

Sunday December 4th 2016
For Jews Request a Sign.....
Part Thirteen

1). Joh 4:10 *Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."*

We had seen last time how the Lord sitting by Jacob's well outside the city of Sychar in Samaria conversing with a Samaritan woman pictures for us Christ and the Church as we find it at the end of this dispensation and how this scene parallels the situation described with respect to the church in Laodicea, the 7th of the 7 churches in Revelation Chapter 3 - Re 3:20 *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."*

a). The Samaritan woman having the opportunity to ask the Fountain of Living Water for a drink of the same and the Christian in the Laodicean church having the opportunity to open the door and dine with Christ and Christ with him can both be seen to be determined by one thing, hearing His voice – Heb 3:7 ¶ *Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice & Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness,*

b). And hearing His voice of course goes beyond just receiving the audible sound for the Samaritan woman and just reading the Bible for the Laodicean Christian to receiving and believing the spiritual truth contained in the Lord's words - Joh 6:63 *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."*

c). It is, as we have seen previously with Nicodemus, the necessity of going beyond the letter which can only result in death with respect to the age to come, to the Spirit who gives life, but as we saw last time the Samaritan woman, just like Nicodemus, is only able to focus on the literal and not the

spiritual and such also must be the case for the Laodicean Christian – The Lord is directing the Samaritan woman to be continually filled with the Spirit with a view to receiving age lasting life, something that can only be brought forth from above through the living Word via the written Word which is also alive – Heb 4:12 *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit,*

And the way in which the Lord presents this, asking Him for a drink, alludes to the experience of Israel in the wilderness as recorded in both Exodus and Numbers, an experience found in the Books of Moses that the Samaritans revered and should therefore have known - Ex 17:6 *"Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.*

Nu 20:7 *Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 8 "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals."*

d). But the Samaritan woman hears only the possibility of not having to continue with her daily chore of water gathering - Joh 4:15 *The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."*

And she eventually leaves the Lord's presence without her waterpot, having drawn no water, to return to the city where she asks a question which really serves as a definitive statement - Joh 4:29 *"Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ? [But I really don't think so]"*

And what we see with the Samaritan woman here with her empty waterpot parallels the 5 foolish virgins having no extra supply of oil in their vessels for their lamps and just as the foolish virgins were somewhere else when the Bridegroom came so the Samaritan woman leaves the Bridegroom to go back into the city.

e). And this that we see with the Samaritan woman is something we have witnessed so many times with respect to the proclamation of the Word

of the Kingdom, that which reveals Christ past, present and future. This Word is presented and many who have heard it walk away and although they do not use these words the echo of the Samaritan woman is resounding, 'Could this be the Truth? But I really don't think so.'

2). Continuing along this same thought there is one other part of the conversation between the Lord and the Samaritan woman that is instructive for us - Joh 4:19 *The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23 "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

The Samaritans had built a temple on Mount Gerizim believing this to be the place God wanted His temple built rather than Jerusalem because it was on this mountain that blessings had been pronounced as recorded in - De 11:26 ¶ *"Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: 27 "the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; 28 "and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. 29 "Now it shall be, when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess, that you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.*

a). And there are 2 things that we can learn from this part of their conversation. Firstly, we can note that the woman is preoccupied with form and function, where is the right place to worship God? Rather than how to worship Him, and much of the Church is caught up with this same preoccupation creating sacred areas within buildings, rituals that must be performed a certain way often administered by a 'priestly' class and all this is then seen to be the correct location for, and means by which, the Lord is to be worshipped.

b). The Lord in His response to the Samaritan woman does not address this issue and nor does He make any comment on the merits of Mount Gerizim or Jerusalem, which brings us to the second thing we can learn.

c). The Lord cannot speak about these things to the Samaritan woman because of the type. Things to do with temple worship either in location or ritual, whether Mount Gerizim or Jerusalem, are exclusively the province of the Jews and can have no place within that which pertains to the one new man in Christ. There is nothing that is prescribed in the Law of Moses with regards to this that has anything to do with Christians. We are not subject to the Mosaic economy and so to bring anything from there over into this dispensation is just as out of place as the message, 'Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand' or the supernatural signs that accompany such a message – They have no place in this dispensation, nor could they.

d). Our Lord can minister to us as our High Priest simply because we are not Jews and not subject to the Law of Moses, if we were subject to the Law of Moses then Christ could not be our High Priest because He comes from a different tribe; from Judah, not Levi - Heb 7:14 *For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.*

e). And there are many groups within the Church in these last days who look to the practices of the Jewish temple and seek to bring its ritual and the keeping of its feasts into the Christian realm where they can have no place.

f). In both the man made ideas of form and function within the Church and the import of Jewish practices, that which is missed is that which the Lord actually says to the Samaritan woman, which every Christian ought to embrace - *"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* Our worship, as we saw when we studied this subject, must be in accordance with the nature and character of God, 'in spirit' and must be centered on 'truth' – therefor our worship is found in walking in the Spirit, in being continually filled with the Spirit, by the renewing of our mind through epignosis knowledge day by day; in submitting ourselves to the Word by receiving the Word with meekness and we can only do this if our life is centered on truth, the truth concerning Christ, past, present and future with a view to His coming Kingdom.

g). We cannot worship through our flesh or through the determination of our own will but only through that which is brought forth from above by the Spirit from the One who is Spirit and Truth.

h). And according to our scripture, 'the Father is seeking such to worship Him.' - Mal 3:16 *Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name.*

And we might add to this - Eph 5:18 *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 ¶ submitting to one another in the fear of God.*

Here then is what worship looks like and it needs neither a 'sacred' place nor a ritual, and may be found as we see in - Mt 18:20 *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."*

We gather together in this place on a Sunday and at our Bible studies during the week for a specific reason, but attendance of itself is not worship – worship takes place through that brought forth from the Spirit as we do so, as we embrace the truth and submit ourselves to it – Jas 1:21 *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

Heb 10:25 *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

i). And also, as we saw last time, there was much to encourage us in the Lord's 2 days in Samaria because of the 'many' who believed because they 'heard Him' – and this of course as we have seen so many times is the key – hearing His voice.

j). And so from the Lord's 2 days in Samaria we see through the Samaritan woman the picture of the Church at the end of this dispensation, the same picture presented through Laodicea in Chapter 3 of the Revelation and the Matthew 13 parables, but despite this overall picture there are and

still will be those who receive Him and hear His own word and believe and this is both our experience and our motivation.

3). But the time of this dispensation is drawing rapidly to a close, that pictured through the Lord's 2 days in Samaria is nearly at an end and when it does end the Lord's attention will once again return to Israel.

a). Joh 4:43 ¶ *Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. 44 For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. 45 So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast. 46 So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. 48 Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe." 49 The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!" 50 Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. 51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, "Your son lives!" 52 Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." 53 So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives." And he himself believed, and his whole household. 54 This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.*

The performance of this second supernatural sign takes place when Jesus had come again to Galilee, to the village of Cana where He had performed the first sign of turning the water to wine.

a). And once again through that seen in this sign we see a picture of Israel in the 3rd Day – a picture that makes clear the healing and deliverance that awaits the nation of Israel upon repentance – a healing that must take place prior to that pictured through the wedding at Cana being brought to completion; a healing that can only be brought forth supernaturally from above.

b). God has not finished with His people Israel, something that Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles is at pains to point out throughout Romans Chapter 11 Ro 11:1 ¶ *I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am*

an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew.....11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. 12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! 13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. 15 For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 16 For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

c). Now the restoration and healing of Israel at the end of the Tribulation with a view to their place of rulership in Christ's Kingdom is something we have long understood, but I would like us to realize that knowing this, believing this, studying this, proclaiming this and praying for the nation because of this is of itself worship in spirit as it is exactly in line with the nature and character of God, centered on His Word which is truth.

d). The 'certain nobleman' in John Chapter 4 pictures God the Father and His sick son at the point of death is the nation of Israel and the supernatural healing of the son took place 'at the seventh hour' – a time that takes us again to the 7th Day, the same day we had seen in relation to the wedding in Cana.

e). And we see in the Gospel account that as a result of the healing the nobleman and 'all his household' believed. And in the context of the sign the whole household points once again to the complete nation - Ro 11:26 *And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; 27 For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."*

4). Then at the beginning of John Chapter 5 we come immediately to the third sign - Joh 5:1 ¶ *After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. 3 In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. 4 For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of*

whatever disease he had. 5 Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years.

And this third sign opens up that seen in the second sign – the ‘great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed’ shows the spiritual condition of Israel as it has existed throughout the nation’s history, just as we have seen in –
Isa 1:4 Alas, sinful nation, A people laden with iniquity, A brood of evildoers, Children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, They have provoked to anger The Holy One of Israel, They have turned away backward. 5 Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, And the whole heart faints. 6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, There is no soundness in it, But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; They have not been closed or bound up, Or soothed with ointment.

The great multitude of sick people seen in the third sign is the certain nobleman’s son seen in the second sign and they are found at the pool of Bethesda, by the Sheep Gate, lying in 5 porches; details which I am sure we will realize are by no means random, but are rather significant to the sign.

a). ‘Bethesda’ is a Hebrew name meaning ‘house of mercy’; the number of porches found there, ‘five’, is a number associated with grace and the sheep gate, by tradition is thought to be the gate through which the paschal lambs were brought into the Temple to be slain, but I wonder if the reference to the Sheep Gate does in fact have more to do with what we find in John Chapter 10, neither of which is mutually exclusive, as I am sure we will see a connection –
Joh 10:1 ¶ "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 "But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 "Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." 6 Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. 7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 "All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they

may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. 11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

b). We will need to wait and endeavor to come through this same door again next time – if the Lord is willing.