

# The Real Thirst-Quencher

*John 4:1-15*

**John 4:1** Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John

<sup>2</sup> (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples),

<sup>3</sup> he **left Judea and departed again for Galilee.**

<sup>4</sup> And he had to pass through **Samaria.**

<sup>5</sup> So he came to a town of Samaria called **Sychar**, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.

<sup>6</sup> **Jacob's well** was there;<sup>1</sup> so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

<sup>7</sup> **A woman from Samaria** came to draw water. **Jesus** said to her, "**Give me a drink.**"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>8</sup> (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.)

<sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "**How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?**" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you **living water.**"

<sup>11</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?"

<sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock."

<sup>13</sup> Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,

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<sup>1</sup> **Genesis 29:1** Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the east.

<sup>2</sup> As he looked, he saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large,

<sup>3</sup> and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place over the mouth of the well.

<sup>4</sup> Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where do you come from?" They said, "We are from Haran."

<sup>5</sup> He said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" They said, "We know him."

<sup>6</sup> He said to them, "Is it well with him?" They said, "It is well; and see, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep!"

<sup>7</sup> He said, "Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered together. Water the sheep and go, pasture them."

<sup>8</sup> But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep."

<sup>9</sup> While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess.

<sup>10</sup> Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob came near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

<sup>11</sup> Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud. (Gen 29:1-11 ESV)

<sup>2</sup> Let the young woman to whom I shall say, 'Please let down your jar that I may drink,' and who shall say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels'--let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master." (Gen 24:14 ESV). Then the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water to drink from your jar." (Gen 24:17 ESV)

<sup>3</sup> She said, "Drink, my lord." And she quickly let down her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink. (Gen 24:18 ESV)

<sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

<sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

## **The Elixir of Life**

As long as anyone can remember, people have looked up into the sky and wondered what is out there. Then, a few decades back, man went to the moon. A decade later, we sent probes to Mars. Clearly, some have it as their dream to one day colonize these gigantic rocks in space. So, today, governments and scientists are searching and scouring the solar system for the most precious of all resources: [water](#).

In the past couple of years we have heard that they have found water on Mars and on the moon. Farther out, science wonders if any of the moons of Jupiter or Saturn might contain water. Even further out, the relatively new science of locating exoplanets, that is planets outside of our solar system, has focused on looking for appropriate sized bodies far enough from a host sun, but not too close, that they might contain [water](#).

[Why this obsession with water?](#) The answer is obvious. [Water is the elixir of life](#). An elixir is a substance held capable of prolonging life indefinitely. In God's mysterious provi-

dence, this is the task he has assigned to water. Without water, no life can survive for long. It is essential to all material beings everywhere. We must have water, or we die.

## **From Baptism to Living Water**

**John 4:4-42** is the famous story of Jesus talking to an unnamed woman at a well in Samaria. **John 4:1-4** sets up this story, which becomes a remarkable theological contrast to the story of Nicodemus, by telling us about a **geographical transition** in Jesus' ministry. It seems that the places our Lord went were deeply influenced by the things he wanted to teach us.

Jesus has gone from up near the **Sea of Galilee** (**John 1:28**) and the **surrounding Judean country** (**2:1, 12**), down to **Jerusalem** (**2:13**), back up to the **Judean country** (**3:22-23**) to perform baptisms, and now is heading back up to **Galilee** by way of a place called **Samaria** (**4:3-4**). Previously, Jesus has been baptizing at a place called Aenon near Salim about two thirds of the way towards the Sea of Galilee from the Dead Sea. The water of **baptism** serves as a **theological bridge** between John chapter 3 and waters of the well in chapter 4.

You may recall that in **John 3:22-36**, John the Baptist answers some questions raised about Jesus, whom we now learn was making and baptizing more disciples than John. However, the text explains that Jesus was not actually baptizing anyone, but his disciples were doing the baptizing (**4:2**). It is because he was making more disciples that Jesus decides to leave this

place and head back up north to Galilee, and the beautiful Sea in northern Israel.

Jesus' attitude seems pretty clear. The Pharisees had heard that he was making more disciples than even John, and he does not want the added attention these religious leaders will bring. We actually see Jesus acting like this for much of his earthly ministry. Recall that he often heals people only to tell them not to tell anyone that he is the Son of God. Or, we find him reading a passage from Scripture, only to quickly leave the place where he had been. Or we find him healing people in one town only to denounce that town and move quickly to another place because of their lack of faith.

The reason is that **his time has not yet come**. Jesus is not here to make a name for himself, but to die for sin. He is not the Messiah anticipated by many of these zealots. He is not a political hero who has come to deliver Israel from the tyranny of the Roman Empire. He knows that the people and the leaders will twist who he is to fit their own image. He also knows that because he does not meet their preconceived expectations of the Messiah that they will put him to death.

His mission is of a different sort. His kingdom is of another place. So he does not want to attract unnecessary attention, to be put in the headlines of the newspapers of those days, or to become the fuel of gossip by those who would crown him a religious-political king.

I do not usually like to make application like I'm about to do, because in some ways we can't compare what Jesus did to anything any of us have done or could do. But as I was thinking about this, it came to my mind, again, how different this is from some Christian leaders, who seem to crave the spotlight, and the fame and power that comes with it. There is a caution in Jesus' attitude here. It is not wrong to become famous or even powerful. It is wrong to seek it for its own sake. And once you have it, it is wrong to bask in your own glory.

Perhaps most of those Christians who get such fame in our day are not seeking it, but when it comes, what do they—and we—do to keep our carnal desires to follow famous men at bay as much as possible? The Lord was God, and yet he knew that people could and would twist and distort who he is to fit their own evil desires and beliefs. How much more we who are not God? Our Lord is an example here of not seeking attention, in fact of running away when it comes to him.

Of course, the circumstances of his leaving because he did not want the Pharisees to begin following him around so early on is different than what we have today, for none of us are Him. Yet, Christian leaders are His representatives, and we all have people who follow and listen to us. It seems to me that we should all be leery of the pitfalls that can come with fame, be they the [pitfalls of becoming famous or of following the famous](#), and we should beware to make sure that we are not falling into traps of idolizing Christian superstars, of making

them spiritual heroes above sin, of thinking their teachings are always right because they are famous, and most importantly, of following them because of their charisma and knowledge and ability to teach. Indeed, we must all be cautious here.

These are **subtle temptations**. Sometimes we may not even be aware that we have given into them. But we all can fall into it. It can start from zealous and sincere love for people whom the Lord used to bring us to the doctrines of grace, but soon turn into “**so and so said it, so it can’t be wrong.**” It does not have to be radio personalities or people who make it into widely circulating publications either. I’ve seen people do this with lesser-knowns even in Reformed Baptist circles. So, you must be watchful of following men rather than Christ, and leaders must be more watchful of making sure they are not encouraging people to follow *them*, either in what they say or in what they do or in what they do not do. They must always point back to the Savior, who did not seek to make a name for himself, much less a political name or celebrity status in ancient Israel. We must look to Christ alone, and not to a man, no matter how gifted or important they have been to us. Jesus left Judea rather than seek the fame and accolades of the leaders and other people of his day.

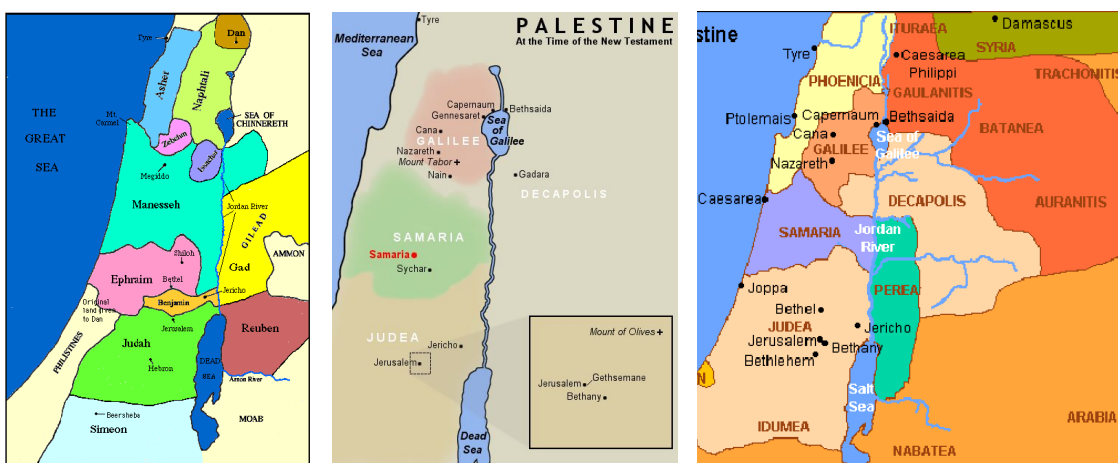
## **From Baptism to Living Water**

**John 4:5** now introduces us to our next encounter with Jesus. It says that Jesus “**came to a town of Samaria called**

Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.” Let us first look at this “**Samaria**” and then turn our attention to this city and field. Samaria is quite important to this story. Where is it and what is it?

Samaria was both a **region** (like Galilee) and a **city**. The city was established by Omri, the wicked king of Israel (the northern kingdom), in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (**1 Kgs 16:23-24**). As we will see next time, he later built a temple here to rival the one in Jerusalem. This city was conquered a century later by the Assyrians.

The Assyrian custom was to take the name of a conquered city and rename the larger district surrounding it (presumably so that everyone would remember that the city had been conquered). Samaria is the ancient land of Ephraim and Manasseh between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea on the western side of the Jordan (just above Jerusalem/Judea and below Galilee).



Three Maps depicting Samaria

Samaritans are people from Samaria. They claimed that they were the original descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, and a small group of them still exist to this day. It is interesting to think about who Ephraim and Manasseh were. They were the sons of Joseph born of an Egyptian woman. In other words, they were half-breeds. Similarly, the Jews claimed that Samaritans were repatriated outsiders after the exile, and not true Jews. “Colonists brought into the region of Samaria by the Assyrians from other lands they had conquered,” as Josephus tells us (*Ant* 9.288-290).<sup>4</sup> Whether originally outsiders from an Egyptian mother (the beautiful Aseneth), or repatriated Gentiles from Assyrian lands, this “half-breed” mentality essential to the context of the story about to unfold.

The second geographical location mentioned is a city named Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to Joseph. Scholars have identified the probable location of this city near the modern village of ‘Askar on the shoulder of Mount Ebal across from Mount Gerizim. This will become important later on in Jesus’ discussion with this woman when by begin to talk about worshipping God on one mountain or another. John 4:5 tells us that this was also the place of “Jacob’s well.” This well is about a half mile south of Sychar.

John is referencing Genesis 48:22 where, on his deathbed, Jacob says to Joseph, “I have given to you rather than to your

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<sup>4</sup> Robert T. Anderson, "Samaritans," in vol. 5, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 941.



brothers one mountain slope that I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow" (Gen 48:22). This is where Scripture tells us they took to the bones of Joseph out of Egypt and buried them (Josh 24:32). Sychar lies about a mile from the ancient town of Shechem, the place where Simeon and Levi made a slaughter for their sister Dinah. Joseph's tomb lies but a few hundred yards north-west of Jacob's well.<sup>5</sup> So there is a lot of Patriarchal history in this place.

## A Story of Contrasts, A Story of Need

Let's now move to the confrontation between Jesus and the woman. First, we learn that Jesus came to Jacob's well about the sixth hour (John 4:6), which is probably around noon. The sun was up. The heat was on. Jesus is "wearied" and thirsty, as any traveler would be. The church father's made a rather big deal of this, because they were fighting heresies which denied Jesus' humanity. This little section of the story shows us, however, that Jesus was quite human. He was not immune to the frailties of human flesh. He was thirsty, because, like all living material things, he needed water to survive. In your thinking of our Savior, never forget that he was a man, exposed to the needs of men. He is able to sympathize with all of our weaknesses and passions, as another story of Jesus, Jesus' temptation in the wilderness where he was

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<sup>5</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 216-17.

thirsty and hungry, also teaches us. What kind of a God is this that he also became man? No other religion has such a story as that.

At this point, **an unnamed woman** enters the story. She is “**a woman from Samaria**” (**John 4:7**). Earlier, we read that Jesus “**had to pass**” through Samaria. He “had” to pass. Now we see why. It was **not a geographical necessity** that he had to come this way, for he could have gone up to Galilee on the eastern side of the Jordan River, if he really wanted to. But he had a **divine appointment** here, with this woman. It was an appointment, and no accident or chance encounter. For later in the story, we learn that Jesus knew everything about this woman, even though he had never met her (**4:29**). Jesus came here just to meet this woman. This gives us a glimpse into Christ’s divinity. What mere human could ever make an appointment like this?

But why would he want to do this? The fact that **this is a woman** adds the troubling fact that **she is also a Samaritan**. This is quite intentional. For, this story of the Samaritan woman at the well is juxtaposed with the story of Nicodemus in the previous chapter. There are several points of contrast that the story will flesh out for us. Here are a few of them:

Nicodemus	Woman at Well
Learned	Unschooling
Powerful	Without influence

Respected	Despised
Orthodox	Capable only of folk religion
Theologically trained	Untrained
Man	Woman
Jew	Samaritan
Ruler	Moral outcast
Respectable	Woman with many husbands
Wealthy	Poor
Serious and Dignified	Flippant and possibly boisterous
"Both needed Jesus" (Carson)	

The contrast is very important to the story, and one you need to think long and hard about. You see, both of these people have a similar problem. That is, **both are in need of Jesus**. However, the person you would think would be the one to see it is the one that, in the story at least, cannot see it. It is the female, half-bred, moral outcast, poor, sinner who ends up seeing her need for Christ; not the respectable, wealthy, Jewish, male, ruler. This isn't exactly the gospel preached in the wealthiest nation in human history, but it is the story of those whom Christ seeks. You would do well to remember that, especially in the biases you and I naturally have against people that are not like us.

This is exactly what Jesus told the people of his day, in many different ways. "How hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (**Matt 19:23**). "I have not come to call the righteous, but the sinner" (**Matt 9:13**). "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" (**Matt 9:12**). You must take care of the orphan and widow (**James 1:27**). The hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked,

the sick, those in prison ... to take care of these is to do it to Christ (**Matt 25:44-45**). Which one are you?

Many are like this physically. Do you have a heart for such as these? Jesus did. *All* are like this spiritually. You see, Nicodemus did not recognize that he was actually just as needy and poor as a Samaritan woman in God's sight. For, no one is born into the kingdom of God. Rather, a person must be born ... again, from above. It seems that in the Bible, one's circumstances in life often have a good deal to do with being able to accept the truth about Jesus.

I'm only referring here to how our circumstances in life often frame our view of our needs. **Those who have everything really don't feel like they need anything.** Those with nothing are always on the lookout for help and relief. I've heard rumors that Christians in persecuted countries are actually praying to God that he would take away American Christians' money and freedom, so that they might know again and recapture the true gospel, because they are sick of the exported "Americian Gospel" we are sending them. God uses these natural conditions as a **secondary means** by which to draw people to himself through the gospel. Yet, anyone can come to this realization, if they understand through the law of God that they have as much need for Christ's righteousness and forgiveness as anyone else. **It is impossible to come to this recognition on your own**, whether you are rich or poor, male or female, respectable or outcast. But with God,

all things are possible. So consider your condition before God today. Or, if you have done so, consider again the state you were in before God called you. Turn to Christ for forgiveness of your sins, and be thankful to him that he has done all that you need to be made righteous in his sight (you have come here today to worship, after all), and be thoughtful of those that are not like you, but who are in need.

## Give Me A Drink

Now we come to the beginning of the conversation that Jesus has with this woman. I will not go far into this story today, because there is too much here do justice to with the remainder of our time together today. Therefore, I will only go through verse 15. The woman had come to the well **in order to draw water**. Typically, women would come together. But this woman is alone, possibly because she was an outcast, even amongst the female Samaritans.

Jesus is alone as well, for the disciples had gone away into the city to buy food (**John 4:8**; a fact that will become important later on). Then Jesus talks *to her*! The woman is shocked. “**How is it that you, a Jew, ask me for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?**” (**vs. 9**). This is remarkable. As John adds, “**For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.**” It would be like you going down to Five Points and starting some random conversation with a gang member. Or, as I might have put it in high school, it would be like seeing the

jocks hanging out with the stoners (do they still use those terms)? But this is infinitely more incredible.

Jesus, **God on earth**, goes out of his way to come to this very spot in this despised place in order to speak to one of the most unmentionable creatures on the planet, at least as far as human beings are concerned. See then how this shows you the love and mercy of God. See how it shows you the boldness of Christ, and his great desire to go out of his way to bring people to himself, in spite of all the difficulties, all the human objections, stereotypes, and foolish thoughts? That is the kind of God we serve.

What does Jesus say to her? He says, **“Give me a drink”** (**John 4:8**). Though the **geography** reminds us of Jacob and Joseph, these *words* actually remind me of **Isaac when he met Rebekah**. The story is found in Genesis 24. **“Let the young woman to whom I shall say, ‘Please let down your jar that I may drink,’ and who shall say, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels’—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac ... Then the servant ran to meet her and said, ‘Please give me a little water to drink from your jar.’ She said, ‘Drink, my lord.’ And she quickly let down her jar upon her hand and give him a drink”** (**Gen 24:14, 17-18**).

Obviously, the woman and Rebekah have opposite reactions. This is because the woman is an outcast, while Rebekah is not. Just here, Augustine makes an interesting comparison saying, **“The woman here is the type of the Church, not yet**

justified, but just about to be. And it is a part of the resemblance, that she comes from a foreign people” (AUGUSTINE, Tract. xv. c. 10). It is in this light that you can read vs. 11, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with...” The word “sir” obscures the Greek which is parallel to the LXX of the story of Isaac and Rebekah. In both stories, the woman responds by calling the master “Lord” (*kurie*). Now, the woman at the well is no more calling Jesus “God” here than is Rebekah calling Isaac God. She doesn’t know who Jesus is. “Lord” is a term of submission, but not necessarily one of deity. But this helps to establish another link between the two stories.

If Augustine’s typology is accurate, then it parallels the Rebekah story in another way, for Isaac’s whole point in coming to this well was to find a bride. Obviously, I’m not saying that Jesus is coming to this well to marry the woman literally. But figuratively, he is going to marry her, in as much as she will by faith trust in him and become part of his church. He will become her husband, and she his bride, for as an outsider to Israel, she is a type of the church. With all of the attention in this passage paid to worship and water, perhaps it is his making a church, marrying a bride from such a low-life as this, which is the most remarkable thing at all. God loves the lowly, the humble, the poor, the outcast, the widow, the orphan, the sinner, the tax collector, and so on. His is a kingdom of misfits turned into righteous saints through the

imputation of Christ's righteousness. How then shall we not praise him for seeking such as us?

The figure is through **water**. Ephesians tells us that Christ's job in this marriage is to “**cleanse her by the washing of water with the word**” (**Eph 5:26**). Water is a picture of the life-giving spirit that we all need to be saved. As Jesus told Nicodemus, you have to be born through **water** and the spirit (**John 3:5**)—another connection with the two stories.

In light of this, Jesus changes the subject, from water to “**living water.**” “**If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you *living water***” (**John 4:10**). The woman, as well as many today, only gets more confused. “**Lord, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?**” (**John 4:11**).

It is becoming common in this Gospel to see how people literalize everything Jesus says. “**Destroy this temple,**” he says, and they think he is talking about Herod's temple. “**Be born again,**” Jesus says, and Nicodemus thinks Jesus is talking about entering his mother's womb a second time. “**Living water,**” Jesus says, and the woman thinks he is still talking about water from Jacob's well. Beware of literalizing everything in the Bible, for you could miss the gospel.

The woman, seeing that he has no **bucket**, now asks if he is greater than Jacob (**John 4:12**). In this, she actually shows more of an ability to figure out that Jesus is talking about



something different than the Pharisees and Nicodemus did, adding more ironic contrast in the stories. Her question implies that Jesus may be talking about water from some other source, though it seems that she still is thinking in physical terms. Maybe Jesus knows of a secret well?

Actually, he does. But it is no secret, for it was revealed throughout the Scriptures, and even though Samaritans only accepted the first five books of the Bible, you find it there too. Jesus looks at the water in Jacob's well and then looks back at the woman and responds, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again" (John 4:13). "But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14). Eternal life. We have heard this before. It's the same language he gave to Nicodemus. It is what the prophets all spoke about.

Since the Samaritans only accepted the first five books of the Bible as inspired, perhaps I should start there. There is a fascinating verse in Numbers 24:7 which says, "Water shall flow from *his buckets*, and his seed shall be in *many waters*; his *king* shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted." This verse is taken in the Jewish targums to refer to Messiah ("There King will arise, and their Redeemer be of them and among them"; see Jerusalem Targum, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan). This is a correct interpretation, as just a few verses later we read, "I seem him, but not now; I behold

him, but not near; a star shall come out of Jacob , and scepter shall rise out of Israel” (Num 24:17). A Messianic prophecy about buckets of water fits rather nicely with the Messiah talking to the woman at the well about living water, and she asks him about buckets. In fact, the Samaritan’s own liturgy used this verse to refer to Messiah as having buckets of flowing water (they called Messiah the “Taheb”).<sup>6</sup>

There is another connection in our passage to a story in Numbers. Jesus tells the woman that he will give a “spring of water welling up” to eternal life. The language “well up” is used in Numbers 21:17 in a work song (sort of like slaves singing while working on a chain-gang). They sing, “Spring up, O well!”<sup>7</sup> The context takes place immediately after the serpent pole incident that Jesus relates to the cross in the Nicodemus story (John 3:14-15; in light of all of these connections, you should really read Nicodemus and the woman at the well together in one sitting). The LORD gathers the people at Beer, and commands them to dig a well. It says it is “the well that the princes made, that the nobles of the people dug, with the scepter and with their staffs” (Num 21:18). It is not difficult to see the Messianic connections here at all.

There are many examples like these throughout the Scriptures. Isaiah 12:3 says, “With joy you will draw water from *the*

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<sup>6</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger, “John,” in G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (eds), *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 439.

<sup>7</sup> See also Isaiah 35:6 LXX, “Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the stammerers shall speak plainly; for water has burst forth in the desert, and a channel of water in a thirsty land. where the lame man “springs up” is the same word (al-lomai) Jesus uses for the water of life.

*wells of salvation.*” These wells of salvation were consistently interpreted as Messianic prophecies. For example, **Ecclesiastes Rabbah**<sup>8</sup> 1:9 says, “R[abbi] Berekiah [pre-340 A.D.] said in the name of R. Isaac: As the first redeemer [Moses] was, so shall the latter Redeemer be ... As for the former redeemer made a well to rise, so will the the latter Redeemer bring up water, as it is stated, ‘And a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim’” (**Joel 3:18**).<sup>9</sup>

What Jesus says to this woman is perfectly consistent with Messianic expectations of the day. And it is how you are to read these kinds of OT passages, lest you miss Christ. As Paul says of the water that flowed from the Rock (cf., **Ex 17:6**), “All drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ” (**1 Cor 10:4**).

You see, friends, Christ is the living water. Jeremiah says, “For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water” (**Jer 2:13**). The Holy Spirit is the living water that Christ gives to all that ask. Later in John’s Gospel, Jesus will say, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water’” (**John 7:38**). Jesus adds that this water is closely identi-

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<sup>8</sup> An ancient Rabbinical commentary on Ecclesiastes.

<sup>9</sup> Cited in Darrell Bock and Gregory Herrick, *Jesus in Context: Background readings for Gospel study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 17.

fied with the Holy Spirit whom he would send at Pentecost, “Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:39).

## **Come and Drink**

What then must you do? You must do what the woman did. After all this, she asked Jesus, “Lord, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water” (John 4:15). In the Isaac story, Rebekah (the woman) gave the water to the master. But in our story, it is the Master who gives the water to the woman. You must ask God to give you this living water. Tell him that you thirst for righteousness (Matt 5:6), and that you know you can only receive righteousness through Christ.

Jeremiah has another verse on this. He tells you what happens if you forsake the living water. “O LORD, the hope (*mikveh*) of Israel, all who forsake you shall be put to shame; those who turn away from you shall be written in the earth, for they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living water” (Jer 17:13). Pray to God and ask him to forgive you of your sins. Draw near to God for he is drawing near to you. Respond in faith like the woman, rather than in doubt like Nicodemus.

You do not want to go an eternity forsaken by God. This is what it means to have eternal death, and it is a miserable condition to remain in. Instead, turn from your sin by drink-

ing deeply from the Fountain. John was so fond of this metaphor that some of the very last words of the Bible say, “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price” (Rev 22:17).

To conclude, I asked our resident Spurgeon expert (Sean) to find me some Spurgeon quotes, because I just knew he would have something to say as a call to you today. Sure enough, my suspicions were confirmed.

Man is utterly ruined and undone. he is lost in a wild waste wilderness. The skin bottle of his righteousness is all dried up, and there is not so much as a drop of water in it. The heavens refuse him rain, and the earth can yield him no moisture. Must he perish? He looks aloft, beneath, around, and he discovers no means of escape. Must he die? Must thirst devour him? Must he fall upon the desert and leave his bones to bleach under the hot sun? No; for the text declares there is a fountain of life. Ordained in old eternity by God in solemn covenant, this fountain, this divine well, takes its spring from the deep foundations of God's decrees. It gushes up from the depth which couches beneath, it comes from that place which the eagle's eye has not seen, and which the lion's cub has not passed over. The deep foundations of Godly government, the depth, of his own essential goodness and of his divine nature - these are the mysterious springs from which gush forth that fountain of the "water of life" which shall do good to a man. The Son hath digged this well and bored through massive rocks which prevented this living water from springing upward. Using his cross as the grand instrument he has pierced through rocks, he has himself descended to the lowest depth, and he hath broken a passage by which

the love and grace of God, the living water which can save the soul, may well up and overflow to quench the thirst of dying men. (Vol. 5)

Thus then it is the living water, it is the water of life, because it satisfies our thirst, and gives us the reality of life which we can never find in anything beneath the sky. (Vol. 5)

Happy is the man who feels the well within him bubbling up, so that it is in his very life to obey the Lord Jesus. God grant we all may drink of the living water for Jesus' sake. Amen. (Vol.