



John

Lesson 4 Chapter 4

In Chapter 3 John the Baptist testified to his disciples that he must decrease, and Jesus must increase (vr.30). That meant that John understood that the time had come for Jesus to begin revealing Himself as the Messiah, and for the focus to go from John to Jesus. The Jews had not heard from God through a prophet in 400 years. To now hear John, who was very similar to Elijah, preaching and teaching that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, dramatically caught their attention. John made it clear that he himself was not the Messiah, but his calling was to identify the Messiah. He did this when he declared of Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." John 1:29 When the Pharisees heard that Jesus was baptizing more and making more disciples than John, they began to feel threatened by Him because He spoke so powerfully, performed miracles they couldn't explain, and made them look like fools before their followers (4:1). Jesus decided to leave the area undoubtedly to avoid unnecessary conflict with them. His destination was to return to Galilee which was about a three-day journey north through the district of Samaria (4:4). Most Jews took a longer route around the area instead of through it because of the centuries old conflict between the Jews and

Samaritans. This feud began in 720 B.C. when the Assyrians invaded the land which had been populated by the Jewish people. After conquering them and taking many of the people back to Assyria, they moved in foreigners to repopulate the area with the Jews that were left there (2 Kings 17:6). The Samaritans were the result of the intermarriages that took place among these people. To Jews this was a most terrible crime of defiling the Jewish racial purity, and a bitter hatred grew between them. The Samaritans considered themselves as true Yahweh worshippers just as the Jews did. They both used the Pentateuch as their guide to life and worship, but the Samaritans believed that Mt. Gerizim was the true central place of worship for all Israel. They believed that the site where Abraham offered Isaac was that of an area of a similar name that was near Mt. Gerizim not in Jerusalem. And following the Ten Commandments in Exodus and Deuteronomy, they add another commandment that requires an altar on Mt. Gerizim and a sacrificial service that was to be celebrated there (Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia). So for Jesus to travel through this area, and add to His defilement by talking to a woman there, simply added fuel to the fire of enmity that was burning in the hearts and minds of the religious leaders.

READ CHAPTER 4

1. *The racial and cultural prejudice between the Jews and Samaritans is common to what we experience in our world today. Think of some specific situations where racial prejudice exists. What do you think are some of the root causes of it?*

7. *What was the end result of this encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman? Vs.39-42*
8. *After leaving Samaria Jesus heads north again to Galilee. He went to Cana (located about 3.7 miles from His hometown of Nazareth) where He had done His first miracle of changing water to wine at the wedding feast. Why do you think the people at Cana received Jesus well and those in His hometown didn't? Matthew 13:57-58*
9. *Who was the man that came and made a request of Jesus, and where was he from?*
10. *Compare the incident that takes place in vs.43-53 to the events of Matthew 8:5-13. Explain how they are similar, how they are different, and what you learn from them.*

Prayer requests:

Group time notes:
