

John 4:7-22 (4B)

Fr. Behr (Background of John 4)

Jacob's well- Genesis makes no mention of a well, it is found in the Targums (an Aramaic translation of the Hebrew bible, the scriptures were taught in the 1st C. in a common language and they paraphrased and expanded the scriptures with interpretations)

The Well travelled with them as a “gift from God” – Jesus is sitting upon the Well, is Himself the “gift of God” and gives living water.

Water in scripture is applied to the Word of God (Isaiah 55); to Wisdom (Proverbs 16) a fountain of life; and to the Spirit of God (Isaiah 44, Ezekiel 36).

In cultic (ritual) context it is a reference to the new Temple in Ezekiel, with the water flowing up from under its foundations just as rivers had flowed from Eden to the whole creation, which is now ready for harvest. The image of the ‘water of life’ flowing from the throne of God is all brought together at the crucifixion when from His body ‘water flows’ and His Spirit is handed over to those who have put on the identity of Christ.

The crucifixion is the ‘hour’ that is coming when true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth.

⁷There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give Me to drink.” ⁸For His disciples had gone away into the city in order that they might buy provisions. ⁹Then the Samaritan woman said to Him, “How is it *that* You, being a Jew, ask to drink from me, who am a Samaritan woman? For the Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.”

Theophylact: “The woman attempted to correct Him out of concern that He would do something not permitted by his own Jewish law. The Lord does not reveal who He is until the woman’s virtue, prudence and conscientiousness have all been manifested.”

The progression of knowing God – Jesus is first “a Jew” (4:9); then, Lord (4:11); then “a Prophet” (4:19); the “Messiah” (4:25); the “I am” (He uses the divine Name, I am) – Christ is the very presence of God Who is the Savior of the World (4:42)

St. Ephrem the Syrian: “Our Lord came to the fountain of water like a hunter. He asked for water so that He might give water, He asked for drink like someone thirsty so that the gateway to quenching thirst might be open to Him...he sent His disciples away from Him lest they chase away His prey.”

¹⁰Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and Who is the *One* Who said to you, ‘Give Me to drink,’ thou would have asked Him, and He would have given to thee living water.”

Cyril of Alexandria: “Jesus calls the quickening gift of the Spirit ‘living water’ because mere human nature is parched to its very roots...”

¹¹The woman said to Him, “Lord, You have no bucket for drawing water, and the well is deep. From what place then have You the water, the living *one*?”

Saint Chrysostom: “Already He has raised her low opinion of Him, not deeming Him to be one of the many. For she did not here simply call Him ‘Lord,’ but rendered Him honor. And that she was speaking these words to honor Him, is manifested from what is said afterwards.”

¹²“You are not greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his sons, and his animals, are You?” ¹³Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; ¹⁴“but whosoever drinks of the water which I shall give him in no wise shall ever thirst. But the water which I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water (living water) springing into eternal life.”

Theodore of Mopsuestia: “The water from a spring does not run out, nor does it need to be brought from another place...but it constantly offers perpetual nourishment to those who want it. In a similar way also the virtue of this water provides the one who receives it with perpetual help and will always preserve him and not allow him to perish. Therefore the one who receives this grace will never reach death...this is water the virtue of the Spirit is.”

¹⁵The woman said to Him, “Lord, give me this water, that I may not be thirsting, nor keep on coming here to draw.” ¹⁶Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” ¹⁷The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “Well did you say, ‘I have no husband,’ ¹⁸“for you hast had five husbands, and now *he* whom you have is not your husband; this truly you have spoken.” ¹⁹The woman said to Him, “Lord, I perceive that You are a prophet.

Bishop Gerasimos (Abydos): “When (we) encounter sublime things, we are amazed. When the divine is revealed to (us) in Christ, we are not ashamed and not afraid. She acknowledges her weakness, she is corrected and seeks the love of God. What did not happen with the Pharisees is now beginning to happen with the Samaritan woman...her conscious is awoken and she apparently experiences the first tears of repentance from her hidden sins.”

Bishop Gerasimos (Abydos): She recognized Jesus as a Prophet, a man of God, and directly went to another subject, not to avoid the censure ... but in order to ask a serious theological question. She asked about the subject of true worship, the true relationship between man and God.”

²⁰“Our fathers do reverence in this mountain (Gerizim), and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where it is needful to do reverence.” ²¹Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, that there is coming an hour when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you do reverence to the Father. ²²“You do reverence what you know not; we do reverence what we know, for salvation is of the Jews.

Origen: Gerizim was a mountain on which the Samaritans worshipped God because Moses commanded the people to bless the Lord there (Deuteronomy 27) The Jews considered Zion to be Holy and God’s dwelling place, so Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem.

Saint Chrysostom: “What He says is either of this kind: that blessing to the world came from them (for to know God and condemn idols came from them),...or else, He speaks of His own coming. Again, one would not be wrong in calling both these things ‘salvation’ which He said was of the Jews. Paul also implied this when he said, ‘From whom *is* the Christ according to the flesh, Who is over all, God [Rom. 9:5].’”