

The Gospel of John: Chapter 4

(Notes and handouts posted at <http://www.therulingelder.com>)

Outline:

1. The Second Discourse: The Water of Life (4:1-42)
 - a. Jesus' Departure from Galilee (4:1-3)
 - b. Living Water (4:4-14)
 - c. The Woman and Her Husbands (4:15-19)
 - d. True Worship (4:20-26)
 - e. The Woman's Witness (4:27-30)
 - f. Christ's Meat (4:31-38)
 - g. Samaritan Believers (4:39-42)
2. Interlude: In Galilee (4:43-45)
3. The Second Sign: Healing the Nobleman's Son (4:46-54)

Notes:

1-3 - Interlude between chapter 3 and chapter 4.

Pharisees: John never mentions the Sadducees or the Herodians.

He himself did not baptize: See 3:22. Jesus never directly baptizes anyone, but the baptisms performed by His disciples were as valid as if Jesus Himself had performed them. The same is true of Christian baptism: Though Jesus is not physically present to pour out the water on our heads, nevertheless, our baptisms are as sure as if Christ Himself had performed them.

4 - *Samaria.* See Map handout. Situated between Judea (to the south) and Galilee (to the north). Inhabited by people who, though once Israelites, had intermarried with foreigners, and had imported the worship of false gods into the worship of Jehovah. By the time of Jesus, they only worshipped Jehovah, but they did so at their own temple, in their own holy city. They also rejected all of the Old Testament other than the Pentateuch (see Deuteronomy 18:18).

5 - *Jacob gave to his son.* See Genesis 33:19 & 48:22; Joshua 24:32

6 - *wearied.* Jesus was truly human, and as such, grew tired!

the sixth hour. That is, noon. An odd time to gather water, as it was typically done in the evening.

7 - *a woman came.* The OT is rife with examples of men meeting their future wives at wells. Jacob and Rachel met at one (Gen. 29:9), Isaac and Rebekah met at one (Gen. 24:15), Moses and Ziporah met at one (Exodus 2:15, 21). Here the Lord

meets, not a wife, but a harlot--a unchaste woman. But the result is so much better than meeting a husband. She meets her Savior!

9 - *no dealings*. See 2 Kings 17:24; Acts 10:28.

10 - *living water*. Isaiah 12:3; Isaiah 44:3

11 - *the well is deep*. This woman, like the Jews at Passover and Nicodemus misunderstand Jesus meaning. See also v. 33 where His own disciples misunderstand as well.

14 - *I shall give*. Jesus makes an explicit claim to divinity in verse 26; however, He also makes a claim here: In verse 10 He said the gift is from God, here He states He Himself gives the living water.

18 - *five husbands*. Jesus reveals that He knows details of her life that she has not revealed to Him.

19 - *a prophet*. Though she does not yet realize to whom she is speaking, this is more than a mere admission of Jesus being a prophet in the general sense. Samaritans only held to the five books of Moses as Scripture. They acknowledged no other prophet, save the one that would come like Moses (Deut. 18:18).

20 - *this mountain*. That is, Mount Gerizim where the Samaritans had built their own temple, which was subsequently destroyed by the Jews in 130 BC.

24 - *in spirit and in truth*. The "spirit" here is the Holy Spirit who will continue the work begun by Jesus (see John 14:16-18 and Acts 2:33). This bolsters the argument that the "living water" to which Jesus referred was the Holy Spirit. Prominent marks of this worship will be the removal of the barrier between Jews and Gentiles, and the ability of Christians to worship without need for a temple of any kind.

26. *I am*. The "He" is supplied by the English translators. It is not present in the Greek. Jesus says "The one to whom you speak, I AM." He not only acknowledges her claim is correct, He claims the divine title of I AM (Exodus 3:14).

27 - *marveled*. The word has a sense of disgust. Marveled in a shocked, disgusted manner.

33 - *has anyone brought Him anything to eat?* The disciples, like the woman earlier, misunderstand Jesus.

37 - *sows...reaps*. See John 12:23-24 where the seed being sown in Christ Himself.

42 - *Savior of the world*. A true declaration, but interestingly only ever used here and in 1 John 4:14. It seems John has a special emphasis on Christ's work of salvation applied to all peoples, Jews and Gentiles alike.

43-45. *Galilee*. An interesting contrast is set between the Samaritans who believed because of Jesus' words, and the Galileans who believed only because of the signs He performed (v. 45). Jesus' differing response to the two groups is interesting.

46 - *nobleman*. That is a royal official. One who served in King Herod's court.

46, 47, 49 - *sick, at the point of death, dies*. The son was sick to the point of death. There was no hope of recovery. Only supernatural intervention would restore him to life. Contrast with vv. **50, 51, 53** - *your son lives, your son lives, your son lives*. The point John is making by repeating this phrase is that Jesus has the power to give life: both temporal (the son) and eternal (the man and his whole household, v. 53).

50 - *the man believed...he went his way*. As if to emphasize the audacity of the Galileans who believed because of the signs Jesus performed and not His words, John here includes the startling account of this nobleman who not only believed Jesus' words, but left to go home to his recovered son without any other sign or indication that Jesus had truly done what He said He would do.

53 - *He himself believed, and his whole household*. This nobleman had previously believed Jesus' words, now He believes that He is the Christ. This is a saving faith. And his whole household believes as well. See Acts 16:15, 31; Acts 18:8.

54 - *second sign*. That is, the second sign Jesus performed in Galilee.