

# THE OFFER OF LIVING WATER

## JOHN 04:01–14

### *John 04: 01–42 Division Overview: Salvation*

Jesus offered the Samaritan woman living water, and she showed an intriguing interest. However, there were some things that she had to straighten out before she could ever have the living water. There was the matter of sin in her life, of worship, of the Messiah, and of labouring for God. Therefore, Jesus began to discuss these subjects with her one by one.

### *John 04:01–14 Introduction*

This is one of the most profound revelations of Jesus: He is the Living Water, the water which men can drink and thereby never thirst again.

- I Jesus left Judea (vv. 1-9).
- II Living water is truly alive (v. 10).
- III Living water is from a Person much greater than a religious father (vv. 11-12).
- IV Living water is the only water that will quench thirst (vv. 13-14).

### **I. *John 04:01–09 The Mission of Jesus Christ***

Jesus left Judea. Note two significant facts.

1. Jesus left Judea out of necessity. He left for John's sake. The crowds were leaving John and coming to Jesus, and the religionists were using the fact to downgrade John's ministry (Jn. 3:22-26). Jesus did not want to create a competitive scene that would damage John's ministry, so He left the area to return to Galilee.

Note the words, "Now he had to go through Samaria." The word *had* (*edei*) means necessity, compulsion, destiny. Jesus was driven to go through Samaria for the sake of His mission. Samaria needed the gospel as much as other areas. (The words "had" and "must" are so often used in connection with Jesus' mission that it makes an excellent word study. See Jn. 3:14; 9:4; 10:16; 12:34; 20:9.)

2. Jesus left Judea to confront a Samaritan woman. He entered Sychar, a city of Samaria (Jn. 4:5). He sat on the wall of a well, for He was both tired and thirsty from His journey. While sitting there, one of the events for which He had come into Samaria happened: He confronted a woman with his claims of the Messiah.

She came to draw water, and He initiated a conversation by asking her for a drink of water. She was shocked, for the Jews did not associate with the Samaritans. She asked Jesus why He would ask her, a Samaritan, for a drink. It was this question, this subject of water, that Jesus used...

- to discuss one of the greatest truths of spiritual life, that of living water.
  - to present the claims of God upon a life.
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## JOHN 04:05 SAMARIA, SAMARITANS

Samaria was the central part of Palestine. Palestine was a small country, stretching only 120 miles north to south. The country was divided into three sections:

=> Judea, the southern section

=> Galilee, the northern section

=> Samaria, the central section, lying right between the two

There was bitter hatred between the Jews and Samaritans. Two things in particular caused this hatred.

1. The Samaritans were mongrel or half Jews, a mixed breed *by birth*. Centuries before (about 720 B.C.), the King of Assyria had captured the ten tribes of Israel and deported a large number of the people, scattering them all throughout the Median empire (see 2 Kng. 17:6-41). He then took people from all over the Assyrian empire to transplant them into Samaria to repopulate the land. The result was only natural. Intermarriage took place and the people became a mixed breed, a breed including...

- the transplanted people
- the weak of the land who had been left behind
- the outcast and irreligious who had intermarried with the original Samaritans

The fact of a mixed breed, of course, infuriated the strict Jews who held to be a pure race.

2. The Samaritans were mongrel or half Jews, a mixed breed *by religion*. The transplanted heathen, of course, brought their gods with them. Eventually the God of Israel won out, but the Samaritan religion never became pure Judaism. Three things happened to cause this.

a. When Ezra led the Jews back from exile in Babylon, the first thing the Jews did was to start rebuilding their temple. The Samaritans offered to help them, but the Jews rejected their help, declaring that the Samaritans — through intermarriage and worship of false gods — had lost their purity and forfeited their right to worship the only true God. This severe denunciation embittered the Samaritans against the Jews in Jerusalem.

b. The Samaritans built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim to stand in competition with the Jewish temple at Jerusalem.

c. The Samaritans twisted both the Scripture and history to favour their own people and nation.

=> They twisted Scripture in that they accepted only five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch. (Just imagine! They missed all the richness and depth of the Psalms and prophets.)

=> They twisted history in that they claimed three great events took place on Mt. Gerizim that set it apart as a place of worship. They claimed it was the place where Abraham offered Isaac, where Melchizedek met Abraham, and where Moses built his first altar after leading Israel out from Egyptian bondage. □

### JOHN 04:05 SYCHAR

Little is known about the city; however, three significant Biblical events happened there.

=> Jacob bought a piece of land in the area (Gen. 33:19).

=> Jacob, as he was dying, willed the land to Joseph (Gen. 48: 22).

=> Joseph's bones were buried there (Jos. 24:32). □

## II. *John 04:10 Living Water, Jesus Christ, Salvation*

Living water is truly alive. To the Jew, living water was water that was always flowing and moving along, such as a creek fed by springs or a lake with both an inflow and an outflow. Dead water was stagnant water such as ponds or pools that were always sitting still with no inflow or outflow. However, when Jesus spoke of “living water,” He meant much more than living streams and lakes.

1. Living water is “*of God*”. It is of Him who is living, always has been and always will be living. The water that God gives is the most *alive* water. No other water, no matter how alive it may be considered, can compare with the living water that is of God.

*Psa 36:9 For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.*

2. Living water is “*the gift*” of God. The word “gift” means it is freely given, is *not earned* and is *not deserved*.

*Isa 55:1 “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.*

*Eph 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast..*

3. Living water is given by asking for it. Note what Jesus said: “If you knew...you would have asked.” The woman had never received living water because she *had never known* about it and *had never asked* for it. It was now available simply by asking for it.

## III. *John 04:11–12 Living Water, Gift of Jesus Christ*

Living water is from a Person much greater than a religious father. The woman saw clearly that Jesus was making an unusual claim. She did not yet understand what the claim was, but she knew He was alluding to something. She noticed He had no leather pouch with which to draw water, so she asked two significant questions.

=> From where did He get this living water?

=> Was He *greater* than Jacob who was one of the great religious patriarchs of the Samaritans? Jacob had to dig the well in order to secure water for his family. Was Jesus greater, able to do more than Jacob did?

The point is this: the woman recognized something most people do not. Jesus was claiming to be greater than one of the greatest religious fathers, Jacob himself. He was claiming to have access to a much better water for quenching the thirst of men.

**Thought 1.** Throughout Scripture Jesus claimed to be...

- greater than the temple (Mt. 12:6)
- greater than Jonah (Mt. 12:41)
- greater than Solomon (Mt. 12:42; Lk. 11:31).
- greater than Abraham, “before Abraham” (Jn. 8:53, 58)
- greater than Jacob (Jn. 4:11-12)
- worthy of greater honour than Moses (Heb. 3:3; Jn. 5:45-47)

**John 3:31** *“The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all.*

**Col 1:18** *And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.*

**Heb 3:3** *Jesus has been found worthy of greater honour than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honour than the house itself.*

#### IV. **John 04:13–14 Living Water — to Quench Thirst**

Living water is the only water that will quench thirst. Men have two thirsts: a physical thirst and a spiritual thirst.

**Psa 42:1** *As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.*

**Zec 13:1** *“On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.*

Men know immediately how to quench their physical thirst, but their spiritual thirst is a different matter. Within their hearts men sense a thirst for...

- purpose
- meaning
- significance
- satisfaction
- fulfilment
- something that is missing
- something to fill the void, the emptiness, and the loneliness
- deliverance from a sense of lostness
- freedom from undue anxiety, stress and pressure

Men have a problem, however. They usually misunderstand the spiritual thirst and try to quench it with the stagnant waters of the flesh and of this world. The result is poison and death.

=> The stagnant waters of the flesh and sinful nature are such things as lust, immorality, drunkenness, indulgence, and pride.

=> The stagnant waters of the world are such things as the love of money, cars, houses, lands, clothes, extravagant living, position, and power.

The stagnant waters of the flesh and the world never quench a man's thirst. They are like salt water; they only make a man crave for more and more. (Jas. 4:1-3.)

*Jer 2:13* "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

Several facts about the living water are mentioned here.

1. The living water comes from Christ. He and He alone is its source.

*John 7:37* On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink."

*Rev 21:6* He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life.

2. The living water keeps a man from ever thirsting again. His inner thirst is gone forever. It is quenched and fully satisfied.

*Zec 13:1* "On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.

*Isa 58:11* The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

3. The living water is "a spring of water" placed "in" the man. The well is not placed outside the man, not placed anywhere out in the world, not in his home, nor in his business. It is placed "in" him.

*John 7:38-39* "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

4. The living water springs up and continues to spring up and bubble, flowing on and on. It is ever in motion.

*Isa 12:3* With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

5. The living water springs up into eternal life. It will never end.

*Rev 7:17* “For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

*Rev 22:17* The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

(Jesus interpreted what He was saying in Jn. 7:37-39. All five of the above facts are seen fulfilled in the Holy Spirit.) ■