

## 28.20 Woman at the Well in Samaria (Matthew 4:12–17; John 4:1–43)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- The DVD, *John*

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *Samaria/Samaritans*: “The Samaritans were a mixed people. After Israel was carried captive, the king of Assyria sent people to live in the land who did not fear the Lord; and the Lord sent lions and slew some of them. So one of the priests was sent back to teach them the manner of the God of the land” (JND CW 25.238f). “Although Samaritans claimed to believe in Israel’s God, accepting the Pentateuch [first five books of the Bible], they did not accept the prophets. Their religion was corrupted even to the point of incorporating idol worship. The Jews and Samaritans disliked each other very much” (Online Bible).
- *Mount Gerizim*: “[In Samaritan territory this mountain] was the place where Joshua [had] pronounced the blessings, and so [Samaritans] said that would be the proper place for worship, and a temple was built at Gerizim by them” (JND CW 25.238f).
- *conversations between men and women in Bible times*: didn’t happen; considered forbidden for a man to speak to a woman, even in public
- *spirit*: without a body; no material or composed parts; invisible; in every place; pure and holy (Barnes in Online Bible)

### Scripture Passage: (ESV)

John 4:1 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), 3 he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. 4 And he had to pass through Samaria 5 So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob’s well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

7 A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” 8 (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) 9 The 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.) 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.” 11 The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” 13 Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” 15 The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”

16 Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” 17 The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.” 19 The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” 21 Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when

neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 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 is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” 25 The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”

27 Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you seek?” or, “Why are you talking with her?” 28 So 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?” 30 They went out of the town and were coming to him.

31 Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” 32 But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” 33 So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?” 34 Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. 35 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. 36 Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. 37 For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ 38 I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

39 Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his word. 42 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 indeed the Savior of the world.” 43 After the two days he departed for Galilee.

### **Introduction/Review:**

In Jerusalem Jesus had had a conversation with the ruler of the Jews. What was his name? [Nicodemus.] What was the subject of the conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus? [The new birth.] Explain what the new birth is not. [One cannot be saved by belonging to the right family or race.] Who makes a person to be born again? [The Holy Spirit.] Quote John 3:16. [“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life (NLT).”] What story from Moses’ time in the Old Testament did Jesus give to illustrate coming to Christ for salvation? [The bronze serpent on a pole: Jesus would be so put on a cross so that whoever would believe on Him would be saved.]

### **Story:**

Today’s story gives us another conversation, this time with someone quite the opposite to Nicodemus, the top guy in Jewish circles. This conversation was with an immoral woman in the generally hated (by the Jews) area called Samaria Here is what happened.

John 4:4 is a simple statement: “He had to pass through Samaria.” Well, He was going to Galilee. [Throughout this story locate places on a map.] And it appears Samaria is right on the way there. Problem was, according to scholars, some Jews despised Samaritans so much that they would avoid that three-day route and take a seven-day route across the Jordan, up the east side of this river, and then across the Jordan again to get to Galilee (Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 20.6,1). Jesus, though, “had to pass through Samaria.” ✓ I think He knew what was about to happen.

### ***Jacob’s Well***

While His disciples went into the town about half a mile away in order to buy some food (my husband says, “at the local MacDonald’s”) for lunch, Jesus sat down at Jacob’s Well. Jacob. Have we heard that name before? Who was he? [Grandson of Abraham, son of Isaac, father of the twelve tribes of Israel.] This well is

still in existence and “is often considered the most authentic site in the Holy Land — since no one can move a well that was originally more than 40 metres deep” (<http://www.seetheholyland.net/jacobs-well/>). Forty meters. If a meter is just over one yard (3 feet), how deep was this well? [40x3=more than 120 feet deep, comparable to a 10-story building sunk into the ground.] This well is named Jacob’s Well, but the Bible doesn’t tell us about Jacob’s digging any wells. We do know that Jacob owned the land here; in fact, he gave it to his son Joseph (Genesis 48:22; Joshua 24:32).

Let’s get back to the story. It was noon, pretty much the hottest part of the day. Along comes a woman from the town of Sychar.\* She’s alone; no other women come to get water at this time of day. She carries a leather bucket to put down the well and pull up full of water and a jar/jug with which to carry the water home. Jesus has neither of these items, and He’s tired and thirsty. He politely says to the woman, “Give me a drink.”

Noting two customs—#1, not speaking to a woman and, #2, having nothing to do with Samaritans—the woman asks, “How is it that you, a *Jew*, ask for a drink from me, a *woman of Samaria*?” [emphasis added].

### ***Living Water***

Jesus, as with Nicodemus, wastes no time in ceremony; He gets to the point immediately, saying, “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.” What did He say He would give? [Living water.]

Just like Nicodemus, this woman thinks only of the physical: “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.”

Jesus continues with His spiritual lesson; He says to her, “Everyone who drinks of this [physical] water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the [spiritual] water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

What does spiritual living water do? [Wells up within a person to eternal life—salvation.]

“Hey, I want your water. If I have it, I won’t get thirsty anymore and I won’t have to come to get water from this well anymore!” exclaimed the woman.

### ***Husband[s]***

Jesus abruptly changes the subject. He says, “Go get your husband and bring him here.”

I can imagine the woman’s look upon hearing this request. [Teacher, roll your eyes as if being guilty.] “I, ah, I —don’t have a husband,” she stammers.

Jesus replies, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the man you are living with now is not your husband. What you have said is true.”

### ***Religious argument***

“You must be a prophet!” the ✓amazed woman answers. Then, ✓perhaps to divert attention from herself or just to be argumentative about religion or to get an answer to a long-time question, she says, “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.”

Before she can ask, “What do you think about that?” Jesus answers, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.” Where will people not worship? [Neither on “this mountain nor in Jerusalem.”] Do you students worship on that mountain? [No.] Do you worship in Jerusalem? [No.] Where do you worship? [With the assembly in my town.] Jesus says this hour was to come when we would not worship in either the mountain or in Jerusalem. That time has arrived.

Jesus continues, “You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the

Jews.” He is telling the woman that her religion is invalid. He says salvation is from the Jews. That does not mean that one needs to become a Jew in order to be saved. Rather, salvation is from Jesus, who fulfilled all the requirements of being a Jew—enough to qualify Him as the Saviour.

### ***Spirit-and-truth worship***

Then Jesus talks about another time to come (in fact, He says it has already come) when “true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.” “*In spirit*” means not just outwardly at certain places but within, from the heart. “*In truth*” means not by false religion but the truth as found in the Word of God.

Jesus finishes this part of the conversation with a doctrinal statement: “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” What is special about God’s being spirit? Being spirit, God is not limited to time and space. Being spirit enables Him to exercise all His Godly attributes.

### ***The Messiah***

The woman begins to put some ideas together. “I know,” she says, “that Messiah (Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will tell us all things.” Do you suppose she is beginning to think this Man is someone more than a mere man or more than even a prophet? I wonder.

Jesus doesn’t make her wonder any longer. He plainly states, “I who speak to you am He.” What did Jesus just say? “I who speak to you am Christ, the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament, the Prophet whom Moses said would come.” This is the first time Jesus openly states His deity—His being God, the Promised One. He didn’t announce to the Jews or even to His disciples but to this despised Samaritan woman.

At this point in the story, the disciples return with food, see Jesus talking with a woman, and urge Jesus to eat. But Jesus answers, “I have food to eat that you don’t know about.”

“Hmm. Someone must have brought Him some food,” the disciples say to each other.

But Jesus explains, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.” In other words, the ministry keeps Jesus going as food does for the body. His food is to do and finish God’s will and work. He continues, “The fields of souls are white, ready for harvest. Right now it is time, not to eat, but to harvest souls for the kingdom.”

### ***Sychar hears Jesus***

Meanwhile, the woman leaves her water pot by the well and goes back to her city. She is excited and exclaims to the men, “There is a man out by the well who, like a prophet, told me everything that I have done. Could this be the Christ?”

Apparently, those men of Sychar are at least curious, for they go out to the well to meet Jesus. ✓He begins to teach them and to harvest souls. They are so interested and likely changed by the gospel that they ask Jesus to stay with them longer. Jesus does stay another two days. Many more believe because of what Jesus Himself says. They say 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 Savior of the world.”

I am so happy to hear when people hear the Word of God and come to Jesus Christ in faith. These despised Samaritans came to Christ! He saved them—an immoral woman, men of a corrupt religion. Jesus can save anyone!

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\*[T]he real Sychar, now called ‘Askar,’ lies scarcely half a mile north of the well. It was a small town, loosely called a city, and adjoined the land which Jacob gave to Joseph (#Ge 33:19 47:22 Jos 24:32), Joseph’s tomb being about one hundred yards east of it. The mummy of Joseph, carried out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus, was buried in this parcel of ground, and there is but little doubt that it really rests in the place indicated by the tomb; and though the name Sychar may be derived from the words ‘liar’ or ‘drunkard,’ it is more likely that it

means ‘town of the sepulchre,’ referring to this tomb” (TFG 140–141).

### **Lessons from this lesson:**

- Jesus is God: He said He could give “living water . . . springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:10–14). He knew all about the life of the woman at the well (John 4:16–18). He said He was the “Messiah, the Savior of the world” (John 4:26, 42).
- Seek opportunities to tell others about Christ, the Saviour of the world.
- No matter how sinful a person may be, God is able to save that person. (That does not mean we can presume upon God--doing wickedness with the intention of asking forgiveness and seeking salvation at the end of life.)
- Salvation is of the Jews--from Christ, who came from the Jewish line.
- God is spirit, and we must worship Him in spirit and in truth.
- We need more authority to claim true worship than beliefs like “our fathers worshiped this way.” We need, “Thus says the Lord” from the Bible.

### **Activities:**

- Play dough: pot; well
- Sing “Jesus Gave Her Water” (CEF’s *Salvation Songs*, Vol. 2, #91).  
Jesus gave her water that was not from the well [repeat]  
She went away singing and came back bringing  
Others to the water that was not from the well.
- Sing to the tune, “Jack and Jill” (Shining Star Publications, Summer Celebrations, 1985, p. 41).  
A woman from Samaria  
Went to the well for water.  
Jesus came and talked to her:  
She changed her life thereafter.
- Sing to the tune, “If You’re Happy and You Know It” (Shining Star Publications, Summer Celebrations, 1985, p. 41).  
“There is someone who knows everything I did.” (clap, clap) [repeat ]  
Then she ran to tell her neighbors so they’d come to meet the Saviour.  
“There is someone who knows everything I did.” (clap, clap)  
“There is someone who will help me thirst no more.” (clap, clap) [repeat]  
Christ would be her living water. She became God’s happy daughter.  
“There is someone who will help me thirst no more.” (clap, clap)
- Sing to the tune, “Are You Sleeping?” (Baptist Publishing House)  
“There sits Jesus; there sits Jesus  
“At the well, at the well.  
“He knows all about me. [repeat]  
“He forgives; He forgives.”
- Play the game, “Drop the Pot,” like “Drop the Handkerchief,” using a plastic container instead of a hankie.
- Practice balancing a plastic jug or other container on the head, holding it on the shoulder.

- Tell the story from the jug's viewpoint, first emphasizing to students that jugs do not talk. We are pretending the jug is saying, if it could talk, things it would have actually seen and heard (idea from an article in an old CEF *Today's Child* magazine). Use a puppet jug to "speak." My jug's-view story is found below.
- Play the game, "Fill the Bucket." Students kneel on chair to drop clothespins into a narrow-necked container on the floor.
- Review questions: (Game: From southwestern style wallpaper cut out small pots. Back with flannel or flock scraps. A correct answer entitles a student to place a pot on the flannel board.)
  1. How did Jesus need to get to Galilee—through which area? [Samaria.]
  2. Give one reason why the woman at the well was surprised Jesus talked to her. [Men didn't speak to women; He was a Jew and she, a Samaritan.]
  3. What was the name of the well at Sychar? [Jacob's Well.]
  4. Fill in the blanks. Jesus said, "Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be \_\_\_\_\_ again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to \_\_\_\_\_." [Thirsty; eternal life.]
  5. What did Jesus know about the woman's personal life? [She had had five husbands.]
  6. Fill in the blanks. Jesus said, "The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_." [Spirit; truth.]
  7. What important revelation about Himself did Jesus make to the woman, not to others before her? [That He was the Christ, the Messiah.]
  8. Why did the people come out of the town to see Jesus? [The woman told them Jesus knew about her life; this proved He might be the Christ.]
  9. After the people believed, they told the woman they formerly believed because of what the woman had said. Now they believed for a different reason. What was that reason? ["We have heard for ourselves."]
  10. How long did Jesus stay and teach in Sychar? [Two days.]

#### Memory Verse[s]:

- John 4:25, 26—The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."
- John 1:1–14:
  - 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
  - 2 He was in the beginning with God.
  - 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.
  - 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
  - 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.
  - 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.
  - 7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.
  - 8 He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.
  - 9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.
  - 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.
  - 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.
  - 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:
  - 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
  - 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

#### Handwork:

- Cut out heart shapes from red construction paper and jugs (smaller than the hearts) from wallpaper. Cut 2-inch lengths of blue curling ribbon (as used for gift wrap). Write “You must be born again (John 3:7)” on the heart. Glue or tape the ribbon to the back side of the jug. Attach the jug to the heart with a brad or sewing snap. Tip the jug as if pouring out water. (See sample at the end of this lesson.)
- Cut out well and well-opening shapes out of cardboard (see sample at the end of this lesson). Use the shapes to trace. Place pieces of contact paper (stone appearance) on the well to look like stones. Trace jug from wallpaper and glue to well.

**spirit**

**Samaria/Samaritans**

**Mount Gerizim**

**conversations: men /women**



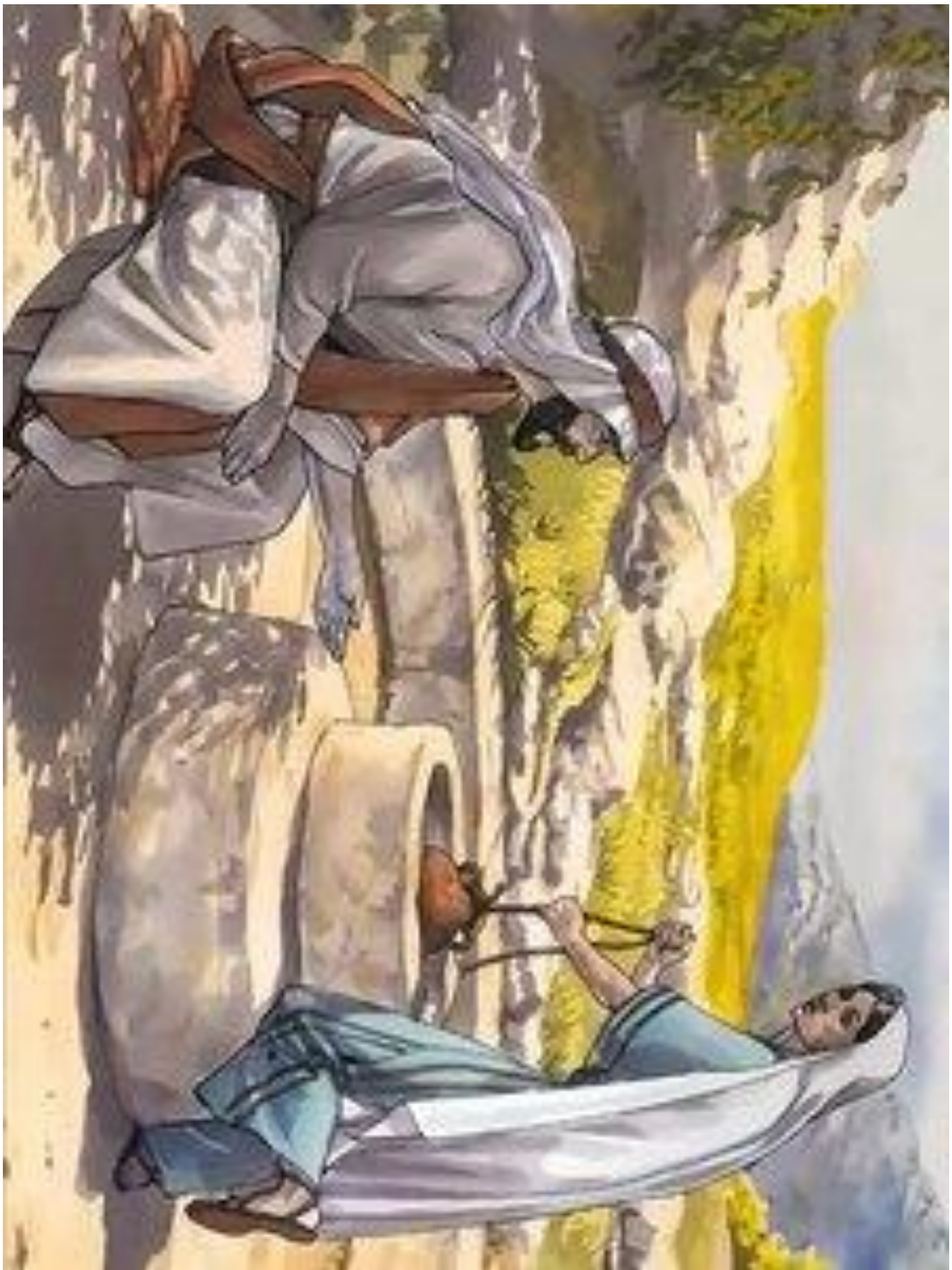






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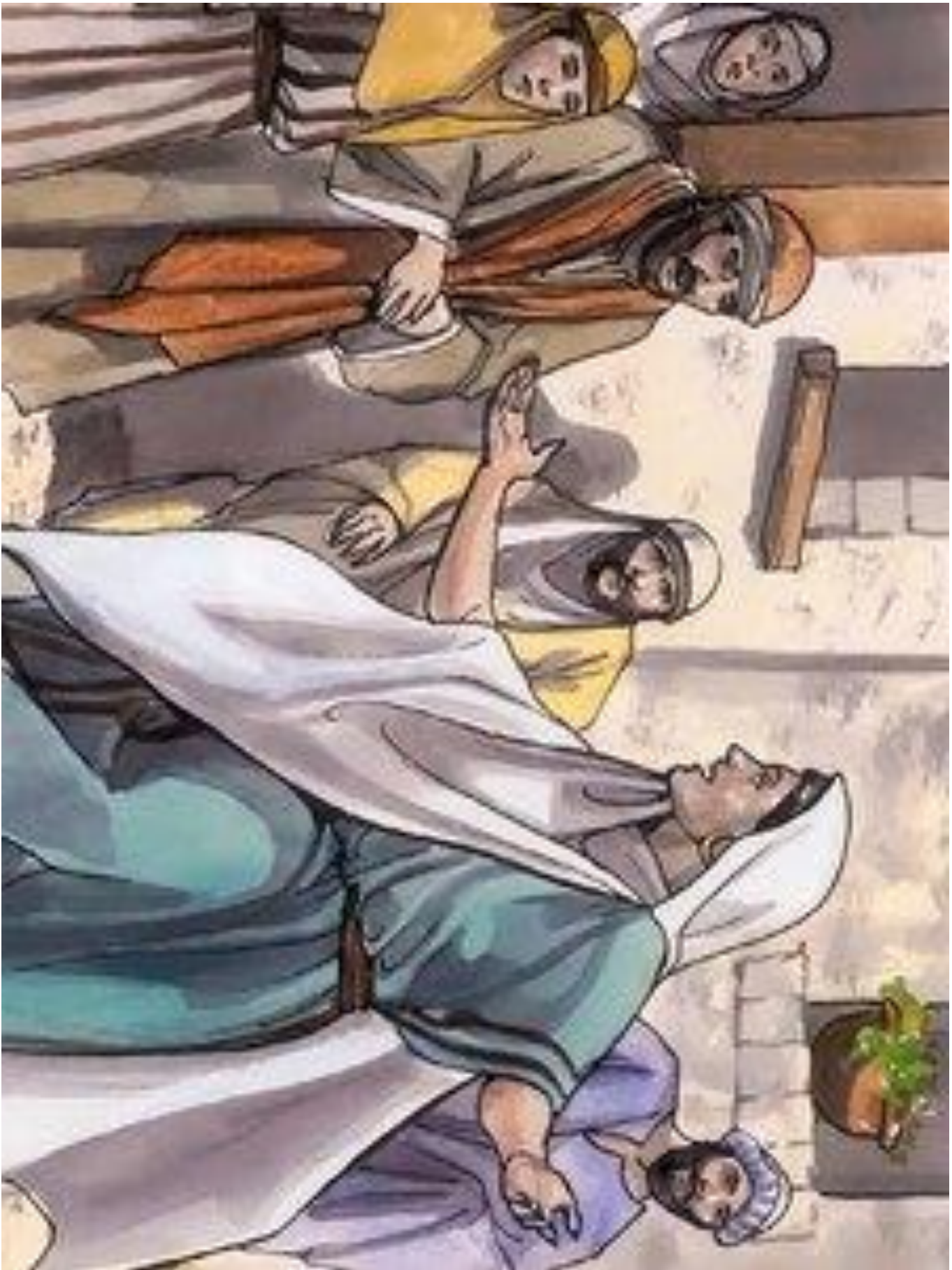
The present-day view of Jacob's Well





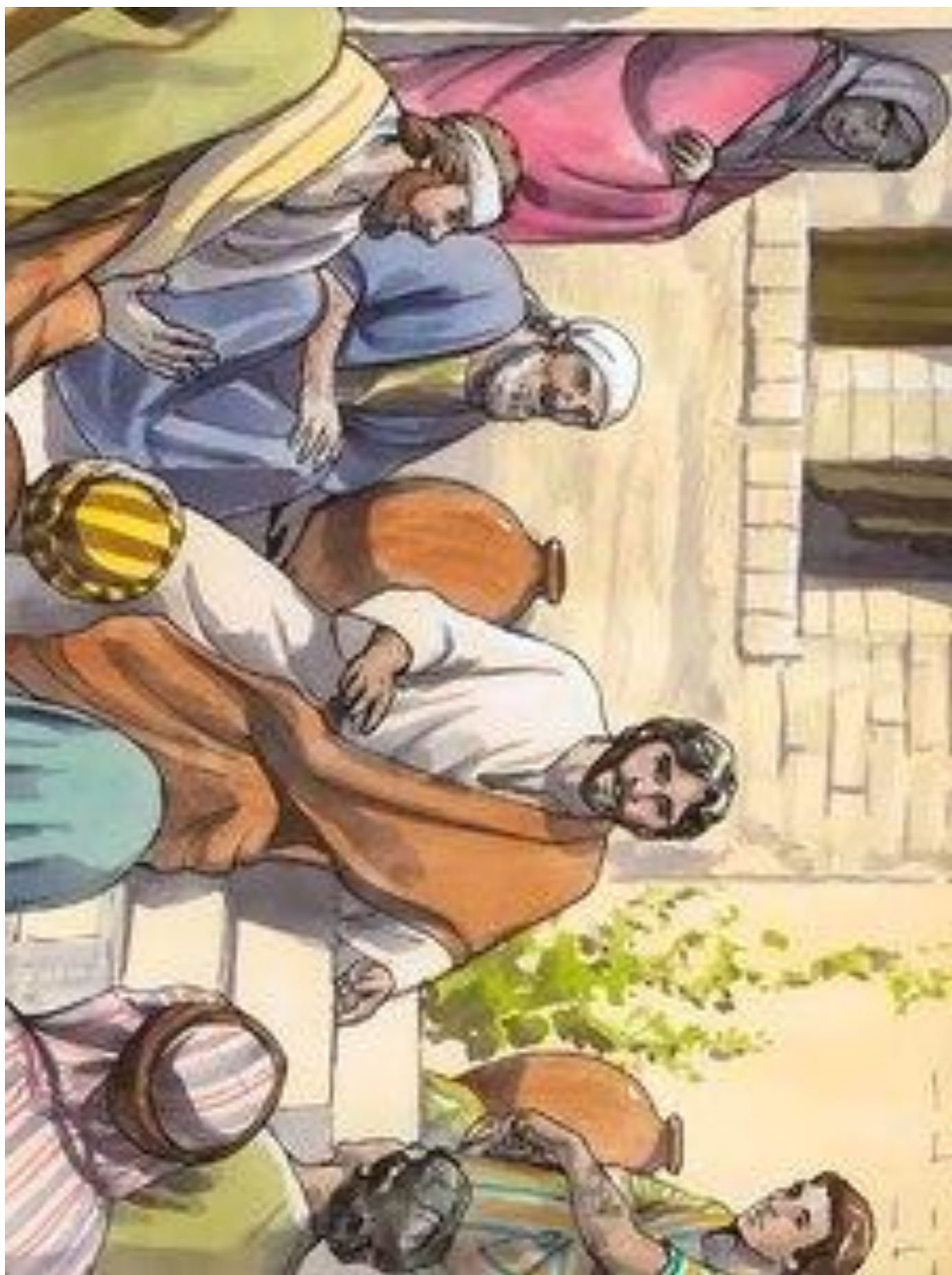


















## A Jug's-Eye View of the Samaritan Woman's Encounter with Jesus

That Man talked to my owner. What did He say? He can give 'living water'? What does that mean? What's He talking about? Why, He doesn't even have a bucket to carry water.

What's that? He can give water that will make people never be thirsty? Hey, Mister. Give her some of that water so that I don't have to worry that she'll drop me some day while she comes to this well. Oh, You don't mean wet water?

He asked her to go get her husband. Yeah, right. She's been married five different times, and she's not married to that man at home.

Did you hear that? That Man just told her the same thing. How did He know?

My owner is just as surprised as I am. Yes sir, this guy must be a prophet. Tell Him we don't care about Jewish preachers around here because we worship in this mountain over here and those Jews think they have to worship in Jerusalem.

What's that? He says the place isn't so important, but the truth is. Worship God the Father in spirit and in truth? You know, that sounds like something the Messiah would say. What!?! That guy, I mean that Man, said *He* is the Messiah, the One the whole Bible says would come some day. This is the Man—the Messiah?

Wow! This is worth telling all the kitchen pots.

Let's go, Lady. Hey! You left me behind! Oh, that's okay. It's better to be here with the Son of God. Maybe He'll use me to get a drink.

Living water—. Hmmm. Everlasting life—. Hmmm.



Handwork sample

