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John 4

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

John 4.

Topics.

- Jesus talks to a woman of Samaria at Jacob's well.
- The gift of God.
- Living water and God's word.
- Worship will neither be on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.
- Salvation is from the Jews.
- Worship in spirit and in truth.
- God is Spirit.
- I have food to eat that you do not know about.
- The fields are white for harvest.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter Jesus told Nicodemus (a ruler of the Jews) unless one is born again, they cannot see the Kingdom of God and that the light has come into the world. The chapter ends with Jesus and his disciples baptising in the Judean countryside.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

JOHN 4:1-6

Jesus Himself did Not Baptise, But Only His Disciples.

- **John 4:1-6:** Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John ²(although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), ³he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. ⁴And he had to pass through Samaria. ⁵So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour (Midday)

Samaria: (Samaritans) the land of Samaria in the Old Testament was originally occupied by the ten tribes of Israel, but when they were taken into exile the Assyrians occupied their land, after the seventy-year captivity many Jews returned to their homes in the land of Samaria (they became known as Samaritan Jews) and took foreign woman for their wives, added to this their Jewish faith became polluted by the gods of the people they were living amongst, it was because of this the Jews at Jerusalem and the surrounding regions had no dealings with them (Samaria today is modern Syria).

Jesus leaves Judea: Jesus hears that the Pharisees know that he and his disciple's ministry is surpassing that of John the Baptist so not wanting to stir up their wrath he leaves Judea and travels through the land of Samaria to return to Galilee. About midday they took a rest break at Jacobs well in a town called Sychar.

JOHN 4:7-15

Jesus talks to a woman of Samaria at Jacob's well.

- **John 4:7-15:** 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.) ⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) ¹⁰Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." ¹¹The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." ¹³Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." ¹⁵The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.

Jacobs well: the woman's words, "He gave us the well and drank from it himself," refer to Jacob the father of Israel who built the well (Gen. 33:19) in the town called Sychar. Jacob's well is a famous well in Samaria near the base of Mt Gerizim, whose bluffs may have inspired Jesus to say this mountain (v21). A narrow opening four feet long led from the floor of a vault into the well, which was dug through limestone, the depth has not been determined one explorer in 670 AD claimed it was 240ft while another reported in 1697 that it was 105ft then in 1861 a major Anderson found it only 75ft deep, Greek Catholics bought the site and put it under guard.

Jesus, a man breaking all Jewish customs: this is an absolutely beautiful story simply because the religious leaders of Jesus generation (the Chief Priests, Pharisees and Scribes) would have nothing to do with the Samaritan people let alone give their time to talk to a Samaritan woman, but Jesus the most holy of all men to ever walk on planet earth not only stops but sits down with her and asks for a cup of water. Then brilliantly uses the water to explain to her who it is she is sitting and talking to.

The gift of God: notice the majestic words Jesus uses, "If you knew the gift of God," (v10) referring to himself. Jesus is God's gift to all mankind, because in Christ is God's steadfast love and the Holy Spirit, all the promises, grace and forgiveness of sins, the free gift of righteousness, salvation by faith and favour from God climaxing in eternal life and everlasting glory. Whoever believes in Jesus and faithfully follows him will receive all of these spiritual gifts. This is why salvation is referred to as a gift, no-one can achieve righteousness by their own self-effort or good works, it is a free gift that God freely grants to all those who have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Living water: imagine for a moment; this woman has absolutely no idea who Jesus is and this stranger is telling her that he can give her living water that if anyone drinks off, they will never thirst again and that this water will become a spring within a person welling up to eternal life. This woman still thinks he is talking about natural water because she asks Jesus to give her the water, he's talking about so that she will not be thirsty and have to come to Jacobs well again to draw water.

Living water and God's word: the living water now comes to us through the Word of God because it is God's word that brings a sinner to repentance and reveals Jesus Christ the Saviour who gives eternal life to all who come to him. David when echoing Christ wrote:

- Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me (Psalm 40:7).

And Jesus rebuked the Pharisees saying:

- You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me (John 5:39).

Added to these the author of Hebrews says of Christ:

- Behold, he came to do your will, O God, as it is written of him in the scroll of the book (Heb. 10:7).

JOHN 4:16-22

Worship will neither be on this Mountain nor in Jerusalem.

- **John 4:16-22:** Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." ¹⁷The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; ¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." ¹⁹The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers (the Samaritans) worshiped on this mountain but you (Jews) say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." ²¹Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

The words, "You have had five husbands," implies that she may have been working as a prostitute, since Jesus says even the man, she is with now is not her husband or it could simply mean that she had been married five times. Either way the important thing to notice is that Jesus doesn't judge or condemn her, but shows her acceptance and compassion.

Our fathers worshiped on this mountain: the mountain the Samaritans fathers worshipped on (v20) was Mount Gerizim a mountain of Samaria it was here Moses commanded the Israelites when they came into the Promised Land to speak the blessing of keeping the law from Mt Gerizim and the curse from Mount Ebal with six tribes standing on the slopes of either peak. When the Israelites returned from the Babylonian exile, they refused to let the mixed races of Samaria help rebuild Jerusalem so the Samaritans built themselves a temple on Mt Gerizim. Samaritan tradition maintains that Abraham attempted to sacrifice Isaac on this mountain and at a nearby city called Salem Abraham meet Melchizedek and Jacob's dream occurred on this mountain.

No more need for worship Centres: the Jews of Judah worshipped at their temple in Jerusalem while the people in the land of Samaria worshipped in their temple on Mount Gerizim, but even though these were the two major worship centres of Israel Jesus tells the woman that a time is approaching when no-one will need these two centres to worship God.

Salvation is from the Jews: salvation is from the Jews means that the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God (Rom 3:2) they are Israelites and children of Abraham because they are his offspring (Rom 9:4-5, 7), to them belong the adoption, the glory and the covenants they were given the law, the worship and the promises, to them belong the patriarchs and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is Lord over all.

JOHN 4:23-26

The True Worshipers Will Worship the Father in Spirit and Truth.

- **John 4:23-26:** But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." ²⁶Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

NOTICE: this woman and the Samaritan people had a heartfelt expectation that their promised Messiah (the Christ) was coming and would be full of wisdom and explain all things (concerning prophecy, salvation and God's eternal plans and purposes).

Worship in Spirit and in truth: Jesus twice says, "The Father is seeking true worshipers who will worship Him in spirit and truth." The spirit in the context of these verses refers to the human spirit, the heart, the mind and the authentic self. It refers to the inner most being of who we are at our core. While the truth carries the idea of a thing not being concealed.

True worshipers will worship God in spirit carry the following three ideas:

1. Worshipping from the heart.
2. Worshipping without concealing anything before God.
3. Worshipping from honesty and integrity.

Worshipping in truth carries the following three ideas:

1. Being honest before God as opposed to being hypocritical like the religious leaders of Jesus generation who Jesus rebuked with the words, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness (Matt. 23:27). They were worshipping God, but were hypocrites and self-righteous, they did not acknowledge their sin, but believed they were right with God because they descended from Abraham and adhered to the Jewish ceremonial rites, holy days and strictly kept their religious customs and traditions.
2. Acknowledging one's own sin before God contrasted to living a life of self-righteousness as the scribes and Pharisees were doing.
3. Worshipping according to the teachings of Jesus, the message of the cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The words, "Worship in spirit and truth" is not about understanding every detail of doctrine from Genesis to Revelation the primary focus is honest worship from the heart, (i.e., worship without any pretence). Ponder for a moment when the early church came together after Christ's death and resurrection it was made up of Jews who had been under Moses Law for nearly four-thousand years, Samaritans who had married foreign wife's and adopted their pagan practises, and Gentiles who knew nothing about God or the Old Testament. These groups were coming together in-home churches to worship God the thing they all had in common was not intellectual head knowledge from Genesis to Revelation but their passion and love toward the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus, the message of the cross and the Gospel was central in their lives. The love Jesus showed toward them on the cross of Calvary was the cement that held them together as they grew in their faith, in behaviour and in greater knowledge. Jesus said:

- I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)

Worshipping in truth and in spirit is coming to God through the Lord Jesus Christ and walking in a manner worthy of him with all humility, gentleness, patience, speaking the truth and bearing with one another in love. It is putting away all bitterness, anger slander and malice and being kind to one another, tender-hearted and forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave us. It is knowing that there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all and being fully aware that we are all members of one another growing up in every way into Christ who is the head from whom the whole body, is held together and grows so that it builds itself up in love eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It is building each other up until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:1). When we worshipped the Father through Christ with this attitude we are worshipping in spirit and in truth.

NOTICE: the knowledge Paul says we should all be building each other up in is the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God is Spirit: Jesus says God his heavenly Father is Spirit, meaning God is an eternal Spirit with a Father's heart. This is why God desires those who worship Him to worship from a true heart because it is in the heart of humans that God desires to dwell and it is through the Spirit that worshipper's commune with Him.

NOTE: worship is not limited to musical instruments and singing; worship is about communion with God. It can be a simple prayer, a cry of help, seeking God in depression or despair, worship is not something that is only about joyous times it covers every moment we are in communion with God that is why it is so important to worship and communicate with God with an honest heart that is void of any hypocrisy and pretence.

Some may wonder, "Who should be worshipped?" Is it wrong for a Christian's mind and their thoughts to be more occupied with Christ than they are with his heavenly Father? This question has caused certain confusion throughout all generations amongst faithful brothers and sisters in Christ. Those who have pondered this question experience a mental dilemma between who in prayer, thought and heartfelt worship they should give the highest esteem and exaltation to and mentally wondered if it is wrong to love and esteem Christ more than God his heavenly Father?

Consider the following: Adam fully loved Eve, and God was not jealous of Adam's love was proper and right. A wife fully loves her children and her husband is not Jealous, it is proper and right. Likewise, Christians can fully love and worship Christ and be confident that God his heavenly Father is not jealous of their devotion toward His Son because Christ is the glory of God and God's magnificence and love is seen in the character and nature of Christ. It is proper and right to worship the immortal invisible eternal God who created all things and is the source of all life for without Him we would not exist, but it is also proper and right to worship His most beloved Son the Lord Jesus Christ for without his willingness to lay down his life to a brutal, bloody and cruel death we would be eternally separated from the immortal invisible eternal God and left to decay in the grave with no hope of being raised from to eternal life and everlasting glory. It could be likened to a child asking the question, "Who should I love more, Mum or Dad?" Obviously, the child is to love both Mum and Dad and have the same heartfelt gratitude toward both parents. Likewise, Christians should love and honour God as their creator and heavenly Father and love and honour Christ as God's most loved Son and as their Saviour and Redeemer, their perfect High Priest and eternal brother.

JOHN 4:27-34

The Disciples marvelled that Jesus was Talking with a Samaritan.

- **John 4:27-34:** Just then his disciples came back. They marvelled that he was talking with a (Samaritan) woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" ²⁸So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹"Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" ³⁰They went out of the town and were coming to him. ³¹Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." ³²But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." ³³So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" ³⁴Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

This is fabulous no-one yet has any idea of what Jesus ministry is all about, he is so totally different to every other religious leader they would have ever known thus the reason his disciples are stunned when they see Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman who Jews especially the religious

leaders had nothing to do with. The woman herself was so excited suspecting Jesus was the Christ that she ran and told the townsfolk all about Jesus they in turn came out to see him.

I have food to eat that you do not know about: Jesus words, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." Refers to doing the will of his heavenly Father, Jesus no-doubt had enormous excitement seeing the Samaritan woman and the Samaritan townsfolk seeking the Messiah the Christ this joy in seeing people seeking and finding God was the food he had to eat that the disciples did not know anything about. Here is a health tip; if anyone who belongs to Christ wants to go on a healthy diet do the will of Christ and serve God it was the best food Jesus could eat so it is guaranteed it will be the best diet we can ever feast on.

JOHN 4:35-38

The Fields are White for Harvest.

- **John 4:35-38:** Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. ³⁶Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. ³⁷For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' ³⁸I sent you (the disciples) to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour."

The fields are ripe for harvest because Israel's Messiah the Christ has arrived, the words, "Already the one who reaps is receiving wages," refers to the apostles and disciples of Jesus their wages are the multitudes that believe the Good News of the Gospel and that Jesus is the Christ. The sower and reaper may rejoice together refers to Jesus the sower and by extension all who proclaim the Good News of the Gospel and the reapers are those who gather the believers together. Both the sower and the reapers rejoice together because souls are being saved and then nurtured and trained in the ways of God to be Disciples of Christ.

JOHN 4:39-42

This is indeed the Saviour of the World.

- **John 4:39-42:** Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of his word. ⁴²They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

The town folk believed in Jesus because of the Samaritan woman's testimony, but after hearing Jesus speak it appears, they not only believed he was Israel's Messiah the Christ but also the Saviour of the world. This shows us the power of personal testimony and teaches us a good lesson, some new converts can feel intimidated to share their faith because of their past ungodly lifestyle, but this Samaritan woman had six husbands yet her personal testimony resulted in many believing in Jesus.

JOHN 4:43-45

A Prophet has no Honour in his own Hometown.

- **John 4:43-45:** After the two days he departed for Galilee. ⁴⁴(For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honour in his own hometown) ⁴⁵So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast.

After witnessing to the Samaritan people for two days Jesus departed for Galilee his hometown and where many of his apostles lived. Prior to leaving Galilee and going to Samaria Jesus made the statement that a prophet has no honour in his hometown (Matt. 13:57) but when he returns to Galilee it seems that the Galileans are now giving Jesus honour because of what they saw him do in Jerusalem.

A principal for those who belong to Christ today: quite often when a person is converted their own family and friends do not give much credibility to their new found faith, but after a little time when they see their faithfulness, commitment and their life taking on the fruits of the Spirit i.e., mercy, grace, kindness, forgiveness etc., their respect grows.

JESUS' SECOND MIRACLE

JOHN 4:46-54

Jesus Heals a Man's Son

- **John 4:46-54:** So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. ⁴⁷When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. ⁴⁸So Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." ⁴⁹The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. ⁵¹As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. ⁵²So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." ⁵³The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." And he himself believed, and all his household. ⁵⁴This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.

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NOTE: Jesus first miracle was turning water to wine.

An official whose son was ill asked Jesus to come and heal his sick son who was near death but Jesus rather than healing him says, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe" to which the official pleads for Jesus to go with him before his son dies, but Jesus tell the man to go he will find his son healed and the man believed him. Notice even though the official knew Jesus could heal his dying son he did not demand it but humbly asked Jesus to heal him.

NOTICE: how powerful Christ's word is, the moment he told the man his son was healed was the exact moment his son was healed even though the man's son was some distance away and Jesus could not see him such is the power of God flowing through Christ.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
