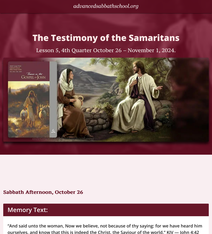
The Testimony of the Samaritans

Lesson 5, 4th Quarter October 26 – November 1, 2024.



Sabbath Afternoon, October 26

Memory Text:

"And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." KJV — John 4:42

"The Jews and the Samaritans were bitter enemies, and as far as possible avoided all dealing with each other. To trade with the Samaritans or to speak of them in any way indeed counted lawful by the rabbis, but all social intercourse with them was condemned. A Jew would not borrow from a Samaritan, nor receive a loan from them, even in a moment of bread or a cup of water. The disciples, in buying food, were acting in harmony with the custom of their nation. But beyond this they did not go. To ask a favor of the Samaritans, or in any way seek to benefit them, did not enter into the thought of even Christ's disciples." DA 185.2

"The great difference between the Jews and the Samaritans was a difference in religious belief, a question as to what constitutes true worship. The Pharisees would say nothing good of the Samaritans, but pursued their bitterest curses upon them...And when the Jews were so filled with prejudice against the Samaritans, what could the Samaritans do? Some of them had taught their children to hatred and to envy, and to express their hatred than, 'Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?' John 8:48. Yet the priest and Levite neglected the very work the Lord had enjoined on them, leaving a hated and despised Samaritan to minister to one of their own countrymen. COL 383.1

Sunday, October 27

The Setting of the Encounter

Read John 4:1–4. What was the background issue that led Jesus through Samaria?

"On the way to Galilee Jesus passed through Samaria. It was noon when He reached the beautiful Vale of Shechem. He was wearied with the journey, and was left alone while His disciples went into the city to rest while His disciples went to buy food." DA 183.1

"Jesus answered, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me a drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.' You wonder that I should ask of you even so small a favor as a draught of water from the well at our feet. Had you asked Me, I would have given you to drink of the water of everlasting life. DA 184.2

The woman had not comprehended the words of Christ, but she felt their solemn import. Her light, bantering manner began to change. Supposing that Jesus spoke of the well before them, she said, 'Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water? Art Thou greater than our father our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself?' She saw before her only a thirsty traveler, wayworn and dusty. In her mind she compared Him with the honored patriarch Jacob..." DA 184

Monday, October 28

The Woman at the Well

Read John 4:7–15. How does Jesus use this encounter to start witnessing to this woman?

"Jesus did not immediately answer the question in regard to Himself, but with solemn earnestness He said, 'Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.' DA 185

"He who seeks to satisfy the cravings of the fountains of this world will drink only to thirst again. Everywhere men are unsatisfied. They long for something to supply the need of the soul. Only One can meet that want. The need of the world, "The Desire of all nations," is Christ. The divine grace which He alone can impart, is as living water, purifying, refreshing, and invigorating the soul. DA 187.2

Jesus did not convey the idea that merely one draught of the water of life would suffice the receiver. He was speaking of a fountain of water ever-flowing, ever-ever full, ever-ever ready for refreshing. The riches, honors, and pleasures of the world do not attract him. The constant cry of his heart is, More of Thee. And the soul who has once tasted of the reality is yearning to satisfy its longings and thirst. Every human resource and dependence will fail. The cisterns will be emptied, the pools become dry; but our Redeemer is the ever-flowing fountain, the ever-full cistern, the ever-ready and drink again, and the fresh supply. He in whom Christ dwells has within himself the fountain of blessings—a well of water springing up to life everlasting life." From this source he may draw strength and grace sufficient for all his needs. DA 187.3

What is the Old Testament background to Jesus' statement about living water? (Jer. 2:13, Zech. 14:8)?

"In the East, water was called "the gift of God." To offer a drink to the thirsty traveler was held to be a duty so sacred that the Arabs of the desert would go out of their way in order to perform it. The hatred between Jews and Samaritans prevented the woman from offering a kindness to Jesus; but the Saviour was seeking to find the key to the heart, and with the last born of divine love, He asked, not offered, a favor. The offer of kindness had already been rejected; but that awakens trust. The King of heaven came to this outcast soul, asking a service at her hands. He who made the ocean, who controls the waters of the great deep, who opened the springs and channels of the earth, rested from His weariness at Jacob's well, and was dependent upon a stranger's kindness for even the gift of a drink of water. DA 183.4

Tuesday, October 29

"Sir, Give Me This Water"

How does Ezekiel 36:25–27 reflect the truths Jesus was seeking to give to Nicodemus and to the woman at the well?

It will not do for us lightly to pass over these verses of Scripture as we and the whole Denomination have been doing heretofore. All of us should carefully note the fact that God is to sanctify himself by taking His elect from among the heathen, and out of all countries, and bring them into their own land, into the land of their fathers. "Then," when they return into their father's land, says the scripture, will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. I will give them they are to be given a new heart, and a new spirit, and be made to walk in God's statutes and to keep His judgments.

We are here told that the final cleansing of the saints, the cleansing that removes all the marks of sin, is performed after God takes His people from among the heathen and from all countries and brings them into their own land.

Read John 4:16. How did Jesus respond to the woman's request?

"As Jesus spoke of the living water, the woman looked upon Him with wondering attention. He had aroused her interest, and awakened a desire for the gift of which He spoke. She perceived that it was not the water of Jacob's well to which He referred; for of this she used continually, drinking, and bathing again, "Sir," she said, "give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." DA 185.1

Jesus now abruptly turned the conversation. Before this soul could receive the gift He longed to bestow, she must be brought to recognize her sin and her Saviour. He saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman replied, "I have no husband." The woman's reply was a direct evasion of questioning in that direction. But the Saviour continued, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly." DA 187.5

Wednesday, October 30

The Revelation of Jesus

Read John 4:16–24. What did Jesus do to show this woman that He knew her deepest secrets, and how did she respond?

"Patiently Jesus permitted her to lead the conversation whither she would. Meanwhile He watched for the opportunity of again bringing the truth home to her heart. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain," she said, "and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Unto Israel in sight was Mount Gerizim. Its temple was demolished, and only the altar remained. The place of worship had been a subject of controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans. Some of the ancestors of the latter people had once belonged to Israel; but because of their sin, the Lord suffered them to be overcome by their enemies, and carried into captivity. Many of the captives were brought into heathen lands, and there became completely contaminated their own. It is true they held that their idols were only to remind them of the living God, the Ruler of the universe; nevertheless the people were led to reverence the image of the god. DA 186.1

"In answer to the woman, Jesus said, "Believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." He worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews." Jesus had shown that He was free from Jewish prejudice against the Samaritans. Now He sought to break down the prejudice of this Samarian against the Jews. While speaking of the Jews, He had set aside the Samaritan's prejudice against them with dignity. He declared that the great truths of redemption had been committed to the Jews, and that from among them the Messiah was to arise. But the Saviour intimated that they had a share in the work of God, and that they were the principles of His government. Jesus classed Himself with the Jews as those to whom God had given a knowledge of Himself. DA 186.2

"He desired to lift the thoughts of His hearer above matters of form and ceremony, and questions of controversy. The hour cometh, he said, "and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." DA 186.3

"As the woman talked with Jesus, she was impressed with His words. Never had the heard such sentiments from the priests of her own people or from the Jews. As the past of her life had been spread out before her, she had been made sensible of her great sinfulness. She realized her soul thirst, which the waters of the well of Sychar could never satisfy. Nothing had that hitherto come in contact with her had so awakened her to a higher need. Jesus had convinced her that He read the secret of her life; yet she felt that He was her friend, pitying and loving her. While the very purity of His presence condemned her sin, he had spoken no word of denunciation, but had told her of His grace, that could renew the soul. She began to have some conception of His character. The question arose in her mind, Is this the Christ, the long-looked-for Messiah? She said to Him, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, He will tell us all things." Jesus answered, "I that speak unto thee am He." DA 187.1

"As the woman heard these words, faith sprang up in her heart. She accepted the wonderful announcement from the lips of the divine Teacher." DA 190.1

Thursday, November 1

The Testimony of the Samaritans

Read John 4:27–29. What surprising action did the woman take?

"When the disciples returned from their errand, they were surprised to find their Master speaking with the woman. He had not taken the refreshing draught that they had desired, and they did not stop to ask the food His disciples had brought. When the woman had gone, the disciples entreated Him to eat. They saw Him silent, absorbed, as in rapt meditation. His face was beaming with light, and they hoped to interrupt His communion with heaven. But they knew that He was faint and weary, and thought it their duty to remind Him of His physical necessities. Jesus recognized their loving interest, and He said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." DA 190.4

"The woman had been filled with joy as she listened to Christ's words. The wonderful revelation was almost overpowering. Leaving her waterpot, she returned to the city, to carry the message to others. Jesus knew why she had gone. Leaving her waterpot spoke unmistakably as to the effect of His words. She had left her waterpot, that she might bear the glad tidings to others. Her work was begun in earnest. We forget the Saviour's third request, which has purposed to supply. With the water overflowing with gladness, she hastened on her way, to impart to others the precious gift she had received. DA 191.2

"Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did,' she said to the men of the city. "Is not this the Christ?" Her words trusted their hearts. There was a new expression on her face, a change in her whole appearance. They were interested to see Jesus. Then they went out of the city, and came unto Him." DA 191.3

"Jesus sat alone at the well, He looked over the fields of grain that were spread out before Him, their tender green touched by the golden sunlight. Pointing His disciples to the scene, He employed it as a parable. "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." And as He spoke, He thought of the harvest of souls that would be gathered in in the months to come, as the result of His coming, grain, but there was a harvest of souls. DA 191.4

"The soil, naught," he said, "receiveth wages, and gatheredh fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth." Here Christ and His disciples were sowed seed to God by those who receive the gospel. They are to be His living agencies. He requires their individual service. And whether we sow or reap, we are equally in His service. The sowers are those who are laying foundations in the harvest; and both the sower and the reaper receive wages. They rejoice together in the reward of their labor." DA 191.5

"Jesus said to the disciples, "I send you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor: other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors." The Saviour was here looking forward to the great harvest yet to be on the day of Pentecost. The disciples were not to regard this as the result of their own efforts. They were laborers together with God. Christ was the great worker. The disciples were instrumentalities in the hand of the world's Redeemer. Christ was the husbandman, the sower of the seed, the reaper, an omnipotent power, had worked silently but effectually to produce the harvest. The dew and rain and sunshine, the growth of the grain, were all due to refreshing showers from the heavens. Angels were about to water the seed with His own blood. His disciples were privileged to be laborers together with God. They were coworkers with Christ and with the holy men of old. By the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, thousands were to be converted in a day. This was the result of Christ's sowing, the harvest of His work. DA 192.1

"In the words spoken to the woman at the well, good seed had been sown, and how quickly the harvest was received. The Samaritans came and heard Jesus, and believed on Him. Crowding about Him at the well, they plied him with questions, and eagerly received His explanations of many things that had been obscure to them. As they listened, their perplexity began to clear away. They were like a people in great darkness rising up a sudden ray of light till they had found the day. But they were not satisfied with this short conference. They were anxious to hear more, and to have their friends also partake of the wonderful teachers. They invited him to their city, and begged Him to remain with them. For two days he tarried in Samaria, and many more believed on Him." DA 192.2

Friday, November 2

Further Thought

"The Samaritans believed that the Messiah was to come as the Redeemer, not only of the Jews, but of the world. The Holy Spirit through Moses had foretold him as a prophet sent from God. Through Jacob it had been declared that unto Him should the gathering of the people be; and through Abraham, that in Him all the nations of the earth should be blessed. On these scriptures the people of Samaria based their faith in the Messiah. The fact that the Jews had misrepresented the later prophets, attributing to the first advent the glory of Christ's second coming, had led the Samaritans to discard all the sacred writings except those given through Moses. But as the Saviour swept away these false interpretations, many accepted the later prophecies and the words of Christ Himself in regard to the kingdom of God. DA 193.1

"Jesus had begun to break down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile, and to preach salvation to the world. Though He was a Jew, He mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at nought the Pharisaic customs of the nation. In face of their prejudices He accepted the hospitality of this despised people. He slept under their roofs, ate with them at their tables,—partaking of the food prepared and served by their hands,—sought in their streets, and treated them with the utmost kindness and courtesy." DA 193.2