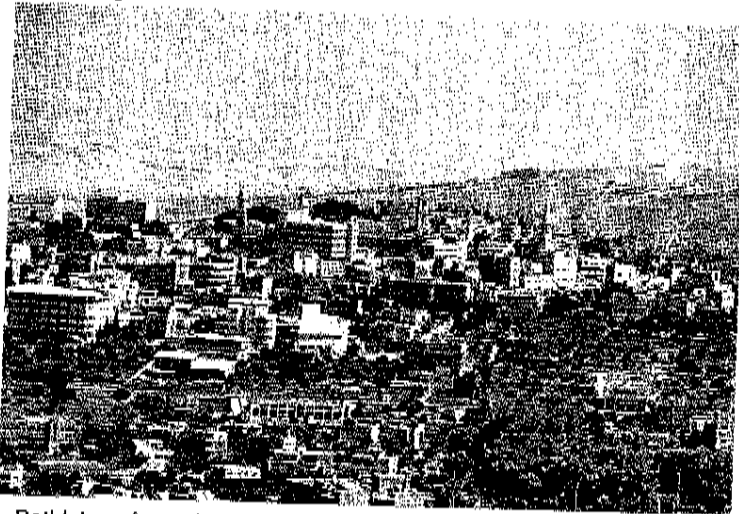


Book of John, A Walk with the Beloved Disciple

(From transcription notes with earlier permission from Janet Crisler)

John 4:6, "Jacob's well is there." It's concealed in a partially completed church. You cannot see the mountain to which the woman of Samaria was pointing in the story. It has been measured and it's quite clear. Dr. Bull was the one who did the excavations at Telaras. He was the first scholar to announce that he feels he has discovered the Samaritan temple ruins on the top of Mount Gerazim which could be seen in Jesus time from the wellhead.

John 4:7 So, he Jesus, rests. It's about the noon hour.



Bethlehem from above

Photograph © 2001 Todd Bolen

John 4:7, "In comes a woman of Samaria." While you don't deal with Samaritans much, you also don't deal with women that often. When you add a Samaritan to a woman, you've got the least likely social contact for a Jew. Jesus doesn't concern himself at all about these artificial ghetto outlines that others

have thrown around their neighbors. "He opens the conversation with the woman."

John 4:8, "the disciples have gone to the nearby city," which is probably Neapolis. It had been corrupted in Arabic as "Nablus," which you may see in the news because that's a hotbed of Palestinian unrest.

4:9

John 4:9, "So, the woman of Samaria says, How come you're talking to me?" A woman would naturally say that because she would expect to be talking to him.

John 4:15. The woman, not comprehending thoroughly, but nevertheless bold enough to continue asking, finally gets the practicality of Jesus' message and says, "That's a great idea. Give me this living water, and I won't take another step. Never will I have to come up with these heavy jugs and fill them with water."

Remember, there are not too many conversations that are recorded between

Jesus and anyone. The relative importance, just from the quantity of this text, stands out.

John 4:16, "Jesus says, *Go, call thy husband, and come hither.*"

John 4:17. He knows what he's saying. He knows the whole story. So, what is he doing? He's testing again. Here's a Samaritan woman. What is he interested in? Is he interested in whether someone is a Jew, a Samaritan, a child, a man, a woman, a Roman centurion, a ruler of the synagogue? Does he really care? What does he really need?

What is he looking for? Receptivity. That is the universal access. It means we all have the same access if we'd only use it. Who's fault is it if we aren't using it? It's ours. So it has nothing to do with status, culture, sex, or whatever. He's not really saying that womanhood is the best way to get to God. Or childhood, or any of those. Wherever we find *receptivity* it counts.

"So," the woman says, hedging a bit, "*I don't have a husband.*"

John 4:18, "*Whereupon Jesus said, 'How right you are. As a matter of fact, you've had five husbands, and the one you're living with right now can't exactly be called your husband.'*" Boy, that has a nice twentieth century ring to it.

John 4:19. All the woman can say in response to that is, "*Sir, I perceive that you're a prophet.*" The woman is really beautiful. Jesus wouldn't spend all this time with her if he didn't see **behind** all this label and this stereotyped thing. There was a *receptivity* here that he wasn't running into regularly. He was after that. He was after womanhood as a **type** to replace this femaleness as a stereotype. He continued to probe in order to do this.

John 4:20. The woman said, "*Our fathers worshiped in this mountain.*" Boy, did that have a meaning. She's pointing to the Samaritan temple, and guess who had destroyed it? The Jews. The Maccabean rulers had destroyed the Samaritan temple which was built to resemble the Jerusalem temple. It's occupied territory. It's a little difficult to dig in an area that Jordan still claims but Israel occupies.

It was destroyed by the Jews, so you can see the irony behind what the woman said, "Our fathers worshiped . . ." It's past. It's through. The Greek word that is used there is well in the past, "all wiped out." We worshiped in this mountain, but

the implication, guess who stopped us, or ruined the temple? Your fathers. We have a divisive thing. We, the Samaritans, worshiped here. You, the Jews, destroyed it. That's the same thing that's going on to day in the same location.

Jesus is discussing intellectual problems of Scripture with a woman. This is unheard of!

John 4:21, "*Jesus said, Woman,*" this is his general address to womanhood, "*Believe me, the hour cometh,*" still somewhat ahead, "*when you won't worry about geography in worshipping God.*"

John 4:23, "*The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*" Look at the

definition of worship. "*Worship is spiritual,*" not structural, not geographical, not ritualistic. Why? Because worship of God can only properly be done by partaking of God's own nature.

John 4:24 tells us that "*God is Spirit. Therefore worshipping Spirit can only be done spiritually.*" There's no other way to do it. How basic. By the way, when you see "a Spirit" in there. It shouldn't be there.

Listen to what God says about it. Notice the strong tenor of his words. To translate "God is a Spirit" is the most gross perversion of the meaning. "A Spirit" implies one of a class of "*pneumata,*" the Greek word for it. There is no trace, in the fourth gospel, of the vulgar conception of a multitude of spirits. "*God is Spirit.*" Mathematically one can only derive from Spirit included in it. Namely, spirituality is the derivation. Worship must be that.

Notice what is done as this woman's thought. Women weren't supposed to discuss the Scriptures. There was a first century rabbi, Eleazar, who said, "To teach a woman Scripture was like teaching her lasciviousness." That's some extreme. That was the kind of thought that was at some rabbinical extremes in the first century, not necessarily the general Jewish view, but Eleazar is considered quite a great rabbi.

Jesus is discussing intellectual problems of Scripture with a woman. This is unheard of!

John 4:25, *"That woman suddenly comes to him and says, I know that Messiah is coming."* How about that for a recognition! *"I know that the Messiah is coming which is called Christ."* She didn't say that right. Why, is that in the text? Because it is for the Greeks. *"I know the Messiah comes when he is come, he will tell us all things."*

John 4:26. Jesus, in one of the rare occurrences, is discouraged from turning the fact that he was the Messiah into any advertising campaign. Rather he focuses on this woman and her receptivity, *"He said, I that speak unto thee am he."* John 4:26

John 4:27, *"When the disciples come back, their only problem is that he's talking with the woman."*

John 4:28, *"The woman leaves her waterpot."* That's what she'd come for, but she went away with living water. *"She ran into the city"*

John 4:29, *"She said to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did. It's got to be the Messiah."*

John 4:30, *"The men came out,"* reluctantly, because they didn't want to look like they were coming out because a woman suggested it.

Do you remember when the women disciples told the men disciples that Jesus was risen? The men thought they were idle tales! 4:31

John 4:31, *"In the meantime his disciples asked Jesus to eat the groceries they had bought."*

In John 4:34, *"Jesus announces his meat is to do God's will."* 4:34

Remember that. That is what his food is, literally, in Greek. So when he breaks bread and distributes it to his disciples later, you know what his definition of food is. It *"is to do God's will."* That's the nourishment. *"And to finish his work."*

In John 4:46, we go *"back to Cana, and while he was there a nobleman has a sick son at Capernaum."*