

Worksheet 69 – John 4:1-30

4 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John ²(though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), ³He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. ⁴But He needed to go through Samaria.

⁵So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

⁷A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." ⁸For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

⁹Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

¹⁰Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

¹¹The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? ¹²Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

¹³Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

¹⁵The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

¹⁷The woman answered and said, "I have no husband."

Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' ¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

¹⁹The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.²² You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

²⁵ The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things."

²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

²⁷ And at this point His disciples came, and they marvelled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?"

²⁸ The woman then left her water pot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ²⁹ "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" ³⁰ Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

Finding out about the Samaritans

The Samaritans were people who lived in what had been the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Samaria, the name of that kingdom's capital, was located between Galilee in the north and Judea in the south. The Samaritans were a racially mixed society with Jewish and pagan ancestry. Although they worshiped Yahweh as did the Jews, their religion was not mainstream Judaism. They accepted only the first five books of the Bible as canonical, and their temple was on Mount Gerazim instead of on Mount Zion in Jerusalem (Jn 4:20).

The Samaritans of Jesus' day were strict monotheists. In some respects they were more strict than Jews about the commands of the Mosaic law, especially the sabbath regulations, but they did not share the Jewish stricture against pronouncing the divine name Yahweh in their oaths.

Because of their imperfect adherence to Judaism and their partly pagan ancestry, the Samaritans were despised by ordinary Jews. Rather than contaminate themselves by passing through Samaritan territory, Jews who were traveling from Judea to Galilee or vice versa would cross over the river Jordan, bypass Samaria by going through Transjordan, and cross over the river again as they neared their destination. The Samaritans also harboured antipathy toward the Jews (Lk 9:52-53).

That the Samaritans were separated from and looked down upon by the Jews makes them important in the New Testament. Jesus indicated a new attitude must be taken toward the Samaritans when he passed through their towns instead of crossing the Jordan to avoid them (Jn 4:4-5), when he spoke with a Samaritan woman, contrary to Jewish custom (Jn 4:9), and when he said a time would come when

worshiping in Jerusalem or on Mount Gerazim would not be important (Jn 4:21-24). When asked whom to regard as our neighbour, Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan precisely because Samaritans were despised.

The apostles recognized that in the Church Samaritans must be accepted as equal to Jews. Peter and John conducted a special mission to Samaria to confirm Samaritans who had already been baptized by Philip (Acts 8:14-17). This initiation of the Samaritans was a middle stage between the preaching of the gospel to the Jews (Acts 2) and the preaching of the gospel to full-blooded Gentiles (Acts 10).

Today a few Samaritans survive, not having lost their identity through intermarriage. There are about 300 active practitioners of the Samaritan religion, most of whom live in the city of Nablus. Although their temple is long since destroyed, they still celebrate Passover every year in its ruins on Mount Gerazim.

ACTIVITY - Read the biblical text above and the information about the Samaritans.



Christ's teaching mainly consists in the material to be found in verses 10, 13-14 and 21-24. Verses 10, 13-14 contains the promise of "living water" as a gift from God. Verses 21-24 concerns true worship as not tied to a particular place but rather that which is "in spirit and truth."

Continue reading the following for greater understanding of this passage then answer the questions.

Living Water

If we want to know what living water is we must turn to another passage in St John's Gospel where Jesus makes this clear: -

³⁷ On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

So "living water" is to be identified with the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This is prophesied in these terms in Isaiah 44:3

For I will pour water on him who is thirsty,
And floods on the dry ground;
I will pour My Spirit on your descendants,
And My blessing on your offspring;

.... and by St Paul in connection with baptism ... (1 Corinthians 12:13)

¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

"Drink" and "pour" is a symbolic language here and although appropriate when referring to the waters of baptism, it has its limitations. Because the Holy Spirit is a personal manifestation of the personal Triune God, this must not be thought of *literally* as either water or for that matter (and to use another biblical image) ... "fire."

Coming to Christ and believing in Him is the basis on which we can be filled with the Holy Spirit and this is the meaning of Christ's encounter with St Photini, the Samaritan Woman at the well.

QUESTIONS

1. When did we receive the Holy Spirit?
2. When do we receive the Holy Spirit (ie., He can be received more than once This is a lifelong process, the acquisition of the Holy Spirit)
3. What difference do you think having the Holy Spirit makes to our Christian lives?

Worship in Spirit and Truth

Having the Holy Spirit means that it is easier to worship “in Spirit and in Truth.”

The first part is easier to understand. If we have the Holy Spirit then we will worship in the Holy Spirit – by His power and grace.

But, what is the connection with “truth”?

What does it mean to offer worship “in truth”?

Let us focus these questions more clearly.

QUESTIONS

1. What (or Who) is Christian Truth? Look up John 14:6.
2. In we are worshipping “in the Truth” then our worship must be immersed in truth and not just give us a “nice feeling.” How do we receive “the Truth” in worship?
3. What kinds of truth are there in human life? How do these connect to Jesus Christ? How do these truths come into worship as well?
4. Some people say that all religions are equally true. This is unacceptable from a Christian point of view since some faiths contradict each other * even if sometimes they talk about the same of similar things in different ways. How then can we preach Christ as a Reconciler and Uniter rather than an agent of division and error (which is the devil’s business!)

** A classic example can be taken from the Quran where Ishmael is the son that Abraham nearly sacrifices whereas in Judaism and Christianity (Genesis 22:1-2; Hebrews 11:17; James 2:21) this is Isaac. Strangely, the Quran itself never actually mentions the identity of the child although this is always taken by Muslims to refer to Ismael! This historical reference really does matter though as the two versions come to two radically different conclusions about God’s action in history.*