

## ***Commentary on John 4:7-15, 23-26, 28-30***

***International Bible Lessons***

**Sunday, April 22, 2012**

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The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Series*) for **Sunday, April 22, 2012**, is from **John 4:7-15, 23-26, 28-30**. Five **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse by verse **[International Bible Lessons Commentary](#)** below. The **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, which are also available on the **[Bible Lesson Forum](#)**, will aid teachers in class preparation and in conducting class discussion. For additional **International Bible Lesson Commentaries**, see the complete and comprehensive **[International Bible Lessons Commentary Index](#)**. The weekly **[International Bible Lesson](#)** is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught at **<http://InternationalBibleLessons.org>** and in **[The Oklahoman](#)** newspaper.

### ***International Bible Lesson Commentary*** **John 4:7-15**

**(John 4:7) A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.”**

The Samaritans were descended from those who remained in the Kingdom of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) after it was destroyed in 722 BC and the 10 northern tribes were dispersed among other nations and peoples. The survivors who remained in that area intermarried with the foreigners that the Assyrians brought to live in the conquered northern kingdom. The Samaritans believed in and practiced the teachings of the first five books of the Old Testament (their scriptures). They believed in the prophecies Moses recorded about a coming Savior, the Messiah. Samaritans exist today and make an effort to offer sacrifices according to the five books of Moses.

**(John 4:8) (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.)**

The shortest distance to travel from Galilee to Jerusalem and back was to go through Samaria, the former northern kingdom or former Kingdom of Israel. The disciples carried a common purse that Judas kept as their treasurer. They would stop from town to town as they traveled to buy food. Though the Jews and Samaritans were prejudiced against each other, they could both obey the law of Moses regarding food regulations.

**(John 4:9) The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.)**

Bible scholars speculate about the profession of this woman who had been married more than once. Perhaps because of her moral character, she did not want to go to the well with the other women in the city. She was alone with Jesus when He asked her for a drink, and He would have drunk the water she drew out of her container. Jews would seldom if ever do this, for they would be afraid to become ritually unclean.

**(John 4:10) Jesus 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.”**

Jesus was “the gift of God” – remember “God gave His only Son” (John 3:16). Jesus was the expression of the merciful, forgiving love of God for all people – even Samaritans and people of questionable moral character. Jesus was the Messiah, Who was asking her for a drink. If she had known these things, she would have asked Jesus to meet her moral and spiritual needs.

**(John 4:11) The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?”**

The Samaritan woman spoke freely and openly with Jesus. She did not know what Jesus meant by “living water.” She only knew of one water – the water in the well and she saw that Jesus had no way to draw out that water. She probably deducted that Jesus meant a water other than the Samaritan well water, but she probed Him for clarification.

**(John 4:12) Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?”**

The Samaritans honored Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (the same as the Jews). God changed Jacob’s name to Israel. The descendents of 10 of Israel’s 12 sons (10 of the 12 tribes of Israel) composed the kingdom of Israel. The woman did know about and believe in the Messiah that God was going to send, because His coming is foretold in the Bible books accepted by the Samaritans and there was much Messianic expectation everywhere at that time. She wanted to know if Jesus was greater than their greatest ancestor, Jacob, who became the father of the 12 tribes. She could think of no one greater than Jacob other than the Messiah who was to come.

**(John 4:13) Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,**

First, Jesus spoke to her about the physical water that meets physical needs. We know that after we drink physical water we will need more physical water later and our body will tell us when we need to have a drink of water. On a deeper level, the teachings of Moses and the law of Moses that the Jews and Samaritans both accepted would not completely and forever satisfy their spiritual thirst.

**(John 4:14) but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”**

Jesus came to give spiritual water, spiritual truths, and a spiritual presence with God that will totally and forever satisfy our spiritual needs. When we take Jesus and His teaching into our hearts, mind, and soul, then the truth and presence of Jesus keep satisfying us more and more and give us the blessings of eternal life now and forever.

**(John 4:15) The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”**

After hearing Jesus, the woman kept her attention on physical water. Before the next verse in this *International Bible Lesson*, Jesus talked to her about her past relationships and moral character. Many people today take running water in their homes for granted, and this woman naturally wanted to avoid the labor of drawing water from a well and carrying it back to her home.

### **John 4:23-26**

**(John 4:23) But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him.**

Jesus answered her questions about the proper location for worship. He told her that physical locations for worship are not important. With billions of people becoming followers of Jesus during the past 2000 years, physical location could not be important for this many people to come together for worship. Where the place of worship is essential at various times in some religions, sometimes hundreds of worshipers are trampled to death as they gather together or disperse. Worshiping God “spiritually” and “truthfully” and as “the Father” from the heart and mind is important to God, and always will be important to God the Father.

**(John 4:24) God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”**

God is Spirit, not a golden calf or any other physical representation of God. God is not material, but spiritual. So, believers must worship God with their mind on the basis of the truth about God, the truth revealed by the Bible. Jesus came to reveal the truth about God. In worship, we mentally thank God for the truth He has revealed in Jesus, and praise Him for Who He is and what He does.

**(John 4:25) The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.”**

With this statement, the woman revealed her faith in the Messiah who was to come. She believed what the Bible taught about the Messiah and His coming in as much of the Bible as the Samaritans claimed to be inspired by God (the first five books, also known as the five books of Moses). She believed that when the Messiah came, He would proclaim the truth that would explain and settle all theological arguments. When she expressed her faith in the truth she knew, Jesus confirmed her belief and pointed to himself as the Messiah.

**(John 4:26) Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”**

In this verse, Jesus boldly proclaimed to her that He was the Messiah; furthermore, as the Messiah He was speaking to her, a Samaritan woman, and He was clarifying and explaining and settling once and for all time her theological questions. Others may have these or similar questions later, and these are the answers of the Messiah on how to worship God the Father, and that true worship is of God the Father according to Jesus’ teachings.

**(John 4:27) Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” (Verse 27 was not included in the original lesson, but is here)**

The disciples expressed the typical viewpoint of both men and Jews. In this verse, they did not express the ideas of Jesus and His way of treating either women or Samaritans. They had not been with Jesus long enough to recognize the fact that Jesus did not hold any prejudice or resentment against those of a different gender or race. God and Jesus loved the world, and Jesus did not come to condemn the world. He came to save everyone who would believe in Him, and that included women and Samaritans (and those of all races).

### **John 4:28-30**

**(John 4:28) Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people,**

When the woman heard Jesus claim to be the Messiah that they expected (and not because the disciples had said anything to her), she went back into the city and spoke to the people. When Jesus had told her that “salvation is from the Jews,” He was not being racist or claiming the Jews were superior to Samaritans (see John 4:22). Rather, Jesus was explaining that the Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah (which was in the southern kingdom). This was a fulfillment of prophecy by Jacob as recorded by Moses (see Genesis 49:8-10).

**(John 4:29) “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?”**

Jesus fulfilled, would fulfill, and will completely fulfill the prophecy in Genesis 49:8-10. He was of the tribe of Judah. He was a Jew. He was the long-expected Messiah. He was the fulfillment of the prophecy given by their ancestor Jacob in Genesis. The woman did not claim that Jesus was the Messiah, because she knew she would not be believed (perhaps because of her past actions). She told them what Jesus had done for her (both Jesus and the townspeople knew her past). Then, she asked them a question (as though seeking their help), so they could go and meet Jesus and decide for themselves based on their experiences.

**(John 4:30) They left the city and were on their way to him.**

The people of the city at that time expected that the Messiah would come someday. They believed; they had faith. But none of them had met the Messiah. On the basis of their faith in their scriptures and the woman's testimony about what Jesus had done, they left the city to meet Jesus. He spoke to those who came to Him. John recorded the result of their meeting Jesus, "Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.' So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They 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 truly the Savior of the world'" (John 4:39-42).

### **Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman, what example did He give?
2. Why do you think Jesus emphasized that what He had to give her was "the gift of God"?
3. What type of worshipers does God the Father seek?
4. Why do you think Jesus revealed to her directly, instead of indirectly as He often did with some, that He was the Messiah?
5. Why might the woman's testimony about Jesus and what He had done have influenced the townspeople to go out and meet Him? Why was her question more important to them than if she had simply declared that she had met the Messiah?

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