

The Woman at the Well

John 4



Whenever I teach on John Chapter 4, I try to bring in all the Orientalisms involved in this story of the Woman at the Well. For our purposes at this time, however, I will bring you only the last portion of the chapter, which illustrates how one person witnessed to others when finding Christ.

This Samaritan woman has been visiting with Jesus at Jacob's well about spiritual matters, and has become convinced that he is at least a prophet because he has been able to tell her things about herself which he had no way of knowing except by a supernatural way.

John 4:19, 20:

The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Now that the Samaritan woman understands that she is talking to a man of God, she wants to straighten out a question of theology which has been bothering her. The Samaritans go up into a holy mountain to worship; the Judeans say that one must go to Jerusalem to worship. She wants to know, which is right?

John 4:21-26:

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things.

Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*.

Here we see that Jesus is at last telling her who he is; he has talked with her enough until she is ready to understand and accept his statement, "I am he." He did not, you notice, rush up to her at the first and say, "Give me a drink because I am the Messiah".

John 4:27:

And upon this came his disciples, and marveled that he talked with the woman; yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

They marveled, you see, not because he was speaking to a woman of bad reputation, as some Bible scholars try to say, but because he was speaking to a woman contrary to the custom that after asking for water he should not continue to talk with her in the public thoroughfare.

John 4:28:

The woman left her waterpot...

Here is a statement of tremendous significance. You see the waterpot of the household is a sacred object in the East. It has little monetary value, but is guarded carefully because of its sentimental value. Orientals feel that the clay of the pot signifies the clay which is our body; the water within the pot corresponds to God's spirit within us. To leave the waterpot behind would be like leaving one's soul behind!

The women of the village where this Samaritan woman lived would never, never make the mistake of leaving the waterpot behind them at the well to go some place else. To do so would bring shame upon the household. It would bring severe ridicule upon them. It was not sociably acceptable. Yet the Samaritan woman left her waterpot. Why? Because she had found the Christ. Having found Christ, she was willing to leave the pot behind and hasten to tell others about it. We as Christians should be willing to leave behind our "waterpots" and go forth to tell others about Christ!

John 4:28-30:

The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city and saith to the men,

Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Christ?

Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

This indicates that this Samaritan woman was of good virtue and was highly respected in her village. If she had not been, she would never have been able to approach the men of the city, for they would not have listened to her or believed her when she told them to come and see a man who was the Christ. Because of this one woman we find that many of the Samaritans of the city believed that this was indeed the Christ, the Savior of the World.

What a fine accomplishment, what a contribution this woman made to her community. Would to God that every person who has accepted Christ and has been transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit in him could do so as well!

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