

SCRIPTURE READING FOR JANUARY 30, 2022 @ CAPC OAKLAND

John 4:1-42
COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE

¹ Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was making more disciples and baptizing more than John (² although Jesus' disciples were baptizing, not Jesus himself). ³ Therefore, he left Judea and went back to Galilee.

⁴ Jesus had to go through **SAMARIA**. ⁵ He came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, which was near the land Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there. Jesus was tired from his journey, so he sat down at the well. *It was about noon.*

⁷ A Samaritan woman came to the well to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me some water to drink." ⁸ His disciples had gone into the city to buy him some food.

⁹ The Samaritan woman asked, "Why do you, a Jewish man, ask for something to drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (Jews and Samaritans didn't associate with each other.)

¹⁰ Jesus responded, "If you recognized God's gift and who is saying to you, 'Give me some water to drink,' you would be asking him and he would give you living water."

¹¹ The woman said to him, "Sir, you don't have a bucket and the well is deep. Where would you get this living water? ¹² You aren't greater than our father Jacob, are you? He gave this well to us, and he drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock."

¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks from the water that I will give will never be thirsty again. The water that I give will become in those who drink it a spring of water that bubbles up into eternal life."

¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will never be thirsty and will never need to come here to draw water!"

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

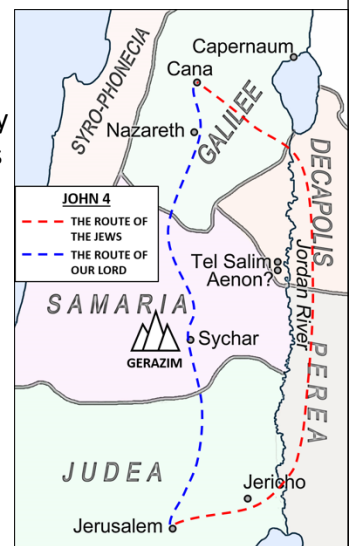
The gospel of John one of the four stories of the good news of Jesus (Gospel means good news) which tells his life, actions, words and mission. It's believed that John's account is the last one written as his retelling of the story reflects considerable theological reflection and uses metaphors and poetic language. One example is the play with light and darkness throughout the story. John's account also contains only seven miracles – or signs as they're called. A symbolic number in Jewish tradition that represents the divine and also recall the days of creation in the foundational story of Genesis.

SAMARIA:: The nation of Israel was divided into two nations in the days of Rehoboam (1 Kings 12). Israel was composed of the ten tribes to the north, and Judah was made up of Judah and Benjamin. The animosity between the Jews (inhabitants of the Judah, the southern kingdom) and Israelites began immediately after the division, as Samaria was the capital city of the northern kingdom (with Jeroboam as her first king). Rehoboam assembled an army to make war against Israel to reunite the kingdom but failed.

Immediately after the division, Jeroboam changed the worship of the Israelites in 1 Kings 12:25-33. No longer did the inhabitants of the north travel to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice and worship (compare it to Deuteronomy 12:5-14). Instead, Jeroboam set up idols in Dan and Bethel.

Later, after Israel's fall to the Assyrians, they (the Israelites of the northern Kingdom) began to intermarry with the Assyrians, contrary to Deuteronomy 7:3-5. This is why the Jews hated the Samaritans as "dogs," or "half-breeds."

The Samaritans were also a continuous source of difficulty to the Jews who rebuilt Jerusalem after returning from Babylonian captivity (Ezra 4, especially v 10; Nehemiah 4, especially v 2).



¹⁶ Jesus said to her, “Go, get your husband, and come back here.”

¹⁷ The woman replied, “I don’t have a husband.” “You are right to say, ‘I don’t have a husband,’” Jesus answered. ¹⁸ “You’ve had five husbands, and the man you are with now isn’t your husband. You’ve spoken the truth.” ¹⁹ The woman said, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshipped **on this mountain**, but you and your people say that it is necessary to worship in Jerusalem.”

²¹ Jesus said to her, “Believe me, woman, the time is coming when you and your people will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You and your people worship what you don’t know; we worship what we know because salvation is from the Jews. ²³ But the time is coming—and is here!—when true worshippers will worship in spirit and truth. The Father looks for those who worship him this way. ²⁴ God is spirit, and it is necessary to worship God in spirit and truth.”

²⁵ The woman said, “I know that the Messiah is coming, the one who is called the Christ. When he comes, he will teach everything to us.”

²⁶ Jesus said to her, “I Am—the one who speaks with you.”

²⁷ Just then, Jesus’ disciples arrived and were shocked that he was talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?” ²⁸ The woman put down her water jar and went into the city. She said to the people, ²⁹ “Come and see a man who has told me everything I’ve done! Could this man be the Christ?” ³⁰ They left the city and were on their way to see Jesus.

³¹ In the meantime the disciples spoke to Jesus, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”

³² Jesus said to them, “I have food to eat that you don’t know about.”

³³ The disciples asked each other, “Has someone brought him food?”

³⁴ Jesus said to them, “I am fed by doing the will of the one who sent me and by completing his work. ³⁵ Don’t you have a saying, ‘Four more months and then it’s time for harvest’? Look, I tell you: open your eyes and notice that the fields are

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Eventually, the religion of the Samaritans evolved to the point that they held only the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy) as being the law of God, rejecting all the books of poetry and prophecy. Furthermore, they claimed their copy of the Pentateuch was the only original copy.

The Jews (those who were mainly from Judah or who didn't intermarry) and Samaritans hated each other because of this historic animosity and religious division. Most Jews would not travel through Samaria. They went by a longer route to avoid Samaria and any contact with Samaritans. We see in today's story that Jesus, for some reason chooses not to take the long route around Samaria in order to avoid those distant cousins...

about noon... came to the well to draw water:: The text tells us that the woman is coming out in the heat of the day to draw water from the common, village well. Most often this would be done in the coolness of the morning or early evening. Is she off schedule? Or could she be trying to avoid the crowds of people (mostly women) who would be out at the well at those times?

on this mountain:: The mountain mentioned here is Mount Gerizim. It is thought to be according to the Bible as the place where, upon first entering the Promised Land after the Exodus, the Israelites performed ceremonies of blessings, as they had been instructed by Moses.

In Samaritan tradition, it is the oldest and most central mountain in the world, towering above the Great Flood and providing the first land for Noah’s disembarkation. Mount Gerizim is sacred to the Samaritans, who regard it, rather than Jerusalem's Temple Mount, as the location chosen by Yahweh (God) for a holy temple..

already ripe for the harvest. ³⁶ Those who harvest are receiving their pay and gathering fruit for eternal life so that those who sow and those who harvest can celebrate together. ³⁷ This is a true saying, that one sows and another harvests. ³⁸ I have sent you to harvest what you didn't work hard for; others worked hard, and you will share in their hard work."

³⁹ *Many Samaritans in that city believed* in Jesus because of the woman's word when she testified, "He told me everything I've ever done." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹ *Many more believed* because of his word, ⁴² and they said to the woman, "We no longer believe because of what you said, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this one is truly the savior of the world."

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- What engaged you, enraged you, or surprised you in these texts?
- Is there a particular character(s) with whom you can relate or identify in the text? How so?...the woman, the disciples, the other water searchers in the town, the other townsfolk that come to see Jesus for themselves?
- The text addresses what we now call misogyny (no woman was supposed to talk with a man in public) and racism (the discrimination and hatred between "Jews" and Samaritans). Does that surprise you? How does Jesus address and undermine those societal limitations so that all people can drink of living water and live abundantly?
- This is the first time in the gospel of John that people outside of the "Jewish" family encounter and hear of Jesus. They believe in him, trust him because of the most unlikely of people: the Samaritan woman. In 1 Corinthians 1:28-30 the Apostle Paul writes: "And God chose what the world considers low-class and low-life—what is considered to be nothing—to reduce what is considered to be something to nothing. So no human being can brag in God's presence. It is because of God that you are in Christ Jesus. He became wisdom from God for us. This means that he made us righteous and holy, and he delivered us." How do you see that in this text? How have you experienced God's surprising way of acting in your own life?
- What invitation do you hear the Spirit of God speaking to you – or to us, as a church – to act, speak, be or change through this word of scripture?

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The mountain continues to be the center of Samaritan religion to this day, and most Samaritans live in close proximity to Gerizim, mostly in the small village of Kiryat Luza. Passover is still celebrated annually by the Samaritans with a lamb sacrifice on Mount Gerizim, which they consider the location where Abraham almost sacrificed his son Isaac. Jews, on the other hand, consider the location of the near-sacrifice to be Mount Moriah, traditionally identified by them with the Temple Mount.

Many Samaritans believed:: throughout the gospel of John coming to belief in Jesus is portrayed as choice between life and death, recalling the majestic words of the prologue in John 1:12-14: "¹² But those who did welcome him, *those who believed* in his name, he authorized to become God's children, ¹³ born not from blood nor from human desire or passion, but born from God. ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his home among us. We have seen his glory, glory like that of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."

In John's creation-like story of the world through Jesus we've seen the disciples *believed* in Jesus at the first sign at the wedding at Cana (John 2:11). Then they *believed* again in him in (2:22). Whereas Nicodemus in chapter 3 thinks he has authority but *does not believe* in him. Here we see a new grouping of people who *believe* in Jesus – a woman, a Samaritan one at that, and other Samaritans (people from the wrong side of the religious tracks).