

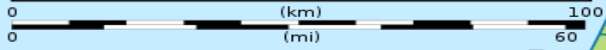
The Samaritan Woman: Marriage Theme

Pt. 4

Jn. 4:4-14

THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

Around 1200-1050 B.C.
(according to the Book of Joshua)





Summary: Alternate realities:

1. Who are the Samaritans?
2. Who is the Samaritan Woman?

1. Jesus's encounter with the woman occurs in two related parts:
 - a. Jesus is the source of living water that everlastingly quenches thirst (4:7-15). Key verse: 4:10—turns discussion from the water Jacob's well can provide to that which Jesus can provide.
 - b. Jesus is the object of worship in Spirit and Truth that the Father seeks because He is the embodiment of the I AM Jehovah God of Israel (4:16-30). Jesus's question: If you knew who was speaking to you in v. 10 is answered in v. 26: The One speaking to you is I AM (v. 26).

2. This moves from JohnB's I AM not the Christ to Jesus's I AM THE CHRIST (4:26), which won't culminate until Jn. 17-18 with a burst of I AM sayings: 17:14, 16, 24; 18:5, 6, 8.

3. Jesus goes from being:
- a. A Jew (v. 9)
 - b. Sir (lord) (v. 11, 15, 19)
 - c. A Prophet (v. 19)
 - d. Is not this the Christ? (v. 29)

The Samaritans add:

- e. He is the Christ (v. 42)
- f. The Savior of the World (v. 42)

4. Man, Woman, Well motif in the Bible:
 - a. Isaac (Gen. 24:12-21), Jacob (Gen. 29:1-14), Moses (Ex. 2:15-22).
 - b. The relationship between God and Israel is often put in terms of marriage (Jer. 31:32; Ezek. 16:8-14; Is. 54:5-6; Hos. 2:7; Joel 1:8).

5. We saw this marriage/family motif before in John:
 - a. 1:36-39: hint at marriage custom of betrothal, calling of Bel. Remnant of Israel to come into His house and dwell with Him.
 - b. 2:1-12: A wedding where the wine that is supposed to be supplied by the bridegroom is supplied by Christ—hinting that He is the bridegroom of Israel.
 - c. 2:13-16: Clearing a place in the Father's House for Him and His wife Israel.
 - d. 3:3, 5: New Birth (into the family).
 - e. 3:29: JohnB explicitly states he is just the friend; Jesus is the Bridegroom.

6. Jesus continues the marriage motif by going from meeting the woman at the well to asking her to call her husband.
 - a. This is not just Jesus exercising prophetic knowledge.
 - b. Symbolic? Some suggest this ties back to Samaria's worshipping foreign gods (2 Kgs. 17:24-31—5 nations with 7 gods) being depicted as adultery (Hos. 2:2-5). But we have already shown that the idolatrous Israelite Samaritans/Samaritans are not the Samaritans of Jn. 4.

- c. Immorality? Most see an immoral lifestyle here, but there is no reference to sin or repentance just astonishment about what Jesus knew. There could be a number of reasons for her situation. We also should remember that unlike today, in those days women were completely dependent on men, esp. if they had no means of their own. Women didn't marry primarily out of desire but out of need—ex. Ruth and her 2 husbands, which would probably have been 3 if Naomi's 2nd son wasn't already married (Ruth. 1:1-5).
1. Harlots don't marry their clients. That is what makes the book of Hosea so powerful—he married a harlot!
 2. She could be a victim of the mis-use of the Law: Under the VRS, men could divorce their wives for almost any reason—Jesus decried this (Deut. 24:1-2; Mat. 5:31-32; 19:3-11).

3. She could be caught in a Levirate marriage, which would be even more enforced in a small community trying to survive and grow. Tamar would have had 3 husbands (and potentially more if Judah had more sons) and through deception in effect made Judah her husband (Deut. 25:5-10; Gen. 38; Mk. 12:18-25— Woman with 7 husbands).
4. She could have just led a very unfortunate life, losing husbands through death due to accidents, disease, wars, etc.
5. After 5 marriages she was probably older (>40) and the man she is now living could have been her father or a brother.

7. In conclusion: While I'm not saying she was a paragon of virtue--she was after all a sinner just like us—she may have been difficult to get along with—she may have not liked wifely duties like cooking and cleaning—but she need not be the bad girl that traditional teachings (mostly men) make her out to be. Perhaps it is best to just let this show that neither the Judean's nor the Samaritan's deepest longings were fulfilled with what they had. They needed something new that only Jesus—the Prophet, the Christ, the Savior of the world--could provide.
 - a. Just as the 6 Jewish water pots couldn't provide the wine of the Kingdom, so too the Samaritan woman's 6 men couldn't satisfy her deepest longings.
 - b. The One who could do all these things, the Bridegroom of Israel, the Messiah of her hopes, however, was standing there before her.