

## John 3-4:42 Chapter Study

### INTRODUCTION

Let's take a look at our outline for John.

#### I. THE SIGNS Chs. 1-11

#### II. THE END Chs. 12-21

John doesn't wrap his story of Jesus around a strict timeline as do M, M, & L.

He instead highlights some miracles Jesus did, calling them "signs", then uses these signs as the platform from which to describe Jesus.

In Chs. 1-11, John tells us about these signs and what they mean,

Then in Chs. 12-21 he gives an detailed account of the last few days of Jesus.

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#### I. THE SIGNS Chs. 1-11

Last week we saw Jesus perform His first miracle in the little village of Cana, where He turned water into wine at a wedding feast.

#### E. *Jesus in Jerusalem 2:13-3:22*

##### 1. Clearing the Temple 2:13-22

Then He traveled to Jerusalem where He cleared the Temple of the religious marketplace that had been set up there.

It was a money-making racket that badly misrepresented God and it made Jesus furious.

So He patiently prepared a whip, then waded through the stalls, turning over the tables and setting loose the animals that were for sale.

##### 2. Many Believe in Jesus 2:23-3:21

This upset the religious leaders who drew a nice income from this market.

But it made Jesus something of a hero among the common people.

This marked the beginning of the official opposition to Jesus.

The leaders were wary of anyone outside their control who became popular with the common people.

There'd already been several wannabe messiahs who'd managed to stir up a following and called down the wrath of Rome.

Every new insurrection resulted in more limitations of the Jewish leaders powers.

So Jesus' growing popularity with the common people was troublesome to them.

What made them even more edgy was the reports of the miracles He was performing, and the powerful words He spoke.

Though many had tried, no one could get the better of Him in verbal sparring.

So a division becomes clear between the leaders & the common people as it relates to Jesus.

But even among the leaders, there were some who liked Jesus and wanted to back him.

One of them was a man named Nicodemus, one of the 70 members of the Jewish high Court, the Sanhedrin.

His story is found in 3:1-21, which we'll look at on Sunday.

### 3. Jesus & disciples baptize 3:22

**22 After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized.**

Jesus left Jerusalem & headed east down the road to Jericho, then continued on the few miles to the Jordan where He & the disciples baptized people.

Large crowds were still going out to be baptized by John the Baptist.

Jesus set up not far away & soon the people are going to Him as well.

He did this because He wanted people to realize His ministry was in harmony with John's. What John had *begun*, Jesus would finish.

#### ***F. John the Baptizer's Testimony to Jesus as Messiah 3:23-36***

**23 Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. <sup>24</sup> For John had not yet been thrown into prison.**

Because the Gospel writer John had been a disciple of John the Baptist's, John's testimony to Jesus was very important, so we get this record of John's humility & willingness to point people to Jesus rather than himself.

John assumes his readers are familiar with the other 3 gospels and their accounts of what happened to John the Baptist when he says that this took place before Herod threw him into prison.

**25 Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification.**

The Jewish leaders didn't like John telling Jews they should be baptized, so they argued with him about it.

When they couldn't make any headway against the argument of John's disciples, they did what losers in a debate often do, they shifted the argument to other ground & tried to anger John & his followers by making them jealous.

**26 And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"**

The crowds going out to be baptized were shifting from John to Jesus.

They thought this would bother John.

But all along John had been saying that he was only preparing the way for the Messiah.

He refused to rise to take the bait of jealousy these guys tossed out.

**27 John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven.**

John trusted in the effectiveness & scope of his work to God.

If huge crowds came, it was God's blessing.

If the crowds dried up & went someplace else, that was God's business.

John trusted that as he faithfully followed his calling, what would be would be.

**28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' <sup>29</sup> He who has the bride is the**

**bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. <sup>30</sup> He must increase, but I *must* decrease.**

As a forerunner of the Messiah, John knew the day would come when his ministry would fade out & be taken over by the One he was sent to announce.

When you go to a concert, & the MC comes out, makes a few announcements then announces the band, you want him to give the mic to the lead singer & get off the stage, not stand there & keep announcing the band.

John knew it was time for him to move along & hand the stage over to Jesus.

It is the nature of some ministers to serve for a time, then the season of their service is over.

When it's over, they need to quit and do something else.

It's the case as well that some pastors & teachers serve a specific purpose for a set time, then their ministry is done and they need to move along.

God's anointing can be on a guy for several years.

His ministry is effective and reaps huge results in large numbers of people – for a season.

But then, he's played his part and his work is done.

After that his audience may be just a few dozen.

He needs to recognize that his days as a wild success & the wonderboy of ministry are over & the Spirit has moved on to place His anointing on a new work.

God has wonderfully blessed CCO & we're one of the larger churches in the North County.

God has blessed our ministry and our outreach is extensive.

We are going to continue to grow and will be in a new facility one day.

But we need to recognize the fact that one day things could change.

Another new work could start in town that experiences God's blessing and it explodes.

Will we be envious and start sniping at it?

Will we refuse to bless & partner with them in the work of reaching out because of fear of competition?

It's my desire that every church in this City would be packed with people – that every church would have a building project because they've outgrown their facility.

I want to see 10 churches of over a thousand in Oxnard & Ventura & Camarillo!

And if it **requires** that CCO dissolve & I go to work as a janitor in one of them for that to happen, then let it be!

John knew that when he stood before God the question would not be how many people he had baptized.

The question would be if he had been faithful with his calling.

The numbers are up to God. Faithfulness is up to us.

What follows is presented in our English Bible as being spoken by the Baptizer.

But we don't really know if he said this or if this is **John's commentary** on what the Baptizer said.

There's a definite break in subject matter between vs. 30 & 31.

**31 He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. 32 And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. 33 He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. 34 For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. 35 The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. 36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”**

One of the main themes of John’s Gospel is that those who genuinely love God & want truth come to faith in Jesus. Those who don’t, don’t.

Those who are content to live mere worldly lives reject Christ while those who long for the spiritual receive Him.

John the Baptist’s critics, these guys in v. 25 who came out to argue about purification & baptism, though their subject matter was *religious*, it wasn’t genuinely spiritual.

And because of that, they weren’t able to perceive what either John or Jesus had to say.

John keeps hammering home the truth that Jesus is the sum of the revelation of God and that salvation is *in Him & no other*.

#### **G. Jesus: Savior of the World 4:1-42**

**1 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John 2 (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), 3 He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.**

The Pharisees were a sect of Jews who’d devoted themselves to a *careful & exacting* obedience to the Law of Moses.

They grew out of that period of Jewish history when the nation was in exile in Babylon.

It was idolatry and a neglect of the Law that had resulted in the Exile.

70 years in Babylon weaned Israel off of idolatry and taught them the importance of obeying God’s Word.

The Pharisees were drawn from all different occupations, social levels, and locations who adopted a lifestyle of strict adherence to the law.

They had developed all kinds of elaborate rituals to make sure they not only didn’t violate the Laws of Moses, but that they *didn’t even get close*.

They became Jesus’ chief antagonists because He often defied their interpretations & broke their rules, not because He was being contrary, but because their rules actually violated the heart & intent of the commandments.

Jesus NEVER broke the Law, only their goofy interpretations of it.

This earned Him their abiding wrath.

Jesus knew that when the Pharisees heard more crowds were coming to Him than to John, it would result in a new & more heated wave of opposition, so He decided it was time to return to Galilee. So He began the journey north.

#### **4 But He needed to go through Samaria.**

Anyone reading this near the time of John would say, “What?!?”

This would be like me saying, “Let’s go to LA. But on the way I need to go to Bakersfield.”

LA is south; Bakersfield is East. It’s not on the way to LA.

At this time, Jesus & the disciple were at the Jordan River. [Show map]

The route for Jews from where they were to Galilee lay right along the Jordan.

Going to Samaria was a detour.

But John says that Jesus **NEEDED** to go through Samaria.

He needed to because He had an *appointment* there.

What makes this trip surprising is that respectable Jews *avoided* Samaria.

It was a region populated by half-Jews who’d taken great liberties with the Jewish religion.

Because they were barred from worshipping at Herod’s temple in Jerusalem, the Samaritans set up a rival worship center on Mt. Gerazim.

This only added more fuel to the fire of religious & ethnic debate between the Samaritans & the Jews.

#### **5 So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.**

This was a location rich in history for the Jewish people.

Sychar was a small village that formed a suburb for the larger city of Shechem. Shechem was an important city where a good deal of the life of Israel had taken place.

Jacob’s family had spent a lot of time there.

He’d purchased a well & had given it to his favored son Joseph on his deathbed.

#### **6 Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. <sup>7</sup> A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink.” <sup>8</sup> For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.**

When Jesus & the boys arrived at Sychar, they were parched & hungry.

The disciples went as a group into town to buy supplies while Jesus waited by the well which was outside of the village.

As He waited alone, a woman came to draw water.

John says it was the 6<sup>th</sup> hour – about Noon.

Now, here’s what’s unusual about this—no one draws water at mid-day like this.

Water was drawn by the women in the early morning when it was cool.

If the demands of a particular day required more water, they would go again in the late afternoon, but only when the sun was low & the temperature had dropped.

Drawing & carrying water was hard work, performing the task in the

middle of the day when the sun was hot was foolish.

So why was this woman here at noon to draw water?

She came at a time when she knew no one else would be there.

Why do you suppose that? She didn't want to see anyone!

The morning meeting of the women at the well was for more than just to draw water.

It was a time to chat & swap stories.

This was how news traveled from house to house in the ancient world.

In our day it's done by *telephone & television*. In that day it was "*tell-a-gal*."

This poor woman couldn't show her face among the other women because she was the subject of much of their gossip.

She waited till she knew no one would be there, then she went to draw water.

But on this day she ran into a stranger.

It was obvious by His dress He was a Jew.

Needing water, she went to the well & as she approached, He asked for a drink.

**9 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.**

The prejudice of the Jews against Samaritans was well known & she was surprised that He would *talk* to her, let alone ask a favor.

Not only did Jews not regard Samaritans, it was against all social custom for a man to talk to a strange woman.

All such conversation was supposed to take place through an intermediary.

It was considered *too forward* to talk directly to a woman like this.

Actually, at this time, Jewish men were not supposed to talk to women in public, even one's own wife.

It was considered beneath the dignity of a man to converse with women.

One of their sayings went like this, "A man shall not talk with a woman in the street, not even with his own wife, and especially not with another woman, on account of what men may say."

One rabbi said, "He that talks much with womankind brings evil on himself and neglects the study of the law and at the last will inherit hell."

But don't think that Jesus is flirting with this woman or being at all inappropriate in His behavior.

There was NO ONE who would have acted as this woman's intermediate.

She was a social outcast, a misfit, a woman of such poor reputation no one would give her the time of day. That's why she's drawing water at Noon.

Jesus speaks to her because no one else would!

**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." 11 The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water?"**

Jesus had asked for a drink as a way to open up a conversation with her.

Her response was a question that invited a response.

She wanted to know what kind of a Jew He was that He would not only talk to

her but ask a favor like this.  
His answer is – He’s the kind of Jew Who’s the very gift of God Who—if she will ask, He will give *her* –*living* water.

Living water meant *running water* & was much better than well water which was usually bitter & brackish.

The woman takes a good look at the One who’s speaking to her, sees He has nothing with which to draw water, & asks the source of the offer.

Then, sensing this Stranger might be speaking about *spiritual things* rather than literal water, she asks a vaguely religious question . . .

**12 Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?”**

It was the great patriarch Jacob who’d secured this well for them.

Its water enabled the entire village of Sychar to survive.

Was Jesus saying He was somehow *greater* than Jacob??

This wasn’t a question so much as a statement: She says - “There’s no way You’re greater than Jacob – and the water of this well is as good as it gets around here!”

**13 Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”**

Now Jesus makes it clear that the water He’s speaking of is not literal H<sub>2</sub>O.

Physical water satisfies the body’s thirst for liquid but not the soul’s thirst for meaning.

Jesus has a supply that satisfies the soul’s thirst.

And once taken, it becomes a new source inside that leads to a whole new life that never ends.

**15 The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.”**

Now she’s interested, though she still doesn’t quite understand the whole offer.

**16 Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”**

The conversation has reached a place where it would be inappropriate for Jesus to go further without her husband’s participation.

Jesus *knows* she’s not married – but that’s not the point.

Propriety demanded that if there *was* a husband, he be brought into the conversation at this point.

**17 The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ <sup>18</sup> for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.”**

Now we find out why this woman was drawing water at Noon.

She was a “serial divorcee.” She couldn’t keep a guy.

Sychar wasn’t all that big a place, but she’d worked her way through 5 guys & was on her 6<sup>th</sup>.

It's not clear if she'd been married to the first 5 or had, as with the present guy, just lived with them.

The point is, she was a morally loose woman & had the reputation for it.

**19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.**

There's only one way Jesus could have known about her personal history;

Either someone told Him, or he was a prophet.

She knew no one from Sychar had been talking with Him so by process of elimination, that meant He was a prophet.

If He was a prophet, then He had an inside track on God's Word & will.

There was an on-going debate among the Jews & Samaritans that dominated the intellectual landscape over where the right place to worship God was.

This woman might not be held in too high a regard by her peers, but if she could come back with an inside scoop that would settle the debate, maybe it would help reclaim some of her badly tarnished reputation. So she asked

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**20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain,**

Meaning on Mt. Gerazim which stood next to where they were.

**and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."**

She wanted to know which mount was the right one & why.

**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.**

Jesus says that the time has come when worship will not be a matter of where or when.

**22 You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.**

He reminds her that the Samaritan religion was a mish-mash of different beliefs.

It was only in Judaism that the original was preserved.

**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. <sup>24</sup> God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."**

Even though Judaism preserved the truth, even it was in the process of being redefined.

The old system which had merely pointed the way *to* the Messiah was being fulfilled & would be reformed.

Worship would no longer be about temples & altars & sacrifices.

It would be about a living, vital relationship with God that's 24/7/365.

**25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things."**

Even though the Samaritans added a bunch of additional stuff to the pure Judaism of the OT, they believed in the Messiah.

And like the Jews, they believed that *when* He came He would fundamentally



alter the practice of religion.

**26** Jesus said to her, **“I who speak to you am He.”** **27** **And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why are You talking with her?”**

They were surprised Jesus was breaking the social prohibition of a man speaking to a woman, let alone a Samaritan.

They didn't say anything to Him though because it was obvious something momentous had just occur & they dared not intrude.

**28** **The woman then left her water pot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, <sup>29</sup> “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”**

She went to the men because her credibility with the women was shot. They never would have listened to her.

Her boldness in going to the men, along with her report, was enough to stir them to curiosity, & they went to check Jesus out.

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But notice something – John says that she left her water pot there at the well.

It was heavy & would slow her trip back to town, so she left it & ran back as quick as she could.

She'd come out to fill her pot that day, but encountered Jesus & returned to town without it.

The living water Jesus had promised became hers.

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There's a *lesson* in that water pot sitting behind at the well.

As Jesus said in v. 13, the things of this world do not truly satisfy.

They may help for a time, but they do not last.

God has made us for Himself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Him.

Many people go through their entire lives confusing the longing of their soul for God with the desires of their flesh for pleasure.

They embark on an endless search for satisfaction in buying, eating, smoking, drinking, playing, working, reading, meditating, visualizing, or a dozen other things.

The search will never end till they come to Christ.

And when they do, then they will leave behind all the other things.

In fact, they will have to because once they come to faith in Christ, they will find an undeniable urge to tell others, and that urge some with such urgency they won't want to be weighed down with anything that would get in the way.

Imagine if she'd returned *with* her water pot saying, “I found a guy you gave me living water!”

They'd have asked for some, like she had, confusing what was in her pot with the spiritual gift Jesus gave.

When she would have told them the pot didn't hold it, it would have confused them and they would have said, “Well, if you now have living water, why do you need the pot anymore?”

And you know what, some of you have been asked the same question by your old smoking buddies.

You've come to Christ but you're still smoking marijuana, still doing a line of coke, still drinking a 6-pack of Bud.

Your old friends may not say it out loud but they're thinking it – "If you're a Christian and have found the meaning of life like you say, then why are you still with the pot, the coke, the beer?"

Leave that stuff behind – it's weighing you down & ruining your testimony.

**30 Then they went out of the city and came to Him. 31 In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."**

They wanted Jesus to eat some of the provisions they'd bought.

**32 But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know."**

**33 Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?" 34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work."**

This is one of those passages that shows Jesus living out what He'd just taught the woman.

She came to draw literal water – He offered her eternal, spiritual water that was even more important.

Here He tells the disciples while physical food is necessary for the sustaining of physical life, it's even MORE IMPORTANT to obey the demands of the Spirit & perform the will of God.

Obedience nourishes the soul as food does the body. [Repeat]

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Then Jesus issues an urgent statement about time -

**35 Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'?**

It was about May when this occurred and there were 4 months yet till the harvest season.

**Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!**

It might be 4 months till the *physical* fields were ready for harvest, but the *spiritual* fields were ripe!

Jesus exhorts His disciples to recognize the spiritual reality.

**36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."**

Jesus was referring to the prophets & generations of faithful parents who'd raised their children with faith in God.

The time had come to bring to fullness all the preparation these faithful ones had labored so hard to produce.

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What Jesus said to those first disciples is equally true for us *last disciples*.

The fields are still white for harvest.

Just as Jesus wanted *them* to **SEE** the harvest, He wants *us* to **SEE** it. Jesus didn't want the disciples to see a scandal-stained, morally-questionable woman – He wanted them to see a needy soul created in God's image, thirsty for love & meaning.

He didn't want them to see a pack of despised half-breed Samaritans – He wanted them to see spiritual grain that could bring glory to God in the fertile spiritual soil of Samaria.

They needed to look past their prejudices, past their bigotry, beyond the comfortable stereo-types they held in their heads – to see *people*, men & women, whom God loved and sent His only begotten Son to save.

They were to be more than *statistics* to research or *numbers* to quote.

They must become people they reached out to and talked to personally, just as He had with the Samaritan woman.

God has strategically positioned *you* in a place in the harvest.

That's your post. Lift up your eyes from self-interest, from prejudice, from anything that would eclipse the harvest and SEE the people around you as God wants you to see them.

Growing in the Christian life means becoming more like Jesus.

That means we're being weaned off our prejudices against race, ethnicity, and class distinctions.

As a local church, are we color-blind?

Do we enjoy a fellowship which looks past our ethnicity or which neighborhood we live in?

The problem with prejudice is that we tend to see a *group* rather than *individuals*.

How thankful we are God isn't prejudiced against stupid, sinful humankind.

He sees us as *individuals* whom He loves & longs to save & change.

We must stop looking at *groups* and learn to see *individuals*, people God loves.

Jesus chucked the religious & social conventions of His day & traveled through Samaria because he had an appointment with this poor outcast Samaritan woman.

His Father loved her as she made a mess of her life with a succession of bed-mates.

Jesus was the manifestation of the Father's love.

*We're* called to be the manifestation of God's love to the lost of this world.

There's just no place for racism or prejudice in the Christian.

**39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did."**

**40 So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of His own word. 42 Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."**

We call her initial report to the men of Sychar *a testimony*.

Based on that testimony, many believed Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

That faith led to action on their part to go check Him out themselves.

But once they encountered Jesus themselves, their faith was no longer second-hand.

It was in Jesus Himself.

When we share Jesus with people, it's best to simply describe what we've come to know about Him, sharing how He's changed us and brought life and purpose.

That testimony will move some to check out Jesus on their own.

It's *that encounter* that brings real & lasting change.

Parents – raise your children in the way of God.

When they are old enough, tell them your testimony of how you came to faith in Christ.

But understand that there's a need for them to come to their own faith & relationship with the Lord.

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We'll leave the rest of ch 4 till next week.