SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

John

Chapter Four, Verses 1–54

Living Water for a Thirsty Town — a weary Savior at Jacob's well, a woman with a waterpot, and a father who took Jesus at His word

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

At noon by Jacob's well a tired Jew asks a Samaritan woman for a drink and offers her water that ends thirst forever; she leaves her waterpot, a town comes out across the fields, and back in Cana a royal official goes home on nothing but a word. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind John's key words.

THE PASSAGE

John 4:1–54

Samaria · water · worship · harvest · word

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Five movements from the road through Samaria to the second sign at Cana

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"It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world." — John 4:42

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

John 4:1–54

Living Water for a Thirsty Town — Jesus had to pass through Samaria — and a whole town, and then a royal household, came to believe

† How to Read This Study

This study walks John 4 in 5 movements, in John's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where John is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle — MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions; Command / instruction; Key repeated word; Sin / warning; Promise / blessing; Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · JOHN 4:14

"but whoever drinks of △the water that I will give him ☆shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him ☆a well of water springing up to eternal life."

† Before the Passage

John 3 ended with Jesus and John the Baptist both baptizing in Judea and John's disciples complaining that "all are coming to Him" (3:26). Chapter 4 opens on the other side of that success: the Pharisees have heard that Jesus is making more disciples than John (though His disciples did the baptizing, v. 2), and He leaves Judea for Galilee. Henry: "The success of the gospel exasperates its enemies." The straight road north ran through Samaria, and John says, "He had to pass through Samaria" (v. 4).

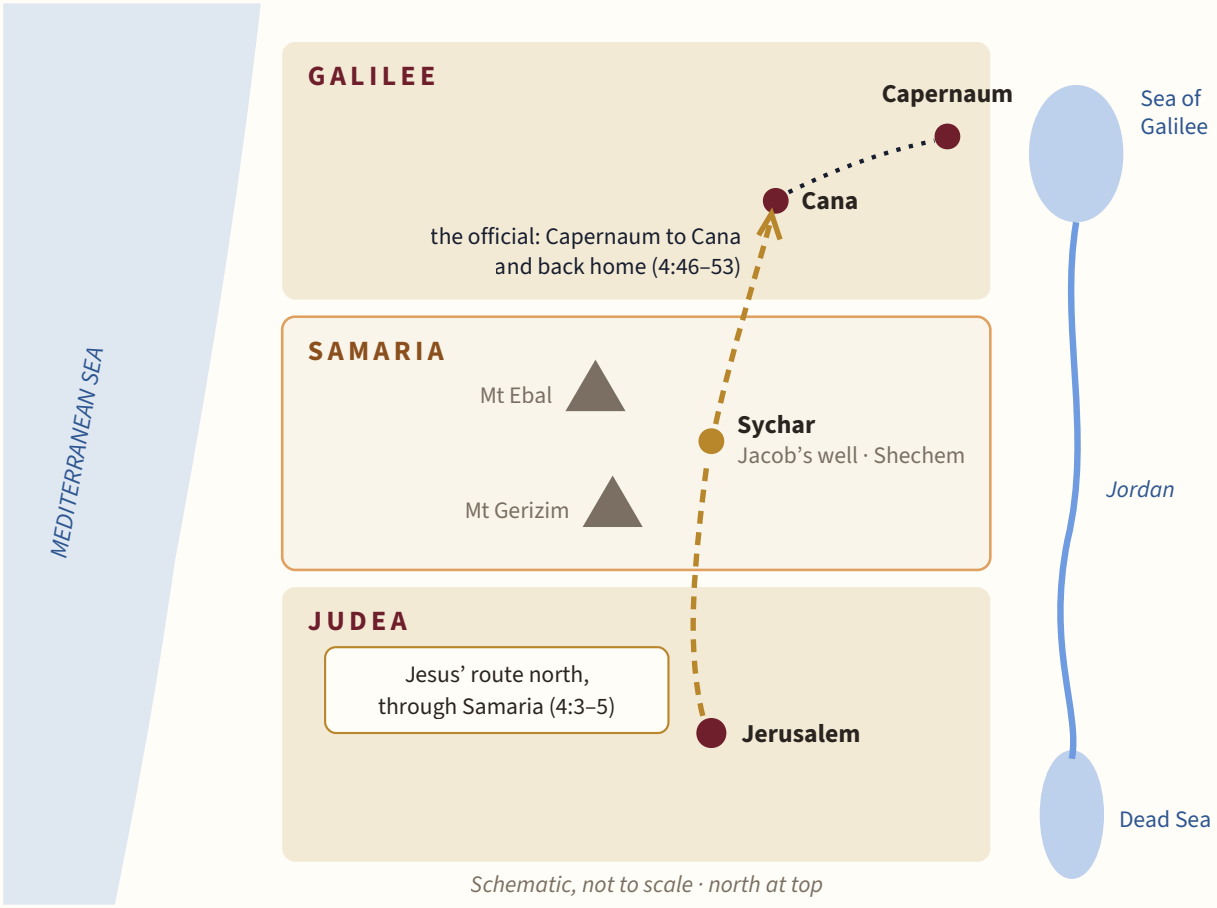
The hostility between Jews and Samaritans was centuries old. When Assyria took the northern kingdom (722 BC), it resettled the land with foreigners (2 Kings 17:24), and the Samaritans who came of that mixing kept the five books of Moses but not the prophets (Sproul). They built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, and, as Guzik notes, "the Jews burned it around 128 B.C." Sproul sums it up: "The Jews had a deep-rooted hostility towards

the Samaritans, and the feelings were mutual." The woman's surprise in verse 9 is the whole history in one sentence.

Sychar lay near ancient Shechem, in the pass between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. The ground is full of Genesis and Joshua: Jacob bought land there (Genesis 33:18–19), gave it to Joseph (v. 5; Genesis 48:22), and Joseph's bones were buried there (Joshua 24:32). Jacob's well is still shown at the foot of Gerizim, and the mountain the woman points to in verse 20 was right above them. Readers of Genesis and Exodus will also remember that wells are where Abraham's servant found Rebekah (Genesis 24), Jacob met Rachel (Genesis 29), and Moses met Zipporah (Exodus 2).

Set this chapter beside the last. Nicodemus was a man, a Jew, a ruler, a teacher, and came at night; the Samaritan is a woman, a Samaritan, an outcast, unnamed, and Jesus meets her at noon. He offers both of them the same thing — new life from God — and the woman is the one who runs to tell her town. The chapter ends back in Cana, where Jesus "had made the water wine" (v. 46), with a royal official whose son lies dying in Capernaum, and John counts it as "a second sign" (v. 54).

FIGURE · JUDEA, SAMARIA, GALILEE



Schematic, not to scale · north at top

Jesus leaves Judea for Galilee by the road through Samaria, stops at Jacob's well under Mount Gerizim, and later speaks a word in Cana that heals a boy in Capernaum.

I
MOVEMENT

JOHN 4:1–6

He Had to Pass Through Samaria

Opposition in Judea, a road north, and a tired Savior at Jacob's well

> [1] *Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John* [2] *(although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were),* [3] *He left Judea and went away again into Galilee.* [4] *And* ◷ *He had to pass through Samaria*. [5] *So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph;* [6] *and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus,* △ *being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was* ◷ *about the sixth hour*.
>
> JOHN 4:1–6

> *"Now they buried the bones of Joseph, which the sons of Israel brought up from Egypt, at Shechem, in the piece of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of money; and they became the inheritance of Joseph's sons."*
>
> JOSHUA 24:32

> *"The king of Assyria brought men from Babylon and from Cuthah and from Avva and from Hamath and Sepharvaim, and settled them in the cities of Samaria in place of the sons of Israel. So they possessed Samaria and lived in its cities."*
>
> 2 KINGS 17:24

ἔδει

EDEI · "HE HAD TO" · G1163

The imperfect of *dei*, the "must" of chapter 3 (vv. 7, 14, 30). Geography alone could explain it — the direct road from Judea to Galilee ran through Samaria, though strict Jews sometimes went around by the Jordan valley. Our teachers read it two ways. Sproul thinks of haste: "Jesus may have been in a hurry, so He decided to go directly through Samaria to Galilee." Guzik and Henry read a purpose: there were people there who needed to hear Him. Both can be true; John's word is the same one he uses for the divine necessity of the cross.

πηγή

PĒGĒ · "WELL, SPRING" · G4077

John calls Jacob's well a *pēgē* — a spring or fountain — twice in verse 6. Eleven New Testament uses, three in John: 4:6 (twice) and 4:14, where the water Jesus gives becomes "a well (*pēgē*) of water springing up" inside the believer. In verses 11–12 the woman uses another word, *phrear* (G5421), a dug shaft or cistern: "the well is deep." Jacob's well was both — a deep shaft fed by groundwater. Jesus promises not a deeper shaft but a spring of His own inside a man.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that Jesus left Judea early because opposition was rising, and he reads "He had to pass through Samaria" as purpose, not convenience — "because there were people there who needed to hear Him." He identifies Sychar with ancient Shechem and walks through its Old Testament history, and he sketches the Samaritans' origin after the Assyrian conquest of 722 BC and their temple on Gerizim, which "the Jews burned it around 128 B.C." The weariness was real: "Jesus genuinely submitted to our human limitations." And the hour: "By the reckoning John used, this was about noon, during the heat of the day."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's first sermon on the passage (28 July 2002) lays out the map — Judea in the south, Galilee in the north, Samaria between — and the rival worship on Gerizim. He sees three strikes against the woman before she speaks: "Not only was she female and Samaritan, but she was a woman who obviously had a reputation for sexual immorality." He reads the route plainly: "Jesus may have been in a hurry." At Jacob's well — "That well has been meeting the people's needs for four thousand years" — Jesus sits tired and thirsty. "That means it was high noon," and a woman coming alone at midday was likely shunned by the other women.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "Jesus Sitting on the Well" draws three truths from verse 6: Christ's true humanity, His self-restraint, and His sympathy. He was really tired, and He would not use His power to ease Himself: "Jesus never wrought a miracle merely for his own comfort." That restraint, Spurgeon says, is a kind of strength: "Oh, I never imagined how strong Christ was till I saw his love hold back his Deity!" And He sat there for a purpose: "He waiteth to be gracious; himself in no hurry, he allows the sinner time." "Oh, the deep sympathy of Christ!"

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry reads the departure from Judea as prudence: "He left Judea, because he was likely to be persecuted there even to the death," for "The success of the gospel exasperates its enemies." He passed through Samaria because He needed to, and Henry draws a rule from it: "We should not go into places of temptation but when we needs must." At the well he sees the Lord of glory tired out: "When we are carried easily, let us think on the weariness of our Master."

II
MOVEMENT

JOHN 4:7–15

Living Water

"Give Me a drink" — and the gift that ends thirst forever

7 There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." 8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. 9 Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For ⚠ Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)
10 Jesus answered and said to her, "△ If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you ⟳ living water." 11 She said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that ⟳ living water? 12 "You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?"
13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; 14 but whoever drinks of

> *the water that I will give him ☆ shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him ☆ a well of water springing up to eternal life."* [15] *The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw."*
>
> JOHN 4:7–15

> *"For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water."*
>
> JEREMIAH 2:13

ὕδωρ ζῶν

HYDŌR ZŌN · "LIVING WATER" · G2198

In ordinary speech "living water" was running water — a spring or stream rather than a cistern — and the woman hears it that way (v. 11). Jesus means more. The prophets called the LORD Himself "the fountain of living waters" (Jeremiah 2:13), and John later explains the phrase: "this He spoke of the Spirit" (7:39). Guzik: "Jesus made a play on words." *Zōn* is the present participle of *zaō*, to live — water that is alive and keeps flowing.

ἁλλομένου

HALLOMENOU · "SPRINGING UP" · G242

From *hallomai*, to leap or spring up. Only three New Testament uses: here, and twice of lame men healed in Acts who went "leaping" (3:8) and "leaped up" (14:10). The water Christ gives does not sit in a man like water in a jar; it jumps. Sproul makes the same point — the water "springs up" in the sense of leaping. Compare Jacob's well, deep and still (*phrear*, G5421, v. 11): "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again" (v. 13).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik sees Jesus' request for a drink as a deliberate opening, and he notes that God often chooses to use people: "Some people imagine that God is most glorified when human participation is most excluded." Verse 10 carries a lesson about prayer — "If you knew more, you would pray more." "Jesus made a play on words" with living water, meaning spiritual life, not the spring. Drinking is simply receiving, and it is not once for all: "It isn't a one-time sip of Jesus that satisfies forever, but continual connection with Him." He leaves the tone of her Jacob question open; it may have been sincere.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul explains that "no dealings" is a poor translation: Jews and Samaritans traded, but would not share a cup. So Jesus' request was startling, and His answer turns the tables — had she known who asked, "You would have dropped everything, and you would have said to Me, 'No, please, give me a drink.'" The water He gives leaps up: "It is something that continues to nurture day after day, year after year." With Aquinas he insists that unbelievers chase fulfillment everywhere while fleeing God: "Prior to your conversion, you are running as fast and as relentlessly as you can away from God."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon preached verse 11 as "The Source." The woman asked where Jesus would get living water, and he answers: from His deity, His Father's appointment, the Spirit's anointing, and His finished work — "Gethsemane, Gabbatha, Golgotha." "Nobody who is less than Deity can save sinners." The sinner brings nothing: "You must be the emptiness, and he must be the fulness." In "The Water of Life" on verse 15 he gives eight ways grace is like water, starting with "Water, first, is thirst-removing," and promises: "There never was one refused who said, "Give me this water," and you shall not be the first."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry notes that "Quarrels about religion are usually the most implacable of all quarrels," and that Jesus stepped right over this one. The gift must be asked for: "Those that would have any benefit by Christ must ask for it, must be earnest in prayer to God for it." The woman cannot see a bucket, but "The fountain of life is hid with Christ." Jacob's water quenches thirst for an hour; Christ's satisfies the soul, so that the believer "needs not sneak to the world for comfort."

III
MOVEMENT

JOHN 4:16–26

In Spirit and Truth

Five husbands, two mountains, and the Messiah who reveals Himself

16 *He said to her, "Go, call your husband and come here."* 17 *The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have correctly said, 'I have no husband';* 18 *for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly."* 19 *The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.* 20 *"Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."* 21 *Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.* 22 *"You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.* 23 *"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.* 24 *"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* 25 *The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us."* 26 *Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."*

JOHN 4:16–26

προσκυνέω

PROSKYNEŌ · "WORSHIP" · G4352

To bow down, to prostrate oneself; the word may come from the picture of kissing toward someone, as a dog licks its master's hand. Sixty New Testament uses, and verses 20–24 are crowded with it — in the NASB, "worship," "worshiped" and "worshipers" come ten times in five verses. The woman asks *where* (Gerizim or Jerusalem); Jesus answers *whom* ("the Father") and *how* ("in spirit and truth"). Verse 24 uses the same *dei* as 3:7 and 4:4: those who worship Him "must" worship in spirit and truth.

ἐγώ εἰμι
EGŌ EIMI · "I AM [HE]" · G1510

Verse 26 reads literally "I am — the one speaking to you." The NASB supplies "He." *Eimi* is simply "to be," and here the plain sense is "I am the Messiah" (the lexicon lists 4:26 that way). But this is the first time in John that Jesus says *egō eimi* of Himself, and the phrase will grow — "I am the bread of life" (6:35), "before Abraham was born, I am" (8:58) — until it echoes Exodus 3:14: "I AM WHO I AM." He says it first, not to a ruler, but to a Samaritan woman.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik says Jesus raised her husband because "her sinful life had to be confronted" before she could receive living water; He exposed it without crushing her. He also notes the line Jesus drew: the man she lived with was "not your husband," so living together and marriage are not the same. When she turns to the old dispute over mountains, Jesus does not take the bait: "Jesus was more interested in winning a soul than in winning an argument." Yet He answers truly — the Samaritans had only part of Scripture — and "To worship in truth means you worship according to the whole counsel of God's word." At the end, "Jesus reveals Himself to sinners."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul is blunt about verses 16–18: "She was 0 for 5, and now she was living with someone who was not her husband." Her "I perceive that You are a prophet" is, he thinks, a dodge — "That is a brilliant deduction, but why did she have this perception?" In his second sermon (4 August 2002) he insists that Jesus does not wave the question away: "He answers that question." "It is the Jewish way that is the correct way, the way God has ordained," for "we must always remember that salvation is of the Jews." Worship in spirit means "the worship we offer is to come from the depths of our souls"; in truth means by God's Word, not by surveys of felt needs — or we end at a golden calf.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry admires the way Jesus reproves: "Reproofs are ordinarily most profitable when they are least provoking." She owns Him "to be a prophet, one that had a correspondence with Heaven," and then raises the dispute between the mountains. Henry presses the point on church-goers: "It is possible that we may be better than our neighbours, and yet not so good as we should be." "Salvation is of the Jews; and therefore they know what they worship." And for every worshiper: "It is required of all that worship God that they worship him in spirit and in truth," because "God is a spirit, for he is an infinite and eternal mind."

IV
MOVEMENT

JOHN 4:27–42

Fields White for Harvest

A waterpot left behind, food the disciples did not know, and a town that believes

27 *At this point His disciples came, and they were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman, yet no one*
said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why do You speak with her?" 28 *So the woman left her waterpot, and went into*
the city and said to the men, 29 *"Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the*
Christ, is it?" 30 *They went out of the city, and were coming to Him.* 31 *Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him,*
saying, "Rabbi, eat." 32 *But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about."* 33 *So the disciples*

were saying to one another, "No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?" [34] *Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.* [35] *"Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.* [36] *"Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.* [37] *"For in this case the saying is true, 'One sows and another reaps.'* [38] *"I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor."* [39] *From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I have done."* [40] *So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.* [41] *Many more believed because of His word;* [42] *and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."*

JOHN 4:27–42

FIGURE · THE NAMES GROW

WHO IS THIS MAN? THE NAMES GROW THROUGH THE CHAPTER



The woman starts with what she can see; the town ends with what they have heard for themselves (v42).

Follow the bars down the page: each new name for Jesus says more than the last, from "a Jew" at the well to "the Savior of the world" in the town.

ὑδρία

HYDRIA · "WATERPOT" · G5201

A household water jar, from *hydōr*, water. Only three New Testament uses, all in John: the six stone jars at Cana (2:6, 7) and this one (4:28). At Cana the jars were filled and became wine; here the jar is left empty at the well. Sproul: "We have no record that she even filled it." She came for water and went away with the Water-giver. Verse 34's "food" is *brōma* (G1033), the only time John uses it: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me."

σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου

SŌTĒR TOU KOSMOU · "SAVIOR OF THE WORLD" · G4990

Sōtēr occurs twenty-four times in the New Testament but only three times in the Gospels: Luke 1:47 ("God my Savior"), Luke 2:11 ("a Savior, who is Christ the Lord") and here. The first people in John to call Jesus "Savior of the world" are not Jews but Samaritans — the outsiders of 3:16's "world." John repeats it late in life: "the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world" (1 John 4:14).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik describes the woman as "so impressed by her time with Jesus" that she becomes an eager witness, and he draws a word for churches: "give people today a safe place to confess their sin, repent, and put their trust in Jesus." On the food, he is careful: "Jesus wasn't saying that food and drink and rest are not important." The harvest is not four months off; it is coming across the fields now. The Samaritans' faith moves from her testimony to His own word, and with Bruce he wonders whether this was the town Philip later reached in Acts 8.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul finds a whole sermon in the empty jar: "We have no record that she even filled it." Now sure Jesus is the Messiah, she runs to tell her town — one beggar telling others where to find bread. When the disciples press Him to eat, He tells them what really fed Him: "His meat and His drink, His zeal and His passion, were to do everything the Father sent Him to do." And Sproul marvels at the audience He chose: "But here, to a despised Samaritan, a despised woman, Jesus reveals Himself." He links that food to the Lord's Supper as a means of grace.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In the last part of "Jesus Sitting on the Well," Spurgeon turns the picture around: the woman, without meaning to, refreshed Christ. "She did not dip her water-pot into the well; but did she give him to drink?" Her questions, her poor prayer ("Sir, give me this water"), her confession and above all her faith fed Him — "Best of all, this woman believed in Jesus." That, he says, is the meat the disciples knew nothing of. And he applies it: "A hearty confession to God, while it is good for your soul, is good for Christ's soul, too."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry reads the abandoned jar as a sign of a changed heart: "Those who are brought to the knowledge of Christ will show it by a holy contempt of this world and the things of it." Her errand is every believer's: "They that have been themselves with Jesus, and have found comfort in him, should do all they can to bring others to him." The fields are ripe, for "gospel time is harvest time, and gospel work harvest work." "Our Saviour, by instructing one poor woman, spread instruction to a whole town," and "Those are most likely to do good that can tell what God has done for their souls."

V
MOVEMENT

JOHN 4:43–54

Go; Your Son Lives

A prophet without honor, a royal official, and faith in a bare word

43 After the two days He went forth from there into Galilee. 44 For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. 45 So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast. 46 Therefore He came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and was imploring Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. 48 So Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe." 49 The royal official said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." 50 Jesus said to him, "Go; your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off. 51 As he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living. 52 So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. Then they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." 53 So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives"; and he himself believed and his whole household. 54 This is again a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

JOHN 4:43–54

FIGURE · A FATHER'S FAITH GROWS

A FATHER'S FAITH GROWS · JOHN 4:46–53 · SPURGEON'S FOUR STAGES

THE SPARK vv46–47	THE FIRE vv48–49	THE FLAME v50	THE BLAZE vv51–53
he hears Jesus has come; he goes and implores Him "come down"	rebuked for wanting signs, he presses: "Sir, come down before …"	"Go; your son lives." He believes the word and starts off	"at that hour" — he himself believed and his whole household

THE HOUR CHECKS OUT

Cana, "the seventh hour" — Jesus speaks (v52) · next day on the road — the slaves meet him (v51)

"So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives"" (v53)

Spurgeon traced four stages in the official's faith; read left to right, and notice that the healing word came before the man saw anything.

βασιλικός

BASILIKOS · "ROYAL OFFICIAL" · G937

An adjective, "royal, belonging to a king," used here as a noun: a king's man. Five New Testament uses — twice of this man (vv. 46, 49), then "the king's country" and "royal apparel" in Acts 12:20–21, and "the royal law" in James 2:8. Galilee's "king" was Herod Antipas, and Guzik (following Alford) calls the man "probably an officer of Herod Antipas." Rank did not help him at his son's bedside; he had to come to Jesus like anyone else.

σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα

SĒMEIA KAI TERATA · "SIGNS AND WONDERS" · G4592, G5059

Sēmeion (77 New Testament uses) is John's chosen word for Jesus' miracles — signs that point beyond themselves (2:11; 4:54; 20:30–31). *Teras* (16 uses) is a prodigy, a marvel that makes people stare; this is its only appearance in John. Jesus' rebuke in verse 48 is plural ("you people"): Galilee wanted wonders. Then He gives this father no wonder to look at — only a word — and the sign is that the word worked "at that hour" (v. 53).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik follows the father from panic to peace: "In fear, the nobleman ran from Capernaum to Cana; in faith he walked from Cana back to Capernaum." Jesus' hard word about signs tested him, and the man passed. "Real faith may perceive and accept the outward demonstration of the miraculous, but does not require it." The seventh-hour report confirmed the word he had already believed: "The nobleman demonstrated that true faith is simply taking Jesus at His word." Guzik sees the two Cana signs as calls to faith in different groups of people.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Nobleman's Son" (11 Aug 2002) first faces verses 44–45: "it would be surprising to me if John contradicted himself." Whether "his own country" means Judea or Galilee, the Galileans welcomed Jesus for His signs — "People welcome Him only when they are looking for signs and wonders." The father wanted a benefit, not salvation: "Do you have to be a Christian to beg someone to heal your child if your child is dying?" "Notice that Jesus refuses the request," and gives a word instead. "A Christian's life is not about believing in God; it is about believing God." "Saving faith is trusting that what God says is the truth."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "The Nobleman's Faith" (11 Oct 1885) traces faith from spark to blaze. At first it was weak: "The nobleman's faith was so feeble that he limited the power of Jesus to his local presence." It survived a rebuke and grew urgent. Then "He believes not upon mere report, but upon the word of Jesus," and goes home without seeing anything — an unhurried walk of quiet confidence. "Anxious minds, even when they believe, are in a hurry to see." At last the servants' news set it all alight, and "Not only was the child cured, but the whole household was cured." "Give him not a half faith, but a whole faith."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry explains the cold welcome at home: "Men's pride and envy make them scorn to be instructed by those who once were their school-fellows and play-fellows." The official pleads for his son; Jesus will not go, but speaks, and the word is enough: "Now he sees no sign or wonder, and yet believes the wonder done." On the road, "Good news will meet those that hope in God's word," and the matching hour turns a sick boy's healing into a believing household.

VI
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

From Isaiah's springs to the last invitation of the Bible

> *"Therefore you will joyously draw water From the springs of salvation."*
>
> ISAIAH 12:3

> *"Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost."*
>
> ISAIAH 55:1

> *"I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him."*
>
> DEUTERONOMY 18:18

> *"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"*
>
> JOHN 7:37-38

> *"So, when they had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they started back to Jerusalem, and were preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans."*
>
> ACTS 8:25

> *"We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world."*
>
> 1 JOHN 4:14

> *"The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."*
>
> REVELATION 22:17

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik cites Bruce on the Samaritans' hope of the Taheb, a coming Restorer, behind the woman's "Messiah is coming" (v. 25), and wonders whether Sychar was among the places Philip evangelized in Acts 8.

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, one chapter. Guzik walks the text and notes the background; Sproul presses the history and the doctrine — Samaritan worship, the authority of the Old Testament, saving faith as believing God; Spurgeon pleads with the thirsty to drink; Henry turns every verse into counsel. They differ on small things — why Jesus "had to" go through Samaria — and agree on the large one: Jesus seeks the outcast and saves by His word.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · The road and the well	Purpose, not convenience — people there needed Him; noon by John's reckoning.	Three strikes against her; perhaps in a hurry; high noon, alone.	Love held back His deity; He waits, in no hurry, for sinners.	Avoid temptation unless you must; think on your Master's weariness.
II · Living water	If you knew more you would pray more; not a sip but a connection.	No shared cup; she should have dropped everything; we run from God.	Be the emptiness, let Him be the fulness; no one ever refused.	Ask earnestly; the fountain of life is hid with Christ.
III · Spirit and truth	Win the soul, not the argument; worship by the whole counsel of God.	0 for 5; He answers the question — salvation is of the Jews.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Reproofs work best when least provoking; God is an infinite mind.
IV · The harvest	A safe place to confess; the harvest is coming across the fields now.	She never filled the jar; His meat was the Father's will.	She never dipped the jar, yet she gave Him drink — by believing.	Gospel time is harvest time; one woman taught a town.
V · Go; your son lives	Ran in fear, walked home in faith; faith takes Jesus at His word.	Not believing in God but believing God; that is saving faith.	Spark, fire, flame, blaze — then the whole household.	No sign seen, yet he believes the wonder done.

JOHN 4:1–54 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **"Had to" is the same word as the cross.** *Edei* (4:4) is the past tense of the "must" of 3:7, 14, 30. Sproul reads haste; Guzik and Henry read purpose. Either way, a divine appointment was waiting at the well. THE GREEK
- **God was weary at a well.** Spurgeon: "Jesus never wrought a miracle merely for his own comfort." The Word made flesh got tired, thirsty and hungry — and used it to open a conversation. SPURGEON
- **He asks before He gives.** "Give Me a drink" (v7) breaks three walls at once — Jew and Samaritan, man and woman, rabbi and outcast — and then turns into an offer: "you would have asked Him" (v10). THE TEXT
- **A spring, not a cistern.** Jacob's well is a deep shaft; the water Christ gives is a *pēgē* that leaps up (*hallomai*) inside a man. Jeremiah 2:13 had already named the two options. THE GREEK
- **Jesus exposes in order to heal.** Sproul: "She was 0 for 5." Henry: "Reproofs are ordinarily most profitable when they are least provoking." He named her sin and did not send her away. HENRY
- **Not where, but whom and how.** She asked about a mountain; Jesus answered with a Father, a Spirit and the truth. Sproul: Jesus still "answers that question" — salvation is from the Jews. SPROUL
- **The first "I am" goes to an outcast.** "I who speak to you am He" (v26) is the first *egō eimi* Jesus speaks of Himself in John — not to the teacher of Israel but to a Samaritan woman. THE GREEK

- **She left her waterpot.** Sproul: "We have no record that she even filled it." Henry: a holy contempt of this world. Spurgeon: she gave Him drink by believing. THE TEXT
- **Testimony leads to His word.** The town believed first "because of the word of the woman" (v39), then "because of His word" (v41) — and called Him "the Savior of the world" (v42). THE TEXT
- **Faith takes Jesus at His word.** Guzik: "true faith is simply taking Jesus at His word." Sproul: "A Christian's life is not about believing in God; it is about believing God." GUZIK

† Questions for the Table

1 **Jesus "had to pass through Samaria" — the place good Jews avoided. Who is the person or place I avoid that Jesus might be sending me toward?**

A divine appointment waited at the well.

4:4-9; Acts 1:8

2 **What "wells" have I kept going back to that leave me thirsty again — and what would it look like to ask Jesus for living water instead?**

Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again.

4:13-15; Jer 2:13

3 **When Jesus put His finger on her past, the woman changed the subject. What subject do I raise when God gets close to my sin?**

He was more interested in winning a soul than an argument (Guzik).

4:16-20

4 **Is my worship "in spirit" (from the heart) and "in truth" (by God's Word)? Which one am I weaker in?**

The Father seeks such people to be His worshipers.

4:23-24

5 **The woman's whole testimony was "He told me all the things that I have done." What would my honest one-sentence testimony be?**

Those are most likely to do good that can tell what God has done for their souls (Henry).

4:28-30, 39

6 **The official had nothing but a word to walk home on. Where is God asking me to believe His word before I see anything?**

Not believing in God but believing God (Sproul).

4:48-53; Heb 11:1

John 4 starts with a tired man at a well and ends with a father on a road, both holding on to a word. Jesus crosses every wall to reach a thirsty woman, and then lets her town hear Him for themselves. If you are thirsty, ask Him; if you have drunk, leave your waterpot and tell someone where the water is.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

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