

Topic: Woman of Samaria

Historical Context (From MacArthur Study Bible)

Samaria:

- Samaria is the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, named by King Omri after the nation split politically.
- Samaria was taken captive by Assyria in 722 BC (2Ki 17:1-6).
- Assyria led the majority of the people from the Northern tribes away (into the region today which is Northern Iraq), however left a sizable population of Jews in the Northern Samaritan region and transported many non-Jews into Samaria.
- These groups intermingled to form a mixed race through intermarriage. When Jews returned from captivity, tension developed between them and the Samaritans. Instead of worshipping Yahweh at Jerusalem, the Samaritans established their worship at Mt. Gerizim in Samaria (Joh 4:20-22).
- Samaritans regarded only the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy) as authoritative. As a result, the Jews spurned the Samaritans, considering them heretical. Strong ethnic and cultural tensions existed between the two groups, so both avoided contact as much as possible (Ezr 4:1-24; Neh 4:1-6; Luk 10:25-37).

Reading Outline

- Read John 4
- Don't lose sight of the overall purpose of this chapter and the "big picture" themes.
- Have fun and see how this chapter can edify and teach women regarding the unity of the faith.

John 4

- V4:1- 4 - In verse 4, we read that Jesus "...had to pass through Samaria." "Had to pass" may have referred to the fact that this was the shorter route and Jesus may have wanted to save time, but given His omniscience and His mission, why else would the apostle John likely have chosen this phrase? While this was the shortest route for a traveler going from Galilee to Jerusalem, Pharisees often avoided this route to avoid the Samaritans (Luk 9:51-53). How can we apply this to our lives when it comes to divine appointments? What more does the Bible have to say about divine appointments (Psa 37:23, Act 8:26-39, 2Ti 4:2, 1Pe 3:15)?
- V4: 5 -6 – What is noteworthy about the exact place in Samaria where Jesus arrives (Gen 48:22; 33:19)?
- V4: 6 (cont'd) - What is the significance of Jesus being weary? How does considering Christ's humanity enrich your spiritual walk and your relationship with Him (Heb 2:14-17; 4:15; 6:19-20, Luk 2:52; 22:42, Phi 2:5-8)?
- V4:7 – In this verse, it appears that the woman of Samaria came alone (unless there were others who simply were not mentioned). Women generally went in groups to draw water. What are some of the possible reasons she was alone (Joh 4:16-19)? How does God use our own times of solitude for His purpose (Mat 6:6; 14:23)?
- V4:7 cont'd – In this verse, Jesus asks for a drink. How is Jesus setting the stage for His discussion on spiritual thirst? The Word commands us to serve others. What are some of the blessings that come with serving others instead of focusing on self? How is demonstrating Christ-like love, serving others, and the Great Commission intrinsically intertwined (Mat 10:42, Joh 3:16; 13:35)?

- V4:9 – What is the significance of the Samaritan woman expressing her surprise at the fact that Jesus, a Jew, is associating with her, a Samaritan? How is understanding this social “chasm” important in preparing her soul for what is to come? What does His Word teach us over and over about the role humility plays in receiving Christ and His Gospel (1Co 1:28-30, Luk 19:1-10)?
- V4:10- Jesus immediately describes what is of God as a *gift*. What can be said about the need for being humbled before being able to receive grace? His word is chock-full of examples of humility preceding grace. What are some of these examples (Mat 13:1-23)?
- V4:10 cont’d - Here, we read of Jesus using the Samaritan’s need for water to sustain physical life to serve as a greater lesson for her need for spiritual transformation. The Old Testament addresses the term *Living Water* with important metaphorical significance. What are some of these metaphors (Eze 47:9, Zec 14:8, Isa 1:16-18; 12:3; 44:3, Eze 36:25-27)?
- V4:11 – What analogy might we make here from the natural “deep well” to the spiritual? (Isa 12:3; 49:10, Zec 14:8, Psa 136, 1Co 2:9)?
- V4:12 – How does the Samaritan woman depict Jacob in this verse? How is this verse important in establishing the differences between what man can do and what God can do? What causes us to focus more on the natural than the spiritual (Psa 147:15-18, Job 37:11-13, Eph 1:11, Act 4:27-28)?
- V4:13 – Why might this analogy of thirst be so powerful for the woman at the well? Consider the climate of Samaria. Where else in the Bible does the topic of thirst come up (Exo 17:1-6, Num 20:2-11, Deu 8:15, Psa 78:15-16, Isa 48:21, Psa 23:1-2)?
- V4:14 - What can be said about the fact that Jesus shares He will not just give water but the actual “well of water” (Gal 2:20, Rom 5:5)?
- V4:15 – What is the woman desiring at this point? How can we relate to her desires? How often do we need to be reminded through our natural desires, and our exhaustion through human efforts, that Christ is our only true source of peace (Joh 16:33, Phi 4:7)?
- V4:16-18 – What is the result of Christ’s instruction to “Go, call your husband...”? What is He helping the woman realize in these verses (1Pe 5:6-7, Jam 4:6, 10)?
- V4:19-22 – In John 4:19-21 we read of the distinctions between how the Samaritans and the Jews worshiped God. They both were commanded by their forefathers to identify a special place for worship (Deu 12:5). The Jews chose Jerusalem (2Sa 7:5-13, 2Ch 6:6) and the Samaritans (only recognizing Genesis-Deuteronomy as being divinely inspired) worshipped at Shechem (Gen 12:6-7). What does Jesus point out to the woman in this verse about the inadequacy of her people’s worship?
- V4:23–24 - To what “hour” is Jesus referring? How is He setting the stage for the woman to understand that true worship is through the promised Messiah? What must she know about the promised Messiah based on the Pentateuch? (Gen 12:3; 49:10, Deu 18:15)?
- V4:23-24 Cont’d - What do we see about man’s need for the visible to understand the invisible?
- V4:25 – What is involved in God’s perfect sequence of events in the dialogue between Jesus and the woman, making the soil fertile for Christ’s revelation of Himself as Messiah? What did the woman need to hear up to this point before being ready to grasp this verse? Once again, how can we relate to this? What can we learn from this and take with us as we share His Gospel (Mat 13:1-23)?