read). Jesus now makes plain to this woman that He is talking about water in a figurative sense. Anyone who drinks literal water gets thirsty again. But anyone who drinks of the water, the water of life that He offers, will never thirst again. The

water He gives will become *water producing* water. It will become a fountain that springs up into everlasting life. What a picture of salvation Jesus gives to this woman.

Now there must have been something in Jesus that caused her to have some hope, and that caused her to thirst for this other water and so she says in verse 15, "Sir". Now this word translated 'sir' is the word 'kurios', which is generally translated as *lord*, however, in the Woman's use of this word I think, "Sir" is a good translation. She is giving recognition to Jesus, but she does not yet know Him as Lord. She said, "Sir, give me this water that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

Now we have a question before us. Was this woman serious? Or was she nicely saying, "Yeah, right. What would I give to not have to carry water from here on. Give me of this living water so I can be alleviated of my water carrying job."

Earlier we saw the humanity of Christ and now we will see His divinity. Jesus said to her in verse 16, "Go call your husband, and come here." And she said, "I do not have a husband." And Jesus said, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

We are not told if this means she was divorced from five husbands or if some or even all five had died. We are told that the one she now has is not her husband. Now we must ask why Jesus brought up this subject. This woman may have answered Jesus smartly when she said, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." If that was the case, that attitude has now been successfully shut down. She has been discovered. Christ has pointed out sin in her life. And she might have argued about the right and the wrong as well, but the fact that this Man knew about that shut her down. Who is this Man that knows such things? I think in brief, Jesus has said, "All have sinned and come

short of the glory of God. And woman, you need this water I offered you, not for any earthly advantage, but for your soul's sake."

And that brings us to her response to His intimate knowledge of her life. She now said, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet." Nicodemus had said, "We know You are a teacher who has come from God." He knew that because of what Christ had done. This woman perceived that He was a prophet because of what He knew about her. Here we have evidence again that He was the Messiah.

Now when this woman perceived that Jesus was a prophet, she had one burning question to which she wanted an answer. She has likely carried this question for years already. Maybe she had thought that if she ever had a chance to talk to someone who might know, she would ask her one burning question. And so, look at her question in verses 21, "Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." And she is saying, "You are a prophet. I can tell that much. Now please tell me, who is right, we Samaritans or You Jews?"

Let me give you a bit more history. You see, Jesus is at Sychar, at Jacob's well. Going the direction Jesus was going, over on the right is Mt. Ebal, and on the left is Mt. Gerizim. And for your own interest you can read Deuteronomy 27 and 28, and the curses that were to be announced from Mt. Ebal and the blessings that were to be announced from Mt. Gerizim.

When the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity, they did not allow the mixed races of the Samaritans to help rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra 4:1-4; Neh. 2:19-20), and the Samaritans built their own temple on Mt. Gerizim. Some Samaritans claimed that Abraham offered Isaac on Mt. Gerizim, rather than Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem. And so this Samaritan woman is referring to their worship on Mt. Gerizim.

Well, Jesus does answer her question in verses 21-24 (read). First, from verse 21 we see that Jesus knows what the future holds. In 70 AD the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews have never worshipped there again. Then in verse 22 Jesus plainly tells this woman that they, as Samaritans, worship all right, but what they worship they do not know. Then He said something very significant. He said, "We (i.e., the Jews) know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews." In this age of mounting anti-Semitism, the world, and even the Church, needs to hear this again.

But Jesus indicates that true worship would soon be happening all over the world, not in Mt. Gerizim or Mt. Moriah. And those who would be the true worshippers would worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. And it is noteworthy that as outgoing as Jesus was towards outcasts, He was still very honest with them. Jesus did not skirt around Samaria, nor did He skirt around the truth with the Samaritans about their way of worship.

Now the words at the end of verse 26 must have sounded unbelievable (read 25-26). What a moment in time this woman had met! Though she was a Samaritan, the Jewish teaching of a coming Messiah was still there, and here she was speaking to the Messiah! What a moment of life. May I ask you, have you come to a great moment in life? Did the Lord reveal Himself to you one day? And what did you do with that revelation?

Well, no sooner has Jesus revealed to this woman that He Himself is the Messiah, and the disciples come back with the lunch. So look at their response to the situation they have come upon in verse 27 (read). Now note that they do not marvel that He spoke with a Samaritan, but that He spoke to a woman. Many Jews would have viewed this lengthy conversation with a woman as very wrong.

Lightfoot, in his commentary speaks of a Galilean man who met a woman on the way and asked, "What way must we go to Lydda?" And the woman said, "O thou foolish Galilean, have not the wise men

taught, 'Do not multiply discourse with a woman? Thou oughtest only to have said, 'Which way to Lydda.'" She was reprimanding him for using too many words in speaking with a Samaritan woman. She reprimanded him for using 7 words when he could have done it in four.

Well, John does not stop his account about the woman. So look at verses 28-30 (read). It says she left her water pot behind. Some have suggested that it was out of kindness to Jesus and His disciples that they might draw water, but I think it was out of excitement at having spoken to a man who claimed to be the Messiah, and every bit of evidence pointed that way as well. She likely told them of her conversation and then said, "Could this be the Messiah?" And so she now heads back with a troop of Samaritans.

But meanwhile we have verses 31-38 (read). Jesus life was wrapped up, not in eating, but in doing the will of God. He must have sensed a great satisfaction in His opportunity to bring light to the Samaritans. And He said, "Do you not say, 'There are still four months to the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest." Lord willing, I will talk to you about this verse next Christmas. But when Jesus invited them to lift up their eyes, if they had done that they would have seen a band of Samaritans on their way to listen to Jesus.

So note verse 26. It says, "And he who reaps receives wages and gathers fruit for eternal life." Here at Samaria the fields were white and ready for harvest. The one who reaps accomplishes two things for the one who wins souls, receives wages and he gathers fruit for eternal life. In natural life the one who reaps receives wages, and just so, those who labor in the Lord's field will receive rewards. And those who reap in natural life reap something that produces more natural life through the food that is supplied. But in the spiritual kingdom, they save souls and reap eternal life.



In verse 37 Jesus said that one sows and another reaps. Someone had sown in Samaria before, and now the harvest waited to be taken in. How did this woman know about a coming Messiah, and who had planted the seed for this white crop in Samaria. In 1616, a copy of the first five books of the Bible was found which is called the Samaritan Pentateuch. It is no doubt that they had the first five books of the Bible, and there may have been other books and teaching as well. So the woman could say to Jesus, "I know that Messiah is coming." Someone had prepared the way. So Jesus said in verse 38, "I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors." The thought may be that the OT prophets had prepared these people for the Messiah.

So look at the phenomenal outcome of this little visit with a woman in verses 39-42 (read).

It is most interesting that Jesus stayed among the Samaritans for two days. One wonders where He stayed, what He and His disciples did. How they treated Him and so on, but we are not told.

#### 7. Healing of a Noble man's son

The second evidence in this chapter John gives that Jesus is the Messiah is the healing of a certain noble man's son. We begin by reading 4:43-45 (read). Jesus is now leaving the Samaritans and heading for the region of Galilee. It has caused much discussion what is meant by verse 44 that He left because a prophet has no honor in his own country. I think it does not mean He left Judea because of this, but that He left for the region of Galilee, rather than to Nazareth, for the reason that a prophet has no honor in his own country. He went to other cities than His own city of Nazareth. And we find that His reception among the Galileans is very good. Many of them had been at the feast of Passover when Jesus cleansed the temple and did some miracles, and they were glad to see Him.

So verse 46 says He came to Cana where He had

turned the water into wine. And when he got there, there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. Albert Barnes comments like this on the nobleman, "One who was of the royal family, connected by birth with Herod Antipas; or one of the officers of the court, whether by birth allied to him or not. It seems that his ordinary residence was at Capernaum. Capernaum was about a day's journey from Cana, where Jesus then was."

So look at verse 47 (read). From verse 49 we learn that this son was but a child. And this child is at the point of death. All parents must know a little of the helplessness one feels when a child is so very sick. And it is interesting that this nobleman would know about Jesus. As time goes on, more and more people are hearing about Him.

So Jesus said to Him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe." The words, 'by no means believe' come in the form of a double negative which does not work in English but a double negative makes it very strong in the Greek. And Jesus addressed this man in the plural, speaking of others as well. Did he mean the people of this nobleman, or the Galileans in general, who will have heard Jesus, or the Jews as a whole? We do not know. Nevertheless, the nobleman is very aggressive. His son is about to die. And so he says, "Sir, come down before my child dies!" In other words, "Why are we talking when my son is dying?"

Look now at verses 50-54 (read). Now let me ask you this question: If those verses are factual, historical information, would you conclude that Jesus was in fact the Messiah?

CONCL: Well, let us conclude. As I see this first large section of the Gospels, Christ's words and works were for the purpose of giving evidence that He was the Messiah. We have seen this on two occasions in John 4. The last verse of chapter 4 says that this was the second sign that Jesus did when He had come out of Judea. There is some question about what the first sign was. Some think this speaks of

the second time Jesus did a miracle in Cana. And some argument can be made for that. If one translates the word *seimion* as 'miracle' it might seem that Jesus' visit with the Samaritan woman was not a miracle. But if one translates it as a sign, it surely was that. And so we have accumulating evidence that Jesus Christ was in fact the Messiah.

In the next message I want to show you why I believe Jesus' ministry was only just over two years in length. You may wish to read the chapter to see if you can find the answer.