

The Woman at the Well: John 4:1–26

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Introduction

Jesus went from Judea to Galilee when the Pharisees discovered He had more baptized disciples than John (4:1–3)

John 3:27ff. shows that John directed people to Jesus (as in 1:29ff).

Jesus needed to traverse Samaria & rested by Jacob's well as He came to Sychar after a long day's walk (4:4–6)

Josephus *AJ* 20:118, Galileans regularly traversed Samaria

"It was the custom of the Galileans, when they came to the holy city at the festivals, to take their journey through the country of the Samaritans..."

Josephus then said Samaritans once attacked Galilean pilgrims (ca. A.D. 51), recruiting Judeans to join them to avenge the attack.

Jesus was born in Judea to Judean parents, but grew up in Galilee
Jesus' inner-circle of disciples were Galileans

He came to the well near Sychar after a long day's walk (He was wearied)

Gen 33:19 says Jacob bought land near Shechem (which is near Sychar)
(Genesis speaks of a man named Shechem, hence the name of the place)
Genesis 48:21–22 speaks of Jacob giving a plot of land to his son, Joseph
John identifies this as land Jacob gave to Joseph (incl. Jacob's well)

Jesus asked a Samaritan woman for water as His disciples were away buying food, but she chided Him over Judean discrimination against Samaritans (4:7–9)

Jesus even spoke to a Samaritan woman, who then called Him a Judean
Mark 14:70 speaks of a Galilean accent. Maybe He spoke with a Judean accent

John's remark about Judeans not associating with Samaritans

The Greek may mean: *do not associate with* or it may mean: *do not use the same drinking cups/eating plates*. She will not share water with Him

Though Jesus first requested a favor from her, He asserted that she would have requested living water from Him, if she had known God's gift and the Giver (4:10)

What is living water?

Some say that it is the Holy Spirit, because of John 7:39

However, John 7:39 (itself) requires another solution (cf. 16:7)

Many would identify living water as everlasting life (I once held this view)

However, there is a problem: *Asking* is not the same as *believing*

Jesus emphasizes that everlasting life comes by *believing*

Solution: If you knew the gift and Jesus is the Giver, you would have asked and He would have told you how to get the gift from the giver (Christ)

Living water is _____

The woman expressed her doubts that He actually could give her living water, because He did not seem great enough to deliver on His promise to her (4:11–12)

He gives living water that is greater than the best spring water: an eternal thirst quencher, an artesian well springing up into everlasting life (4:13–14)

She wanted an eternal thirst quencher so she would not need to draw again (4:15)

He told her to return w/ her husband; she said she was unmarried (4:16–17a)

Jesus said that she spoke truthfully in saying she was unmarried; she now lived w/ a man who was not her husband (after having 5 husbands) (4:17b–18)

[Based on His disclosure about her] she affirmed that He was a prophet and mentioned a Samaritan/Judean Temple controversy (4:19–20)

[Rather than rescinding the offer] Jesus told her that the controversy over the proper location of the temple would soon become irrelevant (4:21)

He said that Samaritans worshipped ignorantly, in rejecting the idea that God's salvation comes through Judeans (specifically, the Messianic lineage) (4:22)

God is now (even in Samaria) seeking true worshippers who would worship the Father in spirit and truth: the only way that God can be truly worshipped (4:23–24)

She hinted at whether Jesus might be the Messiah, because the coming Messiah would explain everything (4:25)

Jesus identified Himself as the Messiah [and she believed Him] (4:26)

Jesus' returning disciples were amazed that He spoke with a woman (4:27)
They had gone into town to buy food (cf. 4:7)

The woman left her waterpot as she returned to town and persuaded men in town to see if Jesus might be the Messiah (4:28–30)

The disciples tried to persuade Jesus to eat, but He told them that He had other food, to complete the Father's work (4:31–34)
Jesus told His disciples that harvest is now, not four months from now (4:35)

He urged them to join in the harvest that they might rejoice with the reaper (4:36)

Specifically, even though the disciples did not sow, Jesus will allow them to enter into the labors of others (4:37–38)

Many of the Samaritan men believed in Jesus because they perceived Him to be the Messiah when He told the woman her past (4:39)

The Samaritans asked Him to remain and He stayed two days (4:40)

Many more believed in Him because of His own word and they told the woman that Jesus' own word added to the content of their faith beyond what they believed from the woman's testimony (4:41–42)

CONCLUSION