

Lent II: Jn. 4:4-26: Jesus and the Woman at the Well

1. Vs. 4: We are including this vs. because of the word ἔδει. Not only did Jesus have to pass through Samaria because it lay in the way but also it happened by the plan and providence of God. The disciples were with Him but vs. 4 stresses αὐτὸν, Jesus, not αὐτοὺς, Jesus and the disciples.
2. Vs. 5: Note the singular ἔρχεται. Stress is laid on Jesus' coming there, though the disciples were with Him. εἰς here means "to" not "into".
3. Vs. 6: πηγή means "spring". The well was fed by a spring. τοῦ Ἰακώβ is adjectival, identifying the spring. οὖν is the narrative use of this word. κεκοπιακῶς is the perf. participle of existing state. ἐκ denotes cause. ἐκαθέζετο impf. of continued action. οὕτως: RSV, AAT and NIV read "wearied as He was". Note the true humanity of Jesus. ἕκτη has caused much discussion. AV, RSV, NIV, JB, NASB, NKJV leave it at "the sixth hour". AAT and Hendriksen interpret "six in the evening". LB, TEV, NEB and Fahling interpret "twelve noon". Ylvisaker has "either six a.m. or six p.m." We don't know for sure. These notes prefer "twelve noon", as does Bengel.
4. Vs. 7: ἔρχεται corresponds to ἔρχεται in vs. 5. Our attention is riveted on two people. Jesus came first and foresaw all this. It was planned. The ἐκ phrase is adjectival "a woman of Samaria" or "a Samaritan woman". We are notified immediately that Jesus is dealing with a pagan woman. ἀντηλθῆσαι denotes purpose. That's all she came for. Little did she know what was going to happen. But Jesus did. Jesus' word to her is very simple and direct. πειν is an aorist infinitive used as a noun.
5. Vs. 8: γὰρ indicates that this verse is parenthetical. It makes clear that the disciples are not present. This time εἰς means "into". Another indication of Jesus' true humanity. Not only was He thirsty. He was also hungry.
6. Vs. 9: If vs. 8 is parenthetical, οὖν is responsive, "in response". Note that λέγει corresponds to λέγει in vs. 7, likewise αὐτῷ to αὐτῇ. Note that ἡ Σαμαριτίτις stresses the kind of woman Jesus is dealing with. πῶς shows the perplexity of this woman. σὺν is emphatic. "How can you, a Jew, request a drink from me, a Samaritan, and a woman at that?" The last clause has caused two problems: a) Is it textual? Nestle brackets it, for though Weiss included it, Tischendorf rejected it. The translations include it. The UBS Commentary retains it: "Such comments are typical of the evangelist." b) What does it mean? Does it mean "Associate on friendly terms with?" Thus Bengel, BAG, and most of our translations. Or does it mean "Use vessels for food and drink together?" Thus AAT, NEB and TEV. We prefer the former. It speaks primarily of Jewish attitudes toward the Samaritans. By the way, NASB, NIV, TEV, NEB and AAT make it parenthetical, a remark by John, the writer.
7. Vs. 10: We note the following about this verse:
 - a) It is a contrary to fact condition, with impf. in protasis denoting present time and aorist in apodosis denoting past time: "If you knew, you would have asked etc." Thus all translations except TEV and LB which have "you would ask" in the apodosis. The point is that if she had truly known, had been a believer, she would have asked for living water before Jesus asked her for a drink. Since she did not, Jesus asked her for a drink. By the way, we are not told that Jesus received a drink. Though thirsty, He forewent a drink to preach the Gospel to her.
 - b) ἤδεις, to know on one's own without approval, not γινώσκω. τοῦ θεοῦ is subjective genitive. καὶ is expegetical "namely". Jesus is saying that she doesn't know the Savior. Bengel says here: "Ignorance is a hindrance, but the disclosure of her ignorance shows the compassion of the Lord"

and kindled a longing desire in the woman's heart." He had said: Δός μοι πειν in vs. 7 but was yearning for her to ask Him the same thing. She did, eventually (spiritually). The second καὶ is resultative.

c) She should have asked for "living water" which will be explained. This is the same as "the gift of God, Jesus Christ Himself."

8. Vs. 11: Κύριε is found here, and in vss. 15 and 19. All our translations consistently translate "Sir". Bengel thinks it means "Lord". He says: "Previously she had not called Him Lord; now she so calls Him, inasmuch as speaking piously about God, though as yet unknown to her." He adds: "She had a feeling in some way or other of His dignity." In this vs. and the next the woman presents five difficulties: a) You don't have a bucket; b) The well is deep; c) Where will you get the living water, different from the usual; e) Jacob was satisfied with this water, to say nothing of his sons and his animals. What could be better? Read LB at this point. Not bad. In vs. 11 οὔτε-καὶ mean "neither-furthermore". Note that here and in vs. 12 she calls it a φρέαρ, a well, not a spring. He had said ὕδωρ ζῶν. She answered with τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ζῶν "that living water.
9. Vs. 12: μὴ introduces a question which expects the answer "no". τοῦ πατρὸς is genitive of comparison. The first use of πατήρ. It will occur four more times in this text. The Samaritans claimed Jacob as their patriarch, simply because of the well. ἔδωκεν, he gave, he was their benefactor. καὶ αὐτὸς "and furthermore he himself etc." It was good enough for him. The woman puts Jacob on a level with herself, a drinker of physical water. Actually, Jacob was a true believer who drank the water of life. There is plenty of evidence for that. In her ignorance, she misrepresents Jacob.
10. Vs. 13: This complex sentence is both present general (no exceptions) and future more vivid (the apodosis follows logically out of the protasis). ἐκ is partitive. τοῦτου means "physical water". πάλιν, on each occasion. How often don't we have to drink water!
11. Vs. 14: δέ is plainly "but". In 13 He said "everyone" but here He says "whoever" but the type of condition is the same. There is a difference: οὐ μὴ means "definitely not". And it is strengthened by εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. Note emphatic ἐγὼ. οὐ is genitive by attraction. Note how often forms of δίδωμι occur here: vss. 5, 7, twice 10, 12, twice 14, 15. He says δός μοι in vs. 7 which finally leads to her saying the same thing, which is just what He wanted. What a masterpiece of evangelism! ἀλλὰ following a negative means "but quite to the contrary (of thirst)." Twice in this vs. Jesus speaks about "the water which I will give him (the thirster)." The first part of the sentence is a conditional relative general clause. After ἀλλὰ Jesus explains what this water will do. People cannot live without water. That is the metaphor. But this water (the Gospel) will quench thirst forever. Furthermore, in the person whose thirst has been satisfied there will be a spring (πηγή) of water which springs up into everlasting life. He is making Himself plain. By the way, vs. 14 is not saying that the means of grace are not necessary. He is saying that the reception of God's gift of life becomes a permanent possession. Bengel aptly says: "Truly that water, as far as it depends on itself, has in it an everlasting virtue; and when thirst returns, the defect is on the part of the man, not of the water. . . . The antithesis to πηγή is φρέαρ, the well, vs. 11. In believers there is a spring. . . 'of springing water', the abounding fruitfulness of believers."
12. Vs. 15: Finally she says δός μοι, but not πειν, a drink, but "this water" of which He had been speaking. Ylvisaker says of vss. 9-15: "At first He awakens in her a longing for something higher and nobler than the earthly considerations which have hitherto beset her heart." Jesus is thirsty but He foregoes drinking water until He tells her about "the life-giving water". If it leads to life eternal

it must be life-giving. But she still does not understand. She wants this water for only two purposes: to quench her (physical) thirst once for all, and so that she does not constantly have to come here. It was hard work. But Jesus is not speaking of works. He speaks of a gift.

13. Vs. 16: Ylvisaker says of vss. 16-19: "The next step is to help her to a realization, an acknowledgment, and a confession of her sins." Jesus has most definitely aroused her curiosity and she has given Him her undivided attention. She doesn't want to come back here (ἐνθάδε). Jesus uses the very same word. "Call your husband and come back here." That's where both would learn what He meant. Kretzmann remarks: "Very often the real battle in the heart of a person begins only after the desire for salvation has been felt." And Lenski: "Either (law or gospel) may be offered first, or both may be intertwined, though each always remains distinct, likewise the proper effects of each. Here Jesus uses the gospel first. It is a mistake to imagine that in doing this he failed and then tried something else." Correct. The Gospel aroused her attention, but she is about to learn what it means to be a sinner.
14. Vs. 17: The five occurrences of ἀνὴρ in vss. 16-18 all mean "husband". The woman does not lie. She truthfully tells Jesus that she has no husband. He corroborates her answer, thereby showing His omniscience. But she has something to hide.
15. Vs. 18: γὰρ is explanatory: "You see, you've had five husbands." Bengel says: "Five marriage connections embraced almost the whole life of the woman, and by the mention of them He clearly recalled to the recollection of the woman her whole life. . . . Whether they all died, or whether the woman lost some of them in other ways, the Lord stirred up her conscience. . . . This sixth marriage was not a lawful one." That many marriages surely indicates unforgiven sin. The καὶ in 18 means "and furthermore". This implies sin in the other marriages. The Jews and Samaritans had lax divorce laws. By τοῦτο Jesus means only that which follows καὶ. Jesus is saying: "Your truthful answer covered up your sins."
16. Vs. 19: θεωρῶ "I perceive". Note emphatic position of προφήτης and emphatic σὺ. The latter is the subject. She perceives that He is more than a mere man.
17. Vs. 20: Ylvisaker says of vss. 20-26: "His third objective is to remove her from the path of nationalism and religious error into the true way of the revelation of redemption through Himself." Hendriksen says: "Here, as it seems probable to us, we see a woman who in her anxiety to drop a painful subject proposes a question about which she has heard much and in which she has developed a certain interest." But Lenski is of the school which says (as do other Lutherans) that vs. 19 is a virtual confession of sin. She comes clean. "The woman really asks Jesus, who are right, her ancestors or the Jews (emphatic ὑμεῖς). This she does in connection with her unqualified admission of sin and guilt. That matter is of the gravest personal concern to her for this reason and for this alone. She admits that she needs cleansing. Where is she to obtain it?" Stoeckhardt: "The woman now recognized the man who spoke with her as a prophet, and asked Him about the true God and the right worship. Her soul now thirsts for the living God, and desires to become clean with the God whom she has greatly offended. When the sinner, in whom the Lord is working, recognizes his total unworthiness and corruption, the question in him becomes so much more active: Where do I find the true God? How can I reach a gracious Lord?" Ylvisaker: "Peace is what she must have for her soul. This has now suddenly become the paramount issue." Kretzmann: "She wanted to know where the living God was to be found and which was the true worship It was the question of a serious seeker after truth." But Fahling: "She did not yet recognize in Jesus THAT Prophet. Neither was she ready to ask, What must I do to be saved? In truly feminine artfulness, partly defending herself,

yet not completely confiding in the newly discovered prophet, she challenged Jesus with a standing problem of the Samaritan religion." Bengel is non-committal on this point. These notes prefer the view-point of Lenski, Stoeckhardt, Kretzmann and Ylvisaker as opposed to that of Hendriksen and Fahling. Now back to the Greek: She compares the Samaritans with the Jews. Perhaps with of πατέρες ἡμῶν she claims the patriarchs falsely, because worship on Gerizim took place only after the Babylonian Captivity. With emphatic ὑμεῖς she means "you Jews". ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ is opposed to ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις. Note that she uses δεῖ, denoting necessity, which Jesus will answer in 24 with δεῖ. καὶ means "on the other hand", almost "but". She is asking: "Where is the true worship so that I can find it?"

18. Vs. 21: Bengel: "In this passage alone, to the Samaritan woman, He says 'Believe Me'." True. Nowhere else did Jesus say that, not even to the disciples to whom He always said "I say unto you". Bengel again: "It is called the hour because its beginning is nigh. Cf. 5:25 and 16:2." He also notes the antithesis of "The Father" here to "our fathers" in vs. 20. Not where our fathers worshipped, but the worship of THE FATHER is the important thing. Fahling: "In His reply the Lord showed marvelous wisdom and both tender human insight and consideration. As to the proper place for worship the Jews were undoubtedly right. Jerusalem was the place which the Lord had chosen. Even if inwardly they (the Jews) had betrayed their solemn trust, outwardly they still had Moses and the prophets. It is not a question of where of worship, but of the whom and how." Kretzmann: "The Lord answers with one of the greatest and most far-reaching announcements of all times, earnestly inviting the woman, at the same time, to give full credence to His weighty words. Both places of the OT cultus, that of Gerizim and of Jerusalem, would then be forsaken. This took place shortly after Christ's ascension. Then the Samaritans that came to faith (Acts 8) deserted Mt. Gerizim and worshipped the true God in Jesus Christ the Savior. Incidentally, however, Jesus states that there is a difference, even now, though this difference lay not in the place, but in the object of worship." On the words "You (Samaritans) will worship the Father" Lenski remarks: "This prophecy, in the sense of foretelling the future, is another evidence of divine omniscience used for Jesus' saving purpose. . . . The point in Jesus' words is that the specific place of the worship is a secondary question, whereas the true worship itself is the essential." True. Jesus will fulfill "the hour". In vs. 21 Jesus is not saying that Mt. Gerizim and Jerusalem are on an equal footing and therefore will both be eliminated. That Jerusalem was the center of worship is implicit in vs. 22. In vs. 21 Jesus immediately attracts the woman's attention to Himself, the fulfillment of all OT prophecies and types.
19. Vs. 22: Note that in 21 and 22 there are no connective particles. It's straightforward proclamation of the Truth. Note contrast between emphatic ὑμεῖς and ἡμεῖς, of the verb and of the subordinate clause. In both cases ὃ does not denote the object of worship but its form and content. Note forms of οἶδα twice. It means to know without approval, without anyone telling you. It's not γινώσκω. The Samaritans' worship was based on inherent ignorance. That of the Jews was based on Truth. Jesus is speaking of the Jews without distinguishing those who believed from those who did not. The difference between ignorance and true knowledge is given in the ὅτι clause which is causal: "THE salvation (there is none other) is of THE Jews (the covenant people)." ἐκ denotes origin. Bengel makes ἐστίν paroxytone, with the accent on the epsilon. That makes ἐστίν emphatic "truly is". Lenski says: "Here 'the salvation' denotes the specific and only salvation contemplated in God's promises and to be realized in his incarnate Son. This salvation is in no way promised to the Samaritans, so that it would emanate from their midst, but to the Jews alone." Bengel: "For such was the promise that the Saviour and the knowledge would be extended to others." Then he adds this significant statement: "Jesus speaks of the Jews in more glorifying terms when addressing foreigners than when addressing Jews." Ylvisaker: "The Samaritans worshiped an unknown deity." Stoeckhardt: "The Jews had Moses and the prophets and knew about the true and living God. In the temple of

Jerusalem God had established the memory of His name, because the salvation was to come from the Jews, preserving the right worship till then among His people, although inwardly they were estranged from Him."

20. Vs. 23: Vs. 22 is parenthetical, a digression in thought. That does not mean that it is not important. ἀλλὰ resumes the thought of vs. 21. It means "furthermore". He is further explaining the word ὄρα which was used in 21. Note repetition of ἐρχεται ὄρα. ὅτε is common to both, but a thought (καὶ νῦν ἐστίν) is added. Furthermore τῷ πατρὶ is common to both. And also forms of προσκυνέω. In 21 He stated that the ὄρα would do away with all distinctions of place of worship, whether false or true. In 23 He adds "in fact, it is now here" (meaning Himself) and adds the thought of the genuine worshippers, whom they will worship and how they will do it. ἀληθινοὶ points to the believers of the New Covenant. This vs. does not say that no worshippers in the OT were true worshippers in spirit and in truth. Here again Jesus is attracting the woman's attention to Himself Who will fulfill all OT types and prophecies and bring salvation not only to Jew but also to Gentile. True OT worship was spiritual but it involved also the externals of the ceremonial law, presently to be fulfilled by Christ and forever abolished (cf. Epistle to the Hebrews). Fahling: "His presence is not confined to a temple built by the hand of man, nor are those who worship Him bound to mere forms, ceremonies, rituals, symbols, and sacrifices. This is a picture in miniature of the NT Christian Church, which is not bound to a certain place of worship and its prescribed ceremonies. The true children of God, the believers in Christ, need not observe such and such outward forms; it is all a matter of a truly believing heart." Kretzmann: "The external worship of God at Jerusalem must give way to the true service of God." Now we come to καὶ γὰρ. γὰρ is explanatory "you see". καὶ means "also" implying that Jesus is divine and that the Father and the Son both seek. At this moment the Son is seeking this woman. The Father (not Jacob or the fathers of the Samaritans), the heavenly Father, works with the Son. ζητεῖ is used as at Lk. 19:10. Natural man cannot find God. God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost seek and save man. τοιοῦτους points back to οἱ ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταὶ and is explained by τοὺς προσκυνούντας αὐτόν, "such who worship Him" not a false place of worship like Gerizim, nor even a limited place like Jerusalem, though the Old Covenant centered there. Lenski: "'The Father' connotes, first of all, that Jesus is this Father's Son, and, secondly, connotes that all genuine worshippers are the children of this Father." Bengel says: "καὶ νῦν ἐστίν, what was not stated in 21 is now added, lest the woman should think that in the meantime she must seek a settlement in Judea. It was presently fulfilled in vss. 39 and 41. 'The true worshippers' for instance, the Samaritans, vs. 41."
21. Vs. 24: πνεῦμα ὁ θεός. The predicate is stated first for emphasis: "The true and only God is Spirit." Jesus is not classifying God but stating His nature. For the construction cf. Jn. 1:1 θεός ἦν ὁ λόγος Jesus is not bringing new revelation, different from that in the OT. God was Spirit in the OT and had spiritual worshippers there too. καὶ means "and in keeping with this" spiritual nature of God, His worshippers must worship Him in spirit and in truth. τοῦς is possessive, His worshippers. Note how Jesus repeats the word δεῖ which the woman had used in vs. 20. The OT worship was restricted as to people (the Jews), place (Jerusalem) and method (the Old Covenant with its ceremonial law). The NT worship, fulfilled in Christ, does away with restrictions, all of them. Like the Father's very nature, true worship is spiritual. Jesus is the Truth, the fulfillment of all that was promised. The words ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ implicitly point immediately to Christ as He will state in vs. 26. Bengel says: "There is contained herein a testimony as to the Holy Trinity. The Father is worshipped in the Holy Spirit, and in the Truth accomplished through Jesus Christ. They who worship the Father, as sons, in Spirit and Truth, these are placed above mere considerations of localities, and of all circumstances of that kind." Small wonder we begin our services in the name of the Triune God. Bengel adds: "Jesus holds a profound and striking conversation with an ordinary woman, whom He scarcely knew."

He did not commit to His disciples more lofty truths." Note train of thought, vss. 21, 23, 24: In 21 He speaks of the coming hour when they (a prophecy and promise) will worship the Father, irrespective of place. In 23 this is expanded. The hour is already here. Now He tells her that these worshippers are genuine and how they will worship, and that the Father Himself seeks them. In 24 He tells her that the worship of men must be like God's very nature, spiritual and true.

22. Vs. 25: Commentators are at a loss to explain how she knew what she knew. The best answer is that Christ Himself had awakened faith in her. Lenski aptly remarks: "Messiahward her thoughts turn like the flower to the sun. . . . This thought comes to here because of the great things she has just heard from Jesus' lips. . . . The learned, self-righteous, exceedingly prominent Pharisee Nicodemus and this unlearned, sin-laden, ordinary unnamed woman of despised Samaria are companions." Note that she uses οἶδα, I know on my own. Note frequency of ἐρχεται in this account, vss. 5, 7, 21, 23, 25. First the Savior comes, then she comes, He speaks about the coming hour, which is already there. And, finally, she says: "I know that Messiah is coming." Faith had truly been awakened. Are the words "The One called Christ" the words of the woman or added by way of explanation by the evangelist John? Translators and commentators differ on this point. We shall not try to settle it. It makes little difference. In any case Μεσσίας and Χριστός mean the same thing. ἐκεῖνος is a emphatic pronoun. Note that she uses a form of ἐρχομαι once more. The translations variously render ἀναγγελεῖ "tell, explain, show, declare". It is the very word that Jesus uses of the Holy Spirit at Jn. 16:13. ὅπαντα, all things, necessary for our salvation. Bengel remarks: "She speaks with joy at the truth which she had come to know, and with earnestness and hope of coming to the full knowledge, concerning Messiah Himself." Truly the language of faith.
23. Vs. 26: Note emphatic 'Εγώ: "I am the one, the One Who is speaking to you." Fahling: "Jesus opens wide the floodgates of living water." Stoekhardt: "With these words Jesus tightly fastened the bond with which He drew this soul to Himself." Lenski: "Now Jesus helps her with her confession of faith (vs. 29). To this obscure woman Jesus reveals point-blank what He had revealed to no one else." Cf. Jn. 9:37 and 10:25. Bengel: "He hastened to say the whole before the coming of His disciples. . . . Nowhere did He speak of Himself more directly, even to the disciples themselves."
24. What a text! Jesus makes a simple request in vs. 7 to which she counters with a thought of national prejudice. Hiding His identity, He introduces the subject of living water which really arouses her curiosity. She practically says: "Who do you think you are?" He continues with His discussion about life-giving water and what it can do for her. Though she does not understand she practically says: "That's for me!" Then Jesus gently unfolds her whole sinful life to her. She recognizes Him as a Prophet and indicates that she wants to know about the true religion. In vss. 21-24 Jesus speaks a beautiful word about the whole sum and substance of the New Covenant. She confesses her faith. Not til then does He identify Himself. All along, the God-man, Who made Himself of no reputation, brings this obscure woman to a true faith in Himself. In His providence He had planned the absence of the disciples. What a text!