

Summary Sheet for John 4 vs 1-54

...to accompany Notes 8-10



GOAL of these 1-2-1 studies

Realise that Jesus is the Saviour of the whole world, uniquely qualified to offer anybody and everybody life that will satisfy forever!

Context – how does this chapter fit in?

Jesus has begun to demonstrate that the messianic age really has arrived (ch2), and in ch3 he explains to Nicodemus how somebody can enter God's kingdom. He has shown that he is uniquely qualified to give entry, so belief in him is essential. Now in ch4 the question moves to WHO can enter... Is it only Jewish people? Jesus has already told us (3v16) that 'whoever believes' can enter, and now we see that this includes people like the Samaritan woman – who, from the disciples' viewpoint, is ethnically, morally and gender-wise a very unexpected choice, particularly in contrast to moral, religious Nicodemus (ch3)...

Impact on us

Jesus is the Messiah for everybody, not just for Jews or other religious and morally upright people... He has come to offer satisfying eternal life and make true worshippers ... of all kinds of people! ... those we think are obvious choices and those we'd never think of. Do we believe this? Will we come to him for life and invite others too?

How John writes to make his point

Throughout the Gospel Jesus uses images such as 'bread', 'light', 'water', to convey something about who he is. These images all have huge echoes from the Old Testament, where God miraculously provided bread & water for his people, brought light into being etc, but are also everyday concepts that are essential to life - as is Jesus Christ, the one to whom they point. John emphasises that the woman is a Samaritan to make sure we don't miss the point that Jesus is the Saviour of the whole world and that now is harvest time and his disciples and all who believe are drawn in to the joy of reaping.

Structure

4vs1-15: Jesus is the Messiah – **God gives** eternal life – living water – through him

4vs16-30: Jesus is the Messiah – he is the one who defines the true worship that **God wants**

4vs31-42: Jesus explains why he has come to Samaria – he is the Saviour of the world, which the Samaritans have come to believe

4vs43-54: The second 'sign' (again in Cana) that Jesus gives to show he is the Messiah. It is no longer the scene of a joyous wedding banquet where he demonstrates his authority, but now he takes on matters of life and death...

John's references to the Old Testament and why they matter

- Samaritans

Samaria was originally part of 'Israel' but intermarried with other nations and adopted their idols, to the disgust of Jewish people, who considered themselves 'pure'. Ezekiel 37vs15-28 promised a day when God would re-unite these bitter rivals under one king.

- Living water

Living water is a picture of the eternal life and satisfying joy given once God's people have been saved from their sin and had God's Spirit poured into their hearts (Isaiah 44v3, 55vs1-3). In addition, in Jeremiah 2v13, God describes himself as the '*fountain of living waters*', which his people had rejected, in favour of cracked, empty pots that would never satisfy.

- True worship

Although Samaria still clung to traditional Jewish sites – e.g. Jacob's well – their hotch-potch religion causes Jesus to remark (v22), "*You worship what you do not know.*" Jesus has come to offer them what their mixed up traditions and even their great forefather Jacob could never give them – the living water of eternal life.

No longer will worship be centred in a place – a sacred mountain or even the temple in Jerusalem – but now that Jesus is here, Jews and Samaritans are to be united in worshipping God the way he wants – '*in spirit*' (all the time, everywhere) – and '*in truth*' (ie as he has revealed himself). Ironically, the woman knows this kind of massive shift would happen when the Messiah arrived (v25) – Jesus is that Man!!

- Saviour of the world

In Isaiah 42v6, the Servant of the Lord – who would have God's Spirit resting on him – is seen as being a 'light to the Gentiles'. The idea of God rescuing people from many nations isn't new, but rather is mentioned throughout the Old Testament, starting in Genesis. Isaiah 25vs6-7 says that God's salvation will be for all peoples.

- Death/Life

The first 'sign' Jesus gave in Cana (ch2vs1-11) had strong echoes of Isaiah ch 25, as does the second 'sign' here in ch 4vs46-54. Isaiah not only promised that the Lord would provide a feast of well-aged wine for his people, but also to swallow up death forever, and to wipe away all tears.

Some questions to consider – vs 1-18

Opener: Who would be the least likely person you think God would welcome?

Considering the text1: From this passage, sum up what we learn about the woman Jesus meets? How is she similar and different to Nicodemus in ch3?

Considering the text2: What is Jesus offering this woman? How does his offer compare to the water she's been used to getting from Jacob's well? How does Jeremiah 2v13 help sharpen our understanding of what it means to have 'living water'?

One to keep chewing on: How does the description of 'living water' in these verses inform our understanding of the kind of King Jesus is, and what he's offering people?

...vs 16-30

Opener: What do people think is the right way to worship God?

Considering the text1: Looking at vs 19-24, what have been the differences between Samaritan worship and Jewish worship up to this point? What does Jesus say about the kind of worship God is actually looking for?

Considering the text2: How does the woman respond to Jesus' words in v25-30? On what basis can Jesus say what is an acceptable way to worship God, and what is not acceptable?

One to keep chewing on: What implications does worshipping God 'in spirit and truth' have for the way we view religious buildings, church services, Monday morning..?

...vs 27-54

Opener: What would it take to convince you that somebody was as impressive as people were claiming?

Considering the text1: Looking at vs27-30, what are the different responses to Jesus' conversation with the woman? In vs31-38, what we learn about the work Jesus has been given to do? Given v30, what is Jesus telling the disciples to look at in v35, what work does he have for them to do v35-38?

Considering the text2: What conclusion do the Samaritans come to about Jesus in vs39-42? On what basis do they come to this conclusion?

Considering the text3: The Cana miracle in vs46-54 is paired with the Cana miracle in 2vs1-11. What does 4vs46-54 add to our impression of the kind of king Jesus is and why we can trust his promise of eternal life?

One to keep chewing on: "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe..." – what should we be looking for as we come to think about Jesus?