

# Meeting Jesus

## LEADERS NOTES

### Week 2

Reading - I am not suggesting reading it like a script but rather from v9-26 that one person reads the verses where the woman speaks and another person reads the verses where Jesus speaks.

2. They seem to me to be as different as chalk and cheese.

3. This is not a trick question, she doesn't seem to have any spiritual interest that we know of. Although she does show an awareness of the issues between Jews and Samaritans.

4. The readings after question 19 may also be relevant here.

Of course someone like the woman at the well might never visit a church so you might consider how we can instead reach someone like this.

(For that matter a devout follower of another religion might well never visit a church either.)

5. Remember she probably had to trek out to this well every day, Jesus talk about water gets her attention.

Many say that Sychar is a name for what had formerly been Shechem. If this is the case then the well was over a mile from the city whilst there was water nearer. An alternative, though less popular, view is that Sychar was a village near to Shechem which is otherwise unknown. In antiquity the scholar Jerome took the former view and Jewish historian Eusebius the latter.

7. Jesus knows the woman's circumstances apparently a divine knowledge.

9. In chapter 6 Jesus speaks about eating His flesh and drinking His blood. This is about spiritually feeding on Him in faith and is also the significance of the Lord's Supper.

In chapter 7 (vv37-39) Jesus uses a similar image about water flowing and refers this to the Holy Spirit.

The language here in chapter 4 seems to be about being spiritually sustained by Christ, and that this sustaining is eternal. But of course this is part of the work of the Holy Spirit in us.

10-11. This is one of the many verses in the Bible that indicate that other religions are not different roads to God, the Samaritans were "wrong" but now in Christ all can come to Salvation.

It is interesting that Jesus told the disciples they were to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, **Samaria** and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1.8) and that sequence is followed in the rest of Acts. The Samaritans, who did have some shared history with the Jews (ie Judahites), seem to have had a special place in this.

14-15. People do get very attached to buildings. That was a problem for the Israelites at the time of Jesus as is shown by their reaction to Jesus. Stephen's speech (Acts 7) shows that God's people fared perfectly well before the Temple. It is also worth remembering that the Temple was destroyed in John, the Gospel writer's lifetime.

The difficulty is that people can also get attached to church buildings and somehow think that worship is not possible without the building. The early Christians certainly met for a while in Synagogues but as far as we know it was quite some time before they had their own distinct places of worship, although that was partly because they often had to meet in secret as happens in other countries still today.

16-17. I may be stretching the point here myself. But, the woman's testimony that Jesus told her everything she ever did is a bit over the top. Of course it is hard to think anyone would have taken what she said literally, and we would affirm that Jesus probably could have

told her everything she ever did, nevertheless less he didn't. Sometimes I think we are tempted to spice up our testimony and say things that are not strictly true if not necessarily false. This seems to me wrong not just because it is bearing false witness but because people may later feel that they were duped by us.

19. We don't know for certain what this woman believed or what happened to her faith afterwards, but she does seem to have travelled a lot further on her journey of faith through this first encounter with Jesus than Nicodemus did in his.

The references from James are intended as a reminder that we often judge people by external things. Many would imagine that Nicodemus was much more promising as pew fodder. But in the ministry of Jesus we see that it was those who were furthest from the kingdom who seem to have grasped most clearly the grace of the gospel, whilst those who seemed religious and upright had the greatest difficulties.

*David Phillips,  
February 2015*