

A Study of John's Gospel

Lesson 5: The Beginning Public Ministry of Jesus, Part 4 (4:1-54)

January 1, 2012

"I who speak to you am He" (4:1-26, 39-45)

Jesus traveled back toward Galilee by way of Samaria and stopped at the well that the Patriarch Jacob had dug centuries before (Gen 33:18-20; Josh 24:32). Jesus was "wearied from His journey." His discussion with an immoral Samaritan woman transitioned from Jesus' simple request for a drink of water to her acknowledgment of her sinful life. Many of the Samaritans believed and accepted Jesus as "the Christ, the Savior of the world" as a result of her faith.

"Lift up your eyes and look at the fields" (4:27-38)

This section of John's gospel highlights Jesus' true focus while walking this earth. He was the light of the world and His mission was to save those who were honestly drawn to Him (3:17). Jesus' disciples seemed frustrated and confused that He would actually spend time with a Samaritan. Jesus, however, saw her, not as if He should "have no dealings" with her (3:9), but as a lost soul needing what He had to give. Jesus explained to His disciples that He had much work to do in bringing all men and women to repentance. Within the next 3 years, they too will understand this great responsibility of teaching the lost.

"Go your way; your son lives" (4:46-54)

Jesus' teaching and actions impacted so many at this point. The details of the healing of the nobleman's son support the purpose of John's writing (20:30-31). There was no question in the nobleman's mind that his son was saved, though miles away from Jesus, at the exact instant that Jesus said "Your son lives!" John records this as Jesus' second miracle, of which the synoptic gospels mention nothing.

Questions:

1. The conversation between the Samaritan woman and Jesus progressed from His asking for a drink of water (7) to Jesus revealing Himself as the prophesied Messiah (26). What does this tell us about the heart of the Samaritan woman?
2. Why did the woman seem surprised when Jesus asked her for a drink (9)?
3. What was the difference between water from the well and that given by Jesus (10-15)?
4. Why did many more Samaritans believe (39-42)?
5. What did Jesus mean when he stated "I have food to eat of which you do not know" when His disciples urged Him to eat (31-35)?
6. Tell how the nobleman's faith was manifested in four different ways (47, 49, 50 and 53). What is the lesson for us in this example?