

COMMENTARY ON JOHN

LESSON NUMBER 48

John 4:25 ***"The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when He is come, He will tell us all things. ²⁶ Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He. ²⁷ And upon this came His disciples, and marveled that He talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest Thou? or, Why talkest Thou with her?"*** (John 4:25-27)

I AM HE

INTRODUCTION

Those who have any perceptive dealings with Jesus, find they are always personal. Jesus does not deal with people as anonymous members of the human race. When he first met Nathanael He said to him, *"Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee"* (John 1:48). When teaching in the home of Martha, who complained because her sister was not helping her, Jesus said, *"Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things"* (Luke 10:41). He revealed to Peter that Satan had requested to sift him, but that He had prayed for Peter (Lk 22:31-32). He gave a severe diagnosis of the scribes and Pharisees, speaking directly to them (Matt 23:13-35). He confronted those who merchandised in the Temple, telling them, what they were actually doing (John 2:16; Lk 19:46). He dealt with things the disciples disputed about as they walked along, thinking their conversation was unknown to Him (Mk 9:33-34). When in Simon's house, and a woman of ill fame anointed His feet with precious ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, Simon thought within himself, *"This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him: for she is a sinner."* Jesus responded by telling Simon what he had **not** done, and how it related to what the woman had done. He also told the woman, *"Thy sins are forgiven thee"* (Luke 7:37-50). After He had risen from the dead, He confronted two discouraged men walking on the road that led to Emmaus. He asked them why they were walking with sadness. He then corrected their thinking (Lk 24:17-28). In our text, Jesus has taken the time to speak with an unnamed Samaritan woman. He has told her how many husbands she had, and that she was living with a man who was not her husband (John 4:18). He has told her what she did not know, and that the religion she had embraced was one characterized by ignorance (John 4:22). This is the Lord's manner. He will not deal with you in an impersonal way, or approach you merely as an anonymous member of a religious group. He will probe and reveal your heart. The advantage comes to you when you are willing for Him to do this.

"I KNOW THAT MESSIAS COMETH"

John 4:25 ***"The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when He is come, He will tell us all things."***

THE WOMAN SAITH UNTO HIM. There is certain evidence of boldness in this woman speaking with Christ. There are not a lot of examples of women speaking with Jesus. When Jesus asked who touched Him, the woman healed of an issue of blood told

Jesus what had taken place, fearing and trembling as she did so (Mk 5:33). The Syrophenician woman followed after Jesus, pleading that He would heal her daughter (Mk 7:26), and reasoned with Jesus when He seemed to refuse to do so (Mk 7:28). Because of the unusual nature of this case, I affirm that this was an example of the Lord drawing an individual to Jesus. In fact, Jesus said no one could come to Him unless the Father drew them (John 6:44). In that Divine drawing, natural and cultural hindrances are overcome, and the individual is liberated to inquire and speak more freely to the Lord.

I KNOW THAT. This was **not** the knowledge that saves, or that makes a person free (John 8:32). This was an intellectual assessment. It is the kind of knowledge Paul said Agrippa had. He was *"expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews"* (Acts 26:3). He had an intellectual and rudimentary grasp of the prophets (Acts 26:27), but it was not sufficient to make him free, or to bring him to salvation. In order for the knowledge of truth to have a sanctifying influence upon the individual, he must be persuaded of it (Acts 26:28-29). This is one of the great weaknesses of contemporary Christianity. The knowledge it promotes is more akin to that of Agrippa and the woman of Samaria, than to the *"knowledge"* that frees (John 8:32), and the knowledge that is added to virtue (2 Pet 1:5). The question is not whether or not this kind of knowledge is lawful. Rather, it is whether or not it can be productive in matters pertaining to life and godliness. This text has to do with that.

MESSIAS COMETH WHICH IS CALLED CHRIST. The Samaritans did not receive the Prophets as inspired messengers. They did, it is generally known, receive the writings of Moses. His writings included three particular prophecies of Jesus.

First, that the *"Seed"* of the woman would bruise the serpent's head: *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel"* (Gen 3:15).

Second, that the people would gather to Him: *"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between His feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be"* (Gen 49:10). There would be no God-ordained leader of the people that would take the place of, or replace, Jesus.

Third, that He would be a prophet to whom the people must give heed: *"The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken . . . "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him . . . And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him"* (Deut 18:15,18-19). Peter referred to this latter text in his second sermon in the Temple (Acts 3:22-23).

Sadly, there are many professing Christians who do not think of Jesus in this rudimentary way – as delivering words from God to us, that **must** be received by us. In the movement with which I was once associated there is a significant number of leaders who believe the words of Jesus were spoken under the Law, and do not apply to us. They take the position that the words of Jesus to which Moses referred, are limited to the ones He spoke through the Apostles after the day of Pentecost – even though Jesus said His words, spoken while He tabernacled among men, were *"spirit,"* and *"life"* (John 6:63), and would never pass away (Matt 24:35). That is, they could make men alive.

HE WILL TELL US ALL THINGS. This expression matches the words declared by Moses: *"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will*

put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them ALL that I shall command Him" (Deut 18:18). Moses' prophecy was not that Jesus would reveal what was in man – although He does do that. Rather, they speak of Him declaring everything the Father and told Him to say, which are the *"all things"* of reference. During His ministry, Jesus precisely affirmed that is what He was doing when He spoke. *"Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me"* (John 7:16); *"as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things"* (John 8:28); *"For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak;"* (John 12:49); *"the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works"* (John 14:10); *"the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me"* (John 14:24).

The *"all things"* that Jesus speaks, therefore, are all the things the Father commanded Him to speak. It simply is not possible that they pertained only to the six-month period in which He went about preaching the Kingdom of God.

I THAT SPEAK UNTO THEE AM HE

"²⁶ Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He."

The woman from Samaria had acknowledged, *"I know that Messiah is coming"* ^{NKJV} (John 4:25). This was apparently general knowledge, even among the Samaritans. We do not know how this knowledge was obtained, except that it was not direct knowledge from God. We know this is the case, because the Samaritans did not know the God they worshiped (John 4:22). They could not have deduced this from nature, or earthly circumstances, for nature does not hold the mysteries of what God is going to do. That prerogative belongs to prophets, who are sent from God.

Ultimately, this is probably traced back to the time when the king of Assyria, who, upon conquering and capturing Israel, had populated the promised land with heathen (2 Kgs 17:24). The Lord responded to this defiling of His land by sending *"lions among them, which slew some of them"* (2 Kgs 17:25). The people sent word to the king, reporting the activity of the lions, concluding that God had done this because the people *"know not the manner of the God of the land."* The king then commanded, *"saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land. Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD"* (2 Kgs 17:27-28).

We do not know everything that resulted from this event, which took place around seven hundred and fifty years before the occasion taking place at the well of Jacob. However, in that interim, some valid introductory knowledge of God penetrated the land. We understand that the Samaritans only acknowledged Moses' writings. That being true, the prophecy of a coming Messiah who would tell the people *"all things"* was the solitary prophecy of Deuteronomy 18:18: *"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and he shall speak unto them ALL that I shall command him."* Now, for more than seven centuries, at least some of the Samaritans had been anticipating the coming of this promised Revealer. Talk about *"small beginnings!"* It is no wonder that when the Jews started rebuilding the Temple, and became discouraged at the seeming littleness of the work, God replied, *"Do not despise these small beginnings"* ^{NLT} (Zech 4:10).

A WORD ABOUT OUR TIMES. The Spirit has exposed us to the times during which

Jesus began His ministry. It was a time when some Samaritans were anticipating the Messiah – the Christ.” Others “waited for the Kingdom of God” (Mk 15:43). Still others “looked for redemption in Jerusalem” (Lk 2:38). When John the Baptist began preparing the way for Christ, “the people were in expectation” (Lk 3:15). After Philip confronted Jesus, he went and told Nathanael, “We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (John 1:45). Not knowing Jesus would rise from the dead, His disciples reasoned, “But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel” (Luke 24:21). **The point is that familiarity with the Word of God had produced an expectation in those who believed what God had promised.**

In our time, there is such a pervasive ignorance of the Word of God, that scarcely a person can be found who is living in expectation of a Divine work. They do not know enough about Jesus to recognize when He is working among them. Our society has been brought lower than the Samaritans, and there is no acceptable excuse for it. Religious professionals have dealt a devastating blow to the society to whom they are supposedly ministering.

THE RELEVANCE OF THIS TO OUR TEXT. This woman knew enough so that Jesus could frankly say to her, “I that speak unto thee am He!” He was the One whom God had sent to tell all things He intended for men to know. With only a smattering of knowledge, this woman was enabled to identify enough about Jesus to do something about it.

As men “grow up- into Christ in all things,” which is what they are intended to do (Eph 4:15), Jesus will more and more say to their hearts, “I am He!” **When you believe there are such things as “the Door”**—[ENTRANCE] (John 10:9), **“the Vine”**—[LIFE-SOURCE] (John 15:5), **“the Way”**—[ACCESS] **“the Truth”**—[ULTIMATE REALITY], **“and the Life”**—[RECIPROCITY WITH GOD] (John 14:6), **“the Bread of life”**—[NOURISHMENT FOR THE SOUL] (John 6:35), **“the Light of the world”**—[ILLUMINATION] (John 8:12), **“the Good Shepherd”**—[GUIDANCE AND CARE] (John 10:11), and **“the resurrection and the Life”**—[RENEWAL AND VITALITY] (John 11:25), you are ready for Jesus to speak. **When the heart is persuaded that these realities exist and can be apprehended, then, and only then, will Jesus speak to the heart saying, “I am He!”**

Until then, religion remains in the domain of philosophy, and certainty, confidence, and assurance are an absent trio. O, there are approaches to Christianity that lead people into the room of surmising, causing them to think such things are true because it is the position of a favored religious institution. However, there will be no power resident in any profession that is not the result of spiritual perception. I will tell you that we are living in a generation that does not expect much from Jesus, because they know very little about Him – even less than the Samaritan woman with whom Jesus is talking.

THE DISCIPLES RETURN AND OBSERVE

“ 27 And upon this came His disciples, and marveled that He talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest Thou? or, Why talkest Thou with her?”

UPON THIS. Other versions read, “at this point,” ^{NKJV} “just then,” ^{NIV} “And immediately,” ^{DOUAY} “upon that,” ^{GENEVA} “At that time,” ^{GWN} “while he was speaking,” ^{MRD} “At that moment,” ^{NAB} and “Now at that very moment.” ^{NET}

Something of Divine workings is revealed in this seemingly passing comment. First, we learn from the Scriptures that God frequently interrupts what men are doing. This is seen in the experiences of Adam and Eve (Gen 3:9), Cain (Gen 4:10), the flood (2 Pet 2:5, the building of the tower and city at Shinar (Gen 11:7-8), Nebuchadnezzar’s reign (Dan 4:30-33), etc. But men never interrupt what God is doing, staying His hand, or asking Him

what He is doing (Dan 4:35).

So it is here. According to the Divine calendar, Jesus had an appointment with a woman from Samaria. He told the woman what God intended Him to say, for He only said what His Father told Him to say (John 8:28; 12:49). When He had completed His witness, and only when it had been completed, His disciples returned from obtaining some food.

HIS DISCIPLES MARVELED. When the disciples returned, they saw Jesus talking with this woman. At this point in His ministry, it does not appear the disciples had every witnessed Jesus talking with a woman. Aside from this Samaritan woman, and after His ministry commenced, the first woman with whom Jesus is said to have spoken is the woman with the issue of blood (Matt 9:20; Mk 5:25; Lk 8:43). This by no means suggests Jesus had avoided speaking with women. It had not, however, been revealed as His manner. Now, the disciples behold Jesus talking with a woman – not a Jewish woman, but a Samaritan woman.

They “*marveled*” at what they saw. Other versions read, “*were surprised*,”^{NIV} “*were astonished*,”^{NRSV} “*were shocked*,”^{CEB} “*were amazed*,”^{CJB} “*wondered that He spoke with a woman*,”^{DARBY} “*were greatly surprised*,”^{GNB} and “*they wondered (were surprised, astonished.*”^{AMPLIFIED}

The word translated “*marveled*” [thaumazo] means, “TO WONDER, WONDER AT, MARVEL,”^{THAYER} “BE ASTONISHED OR SURPRISED THAT,”^{FRIBERG} AND “WONDER, MARVEL, BE ASTONISHED.”^{GINGRICH}

What happened here is that the disciples saw Jesus doing something they had no idea He would do. He was acting in contradiction of their perception of Him. None of them concluded that this was something Jesus would ordinarily do. They were not yet acquainted with Jesus as He really was. When Jesus stilled a tempest and quieted the winds, His disciples “*were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered*” (Mk 6:51). When Jesus told His disciples it was more difficult for a rich man to be saved than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, “*they were exceedingly amazed*” (Matt 19:25). Later, they “*marveled*” when the fig Jesus had cursed withered and died (Matt 21:20; Lk 8:25).

All such expressions are confirmations that Christ is not known as fully as is possible. Men cannot simply see some things Jesus does, hear of things He has said, then reason it all out, arriving at an accurate appraisal of the Son of God. **Men must grow up into Christ** (Eph 4:15) **to the point where they are not constantly surprised by what Jesus does.** As long as their understanding of Jesus is deficient, their prayers will be limited, circumscribed by their own ignorance.

YET NO MAN SAID. The disciples of Jesus knew enough about Him to know they should not ask, “*What seekest Thou? or, Why talkest Thou with her?*” Other versions read, “*What do you want? or Why are you talking with her?*”^{NIV} “*What is your purpose? or, Why are you talking to her?*”^{BBE} “*What do you want from her?*” or “*Why are you talking to her?*”^{GWN} “*why, or what they had been discussing,*”^{LIVING} and “*What are You inquiring about? or What do You want? or, Why do You speak with her?*”^{AMPLIFIED} Was there something Jesus needed that they did not know about? **Whatever thoughts they may have had about what they were seeing, they did not say them to Jesus!**

Peter was sometimes bold to speak (Matt 16:22; 17:4; John 21:21). – but not this time! James and John waxed bold and asked concerning being seated at Jesus’ right and left hands in the Kingdom (Mk 10:35-40) – but they ventured no word here.

And what of those who say such things as, “Why did this happen to me?” Or, “What is the Lord doing?” Or, “Why did **they** see this, but I did not?” Or, “Why am I not

enjoying the favor someone else is enjoying? Are those legitimate inquiries? Is it ever right to say to God Almighty, *"Why hast Thou made me thus?"* (Rom 9:20). Job told his critics, *"Behold, He taketh away, who can hinder Him? who will say unto Him, What doest Thou?"* (Job 9:12). Let the people of God be noted for saying, *"Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven"* (Matt 6:10), and *"The will of the Lord be done"* (Acts 21:14). When Job was confronted with Divine interrogation he replied, *"Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once I have spoken; but I will not answer: yea twice, but I will proceed no further"* (Job 40:4). A wise course, indeed!