

John 4:1-42

BACKDROP: Samaritan-Jewish Antagonism

- Division of the kingdom
- Jereboam established new religious centers at Dan and Bethel
- Assyrian conquest and resettlement
- Destruction of the temple at Gerizim
- Samaritans develop an alternative history
- Contention: Gerizim, intermarriage, syncretism, Sadducean

THE CONVERSATION AT THE WELL

- Jesus is here describing worship in this new age, now that the Temple has been replaced
- Both cultural centers will be superseded. Indeed it has already begun

What is the living water of v 10?

- Not eternal life, for the water leads to eternal life
- Not Jesus, for he is the one who gives it
- **Jn 7:37-39**. He also promises the Spirit in **14:26** and **16:13**. See also Ez 36, Joel 2
- **The gift of the Spirit is the way to eternal life.** This fits with Jesus's emphasis of replacing the old with the new. **The spirit given by God creates the life of the new age.**

SPIRIT AND TRUTH (the key verse)

- **“God is spirit”**: Not immaterial, as per Greek dualism. KJV erroneously translates it “God is a spirit”. But it's the same construction as in 1:1 (*God*, not *a god*)
- **Think in OT categories**, the Holy Spirit
 - Creative power of God
 - Regeneration, cleansing
 - Leading, directing, guiding
 - Filling the Temple with God's presence
 - Prophetic revelation
- **The living God is active anew in this new age.** Old ways are crumbling. A new age is being inaugurated.
- The thrust is **not simple, immaterial worship**, but the **creative power of God**

TRUTH

- **Tied to Jesus (1:14; 1:17). Baptist a witness to the truth in Jesus.** Jn 14:16 I Am the way, the truth, and the life
- **John uses *truth* or *true* 83 times.** Synoptics use it 2, 4, and 4 times. 65 times in the rest of the NT. True light, true bread, true vine. Many references: his testimony and his judgment is true. The one who sent him is true. Testimony to Pilate. God seeks true worshipers.
- Truth is not an abstract notion, but the liberating, empowering gift of God in Jesus (see 8:30, 31, 37)
- Jesus is telling her that she must worship in the new revelation of God in Christ, in the power of the Spirit. Truth is the knowledge of God which makes us children of God.
- Jesus is **not talking about dishonest worship**, but that now we must **worship the reality, not the type.** It's a **redemptive-historical contrast.** The reality has come in fullness.
- To worship in Spirit means to **worship the Holy Spirit. He has returned.** Look at the **context:** water of life, gift of the Holy Spirit. H.S is the thematic unity of an otherwise rambling discourse.
- **The Messiah has come to his Temple, and the eschatological way of worship is begun.** The **woman brings up the Messiah in verse 25** because she sees Jesus's meaning regarding the new age.
- Worship is now inspired by the presence of that to which everything previously was pointing. **Now true worship can begin,** now that we have Christ. How inferior everything else has been.
- Christ is calling us to **leave our earth-bound worship and seek** him who in his heavenly splendor is **the only true object of worship.**

THE DISCIPLES RETURN

- Doing God's will is more important than eating
- The delay is not complete. The harvest is beginning now. **Not judgment, but fruitfulness**
- **Verse 42 is the main theme.** Everything else (Samaritans, water, harvest. Etc) is secondary. **He is indeed the Savior of the World.**