

Last week we found Jesus departing Judea because of building tension with the leaders in Jerusalem. He headed back to Galilee where he could be a bit more out of reach. The Jews of Galilee would often take a long route to Jerusalem, along the Jordan River to Jericho, and then east up the steep road to Jerusalem. This was done to skirt around Samaria and to avoid contact with the hated Samaritan people. The direct route from Jerusalem was much shorter, but passed straight through Samaria. One could get from Jerusalem to Galilee in only 3 days by this route. Jesus decided to take that route which led to today's encounter.

The Samaritans were a mixed breed of Israelites and foreigners. During the Assyrian invasion by Shalmaneser, and then Sargon II, between 724-721 BC, most of the people of the Northern Kingdom were carried away captive. They became the 'ten lost tribes'. They were replaced by peoples from other lands conquered by Assyria. The few Israelites that were left behind intermixed with the new transplants to form the peoples known in Jesus day as the Samaritans. They used only the Pentateuch as their scriptures, and mixed their religion with the religions of the new settlers. You might want to review 2 Kings 17:1-41. Below is a portion from there.

2Kings 17:24-33 *And the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the people of Israel. And they took possession of Samaria and lived in its cities. And at the beginning of their dwelling there, they did not fear the LORD. Therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them.*

So the king of Assyria was told, "The nations that you have carried away and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the law of the god of the land. Therefore he has sent lions among them, and behold, they are killing them, because they do not know the law of the god of the land." Then the king of Assyria commanded, "Send there one of the priests whom you carried away from there, and let him go and dwell there and teach them the law of the god of the land."

So one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and lived in Bethel and taught them how they should fear the LORD.

But every nation still made gods of its own and put them in the shrines of the high places that the Samaritans had made, every nation in the cities in which they lived. The men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, and the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.

They also feared the LORD and appointed from among themselves all sorts of people as priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places. So they feared the LORD but also served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away.

To this day, the Samaritans in today's Israel sacrifice animals according the instructions in the Pentateuch.

John 4:1-6 *Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. And he had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.*

The town Sychar, was called Shechem in the days of Jacob. Jacob's daughter by Leah, Dinah, was raped there by Shechem, the son of the prince of Shechem. Jacob did build an altar there, but we do not have a record of his digging a well. Jacob was an altar builder, and Abraham had been the well digger. Jacob bought a piece of land from the royal family of Shechem that became the second piece of real estate owned by Abraham's family in the land of Canaan. (What was the first?) Jacob later gave this piece of land to Joseph, probably to his brothers' chagrin.

See Genesis 33-34.

*Christ...the source of the breath of life for all, when He was
Weary from a journey, sat down near a spring of Samaria.
And it was the season of burning heat.
It was the sixth hour, as the Scripture says,
It was the middle of the day when the Messiah
Came to illumine those in darkness.
The Spring came upon the spring, not to drink but to cleanse.
The fountain of immortality was near the
stream of the wretched woman as thought it were in need.
He is tired from walking, He who tirelessly walked on the sea,
He who furnishes exceeding great joy and redemption.*

Romanus Melodus

: 7-15 *There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) 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.) 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." 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? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." 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 woman is a type of the church. Jesus woos her to himself. He has sent the disciples away so that he can reach her without distractions. She is taken aback that a man should speak to her, and more so that a Jewish man should do so. But Jesus is no longer a Messiah of the Jews alone, but the savior of the whole world. The old rules are no longer applicable. His kingdom will be filled with both Jews and Gentiles, and he has come that all mankind might be saved.

How is the church, or even ourselves, like the woman at the well?

Jesus asks for a drink, but he really desires her faith. His ‘drink’ was to do the will of him that sent him. He is the source of living water. He has already turned water into the wine of his new kingdom. With Nicodemus he presents the water of baptism as the passage to the new life. Now he turns water from Jacob’s well (the Old Testament, especially the Pentateuch) into living water (the New Testament) that can quench one’s thirst forever.

: 16-18 Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”

Jesus sees into the soul of the woman. As our pastor said, she had been defiled at the hands of the men of her town. Her reputation is gone. She comes to the well in the middle of the day to try to avoid contact with the women of the town. She is a hurting person, one that Jesus has come to save. (*For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. Matt 9:13*).

Ezekiel 16 likens Israel to a prostitute, and a faithless bride:

:3 and say, Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth are of the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. :5 No eye pitied you, to do any of these things to you out of compassion for you, but you were cast out on the open field, for you were abhorred, on the day that you were born. :6 “And when I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your blood, I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’ I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’ :7 I made you flourish like a plant of the field. And you grew up and became tall and arrived at full adornment. Your breasts were formed, and your hair had grown; yet you were naked and bare.

:8 “When I passed by you again and saw you, behold, you were at the age for love, and I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness; I made my vow to you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord GOD, and you became mine. :10 I clothed you also with embroidered cloth and shod you with fine leather. I wrapped you in fine linen and covered you with silk. :11 And I adorned you with ornaments and put bracelets on your wrists and a chain on your neck. :13 Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen and silk and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour and honey and oil. You grew exceedingly beautiful and advanced to royalty.

:14 And your renown went forth among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through the splendor that I had bestowed on you, declares the Lord GOD.

:15 “But you trusted in your beauty and played the whore because of your renown and lavished your whorings on any passerby; your beauty became his. :16 colorful shrines, and on them played the whore. The like has never been, nor ever shall be.:17 You also took your beautiful jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself images of men, and with them played the whore.

:22 nd in all your abominations and your whorings you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, wallowing in your blood. :30 “How lovesick is your heart, declares the Lord GOD, because you did all these things, the deeds of a brazen prostitute, :31 building your vaulted chamber at the head of every street, and making your lofty place in every square. Yet you were not like a prostitute, because you scorned payment.

:32 Adulterous wife, who receives strangers instead of her husband!

: 19-26 *The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”*

The mountain for the Samaritans is Mt. Gerizim, as Mt Zion is the mountain of the Jews. It was on Mt. Gerizim that the Israelites first read the blessings of the covenant when they entered the Promised Land (**Deut 27:9-13; Joshua 8:30-35**).

Deut. 11:26-29 *“See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way that I am commanding you today, to go after other gods that you have not known. And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, you shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.*

Moses promised the people that there would be a Messiah in their future. The Samaritans were as aware of this as the Jews, but both had a distorted picture of who he would be.

Deut. 18:18 *I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.*