

ABC's of SALVATION

by

John J. Van Gorder

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CHAPTER TWELVE

LIVING WATER

“Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:13, 14).

THESE verses are taken from one of the best known chapters in all the Word of God, unless it be the preceding chapter in John's Gospel. These two chapters present two of the most important interviews held by our Lord while on earth. In chapter three, an influential, educated, religious leader of the Jews, filled with encomiums, sought an interview with Christ.

Were it not for the last two verses of chapter one, the Lord would almost appear rude to this great leader as He brushed aside his praises and bluntly said to him, **“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”**

But how different He is in chapter four! The poor outcast is carefully interrogated until she cries out, **“Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not.”** All of chapter four should be studied carefully to get the full significance of this lesson.

I. A Picture of Israel's Blindness

Nineteen centuries before, God had called Abraham from Ur and placed him at the crossroads of the world in order that he and his descendants might give the knowledge of God back to a lost race. During all these centuries, Abraham's descendants had the privileges and advantages of God's revelations (Romans 3:1-2). Instead of obeying God, they had wrapped the skirts of exclusiveness about them until they termed the Gentiles **“dogs.”**

Lying between Galilee and Judea was Samaria. So neglected and ostracized was this land that the poor Samaritan woman was forced to say, **“How is it that thou, being a Jew, asketh drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?”**

To His returning disciples He said, **“Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest”** The Jews were blind to this harvest field.

II. A Picture of the Law

“The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou that living water?” (John 4:11).

There was nothing wrong with the well—there was nothing wrong with the water. A friend of mine recently showed me a picture of himself and wife standing beside this well which was still producing water after all these centuries.

The woman spoke an unknown truth that day. The Jews, like some people yet today, thought to draw water from the well of salvation by keeping the Law. There was nothing wrong with the Law for **“the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good”** (Romans 7:12). The trouble was **“that it was weak through the flesh”** (Romans 8:3). Salvation does not come by law keeping, for it is plainly written, **“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight”** (Romans 3:20). The woman saw the well, she knew of its water, but she also saw His physical handicap.

III. The Omniscient Christ

“He must needs go through Samaria” (John 4:4).

The usual way for the Jews to go to Galilee from Judea was to cross the Jordan into Perea, go up the east side of the Jordan, then cross back into Galilee. The Samaritans, too, were considered **“dogs,”** and the Jews might become defiled by passing through their land.

Professing Christendom is not entirely free from this form of Judaism.

There is a congregation, which several years ago erected a plain but substantial building in a neglected portion of a city. Its primary purpose was to reach the neglected and common folk. When a change of pastorate took place, this station was soon closed. Someone was heard to say, **“We cannot reach the cultured there.”** While the gospel is for the **“up-and-outer”** as well as the **“down-and-outer,”** nevertheless it is scripturally true that **“Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called”** (I Corinthians 1:26). Spiritual pride is a terrible affliction.

The Saviour did not move in a haphazard manner. In the past eternity His meeting with that woman had been planned. It was a step in the way that set the machinery of grace into operation by which not only she was saved, but she became the means of salvation of her townspeople (John 4:39). The disciples, when they came back, **“marveled that he talked with the woman”** but unlike some of the professed disciples of today, they did not try to keep the message of salvation from going out to her and her people.

IV. The Humanity of Christ

“Being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well.” (John 4:6).

Throughout Christ's earthly ministry, both His deity and humanity are clearly seen.

- The angel of the Lord announced to the shepherds on the Judean hills the advent of "**Christ the Lord**" but they found Him to be "**a babe in swaddling clothes.**"
- He slept in a boat on Galilee, yet when awakened by the frightened disciples He stilled the waves.
- He wept at the grave of Lazarus, then a few moments later called Lazarus forth from the tomb.
- He sat tired and thirsty at the well of Jacob, yet waited for the woman to come with whom he had a rendezvous from eternity.

V. The Place He Chose

How profound and significant is everything in the Scriptures! When He gave his Magna Charta of His kingdom (Matthew 5-7) "**He went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them**" (Matthew 5:1-2).

Blind indeed must be the man who does not see the kingly setting of this scene. Later on, in the same Gospel, when His rejection by Israel is apparent, and He is to give His second major discourse—the discourse which tells of the time of His absence, it is written, "**The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side**" (Matthew 13:1). Again we say, blind must be the one who does not see the typical significance of the scene. So when he would meet this poor outcast of society and give her the water of life, He waited for her at Jacob's well, for that day she was to draw water "**out of the wells of salvation**" (Isaiah 12:3).

VI. The Woman

How ignorant she was! She had the same fourfold ignorance that characterizes every unsaved person, whether high or low in society, whether educated or illiterate.

1. *She was ignorant of the person of Christ* (John 4:9).

She saw in Him only a Jew—possibly less self-respecting than most Jews. Hers was a false view of the person of Christ.

2. *She was ignorant of the purpose of Christ* (v. 10).

He said unto her, "**If thou knewest,**" for she did not know.

3. *She was ignorant of the power of Christ* (v. 11).

Her mind was on earthly things; she could reason only from the human viewpoint.

4. *She was ignorant of the pardon in Christ* (v. 20).

She thought she had to journey to Mount Gerizim.

The woman should not be unduly condemned, for Christendom has many professing members just as ignorant of the grace of God as this woman.

VII. The Living Water

Note the phrases “**this water**” in verse 13 and “**the water**” in verse 14.

Christianity is not a pump in Jacob’s well trying to draw water out of the Law. This is further shown in the word well in verse 11, which means the ordinary digged hole in the ground, and the word well in verse 14, which means a fountain bursting forth from the ground. The water from the well of which He spoke to the woman was the same as that spoken by Him in John 7:38, where it is written, “**He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly (innermost being) shall flow rivers of living water.**”

That this woman drank at the Fountain of Living Water is shown by the fact that she immediately became a fountain of life to others.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
“Behold I freely give
The living water:—thirsty one,
Stoop down, and drink and live”
I came to Jesus and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him.

~ end of chapter 12 ~

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