

John 4:1-30

Introduction:

I. Brief History of Samaria:

A. There is a notable tension within the text that is mentioned and that must be kept in mind during the exchange with the famed story of *Jesus and the Woman at the Well*.

1. Samaria came to be the capital of Israel during the Kingdom split following the death of King Solomon in 1 Kings 12.

a) Samaria in Israel as a special place is recorded in 1 Kings 16:6, 28-29 where king Omri was laid to rest.

2. Israel had no good kings in its history.

a) Many kings were corrupt and idolatrous and, also, were influenced by foreign powers, like Assyria (1 Kings 16:29-33, king Ahab, 2 Kings 17:24-31, Assyria)

b) This sort of leadership caused much corruption amongst the people, also, in Samaria and Israel's kingdom during the split.

c) This is why Samaritan's, as we will see in John's Gospel (and the other synoptic Gospels) will have such shocking encounters and or stories from Jesus involving the Samaritan's as either good or upstanding persons.

d) In John's case, though, it is the fact that Jesus speaks directly with such an individual that is shocking—even the woman is shocked (John 4:9).

3. A warning:

a) What we cannot do is take our 21st century perspective and impose it upon the text.

b) ***The blood feud between Israel and Samaria during Jesus' day is not akin to racial feuds we have in our day.***

c) While many have tried to make John 4 or the Good Samaritan (Luke 12) akin to racial feuds, it simply does not parallel correctly.

(1) The situations are apples and oranges and deserve their own reconciliation in their own right. Not together.

II. Theological Importance:

A. We are now moving into a whole new section in John's Gospel but the main point is still relevant (John 20:30-31).

B. Thus, the purpose of each section ultimately goes to serve John's overall message of Jesus being the Christ and the Savior, and John 4:1-27 will touch on that overall aspect of the Gospel as well as the specifics within the immediate context of our focused passage.

Exegesis of John. 4:1-27

I. Geographic Scene Change. (4:1-5)

A. The Pharisees

1. Though not focused, but worth noting is the active opposition against Jesus that does serve to further the plot of the Gospel narrative.
 - a) Take for example the early presence of the Pharisees or other groups in John 1:19, 2:20, 3:2, and 3:25-26 [specifically the Jewish opposition, as well]).

B. Passing Through Samaria

1. Even Jesus' traveling was controversial since the Old Testament avoided passing through Samaria due to the existing feud between the Jews and the Samaritans because of Samaritan intermarriage, idolatry, and idolatrous customs (Again, 1 Kings 16:29-33 and 2 Kings 17:24-31)

C. Near a Field that Jacob Gave to Joseph and at Jacobs well (1:5-6)

1. the significance of setting the scene here is not just the inclusion and shock of going through Samaria but the recall of God's struggle with Israel as God's chosen people through important land marks, as it were.
2. Another important note to keep in mind is the OT allusion of what we will read in light of Jesus being at Jacob's well.
3. Several important figures and scenes happened by a well:
 - a) Abraham servants, on behalf of Issac, meets Rebekah at a well (Gen. 24:1-27)
 - b) Jacob met Rachel at a well (Gen. 29:1-12)
 - c) Moses and Zipporah (Ex. 2:15-21)

II. The Humanity of Jesus (4:6)

A. It cannot be taken lightly that Jesus' fatigue is mentioned here.

B. The strong opening of Jesus as the Word, and the Word made flesh (John 1:1, 1:14) must still be in mind but with a balanced view of Jesus' humanity when it is highlighted.

1. Jesus is genuinely fatigued but He, in His sovereignty, not only intends to have this moment with the woman (4:7) but to display Himself as Savior as a man as well as God.

III. The Woman at the Well (4:7-26)

A. The Gift of God (vv. 7-15)

1. The question from the woman (vv. 7-9)
 - a) Again, while we cannot get lost in the cultural issue of Jew and Samaritan, it cannot be missed that she was shocked at what Jesus was doing.
 - b) Yet, Jesus, in His wisdom, uses his statement for a drink to "witness" to her

2. Jesus, the living water (vv. 10-15)
 - a) Jesus identifies Himself in a trinitarian manner!
 - (1) Jesus' mention of the "gift of God" denotes that something—namely, salvation—comes from God
 - (2) Jesus equally mentions that there is significance with His—dual nature—person, "if you knew the one who is saying to you..." (v. 10)
 - (3) Double minded here, John not only tips us off to the cultural issue but the spiritual issue.
 - (a) That is, the woman is being inappropriate because she does not know she is talking to the Son of Man, even though it seems Jesus is being inappropriate as a Jewish man talking to a Samaritan woman.
 - b) Notice Jesus' emphasis on living water.
 - (1) This should recall to us the baptism that Jesus gives.
 - (2) Thus, building off of and now in application to what we saw in John 3:22-30.
 - c) The woman misses the point the first time (v. 11-12)!
 - (1) The question she offers assumes that it is at the least odd that Jesus, a Jewish man, would assert Him or His words as greater than His Jewish heritage.
 - (2) She, equally, is noting the commonality between her and Jesus, claiming Jacob as a father of her, a Samaritan woman.
 - d) Jesus' response
 - (1) He notes to the woman that he is talking about something greater than the water at Jacob's well.
 - (2) The water he will give is superior in all ways because it is a spring of eternal life (v. 14)
 - e) The woman's response
 - (1) Where can I get this water?
 - (2) This is where Jesus is intending her to be!
3. Jesus Reveals Himself (4:16-26)
 - a) First, the woman's sin (vv. 16-19)
 - (1) Jesus moves the conversation to a very personal, everyday issue of the woman's life: her romantic life.
 - (2) Jesus confronts the woman in her sin but she equally does not lie to Him about her marital status.
 - (3) The woman does not respond unkindly, either (v. 19)
 - b) Jesus' response, continued (vv. 20-24)

- (1) The woman raises interest but also implied confusion.
 - (a) The woman sees that Jesus is a prophet (a seer or spiritual man) but how is it that they can talk of such things—i.e., Jesus giving all the water of life through the Spirit—if they are who they are ethnically.
 - (b) Thus, when she raises the issue about worship, it is not arbitrary or at random.
- (2) **Jesus' Point:**
 - (a) Ethnic or cultural differences does not matter when God offers such water to all people.
 - (b) Salvation comes from the Jews (v. 22 as was prophesied in Isaiah 53)
 - (c) Thus, those who worship and those who have true salvation will be all people so long as they worship in light of the Spirit and the truth of God (Jesus Christ).
 - (d) God is seeking such people—His people—to worship Him.
 - i) Here, Ephesians chs. 1-2 are SO important! ! !
 - (e) Ultimately, what is being said is this:
 - i) *Those who obtain the water of eternal life (v.14) are not stricken or bound to trivial issues like ethnicity or culture but have salvation in Jesus Christ and those people will want to and desire to worship God in Christ through the Spirit (notice, in Spirit and in truth—truth being Jesus Himself vv. 1:14). Thus, the worship is spiritual but tangible and real (v. 24). To truly worship and be devote and have God is to have the Spirit and the Son. Thus, the trinitarian salvation emphasis from earlier (v 10).*
- (3) The woman's response (vv. 25)
 - (a) Jesus reiterates His claim (v. 26)
4. The End of the Scene (vv. 27-30)
 - a) The disciples do not question Jesus, though, they marveled at Jesus speaking to the Samaritan woman
 - b) The woman goes and tells others about Jesus
 - c) the people come to see Jesus because of the woman telling them

What does this passage teach us about: 1) God? 2) Humanity? 3) The Gospel?