



The Living Water (John 4)

Notes: Week Four

John 4 (HCSB)

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

4 When Jesus^[a] knew that the Pharisees heard He was making and baptizing more disciples than John² (though Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were),³ He left Judea and went again to Galilee. **4** He had to travel through Samaria,⁵ so He came to a town of Samaria called Sychar near the property^[b] that Jacob had given his son Joseph. **6** Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, worn out from His journey, sat down at the well. It was about six in the evening.^[c]

7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water.

"Give Me a drink," Jesus said to her,⁸ for His disciples had gone into town to buy food.

9 "How is it that You, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" she asked Him. For Jews do not associate with^[d] Samaritans.^[e]

10 Jesus answered, "If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would ask Him, and He would give you living water."

11 "Sir," said the woman, "You don't even have a bucket, and the well is deep. So where do You get this 'living water'? **12** You aren't greater than our father Jacob, are You? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and livestock."

13 Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again.¹⁴ But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again—ever! In fact, the water I will give him will become a well^[f] of water springing up within him for eternal life."

15 "Sir," the woman said to Him, "give me this water so I won't get thirsty and come here to draw water."

16 "Go call your husband," He told her, "and come back here."

17 "I don't have a husband," she answered.

"You have correctly said, 'I don't have a husband,'" Jesus said. **18** "For you've had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."

19 "Sir," the woman replied, "I see that You are a prophet. **20** Our fathers worshiped on this mountain,^[g] yet you Jews say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem."

²¹ Jesus told her, “Believe Me, woman, an hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans^[j] worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know, because salvation is from the Jews. ²³ But an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. Yes, the Father wants such people to worship Him. 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^[i] is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will explain everything to us.”

²⁶ “I am He,” Jesus told her, “the One speaking to you.”

The Ripened Harvest

²⁷ Just then His disciples arrived, and they were amazed that He was talking with a woman. Yet no one said, “What do You want?” or “Why are You talking with her?”

²⁸ Then the woman left her water jar, went into town, and told the men,²⁹ “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could this be the Messiah?” ³⁰ They left the town and made their way to Him.

³¹ In the meantime the disciples kept urging Him, “Rabbi, eat something.”

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

³³ The disciples said to one another, “Could someone have brought Him something to eat?”

³⁴ “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work,” Jesus told them. ³⁵ “Don’t you say, ‘There are still four more months, then comes the harvest’? Listen to what I’m telling you: Open^[j] your eyes and look at the fields, for they are ready^[k] for harvest. ³⁶ The reaper is already receiving pay and gathering fruit for eternal life, so the sower and reaper can rejoice together. ³⁷ For in this case the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ ³⁸ I sent you to reap what you didn’t labor for; others have labored, and you have benefited from^[l] their labor.”

The Savior of the World

³⁹ Now many Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of what the woman said^[m] when she testified, “He told me everything I ever did.” ⁴⁰ Therefore, when the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to stay with them, and He stayed there two days. ⁴¹ Many more believed because of what He said.^[n] ⁴² And they told the woman, “We no longer believe because of what you said, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this really is the Savior of the world.”^[o]

A Galilean Welcome

⁴³ After two days He left there for Galilee. ⁴⁴ Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. ⁴⁵ When they entered Galilee, the Galileans welcomed Him because they had seen everything He did in Jerusalem during the festival. For they also had gone to the festival.

The Second Sign: Healing an Official's Son

⁴⁶ Then He went again to Cana of Galilee, where He had turned the water into wine. There was a certain royal official whose son was ill at Capernaum. ⁴⁷ When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and pleaded with Him to come down and heal his son, for he was about to die.

⁴⁸ Jesus told him, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe.”

⁴⁹ “Sir,” the official said to Him, “come down before my boy dies!”

⁵⁰ “Go,” Jesus told him, “your son will live.” The man believed what^[p] Jesus said to him and departed.

⁵¹ While he was still going down, his slaves met him saying that his boy was alive. ⁵² He asked them at what time he got better. “Yesterday at seven in the morning^[q] the fever left him,” they answered. ⁵³ The father realized this was the very hour at which Jesus had told him, “Your son will live.” Then he himself believed, along with his whole household.

⁵⁴ This, therefore, was the second sign Jesus performed after He came from Judea to Galilee.

Footnotes:

- a. [John 4:1](#) Other mss read *the Lord*
- b. [John 4:5](#) Lit *piece of land*
- c. [John 4:6](#) Lit *the sixth hour*; see note at [Jn 1:39](#); an alt. time reckoning would be *noon*
- d. [John 4:9](#) Or *do not share vessels with*
- e. [John 4:9](#) Other mss omit *For Jews do not associate with Samaritans*.
- f. [John 4:14](#) Or *spring*
- g. [John 4:20](#) Mount Gerizim, where there had been a Samaritan temple that rivaled Jerusalem's
- h. [John 4:22](#) *Samaritans* is implied since the Gk verb and pronoun are pl.
- i. [John 4:25](#) In the NT, the word Messiah translates the Gk word *Christos* (“Anointed One”), except here and in [Jn 1:41](#) where it translates *Messias*.
- j. [John 4:35](#) Lit *Raise*
- k. [John 4:35](#) Lit *white*
- l. [John 4:38](#) Lit *you have entered into*
- m. [John 4:39](#) Lit *because of the woman's word*
- n. [John 4:41](#) Lit *because of His word*
- o. [John 4:42](#) Other mss add *the Messiah*
- p. [John 4:50](#) Lit *the word*
- q. [John 4:52](#) Or *seven in the evening*; lit *at the seventh hour*; see note at [Jn 1:39](#); an alt time reckoning would be *at one in the afternoon*

Holman Christian Standard Bible - *Study Bible*¹

John 4

4:1-42 Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman took place by divine necessity ([v. 4](#)). Unlike Nicodemus, the woman progressed in her understanding. She viewed Him first as a Jew ([v. 9](#)), then as someone who could make her life easier ([v. 15](#)), then as a prophet ([v. 19](#)), and then possibly as Messiah ([v. 29](#)). The woman's fellow townspeople concluded that Jesus was the Savior of the world ([v. 42](#)).

4:1 The Pharisees had investigated John the Baptist's credentials ([1:19,24](#)); now they were looking into those of Jesus.

4:2 John the evangelist, author of this Gospel, here clarified the earlier statement in [3:26](#).

4:3 On Jesus going from **Judea** to **Galilee**, see note at [3:22](#).

4:4 **Had to travel** may indicate that Jesus' itinerary was set by the sovereign plan of God ([9:4](#); [10:16](#); [12:34](#); [20:9](#)). **Through Samaria** was the most direct route from Judea to Galilee, but strict Jews, wishing to avoid defilement, bypassed Samaria by taking a longer, less direct route. This involved crossing the Jordan River and traveling across from Samaria on the eastern side of the river.

4:5 **Sychar** was located just east of Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. The reference to **the property that Jacob had given his son Joseph** reflects the customary inference from [Gen 48:21-22](#) and [Jos 24:32](#) that Jacob gave his son Joseph the land at Shechem which he had bought from the sons of Hamor ([Gen 33:18-19](#)) and which later served as Joseph's burial place ([Ex 13:19](#); [Jos 24:32](#)).

4:6 Jesus was **worn out from His journey**. This underscores His genuine, full humanity.

4:8 Jesus and His disciples usually carried little or nothing to eat on their journeys. Rather, they brought money to buy provisions along the way ([12:6](#); [13:29](#)). Purchasing food was a common assignment given to disciples. Jesus did not fear being defiled by **food** bought in a Samaritan village.

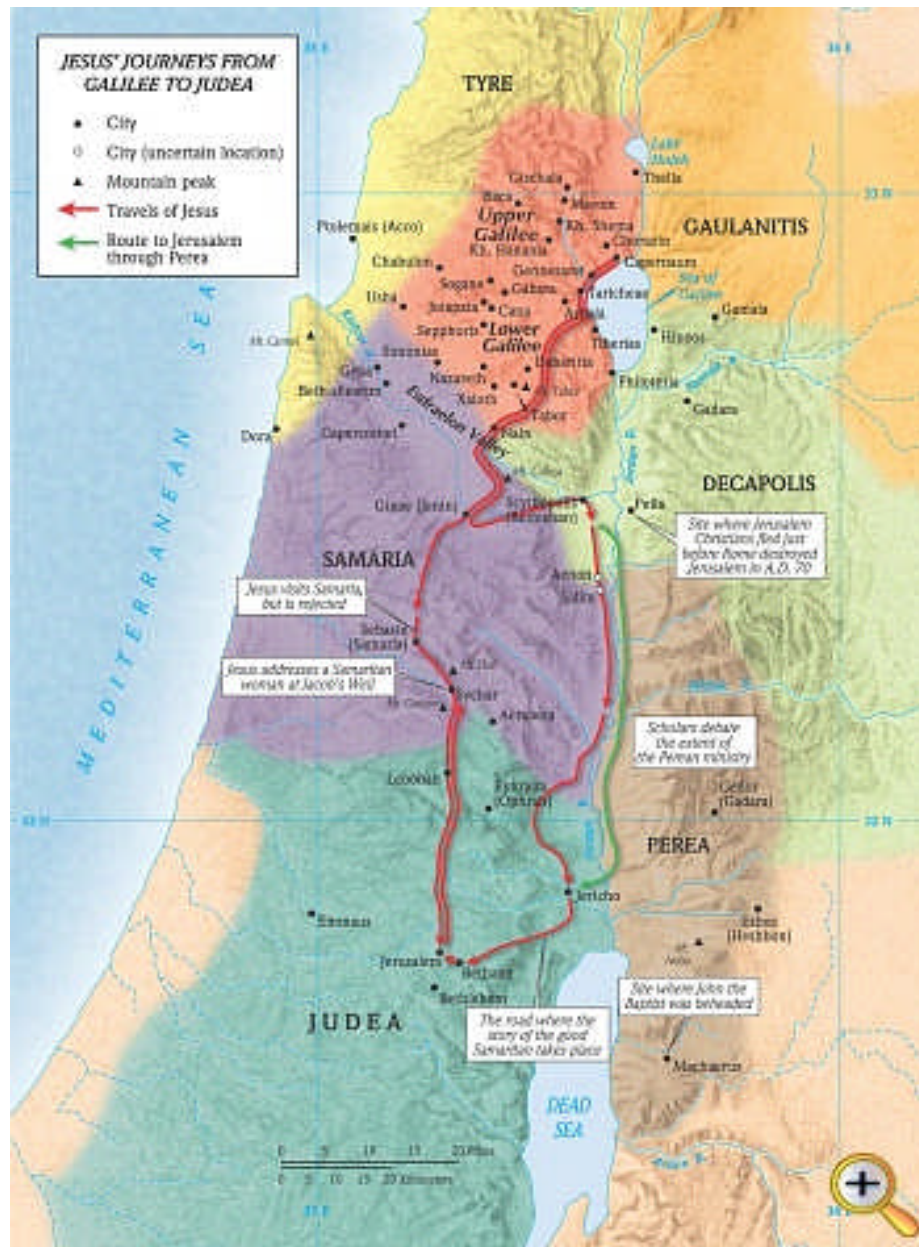
4:9 The author's aside that **Jews do not associate with Samaritans** explained to his Diaspora readership that rabbis considered Samaritans to be in a continual state of uncleanness.

4:10-15 The references to Jesus as the giver of **living water** involve double meaning (see notes at [3:3-8](#) and [3:14](#)). Literally, the phrase refers to fresh spring water ([Gen 26:19](#); [Lv 14:6](#)). God was known as the source of life ([Gen 1:11-12,20-31](#); [2:7](#)) and "the spring of living water" ([Jer 2:13](#); see [Isa 12:3](#)). In [Num 20:8-11](#), water gushed out of the rock, a much-needed provision for the Israelites.

4:11 Jacob's **well** may have been the deepest well in Palestine. It is more than 100 feet **deep** today and was probably deeper in Jesus' day.

4:12 The woman's account of **Jacob** giving the Samaritans the **well** and drinking from it **himself** was based on tradition, not Scripture. The book of Genesis does not record Jacob digging a well, drinking from it, and giving it to his sons.

¹ Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "John 4".



4:14 The phrase **will become a well of water springing up within him** is reminiscent of [Isa 12:3](#) (cp. [Isa 44:3](#); [55:1-3](#)).

4:17 While technically truthful, the woman's statement was potentially misleading because it could be taken to imply that she was unattached. Jesus knew the full truth.

4:18 The woman had had **five husbands**—or five "men" (the Gk *aner* can mean "husband" or "man")—having engaged in a series of illicit relationships, and she was not married to her current lover. Sexual relations outside of marriage are forbidden in both Testaments.

4:19 The woman recognized that Jesus knew her life circumstances without apparently having been told by anyone—hence He must be **a prophet** (cp. [Lk 7:39](#)).

4:20-21 The **fathers** who worshiped on **this mountain**—a reference to Mount Gerizim ([Dt 11:29; 27:12](#)), the OT setting for the pronouncement of blessings for keeping the covenant, and the mountain on which Moses commanded an altar to be built ([Dt 27:4-6](#))—included Abraham ([Gen 12:7](#)) and Jacob ([Gen 33:20](#)), who built altars in this region.

4:24 Because **God is spirit**, the Israelites were not to make idols "in the shape of anything" as the surrounding nations did ([Ex 20:4](#)). Jesus' point was that since God is Spirit, proper worship of Him is also a matter of spirit rather than physical location.

4:25 On **Christ** as a title of Jesus, see note at [1:38](#).

4:27 The disciples' amazement that Jesus was **talking with a woman** stemmed from the common Jewish teaching that talking too much to a woman, even one's wife, was a waste of time, diverting one's attention from the study of Scripture and reflection on God.

4:28 The woman's **water jar** was probably a large earthenware pitcher carried on the shoulder or hip. She abandoned her original purpose for coming to the well in order to tell her townspeople about Jesus.

4:29 **Who told me everything I ever did** was an exaggeration—but understandable in light of her excitement. See note at [verse 39](#).

4:31 **Rabbi, eat something** reflected the disciples' customary concern for their Master's well-being. Jesus had been worn out from His journey before His conversation with the Samaritan woman (see note at [v. 6](#)). He still had not had anything to eat.

4:32-34 The accomplishment of Jesus' mission was more important to Him than physical food ([Mt 6:25; Mk 3:20-21](#)). His statement may echo [Dt 8:3](#) (cp. [Mt 4:4; Lk 4:4](#)). On Jesus' **work**, see note at [17:4](#).

4:35 In agriculture there is always a considerable separation in time between sowing and harvesting. The disciples needed to realize that with the coming of Jesus, sowing (preaching) and reaping (conversions) coincided. The immediate reference may be to the approaching Samaritans ([vv. 39-42](#)).

4:36 This saying is reminiscent of [Am 9:13](#), which depicted the prosperity of the new age. Hence Jesus claimed that He was ushering in the messianic age, a time of swift, abundant harvest.

4:37 This saying may allude to [Mic 6:15](#), "You will sow but not reap." Yet Jesus' adaptation left judgment unmentioned. The others who had labored were Jesus and His predecessors, most recently John the Baptist, the final prophet associated with the OT era. Jesus' followers were the beneficiaries of their work and would bring in the harvest.

4:39 **That town** refers to Sychar (see note at [v. 5](#)). Though people would naturally be skeptical about religious pronouncements made by an immoral woman such as this Samaritan, her sincerity (and perhaps a noticeable change in her morality) convinced her townspeople to take her seriously as she spoke about Jesus.

4:40 Jesus obviously did not share in the Jewish bias against Samaritans since He spent **two days** with them (see notes at [vv. 4](#) and [9](#)).

[4:41-42](#) As others had done ([1:40-41,45](#)), the woman brought people to Jesus so they could see for themselves. Ultimately, it was on the basis of a personal encounter with Jesus that they believed. His large harvest among the Samaritans marked the first sign of the universal scope of His saving mission ([10:16](#); [11:51-52](#)). The early church also undertook a Samaritan mission ([Ac 8:4-25](#); cp. [Ac 1:8](#)). In fact, the pattern of Jesus' mission from Judea (Nicodemus, [Jn 3](#)), to Samaria ([Jn 4](#)), to the Gentiles ([vv. 46-54](#); cp. [12:20-33](#)), anticipated the post-Pentecost mission of the early church ([Ac 1:8](#)).

[4:43-54](#) The healing of the royal official's son completes the "Cana cycle" in John's Gospel, which spans from [2:1](#) to [4:54](#) and begins and ends with a "sign" performed by Jesus in Cana of Galilee ([2:11](#); [4:54](#); see note at [2:11](#)). The present sign is a rare instance of a long-distance healing performed by Jesus. The story resembles that of the Gentile centurion in [Mt 8:5-13](#) and [Lk 7:2-10](#), but this is not the same incident. All three signs featured in the Cana cycle (the turning of water into wine, the temple clearing, and the healing of the royal official's son) set forth Jesus as the Messiah, who showed convincing proofs of His divine commission.

[4:43](#) Jesus **left there** [Sychar] and entered **Galilee**. From Sychar to Cana was about 40 miles, a trip of two or three days.

[4:44](#) On a prophet's lack of **honor in his own country**, compare [Mt 13:57](#); [Lk 4:24](#).

[4:45](#) Jesus' Galilean welcome must be understood in light of [verses 44](#) and [48](#) (cp. [2:23-25](#)).

[4:46](#) The **royal official** was probably a Gentile centurion, possibly in service to Herod Antipas ([Mk 6:14](#)). His son's illness involved fever ([Jn 4:52](#)) and appears to have been terminal ([vv. 47,49](#)).

[4:47](#) The distance from Capernaum to Cana was about 15 miles. The journey was mostly uphill (see note at [2:12](#)). Conversely, from Cana Jesus would **come down** to Capernaum.

[4:48](#) The expression **signs and wonders** probably harks back to the series of miracles performed by Moses at the exodus. Jesus rebuked people for their dependence on the miraculous; for John, miracles were "signs" pointing to Jesus' messianic identity (see note at [2:11](#)).

[4:49-50](#) This is a rare instance of a long-distance miracle. A similar incident is described in [Mt 8:5-13](#) and [Lk 7:1-10](#). The words **your son will live** may recall Elijah's statement in [1Ki 17:23](#). If so, Jesus' messianic activity is compared with the healing ministry of Elijah ([Lk 4:23-27](#)).

[4:54](#) The **second sign** refers to signs done in Cana (see note at [2:11](#)); in the interim, Jesus had performed signs in Jerusalem ([2:23](#); [3:2](#); [4:45](#)). Thus John closed the cycle of Jesus' first ministry circuit, starting and ending in Cana of Galilee (see note at [vv. 43-54](#)).

The Apologetics Study Bible²

John 4

4:1-2 Some have accused John of contradicting himself in the span of two verses by saying that Jesus baptized and then that He didn't. It is possible, however, that John penned [verse 1](#) referring to Jesus and His followers together and then realized he needed to clarify more precisely that it was the followers who performed the actual ritual. Given that John was more interested in contrasting Jesus and John the Baptist than in comparing them, his Gospel's comment that the two for a time had parallel ministries of baptism is not likely to be without historical foundation.

4:4 Jesus didn't have to go through Samaria. Jews in fact preferred to cross over and travel north on the eastern bank of the Jordan to avoid Samaria. But the compulsion was a theological one; it was God's will that Jesus go this way to have His appointed encounter with the woman at the well.

4:9 Jews associated with Samaritans in numerous contexts, especially for commercial transactions. So either this is another sweeping generalization—Jews preferred to avoid Samaritans whenever they could—or the verb for "associate" should be translated "use the same dishes as," referring to the Jewish laws of ritual purity.

4:21-24 [Verse 21](#) could sound like Jesus was discouraging worship anywhere, when in fact He was encouraging it everywhere. No longer will there be one uniquely holy land or place in God's kingdom. On God as Spirit, see [note on 1:18](#).

4:26 How could Jesus reveal Himself so plainly to this Samaritan woman when He was so coy with the Jewish leaders in Israel, especially as seen in the other three Gospels? Because the Samaritans were not looking for a militaristic ruler but expected a Messiah who would be more like a prophet and a teacher.

4:43-54 How does this episode fit with a similar miracle of healing in [Mt 8:5-13](#) and [Lk 7:1-10](#)? It is hard to know for sure. On close examination there are no outright contradictions between the two, even though the Gospel writers have selected different portions to narrate. But they also may be two separate but similar incidents.

² Ted Cabal, ed., *The Apologetics Study Bible: Understanding Why You Believe*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1576-1579.

Article: Can the Gospel Be Presented Across Cultures?

by John Mark Terry

Evangelical Christians respond to this question with a resounding yes. The Bible includes many passages about cross-cultural evangelism. In the Great Commission ([Mt 28:18-20](#)), Jesus commanded His disciples to evangelize all the nations of the world. The word translated "nations" is the Greek word *ethne*, which is the root word for the English word *ethnic*. Thus Jesus instructed the apostles to make disciples of all the ethnic groups of the world. At His ascension ([Ac 1](#)), Jesus reiterated the command, instructing the apostles to witness even to the "ends of the earth" ([Ac 1:8](#)). Clearly the Bible reveals God's concern for all the cultures of the world.

Jesus Himself is the supreme example of cross-cultural ministry. Jesus left heaven to minister on earth. He was the first incarnational missionary as God in the flesh. In a similar way, Christians today should live the gospel among the cultures of the world. Jesus also demonstrated His concern for reaching other cultures by witnessing to the Samaritans, an ethnic group despised by the Jews of His day ([Jn 4](#)).

Peter, the leader of the early church, offers another example of cross-cultural ministry. Like most Jews of his day, he avoided contact with Gentiles. But through a vision God showed Peter the error of his prejudice, and Peter traveled to Caesarea to witness and stay in the home of Cornelius, a Roman army officer ([Ac 10](#)).

Paul provides a third example of cross-cultural witness. Though he had been raised to segregate himself from Gentiles, Paul met the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus, and Christ called him to be a missionary to the Gentiles ([Ac 9:15](#)). Paul devoted the rest of his life to planting churches among Gentiles.

So the Bible clearly says that, yes, the gospel can be presented across cultural boundaries. Any doubt to the contrary is based upon the false contemporary assumption that at least some vital worldview beliefs (such as the gospel) are incommunicable to other cultures. This philosophical assumption has been shown to be false historically. In *A History of Christian Missions*, Bishop Stephen Neill wrote: "Christianity long has succeeded in making itself a universal religion." Bishop Neill said this doesn't mean that everyone has become a Christian, but Christians can be found in almost every country of the world—among "the most sophisticated of westerners to the aborigines of the inhospitable deserts of Australia."

NLT Life Application Study Bible³

John 4

4:1-3 Already opposition was rising against Jesus, especially from the Pharisees. They resented Jesus' popularity as well as his message, which challenged much of their teachings. Because Jesus was just beginning his ministry, it wasn't yet time to confront these leaders openly; so he left Jerusalem and traveled north toward Galilee.

4:4 To go from the territory of Judea to Galilee meant passing through a central territory called Samaria. Most Jews did everything they could to avoid traveling through Samaria. The reason goes way back into their history.

After the northern kingdom, with its capital at Samaria, fell to the Assyrians, many Jews were deported to Assyria, and foreigners were brought in to settle the land and help keep the peace ([2 Kings 17:24](#)). The intermarriage between those foreigners and the remaining Jews resulted in a mixed race, impure in the opinion of Jews who lived in the southern kingdom. Thus, the pure Jews hated this mixed race, called Samaritans, because they felt that their fellow Jews who had intermarried had betrayed their people and nation. The Samaritans had set up an alternate center for worship on Mount Gerizim ([4:20](#)) to parallel the Temple at Jerusalem, but it had been destroyed 150 years earlier. While there was long-standing prejudice between Jews and Samaritans, Jesus did not live by such restrictions. The route through Samaria was shorter, and that was the route he took.

4:5-7 Jacob's well was on the property originally owned by Jacob ([Genesis 33:18, 19](#)). It was not a spring-fed well, but a well into which water seeped from rain and dew, collecting at the bottom. Wells were almost always located outside the city along the main road. Twice each day, morning and evening, women came to draw water. This woman came at noon, however, probably to avoid meeting people who knew her reputation. Jesus gave this woman an extraordinary message about fresh and pure water that would quench her spiritual thirst forever.

4:7-9 This woman (1) was a Samaritan, a member of the hated mixed race, (2) was known to be living in sin, and (3) was in a public place. No respectable Jewish man would talk to a woman under such circumstances. But Jesus did. The Good News is for every person, no matter what his or her race, social position, or past sins. We must be prepared to share this Good News at any time and in any place. Jesus crossed all barriers to share the Good News, and we who follow him must do no less.

4:10 What did Jesus mean by "living water"? In the Old Testament, many verses speak of thirsting after God as one thirsts for water ([Psalm 42:1](#); [Isaiah 55:1](#); [Jeremiah 2:13](#); [Zechariah 13:1](#)). God is called the fountain of life ([Psalm 36:9](#)) and the fountain of living water ([Jeremiah 17:13](#)). In saying he would bring living water that could forever quench a person's thirst for God, Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah. Only the Messiah could give this gift that satisfies the soul's desire.

4:13-15 Many spiritual functions parallel physical functions. As our bodies hunger and thirst, so do our souls. But our souls need *spiritual* food and water. The woman confused the two kinds of water, perhaps because no one had ever talked with her about her spiritual hunger and thirst before. We would not think of depriving our bodies of food and water when they hunger or thirst. Why then should we deprive our souls? The living Word, Jesus Christ, and the written Word, the Bible, can satisfy our hungry and thirsty souls.

³, *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1757-1760.

4:15 The woman mistakenly believed that if she received the water Jesus offered, she would not have to return to the well each day. She was interested in Jesus' message because she thought it could make her life easier. But if that were always the case, people would accept Christ's message for the wrong reasons. Christ did not come to take away challenges, but to change us on the inside and to empower us to deal with problems from God's perspective.

4:16-20 When this woman discovered that Jesus knew all about her private life, she quickly changed the subject. Often people become uncomfortable when the conversation is too close to home, and they try to talk about something else. As we witness, we should gently guide the conversation back to Christ. His presence exposes sin and makes people squirm, but only Christ can forgive sins and give new life.

4:20-24 The woman brought up a popular theological issue—the correct place to worship. But her question was a smoke screen to keep Jesus away from her deepest need. Jesus directed the conversation to a much more important point: The *location* of worship is not nearly as important as the *attitude* of the worshippers.

4:22 When Jesus said, "Salvation comes through the Jews," he meant that only through the Jewish Messiah would the whole world find salvation. God had promised that through the Jewish race the whole earth would be blessed ([Genesis 12:3](#)). The Old Testament prophets had called the Jews to be a light to the other nations of the world, bringing them to a knowledge of God; and they had predicted the Messiah's coming. The woman at the well may have known of these passages and was expecting the Messiah, but she didn't realize that she was talking to him!

4:24 "God is Spirit" means he is not a physical being limited to one place. He is present everywhere, and he can be worshiped anywhere, at any time. It is not where we worship that counts, but how we worship. Is your worship genuine and true? Do you have the Holy Spirit's help? How does the Holy Spirit help us worship? The Holy Spirit prays for us ([Romans 8:26](#)), teaches us the words of Christ ([14:26](#)), and tells us we are loved ([Romans 5:5](#)).

4:34 The "nourishment" about which Jesus was speaking was his spiritual nourishment. It includes more than Bible study, prayer, and attending church. Spiritual nourishment also comes from doing God's will and helping to bring his work of salvation to completion. We are nourished not only by what we take in, but also by what we give out for God. In [17:4](#), Jesus refers to completing God's work on earth.

4:35 Sometimes Christians excuse themselves from witnessing by saying that their family or friends aren't ready to believe. Jesus, however, makes it clear that around us a continual harvest waits to be reaped. Don't let Jesus find you making excuses. Look around. You will find people ready to hear God's Word.

4:36-38 The wages Jesus offers are the joy of working for him and seeing the harvest of believers. These wages come to planter and harvester alike because both find joy in seeing new believers come into Christ's Kingdom. The phrase "others had already done the work" ([4:38](#)) may refer to the Old Testament prophets and to John the Baptist, who paved the way for the Good News.

4:39 The Samaritan woman immediately shared her experience with others. Despite her reputation, many took her invitation and came out to meet Jesus. Perhaps there are sins in our past of which we're ashamed. But Christ changes us. As people see these changes, they become curious. Use these opportunities to introduce them to Christ.



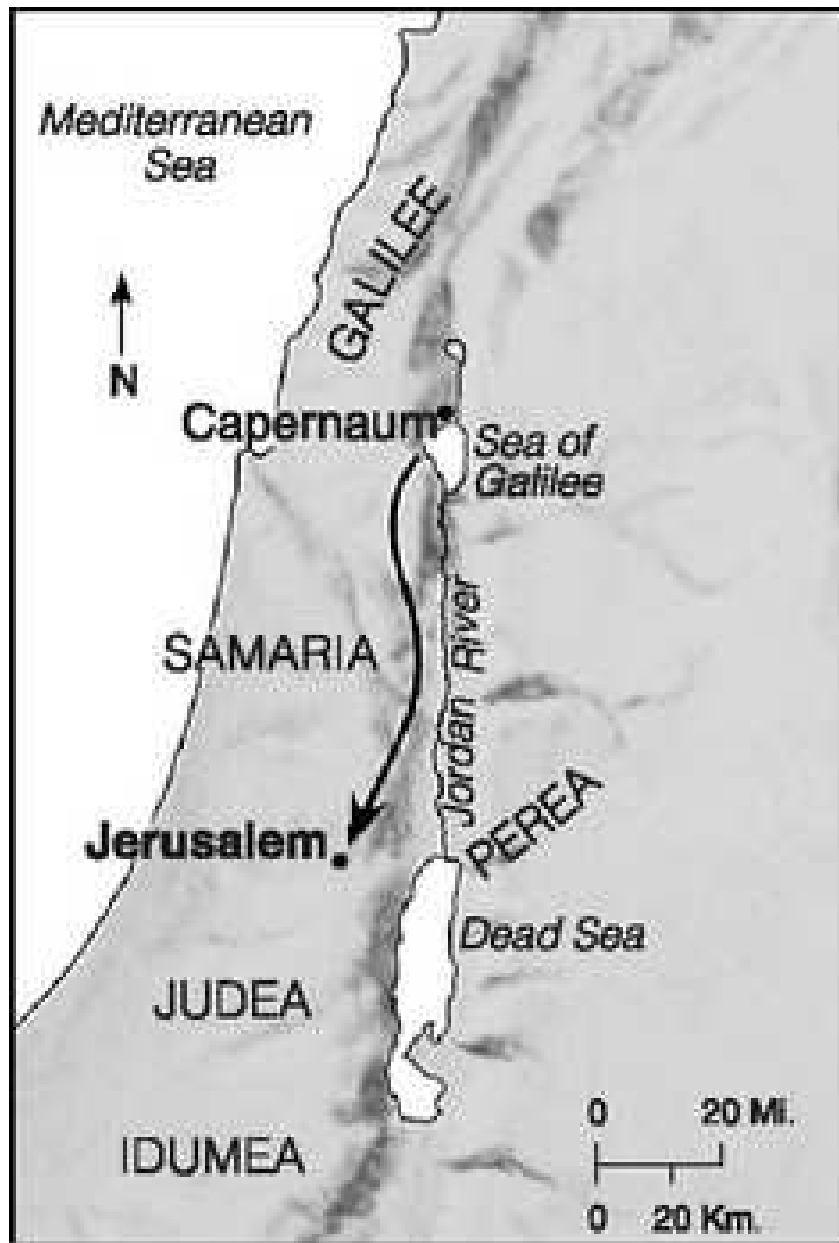
Jesus Returns to Galilee

Jesus stayed in Sychar for two days, then went on to Galilee. He visited Nazareth and various towns in Galilee before arriving in Cana. From there he spoke the word of healing, and a government official's son in Capernaum was healed. The Gospel of Matthew tells us Jesus then settled in Capernaum ([Matthew 4:12,13](#)).

4:46-49 This government official was probably an officer in Herod's service. He had walked 20 miles to see Jesus and addressed him as "Lord," putting himself under Jesus even though he had legal authority over Jesus.

4:48 This miracle was more than a favor to one official; it was a sign to all the people. John's Gospel was written to all humankind to urge faith in Christ. Here a government official had faith that Jesus could do what he claimed. The official believed; *then* he saw a miraculous sign.

4:50 This government official not only believed Jesus could heal; he also obeyed Jesus by returning home, thus demonstrating his faith. It isn't enough for us to say we believe that Jesus can take care of our problems. We need to act as if he can. When you pray about a need or problem, live as though you believe Jesus can do what he says.



Jesus Teaches in Jerusalem

Between [chapters 4](#) and [5](#) of John, Jesus ministered throughout Galilee, especially in Capernaum. He had been calling certain men to follow him, but it wasn't until after this trip to Jerusalem ([5:1](#)) that he chose his 12 disciples from among them.

[4:51](#) Jesus' miracles were not mere illusions. Although the official's son was 20 miles away, he was healed when Jesus spoke the word. Distance was no problem because Christ has mastery over space. We can never put so much space between ourselves and Christ that he can no longer help us.

[4:53](#) Notice how the official's faith grew. First, he believed enough to ask Jesus to help his son. Second, he believed Jesus' assurance that his son would live, and he acted on it. Third, he and his whole house believed in Jesus. Faith is a gift that grows as we use it.