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Exposition of the Gospel of John

CHAPTER 11

CHRIST AT SYCHARA'S WELL

John 4:1-6

We begin with the usual Analysis of the passage that is to be before us. In it we see:—

1. The Lord's knowledge of the Pharisees' jealousy, verse 1.
2. The disciples of the Lord baptizing, verse 2.
3. The Lord leaving Judea and departing into Galilee, verse 3.
4. The constraint of Divine grace, verse 4.
5. The Journey to Sychar, verse 5.
6. The Savior's weariness, verse 6.
7. The Savior resting, verse 6.

Like the first three chapters of John, this fourth also furnishes us with another aspect of the deplorable spiritual state that Israel was in at the time the Lord was here upon earth. It is remarkable how complete is the picture supplied us. Each separate scene gives some distinctive feature. Thus far we have seen, First, a blinded Priesthood (John 1:19, 26); Second, a joyless Nation (John 2:3); Third, a desecrated Temple (John 2:14); Fourth, a spiritually-dead Sanhedrin (John 3:7); Fifth, the person of Christ despised (John 3:26) and His testimony rejected (John 3:32). Now we are shown the heartless indifference of Israel toward their semi-heathen neighbors.

Israel had been highly privileged of God, and not the least of their blessings was a written revelation from Him. But though favored with much light themselves, they were selfishly indifferent toward those who were in darkness. Right within the bounds of their own land (for Samaria was a part of it), dwelt those who were semi-heathen, yet had the Jews no love for their souls and no concern for their spiritual welfare. Listen to the tragic plaint of one of their number: "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9). The heartless indifference of the favored people of God toward the Samaritans is intimated further in the surprise shown by the disciples when they returned and found the Savior talking with this Samaritan woman (Luke 4:27). It was, no doubt, in order to rebuke them that the Savior said, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you. Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35). Thus, this heartless neglect of the Samaritans gives us another glimpse of Israel's state at that time.

But not only does John 4 give us another picture of the miserable condition the Jews were in, but, once more, it contains a prophetic foreshadowing of the future. In the closing verses of the previous chapter we are shown the person of Christ despised (John 3:26) and His testimony rejected (John 3:32). This but anticipated the final rejection of Christ by the Nation as a whole. Now in marvelous consonance with this, the very next thing we see is Christ turning to the Gentiles! The order here, as everywhere, is perfect. As we all know, this is exactly what happened in God's dispensational dealings with the earth. No sooner did the old dispensation end, end with Israel's rejection of Christ, than God in mercy turned to the Gentiles (Rom. 11, etc.). This is intimated in our lesson, first, by the statement made in verse 3: the Lord Jesus "left Judea, and departed again into Galilee"—cf. Matthew 4:15—"Galilee of the Gentiles!" Second, in the fact that here the Lord Jesus is seen occupied not with the Jews but with the Samaritans. And third, by what we read of in verse 40—"and He abode there two days." How exceedingly striking is this! "He abode there two days." Remember that word in 2 Peter 3:8, which declares "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Two "days," then or 2,000 years is the length of time that Christ was to be away from the Jews in Judea. How perfect and accurate is this picture!

At the close of the seventh chapter we called attention to the importance of noticing the relation of one passage to another. This is a principle which has been sadly neglected by Bible students. Not only should we be diligent to examine each verse in the light of its context, but also each passage as a whole should be studied in its relation to the complete passage which precedes and follows it. By attending to this it will often be found that the Holy Spirit has placed in juxtaposition two incidents—miracles, parables, conversations, as the case may be—in order to point a contrast, or series of contrasts between them. Such we saw was plainly the case with what we have in the first and second halves of John 2, where a sevenfold contrast is to be noted. Another striking example is before us here. There is a manifest antithesis between what we have in the first half of John 3 and the first half of John 4.

As we study John 3 and 4 together, we discover a series of striking contrasts. Let us look at them. First, in John

3 we have "a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus:" in John 4 it is an unnamed woman that is before us. Second, the former was a man of rank, a "Master of Israel:" the latter was a woman of the lower ranks, for she came "to draw water." Third, the one was a favored Jew: the other was a despised Samaritan. Fourth, Nicodemus was a man of high reputation, a member of the Sanhedrin: the one with whom Christ dealt in John 4 was a woman of dissolute habits. Fifth, Nicodemus sought out Christ: here Christ seeks out the woman. Sixth, Nicodemus came to Christ "by night:" Christ speaks to the woman at mid-day. Seventh, to the self-righteous Pharisee Christ said, "Ye must be born again:" to this sinner of the Gentiles He tells of "the gift of God." How much we miss by failing to compare and contrast what the Holy Spirit has placed side by side in this wondrous revelation from God! May the Lord stir up all of us to more diligent study of His Word.

"When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee" (John 4:1-3). Even at that early date in Christ's public ministry the Pharisees had begun to manifest their opposition against Him. But this is not difficult to understand, for the teaching of the Lord Jesus openly condemned their hypocritical practices. Moreover, their jealousy was aroused at this new movement, of which He was regarded as the head. The Baptist was the son of a priest that ministered in the Temple, and this would entitle him to some consideration. But here was a man that was regarded as being no more than the son of a carpenter, and who was He to form a following! And, too, He was of Nazareth, now working in Judea! And "out of Nazareth," they taught, "could arise no prophet" (John 7:52). A spirit of rivalry was at work, and the report was being circulated that "Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John." Every one knew what crowds had flocked to the preaching and baptizing of that Elijah-like prophet, crying in the wilderness. Was it to be suffered then, that this One of poor parentage should eclipse the Baptist in fame? Surely not: that could not be allowed at any cost.

"When therefore the Lord knew... he left Judea." What a word is this! There is no hint of any one having informed Him. That was not necessary. The One who had humbled Himself to the infinite stoop of taking upon Him the form of a servant, was none other than "the Lord." This One whom the Pharisees contemptuously regarded as the Nazarene-carpenter, was none other than the Christ of God, in whom "dwelt all the fulness of the God-head bodily." "The Lord knew," at once displays His omniscience. Nothing could be, and nothing can be, hidden from Him.

"The Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John" (John 1:1). It is important to observe the order of the two verbs here for they tell us who, alone, are eligible for baptism. When two verbs are linked together thus, the first denotes the action, and the second how the action was performed. For example; suppose I said, "He poured oil on him and anointed him." You could not say, "He anointed him and poured oil on him," unless the anointing and the pouring were two different acts. Therefore, the fact that "baptizing" here comes after, and not before, the verb "made," proves that they were disciples first, and were "baptized" subsequently. It is one of many passages in the New Testament which, uniformly, teaches that only one who is already a believer in Christ is qualified for baptism.

"Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples" (John 1:2). This is but a parenthetical statement, nevertheless, it is of considerable importance. It has been well said by the late Bishop Ryle, "This verse intimates that baptism is neither the first nor the chief thing about Christianity. We frequently read of Christ preaching and praying, once of His administering the Lord's Supper, but 'baptize' He did not—as though to show us that baptism has nothing to do with salvation."

"He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee" (John 1:3). This is exceedingly solemn. To cherish the spirit of jealousy and rivalry is to drive away the Lord. When the Savior sent forth the twelve on their mission to the cities of Israel, He bade them "And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them" (Luke 9:5). And again, when sending forth the seventy, He said to them, "But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you" (Luke 10:10, 11) But before He did this, He first set them an example. If "no man" would receive His testimony in Judea (John 3:3), then He would leave for other parts. He would not stay to cast pearls before swine.

No doubt the preaching of the Lord Jesus in Judea, and especially the circumstance of baptizing many of the people (through the instrumentality of His disciples) had greatly angered the Jewish rulers, and probably they had already taken steps to prevent the progress of this One whose teaching so evidently conflicted with theirs, and whose growing influence over the minds of the people threatened to weaken their authority. Our Lord knew this, and because His hour was not yet come, and much was to be done by Him before He finished the work the Father had given Him to do, instead of waiting until He should be driven out of Judea, He left that district of His own accord, and retired into Galilee, which, being remote from Jerusalem, and under the governorship of Herod, was more or less outside of their jurisdiction and less subject to the power of the Sanhedrin.

"In going from Judea into Galilee, our Lord's most direct route lay through Samaria, which was a district of Palestine, bounded on the south by Judea, and on the north by Galilee, on the west by the Mediterranean Sea, and on the east by the river Jordan. It was possible to go from Judea into Galilee by crossing the Jordan, and passing through Perea; but this was a very circuitous route, though some of the stricter Jews seemed to have

been in the habit of taking it, to avoid intercourse with the Samaritans. The direct route lay through Samaria" (Dr. J. Brown).

Samaria was a province allotted to Ephraim and the half tribe of Manasseh in the days of Joshua (see Joshua 16 and 17, and particularly Joshua 17:7). After the revolt of the ten tribes, the inhabitants of this district had generally ceased to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem, and following first the wicked idolatry introduced by Jeroboam the son of Nebat (see 1 Kings 12:25-33, and note "Shechem" in verse 25), they fell an easy prey to the Gentile corruptions introduced by his successors. After the great body of the ten tribes had been carried away captives, and their district left almost without inhabitant, the king of Assyria planted in their province a colony of various nations (2 Kings 17:24) who, mingling with the few original inhabitants of the land, formed unto themselves a strange medley of a religion, by combining the principles and rights of Judaism with those of oriental idolaters. As the inspired historian tells us, they "feared the Lord, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places. They feared the Lord, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations who carried them away from thence... So these nations feared the Lord, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day" (2 Kings 17:32, 33, 41). Thus, the original dwellers in Samaria were, to a great extent, heathenized.

At the time of the return of the remnant of Israel from the Babylonian captivity, the Samaritans offered to enter into an alliance with the Jews (Ezra 4:1, 2), and on being refused (Ezra 4:3) they became the bitter enemies of the Jews and their most active opposers in the rebuilding of their Temple and capital (see Nehemiah 4 and 6). According to Josephus (see his "Antiquities" XI:7, 2; XIII:9), at a later date Manasseh, the son of Jaddua the high priest, contrary to the law, married the daughter of Sanballat, the chief of the Samaritans, and when the Jews insisted that he should either repudiate his wife, or renounce his sacred office, he fled to his father-in-law, who gave him an honorable reception, and by the permission of Alexander the Great built a temple to Jehovah on Mount Gerizim, in which Manasseh and his posterity officiated as high priests, in rivalry to the Divinely instituted ritual at Jerusalem—see also 1 Maccabees 3:10.

The Samaritans received as Divine the five books of Moses, and probably, also, some at least of the prophetic oracles; but they did not acknowledge the authenticity of the historical books written by the Jews, who they regarded as their worst enemies. The natural consequence of all these circumstances was, that the Jews and Samaritans regarded each other with much more rancorous dislike than either of them did the idolatrous nations by which they were surrounded. Hence when his enemies said unto Christ, "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan?" (John 8:48), we can understand better the venom behind the insult. Hence, too, it makes us bow our hearts in wonderment to find the Lord Jesus representing Himself as "a certain Samaritan" (Luke 10:33) as we learn of the depths of ignominy into which He had descended and how He became the despised and hated One in order to secure our salvation.

"And he must needs go through Samaria" (John 4:4). The needs-be was a moral and not a geographical one. There were two routes from Judea to Galilee. The more direct was through Samaria. The other, though more circuitous, led through Perea and Decapolis to the southern shores of Gennesaret. The former was the regular route. But the reason why the Lord "must" go through Samaria, was because of a Divine needs-be. From all eternity it had been ordained that He should go through Samaria. Some of God's elect were there, and these must be sought and found—cf. the Lord's own words in John 10:16, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring." We shall never appreciate the Gospel until we go back to the basic truth of predestination, which puts God first, which makes the choice His before it is ours, and which, in due time, brings His grace to bear upon us with invincible power.

Election is of persons—predestination is of things. All the great movements of the universe are regulated by God's will,—But if the great movements, then the small movements for the great depend upon the small. It was predestinated that our Savior should go through Samaria, because there was a chosen sinner there. And she was a chosen sinner, for if not she never would have chosen God, or known Jesus Christ. The whole machinery of grace was therefore set in motion in the direction of one poor lost sinner, that she might be restored to her Savior and to her God. That is what we wish to see in our own experience—to look back of ante-mundane ages, and date our eternal life from the covenant. To say:

Father 'twas Thy love that knew us
 Earth's foundation long before
 That same love to Jesus drew us
 By its sweet constraining power,
 And will keep us
 Safely now and ever more
 (Dr. G. S. Bishop).

It is not difficult to understand why the Lord must needs go through Samaria. There were those in Samaria whom the Father had given Him from all eternity, and these He "must" save. And, dear reader, if you are one of God's elect there is a needs be put on the Lord Jesus Christ to save you. If you are yet in your sins, you will

not always be. For years you may have been fleeing from Christ; but when His time comes He will overtake you. However you may kick against the pricks and contend against Him; however deeply you may sin, as the woman in our passage, He will most surely overtake and conquer you. Yea, even now He is on the way!

"Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour" (John 4:5, 6). How truly human was the Lord Jesus! He would in all points be like unto His brethren, so He did not exempt Himself from fatigue. How fully then can He sympathize with the laborer today who is worn out with toil! To the Savior, a long walk brought weariness, and weariness needed rest, and to rest He "sat thus" on the well. He was, apparently, more worn than the disciples, for they continued on into the village to buy food. But He was under a greater mental strain than they. He had a weariness they knew nothing about.

"Of the Son of man being in heaven, whilst upon earth, we have learnt in the previous chapter (John 3:13). Now, though Divine, and therefore in heaven, He was truly a man upon earth. This mystery of His person none of us can fathom (Matthew 11:27). Nor are we asked to. We have to believe it. 'Perfect God, and perfect Man: of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting'—such has been the language of confession of the western part of Christendom for many an age. Now there are some conditions incident to humanity. There are others, in addition, connected with fallen humanity, such as liability to sickness, to disease, and even to death. To these last, of course, the holy Son of God was not, though a man, subject; yet, as being a man He was able to die, and willingly gave up His life for His people. But to sickness and bodily decay, as the Holy One, in whom was no sin, He was not, and could not have been, subject. On the other hand, from conditions incident to humanity, as hunger, thirst and weariness, He was not exempt. In the wilderness He was hungry. On the Cross He was thirsty. Here at the well He was weary. Into what circumstances, then, did He voluntarily come, and that in obedience and love to His Father, and in love to His own sheep! He, by whom the worlds were made, was sitting a weary man by Jacob's well, and there at first alone. One word from the throne, and the whole angelic host would have flown to minister to Him. But that word was not spoken. For God's purpose of grace to souls in Samaria was to be worked out at Sychar" (C. E. Stuart).

"Jesus therefore being wearied." This brings out the reality of Christ's humanity. He was just as really and truly Man as He was God. In stressing His absolute Deity, we are in danger of overlooking the reality of His humanity. The Lord Jesus was perfect Man: He ate and drank, labored and slept, prayed and wept. And what a precious thought is there here for Christian workers: the Savior knew what it was to be "weary"—not weary of well doing, but weary in well doing. But it is blessed to see how the Holy Spirit has guarded the glory of Christ's person here. Side by side with this word upon His humanity, we are shown His Divine omniscience—revealed in His perfect knowledge of the history of the woman with whom He dealt at the well. This principle meets us at every turn in the Gospels. At His birth we behold His humiliation—lying in a manger—but we discover His Divine glory, too, for the angels were sent to announce the One born as "Christ the Lord." See Him asleep in the boat, exhausted from the toil of a heavy day's work: but mark the sequel, as He rises and stills the storm. Behold Him by the grave of Lazarus, groaning in spirit and weeping: and then bow before Him in worship as He, by a word from His mouth, brings the dead to life. So it is here: "wearied with his journey," and yet displaying His Deity by reading the secrets of this woman's heart.

"Jesus therefore being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well" (John 4:6). This illustrates another important principle, the application of which is often a great aid to the understanding of a passage, namely, noticing the place where a particular incident occurred. There is a profound significance to everything in Scripture, even the seemingly unimportant details. The character of the place frequently supplies the key to the meaning of what is recorded as occurring there. For instance: the children of Israel were in Egypt when the Lord delivered them. Egypt, then, symbolizes the place where we were when God apprehended us, namely, the world in which we groaned under the merciless taskmasters that dominated us. John the Baptist preached in the wilderness, for it symbolized the spiritual barrenness and desolation of Israel at that time. When the Lord Jesus enunciated the laws of His kingdom, He went up into a mountain—a place of elevation, symbolic of His throne of authority from which He delivered His manifesto. When He gave the parables He "sat by the sea side" (cf. Isaiah 17:12, 13; Ezekiel 26:3; Daniel 7:2; Revelation 17:5, for the "sea" in its symbolic significance). The first four parables of Matthew 13 pertain to the public profession of Christianity, hence these were given in the hearing of the "great multitudes;" but the next two concerned only the Lord's own people, so we read "Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him" (Matthew 13:36). When the Lord portrayed the poor sinner as the one to whom He came to minister (under the figure of the good "Samaritan") He represented him as a certain man who "went down from Jerusalem [foundation of peace] to Jericho [the city of the curse]." So, again, in Luke 15 the prodigal son is seen in "the far country" (away from the father), and there feeding on the husks which the swine did eat—another picture giving us the place where the sinner is morally.

The above examples, selected almost at random, illustrate the importance of observing the place where each event happened, and the position occupied by the chief actors. This same principle receives striking exemplification in the passage before us. The meeting between the Savior and this Samaritan adulteress

occurred at Sychar which means "purchased"—so was the "gift of God" that He proffered to her. And, as He revealed to her her soul's deep need He sat "on the well." The "well" was a figure of Himself, and its water was the emblem of the salvation that is to be found in Him. One authority for these statements is Isaiah 12:3, "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells (Heb. 'the well') of salvation." What a remarkable statement is this! It is the key to the typical significance of many an Old Testament passage. The "well" of the Old Testament Scriptures foreshadowed Christ and what is to be found in Him. We shall now turn to some of the Old Testament passages where the "well" is mentioned, and discover how remarkably and blessedly they foreshadowed this One who gave the water of life to the woman of Samaria.

1. The first time the "well" is mentioned in Scripture, is in Genesis 16:6, 7, 13, 14. "But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face. And the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness... And she called the name of the Lord which spake unto her, Thou God seest me... for she said, Have I also here looked after Him that seeth me? Wherefore the well was called, The well of him that liveth and seeth me." Note the following points: First, the "well" (the "fountain of water" of verse 7 is termed the "well" in verse 14) was the place where the angel of the Lord found this poor outcast. So Christ is where God meets the sinner, for "no man cometh unto the Father" but by Him. Second, this well was located in the wilderness—fit symbol of this world. The "wilderness" well depicts the state of heart we were in when we first met Christ! Third, the "well" was the place where God was revealed. Hagar, therefore, termed it, "the well of him that liveth and seeth me." So, again, Christ is the Revealer of God—"He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."

2. In Genesis 21:14-19 we read, "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bow shot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is . . . and God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water." How inexpressibly blessed is this in its typical suggestiveness! Notice the following points: First, we have before us again an outcast, and one whose water was spent, for she had but "a bottle:" like the prodigal son, she "began to be in want." Second, she had cast away her child to die, and there she sat weeping. What a picture of the poor, desolate, despairing sinner! Third, God "opened her eyes," and what for? In order that she might see the "well" that had been there all the time! Ah, was it not so with thee, dear Christian reader? It was not thine own mental acumen which discovered that One of whom the "well" here speaks. It was God who opened thine eyes to see Him as the One who alone could meet thy desperate and deep need. What do we read in Proverbs 20:12—"The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them." And again in John 5:20 we are told, "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that (in order that) we may know Him that is true."

3. In this same chapter the "well" is mentioned again in another connection: "And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant. And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well. Wherefore he called that place the well of the oath; because there they sware both of them" (Gen. 21:27-31). Here we find the "well" was the place of the "covenant" (verse 27), which was ratified by an "oath" (verse 31). And what do we read in Hebrews 7:20-22—"And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament [covenant]."

4. In Genesis 24:10-12 we read, "And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day." Not only is each typical picture perfect, but the order in which they are found evidences Divine design. In the first scriptures we have glanced at, that which is connected with the "well" suggested the meeting between the Savior and the sinner. And in the last passage, the covenant and the oath speak of that which tells of the sure ground upon which our eternal preservation rests. And from that point, every reference to the "well" has that connected with it which is appropriate of believers only. In the last quoted passage, the "well" is the place of prayer: so, the believer asks the Father in the name of Christ, of whom the "well" speaks.

5. In Genesis 29:1-3 we read, "Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east. And he looked, and beheld a well in the field, and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks." This is very beautiful. How striking is the contrast between this typical scene and the first that we looked at in Genesis 16. There, where it is a sinner and Christ which is in view, the "well" is located in the wilderness—figure of the barrenness and desolation of the sinner. But here, where the sheep

are in view, the "well" is found in the field—suggesting the "green pastures" into which the good Shepherd leads His own. Notice there were "three flocks of sheep that were lying by this "well," their position denoting rest, that rest which Christ gives His own. Here in the field were the three flocks lying "by it"—the well. It is only in Christ that we find rest.

6. In Exodus 2:15-17 we are told, "Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock." How marvelous is this type. First, Pharaoh the king of Egypt prefigures Satan as the god of this world, attacking and seeking to destroy the believer. From him Moses "fled." How often the great Enemy frightens us and gets us on the run. But how blessed to note the next statement here: fleeing from Pharaoh to Midian, where he now dwells, the first thing that we read of Moses is, "he sat down by a well." Thank God there is One to whom we can flee for refuge—the Lord Jesus Christ to whom the "well" pointed. To this well the daughters of Jethro also came, for water. But the shepherds came and drove them away. How many of the "under-shepherds" today are, by their infidelistic teaching, driving many away from Christ. Nevertheless, God still has a Moses here and there, who will "stand up and help" those who really desire the Water of Life. But be it noted, before we can "help" others we must first be resting on the well for ourselves, as Moses was.

7. "And from thence they went to Beer: that is the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water. Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it" (Num. 21:16, 17). What a word is this! The well is personified. It is made the object of song. It evokes praise. No interpreter is needed here. Beloved reader, are you "singing" unto the "Well?"

8. "Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by Enrogel; for they might not be seen to come into the city: and a wench went and told them; and they went and told king David. Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court: whither they went down. And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon; and the thing was not known" (2 Sam. 17:17-19). Here we find the "well" providing shelter and protection for God's people. Notice there was a "covering" over its mouth, so that Jonathan and Ahimaaz were hidden in the well. So it is with the believer—"your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). how striking is the last sentence quoted above, "And the thing was not known!" The world is in complete ignorance of the believer's place and portion in Christ!

9. "And David longed, and said, O that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" (2 Sam. 23:15). Nothing but water from the well of Bethlehem would satisfy David.

10. "Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well" (Prov. 5:15). What a blessed climax is this. The "well" is our own, and from its "running waters" we are invited to "drink."

We sincerely pity any who may regard all of this as fanciful. Surely such need to betake themselves to Christ for "eyesalve," that their eyes may be enabled to behold "wondrous things" out of God's Law. To us this study has been unspeakably blessed. And what meaning it all gives to John 4:6—"Jesus, therefore, being wearied with His journey sat thus on the well."

But there is one other word here that we must not overlook, a word that gives added force to the typical character of the picture before us, for it speaks of the character of that Salvation which is found in Christ. "Now Jacob's well was there" (John 4:6). There are three things in connection with this particular "well" that we need to consider. First, this well was purchased by Jacob, or more accurately speaking, the "field" in which the well was located was purchased by him. "And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-Aram; and pitched his tent before the city. And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money" (Gen. 33:18, 19). The word "Sychar" in John 4:6 signifies purchased. What a well-chosen and suited place for Christ to speak to that woman of the "gift of God!" But let it never be forgotten that this "gift" costs us nothing, because it cost Him everything.

Second, the "parcel of ground" in which was this well, was afterwards taken by Joseph with "sword and bow; . . . And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow" (Gen. 48:21, 22)—that this is the same "parcel of ground" referred to in Genesis 33 is clear from John 4:5. The reference in Genesis 48 must be to a later date than what is in view in Genesis 33. The Amorites were seeking to rob Jacob of his well, and therefore an appeal to arms was necessary. This, we believe, fore shadowed the present interval, during which the Holy Spirit (while Satan is yet the "Prince of this world" and ever seeks to oppose and keep God's Jacobs away from the "well") is bringing salvation to souls by means of the "sword" (Heb. 4:12).

Third, this portion purchased by Jacob, and later secured by means of the "sword and bow," was given to Joseph (see Genesis 48:21, 22). This became a part of Joseph's "birthright," for said Jacob "I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren." This ought to have been given to Reuben, Jacob's "firstborn," but through his fall into grievous sin it was transferred to Joseph (see 1 Chronicles 5:1). How marvelously accurate

the type! Christ the second Man takes the inheritance which the first man forfeited and lost through sin! Putting these three together, we have: the "well" purchased, the "well" possessed, the "well" enjoyed.

And here we must stop. In the next chapter we shall, D.V., consider carefully each sentence in verses 7-11. Let the student ponder prayerfully:—

1. What are we to learn from the fact that the Savior was the first to speak? verse 7.
2. Why did He begin by asking her for a drink? verse 7.
3. Was it merely a drink of water He had in mind! If not, what was it?
4. What is the force and significance of the parenthetical statement of verse 8?
5. What does the woman's answer (verse 9) go to prove?
6. What is the "gift of God?" verse 10
7. Why does Christ liken salvation to "living water?" Enumerate the different thoughts suggested by this figure.