

THE GOSPEL OF

JOHN

The Savior
of the World

INTRODUCTION

John 4:1-42

As I think through my life, I can think of many times I have just been in awe of the firsts I experienced. I remember the first time I went to Ethiopia, the first time I visited a college, the first time Shari and I became parents.

I remember the first time I met Jose, my son. You see, at the school that I teach, there is an organization called SOS Children's Village. It is a foster care village made up of 18 single-family homes that have between 3 and 6 kids in each one. Jose was a resident at SOS. However, after several meetings and checking off about a thousand boxes from people visiting our home, Jose came to live at our house on April 24, 2019. Since Jose has lived at our house, he has experienced many different things...in fact, he was experiencing so many first-time things that Jose decided to make his own list.

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|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Read a chapter book | • Jumped into a pool |
| • Wrote a book report | • Went down a water slide |
| • Pumped up a tire | • Went to TGI Fridays |
| • Rode a horse | • Went to Culver's |
| • Had a nerf gun war | • Played a whiffle ball game |
| • Went to the orthodontist | • Went to Bible Camp |
| • Went to a soccer camp | • Drove a gator |
| • Rode in a jeep | • Had a family picture |
| • Climbed a rock wall | |

I remember the first time I had a conversation with the Almighty God...the moment I gave my life to Jesus Christ at 302 E Taylor Street in Newark, during that summer before my junior year of high school.

Many incredible stories in the Bible talk about times when men and women had their first encounter with the Creator of the world. I think of Paul as he was heading to Damascus and on a mission to destroy the new religion exploding in size, referred to as The Way. On his way there, Paul, called Saul in the Scriptures at that point, was greeted by Jesus Christ, and Paul's response was that of shock, disbelief, and perhaps hope that his conversation was not for real.

You see, at that moment when Jesus asked the question, "Why are you persecuting me?," Paul must have been in a panic...who is this speaking to me? Who is having this conversation with me? As Paul found out, it was Jesus of Nazareth. A thousand thoughts raced through Paul's mind on this response...I'm guessing he thought of Stephen and realized that he oversaw the killing of an innocent man...he probably thought of all of his "good" intentions that had been done as an enemy of God rather than as a friend.

In one simple and profound first encounter with the true God, Jesus turned Paul's life upside down, or perhaps right-side up.

Today in John 4, we examine an encounter that took place in the most unlikely place, during the most unlikely time, with the most unlikely company. Unlike many conversations that happen around the water cooler, this one had eternal effects. This was a "first" that wouldn't soon be forgotten.

OPEN IT

1. Besides your encounter with the Savior Jesus Christ, what is the most unique, exciting, or noteworthy first meeting you have had?

READ IT

John 4:1-42

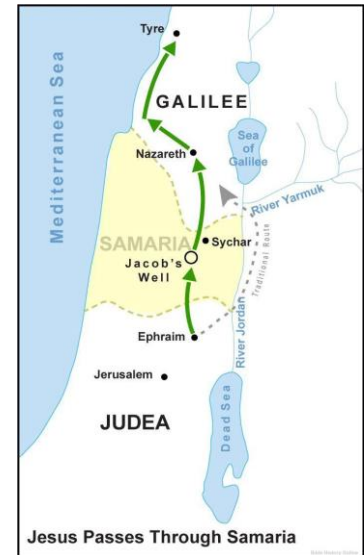
EXPLORE IT

2. Where were Jesus and His disciples departing from? (v.3)
3. Where were they heading to? (v.3)
4. What town did Jesus stop in? (v.5)
5. Why did Jesus stop at Jacob's Well? (v.6)
6. Who did Jesus say He was to the woman? (vv. 25-26)

APPLY IT

John 4 tells us that Jesus and Disciples “left Judea and departed again for Galilee.”¹ Typically, this path would have taken Jesus and His followers to the east of the Jordan River, but that is not the route taken in John 4. Instead, Jesus leads His people North to the heart of Samaria.² Verse 4 says, “And he had to pass through Samaria.”³

Why does John write that “he had to pass through Samaria?”



In verse 6 of John 4, it says, “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.”⁴

7. Why do you think Jesus was weary? Why is His weariness significant to note? What time was it “about” in the standard modern 12-hour clock?

¹ The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

² Aleti, A. (2020). Bible History. photograph. Retrieved 2021, from https://miro.medium.com/max/1398/1*s_NY5wdHVahPQu5OQgvoLA.jpeg.

³ The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

⁴ Ibid

John 3:16 communicates that Jesus was not sent into the world for the Jews only, but for the world. We see this same message in the conversation in chapter 4, starting in verse 7. John tells us that the disciples had gone to town to grab some food while Jesus strikes up a conversation with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well. Immediately we see the woman puts up a defense against Jesus.

8. Why would it have been odd or even unexpected for Jesus to ask the woman for a drink from the well?

9. Jesus bridges the gap between Jews and Samaritans multiple times throughout His ministry. Why does the gospel call us to build bridges instead of divisions?

10. What do Jesus' actions throughout this encounter reveal about how the Kingdom of God functions?

Jesus tells the woman at the well that God has given the gift He had just communicated with Nicodemus in John 3. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the author, the Apostle John, reminds us that Jesus is a gift from God.

11. What is John's purpose in writing this gospel and how does this story help John accomplish that purpose?

While I was in Ethiopia, we gave away clothes and hygiene products to the people who lived in the countryside. These people were beyond poor and lacked almost everything that we would say was a need, including clean water and food daily. As we began to hand out some of the things we brought, a mob of people started pushing their way forward. Eventually, we were able to gain control of the situation, and the people sat in an organized line waiting for their gifts. The thing was, they didn't know what we were giving away. They just knew we had something to give, and they wanted it because they believed it would help them in their situation. That is very similar to this woman at the well after Jesus tells her that the water He can give to her will never run out. She doesn't fully understand it, but if that is what He has, she wants it. This will be the same that we see in John 6 when the people say, "Sir, give us this bread always."⁵

12. Why do you think the woman was so eager to accept the water Jesus was offering?

13. The woman questioned Jesus if He thought that He was better than their father, Jacob. Why did the woman think Jacob was so great?

⁵ Ibid

In verses 16-19, Jesus and woman discuss sin that the woman has been a part of, referring to her many marriages and acknowledging the man that she is with now is not even one of the five previous husbands. The woman immediately identifies that Jesus is a prophet.

14. Why would this cause the woman to believe Jesus was a prophet?

Romans 3 tells us that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. In verse 9 of that chapter, it says, “What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin.”⁶

Even though we have sinned, often we start adding labels onto ourselves and those around us. Those people over there, they are gossipers. Those over there, they have given themselves to sexual immorality. Those people are thieves. Those people, they are liars and cheaters. However, those people are murderers.

That is when we start deceiving ourselves. We start thinking that we are better than that other group, and really we start excusing our behaviors because we aren't that bad.

These verses in chapter 4 of John are many times preached to people that we should be more like Jesus and reach out to those that are lost. Instead, it might be essential for us to reflect on how we are like the woman at the well.

15. Here's a personal question to examine your life...How are you like the woman at the well?

⁶ Ibid

Through the years, billions of people have believed in God and thought that He was good. However, many of these people have resisted a relationship with Jesus Christ because of the exclusivity of Christianity. Right before the disciples return from their quick run to the grocery store, the woman at the well acknowledges that she believes in God and believes that there will be One that would come (see Deuteronomy 18:18).

16. Why do you think the Samaritan woman would have knowledge of the coming Messiah?

17. What was the woman's reaction when Jesus told her, "I who speak to you am he"?⁷

The disciples were shocked that Jesus was talking with the Samaritan woman, and then they were surprised that Jesus wasn't eating, especially after the long journey. However, they didn't understand that Jesus was doing His Father's work, as He always was doing.

18. What was the harvest that Jesus was referring to in verse 35? Do you think this harvest is still in effect today? If so, what should we do to engage in it?

⁷ Ibid

The Samaritan men mentioned that they believed in Jesus because of what the woman said. At the very end of this portion of scripture, they say, “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.”⁸

19. Who led you to know Jesus Christ?

20. What was the moment (date and location) you realized, for yourself, that Jesus Christ was and is indeed the Savior of the world?

⁸ Ibid