

John: 4:1–42

From Catena Aurea:

1. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,
2. (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)
3. He left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee.
4. And he must needs go through Samaria.
5. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.
6. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

GLOSS. 1 The Evangelist, after relating how John checked the envy of his disciples, on the success of Christ's teaching, comes next to the envy of the Pharisees, and Christ's retreat from them. When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard, &c.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 2) Truly had the Pharisees' knowledge that our Lord was making more disciples, and baptizing more than John, been such as to lead them heartily to follow Him, He would not have left Judæa, but would have remained for their sake: but seeing, as He did, that this knowledge of Him was coupled with envy, and made them not followers, but persecutors, He departed thence. He could too, had He pleased, have stayed amongst them, and escaped their hands; but He wished to shew His own example to believers in time to come, that it was no sin for a servant of God to fly from the fury of persecutors. He did it like a good teacher, not out of fear for Himself, but for our instruction.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxi. 1) He did it too to pacify the envy of men, and perhaps to avoid bringing the dispensation of the incarnation into suspicion. For had he been taken and escaped, the reality of His flesh would have been doubted.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 3) It may perplex you, perhaps, to be told that Jesus baptized more than John, and then immediately after, Though Jesus Himself baptized not. What? Is there a mistake made, and then corrected?

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxi. 1) Christ Himself did not baptize, but those who reported the fact, in order to raise the envy of their hearers, so represented it as to appear that Christ Himself baptized. (non occ.). The reason why He baptized not Himself, had been already declared by John, He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. (Luke 3:16) Now He had not yet given the Holy Spirit: it was therefore fitting that He should not baptize. But His disciples baptized, as an efficacious mode of instruction; better than gathering up believers here and there, as had been done in the case of Simon and his brother. Their baptism, however, had no more virtue than the baptism of John; both being without the grace of the Spirit, and both having one object, viz. that of bringing men to Christ.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 3) Or, both are true; for Jesus both baptized, and baptized not. He baptized, in that He cleansed: He baptized not, in that He dipped not. The disciples supplied the ministry of the body, He the aid of that Majesty of which it was said, The Same is He which baptizeth. (ver. 33)

AUGUSTINE. (Ad Seleuciam Ep. xviii.) But we must believe that the disciples of Christ were already baptized themselves, either with John's baptism, or, as is more probable, with Christ's. For He who had stooped to the humble service of washing His disciples' feet, had not failed to administer baptism to His servants, who would thus be enabled in their turn to baptize others.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxi. 2) Christ on withdrawing from Judæa, joined those whom He was with before, as we read next, And departed again into Galilee. As the Apostles, when they were expelled by the Jews, went to the Gentiles, so Christ goes to the Samaritans. But, to deprive the Jews of all excuse, He does not go to stay there, but only takes it on His road, as the Evangelist implies by saying, And he must needs go through Samaria. Samaria receives its name from Somer, a mountain there, so called from the name of a former possessor of it. The inhabitants of the country were formerly not Samaritans, but Israelites. But in process of time they fell under God's wrath, and the king of Assyria transplanted them to Babylon and Media; placing Gentiles from various parts in Samaria in their room. God however, to shew that it was not for want of power on His part that He delivered up the Jews, but for the sins of the people themselves, sent lions to afflict the barbarians. This was told the king, and he sent a priest to instruct them in God's law. But not even then did they wholly cease from their iniquity, but only half changed. For in process of

time they turned to idols again, though they still worshipped God, calling themselves after the mountain, Samaritans.

CHRYSOSTOM. (xxx. 2) It was the place where Simeon and Levi made a great slaughter for Dinah.

THEOPHYLACT. But after the sons of Jacob had desolated the city, by the slaughter of the Sychemites, Jacob annexed it to the portion of his son Joseph, as we read in Genesis, I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword, and with my bow. (Gen. 48:22) This is referred to in what follows, Near to the place of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

Now Jacob's well was there.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 5) It was a well. Every well is a spring, but every spring is not a well. Any water that rises from the ground, and can be drawn for use, is a spring: but where it is ready at hand, and on the surface, it is called a spring only; where it is deep and low down, it is called a well, not a spring.

THEOPHYLACT. But why does the Evangelist make mention of the parcel of ground, and the well? First, to explain what the woman says, Our father Jacob gave us this well: secondly, to remind you that what the Patriarchs obtained by their faith in God, the Jews had lost by their impiety. They had been supplanted to make room for Gentiles. And therefore there is nothing new in what has now taken place, i. e. in the Gentiles succeeding to the kingdom of heaven in the place of the Jews.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxx. 3) Christ prefers labour and exercise to ease and luxury, and therefore travels to Samaria, not in a carriage but on foot; until at last the exertion of the journey fatigues Him; a lesson to us, that so far from indulging in superfluities, we should often even deprive ourselves of necessaries: Jesus therefore being wearied with His journey, &c.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv, c. 6) Jesus, we see, is strong and weak: strong, because in the beginning was the Word; weak, because the Word was made flesh. Jesus thus weak, being wearied with his journey, sat on the well.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxx. 3) As if to say, not on a seat, or a couch, but on the first place He saw—upon the ground. He sat down because He was wearied, and to wait for the disciples. The coolness of the well would be refreshing in the midday heat: And it was about the sixth hour.

THEOPHYLACT. He mentions our Lord's sitting and resting from His journey, that none might blame Him for going to Samaria Himself, after He had forbidden the disciples going.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 7) His journey is His assumption of the flesh for our sake. For whither doth He go, Who is every where present? What is this, except that it was necessary for Him, in order to come to us, to take upon Him visibly a form of flesh? So then His being wearied with His journey, what meaneth it, but that He is wearied with the flesh? And wherefore is it the sixth hour? Because it is the sixth age of the world. Reckon severally as hours, the first age from Adam to Noah, the second from Noah to Abraham, the third from Abraham to David, the fourth from David unto the carrying away into Babylon, the fifth from thence to the baptism of John; on this calculation the present age is the sixth hour.

AUGUSTINE. (1. lxxxiii. Quæst. qu. 64) At the sixth hour then our Lord comes to the well. The black abyss of the well, methinks, represents the lowest parts of this universe, i. e. the earth, to which Jesus came at the sixth hour, that is, in the sixth age of mankind, the old age, as it were, of the old man, which we are bidden to put off, (Col. 3:9.) that we may put on the new. For so do we reckon the different ages of man's life: the first age is infancy, the second childhood, the third boyhood, the fourth youth, the fifth manhood, the sixth old age. Again, the sixth hour, being the middle of the day, the time at which the sun begins to descend, signifies that we, who are called by Christ, are to check our pleasure in visible things, that by the love of things invisible refreshing the inner man, we may be restored to the inward light which never fails. By His sitting is signified His humility, or perhaps His magisterial character; teachers being accustomed to sit.

4:7–12

7. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9. Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12. Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxi. 4) That this conversation might not appear a violation of His own injunctions against talking to the Samaritans, the Evangelist explains how it arose; viz. for He did not come with the intention beforehand of talking with the woman, but only would not send the woman away, when she had come. There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Observe, she comes quite by chance.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. xv. c. 10) The woman here is the type of the Church, not yet justified, but just about to be. And it is a part of the resemblance, that she comes from a foreign people. The Samaritans were foreigners, though they were neighbours; and in like manner the Church was to come from the Gentiles, and to be alien from the Jewish race.

THEOPHYLACT. The argument with the woman arises naturally from the occasion: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. As man, the labour and heat He had undergone had made Him thirsty.

AUGUSTINE. (1. lxxxiii. Quæst. qu. 64) Jesus also thirsted after that woman's faith? He thirsteth for their faith, for whom He shed His blood.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxi. 3) This shews us too not only our Lord's strength and endurance as a traveller, but also his carelessness about food; for His disciples did not carry about food with them, since it follows, His disciples were gone away into the city to buy food. Herein is shewn the humility of Christ; He is left alone. It was in His power, had He pleased, not to send away all, or, on their going away, to leave others in their place to wait on Him. But He did not choose to have it so: for in this way He accustomed His disciples to trample upon pride of every kind. However some one will say, Is humility in fishermen and tent-makers so great a matter? But these very men were all on a sudden raised to the most lofty situation upon earth, that of friends and followers of the Lord of the whole earth. And men of humble origin, when they arrive at dignity, are on this very account more liable than others to be lifted up with pride; the honour being so new to them. Our Lord therefore to keep His disciples humble, taught them in all things to subdue themselves. The woman on being told, Give Me to drink, very naturally asks, How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria? She knew Him to be a Jew from His figure and speech. Here observe her simpleness. For even had our Lord been bound to abstain from dealing with her, that was His concern, not hers; the Evangelist saying not that the Samaritans would have no dealings with the Jews, but that the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. The woman however, though not in fault herself, wished to correct what she thought a fault in another. The Jews after their

return from the captivity entertained a jealousy of the Samaritans, whom they regarded as aliens, and enemies; and the Samaritans did not use all the Scriptures, but only the writings of Moses, and made little of the Prophets. They claimed to be of Jewish origin, but the Jews considered them Gentiles, and hated them, as they did the rest of the Gentile world.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. xiii) The Jews would not even use their vessels. So it would astonish the woman to hear a Jew ask to drink out of her vessel; a thing so contrary to Jewish rule.

CHRYSOSTOM. But why did Christ ask what the law allowed not? It is no answer to say that He knew she would not give it, for in that case, He clearly ought not to have asked for it. Rather His very reason for asking, was to shew His indifference to such observances, and to abolish them for the future.

AUGUSTINE. (Tract. xv) He who asked to drink, however, out of the woman's vessel, thirsted for the woman's faith: Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, or Who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.

ORIGEN. (tom. xiv. in Joan) For it is as it were a doctrine, that no one receives a divine gift, who seeks not for it. Even the Saviour Himself is commanded by the Father to ask, that He may give it Him, as we read, Require of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance. (Ps. 2:8) And our Saviour Himself says, Ask, and it shall be given you. (Luke 11:9) Wherefore He says here emphatically, Thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee.

AUGUSTINE. (1. lxxxiii. Quæst. qu. 64) He lets her know that it was not the water, which she meant, that He asked for; but that knowing her faith, He wished to satisfy her thirst, by giving her the Holy Spirit. For so must we interpret the living water, which is the gift of God; as He saith, If thou knewest the gift of God.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv) Living water is that which comes out of a spring, in distinction to what is collected in ponds and cisterns from the rain. If spring water too becomes stagnant, i. e. collects into some spot, where it is quite separated from its fountain head, it ceases to be living water.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxii) In Scripture the grace of the Holy Spirit is sometimes called fire, sometimes water, which shews that these words are expressive not of its substance, but of its action. The metaphor of fire conveys the lively and sin-consuming property of grace; that of water the cleansing of the Spirit, and the refreshing of the souls who receive Him.

THEOPHYLACT. The grace of the Holy Spirit then He calls living water; i. e. lifegiving, refreshing, stirring. For the grace of the Holy Spirit is ever stirring him who does good works, directing the risings of his heart.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxi. 4) These words raised the woman's notions of our Lord, and make her think Him no common person. She addresses Him reverentially by the title of Lord; The woman saith unto Him, Lord, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water?

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 13.) She understands the living water to be the water in the well; and therefore says, Thou wishest to give me living water; but Thou hast nothing to draw with as I have: Thou canst not then give me this living water; Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxi. 4) As if she said, Thou canst not say that Jacob gave us this spring, and used another himself; for he and they that were with him drank thereof, which would not have been done, had he had another better one. Thou canst not then give me of this spring; and Thou hast not another better spring, unless Thou confess Thyself greater than Jacob. Whence then hast Thou the water, which Thou promisest to give us?

THEOPHYLACT. The addition, and his cattle, shews the abundance of the water; as if she said, Not only is the water sweet, so that Jacob and his sons drank of it, but so abundant, that it satisfied the vast multitude of the Patriarchs' cattle.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxi. 4) See how she thrusts herself upon the Jewish stock. The Samaritans claimed Abraham as their ancestor, on the ground of his having come from Chaldea; and called Jacob their father, as being Abraham's grandson.

ORIGEN. (t. xiii. 6) In the mystical sense, Jacob's well is the Scriptures. The learned then drink like Jacob and his sons; the simple and uneducated, like Jacob's cattle.

4:13–18

13. Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14. 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.

15. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

16. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

18. For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxii. 1) To the woman's question, Art Thou greater than our father Jacob? He does not reply, I am greater, lest He should seem to boast; but His answer implies it; Jesus answered and said to her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; as if He said, If Jacob is to be honoured because he gave you this water, what wilt thou say, if I give thee far better than this? He makes the comparison however not to depreciate Jacob, but to exalt Himself. For He does not say, that this water is vile and counterfeit, but asserts a simple fact of nature, viz. that whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 16) Which is true indeed both of material water, and of that of which it is the type. For the water in the well is the pleasure of the world, that abode of darkness. Men draw it with the waterpot of their lusts; pleasure is not relished, except it be preceded by lust. And when a man has enjoyed this pleasure, i. e. drunk of the water, he thirsts again; but if he have received water from Me, he shall never thirst. For how shall they thirst, who are drunken with the abundance of the house of God? (Ps. 36:8.) But He promised this fulness of the Holy Spirit.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxii. 1) The excellence of this water, viz. that he that drinketh of it never thirsts, He explains in what follows, But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. As a man who had a spring within him, would never feel thirst, so will not he who has this water which I shall give him.

THEOPHYLACT. For the water which I give him is ever multiplying. The saints receive through grace the seed and principle of good; but they themselves make it grow by their own cultivation.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxii. 1) See how the woman is led by degrees to the highest doctrine. First, she thought He was some lax Jew. Then hearing of the living water, she thought it meant material water. Afterwards she understands it as spoken spiritually, and believes that it can take away thirst, but she does not yet know what it is, only understands that it was superior to material things: The woman saith unto

Him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. Observe, she prefers Him to the patriarch Jacob, for whom she had such veneration.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 15–18) Or thus; The woman as yet understands Him of the flesh only. She is delighted to be relieved for ever from thirst, and takes this promise of our Lord's in a carnal sense. For God had once granted to His servant Elijah, that he should neither hunger nor thirst for forty days; and if He could grant this for forty days, why not for ever? Eager to possess such a gift, she asks Him for the living water; The woman saith unto Him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. Her poverty obliged her to labour more than her strength could well bear; would that she could hear, Come unto Me, all that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. (Mat. 11:28) Jesus had said this very thing, i. e. that she need not labour any longer; but she did not understand Him. At last our Lord was resolved that she should understand: Jesus saith unto her, Go call thy husband, and come hither. What meaneth this? Did He wish to give her the water through her husband? Or, because she did not understand, did He wish to teach her by means of her husband? The Apostle indeed saith of women, If they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home. (1 Cor. 14:35) But this applies only where Jesus is not present. Our Lord Himself was present here; what need then that He should speak to her through her husband? Was it through her husband that He spoke to Mary, who sat at His feet?

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxii. 2) The woman then being urgent in asking for the promised water, Jesus saith unto her, Go call thy husband; to shew that he too ought to have a share in these things. But she was in a hurry to receive the gift, and wished to conceal her guilt, (for she still imagined she was speaking to a man:) The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Christ answers her with a seasonable reproof; exposing her as to former husbands, and as to her present one, whom she had concealed; Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 20) Understand, that the woman had not a lawful husband, but had formed an irregular connexion with some one. He tells her, Thou hast had five husbands, in order to shew her His miraculous knowledge.

ORIGEN. (tom. xiii. in Joan. c. 5, 6) May not Jacob's well signify mystically the letter of Scripture; the water of Jesus, that which is above the letter, which all are not allowed to penetrate into? That which is written was dictated by men, whereas the things which the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, cannot be reduced to writing, but are from the fountain of water, that springeth up unto everlasting life, i. e. the Holy Ghost. These truths are unfolded to such as carrying no longer a

human heart within them, are able to say with the Apostle, We have the mind of Christ. (1 Cor. 11:16) Human wisdom indeed discovers truths, which are handed down to posterity; but the teaching of the Spirit is a well of water which springeth up into everlasting life. The woman wished to attain, like the angels, to angelic and super-human truth without the use of Jacob's water. For the angels have a well of water within them, springing from the Word of God Himself. She says therefore, Sir, give me this water. But it is impossible here to have the water which is given by the Word, without that which is drawn from Jacob's well; and therefore Jesus seems to tell the woman that He cannot supply her with it from any other source than Jacob's well; If we are thirsty, we must first drink from Jacob's well. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. (Rom. 7:1) According to the Apostle, the Law is the husband of the soul.

AUGUSTINE. (lib. lxxxiii. Quæst. qu. 64) The five husbands some interpret to be the five books which were given by Moses. And the words, He whom thou now hast is not thy husband, they understand as spoken by our Lord of Himself; as if He said, Thou hast served the five books of Moses, as five husbands; but now he whom thou hast, i. e. whom thou hearest, is not thy husband; for thou dost not yet believe in him. But if she did not believe in Christ, she was still united to those five husbands, i. e. five books, and therefore why is it said, Thou hast had five husbands, as if she no longer had them? And how do we understand that a man must have these five books, in order to pass over to Christ, when he who believes in Christ, so far from forsaking these books, embraces them in this spiritual meaning the more strongly? Let us turn to another interpretation.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 19) Jesus seeing that the woman did not understand, and wishing to enlighten her, says, Call thy husband; i. e. apply thine understanding. For when the life is well ordered, the understanding governs the soul itself, pertaining to the soul. For though it is indeed nothing else than the soul, it is at the same time a certain part of the soul. And this very part of the soul which is called the understanding and the intellect, is itself illuminated by a light superior to itself. Such a Light was talking with the woman; but in her there was not understanding to be enlightened. Our Lord then, as it were, says, I wish to enlighten, and there is not one to be enlightened; Call thy husband, i. e. apply thine understanding, through which thou must be taught, by which governed. The five former husbands may be explained as the five senses, thus: a man before he has the use of his reason, is entirely under the government of his bodily senses. Then reason comes into action; and from that time forward he is capable of entertaining ideas, and is either under the influence of truth or error. The woman had been under the influence of error,

which error was not her lawful husband, but an adulterer. Wherefore our Lord says, Put away that adulterer which corrupts thee, and call thy husband, that thou mayest understand Me.

ORIGEN. (tom. xiii. c. 8) And what more proper place than Jacob's well, for exposing the unlawful husband, i. e. the perverse law? For the Samaritan woman is meant to figure to us a soul, that has subjected itself to a kind of law of its own, not the divine law. And our Saviour wishes to marry her to a lawful husband, i. e. Himself; the Word of truth which was to rise from the dead, and never again to die.

4:19–24

19. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

20. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

21. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

23. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxii) The woman is not offended at Christ's rebuke. She does not leave Him, and go away. Far from it: her admiration for Him is raised: The woman saith unto Him, Sir, I perceive that Thou art a Prophet: as if she said, Thy knowledge of me is unaccountable, Thou must be a prophet.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 23) The husband was beginning to come to her, though He had not yet fully come. She thought our Lord a prophet, and He was a prophet: for He says of Himself, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country. (Mat. 13:57)

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxii. 2) And having come to this belief she asks no questions relating to this life, the health or sickness of the body: she is not troubled about thirst, she is eager for doctrine.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 23) And she begins enquiries on a subject that perplexed her; Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. This

was a great dispute between the Samaritans and the Jews. The Jews worshipped in the temple built by Solomon, and made this a ground of boasting over the Samaritans. The Samaritans replied, Why boast ye, because ye have a temple which we have not? Did our fathers, who pleased God, worship in that temple? Is it not better to pray to God in this mountain, where our fathers worshipped?

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxii. 2) By, our fathers, she means Abraham, who is said to have offered up Isaac here.

ORIGEN. (tom. xiii. c. 13) Or thus; The Samaritans regarded Mount Gerizim, near which Jacob dwelt, as sacred, and worshipped upon it; while the sacred place of the Jews was Mount Sion, God's own choice. The Jews being the people from whom salvation came, are the type of true believers; the Samaritans of heretics. Gerizim, which signifies division, becomes the Samaritans; Sion, which signifies watch-tower, becomes the Jews.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxii. 3) Christ however does not solve this question immediately, but leads the woman to higher things, of which He had not spoken till she acknowledged Him to be a prophet, and therefore listened with a more full belief: Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. He says, Believe me, because we have need of faith, the mother of all good, the medicine of salvation, in order to obtain any real good. They who endeavour without it, are like men who venture on the sea without a boat, and, being able to swim only a little way, are drowned.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 24) Believe Me, our Lord says with fitness, as the husband is now present. For now there is one in thee that believes, thou hast begun to be present in the understanding; but if ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established. (Isa. 7:9)

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiii. 1) There was no necessity for Christ to shew why the fathers worshipped in the mountain, and the Jews in Jerusalem. He therefore was silent on that question; but nevertheless asserted the religious superiority of the Jews on another ground, the ground not of place, but, of knowledge; Ye worship ye know not what, we know what we worship; for salvation if of the Jews.

ORIGEN. (tom. xiii. c. 17) Ye, literally refers to the Samaritans, but mystically, to all who understand the Scriptures in an heretical sense. We again literally means the Jews, but mystically, I the Word, and all who conformed to My Image, obtain salvation from the Jewish Scriptures.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiii. 1) The Samaritans worshipped they knew not what, a local, a partial God, as they imagined, of whom they had the same notion that they had of their idols. And therefore they mingled the worship of God with the worship of idols. But the Jews were free from this superstition: indeed they knew God to be the God of the whole world; wherefore He says, We worship what we know. He reckons Himself among the Jews, in condescension to the woman's idea of Him; and says as if He were a Jewish prophet, We worship, though it is certain that He is the Being who is worshipped by all. The words, For salvation is of the Jews, mean that every thing calculated to save and amend the world, the knowledge of God, the abhorrence of idols, and all other doctrines of that nature, and even the very origin of our religion, comes originally from the Jews. In salvation too He includes His own presence, which He says is of the Jews, as we are told by the Apostle, Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came. (Rom. 9:5) See how He exalts the Old Testament, which He shews to be the root of every thing good; thus proving in every way that He Himself is not opposed to the Law.

AUGUSTINE. (in Joan. Tr. xv. c. 26) It is saying much for the Jews, to declare in their name, We worship what we know. But He does not speak for the reprobate Jews, but for that party from whom the Apostles and the Prophets came. Such were all those saints who laid the prices of their possessions at the Apostle's feet.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiii. 1) The Jewish worship then was far higher than the Samaritan; but even it shall be abolished; The hour cometh, and now is, when, the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. He says, and now is, to shew that this was not a prediction, like those of the ancient Prophets, to be fulfilled in the course of ages. The event, He says, is now at hand, it is approaching your very doors. The words, true worshippers, are by way of distinction: for there are false worshippers who pray for temporal and frail benefits, or whose actions are ever contradicting their prayers.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxiii. 2) Or by saying, true, he excludes the Jews together with the Samaritans. For the Jews, though better than the Samaritans, were yet as much inferior to those who were to succeed them, as the type is to the reality. The true worshippers do not confine the worship of God to place, but worship in the spirit; as Paul saith, Whom I serve with my spirit. (Rom. 1:9)

ORIGEN. (tom. xiii. c. 14) Twice it is said, The hour cometh, and the first time without the addition, and now is. The first seems to allude to that purely spiritual worship which is suited only to a state of perfection; the second to earthly worship, perfected as far as is consistent with human nature. When that hour cometh, which our Lord speaks of, the mountain of the Samaritans must be avoided, and God must

be worshipped in Sion, where is Jerusalem, which is called by Christ the city of the Great King. And this is the Church, where sacred oblations and spiritual victims are offered up by those who understand the spiritual law. So that when the fulness of time shall have come, the true worship, we must suppose, will no longer be attached to Jerusalem, i. e. to the present Church: for the Angels do not worship the Father at Jerusalem: and thus those who have obtained the likeness of the Jews, worship the Father better than they who are at Jerusalem. And when this hour is come, we shall be accounted by the Father as sons. Wherefore it is not said, Worship God, but, Worship the Father. But for the present the true worshippers worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiii. 2) He speaks here of the Church; wherein there is true worship, and such as becometh God; and therefore adds, For the Father seeketh such to worship Him. For though formerly He willed that mankind should linger under a dispensation of types and figures, this was only done in condescension to human frailty, and to prepare men for the reception of the truth.

ORIGEN. (tom. xiii. c. 20) But if the Father seeks, He seeks through Jesus, Who came to seek and to save that which was lost, and to teach men what true worship was. God is a Spirit; i. e. He constitutes our real life, just as our breath (spirit) constitutes our bodily life.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxii. 2) Or it signifies that God is incorporeal; and that therefore He ought to be worshipped not with the body, but with the soul, by the offering up a pure mind, i. e. that they who worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth. The Jews neglected the soul, but paid great attention to the body, and had various kinds of purification. Our Lord seems here to refer to this, and to say, not by cleansing of the body, but by the incorporeal nature within us, i. e. the understanding, which He calls the spirit, that we must worship the incorporeal God.

HILARY. (ii. de Trin. c. 31) Or, by saying that God being a Spirit ought to be worshipped in spirit, He indicates the freedom and knowledge of the worshippers, and the uncircumscribed nature of the worship: according to the saying of the Apostle, Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (2 Cor. 3:17)

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxii. 2) And that we are to worship in truth, means that whereas the former ordinances were typical; that is to say, circumcision, burnt offerings, and sacrifices; now, on the contrary, every thing is real.

THEOPHYLACT. Or, because many think that they worship God in the spirit, i. e. with the mind, who yet held heretical doctrines concerning Him, for this reason He adds, and in truth. May not the words too

refer to the two kinds of philosophy among us, i. e. active and contemplative; the spirit standing for action, according to the Apostle, As many as are led by the Spirit of God; (Rom. 8:14) truth, on the other hand, for contemplation. Or, (to take another view,) as the Samaritans thought that God was confined to a certain place, and ought to be worshipped in that place; in opposition to this notion, our Lord may mean to teach them here, that the true worshippers worship not locally, but spiritually. Or again, all being a type and shadow in the Jewish system, the meaning may be that the true worshippers will worship not in type, but in truth. God being a Spirit, seeketh for spiritual worshippers; being the truth, for true ones.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 25) O for a mountain to pray on, thou criest, high and inaccessible, that I may be nearer to God, and God may hear me better, for He dwelleth on high. Yes, God dwelleth on high, but He hath respect unto the humble. Wherefore descend that thou mayest ascend. “Ways on high are in their heart,” (Ps. 74:7.) it is said, “passing in the valley of tears,” and in “tears” is humility. Wouldest thou pray in the temple? pray in thyself; but first do thou become the temple of God.

4:25–26

25. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

26. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxii. 2) The woman was struck with astonishment at the loftiness of His teaching, as her words shew: The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 27) Unctus in Latin, Christ in Greek, in the Hebrew Messiah. She knew then who could teach her, but did not know Who was teaching her. When He is come, He will tell us all things: as if she said, The Jews now contend for the temple, we for the mountain; but He, when He comes, will level the mountain, overthrow the temple, and teach us how to pray in spirit and in truth.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxii. 2) But what reason had the Samaritans for expecting Christ’s coming? They acknowledged the books of Moses, which foretold it. Jacob prophesies of Christ, The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from beneath his feet, until Shiloh come. (Gen. 49:10) And Moses says, The Lord thy God shall raise up a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren. (Deut. 18:15)

ORIGEN. (tom. xiii. c. 27) It should be known, that as Christ rose out of the Jews, not only declaring but proving Himself to be Christ; so among the Samaritans there arose one Dositheus by name, who asserted that he was the Christ prophesied of.

AUGUSTINE. (lib. lxxxiii. Quæst. qu. 64) It is a confirmation to discerning minds that the five senses were what were signified by the five husbands, to find the woman making five carnal answers, and then mentioning the name of Christ.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiii. 2) Christ now reveals Himself to the woman: Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He. Had He told the woman this to begin with, it would have appeared vanity. Now, having gradually awakened her to the thought of Christ, His disclosure of Himself is perfectly opportune. He is not equally open to the Jews, who ask Him, If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly; (John 10:24) for this reason, that they did not ask in order to learn, but to do Him injury; whereas she spoke in the simplicity of her heart.

4:27–30

27. And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

28. The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

29. Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

30. Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiii. 2, 3) The disciples arrive opportunely, and when the teaching is finished: And upon this came His disciples, and marvelled that He talked with the woman. They marvelled at the exceeding kindness and humility of Christ, in condescending to converse with a poor woman, and a Samaritan.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 29) He who came to seek that which was lost, sought the lost one. This was what they marvelled at: they marvelled at His goodness; they did not suspect evil.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiii. 3) But notwithstanding their wonder, they asked Him no questions, No man said, What seekest Thou? or, Why talkest Thou with her? So careful were they to observe the rank of

disciples, so great was their awe and veneration for Him. On subjects indeed which concerned themselves, they did not hesitate to ask Him questions. But this was not one.

ORIGEN. (tom. xiii. in Joan. c. 28) The woman is almost turned into an Apostle. So forcible are His words, that she leaves her waterpot to go to the city, and tell her townsmen of them. The woman then left her waterpot, i. e. gave up low bodily cares, for the sake of benefitting others. Let us do the same. Let us leave off caring for things of the body, and impart to others of our own.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 30) Hydria answers to our word aquarium; hydor being Greek for water.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiv. 1) As the Apostles, on being called, left their nets, so does she leave her waterpot, to do the work of an Evangelist, by calling not one person, but a whole city: She went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

ORIGEN. (tom. xiii. in Joan. c. 29) She calls them together to see a man, whose words were deeper than man's. She had had five husbands, and then was living with the sixth, not a lawful husband. But now she gives him up for a seventh, and she leaving her waterpot, is converted to chastity.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiv. 1) She was not prevented by shame-facedness from spreading about what had been said to her. For the soul, when it is once kindled by the divine flame, regards neither glory, nor shame, nor any other earthly thing, only the flame which consumes it. But she did not wish them to trust to her own report only, but to come and judge of Christ for themselves. Come, see a man, she says. She does not say, Come and believe, but, Come and see; which is an easier matter. For well she knew that if they only tasted of that well, they would feel as she did.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiv. 1) She then neither openly preaches Christ, nor wholly omits Him, but says, Is not this the Christ? This wakened their attention, Then they went out of the city, and came unto Him.

AUGUSTINE. The circumstance of the woman's leaving her waterpot on going away, must not be overlooked. For the waterpot signifies the love of this world, i. e. concupiscence, by which men from the dark depth, of which the well is the image, i. e. from an earthly conversation, draw up pleasure. It was right then for one who believed in Christ to renounce the world, and, by leaving her waterpot, to shew that she had parted with worldly desires.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 30) She cast away therefore concupiscence, and hastened to proclaim the truth. Let those who wish to preach the Gospel, learn, that they should first leave their waterpots at the well.

ORIGEN. (tom. xiii. c. 29) The woman having become a vessel of wholesome discipline, lays aside as contemptible her former tastes and desires.

4:31–34

31. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

32. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

33. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?

34. Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 31) His disciples had gone to buy food, and had returned. They offered Christ some: In the mean while His disciples prayed Him, saying, Master, eat.

CHRYSOSTOM. They all ask Him at once, Him so fatigued with the journey and heat. This is not impatience in them, but simply love, and tenderness to their Master.

ORIGEN. (tom. xiii. c. 31) They think the present time convenient for dining; it being after the departure of the woman to the city, and before the coming of the Samaritans; so that they sit at meat by themselves. This explains, In the mean while.

THEOPHYLACT. Our Lord, knowing that the woman of Samaria was bringing the whole town out to Him, tells His disciples, I have meat that ye know not of.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiv. 1) The salvation of men He calls His food, shewing His great desire that we should be saved. As food is an object of desire to us, so was the salvation of men to Him. Observe, He does not express Himself directly, but figuratively; which makes some trouble necessary for His hearers, in order to comprehend His meaning, and thus gives a greater importance to that meaning when it is understood.

THEOPHYLACT. That ye know not of, i. e. know not that I call the salvation of men food; or, know not that the Samaritans are about to believe and be saved. The disciples however were in perplexity: Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought Him ought to eat?

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 31) What wonder that the woman did not understand about the water? Lo, the disciples do not understand about the meat.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiv. 1) They shew, as usual, the honour and reverence in which they hold their Master, by talking among themselves, and not presuming to question Him.

THEOPHYLACT. From the question of the disciples, Hath any man brought Him ought to eat, we may infer that our Lord was accustomed to receive food from others, when it was offered Him: not that He who giveth food to all flesh, (Ps. 146.) needed any assistance; but He received it, that they who gave it might obtain their reward, and that poverty thenceforth might not blush, nor the support of others be esteemed a disgrace. It is proper and necessary that teachers should depend on others to provide them with food, in order that, being free from all other cares, they may attend the more to the ministry of the word.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 31) Our Lord heard His doubting disciples, and answered them as disciples, i. e. plainly and expressly, not circuitously, as He answered the women; Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.

ORIGEN. (tom. xiii. c. 6) Fit meat for the Son of God, who was so obedient to the Father, that in Him was the same will that was in the Father: not two wills, but one will in both. The Son is capable of first accomplishing the whole will of the Father. Other saints do nothing against the Father's will; He does that will. That is His meat in an especial sense. And what means, To finish His work? It would seem easy to say, that a work was what was ordered by him who set it; as where men are set to build or dig. But some who go deeper ask whether a work being finished does not imply that it was before incomplete; and whether God could originally have made an incomplete work? The completing of the work, is the completing of a rational creature: for it was to complete this work, which was as yet imperfect, that the Word made flesh come.

THEOPHYLACT. He finished the work of God, i. e. man, He, the Son of God, finished it by exhibiting our nature in Himself without sin, perfect and uncorrupt. He finished also the work of God, i. e. the Law, (Rom. 10:4) (for Christ is the end of the Law,) by abolishing it, when every thing in it had been fulfilled, and changing a carnal into a spiritual worship.

ORIGEN. (tom. xiii. c. 31) The matter of spiritual drink and living water being explained, the subject of meat follows. Jesus had asked the woman of Samaria, and she could give Him none good enough. Then came the disciples, having procured some humble food among the people of the country, and offered it

Him, beseeching Him to eat. They fear perhaps lest the Word of God, deprived of His own proper nourishment, fail within them; and therefore with such as they have found, immediately propose to feed Him, that being confirmed and strengthened, He may abide with His nourishers. Souls require food as well as bodies. And as bodies require different kinds of it, and in different quantities, so is it in things which are above the body. (Heb. 5:12) Souls differ in capacity, and one needs more nourishment, another less. So too in point of quality, the same nourishment of words and thoughts does not suit all. Infants just born need the milk of the word; the grown up, solid meat. Our Lord says, I have meat to eat. For one who is over the weak who cannot behold the same things with the stronger, may always speak thusb.

4:35–38

35. 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.

36. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

37. And herein is that saving true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

38. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiv. 1) What is the will of the Father He now proceeds to explain: Say ye not, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest?

THEOPHYLACT. Now ye are expecting a material harvest. But I say unto you, that a spiritual harvest is at hand: Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. He alludes to the Samaritans who are approaching.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiv. 2) He leads them, as his custom is, from low things to high. Fields and harvest here express the great number of souls, which are ready to receive the word. The eyes are both spiritual, and bodily ones, for they saw a great multitude of Samaritans now approaching. This expectant crowd he calls very suitably white fields. For as the corn, when it grows white, is ready for the harvest; so were these ready for salvation. But why does He not say this in direct language? Because by making use in this way of the objects around them, he gave greater vividness and power to His words, and brought the truth

home to them; and also that His discourse might be more pleasant, and might sink deeper into their memories.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 32) He was intent now on beginning the work, and hastened to send labourers: And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiv. 2) Again, He distinguishes earthly from heavenly things, for as above He said of the water, that he who drank of it should never thirst, so here He says, He that reapeth gathereth fruit unto life eternal; adding, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. The Prophets sowed, the Apostles reaped, yet are not the former deprived of their reward. For here a new thing is promised; viz. that both sowers and reapers shall rejoice together. How different this from what we see here. Now he that soweth grieveth because he soweth for others, and he only that reapeth rejoiceth. But in the new state, the sower and reaper share the same wages.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 32) The Apostles and Prophets had different labours, corresponding to the difference of times; but both will attain to like joy, and receive together their wages, even eternal life.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiv. 2) He confirms what He says by a proverb, And herein is that saying true, one soweth and another reapeth, i. e. one party has the labour, and another reaps the fruit. The saying is especially applicable here, for the Prophets had laboured, and the disciples reaped the fruits of their labours: I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 32) So then He sent reapers, no sowers. The reapers went where the Prophets had preached. Read the account of their labours: they all contain prophecy of Christ. And the harvest was gathered on that occasion when so many thousands brought the prices of their possessions, and laid them at the Apostles' feet; relieving their shoulders from earthly burdens, that they might follow Christ. Yea verily, and from that harvest were a few grains scattered, which filled the whole world. And now ariseth another harvest, which will be reaped at the end of the world, not by Apostles, but by Angels. The reapers, He says, are the Angels. (Mat. 13)

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiv. 2) I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour, i. e. I have reserved you for a favourable time, in which the labour is less, the enjoyment greater. The more laborious part of the work was laid on the Prophets, viz. the sowing of the seed: Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. Christ here throws light on the meaning of the old prophecies. He shews that both the

Law and the Prophets, if rightly interpreted, led men to Him; and that the Prophets were sent in fact by Himself. Thus the intimate connexion is established between the Old Testament and the New.

ORIGEN. (tom. xv. in Joan. c. 39–49) How can we consistently give an allegorical meaning to the words, Lift up your eyes, &c. and only a literal one to the words, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? The same principle of interpretation surely must be applied to the latter, that is to the former. The four months represent the four elements, i. e. our natural life; the harvest, the end of the world, when all conflict shall have ceased, and truth shall prevail. The disciples then regard the truth as incomprehensible in our natural state, and look forward to the end of the world for attaining the knowledge of it. But this idea our Lord condemns: Say not ye, there are four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes. In many places of Holy Scripture, we are commanded in the same way to raise the thoughts of our minds, which cling so obstinately to earth. A difficult task this for one who indulges his passions, and lives carnally. Such an one will not see if the fields be white to the harvest. For when are the fields white to the harvest? When the Word of God comes to light up and make fruitful the fields of Scripture. Indeed, all sensible things are as it were fields made white for the harvest, if only reason be at hand to interpret them. We lift up our eyes, and behold the whole universe overspread with the brightness of truth. And he that reapeth those harvests, has a double reward of his reaping; first, his wages; And he that reapeth receiveth wages; meaning his reward in the life to come; secondly, a certain good state of the understanding, which is the fruit of contemplation, And gathereth fruit unto life eternal. The man who thinks out the first principles of any science, is as it were the sower in that science; others taking them up, pursuing them to their results, and engrafting fresh matter upon them, strike out new discoveries, from which posterity reaps a plentiful harvest. And how much more may we perceive this in the art of arts? The seed there is the whole dispensation of the mystery, now revealed, but formerly hidden in darkness; for while men were unfit for the advent of the Word, the fields were not yet white to their eyes, i. e. the legal and prophetic Scriptures were shut up. Moses and the Prophets, who preceded the coming of Christ, were the sowers of this seed; the Apostles who came after Christ and saw His glory were the reapers. They reaped and gathered into barns the deep meaning which lay hid under the prophetic writings; and did in short what those do who succeed to a scientific system which others have discovered, and who with less trouble attain to clearer results than they who originally sowed the seed. But they that sowed and they that reaped shall rejoice together in another world, in which all sorrow and mourning shall be done away. Nay, and have they not rejoiced already? Did not Moses and Elias, the sowers, rejoice with the reapers Peter, James, and John, when they saw the glory of the Son of God at the Transfiguration? Perhaps in, one soweth and another reapeth, one and another may refer simply to those

who live under the Law, and those who live under the Gospel. For these may both rejoice together, inasmuch as the same end is laid up for them by one God, through one Christ, in one Holy Spirit.

4:39–42

39. And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

40. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

41. And many more believed because of his own word;

42. 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.

ORIGEN. (tom. xiii. in Joan. c. 50) After this conversation with the disciples, Scripture returns to those who had believed on the testimony of the woman, and were come to see Jesus.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxiv. 2) It is now, as it were, harvest time, when the corn is gathered, and a whole floor soon covered with sheaves; And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on Him, for the saying of the woman which testified, He told me all that ever I did. They considered that, the woman would never of her own accord have conceived such admiration for one Who had reproved her offences, unless He were really some great and wonderful person. (Hom. xxxv. 1). And thus relying solely on the testimony of the woman, without any other evidence, they went out to beseech Christ to stay with them: So when the Samaritans were come to Him, they besought Him that He would tarry with them. The Jews when they saw His miracles, so far from begging Him to stay, tried in every way to get rid of His presence. Such is the power of malice, and envy, and vainglory, that obstinate vice which poisons even goodness itself. Though the Samaritans however wished to keep Him with them, He would not consent, but only tarried there two days.

ORIGEN. (tom. xiii. c. 51) It is natural to ask, why our Saviour stays with the Samaritans, when He had given a command to His disciples not to enter into any city of the Samaritans. But we must explain this mystically. To go the way of the Gentiles, is to be imbued with Gentile doctrine; to go into a city of the Samaritans, is to admit the doctrines of those who believe the Scriptures, but interpret them

heretically. But when men have given up their own doctrines, and come to Jesus, it is lawful to stay with them.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxv. 1) The Jews disbelieved in spite of miracles, while these exhibited great faith, before even a miracle was wrought, and when they had only heard our Lord's words. And many more believed because of His own word. Why then do not the Evangelists give these words? To shew that they omit many important things, and because the result shews what they were; the result being that the whole city was convinced. On the other hand, when the hearers are not convinced, the Evangelists are obliged to give our Lord's words, that the failure may be seen to be owing to the indifference of the hearers, not to any defect in the preacher. And now, having become Christ's disciples, they dismiss their first instructor; And they 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. How soon they understand that He was come for the deliverance of the whole world, and could not therefore confine His purposes to the Jews, but must sow the Word every where. Their saying too, The Saviour of the world, implies that they looked on this world as miserable and lost; and that, whereas Prophets and Angels had come to save it, this was the only real Saviour, the Author not only of temporal but eternal salvation. And, observe, whereas the woman had spoken doubtfully, Is not this the Christ? they do not say, we suspect, but we know, know, that this is indeed the Saviour of the world, not one Christ out of many. Though they had only heard His words, they said as much as they could have done, had they seen ever so many and great miracles.

ORIGEN. (tom. xvii. c. 50) With the aid of our former observations on Jacob's well, and the water, it will not be difficult to see, why, when they find the true word, they leave other doctrines, i. e. the city, for a sound faith. (c. 51). Observe, they did not ask our Saviour only to enter Samaria, St. John particularly remarks, or enter that city, but to tarry there. Jesus tarries with those who ask Him, and especially with those who go out of the city to Him.

ORIGEN. (tom. xiii. c. 53) They were not ready yet for the third day; having no anxiety to see a miracle, as those had who supped with Jesus in Cana of Galilee. (This supper was after He had been in Cana three days.) The woman's report was the ground of their belief. The enlightening power of the Word itself was not yet visible to them.

AUGUSTINE. (Tr. xv. c. 33) So then they knew Christ first by report of another, afterwards by His own presence; which is still the case of those that are without the fold, and not yet Christians. Christ is

announced to them by some charitable Christians, by the report of the woman, i. e. the Church; they come to Christ, they believe on Him, through the instrumentality of that woman; He stays with them two days, i. e. gives them two precepts of charity. And thenceforth their belief is stronger. They believe that He is indeed the Saviour of the world.

ORIGEN. (tom. xiii. c. 52) For it is impossible that the same impression should be produced by hearing from one who has seen, and seeing one's self; walking by sight is different from walking by faith. The Samaritans now do not believe only from testimony, but from really seeing the truth.

From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:

4:1 The Pharisees Had Heard of Jesus' Works

Christ Wanted to Soften Their Malice.

Chrysostom: [Christ acted] not from fear but to take away their malice and soften their envy. He was indeed able to restrain them when they came against him, but he did not want to be found doing this all the time. Otherwise people might not believe his incarnation in the flesh was real. For if he was always being seized, only to then escape, this would have raised a lot of suspicion. Therefore, for the most part, he did things in a human way instead. Homilies on the Gospel of John 31.1.

It Is No Sin to Flee from Persecutors.

Augustine: Certainly, if the Pharisees' knowledge that our Lord was making more disciples and baptizing more than John had been such as to lead them wholeheartedly to follow him and desire baptism by him, he would not have left Judea; rather, he would have remained for their sake. But seeing, as he did that this knowledge about him was coupled with envy, making them persecutors instead of followers, he left. He also could have stayed among them, if he had wanted to, and escaped their hands.... But he wanted to provide himself as an example for believers in time to come, that it was no sin for a servant of God to seek refuge from the fury of persecutors.... He did it like a good teacher, not out of fear for himself but for our instruction. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.2.

The Lesser Cleanses Through the Greater.

Augustine: It may perhaps surprise you that it is said, "Jesus baptized more than John," and after this was added, "although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples did." What then? Was the statement made false, and then corrected by this addition? ... Or are both true, that is, that Jesus both did and also did not baptize? He did in fact baptize, because it was he who cleansed. And he also did not baptize, because it was not he who touched. The disciples supplied the ministry of the body; he afforded the aid of his majesty. Now, when could he cease from baptizing, so long as he did not cease from cleansing? In fact, John the Baptist said about him, "This is he that baptizes." Jesus, therefore, is still baptizing. And so long as we continue to be baptized, Jesus baptizes. Let a person come without fear to the minister below, for he has a master above. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.3.

4:2 Jesus' Disciples Baptized

The Disciples Baptize Through the Authority of Christ.

Augustine: You are not better than John, but the baptism given through you is better than that of John, seeing that the one is Christ's but the other is that of John. And that which was given by Paul and that which was given by Peter is Christ's. And if baptism was given by Judas, it was Christ's too. Judas baptized, and after Judas baptism was not repeated. John baptized, and baptism was repeated after John. Because, if Judas baptized, it was the baptism of Christ. But when John baptized, it was only John's baptism. We do not prefer Judas to John. But the baptism of Christ, even when given by the hand of Judas, is preferred over the baptism of John, even though John rightly administered it. For it was said of the Lord, before he suffered, that he baptized more than John. Then it was added: "Although Jesus himself did not baptize, but his disciples." He, and not he: he by power, they by ministry. They performed the service of baptizing. The power of baptizing remained in Christ. His disciples, then, baptized, and Judas was still among his disciples. And were those, then, whom Judas baptized not baptized again and those whom John baptized were baptized again? Plainly there was a repetition, but not a repetition of the same baptism. For those whom John baptized, John baptized; those whom Judas baptized, Christ baptized. In a similar way, then, those whom a drunk baptized, those whom a murderer baptized, those whom an adulterer baptized, if it was the baptism of Christ, they were baptized by Christ. I do not fear the adulterer, the drunk or the murderer because I pay attention to the dove through whom it is said to me, "This is he who baptizes." Tractates on the Gospel of John 5.18.

The Disciples Were Already Baptized.

Augustine: But we must believe that the disciples of Christ were already baptized themselves, either with John's baptism or, as is more probable, with Christ's. For he who had stooped to the humble service of washing his disciples' feet had not failed to administer baptism to his servants, who would thus be enabled in their turn to baptize others. Letter 265.5.

4:3 Leaving Judea

Of the Date of Jesus' Departure into Galilee.

Augustine: The three Evangelists have not made any statement opposed to the Evangelist John but only left unrecorded the Lord's first advent in Galilee after his baptism. On this occasion he turned the water into wine there. For at that period John had not yet been cast into prison. And we are also to understand that these three Evangelists have introduced into the context of these narratives an account of another journey of his into Galilee that took place after John's imprisonment, regarding which return into Galilee the Evangelist John himself furnishes the following notice: "When, therefore, Jesus knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus makes and baptizes more disciples than John (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples), he left Judea and departed again into Galilee." So, then, we perceive that by this time John had been already cast into prison, and further, that the Jews had heard that he was making and baptizing more disciples than John had made and baptized. Harmony of the Gospels 2.18.42.

4:4 Passing Through Samaria

Samaritans Were Gentiles Who Replaced Exiled Israelites.

Chrysostom: Jesus only takes up Samaria along the way, as the evangelist implies by saying, "He had to pass through Samaria." As the apostles, when expelled by the Jews went to the Gentiles, so Christ, when the Jews drove him out, goes to the Samaritans.... He did this in order to deprive the Jews of any excuse and so that they might not be able to say, "He left us and went to the uncircumcised." Homilies on the Gospel of John 31.2.

4:5 Sychar, a City of Samaria

Significance of Sychar and Samaria.

Chrysostom: Why is the Evangelist so exact about this place? It is so that when you hear the woman say, "Jacob our father gave us this well," you will not think it strange. For Sychar was the place where Simeon and Levi brought about a great slaughter because of their anger over what happened to Dinah.... And from where did the Samaritans get their name? Samaria receives its name from Somer, a mountain there, so called from the name of a former possessor of it. ... The inhabitants of the country were formerly not Samaritans but Israelites. But in due time, they fell under God's wrath and the [king of Assyria] ... transplanted them to Babylon and Media, placing Gentiles from various parts in Samaria in their place... God, however, sent lions to afflict the barbarians in order to show that it was not for lack of power on his part that he delivered up the Jews, but rather for the sins of the people themselves. The king was told this, and he sent a priest to instruct them in God's law. But not even then did they entirely discontinue their iniquity but only effected a half-hearted change. In due time, they abandoned their idols and worshiped God. At this point, the Jews returned but were always jealous toward them as strangers and enemies, naming them "Samaritans" after the mountain. Homilies on the Gospel of John 31.2.

4:6a Jacob's Well

Ministry to the Gentiles and Salvation of the Patriarchs.

Cyril of Alexandria: Having crossed the borders of Judea and being now among strangers, the Savior rests at Jacob's well. He shows us again as in a type and darkly that the preaching of the gospel should depart from Jerusalem and the divine word in time would extend to the Gentiles. However, this does not signify that the patriarchs are to be any less revered. Christ shall embrace them again and shall again be refreshed and rest, as in his saints, preserving to them the pristine unfading grace. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.4.

4:6b Jesus Is Tired

Divine Majesty in the Feelings of Our Human Nature.

Ambrose: Many things we read and believe, in the light of the sacrament of the incarnation. Even in the very affections of our human nature we behold the divine majesty. Jesus is wearied with his journey, that he may refresh the weary. He desires to drink when about to give spiritual drink to the thirsty; he was hungry, when about to supply the food of salvation to the hungry. On the Christian Faith 5.4.53.

Rivers of Living Water.

Hilary of Poitiers: If we do not understand the mystery of his tears, hunger and thirst, let us remember that ... he who thirsted gave from himself rivers of living water.... When he ate and drank, it was a concession not to his own necessities but to our habits. On the Trinity 10.24.

4:6c The Sixth Hour

The Spring Comes to the Spring in the Heat of the Day.

Romanus Melodus:

Christ, ... the source of the breath of life for all, when He was

Weary from a journey, sat down near a spring of Samaria.

And it was the season of burning heat. It was the sixth hour, as the Scripture says,

It was the middle of the day when the Messiah came to illumine those in darkness.

The Spring came upon the spring, not to drink but to cleanse.

The fountain of immortality was near the stream of the wretched woman as though it were in need.

He is tired from walking, He who tirelessly walked on the sea,

He who furnishes

Exceeding great joy and redemption.

Kontakion on the Woman of Samaria 9.4.

Entering the Depths.

Augustine: He came wearied, because he carried weak flesh. At the sixth hour, because he was in the sixth age of the world. To a well, because he came to the depth of this our habitation. For this reason it is said in the psalm, "From the depth have I cried to you, O Lord." He sat, as I said, because he was humbled.

Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.9.

4:7 A Woman of Samaria

The Woman Is the Church.

Augustine: It is pertinent to the image of the reality that this woman, who bore the type of the church, comes from strangers, for the church was to come from the Gentiles, an alien from the race of the Jews. In that woman, then, let us hear ourselves, and in her acknowledge ourselves and in her give thanks to God for ourselves. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.10.

Jesus' Thirst for the Woman's Faith.

Augustine: His "drink" was to do the will of him that sent him. That was why he said, "I thirst; give me to drink," namely, to work faith in her and to drink of her faith and transplant her into his own body, for his body is the church. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.31.

Jesus Thirsts for Her and the World's Salvation.

Maximus of Turin: The Savior asks for water from the woman, then, and feigns thirst so that he might give eternal grace to the thirsty. For the source was not able to be thirsty, nor was he in whom there is living water able to draw water full of earthly sediment. Did Christ thirst, then? He thirsted, to be sure, but for salvation and not [merely] for human drink. He was thirsty not for the water of this world but for the redemption of the human race. In a wonderful way, therefore, the source sitting by the well produces streams of mercy in that very place, and with flowing, living water he purifies the woman who is fornicating with a sixth man, not her husband but an adulterer. And in a new kind of miracle the woman

who had come to the well of Samaria as a prostitute returned chaste from the source of Christ. She who had come to look for water brought back chastity. As soon as the Lord points her sins out to her she acknowledges them, confesses Christ and announces the Savior. Abandoning her pitcher she brings not water but grace back to the city. She seems, indeed, to return without a burden, but she returns full of holiness. She returns full, I say, because she who had come as a sinner goes back as a proclaimer, and she who had left her pitcher behind brought back the fullness of Christ, without the slightest loss to her city. For even if she did not bring water to the townspeople, still she brought in the source of salvation. Sanctified, then, by faith in Christ, the woman goes back home. Sermon 22.2.

4:8 The Disciples Had Gone Away

Like a Hunter, Jesus Comes to the Watering Hole.

Ephrem the Syrian: Our Lord came to the spring of water like a hunter. He asked for water in order to give water, with water as a pretext. He sought something to drink, like a thirsty person, so that the way could be opened for him to quench thirst. He asked from her in order to teach her, and she in turn would ask from him. He was not ashamed as a rich person to ask like one in need, to teach poverty how to make a petition. He was not afraid of reproach because he was speaking to a woman by herself, in order to teach me that whoever keeps to the truth will not be shaken. "They were indeed amazed that he was standing and talking with a woman." He had dismissed his disciples from his presence so that they would not chase his prey away. He had cast bait for the dove so that by means of her he might capture the entire flock. He asked her in a way that was opposite to the real situation, so that she could answer honestly. "Give me water to drink." Here was the beginning of the meeting. He asked for water, and he made a promise about living water. He made a request, and he ceased from his request, even as she also left her pitcher. He ceased pretexts because she came to the truth, for the sake of which the pretexts [had arisen]. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 12.16.

4:9 How Is It That a Jew Asks a Drink of a Samaritan?

Samaritans Can Have Dealings with Jews, Not Vice Versa.

Chrysostom: After the Jews returned from their captivity, they were jealous of the Samaritans whom they regarded as outsiders and enemies.... The Samaritans did not use all the Scriptures, but only the writings of Moses, and made little use of the prophets. They were eager to claim their Jewish origin and prided

themselves on Abraham, whom they called their forefather since he was from Chaldea, and also Jacob since they were his descendants. But the Jews considered them Gentiles and thought they were as much an abomination as the rest of the Gentile world.... And so the woman, on being told, "Give me a drink," very naturally asks, "How is it that you, being a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" ... She knew he was a Jew from his appearance and speech. Observe how considerate she is here. For even if our Lord had been bound to abstain from dealing with her, that was his concern, not hers. The Evangelist does not say that the Samaritans would have no dealings with the Jews but that the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. The woman, however, though not at fault herself, wished to correct what she thought was done unlawfully. Homilies on the Gospel of John 31.2, 4.

Jews Would Not Even Use Their Vessels.

Augustine: The Jews would not even use [the Samaritans'] vessels. And as the woman brought with her a vessel to draw the water, it made her wonder that a Jew sought a drink from her—something Jews were not accustomed to do. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.11.

Christ Abolishes the Ceremonial Law for the Future.

Chrysostom: But why did Christ ask for a drink when the law did not permit it? It is no answer to say that he knew ahead of time that she would not give it, for in that case, he clearly should not have asked for it. Rather, his very reason for asking was to show his indifference to such observances since, if he was going to induce others to abolish them, then it was even more important for him to pass them by. Homilies on the Gospel of John 31.4.

4:10a The Gift of God

Thirst Satisfied by the Holy Spirit.

Augustine: He asks for a drink and promises to give a drink. He longs as one about to receive; he abounds as one about to satisfy. "If you knew," he says, "the gift of God." The gift of God is the Holy Spirit. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.12.

Water and Spirit As Gift of God.

Augustine: Is it shown in the sacred books that the Holy Spirit is called the “gift of God”? If people look for this too, we have in the Gospel according to John the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, who says, “If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink: he that believes on me, as the Scripture says, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” And the Evangelist has gone on further to add, “And this he spoke of the Spirit, which they should receive who believe in him.” And hence Paul the apostle also says, “And we have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” The question then is whether that water is called the gift of God, which is the Holy Spirit. But as we find here that this water is the Holy Spirit, so we find elsewhere in the Gospel itself that this water is called the gift of God. For when the same Lord was talking with the woman of Samaria at the well, to whom he had said, “Give me to drink,” and she had answered that the Jews “have no dealings” with the Samaritans, Jesus answered and said to her, “If you had known the gift of God and who it is that says to you, ‘Give me to drink,’ you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living water.” ... Because this living water, then, as the Evangelist has explained to us, is the Holy Spirit, without doubt the Spirit is the gift of God, of which the Lord says here, “If you had known the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, ‘Give me to drink,’ you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living water.” For that which is in the one passage, “Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water,” is in the other, “shall be in him a fountain of water springing up to eternal life.” On the Trinity 15.19.33.

4:10b Living Water

Living Water Is Not Stagnant.

Augustine: Water issuing from a spring is what is commonly called living water. Water collected from rain in pools and cisterns is not called living water. It may have originally flowed from a spring; yet if it collects in some place and is left to stand without any connection to its source, separated, as it were, from the channel of the spring. It is not called “living water.” Water is designated as “living” when it is taken as it flows. This is the kind of water that was in that fountain. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.12.

The Living Water Is Christ's Spirit and Power.

Human Nature Buds into a Virtuous Life.

Cyril of Alexandria: Jesus calls the quickening gift of the Spirit "living water" because mere human nature is parched to its very roots, now rendered dry and barren of all virtue by the crimes of the devil. But now human nature runs back to its pristine beauty, and drinking in that which is life-giving, it is made beautiful with a variety of good things and, budding into a virtuous life, it sends out healthy shoots of love toward God. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.4.

4:11 The Well Is Deep

Title of "Lord" Implies Reverence.

Chrysostom: Already, our Lord raises the woman's low opinion of him, making her realize that he was no common person. She addresses him reverentially by the title of "Lord." Homilies on the Gospel of John 31.4.

Drinking from Jacob's Well.

Origen: The Scriptures, therefore, are introductions, and are called Jacob's well. Once they have now been accurately understood, one must go up from them to Jesus, that he may freely give us the fountain of water that leaps into eternal life. But everyone does not draw water from Jacob's well in the same way.... Some who are wise in the Scriptures drink as Jacob and his sons. But others who are simpler and more innocent, the so-called sheep of Christ, drink as Jacob's livestock. And others, misunderstanding the Scriptures and maintaining certain irreverent things on the pretext that they have apprehended the Scriptures, drink as the Samaritan woman drank before she believed in Jesus. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.37–39.

This Well Is the Grace of the Spirit.

Ambrose: This well is clearly the grace of the Spirit, a stream proceeding from the living fountain. The Holy Spirit, then, is also the fountain of eternal life.... This water, the grace of the Spirit, is so refreshing. Who will give this fountain to my breast? Let it spring up in me, let what gives eternal life flow on me. Let that

fountain overflow on us and not flow away.... How shall I keep this water so that it does not flow or glide away? On the Holy Spirit 1.16.180–81.

4:12 Greater Than the Patriarch Jacob?

Two Reasons Samaritans Claimed Jacob.

Cyril of Alexandria: The Samaritans then were aliens (for they were colonists of the Babylonians), but they call Jacob their father for two reasons. They inhabited a country bordering on Jewish land and so, as neighbors, they were influenced by their worship and were accustomed to boast of the Jews' ancestors. Besides, it was really true that the greater number of the inhabitants of Samaria were sprung from the root of Jacob. For Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, having gathered together ten tribes of Israel and the half-tribe of Ephraim, departed from Jerusalem in the time of the kingdom of the son of Solomon, and took Samaria and built houses and cities there. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.4.

Jesus Is Greater Than Jacob.

Chrysostom: When the woman objects, "Are you greater than our father Jacob?" Jesus does not reply, "Actually, I am greater," which would make him sound like he is boasting since there was no proof at this point. Nonetheless, his answer implies it.... It is as if he said, If Jacob is honored because he gave you this water, what would you say if I give you far better water than this?... He makes the comparison, however, not to put Jacob down but to honor himself. Notice, Jesus does not say that the water is inferior or vile. Rather, he asserts a simple fact of nature: whoever drinks of this water shall thirst again. Homilies on the Gospel of John 32.1.

The Best Well Around.

Chrysostom: It is as if she said, you cannot say that Jacob gave us this spring and then used another for himself. For he and his descendants drank from it, which they would not have done if they had another well that was better. Therefore, you cannot then give me water from this spring. And you do not have a better spring, unless you confess that you are greater than Jacob. Where then does the water come from then that you promise to give us? Homilies on the Gospel of John 31.4.

4:13 Those Who Drink of This Water Will Thirst Again

Ideas That Do Not Satisfy and Ones That Give Eternal Life.

Origen: One must investigate what is meant by “will thirst” in the statement “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again.” ... What is meant in the first place would be something like this: he who partakes of supposedly profound thoughts, even if he is satisfied for a little while and accepts the ideas that are drawn out and that he thinks he has discovered to be most profound, will, however, when he has reconsidered them, raise new questions.... But [the Word] says, I have the teaching that becomes a fountain of living water in the one who has received what I have declared. And he who has received of my water will receive so great a benefit that a fountain capable of discovering everything that is investigated will gush forth within him. The waters will leap upward. His understanding also will spring up and fly as swiftly as possible in accordance with this briskly flowing water, the springing and leaping itself carrying him to that higher life that is eternal. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.13, 15–16.

Pleasures of the World Never Satisfy Our Thirst.

Augustine: Let us not overlook the fact that it is something spiritual that the Lord was promising. What does he mean when he says, “Whoever shall drink of this water shall thirst again”? It is true both for this water and what the water signified. Since the water in the well is the pleasure of the world in its dark depth: from this people draw it with the vessel of lusts. Stooping forward, they let down the lust to reach the pleasure fetched from the depth of the well, and they enjoy the pleasure and the preceding lust that they let down to fetch it. For he who has not dispatched his lust in advance cannot get to the pleasure. Consider lust, then, as the vessel and pleasure as the water from the depth of the well. When one has gotten into the pleasure of this world, whether it be food or drink, a bath, a show, an affair, is there any way he or she will not thirst again? Therefore, “whoever shall drink of this water,” he said “will thirst again.” But if he receives water from me, “he shall never thirst.” “We shall be satisfied,” it says, “with the good things of your house.” Of what water, then, is [Jesus] to give except of which it is said, “With you is the fountain of life”? For how shall they thirst who “shall be drunk with the fatness of your house”? Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.16.

4:14 The Water of Eternal Life

The Fire and Water of the Spirit.

Chrysostom: Sometimes Scripture calls the grace of the Spirit “fire,” other times it calls it “water.” In this way, it shows that these names are not descriptive of its essence but of its operation. For the Spirit, which is invisible and simple, cannot be made up of different substances.... In the same way that he calls the Spirit by the name of “fire,” alluding to the rousing and warming property of grace and its power of destroying sins, he calls it “water” in order to highlight the cleansing it does and the great refreshment it provides those minds that receive it. For it makes the willing soul like a kind of garden, thick with all kinds of fruitful and productive trees, allowing it neither to feel despondency nor the plots of Satan. It quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Homilies on the Gospel of John 32.1.

Baptism Extinguishes the Fires of Hell.

Maximus of Turin: Frequently indeed we see that water poured out extinguishes a fire. But sometimes we see the opposite—that huge balls of fire consume streams of water and that the flames grow more vehement, drawing strength from the water as if from food, so that the water does not seem to put out the burning but to aggravate it. What, then, is that water that consumes flames but is not itself consumed? It is, I think, that which, flowing in the bath from the fountain of Christ is not consumed by sins but consumes the fires of Gehenna, and which, once poured out on people in baptism, itself both lives in them and puts out the fire of hell. It is clear that it lives in people from what the Lord says [here].... But in a wonderful way the water of Christ both vivifies and extinguishes by one and the same operation. For it vivifies souls and extinguishes sins. The souls are renewed by the refreshment of its bath; the sins are consumed by its surging stream. And as far as the higher grace of baptism is concerned, in the heavens a mystery is celebrated and in hell Gehenna is extinguished. In the one the waters flow; in the other the fire grows cold. In the one we are submerged in the bath; in the other we are set free from the underworld. Yet there is nothing astonishing if hell is opened by the sacrament of baptism since heaven is also unlocked. For these places are opened so that freedom and grace might come together in the bath of Christ—grace from heaven and freedom from hell. Sermon 22a.3.

The Spirit in the Word Suffices to Instruct.

Cyril of Alexandria: We must know again that the Savior here calls the grace of the Holy Spirit water. If anyone drinks of this water, he will have the gift of the divine teaching constantly welling up from within him. He needs no admonition from others. Rather, it is enough to exhort those who thirst after the divine and heavenly Word that they are yet living in this present life and on earth along with the holy prophets and apostles. They are heirs of their ministrations of whom it was written, "And you shall draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation." Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.4.

The Samaritan Woman More Receptive Than Nicodemus.

Chrysostom: The woman immediately believed, showing that she was not only much wiser than Nicodemus but also more courageous. For when he heard ten thousand things like this, he neither invited any others to hear what he heard, nor did he himself speak openly [about his encounter]. But she exhibited the actions of an apostle, preaching the gospel to everyone she could and calling them to Jesus. She even drew out a whole city to hear him. When Nicodemus heard Jesus, his reaction was, "How can these things be?" And when Christ set before him a clear illustration utilizing "the wind," even then he did not receive the Word. But this is not the case with the woman. At first she doubted, but afterwards, receiving the Word not by any regular demonstration but in the form of an assertion, she immediately hurried to embrace it. For when Christ said, "It shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life," immediately the woman said, "Give me this water so that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." Homilies on the Gospel of John 32.1.

4:15 Give Me This Water, That I May Not Thirst

She Venerates Jesus More Than Jacob.

Chrysostom: See how the woman is led step by step to a higher understanding. First, she thought Jesus was some lax Jew who was transgressing the law.... Then, when she heard about the living water, she thought it meant material water. Afterwards, she understands it as spoken spiritually and believes that it can take away thirst. However, she does not yet know what it is, only understanding that it was superior to material things ... "The woman says to him, 'Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst nor come here to draw.'" Observe how she prefers him to the patriarch Jacob for whom she previously had had such veneration. Homilies on the Gospel of John 32.1.

Labor Needed No More.

Augustine: The woman is still focused on her bodily needs. She is delighted with the idea that she will never thirst again and takes this promise of our Lord in this way. And this too will be the case, although she will have to wait until the resurrection of the dead. But she wanted this now. God had indeed once allowed Elijah to neither hunger nor thirst for forty days, and if he could grant this for forty days, why not forever? This is what she longed for, to lack nothing and to be spared her hard labor, because she was coming to that fountain day after day, burdened with that heavy weight on her shoulders that was supposed to supply what she lacked.... Her poverty obliged her to work beyond what her strength could handle. If only she could hear the invitation, "Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you!" This is, in fact, what Jesus was saying to her. He was telling her that she did not need to work like this any longer, but she did not yet understand. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.15, 17.

4:16 Go, Call Your Husband

The Value of Her Condemning Herself.

Origen: She already had, as it were, something of the water that leaps into eternal life since she had said ... "I have no husband," having condemned herself on the basis of her association with such a husband. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.50.

The Woman's Haste to Receive the Gift.

Chrysostom: Since the woman demonstrates some urgency in asking for the promised water, Jesus says to her, "Go, call your husband," to show that he too ought to have a share in these things. But she was in a hurry to receive the gift and wanted to conceal her guilt (for she still imagined she was speaking to a man). "The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.'" Christ answers her with a timely rebuke, exposing her in regard to her former husbands and as to her present one whom she had concealed. Homilies on the Gospel of John 32.2

4:17–18 The Woman’s Marital History

An Illicit Union.

Augustine: Understand that the woman did not have a lawful husband but had rather formed an illicit union with someone who was not her lawful husband.... And, just in case the woman might suppose that the Lord knew about this because he had learned this from someone—and not because he knew it by his own divinity—[he says], Listen to something that you have not said, “For you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband.” Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.20.

Christian Marriage Is Blameless.

Cyril of Alexandria: The Savior was not ignorant that she had no lawful husband, and his inquiry about her husband was not the plea of one who needed hidden things revealed.... He had full knowledge of her circumstances and helpfully affirms her comment that she has no husband, although she had had so many. For it is not the union of pleasure but the approval of the law and the bond of pure love that makes marriage blameless. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.4.

She Meets Her Sixth Husband.

Romanus Melodus:

[Jesus says] “If you wish that I give you the streams of pure water,

Go, and call your husband; I shall not imitate your reproach;

I shall not say: ‘You are a woman of Samaria, and how is it that you ask for water?’

I do not increase your thirst; for I have brought you to thirst through thirst.

I exaggerated being thirsty and I was tormented by thirst in order that I might reveal you as thirsty.

Go, then, and call your husband and return.”

The woman said, “I think that I have no husband,” and the Creator said to her:

“Truly do you have none? You have five, the sixth you do not possess,

So that you may receive

Exceeding great joy and redemption.”

O wise enigmas! O wise characteristics!

In the faith of the holy woman is pictured

All the features of the church in true colors which do not grow old;

For the way in which the woman denied a husband when she had many,

Is just the way the church denied many gods, like husbands,

And left them and became betrothed to one Master in coming forth from the water.

She had five husbands and the sixth she did not have; and leaving the five

Husbands of impiety, she now takes Thee, as the sixth, as she comes

From the water,

Exceeding great joy and redemption....

The espoused church of the nations, then, left these things,

And she hurries here to the well of the baptismal font

And denies the things of the past, just as the woman of Samaria did;

For she did not conceal what had formerly been true from Him who knows all in advance,

But she said, “... Even if I formerly had husbands, I do not now wish to have

These husbands which I did have; for I now possess Thee who hast now taken me in Thy net;

And I am by faith rescued from the filth of my sins

That I may receive

Exceeding great joy and redemption.”

Kontakion on the Woman of Samaria 9.11–12, 14.

4:19 You Are a Prophet

No Other Way to Account for Jesus’ Knowledge.

Chrysostom: The woman is not offended at Christ’s rebuke. She does not leave him and go away—far from it. Her admiration for him is raised: “The woman said to him, ‘Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.’ ” ... “I perceive” means “You appear to me to be a prophet.” And having come to this belief [that Jesus was a prophet], she does not ask any questions relating to life, health or sickness of the body.... She is not troubled about thirst; rather, she is eager to be taught. Homilies on the Gospel of John 32.2–3.

4:20 Our Ancestors Worshiped on This Mountain

“Our Fathers” Designates Abraham.

Chrysostom: By “our fathers,” she means Abraham, who is said to have offered up Isaac here. Homilies on the Gospel of John 32.2.

Origins of Disagreement.

Origen: On the statement “our fathers” and what follows one must understand the disagreement between the Samaritans and the Jews over the place they considered holy. For the Samaritans worship God on the mountain called Gerizim, because they consider it to be holy. Moses refers to this mountain in Deuteronomy when he says, “And Moses commanded the people in that day saying, ‘These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have crossed the Jordan.’ ” ... The Jews, on the other hand, because they think Zion is divine and God’s dwelling place, think it has been chosen by the Father of all. For this reason they say Solomon built the temple on Zion, and all the levitical and priestly service is performed there. As a consequence of these assumptions, each nation has considered its fathers to

have worshiped God, but one on this mountain and one on the other. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.77–79.

4:21 Believe Me, the Hour Is Coming

Christ Calls for Faith.

Chrysostom: Everywhere, beloved, we have need of faith. Faith is the mother of all good, the medicine of salvation in order to obtain any real good. Without it, it is impossible to possess any of the great doctrines. Those who try anything without it are like those who venture on the sea without a boat and are drowned because they can barely swim.... Similarly, those who try to figure things out before they have learned anything are prone to suffer shipwreck.... To insure that this does not happen to us, let us hold fast to the sacred anchor by which Christ brings over the Samaritan woman now. Homilies on the Gospel of John 33.1, 2.

Christian Worship Is Not Bound to a Particular Place.

Cyril of Alexandria: Jesus equally condemns the foolishness of all, saying that the worship of both Jews and Samaritans shall be transformed to a truer worship. Jesus in effect says that people will no longer seek after a particular place where God properly dwells. Rather, Jesus is both able to fill and able to contain all things. And so, they shall worship the Lord “every one from his place,” as one of the holy prophets says. Jesus implies that his own sojourn in the world with a body is the time and season for a change of such customs. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.4.

The Church Built Out of Living Stones.

Origen: The Jews stand for those who think intelligently and salvation is from them. The Samaritans represent the heterodox. So they deify Gerizim, which means “separation” or “division.”^{p.p.p.} The Jews, on the other hand, revere Zion, which signifies “watchtower.” ... Inasmuch, then, as the hour mentioned by the Lord has not yet come when they worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem, one must flee the mountain of the Samaritans and worship God on Zion, where Jerusalem lies. Christ calls this Jerusalem the city of the great king. And what else would the city of the great king, the true Jerusalem, be than the church that is built of living stones? This is the place of the holy priesthood, the place where spiritual sacrifices are offered to God by people who are spiritual and who have understood the spiritual

law. But when the fullness of time is imminent, when one is no longer in the flesh but is in the Spirit and everyone is no longer still in the type but is in truth, then one must no longer bring true worship and perfect piety to Jerusalem to be offered. Such a person has been prepared so that he is like those whom God seeks to worship him. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.81, 83, 85.

4:22 Worship and Salvation from the Jews

Christ Born of the Jews.

Augustine: Divergent walls have come to the cornerstone, the Jews from there, the Gentiles from here. You have seen and you know that the further walls are from the corner, the further they are from each other. As they approach the corner, so they approach each other. When they reach the corner, they join each other. Christ [as cornerstone] has joined Jews and Gentiles, who were far away from each other....

Those who came from the Jews are to be counted as being part of a good wall because those who came did not remain in the ruin. We have become one, they and we; but in the One, not in ourselves. Of what lineage was Christ born? Of the Jews. That is what you find written: "Salvation is from the Jews," but not only for the Jews. He did not say, after all, "Salvation is for the Jews" but "Salvation is from the Jews." Sermon 375.1.

Salvation from the Jewish Scriptures.

Origen: The "you" refers literally to the Samaritans but anagogically to all who are heterodox regarding the Scriptures. The "we" literally means the Jews, but allegorically it means, "I, the Word, and all who are changed by me receive salvation from the Jewish Scriptures." For the mystery now revealed was revealed both through the prophetic Scriptures and through the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.101.

4:23 A Time That Is Coming and Now Is

Sons Worship the "Father."

Origen: Twice it is written, "The hour is coming." The first time it is written without the addition of "and now is." I think the first alludes to that purely spiritual worship that will begin at the time of perfection. The second, however, means, I think, the worship of those being perfected in this life so far as it is possible

for human nature to progress. It is possible, therefore, to worship the Father in spirit and in truth not only when “the hour comes” but also when it “now is.” ... For just as the angels do not worship the Father in Jerusalem because they worship the Father in a better way than those in Jerusalem, so those who can already be like the angels in their attitude will not worship the Father in Jerusalem but in a better way than those in Jerusalem....

When, however, someone worships neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem, once the hour has come he worships the Father boldly because he has become a son. Therefore it is not said, “worship God” but “worship the Father.” ...

True worshipers worship the Father in spirit and truth not only in the coming hour but also in the present. But those who worship in spirit, since they worship as they have received, worship at present in the pledge of the Spirit. But when they shall receive the Spirit in his fullness, they will worship the Father in spirit. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.86–88, 99–100, 112.

God Is Adored Not in a Place but in Spirit.

Ambrose: She learned the divine mysteries: that God is spirit and is adored not in a place but in spirit. She also learned that Christ is the Messiah and therefore that he who was still awaited by the Jews had already come. Hearing these things, that woman, who manifests the beauty of the church, learned and believed the mysteries of the law. Isaac, or the Soul 4.26.

Worshipping the Father in Spirit Is Worshipping the Trinity.

Ambrose: What does it mean, then, that the Father is worshiped in Christ, except that the Father is in Christ and the Father speaks in Christ and abides in Christ? He does not abide, indeed, as a body in a body, for God is not a body.... So not an engrafting of a body is meant, but unity of power. Therefore, by unity of power, Christ is jointly worshiped in the Father when God the Father is worshiped in Christ. In the same way then, by unity of the same power the Spirit is jointly worshiped in God when God is worshiped in the Spirit.... When God is said to be worshiped in truth (by the proper meaning of the word itself often expressed after the same manner), it ought to be understood that the Son too is worshiped. So, in the same way, the Spirit is also worshiped because God is worshiped in Spirit. Therefore the Father is worshiped both with the Son and with the Spirit, because the Trinity is worshiped. On the Holy Spirit 3.11.82, 85.

The Father Seeks True Worshipers Through Jesus.

Origen: If the Father seeks true worshipers, he seeks them through the Son, “who came to seek and to save that which was lost,” purifying and educating those whom he equips to be true worshipers through the Word and sound doctrine....

God is a Spirit.... God, who brings us into the true life, is called Spirit, and in the Scriptures, the Spirit is said to make us alive. It is clear from this that “making alive” refers not only to ordinary life but to what is more divine. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.119, 140.

4:24a God is Spirit

“Spirit” Distinguishes God from the Material World.

Origen: In the language of the Gospel itself, it is declared that “God is a Spirit.” ... To the opinion of the woman that God is rightly worshiped according to the privileges of the different localities ... the Savior answered that anyone who would follow the Lord must lay aside all preference for particular places. He expressed himself as follows: “The hour is coming when neither in Jerusalem nor on this mountain shall the true worshipers worship the Father. God is a Spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” Observe how logically he has joined together the spirit and the truth. He called God a Spirit so that he might distinguish him from bodies; and he named him the truth in order to distinguish him from a shadow or an image. For they who worshiped in Jerusalem worshiped God neither in truth nor in spirit, being in subjection to the shadow or image of heavenly things. And such also was the case with those who worshiped on Mount Gerizim. Having refuted, then, as well as we could, every notion that might suggest that we were to think of God as in any degree corporeal, we go on to say that, according to strict truth, God is incomprehensible and incapable of being measured. On First Principles 1.1.4–5.

The Spirit Is a Being, Not Wind.

Didymus the Blind: Since God cannot be seen, his incorporeal nature follows directly on his invisibility. For if God is unseen, then he must be incorporeal. And if this is the case, then the Spirit spoken of here cannot be air that has been set in motion. For among people a body reveals its spirit; however, we cannot say the same about God. Just as the Light spoken of here is not a physical light, but an intellectual light since it illuminates the mind, not the face, and just as he who is called Love is not a disposition but rather a Being

who loves what he has made and takes care of it, so he does not address the Spirit as a blast of wind, but rather presents him as an incorporeal and life-giving Being. Everyone who has learned that “God is spirit” worships him spiritually “in spirit and truth” and no longer worships the God of all under the shadows of types. He makes a distinction between the letter and the spirit and distinguishes between the type and the truth. The letter and the type were useful for a time, but when the truth came, that is, when Christ arrived, all these things came to an end. Fragments on John 3.

God Is Spirit in Bringing Us True Life.

Origen: Since we are made alive by the spirit as far as ordinary life is concerned—and what we usually mean by the term “life” concerns when the spirit that is in us draws, what is called, in the literal sense, the breath of life—I suppose it has been understood from this that God, who brings us to true life, is called spirit. In the scriptures, the spirit is said to make alive. It is clear that this “making alive” refers not to the ordinary life, but to the more divine life. For the letter also kills and produces death, but it is not death in the sense of separation of the soul from the body, but death in the sense of the separation of the soul from God, and from the Lord himself, and from the Holy Spirit. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.140.

Freedom with Knowledge in Worship.

Hilary of Poitiers: We see that the woman, her mind full of inherited tradition, thought that God must be worshiped either on a mountain, as at Samaria, or in a temple, as at Jerusalem.... The prejudices of both confined the all-embracing and illimitable God to the crest of a hill or the vault of a building. God is invisible, incomprehensible, immeasurable. The Lord said that the time had come when God should be worshiped neither on mountain nor in temple. For the Spirit cannot be shut up, as if in a cabin, or confined. It is omnipresent in space and time, and under all conditions it is present in its fullness. Therefore he said that they are the true worshipers who shall worship in the Spirit and in truth. And these who are to worship God the Spirit in the Spirit shall have the One for the means, the Other for the object, of their reverence. For each of the two stand in a different relation to the worshiper. The words “God is Spirit” do not alter the fact that the Holy Spirit has a name of his own and that he is the gift to us.... The imparted gift and the object of reverence were clearly shown when Christ taught that God, being Spirit, must be worshiped in the Spirit, and revealed what freedom and knowledge, what boundless scope for adoration, lay in this worship of God the Spirit, in the Spirit. On the Trinity 2.31.

4:24b Worship in Spirit and Truth

The Spirit in the Still Small Voice.

Origen: In the [First] Book of Kings, the Spirit of the Lord, who came to Elijah, makes the following suggestions concerning God: “For he said, you shall go out tomorrow and stand before the Lord on the mountain. Beyond, the Lord will pass by as a great and strong wind destroying mountains and crushing rocks before the Lord. The Lord is not in the wind (but in other texts we find: “in the spirit of the Lord”). After the wind, an earthquake; the Lord is not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake, a fire; the Lord is not in the fire. And after the fire, the sound of a gentle breeze.” Perhaps, indeed, these words reveal how many must experience the fire of the direct apprehension of the Lord.... But who could more properly tell us about whom God is than the Son? “For no one has known the Father except the Son.” We too aspire to know how God is spirit as the Son reveals it, and to worship God in the spirit that gives life and not in the letter that kills. We want to honor God in truth and no longer in types, shadows and examples even as the angels do not serve God in examples and the shadow of heavenly realities but in realities that belong to the spiritual and heavenly order. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.145–46.

The Theologian’s Prayer.

Evagrius of Pontus: If you wish to pray, you have need of God, “who gives prayer to him who prays.” Invoke him, then, saying, “Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come”—that is, the Holy Spirit and your only begotten Son. For this is what he taught us, saying, “Worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” He who prays in spirit and in truth is no longer dependent on created things when honoring the Creator but praises him for and in himself. If you are a theologian, you will pray truly. And if you pray truly, you are a theologian. Chapters on Prayer 59–61.

Those Who Walk in the Spirit Are Worshiping in the Spirit.

Origen: If there are many who profess to worship the Creator, there are some who are no longer in the flesh but in the spirit, because they walk in the spirit and do not fulfill the desire of the flesh. And there are others who are not in the spirit but in the flesh and wage war according to the flesh. If this is so, then one must say that those who worship the Father in spirit and not in flesh, in truth and not in types, are the true worshipers, and that those who do not so worship are not true worshipers. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.109.

Illumination of the Spirit Enables Worship.

Basil the Great: To worship in the Spirit implies that our intelligence has been enlightened. Consider the words spoken to the Samaritan woman. She was deceived by local custom into believing that worship could only be offered in a specific place. But the Lord, attempting to correct her, said that worship ought to be offered in Spirit and in truth. By truth he clearly meant himself. If we say that worship offered in the Son (the truth) is worship offered in the Father's image, we can say the same about worship offered in the Spirit since the Spirit in himself reveals the divinity of the Lord. The Holy Spirit cannot be divided from the Father and the Son in worship. If you remain outside the Spirit, you cannot worship at all, and if you are in him you cannot separate him from God. Light cannot be separated from what it makes visible, and it is impossible for you to recognize Christ, the image of the invisible God, unless the Spirit enlightens you. Once you see the image, you cannot ignore the light; you see the light and the image simultaneously. It is fitting that when we see Christ, the brightness of God's glory, it is always through the illumination of the Spirit. Through Christ the image, may we be led to the Father, for he bears the seal of the Father's very likeness. On the Spirit 26.64.

Pray in the Temple After You Become the Temple.

Augustine: "O for a mountain to pray on," you cry, "high and inaccessible so that I may be nearer to God and God may hear me better. For he dwells on high." ... Yes, God dwells on high, but he is also considerate of the humble.... Come down so that you may come near him. But do you want to ascend? Ascend, but do not seek a mountain. "The ascents," it said, "are in his heart, in the valley of weeping." A valley has humility. Therefore, do everything within. Even if perhaps you seek some lofty place, some holy place, make yourself a temple for God within yourself. "For the temple of God is holy, which means you." Would you pray in a temple? Pray in yourself. But first be a temple of God, for he in his temple hears the one who prays. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.25.

4:25 When Messiah Comes, He Will Teach Us All Things

The Samaritans Expected Christ Too.

Chrysostom: How is it that the Samaritans expected Christ's coming, since they only acknowledged the books of Moses? Their expectation came from the writings of Moses themselves.... Jacob prophesies of Christ, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until he comes

to whom it belongs, and he is the expectation of nations.” And Moses says, “The Lord your God shall raise up a prophet from the midst of you, of your brothers.” Homilies on the Gospel of John 33.2.

Messiah Will Level the Mountain and the Temple.

Augustine: She says in effect, The Jews now contend for the temple, we for the mountain. But he, when he comes, will level the mountain, overthrow the temple and teach us how to pray in spirit and in truth. She knew who could teach her, but she did not yet know him that was now teaching her.... The Hebrew Messiah is in Greek Christ and means in Latin the anointed one. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.27.

False Christs Arose Among Samaritans Too.

Origen: The Samaritan woman, who accepts only the Pentateuch of Moses, expects the coming of Christ as announced only by the law. The Samaritans probably expected the visitation on the basis of Jacob’s blessing on Judah, when he said ... “A ruler shall not fail from Judah.” ... We must not fail to remark that, as Jesus arose from among the Jews, not only saying that he was the Christ but also proving it, so also a certain Dositheus arose from among the Samaritans and declared himself to be the Christ who had been prophesied. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.154, 162.

4:26 I Who Speak to You Am He

Jesus’ Gradual Revelation of Himself.

Ephrem the Syrian: “And if you are a king, how is it that you are asking me for water?” It was not in this way that he first made reference about himself to her, but rather first as a Jew, and then as a prophet, and thereafter as the Messiah. Step by step he brought and placed her at the highest level. At first, she saw him as a thirsty person, then as a Jew, then a prophet, and afterwards as God. As he was thirsting, she was persuading him; as he was a Jew, she loathed him; as he was a person of learning, she made enquiry of him; in his being a prophet, she was rebuked by him; as he was the Messiah, she worshiped him. Commentary on Tatian’s Diatessaron 12.18.

4:27 Talking with a Samaritan Woman

Jesus' Treatment of Women.

Origen: We learn that he is meek and lowly in heart and does not disdain to speak of such great matters with a woman carrying water who goes out of the city because of her great poverty and labors to draw water for herself. When the disciples arrive they are amazed, for they previously beheld the greatness of the divinity in him, and they marvel that so great a man was speaking with a woman. We, however, carried away with pride and arrogance, despise those below us and forget that the words "Let us make man according to our image and according to our likeness" apply to each person. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.166–67.

Gender Equality in the Gospel.

Cyril of Alexandria: He shows here, as the one Creator of all, that he does not give men only this life through faith but imparts this faith to women as well. Let him that teaches in the church follow this pattern and not refuse to help women. For in all things one must not follow one's own will but the service of preaching. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.5.

4:28 The Woman Left Her Water Jar

The Woman Leaves Carrying Other Water.

Romanus Melodus:

But when the Merciful One was near the spring, ...

Then the woman of Samaria, coming from her native village, Sichar, arrived, and she had her urn on her shoulders;

And who would not call blessed the arrival and departure of this woman?

For she departed in filth; she entered into the figure of the church as blameless;

She departed, and she drew out life like a sponge.

She departed bearing water; she became a bearer of God;

And who does not bless

This woman; or rather who does not revere her, the type of the nations

As she brings

Exceeding great joy and redemption?

Kontakion on the Woman of Samaria 9.5.

Before You Preach, Leave Your Water Jar.

Augustine: Having heard, "I that speak with you am he," and having received Christ the Lord into her heart, what could she do now but leave her water jar and run to preach the gospel? She cast out lust and hurried to proclaim the truth. Let those who would preach the gospel learn: let them throw away their water jar at the well. You remember what I said before of the water jar. It was a vessel with which the water was drawn, called hydria, from its Greek name, because water is hydor in Greek; just as if it were called aquarium, from the Latin. She threw away her water jar then, which was no longer of use but a burden to her, such was her eagerness to be satisfied with that water. Throwing her burden away to make Christ known, "she ran to the city and says to those men, 'Come, and see a man who told me everything I ever did.'" Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.30.

The Samaritan Woman an Apostle.

Origen: He also uses the woman as an apostle, as it were, to those in the city. His words to her are so forceful that she leaves her water jar to go to the city and tells them to her fellow townspeople.... I think there was a definite purpose why the Evangelist recorded that the woman left her water jar and went into the city. At the literal level, then, this shows the tremendous eagerness of the Samaritan woman, who forsakes her water jar and is more concerned for how she may benefit the multitude than for her more humble duty related to material things. For she was very benevolently moved and wished to announce the Christ to her fellow citizens by bearing witness to the one who told her "all I ever did." And she invites them to behold a man whose speech is greater than man, for his appearance to the eye was human. So must we, too, therefore, forgetting things that are more material in nature and leaving them behind, be

eager to impart to others the benefit of which we have been partakers. For by recording the woman's commendation for those capable of reading with understanding, the Evangelist challenges us to this goal. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.169, 173–74.

4:29 Could He Be the Christ?

The Work of an Evangelist.

Chrysostom: As the apostles left their nets on being called, so she leaves her water jar to do the work of an evangelist by calling not one or two people, as Andrew and Philip did, but a whole city. Homilies on the Gospel of John 34.1.

One Need Only Taste of That Well to Feel as She Did.

Chrysostom: She was not prevented by any concern for losing face from spreading around what had been said to her. For the soul, once kindled by the divine flame, does not consider glory or shame or any other earthly consideration: only the flame that consumes it.... She did not want them to trust only her own report but to come and make a judgment about Christ for themselves.... "Come, see a man, she says. She does not say, "Come and believe," but "Come and see," which is an easier matter. For she certainly knew that if they only tasted of that well, they would feel as she did. Homilies on the Gospel of John 34.1.

4:31 The Disciples Urge Their Rabbi to Eat

Diligence in Teaching the Gospel.

Cyril of Alexandria: Having initiated the conversion of the Samaritans ... Jesus focuses entirely on the salvation of those who are called and has no concern for bodily food, though wearied with his journey. In this way, he encourages the teachers in the churches and persuades them to disregard all fatigue and be more zealous for those who are being saved than caring for their own bodies. For the prophet says, "Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord with slackness." Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.5.

4:32 Food to Eat That the Disciples Did Not Know

Jesus Replenishes Himself from the Father.

Origen: And it is not out of place to say that not only do people and angels need spiritual food, but so too does the Christ of God. For, if I may put it this way, he is always replenishing himself from the Father, who alone is without need and sufficient in himself. Now the common person who is being taught receives his foods from the disciples of Jesus who are commanded to distribute food to the crowds, and Jesus' disciples receive their food from Jesus himself.... The Son of God, however, receives his food from the Father alone, without the intervention of any other being. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.219–220.

4:33 Who Brought Food?

The Disciples Do Not Understand.

Augustine: It is no wonder that the woman did not understand what he said about the water when you consider the disciples did not understand about the food either. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.31.

4:34 Doing the Will of God

Christ Hungry for Our Salvation.

Chrysostom: He calls the salvation of men and women his food, showing his great desire that we should be saved. His desire for our salvation is as great as our desire for food. And see how often he does not express himself directly but figuratively. This necessarily makes it difficult for his hearers to comprehend his meaning, but it also gives a greater importance to that meaning once it is understood. Homilies on the Gospel of John 34.1.

The Will of God Is Repentance and Forgiveness.

Ambrose: The food of a priest is the remission of sins. Therefore, the Prince of priests, Christ, says, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me." What is the will of God but this: "When you turn and groan, then shall you be saved"? Letter 57 (to Simplicianus).

One Will.

Origen: It is proper food for the Son of God when he becomes a doer of the Father's will, that is, when he wills in himself what was also the Father's will, so that the will of God is in the will of the Son, and the will of the Son has become indistinguishable from the will of the Father, and there are no longer two wills but one. It is because of this one will that the Son said, "I and the Father are one." And because of this will, he who has seen him has seen the Son, and has seen also the one who sent him. ... Only the Son has comprehended the complete will of God and does it. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.228, 231.

Being Perfected and Made Ready for Solid Food.

Origen: Perhaps the Savior was sent for the following reasons. First, that he might do the will of the one who sent him, having become his worker here, too, and second, that he might perfect the work of God, so that each one who has been perfected might be made fit for solid food and be present with wisdom. "Solid food is for the perfect, the mature, who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil." ... And when each of us, a work of God, has been perfected by Jesus, he will say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As for the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.241–42.

The Work of the Father Is Not Yet Finished.

Ambrose: But as Christ is not yet made subject [to the Father], so also is the work of God not yet perfected. For the Son of God said, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work." How can anyone doubt that the subjection of the Son in me is still in the future when the work of the Father is still unfinished [in me] because I myself am not yet perfect? On the Christian Faith 5.13.169.

4:35 Fields White for Harvest

"Lift Up Your Eyes."

Origen: "Lift up your eyes" occurs in many places in Scripture when the divine Word admonishes us to exalt and lift up our thoughts, and to elevate the insight that lies below in a rather sickly condition and is stooped and completely incapable of looking up, as is written for instance in Isaiah, "lift up your eyes on high and see. Who has made all these things known?" ... No one who indulges his passions and clings to

the flesh with a concern for material things has observed the command that says, “Lift up your eyes.” Such a person will not see the fields, even if they are “already white for harvest.” Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.274, 278.

The Fields of Salvation.

Chrysostom: What the will of the Father is, he now proceeds to explain: “Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes harvest?’ ” ... He leads them, as his custom is, from low things to high... Fields and harvest here express the great number of souls ready to receive the Word. The eyes are both spiritual and bodily, for they saw a great multitude of Samaritans now approaching. This expectant crowd he calls very suitably white fields. For as the corn, when it grows white, is ready for the harvest, so these were ready for salvation. But why doesn’t he say this in direct language?... Because, by making use in this way of the objects around them, he gave greater vividness and power to his words and brought the truth home to them. He also spoke in this way so that his discourse might be more pleasant and might sink deeper into their memories. Homilies on the Gospel of John 34.1–2.

4:36–37 Both Sowers and Reapers Rejoice

Moses as Sower and Apostles as Those Who Reap.

Origen: It is my opinion that in the case of every art and science of the more important subjects of investigation, the one who discovers the first principle is the sower. Others receive and elaborate on these principles. They then hand on to others of a later time what they have discovered ... who then take this up as if it were a harvest of the full fruit of the art or science they have received that has now reached maturity. But if this is true in the case of certain arts and sciences, how much more is it evident in the case of the art of arts and the science of sciences?...

Consider the possibility that those who “sow” are Moses and the prophets, since they wrote “for our admonition on whom the ends of the world have come,” and proclaimed the sojourn of Christ. And consider if those who “reaped” were the apostles who received the Christ and beheld the glory which agreed with the intellectual seeds of the prophets about him. These were reaped by the elaboration and grasping of “the mystery that has been hidden from the ages, but that is manifested in these last times,” and “in other generations was not known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets.”

The seed [that is being sown] in this case is the whole plan related to the revelation of the mystery that has been kept silent for eternity and now has been made known through the prophetic Scriptures and the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. At that time the true light made the fields white already for harvest by shining upon them.

According to this explanation then, the fields in which the seeds had been sown are the writings of the law and prophets that were not white to those who had not received the presence of the Word. They became such, however, to those who become disciples of the Son of God—those who obey him when he says, “Lift up your eyes and see the fields, for they are white for harvest.” As genuine disciples of Jesus, therefore, let us also lift up our eyes and see the fields that have been sown by Moses and the prophets, that we may see their whiteness and how it is possible to reap their fruit to eternal life. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.302–3, 305–8.

Prophets and Apostles.

Chrysostom: Who is “he that sows”? Who is “he that reaps”? The prophets sowed, but they did not reap; rather, the apostles are the ones who reaped. Yet, the prophets are not deprived of the pleasure and reward of their labors on this account, but they rejoice and are glad with us, even though they do not reap with us. For harvesting is not the same kind of work as sowing. I therefore have reserved for you what involves less work and greater pleasure, that is, harvesting instead of sowing, because there is a lot more hardship and work involved in sowing. At the harvest, the return is large and the labor not so great. In fact, it is quite easy. By these arguments Jesus here desires to prove that the desire of the prophets is that all people should come to him. The law was also utilized in this, and the prophets sowed the law for this same reason so that they might produce this fruit. Jesus shows, moreover, that he sent those prophets as well, and that there was a very intimate connection between the new covenant and the old. All this he effects by this one parable. Homilies on the Gospel of John 34.2.

The Threshing Floor Is the Church.

Cyril of Alexandria: The spiritual sowing indicates those who tilled beforehand by the voice of the prophets. The multitude of spiritual ears is those brought to the faith that is shown through Christ. But the harvest is white, in other words, already ripe for faith, and confirmed toward a godly life. But the sickle of the reaper is the glittering and sharp word of the apostle, cutting away the hearers from the worship according to the law and transferring them to the floor, that is, to the church of God. There, they are

bruised and pressed by good works and shall be set forth as pure wheat worthy of the divine harvest. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.5.

4:38 Sent to Reap

4:40 The Samaritans Ask Jesus to Remain

Jesus Remains with Those Who Ask.

Origen: John has not written that the Samaritans “asked him” to enter Samaria or to enter the city but “to remain with them.” ... In what follows he does not say, “And he remained in that city two days” or “he remained in Samaria” but “he remained there,” that is, with those who asked. For Jesus remains with those who ask, and especially when those who ask him come out of their city and come to Jesus, as if in imitation of Abraham when he obeyed God who said, “Go forth out of your country and from your kindred, and out of your father’s house.” Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.345–46.

4:41 Many More Believed Because of Jesus’ Word

What Did Jesus Say to the Samaritans?

Chrysostom: They acknowledge Christ not just as one of the many Christs but as the Savior. And yet, who did they see who had been saved at this point? They had only heard his words, and yet they spoke as though they had seen all these great and wonderful miracles. Why, then, don’t the Evangelists tell us what these words were and how admirably he spoke? By not doing so, they show that they pass over many important matters, and yet, by reporting the event itself, they lead us to understand everything. For he persuaded an entire people and a whole city by his words alone! On the other hand, when the hearers are not convinced, the Evangelists are obliged to provide the words of our Lord so that the failure may be seen as owing to the indifference of the hearers, not to any defect in the preacher. Homilies on the Gospel of John 35.1.

4:42 We Heard Him Ourselves

Direct Access to the Word.

Origen: The Samaritans renounce their faith that was based on the speech of the woman when they discover that hearing the Savior himself is better than that faith, so that they, too, know “that this is truly the Savior of the world.” It is better indeed to become an eyewitness of the Word and to hear him [directly].... And so, there is nothing astonishing in the fact that some are said to walk by faith and not by sight, while others are said to walk by sight, which is greater than walking by faith.... Heracleon says, “People believe in the Savior first by being led by people. But whenever they read his words, they no longer believe because of human testimony alone, but because of the truth itself.” Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.353, 362–63.

The People Dismiss Their First Instructor for the Real Thing.

Chrysostom: “And they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we have heard him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.’ ” The pupils had gone beyond their first instructor ... Notice how soon they arrived at the understanding that he had come for the deliverance of the whole world and could not therefore confine his purposes to the Jews but must sow the Word everywhere.... Their saying too, “The Savior of the world,” implies that they looked on this world as miserable and lost. They saw that whereas prophets and angels had come to save it, this was the only real Savior, the author not only of temporal but eternal salvation.... And notice how the woman had spoken doubtfully, “Is not this the Christ?” But they do not say, “We suspect” but “We know” that this is indeed the Savior of the world. Homilies on the Gospel of John 35.1.