



Turning Lost Students into Christ-Centered Laborers

## WHO SAW THAT COMING? • Go and Tell

### What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

John 4

#### Judea and Samaria

Centuries before Jesus walked on the Earth, certain events had transpired to create the culture of the 1st Century A.D. Here's a little background information.

Jerusalem was the capital city of Israel and the site of the Temple of God in ancient Israel. But in 931 B.C., the nation split into two parts. The southern part maintained Jerusalem as its capital and became known as Judah. The northern part kept the name Israel, and created a new capital in a city called Samaria. And in an effort to keep his people from going to Jerusalem to worship God at the Temple, the new king of new Israel created two idols and made idolatry the national religion of his nation. You can read this story in 1 Kings 12. This act, by King Jeroboam, is called "Israel's sin" throughout the Old Testament. Judah and Israel endured a full-blown civil war during this era.

God eventually judged Israel for their idolatry. In 722 B.C. the empire of Assyria besieged Samaria, captured the city, and exiled the leading people. And Assyria had a particularly effective method of conquest. They spread the exiled Israelites throughout their entire empire and required those who remained in the land to marry Assyrians, who brought a variety of pagan religions with them. Through this technique, the Assyrians succeeded in "breeding out" the native Israelites. The descendants of Northern Israel became forever known as Samaritans (not Jews) since those events.

God judged Judah too, but to a lesser extent. Judah was captured by Babylon in 586 B.C. but Babylon had a completely different method of exiling captives. Many Jews even became leaders in the Babylonian government (see Daniel, for example). And then a kingdom called the Medo-Persian empire conquered Babylon and reversed the exiling process altogether. They allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem.

Many Jews did return. Some leaders from that time include Ezra and Nehemiah. They rebuilt Jerusalem and rebuilt the Temple of God. At the same time, however, Samaritans built a copy of the temple at a place called Mt. Gerizim for their false religion. The Jews destroyed that temple, but Mt. Gerizim continued to be a stronghold of idolatry for the Samaritans.

### What's the Big Idea?

God delights in saving sinners!  
No-one can outdistance His love.

### What's the Problem?

We've sinful by heritage, and we naturally gravitate toward idols.



### OT History Timeline

- Creation and Fall of Mankind (Gen 1-11)
- Selection of Abram and the Rise of the People of Israel (Gen 12-50)
- The Rise of Moses and the Exodus from Egypt (Exodus, Numbers)
- The Law given on Mt. Sinai (Leviticus, Deuteronomy)
- Conquest of the Promised Land (Joshua, Judges)
- The Rise of the Kingdom of Israel (1-2 Samuel, 1 Kings 1-10)
- Solomon Turns from Following the Lord (1 Kings 11)
- 931 B.C. --- Israel Splits in Two: Judah [South] and Israel [North] (1 Kings 12)
- Jeroboam Makes Idolatry the Official Religion of Israel [North] (1 Kings 12)
- War Between Israel and Judah (1 Kings 13 - 2 Kings 16)
- 722 B.C.--- Assyria Destroys Israel [North] (2 Kings 17)
- 586 B.C.--- Babylon Invades Jerusalem in Judah [South] (2 Kings 25)
- Jews Return to the Land beginning in 538 B.C.
- 430 B.C. --- Jews Begin to Rebuild the Land and the People (Ezra, Nehemiah, Malachi)
- 400 B.C.--- Prophecy Ceases for the next 400 Years During the Intertestamental Era

### Samaritans

By Jesus' day, Jews from Judea (formerly Judah) hated Samaritans for political, historical, and religious reasons. They had experienced a two-hundred year war with Samaria (Northern Israel) years earlier. Moreover, these Samaritans had intermarried with enemies of God's people, and they were famous for their false religion. To quote one author, Samaritans were filthy, inbred idolaters.

**Vs. 1-4** When Jesus stopped by that well in Samaria, he was near one of the most famous centers of idolatry in the history of Israel. And then he spoke to a Samaritan woman. By doing so, Jesus deliberately bypassed at least three cultural barriers: (1) Rabbi's and religious leaders did not associate with immoral people. (2) No Jew had any dealings with Samaritans. (3) It also wasn't acceptable for Jewish men to talk casually to women in public.

### "I know that Messiah is coming"

During the Intertestamental period, the Jews had a lot of time to reflect on the history of Israel. And one thing was becoming clear. The nation was beginning to realize they needed a perfect Savior. All the promises to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:1-6; 17:1-5), Isaac (Gen. 22; 26), Jacob (Gen. 28:10-16; 32:22-32) and Joseph (Gen 48:15-16) anticipated a son who would bless the nations. Moses promised the people a better prophet than himself (Deut. 18:15). God promised David a Son who would have an eternal throne (2 Sam. 7:16). Isaiah spoke of a righteous Branch, a suffering Servant who would deliver Israel (Isaiah 11; 42:1-17) and a righteous Lamb who would be pierced for their transgressions (Isaiah 53). The prophet Zecharaia also spoke of a savior who would be pierced for the people (Zech. 12:10). The Psalms spoke of a coming Messiah (Psalms 22; 24; 34; 45; 72; 89; 110). The sacrificial system and the rest of the Law anticipated a greater deliverance (Heb. 9-10). The prophet Malachi told the Jews to look for a Forerunner before the coming of the Messiah (Mal. 3:1; 4:5). It goes on and on.

### No-One Understands Jesus

What's remarkable about this passage is how this Samaritan woman actually understands Jesus. Not even Nicodemus, a Pharisee and Ruler of the Jews, understood Jesus. But this Samaritan woman is right on point! It's a surprising, delightful, unexpected twist in the story. Moreover, this passage is full of joy! Be sure to notice the woman's joy (she runs off without her water jar) and Jesus' joy (he can't even eat).

### What's Our Response?

This passage is packed with joy. You'll want your group to notice how much Jesus enjoys saving people, and to identify people around them who need to know his love.

## What Are the Questions?

John 4:1-41

### LAUNCH

What types of things bring joy to your heart?

### EXPLORE

Read John 4:1-4.

1. Why did Jesus leave Judea and what does the text mean by “and he had to pass through Samaria?” What’s the big deal about Samaria?

Read John 4:5-14

2. People generally came to draw water early in the morning. Why do you think this woman came when no-one else was around?
3. Why was this woman surprised by Jesus' question?
4. How did Jesus turn the tables on the woman in verse 10? What is he offering her?
5. Did the woman understand what Jesus was offering her?

Read John 4:15-26.

6. As soon as she requested the gift Jesus was offering, he brought up her long list of sins. Why? Was he trying to embarrass her?
7. After Jesus put his finger on the huge issue in that woman’s life, she brought up a question about a mountain. What’s the big deal about that mountain in verses 19-24?

8. Jesus had a meaningful discussion with the Samaritan women about true, authentic worship. He even said “the Father seeks” worshippers who worship Him in spirit and truth. What do you think that type of worship looks like?

9. What did Jesus mean when he said salvation was “of the Jews” in verse 22? Did she understand?

10. How do you think the woman felt when Jesus said, “I, the One speaking to you, am He”?

Read John 4:27-42.

11. According to this passage, do you think the Samaritan woman genuinely believed? Why? Why did she run back into town?
12. How is the disciples' confusion about food similar to the woman's confusion about water?

Turn to 2nd Timothy 2:2

13. How has the message of Christ spread around the world?

Back to John 4:27-42.

14. After his encounter with the Samaritan woman, what specific lessons did Jesus apply to his disciples?

### APPLY

15. Who first brought you to Jesus?
16. This woman did not deserve Jesus' kindness. Why was he so nice to her?
17. According to this passage, how does God feel when someone comes to know Him?
18. Have you discovered Jesus? And if so, are there people you need to “run back and tell?” Who? Make a list.
19. What are some things that keep us from telling others about Jesus?

## What Are the Answers?

1. By Jesus' day the northern part of Israel, also known as Samaria, was comprised of an ethnically mixed people group famous for their false religion. These Samaritans hosted pagan religious services at a temple on Mount Gerizim.
2. She was likely there at that time because she was an outcast. She wasn't part of the social crowd.
3. Jesus deliberately bypassed at least three cultural barriers: (1) Rabbi's and religious leaders did not associate with immoral people. (2) No Jew had any dealings with Samaritans. (3) It also wasn't acceptable for Jewish men to talk casually to women in public.
4. "Living water," is like spring water. It was the best water of the day. It was clear running water, as opposed to stagnant sitting water. Jesus used it as an illustration of salvation
5. Discuss
6. Jesus was about to do something magnificent in her life. He had to point out her sin so that she could understand His forgiveness. "The gospel teaches us that we are far more wicked than we ever imagined, but more loved and accepted through Christ than we ever dared dream—at the same time." - John Piper
7. See "What you need to know about this passage."
8. Discuss
9. The word translated "of" more precisely means, "from" or "out of." So Jesus was telling her not only that Gerizim was an inauthentic place of worship, but also that the Savior would arise from the Jewish people. She understood what he meant. In verse 25 she said "I know that the Messiah is coming."
10. Her jaw probably dropped. She may have dropped the water jar too. In a second she's going to run off without it.
11. It's obvious that she believed. Excitement and desire to tell others are signs of authentic faith.
12. This is a theme in John's gospel. "No-one understands Jesus." (But this Samaritan woman did!)
13. Our excitement about Jesus leads us to share about Jesus. It's been that way for two millenia.
14. "Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest!" Jesus was describing the conversations they were about to have with all the Samaritans that were on their way to meet him.
15. Discuss
16. No-one deserves Jesus' kindness, but he delights to give it. That's the gospel.
17. Discuss
18. Discuss
19. Discuss

## Memorize

What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

2 Timothy 2:2