

**A Missional Perspective of John 4:1-42**  
**Hearing Jesus and the Samaritan woman and its Implications**  
**for the Mission of the Contemporary Church**

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**A Missional Perspective of John 4:1-42  
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**By**

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## **Dedication**

This piece of work is dedicated to my beloved mother Mikelina Louise Abia who always did her best as a single mother to ensure that I went to school.

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Peter Anibati Abia

## ABSTRACT

**Title: A Missional Perspective of John 4:1-42: Hearing Jesus and the Samaritan woman and its Implications for the Mission of the Contemporary Church**

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Traditionally, it has been argued that the Gospel of John was never a mission book (Missionsschrift) but rather a “Gemeindeschrift” written to confirm or deepen the faith of the early Christians of the Johannine community. In this study however, it is argued that although John’s Gospel may be encouraging to believers, the author rhetorically intended to persuade his readers to embody the missional motif, which started with the mission of Jesus. The narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4:1-42, is investigated as an example of how Jesus for the sake of His mission crossed all barriers of His time to reach out to the Samaritans and therefore issued a pattern, which is to be followed by His followers. It is also argued that when the mission of Jesus and the narrative of the Samaritan woman are integrated, an ethical missional paradigm is constructed in which the believers as members of God’s family are called to embody the “missional ethics” of Jesus. Finally, it is argued that the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman could be interpreted as a narrative of social and spiritual reunion with moral principles that challenges the contemporary church to embark on missional journeys of restoration as Jesus did with the Samaritans.

**KEYWORDS:** Biblical narratology; the Gospel of John; Jews and Samaritans; missional incarnational ethos; Missions; New Testament ethics; Samaritan woman; socio-religious brokenness; restoration; witness.

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Title

A Missional Perspective of John 4:1-42: Hearing Jesus and the Samaritan Woman and Its Implications for the Mission of the Contemporary Church

### 1.2 Problem and purpose

Although the narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman has intrigued many commentators, less attention has been given to the missional perspective of this narrative. Traditionally, there has been much discussion on the marital history of the woman to her detriment, an approach which is strongly criticized by feminist scholars (see Newsom & Ringe 1998:383; cf. Fiorenza 1993:56). The unusual setting of her coming to the well at the wrong time<sup>1</sup> of the day (4:6; cf. Neyrey 2009:155) and the issue of many husbands are used to define her as a woman of moral deficiency (see Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:98). Not only is she depicted as a notorious sinner who avoids the company of other women, she is also portrayed as an ignorant person who misunderstands Jesus’ “metaphorical and spiritual language” (Nelaval 2008:177). From such interpretation, it is concluded that Jesus accepts even lives gone wrong (Segovia 1998:168).

While this may provide one interpretative lens through which to examine the Samaritan episode, it fails to account for the woman’s marginalization and the socio-religious exclusion that she and her country’s people faced. It also minimizes the woman’s role in the text and neglects the fact that Jesus transcended all barriers to reach out to her and through her got to other Samaritans in the town. What is also neglected is the fact that the “Johannine Jesus” is already in “John 4” (in

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 24:11 and 29:7 indicate that women normally drew water at certain hours, namely, in the mornings and in the evenings and they did so in the company of other women.

contrast to Mt 10:5-6; 15:25; Lk 9:51-56) extending His mission beyond the Jewish borders as a prototype for the disciples' mission (see 17:18; 20:21) and that the Samaritan woman becomes the first person to get involved in a such a mission (4:29-39).

Thus, to construct the missional perspective of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman, it is necessary to employ a different approach, which bears in mind the purpose of John's Gospel.<sup>2</sup> It could be argued that one of the reasons for neglecting the missional perspective of this narrative is that some scholars have previously argued that John's Gospel<sup>3</sup> was not a missional book (see Hahn 1965:152; Erdmann 1998:209; Nissen 1999:213; Köstenberger & O'Brien 2001:203 cf. Bosch 1991). Such a view is problematic considering the purpose, which the author of John stipulates in chapter 20:31.

Therefore, the purpose of this study shall be to develop the missional perspective of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman by investigating the ethical and the missional aspect of the narrative to illustrate how Jesus overcame all barriers of His time to reach out to the Samaritans, and then, to explore how this could shape the way we do mission today. In order to attain this to goal, the following questions will be examined:

- Is John's Gospel indeed a missionary document?
- By going through Samaria and conversing with the Samaritan woman, what barriers did Jesus overcome and how relevant is that to our present society?
- In what way did Jesus cross barriers to reach out to the Samaritans and how can that shape the way we do mission today?
- Looking at the narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman in its Gospel context, what is the mission of Jesus and that of His followers, and what are the implications for the mission of the contemporary church?

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<sup>2</sup> "...But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (20:31). This purpose is missional in the sense that it is intended to engender faith that leads to eternal life, the very mission for which Christ came (1:4; 3:16; 6:48; 10:10; 11:25). According to Witherington (1995:32), the Gospel of John "is written as a tool to be used by Christians who already know a good deal of the gospel tradition (cf. 11:2) in their evangelistic and missionary work." See also Erdmann (1998:208), Köstenberger (1998:202) and Otto and Strauss (2010:39).

<sup>3</sup> The followings terms will be used to refer to the Gospel of John in this thesis: 'John's Gospel,' 'the Gospel of John,' 'the Johannine Gospel', 'this Gospel' and 'John.'

### 1.3 Prior research

The dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John's Gospel has a long history of interpretation in the church. Spencer (2010:319-321) summarizes the different views of some church fathers as follows:

*Augustine interprets the woman's entanglement with five husbands as allegorical evidence of her sensual or carnal understanding of the world...John Chrysostom takes the Samaritan woman's marital history as a record of her sexually immoral past...Thomas Aquinas offers the Samaritan woman a backhanded sexist compliment. He is amazed that she converses so wisely with Jesus...since the fairer sex is generally considered curious and unproductive...Musculus gives her a limited credit. She is no chosen apostle...but merely a woman, a person of inferior sex and a private citizen not called to the ministry of the word...she illustrates that even a woman may be useful in establishing the kingdom of Christ among acquaintances and friends. John Calvin is slightly charitable to the Samaritan woman...he brands her a poor woman, a common woman, unhappy woman, prostitute and hussy who did not deserve Jesus to speak to her at all.*

Over the past years, the narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman has intrigued<sup>4</sup> many commentators. As such, an abundance of books and numerous articles have been written. The bulk of these materials are written from one of four perspectives:

Firstly, the socio-cultural and historical contexts of the patriarchal societies from which commentators argue that marriages were regarded as social norms and economic necessity for women (see Segovia 1998:174). According to this perspective, it is argued that consecutive marriages were considered as legitimate under the Torah (cf. Mark 12:18-27, Deut 25:5; see also Murray 1987:61) and that Mark's story in chapter 12:18-27 gives a hint of how women were forced to enter repeatedly into new marriages in order to secure the patriarchal chain of inheritance (Segovia 1998:162). From this perspective, it is implied that the Samaritan woman might have been a victim of the cultural practices of her day.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Jean K. Kim argues that, "the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman has caught the attention of third world scholars because of their experience of multi-layer victimization similar to that of the Samaritan woman in the story" (Nelaval 2008:178).

<sup>5</sup> Stibbe (1993:70) concludes his commentary on John 4:1-42 by stating that, "the Fourth Gospel is a liberating narrative for Christian women oppressed by patriarchal systems."

This view is taken further by feminist critique, which “radically criticizes the myth and structures of a society and culture that keep women down” (Fiorenza 1993:56). According to Fiorenza (1993:56-57), Feminism “demands a restructuring of societal institutions and a redefinition of cultural images and roles of women and men...” From this point of view however, it is argued that the representation of the Samaritan woman in John 4 as a woman of “dubious morals, guilty of irregular sexual behavior,” derives from a misreading of this narrative (Newsom and Ringe 1998:384). It is suggested that the Samaritan woman, like Tamar in Genesis 38, is perhaps trapped in the custom of levirate marriage and that the last male in the family has refused to marry her. According to Nelavala (2008:179), the Samaritan woman is portrayed as a victim who is faced with multiple forms of marginalization “as ‘a woman’, ‘a Samaritan’, ‘a religious inferior’, and as an ethically charged” person. Similarly, Spencer (2010:308) asserts that the woman’s “getting and toting water by herself without community support (no other women appear on the scene) poses an especially toilsome task.” It is also argued that the sixth man whom she currently has need not to be an illegitimate sexual partner, he could be one of her husband’s distant relatives (cf. Boaz) who is providing her with food and shelter (Spencer 2010:310). From this perspective, Jesus is seen as a “liberator” who frees the woman from all her misfortune, and having experienced Jesus’ liberating presence, she goes to the town and shares her story with the townspeople (Nelaval 2008:166).

Secondly, the betrothal type-scene: According to Stibbe (1993: 68-69), Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well evokes what in antiquity was regarded as “betrothal scenes.” “Biblical wells most readily evoke nuptial images: Isaac, Jacob and Moses all meet their wives at well” (Spencer 2010:308). Okure (1988:87) also reads John 4 in support of this view. She connects the Samaritan narrative with Genesis 24:10-19 (Isaac’s servant and Rebecca), Genesis 29:1-14 (Jacob and Rachael) and Exodus 2:15-21 (Moses and Zipporah). Robert Alter, *in the Art of Biblical Narrative* talks about “Biblical type-scenes and the uses of convention” in which the betrothal type-scene would unfold in particular circumstances and according to a fixed order (1981:52). He argues that the betrothal type-scene would normally occur with the future bridegroom or his surrogate, having journeyed to a foreign land. The man would encounter a girl or girls at a well and either the man or the girl would draw water from the well and afterward, the girl or girls would rush home to report the news and eventually a betrothal would be concluded after the man has been given a meal (Alter 1981:52). According to Stibbe (1993:68), this pattern

is visible in the narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Jesus travels to Samaria, a foreign nation and there He meets one Samaritan woman at the well, He converses with her and she runs to inform her people that she has meet a stranger at the well who is the Messiah. When the people come, they urge Jesus to stay and He stays for two days (4:40). From this perspective, Jesus is presented as a bridegroom who is “seeking union and fellowship” with the Samaritans (Witherington 1995:102).<sup>6</sup>

Thirdly, allegorical interpretation of the woman’s story, where the five husbands are taken to be an allegory of the five gods worshipped by the five nations that settled in Samaria and the sixth man as Yahweh whom the Samaritans did not worship properly (Sanders and Mastin 1988:144; see also Morris 1977:266; 2 Kings 17:29-34). In this regard, deviant sexual behavior is interpreted as an image for idolatrous worship (Lincoln 2005:175-176; Spencer 2010:310) which in the Old Testament is sometimes referred to as adultery (Ezek 6:9). Since the reference to the five husbands is taken to represent a critique of the Samaritans’ religious heritage, Jesus then is presented as reaching out to the ungodly people, the Samaritans and the Gentiles (see 4:43ff). According to Fehribach (1998:66-67), the woman acknowledges Jesus as a prophet because she knows that one of the roles of a prophet was to criticize idolatry (Fehribach 1998:66-67). In this way, her question about the right place to worship (4:20) is not a deviation from her sexual history but rather an inquiry about true worship.

Finally, the interpretation based on the woman’s moral behavior as a notorious sinner. Some have argued that it was indecent according to Jewish standards for a woman to have been married consecutively to five men (see Lincoln 2005:175). If the Samaritans also followed that scruple, the honor of being a married woman for the Samaritan woman was totally lacking (Ridderbos 1997:160). In this interpretation, the Samaritan woman is portrayed as a sexually immoral person (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:98) who is living with a man to whom she is not legally married (Morris: 1977:264). This perspective is different from others because it depicts the Samaritan woman as a notorious sinner and the implication that Jesus accepts even lives gone wrong (Segovia 1998:164). For example, Michaels (1989:69) thinks that by reaching out to such a notorious woman, Jesus is truly depicted as the one who shows mercy to the tax collectors,

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<sup>6</sup> For detailed analysis on John 4 from a betrothal type-scene perspective see Jocelyn McWhirter (2006), *The Bridegroom Messiah and the People of God: Marriage in the Fourth Gospel*.

prostitutes and all the outcasts of the Jewish people (Mark 7:24-30; Luke 7:36-50, 10:25-37). Similarly, Witherington (1995:124) argues that because Jesus is the savior of the world, He rejects the notion that “he shouldn’t associate with Samaritans or that he shouldn’t talk to strange women in public” and “the idea that one shouldn’t associate with notoriously immoral people.” This approach emphasizes the immorality of the woman on one hand, and on the other, the mercy of Christ who reaches out to sinners, as well as women and all kinds of people who suffer marginalization (cf. McWhirter 2006:68).

#### **1.4 The research gap**

As mentioned above, some scholars have argued that John’s Gospel was not a mission book and as such, the missional perspective of this Gospel has been greatly neglected (cf. Erdmann 1998:209). For example, Hahn writes, “The view of mission held in the Johannine writings is a very controversial subject...it is comparatively seldom that John’s Gospel makes real statements about mission” (1965:152). Although Bosch (1991:16) acknowledges that, “the New Testament does not reflect a uniform view of mission but, rather a variety of theologies of mission” he does not develop the missional perspective of John’s Gospel. According to Köstenberger and O’Brien (2001:203), there are some who have “argued that John has little or even no interest in mission.”<sup>7</sup> Such a view limits the purpose of John’s Gospel to ecclesiology (the relationship between the community and the world) and denies mission in the sense of winning new converts, as such, it fails to account for the fact that both Jesus’ work and that of the disciples is characterized as a mission to the world (Nissen 1999:214).

However, in recent years, the following authors have developed the missional perspective of John’s Gospel: Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the disciples according to the Fourth Gospel* (1998). Larkin and Williams (eds), *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach* (1998). Köstenberger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the ends of the earth* (2001). Kok and Niemandt, *Rediscovering a Missional Incarnational Ethos (HTS Theological Studies, 2009)*.

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<sup>7</sup> Unlike other authors, Okure, in her book, *The Johannine approach to Mission* (1988) is an exception; she develops the missional perspective of John’s Gospel and she considers John 4 “as being the most overtly concerned with mission in the Gospel” (1988:285). Although, she deals significantly with the concept of mission in John’s Gospel, she does not discuss the ethical aspect of the narrative.

These scholars find it evident that the divine mission of God through His Son to save the world from its state of “brokenness and loss of True Life” (Kok 2011:20) pervades the entire Gospel of John (3:16; 5:24-25; 6:57; 10:10; 11:25-26; 17:2; 20:31).

According to John, Jesus is the “Sent One” of God and the disciples and ultimately the contemporary church are the “sent ones” of Jesus, sent to continue the same mission, which started with the mission of Jesus (17:18; 20:21). Not that the disciples will “operate alongside or even as a replacement” for Jesus but that they will subordinate themselves under the authority of Jesus and will speak His words as He spoke the words and did the works of His sender (Köstenberger 1998:211). “The disciples are sent out as agents, just as Jesus was sent...to perform essentially the same kind of ministry...” (Witherington 1995:351). They are given “the privilege and responsibility of carrying the message of eternal life and the forgiveness of sins into the harvest field of the world” (Erdmann 1998:224; cf 4:43). For this, Jesus explicitly commissions His disciples with these words, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (20:21; see also 17:18) and in anticipation of this, He already ‘in John 4’ authorizes them to enter into His labor and to reap fruits for eternal life (4:36-38). Therefore, it is essential to recognize that the sending motive of Jesus plays an important role in understanding mission in the Gospel of John (cf. Kok 2011:54; also see Erdmann 1998:210).<sup>8</sup>

Another aspect that was neglected by previous scholarship is the ethics and moral development of John’s Gospel. “Scholars like Meeks contend that one should not, and could not speak of ethics in John’s Gospel” (Van der Watt 2010:140). Schrage (1988:297) writes, “We may ask whether a chapter on the Johannine writings even belongs in a book on the ethics of the New Testament, whether it would not be better to limit ourselves to evaluating the place of John within the theology of the New Testament.” According to Matera (1996:92), the study of ethics in John’s Gospel is a major challenge since “the ethical debates found in the Synoptic Gospels concerning Jesus’ observance or interpretation of the Mosaic law” are absent.<sup>9</sup> Kok (2011:9)

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<sup>8</sup> According to Köstenberger (1998:180), the fact that the sending motive in 17:18 and 20:21 links the disciples’ sending with Jesus being sent, “places ‘sending’ at the centre of mission terminology applied to the disciples in the Fourth Gospel.” Similarly, Schnelle (2009:741) argues that the importance of the mission concept in John’s theology derives from the fundamental conviction that God the Father in the person of Christ, has become a human in order to save His fallen creation.

<sup>9</sup> Also, see Van der Watt (2010) and Kok (2011) who criticize Meek, Schrage and Matera on just this point.

states that the main reason for neglecting the ethical dimension of John's Gospel is that "scholars have used analytical categories (vice lists, paraenesis, imperatives, exemplary stories) that restricted the possibilities of what could have been interpreted as ethics." However, according to Nissen (1999:194), the reason for questioning ethics in John is that the command, "love one another" (13:34-35) is considered as the only moral rule found in John, and that this love is confined only to believers and because it is often measured by the love of enemies found in the synoptic Gospels, it falls demonstrably short.

More recently, however, Van der Watt (2010) has done remarkable work in developing the ethical dimension<sup>10</sup> of John's Gospel. According to him, "faith is the central ethical action" in the Gospel of John, which leads the believer to an obedient life of doing what a child of God, should do. He argues that from the person's identity as a believer or a non-believer will flow his or her behavioral patterns (Van der Watt 2010:140-141). For example, those who believe in Jesus will do and live the way Jesus lived (13:15) and they will do even greater works as He has promised (14:2). On the other hand, those who do not believe in Jesus will act contrary to His teaching. Another recent work is that of Jacobus Kok (2011): *The restoration of the Samaritan woman in John: And Its implications for Missionary Ecclesiology*. He argues that the narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4 could be interpreted as "a narrative of moral language" with specific reference to what he calls "a missional-incarnational ethos." The term "incarnational" is used metaphorically to refer to "the concrete crossing of boundaries..." and the embodiment of "Christ-like ethos" (Kok 2011:7-8).

However, although many of the above resources offer valuable insights into the discussion, they do not have as their focus the missional perspective of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman. In other words, they do not deal substantially with the fact that Jesus crossed all barriers to speak to one Samaritan woman who became the first missionary<sup>11</sup> to evangelize the

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<sup>10</sup> See Jan. G. Van der Watt: *Ethics through the power of language: Some Explorations in the Gospel according to John* (2010). See also the work of Jacobus Kok *The Restoration of the Samaritan woman in John: And its Implications for Missionary Ecclesiology* (2011).

<sup>11</sup> Culpepper refers to the Samaritan woman as a "missionary" who is almost given an apostolic role (1983:137). According to Fehribach (1998:47), few scholars postulate that a woman may have evangelized the Samaritan people.

Samaritans with the implication that those who believe in Jesus will also cross boundaries to evangelize people from all nations for the kingdom of God.

To reiterate, the missional perspective of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman has not yet been given the full attention it deserves because previous investigations have concentrated much on the marital history of the woman. This is caused by overlooking the missionary nature of John's Gospel and a misreading of its purpose (cf. Nissen 1999:213). Therefore, to reconstruct the missional perspective of this narrative, this study seeks to investigate both the moral and missional aspect of this narrative and to illustrate how it could shape the way we do mission today.

## **1.5 Hypothesis**

The Samaritan woman in John 4:1-42 is socially and spiritually disconnected, not only does she come to the well alone (4:6), she has an extraordinary marital history (4:18) and furthermore, she and her country's people are ignorant of true worship (4:22). However, through her encounter with Jesus, she is transformed, integrated into the Jesus' movement and is also re-socialized<sup>12</sup> into her community evidenced by the fact that she becomes one of the first witnesses to testify about Jesus in Samaria and as a result of her testimony the people of Samaria are drawn to Jesus. The Samaritans who believe are also re-socialized into a new community of believers and they together with the Jews become partakers of Jesus' food and drink (see Neyrey 2009:160). Thus, the hypothesis is this: the narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman could be interpreted as a missional narrative with ethical<sup>13</sup> implications that might energize or motivate believers to embark on missional journeys of social and spiritual restoration.<sup>14</sup>

## **1.6 Methodology**

Concerning methodology, the following are in order. First, I will conduct a narratological analysis of John 4:1-42 to explain the mission to the Samaritans. This approach is defined by Bal

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<sup>12</sup> Bruce J. Malina in his essay, 'John's: The Maverick Christian Group: The Evidence of Sociolinguistics' (1996) uses John 4 as one of the passages that serve "a resocialization function" in John's Gospel.

<sup>13</sup> See Kok (2011:7-8) who interprets the narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman as narrative of moral language.

<sup>14</sup> I concur with Kok and Niemandt (2009:6) who argue that, "Against the background of brokenness, the world, as we know it, is desperately in need of healing, restoration and reconciliation, calling the church to embark on a missional-incarnational journey of healing, restoration and reconciliation."

(2009:3) as “the ensemble of theories of narratives, narrative texts,<sup>15</sup> images, spectacles, events; cultural artifacts that ‘tell a story’ and “such a theory<sup>16</sup> helps to understand, analyze and evaluate narratives.” Van Aarde (2009:383) asserts that a Gospel may be analyzed as narrative literature, because it comprises the most basic elements that constitute the essence of narration, i.e. a narrator, a story and a reader of some kind. The method helps to interpret biblical stories with insights drawn from the secular field of modern literary criticism in order to determine the effects that the stories are expected to have on their audience (Powell 2010:240).

According to Rhoads and Syreeni (1999:265), this method, firstly, focuses on the world inside the narrative, its time, place, characters, its past and future, its own set of values and its series of events moving in some meaningful way. Secondly, the analysis of the narrative’s rhetoric focus on the implied impact of a narrative both from the story itself as well as from the way it is told. However, since this study is not intended to provide a narratological reading of John 4:1-42 as such but a missional perspective of the narrative, only those elements of narratology, which can help to attain the objective of the study, will be considered. These include, the question of text type, the rhetorical or authorial devices present in the narrative, the narrator’s situation both spatial and psychological, time elements (narrating, narrated and plotted time), space, characterization and the ideological perspective of the narrative.

Next to the narratological analysis, will follow a detailed exegesis, which will be done by using the exegetical program proposed by Du Toit (2009:120). This program comprises three phases and twelve steps. (a) Preparatory phase: this includes, (1) preliminary selection of the passage (2) first reading of the text (3) demarcation of the text (4) and textual criticism. (b) Main phase: (5) Determining the socio-historical setting of the passage, (6) the literary type of the text (7) the place of the micro text within its literary macro structure (8) analyzing the structure of the text and (9) detailed analysis. (c) Concluding phase: (10) formulating the message for the first readers (11) suggestions for actualizing the text for today (12) and translation. However, taking the

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<sup>15</sup> “A narrative text is a text in which an agent or subject conveys to an addressee (‘tells’ the reader) a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof” (Bal 2009:5).

<sup>16</sup> Bal (2009:3) explains “theory” as “a systematic set of generalized statements about a particular segment of reality.” “That segment of reality, the corpus, about which narratology attempts to make its pronouncements consists of narrative texts of all kinds, made for a variety of purposes and serving many different functions” (Bal 2009:3).

purpose of this study into consideration as stated above and the genre of the underlying text, there will be slight differences in the exegetical process. The chronological order in which the steps occur will not necessarily be followed, some steps may be combined and others not relevant for the study will simply be ignored. In this regard, Du Toit (2009:121-122) himself asserts the flexibility of the process and notes that it is not always necessary to implement all the stages. Furthermore, the necessity of these steps may vary according to the nature of a specific passage, and according to the requirements of the specific enquiry

Finally, the summary of the findings from the narratological and exegetical analysis will be provided, which will include some propositions with regard to the mission of the contemporary church with specific reference to the crossing of boundaries and making accessible the kingdom of God to all people. This final analysis aims to explore the possibility that John rhetorically intended to persuade his readers to embody the missional motif, which started with the mission of Jesus, that is, the manifestation of the Gospel message in a way that transcends all barriers.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See Kok & Niemandt (2009:1).

## A NARRATOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF JOHN 4:1-42

### 2.1 Introductory remarks

The aim of this chapter is to provide a narratological analysis of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman. This will be done by examining the type of narrative used in John 4:1-42, the major rhetorical devices (narrative techniques and authorial devices) used in the narrative, the spatial and psychological situation of the narrator. Thereafter, the following aspects of time: narrating time, story time and plotted time will be analyzed and after that, there will be an analysis on space and characterization. Finally, the chapter will be concluded by discussing the narrative point of view on ideological level.

### 2.2 What type of narrative is John 4:1-42?

The encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman has been studied from various angles.<sup>18</sup> Some scholars contend that since the general structure of the pericope is based on inverted parallelism or the literary technique of chiasmus, which is found in many of the poems of the Hebrew Bible, the pericope should be read from a poetic perspective (Thettayil 2007:28). For example, Talbert (1992:120) and others<sup>19</sup> find a general chiasmic structure in the whole episode.

*A Jesus goes to Galilee (4:3)*

*B Jesus needs a drink (4:7)*

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<sup>18</sup> For a detailed analysis of the different perspectives on John 4:1-42, see Thettayil (2007:15-32).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Stibbe (1993:63); Ball (1996:61) and Coloe (2001:87). However, it should be noted that these various authors have found various chiasmic patterns in the text according to the perspective from which they have approached the narrative (Thettayil 2007:32). For example, Stibbe's chiasmic pattern is based on vocabulary (1993:64) while the pattern in Ball (1996:61) focuses on how Jesus begins and concludes both halves of the dialogue. According to Talbert (1992:120), the centerpiece of the chiasm represents the author's focus.

*C Jesus' witness to the woman based on her experience (4:16-18)*

*D True worship explained by the Messiah (4:20-26)*

*C' The woman's witness to Jesus based on her experience (4:28-29)*

*B' Jesus needs to eat (4:31)*

*A' Jesus goes to Galilee (4:43)<sup>20</sup>*

For others, however, the episode is more like a drama<sup>21</sup> with various techniques of stage settings (Brown 1970:176; Talbert 1992:111; also see Painter 1993:201). According to this perspective, the “first act” (the dialogue with the woman) takes place in the front or centre-stage where some aspects of Jesus’ character, His gift of living water and the nature of true worship are dramatized (Beck 1997:74). The “second act” begins when the woman departs into the town (back-stage) and the disciples enter the front-stage (Thettayil 2007:23) but only to learn that Jesus has been conversing with a woman (4:27) (Brodie 1993:224). Surprised as they are they say nothing; instead, they urge Him to eat some of the food, which they had brought from the town (4:31). In this scene however, the nature of Jesus’ mission (4:34) as well as the Christian mission to the unbelieving world (4:35-38) are dramatized. The drama ends with the coming of the Samaritans (4:39-41) who climax the story (4:42).<sup>22</sup>

Several scholars and most notably Olsson (1974:116), O’Day (1986:51), Moloney (1993:134), Stibbe (1993:62-66), Ball (1996:60-67) and Resseguie (2001:75-80) have read the encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman from a narrative point of view, an approach, which is also taken in this study. As a narrative text, the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman is organized in terms of characters (Jesus, the Samaritan woman, the disciples and the people of Sychar) that move in a particular structure of time and space (cf. Van Aarde 2009:409). Jesus travels to Samaria and remains at the well (He does not move), the disciples go to town (4:8) and the woman comes (4:7), the disciples return (4:27) and the woman departs to the town (4:28), and

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<sup>20</sup> Talbert (1992:120).

<sup>21</sup> Olsson (1974:115) notes that the text is manifestly dramatic in character and contains one of the longest dialogues in the Gospel.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Schnackenburg (1987:442).

after sometime she returns with the people of Sychar (4:39) who come and abide with Jesus for two days (4:42).<sup>23</sup>

According to Ball (1996:61) and Thettayil (2007:15), the episode in Samaria runs from John 4:3, where Jesus withdraws to Galilee, to 4:43, where the objective of 4:3 is finally realized.<sup>24</sup> The opening section (4:1-2) presents the occasion of Jesus' visit to Samaria and verses 4-6 give a reason (the necessity that lead Jesus to pass through Samaria) and a setting for what takes place in the rest of the narrative and as such, act as an introduction (O'Day 1986:54; Talbert 1992:111). The major part of the episode concerns Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman (4:7-26), after which the woman departs and shares her story with the townspeople (4:28-30). This is followed by a short discourse with the disciples (4:31-38) and thereafter, the Samaritans arrive (4:39-42). Thus, it could be agreed with Thettayil (2007:16) that the encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman could be read as a story "with a smooth narrative flow that Brown calls the author 'the master of fiction.'"<sup>25</sup>

### 2.3 Narrative techniques and authorial devices<sup>26</sup>

The narrator of John 4:1-42 makes use of several techniques or rhetorical devices<sup>27</sup> to tell the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Some of these devices include *double entendre and misunderstanding*. When Jesus requested the woman for a drink and she objected on the basis that Jews and Samaritans are not associates (4:9), He instead offered her the gift of living water (ὕδωρ ζῶν). The phrase ὕδωρ ζῶν (4:10) is ambiguous;<sup>28</sup> it can be translated either as "a spring

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<sup>23</sup> Resseguie (2001:7) observes that spatial movements to and from a fixed position underscore a narrative ideology and he refers to John 4 as an example. According to him, the fact that Jesus is stationary at Jacob's well reinforces the ideology that He is like a well to which characters come to draw living water. We shall return to this point when we discuss the ideological perspective of the narrative.

<sup>24</sup> The exact boundaries of the introduction to the narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman are to some extent problematic (O'Day 1986:49). Some read 4:1-4 as unit that establish the itinerary for Jesus' journey from Judea via Samaria to Galilee (Bultmann 1971:176; cf. Botha 1991:97) and some consider 4:1-3 as a transitional section which brings to an end the role of John the Baptist and focuses on Jesus' successful ministry (Kerr 2002:173; Stibbe 1993:63). Yet others consider 4:1-6 as general introduction to the story (Brodie 1993:215; Talbert 1992:111; cf. Coloe 2001:87).

<sup>25</sup> See Brown (1971:176).

<sup>26</sup> Authors use narrative techniques and authorial devices to convey information to readers either directly or indirectly i.e. having the characters communicate the information to one another (see Berger 1997:44).

<sup>27</sup> See Resseguie (2005:41-78) for more details on rhetoric devices used in biblical narratives.

<sup>28</sup> According to Culpepper (1983:152), there are three parts of Johannine misunderstandings: 1) Jesus makes a statement, which is ambiguous, metaphorical or contains a double entendre. 2) The hearer

of water” bubbling up to eternal life as Jesus intends or as a “flowing water/stream” as the woman thinks (Resseguie 2005:66). The woman stumbles over the meaning of living water and assumes that Jesus is talking about a flowing stream or perhaps fresh water from the very bottom of Jacob’s well that requires a bucket or a vessel and thus asks, “You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?”

Although, Jesus explains that the water He provides is not mundane water, unlike everyday water, it quenches one’s thirst forever and propels the drinker towards eternal life (4:13-14), the woman still misses the point and thinks that what Jesus is offering is something magical that could assuage her daily labor of carrying water over a long distance (4:15). On the one hand, the woman’s misunderstanding shows her inability to understand Jesus on her own terms<sup>29</sup> and on the other hand, it allows a new ideological perspective to surface: “what the woman is searching for in mundane water can only be found in Jesus” (Resseguie 2001:11). According to Bultmann (1971:181), what the woman calls “‘living’ is not ‘really living water’” only that which is given by Christ can really be called living because it quenches human thirst once and for all and it finally leads to eternal life (4:14).

A similar play between the physical and spiritual occurs in the dialogue<sup>30</sup> between Jesus and the disciples concerning food. The disciples return from the town and offer Jesus some food but He tells them that He has food to eat that they know nothing about (4:31). They, like the woman, interpret Jesus’ words on a literal level and presume that somebody has brought Him some food while they were away (4:32). Their misconception creates an opportunity for Jesus to move them from the reality of this world, which they know, to a spiritual reality, which they do not seem to understand. Jesus uses food as an analogy to explain His relationship with the Father who sent Him (Schnakenburg 1987:448). For Him, nourishment goes beyond ordinary food, His mission to do the will of the Father and to accomplish His work of salvation is that which sustains and fulfills His deepest desire (see Ridderbos 1997:167).

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responds either in literal terms or by a question or a protest which shows that he/she has missed the point and 3) usually Jesus or the narrator clarifies the misunderstanding with an explanation.

<sup>29</sup> Resseguie (2001:44) notes that, “the typical Johannine misunderstanding of Jesus manifests in a dramatic way the world’s inability to understand Jesus on its own terms.”

<sup>30</sup> Berger (1997:48) notes that dialogue is “the most common means by which characters convey information to one another and, at the same time, indirectly to readers.”

By stating that His food is to do the work of the Father, He makes strange the commonplace perception that mundane food is the only source or primary source of nourishment (Resseguie 2001:47). This brings a new perspective; Jesus is not only sustained by physical food but by doing what the Father demands of Him (cf. Mt 4:4). Here again, the disciples' misunderstanding serves to move the reader from a surface reading, which only sees "the everyday, the quotidian, the ordinary – just as the woman at the well understands water at a physical, mundane level" to a deeper and spiritual understanding" which communicates the depth of the author's theology (Resseguie 2005:67). According to Culpepper (1983:165) double entendre and misunderstanding serve to orientate the reader to the level on which the gospel's language is to be understood and to teach him/her how he/she should read the Gospel of John.

Another technique used is *ironic Juxtaposition and dual stage setting* (Stibbe 1993:65). The narrator juxtaposes the disciples' journey to and from the town with the woman's journey to and from the same town.<sup>31</sup> The disciples went to the town and brought nobody for Jesus apart from physical food but the woman went to the same town and brought many Samaritans to Him (Morris 1995:244, footnote 72). Also, notice how the story is taking place on two stages, namely, front-stage, the well where Jesus stays and the back-stage, the town where both the disciples and the Samaritan woman depart and return (4:8; 27; 28; 39). This narrative technique (dual stage setting) enables the readers not only to observe the narrative but also to move with it, from the well to the town and back to the well and more importantly to evaluate the characters' actions on both stages (O'Day 1986:55).

The narrator makes use of irony as well. According to Ball (1996:53), much of the irony in John's Gospel depends on the reader being placed in a privileged position of knowledge by the author. This knowledge is then played off against the lack of knowledge of the character(s), who converse(s) with Jesus or the character(s) that Jesus addresses. For example, when the woman questions Jesus whether He is greater than "our father Jacob" (4:12), she ironically predicts His superiority without realizing it (Kok 2011:31). But, the reader of this Gospel already knows that Jesus is indeed greater than Jacob; He is the Word who was with God from the beginning (1:1, 14), the true light that enlightens every man (1:9), the only Son of the Father (1:18), the Messiah

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<sup>31</sup> Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman is also juxtaposed with His earlier encounter with Nicodemus (see characterization below).

or the Christ (1:41).<sup>32</sup> Also, when the woman declares that she knows about the coming Messiah, when He comes, He will reveal all things to us (4:25), the reader is aware that she is speaking to the very Messiah whom she expects. However, through Jesus' revelation as ἐγώ εἰμι (4:26), the woman discovers the irony of her situation and therefore, joins the reader and the narrator's conceptual perspective that Jesus is indeed the Messiah (Ball 1996:65).

Towards the end of the narrative, the narrator through the words of Jesus makes use of two *agricultural proverbs* (Carson 1991:230) to explain the essential difference between natural and spiritual harvest (4:35-38). The former entails a waiting period (four months) whereas the latter requires no such time. The harvest imagery is used metaphorically for the bringing of people into the kingdom of God. By telling the disciples to lift up their eyes, Jesus is telling them to see the coming Samaritans and therefore, to seize the opportunity to engage in spiritual harvest (Witherington 1995:122). The fact that one sows and another reaps (4:37) is true for the disciples because they are sent to reap what they did not labor for (4:38). This shows that Jesus' mission is not simply an "individualistic enterprise" (Köstenberger 1998:211), it is done in "partnership" (Milne 1993:87) and is carried out by a community of believers in mutual love and unity (cf. 13:35-36) and in that case both the sower and the reaper rejoice together (4:36).

## 2.4 The narrator's situation

**a) The narrator's spatial situation:** The narrator is a third-person omniscient narrator who tells the story from outside the text and refers to the characters by name (Jesus, Jews, Samaritans) and by making use of titles (Rabbi, Prophet, Messiah, Savior of the world) and sometimes personal pronouns (he, she, they) (cf. Resseguie 2005:168; see also Bal 2006:11; Van Aarde 2009:393). He mainly communicates through the voice of the characters (4:7; 9; 10-26; 29; 31-38; 42) but at no time does he refer to himself as a character. Such a narrator, who narrates exclusively about other people and not himself or herself according to Schmid (2010:68), is a "non-diegetic" narrator.<sup>33</sup>

The narrator of this narrative is not only omniscient he is also omnipresent (cf. Resseguie 2001:21). He is not confined to specific places. For example, he is present when only Jesus and

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. Ball (1996:60).

<sup>33</sup> Bal (2009:21) uses the term "external narrator" (EN) to refer to non-diegetic narrator.

the woman are conversing at the well (4:7-8) and he is also present in the town to report the woman's testimony to her people (4:29) and simultaneously at the well to report Jesus' conversation with the disciples (4:31) (Culpepper 1983:26). Although, he seems to distance himself from the characters by referring to them in the third-person, the narrator does give the impression that he is indeed part of the group around Jesus because much of his narration deals with events that occur within Jesus' group (Culpepper 1983:27).<sup>34</sup> He is like a hidden camera that moves with Jesus and the disciples and covers the whole narrative-world of Jesus and the Samaritan woman.

His ability to describe the characters, their actions and sometimes attitudes (cf. 4:1-3; 4:27) as well as all the events without referring to himself as a character on the one hand, portrays him as a reliable source whom the reader can associate with (Van Aarde 2009:393; cf. Resseguie 2001:19-20).<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, it provides the reader with relevant information that he or she needs to associate or dissociate himself or herself from the characters (Van Aarde (2009:391). For example, when the narrator states that the Pharisees had heard about Jesus (4:1), their awareness or knowledge does not necessarily result in faith. However, when the Samaritans learned of Jesus, their knowledge leads to believe in Him as the Savior of the world (4:42). Here the implied reader/listener is expected to dissociate himself/herself from the Pharisees who hear about and refuse to believe and to associate with the Samaritans who hear and believe (4:39; 42).

The Samaritans' coming to Jesus signifies a limited point of view: they believed not because they heard the details of what Jesus had discussed with the woman, neither are they informed about the fact that Jesus has revealed Himself to the woman as the Messiah (4:26). According to the woman's report, she simply said, "Come and see...could he be the Christ?" The reason for making use of such a limited point of view technique could be that the narrator expects the implied reader/listener to associate with the Samaritans whose faith (4:39) was not based on signs and wonders (cf. 20:29) but on the testimony, which they have heard from the woman and

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<sup>34</sup> Resseguie (2001:22) identifies the narrator of the Johannine narrative as the beloved disciple who is self-effacing and distancing himself from the beloved disciple, only twice does he speak in his own voice with reference to himself (19:35; 21:24).

<sup>35</sup> According to Culpepper (1981:21-22), the Johannine narrator knows what is going to happen before it happens, he knows Jesus' identity as the word who was with God from the beginning and at various points he reveals to the reader what Jesus is thinking and also what other characters are thinking.

the words they have heard from Jesus Himself. The reader is also expected to associate with the woman who believes and shares her faith (4:39).

From an omniscient point of view, the narrator comments that Jews and Samaritans do not associate (4:9).<sup>36</sup> The woman herself confirms this – “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman...” as well as the disciples (4:27).<sup>37</sup> This point of view allows the reader to see the narrated world through the eyes of a first-century reader who would be familiar with the Jew/Samaritan rivalry and to appreciate the Samaritans’ acknowledgment that the Johannine Jesus is indeed the Savior of the world (3:16-17; 4:42) because He freely associates with Jews, Samaritans (4:1-42) and Gentiles alike (4:43-54). The narrator uses this technique to show how radically Jesus overturned the cultural expectations of His day to fulfill His divine mission surprising even the members of His inner group (the disciples). Apart from the Samaritan woman, it is Jesus who acts as the vehicle for the narrator’s ideological perspective. The Pharisees disappear in the narrative background and the disciples display a limited knowledge.

**b) The narrator’s psychological<sup>38</sup> situation:** The narrator of John 4 describes the characters both internally and externally. Externally, the narrator relates the actions of the characters in the third-person expressed in phrases such as he/Jesus/she/Samaritan woman said/answered/declared or He/Jesus/she/Samaritan woman told them/replied or they/Samaritans believed (cf. Van Aarde 2009:394). The purpose of such a description is again to provide the reader with the relevant information to enable him or her to either associate or dissociate from the characters (cf. above). For example, the Samaritan woman is described as a potential convert who goes out and evangelizes for Jesus as opposed to the male disciples who only go out to look only for physical

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<sup>36</sup> The statement, “For Jews do not associate or have dealings with the Samaritans” refers to the deep-rooted hostility that existed between Jews and Samaritans. According to Kok (2010:174), this aversion goes back to the origins of the Samaritans as a mixed race, settled in the northern kingdom by the Assyrian king (cf. 2Kings 17:24-41). The fact the Samaritans were a mixed race to the Jews meant a loss of both race and religious purity (Milne 1993:83).

<sup>37</sup> Since nowhere in the Gospel of John or any other Gospels do the disciples or anyone question Jesus’ conversation with women (Spencer 2010:314-315), it could be argued that the disciples question Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman because it was against cultural expectations for a Jew to be seen in the company of a Samaritan (cf. 4:9).

<sup>38</sup> The psychological situation refers to the psychological perspective of the narrative, which “looks at the inner disposition, thoughts and emotions of the character – also known as inside views” (Resseguie 2005:190). According to Van Aarde (2009:394), the words “internal” or “external” reveal the psychological narrative situation of the narrator. This situation determines whether a narrator describes a character from within (internally) or from without (externally).

food. The Samaritans are described as those who believe as opposed to the Pharisees who reject Jesus in Judea.

Internally, the narrator refers to their inner disposition, emotions and thoughts (cf. Resseguie 2005:190). In the words of Culpepper (1983:21), the narrator tells the reader “what no one in the so-called real life could possibly know.” For example, the opening verses (4:1-3) indicate that the Pharisees had heard about Jesus’ success in Judea and that Jesus was aware that they had heard of Him and therefore withdraws to Galilee. Since the text does not say, “Jesus said He knew the minds of the Pharisees” or that “the Pharisees said they have heard about Jesus’ ministry,” the narrator is simply giving an inside view (cf. Berger 1997:47).

The fact that Jesus who is truly man (He gets tired and thirsts [4:6-7]) knows what is in human hearts without anyone telling Him accentuates His divinity. This divine knowledge is again evident from 4:18 where Jesus supernaturally tells the woman everything she ever did (4:29). Similarly, in 4:9b the narrator explains by means of a commentary why the Samaritan woman is hesitant to offer Jesus a drink and therefore, presents Jesus as one who is acting in opposition to the commonplace perspective. He associates with people (the Samaritan woman and her townsfolk) whom His fellow Jews repudiate. The motivation for such an action is that Jesus is not just an ordinary Jewish man, He is also the divine Son of God whom the Father has sent to save the world (4:26-17; 4:42), which includes all people (both the marginalized and the privileged), all races and all sexes.

## **2.5 Time**

Before an analysis of time can commence, it is necessary to clarify the three aspects that will be dealt with, namely, narrating time, story time and plotted time. Narrating time (narration time) refers the time taken to narrate or hear the story while story time concerns the time taken by the events in the narrative to transpire (Van der Bergh 2008:20; Bar-Efrat 1989:143). While narrating time is measured in terms of words, sentences and page numbers (Ricoeur 1985:78; Van Aarde 2009:395), story time<sup>39</sup> is expressed in ordinary time units such as minutes, hours,

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<sup>39</sup> Van Aarde (2009:395) notes that the study of story time entails the following three aspects: (1) the reconstruction of story time by abstracting it from the time of narrative discourse. (2) The identification of

days, months or years (Van der Bergh 2008:23; cf. Culpepper 1983:54). Plotted time, on the other hand, aims to understand the deeper structure of the narrative, namely, the plot and to establish why the course of events at the level of the narrative discourse is presented differently from that in the story (Van Aarde 2009:402; also see Resseguie 2005:208).

### a) Narrating time

The narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman comprises forty-two verses and is told in forty-four sentences.<sup>40</sup> V. 1-6 presents the occasion of Jesus' departure from Judea as well as the reason that brought Jesus to Samaria. The narrator makes use of *historical analepses*,<sup>41</sup> to inform the reader that Jacob had once owned the piece of ground on which Jesus meets with the woman, this land was later given to Joseph (Genesis 33:19; 47:22; Joshua 24:32) and in this vicinity, Jacob's well was also there. Jesus arrives at this place at around midday<sup>42</sup> and as He is tired and exhausted from the journey, He sits by the well. This is conveyed in just five sentences (compared to the discussion with the woman) and therefore can only be regarded as background information.

After the background information, comes the stationary section, which deals with the conversation with the woman (4:7-26). The conversation occupies twenty of the forty-two verses and the narrator relates it in twenty-three sentences. The amount of space devoted to the dialogue is an indicator of its importance. In the dialogue, the theme of water and wells (that of the patriarch and Jesus) is repeated several times (4:10-15) and it occupies almost a third of the narrative (Resseguie 2001:78) and as such, forms part of what Genette (1980:114) terms *frequency* (cf. Bal 2009:109). The issue of Jacob's well is again raised when the woman questions Jesus whether He thinks that He is greater than Jacob who gave the Samaritans the well in Sychar (4:12). Also, note how the word worship (προσκυνέω) is repeated at least nine times in just four verses (4:20-25). The purpose of this repetition is to point out the norms/beliefs

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the number of narrative lines in a narrative discourse and (3) the distinction between narrated time and time commented upon.

<sup>40</sup> This analysis is done on the Greek text of John 4:1-42 as found in the Greek-English New Testament Nestle-Aland, the 26<sup>th</sup> edition.

<sup>41</sup> See Culpepper (1983:57) who notes that historical analepses recall particular events, which occurred prior to the ministry of John the Baptist.

<sup>42</sup> 4:6, Six hour, see Barnhart (1993:202) and Neyrey (2009:155).

or point of view that the narrator considers important (Resseguie 2005:42). In other words, repetition creates emphasis (Alter 1981:77).

The dialogue with the woman ends when the disciples return from their shopping expedition and she departs to the town (4:27). This transition is only told in one sentence and thereafter, the woman's testimony is reported (4:29). This is followed by a short discourse with the disciples, which the narrator reports in eight sentences (4:31-38). The theme of harvest seems to prevail in this section, which on the one hand prepares the disciples for the coming Samaritans and on the other hand, alludes to the post-Easter missionary work (cf. below). Although, the woman's testimony is short (only fourteen Greek words) the effect is big, *Ἐκ δὲ τῆς πόλεως ἐκείνης πολλοὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτὸν τῶν Σαμαρειτῶν διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς γυναικὸς μαρτυρούσης ὅτι εἰπέν μοι πάντα ὅσα ἐποίησα. Ὡς οὖν ἦλθον πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Σαμαρεῖται, ἠρώτων αὐτὸν μείναι παρ' αὐτοῖς καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐκεῖ δύο ἡμέρας* (4:39-40).

Jesus, who arrived in Samaria at noontime and spent several hours educating the Samaritan woman and the disciples, finally, spends 48 hours (two days) with the Samaritans who confess Him as the Savior of the world (4:42). The narrated span of time of Jesus' stay in Samaria is slightly above two days (cf. Culpepper 1983:72).<sup>43</sup> In just about 48 hours, the Samaritans' life changes substantially, from ignorance (cf. 4:22) to true knowledge (4:42) and from outcasts to being members of God's family who believe and abide with Jesus.<sup>44</sup>

### **b) Narrated time as “story time”**

The beginning of the story stretches from 4:1-3, where Jesus leaves Judea and goes to Galilee. The following order<sup>45</sup> of events in the story can be reconstructed. (1) John baptizes and wins followers (2) Jesus' disciples baptize and win more followers for Jesus (3) The Pharisees get the wrong impression and are resentful that many are attaching themselves to Jesus (4) Jesus knows

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<sup>43</sup> Jesus arrives at Sychar at around midday, spends some hours discussing with the woman and afterwards with the disciples. When the Samaritans arrive, they urge Him to stay and He stays two days plus the hours He spent with the woman and his disciples make His stay in Samaria slightly above two days.

<sup>44</sup> To abide or to dwell with Jesus is to remain in His words and to share in His relationship with the Father. This is implied by the verb *μείναι* (Lincoln 2005:181).

<sup>45</sup> Culpepper (1983:54) notes that narrative time is determined by the order, duration and frequency of events in the narrative.

their hostility<sup>46</sup> and therefore withdraws to Galilee (cf. Olsson 1974:124). From 4:4-6, there is a pause, which on the one hand slows down the journey to Galilee and on the other hand, serves to convey background information to the reader about Jesus' encounter with the woman in Sychar.

From 4:7-26, the following order of events can be reconstructed (1) Jesus arrives at Jacob's well (2) the disciples depart to town (3) a woman with a history of immorality comes to the well. (4) Jesus teaches her about living water and true worship and (5) He reveals Himself as the new temple in which God is to be worshipped and the Messiah who has come into the world. Notice how the disciples' going to the town that occurred long before the arrival of the woman at the well is told only after Jesus had requested her for a drink (4:7b). This is known as completing analepses or returns; they comprise the retrospective sections that fill in, after the event, an earlier gap in the narrative (Genette 1980:51; Van Aarde 2009:401). Culpepper (1983:59) notes that they also present important information about events, which are omitted from the narration.<sup>47</sup>

Also, the woman's history of immorality is withheld until she requests a drink from Jesus. The rhetorical power of Jesus' disclosure of her past life is increased by this delay. Jesus from the very beginning knew that He was dealing with a woman who has had a deviant lifestyle but instead of condemning her, He made her realize her need and thirst for the waters of life, which in essence implied a destruction of her past life.<sup>48</sup> After experiencing how Jesus had dealt with her revealing Himself to her as the Messiah, the woman was motivated to go to the town to call others to come and see what she had experienced at the well. Probably, if she were condemned, she would not have come to that point in her life. She would just remain a lost and a condemned Samaritan.

From the above discussion, two complete narrative lines can be identified. Firstly, Jesus travels through Samaria and as He is resting by the well, a woman of Samaria comes to fetch some water (beginning). Jesus asks her for a drink and they begin to converse. In their discussion, a number of themes appear: living water, Jacob the patriarch, the proper place of worship, the true

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<sup>46</sup> The Pharisees' hostility is only implied here (see Blomberg 2001:98; cf. Schnackenburg 1987:421).

<sup>47</sup> Cf. 4:38 where Jesus sends His disciples to reap from the labor of mission. This provides important information for their commissioning in 20:21, which is not explicitly narrated here in John 4.

<sup>48</sup> The woman leaves behind her water jar symbolizing a change of heart and a breaking away from the past to a new future with Jesus (cf. Coloe 2001:105; Brodie 1993:224; Carson 1991:227).

worshippers and the revelation that Jesus is the Messiah (middle). The disciples return to the well and the woman departs to the city. This is followed by Jesus' discussion with the disciples about His spiritual food and the spiritual harvest (end). Secondly, the woman testifies in the city causing many to believe (beginning). The new believers come to Jesus and they urge Him to stay, and He stays for two days (middle). After hearing Jesus' own words, they confess Him as the savior of the world (end).

### c) Narrated time as “plotted time”

The “story” (historie)<sup>49</sup> in John 4:1-42 contains the following episodes:

- Jesus travels to Galilee and passes through Samaria
- Jesus teaches the woman about spiritual water
- Jesus tells the woman to go and call her husband
- Jesus teaches the woman about the nature and the place of true worship
- The woman goes and brings her country's people
- Jesus teaches His disciples about spiritual food and harvest
- The Samaritans come to the well and meets Jesus
- The Samaritans confess Jesus as the world's Savior

The “plot-type” or “dominate mythos” is “romance” (Stibbe 1993:69).<sup>50</sup> Earlier in this Gospel Jesus had assumed the role of a bridegroom by providing superb wine for the wedding at Cana (2:1-11) and John the Baptist had identified Him as the bridegroom who had come to claim His bride (3:29). Now, is Jesus going to find His bride in John 4? Is it going to be the Samaritan woman? But, the fact that Jesus is a Jew and the woman is a Samaritan is conflicting with the societal norms and values of the dominate culture. Not only is she a Samaritan, she has a questionable morality, she has had five marriages and is currently living in a non-marital

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<sup>49</sup> Historie is the chronological linear reconstruction of event ( Van Aarde 2009:396)

<sup>50</sup> See Witherington (1995:118) who describes the pattern of antiquity well stories as follows:

1. The future bridegroom or his substitute travels to a foreign land (compare the Jacob story to John 4:3-5, where Jesus goes through Samaria)
2. He encounters a girl (or girls) at the well (compare the Jacob story to John 4:6-7)
3. Someone draws water from the well
4. The girl rushes home to bring the news of the stranger (compare gen. 24:28ff. to John 4:28-30)
5. A betrothal is concluded between the stranger and the girl, generally only after he has been invited to a meal (compare Gen. 29:14 to John 4:31-34, 40-42).

relationship (4:18). Although, the narrative does not tell whether she was divorced five times or trapped in a levirate marriage,<sup>51</sup> generally, the rabbis taught that three marriages were the maximum allowable (Milne 1993:84; Edwards 2004:56). It seems that she has exceeded the limit and this in the eyes of a first-century pious Jew was not something to be tolerated. Even the idea of talking to such a woman would be considered repulsive.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, as the conflict mounts, the possibility of a romantic relationship diminishes and a new perspective emerges. Jesus is not seeking a romantic relationship (McWhirter 2006:75); He is seeking a relationship of faith, which will get this woman (and all people) to worship the Father in spirit and in truth (Witherington 1995:118). Jesus, unlike the patriarchs, has taken up the role of Yahweh,<sup>53</sup> who is the ancient bridegroom of Israel to claim Samaria as an integral part of “New Israel” (Coloe 2001:98). This “New Israel” according to (Lincoln 2005:182) transcends all “ethnic, gender and purity divisions.

By presenting the encounter as a betrothal type-scene, the narrator makes use of what Bal (2009:94) terms suspense.<sup>54</sup> Such a technique is used here to dramatize the difference between God’s ways and our ways, God’s betrothal and that of the patriarchs (cf. Resseguie 2005:203). While the patriarchs’ betrothal was limited to the tribes of Israel, the eschatological wedding between God and His bride, that is, the community of believers is not narrowly nationalistic as that of the patriarchs (Stibbe 1993:69). Also, a contrast indicated between the well stories in the Hebrew Scriptures and the Johannine well story. While the betrothal scenes in Genesis (29:1-14) and Exodus (2:15-21) sought to establish an earthly family, the Johannine type-scene seeks to

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<sup>51</sup> According to Barrett (1978:197), “it is possible (a) that the woman had had five legal husbands who had died or divorced her, and that she was now living with a man to whom she was not legally married; (b) that she was living with a man who was legally her husband according to Mosaic law but not according to Christian standards (Mark 10.10ff).”

<sup>52</sup> See Barclay (1975:151) who notes the following facts: “There was still another way in which Jesus was taking down the barriers: The Samaritan was a woman. The Strict Rabbis forbade a Rabbi to greet a woman in public. A Rabbi might not even speak to his own wife or daughter or sister in public. There were even Pharisees who were called “the bruised and bleeding Pharisees” because they shut their eyes when they saw a woman on the street and so walked into walls and houses! For Rabbis to be seen talking to a woman in public was the end of his reputation- and yet Jesus spoke to this woman. Not only was she a woman; she was also a woman of notorious character. No decent man, let alone a Rabbi, would have been seen in her company, or even exchanging a word with her- and yet Jesus spoke with her.”

<sup>53</sup> Jesus reveals Himself to the Samaritan woman as Εγώ εἰμι the name by which God revealed Himself to Moses (Exod. 3:14).

<sup>54</sup> According to Bal (2009:94) suspense causes the reader to ask questions as follows: how could it have happened like this? How could the society allow such a thing to happen? How did the hero(ine) find out about this?

establish a spiritual family, a family of faith, not born of “natural descent, nor of human decision or husband’s will, but born of God” (1:13). This happened when the Samaritans believed and confessed Jesus as their Savior (4:42).

Generally, the Gospel of John has a “U-shaped plot” (Stibbe 1993:13) that takes the form of a journey and involves a “recognition or discovery” of things that were previously “unseen or unrecognized” and characters move from “ignorance to knowledge” and “from imperceptibility to an awakening” (Resseguie 2005:213). The U-shaped plot begins at the top of the U with a state of equilibrium (prosperity, happiness), which is then disrupted by disequilibrium or disaster. However, at the bottom of the U, a reversal is realized in which the character recognizes something that he or she did not previously recognize, that marks the beginning of the dénouement and a movement towards a new state of equilibrium.<sup>55</sup> Some of these elements are evident in the narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman. The Samaritan woman when she comes to the well identifies Jesus as a Jew and therefore refuses to give Him a drink (4:9). This represents a falling action that begins the downward slope of the U-shaped plot.

The main conflict is within the woman: how can Jesus who is a Jew ask her for a drink when He knows that Jews and Samaritans do not share things together (4:9). This thought continues to ring in her mind and although Jesus offers her the gift of living water (4:10), she misses the point and sees only the impossibility of how one can provide such a water from a deep well without the necessary equipment required (4:11). Her objection to Jesus’ request and her misunderstanding of what He is offering becomes a personal crisis that keeps her away from the water of life. However, as Jesus continues to speak His words to her ears and to educate her about who He is and what He has to offer, a reversal (peripety) is realized and the falling action is turned into a rising action (cf. Resseguie 2005:206). This occurs when Jesus reveals to her that she has been married five times and is currently living with the sixth man who is not her husband (4:18).

From that point onwards, she begins to see things differently and thus makes an important and previously unrecognized discovery that Jesus is not just a mere Jew, He is a prophet (4:19). With this insight, she brings up the question of the correct location of the temple and Jesus having

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<sup>55</sup> See Resseguie (2005:205-206) for a detailed analysis of a U-shaped plot.

answered her well reminds her of the promised Messiah. She expresses her faith in the coming Messiah (4:25) and Jesus reveals to her that the one who is speaking with her is He (4:26). This marks the *dénouement* or resolution of the crisis and therefore sets the woman on motion towards the people of Sychar with the news that she has found a man who could possibly be the Messiah (4:29). In the upward turn, the narrative shifts from the woman's actions to the actions of the Samaritans. Many of the Samaritan people believed because of the woman's testimony and when they came to Jesus, they urged Him to stay and He stayed for two days and after hearing from Him, they concluded that He is indeed the world's Savior (4:42).<sup>56</sup>

Their confession represents the top of the U or the new state of equilibrium, the woman's misunderstanding is resolved, there is reconciliation, new life, peace, salvation and wholeness<sup>57</sup> and both the woman and her townsfolk invite Jesus together with His Jewish disciples without misgiving (Schnackenburg 1987:455). They are restored socially and spiritually and they all have become members of God's family. Through faith in Jesus Christ, the Samaritans have come to realize that the barriers that separate people from one another or nation from nation (race, gender, social status etc) are transcended because Jesus is the Savior of the world (see Koester 1995:50). In this way, Jesus is presented as one who breaks both the barrier of ungodliness and that which separates human beings from each another (Kok 2011:46, footnote 89).

Although, the Pharisees' opposition seemed to occasion Jesus' movement to Galilee (4:1-3), His travel through Samaria is directed by a necessity<sup>58</sup> (4:4), the necessity of doing the Father's will and accomplishing His work (4:34). Jesus does not go to Samaria just because He is afraid of His life, He goes because He has work to do, the work of bringing people to faith (cf. 6:29). This development within the plot is called "causation," it answers the question, "Why do things happen as they do" in the narrative? (Resseguie 2005:199). Therefore, the divine necessity to

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<sup>56</sup> Schnelle (2009:692) notes that, "The Roman emperor is the benefactor and savior of the world who not only guarantees the political unity of the realm but grants its citizens prosperity, well-being, and meaning. Here, too, John claims an absolute superlative, since for him Jesus Christ is the only savior, and he already gives eternal life in the present to those who believe. The universal salvation of the world cannot be expected from political rulers but only from the crucified and risen Jesus Christ. At the same time, this prediction expresses the self-understanding of the Johannine Christians: they understand themselves to be charged with a message to the whole world, because only Jesus is the savior of the world (cf. John 3:16; 6:33; 12:47).

<sup>57</sup> Resseguie (2005:205) notes that the U-shaped plot ends with success, where a new state of equilibrium is reached and in biblical terms, it is characterized by peace, salvation, and wholeness.

<sup>58</sup> See 4:4  $\text{Ἐδὲ}$

create faith in the hearts of the Samaritan woman and her people was the cause of Jesus' journey through Samaria. Both the woman and her townsfolk are portrayed as examples of people moving from no faith-to-faith in the Son of God and the Samaritan woman serves as an example of a disciple who goes out and brings people to Christ (Witherington 1995:125). The Samaritans' faith is presented as an example of faith based on testimony without miraculous signs (cf. 20:29).

## 2.5 Space

Jesus leaves the antagonistic Judea and goes into Samaria where the Samaritans cordially welcome Him. Both Samaria and Judea where the Pharisees seem to be unhappy that more and more people are becoming Jesus' followers serve as focal spaces. There is a contrast between the Judean Pharisees and the people of Sychar, the Pharisees' opposition (4:1, 3) and the Samaritans' faith (4:39, 42). The question of geography seems to be at the core of the narrative. Both Jesus and the woman are described according to their regions and the location of their sacred worship places. The woman is described as a Samaritan who worships on the Samaritans' holy mountain of Gerizim (4:20) and the Jews as those who worship God in the Jerusalem temple. This description indicates polarization along ethnic and religious lines (Coloe 2001:89) and thus draws a sharp contrast between the two groups.

The distance from Judea to Jacob's well in Sychar serves as a focal space. It indicates Jesus' movement from the Jewish sacred mountain, Jerusalem to the foot of the Samaritans' holy mountain, Gerizim (Pryor 1992:21), a place that was avoided by most Jews of Jesus' time (Bruner 2012:236). The important issue being raised by this movement is the contravention of boundaries. Jesus transcends the barrier of geography – this mountain or that mountain (4:20) and reveals Himself as the new temple in whom the Father can rightly be worshipped (Thettayil 2007:225). As such, both the sacred places of Jews and Samaritans are obsolete because God no longer resides in such places but only in His Son Jesus Christ (Bruner 2012:258). This means that the Jew/Samaritan dispute about the correct location of the temple is obsolete because Jesus is now the focus of true worship. He is the one through whom the whole world (Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles) can come to the Father (4:42; cf. 3:16; 14:6). He establishes a universal worship, which is open to all people, all genders and all races (Spencer 2010:310).

By transcending the barrier of geography, Jesus also breaks down the purity laws<sup>59</sup> of that culture. He brings God's presence into the marginalized city of Sychar, a place, where the Jews of His time would normally not expect such a presence to be found (Kok & Niemandt 2009:6).<sup>60</sup> Jesus also breaks down the gender barriers of His day by initiating conversation with a strange woman in the public space<sup>61</sup> and at the same time turning the well surrounding into His own private space (the disciples and the Samaritans all return to the well) where males and females freely communicate and share things together (Neyrey 2009:160). By engaging the woman in such a space, Jesus demonstrates that the entire universe is God's space and that His mission is to bring God's presence into all spheres of life and even to places that are seen as dark, hostile and contaminated (Kok & Niemandt 2009:6).

The fact that Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman is taking place at a particular well, namely, that of the patriarch (Jacob) is significant. It draws a contrast between Jesus and Jacob and between the gift of living water and the patriarch's gift of the well (4:12-14). Those who drink from Jesus' living water will never thirst because this water will become a spring within them that will gush out into eternity but those who drink from the ancestral well will keep coming to the well at least on a daily basis. Here the narrator brings to the scene the sufficiency of Jesus' gift and the inadequacy of the patriarch's gift (Ridderbos 1997:156). The fact that Jesus' gift – the living water supersedes (it grants eternal life) the gift of the patriarch, and the fact that Jesus is the new dwelling of God, makes Him far greater than Jacob (Coloe 2001:113).

Seen from the perspective of the interests represented by the characters in the different focal spaces (Jacob's well, the temples in Jerusalem and Gerizim, and Samaria over against Judea), the Samaritans seem to agree with the ideological perspective that Jesus is the Savior of the world

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<sup>59</sup> Witherington (1995:117-118) notes that by Jesus' time, Samaria was regarded by many Judean and Galilean Jews as unclean and any contact with the Samaritans, especially their women or sharing a meal or a common cup with them, was widely held to render a Jew unclean.

<sup>60</sup> According to the Jews, the Samaritans were fundamentally out of place, they were disconnected from the heart of the temple and therefore, ceased to be God's chosen people and as such, were cut from God's presence (Kok 2010:176).

<sup>61</sup> According to Neyrey (2009:144-150), the ancient people construed the world as radically gender-divided with males in the so-called "public space" and the women in the so-called "private space." Public spaces or male spaces included marketplaces, public squares and open fields and private or female spaces included houses, wells and ovens. Jacob's well is public space because the woman comes at the time when females are not expected to be at the well. Conversely, she comes at the "male time" (Neyrey 2009:160)

(4:42). The Judean Pharisees portray a rejection of Jesus' message as well as His identity as the Messiah.

## 2.7 Characterization

The following characters appear in the narrative: Jesus, the Samaritan woman, the disciples and the people of Sychar. Although the Pharisees are mentioned at the beginning of the narrative, they disappear into the narrative background. Jesus is the protagonist who acts as a vehicle for the narrator's ideological perspective and the Samaritan woman; the people of Sychar including the disciples are the helpers.<sup>62</sup> The narrator's characterization of Jesus relies on both showing and telling.<sup>63</sup> The narrator's view on why Jesus leaves Judea, Jesus' request for a drink (4:7), the woman's response (4:9), the dialogue with the woman (4:10-26) and the dialogue with the disciples (4:27-38) are the primary methods of showing Jesus' characterization.

When Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for a drink (4:7), she responded with amazement because she only saw a Jew who would normally not share a "drinking vessel" with a Samaritan (4:9).<sup>64</sup> According to the Jews, it was a serious "polluting act" to share drinking cups or utensils with the Samaritans (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:99). The woman, unaware of who Jesus is, and what His mission is, cannot fathom why He being a Jew would ask a Samaritan for a drink. Her objection on the one hand allows the reader to see how the constraints of societal norms have shaped her understanding of the Jews and on the other hand, it shows the extent to which Jesus is radically taking down these norms.

Instead of answering her question – how is it that you a Jew would ask me a Samaritan woman for a drink (4:9) - Jesus refers her to a different "world and reality than the one in terms of which she lives, one in which the barrier she has mentioned plays no role" (Ridderbos 1997:155). "If you knew the gift of God," says Jesus "and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have

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<sup>62</sup> Ball (1996:63) is right in arguing that, "the Samaritan woman and the disciples in John 4 are tools to help the reader understand the person of Jesus. Although, they are characters in their own right, their reactions and misunderstandings enable the reader to see Jesus for whom the evangelist believes he really is."

<sup>63</sup> Showing and telling are narrative techniques that are used to characterize characters. For a detailed discussion on these techniques see Resseguie (2005:126-130).

<sup>64</sup> Beck (1997:72) notes that Jesus' request for a drink from the woman is unthinkable because of the distinctiveness of their respective gender, ethnic and cultural identities and that the woman's response could be seen as a rebuke to Jesus' request.

asked and he would have given you living water” (4:10). Jesus’ reference to living water as God’s gift and to Himself as the giver amounts to an implicit equation of Himself with God, He is not just an ordinary man; He is also divine, and in fact, He reveals Himself as God in the giving motif, He gives what only God can offer, namely, eternal life (Stibbe 1993:66).

Also, the different titles ascribed to Him, their progression<sup>65</sup> (Jew, Prophet, the Messiah/Christ, Savior of the world) and His supernatural knowledge into the woman’s marital history (the woman has been married five times and is currently living with sixth man who is not her husband) all accentuate His divinity (Spencer 2010:316). Jesus’ divinity is again indicated by the divine name *Εγώ εἰμι*. By revealing Himself as I AM, Jesus claims to be far greater than all the prophets and the patriarchs because He is the incarnate God (1:14) who revealed Himself as I AM to Moses (Coloe 2001:102).<sup>66</sup> Just as God was on a mission when He revealed Himself as I AM to save His people Israel from their slavery, even so Jesus reveals Himself as I AM on a missionary journey to bring salvation to those whom social convention deemed as outsiders and the no-bodies (O’Day 1995:565).

In telling the characterization of Jesus, the narrator uses descriptive comments. For example, Jesus goes to Samaria because of a divine necessity<sup>67</sup> and as He is journeying, He gets tired on the way and thus sits by Jacob’s well while His disciples go to the town. This telling or direct presentation of Jesus as a weary traveler indicates that He who is the divine Son of God is also true man; He experiences fatigue and thirst just as humans do (cf. Bruner 2012:237)<sup>68</sup>. As noted above, the narrator’s portrayal of Jesus sitting by the well and conversing with a woman represents a betrothal. However, as the narrative unfolds, Jesus does not betroth the woman, as the Hebrew hearer would normally expect. Instead, He offers her the gift of living water (4:10), which gives eternal life (4:14). This reminds the reader that Jesus is not seeking a wife but a witness who will take His message to the people of Samaria. Moreover, His journey to Samaria

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<sup>65</sup> According to Schnelle (2009:692), Jesus is “designated, on an ascending scale,” as a Jew (4:9), as someone greater than Jacob (4:12), as a prophet (4:19), as the Messiah (4:29) and finally as the Savior of the world.

<sup>66</sup> See Exodus 3:14; cf. Isaiah 52:6

<sup>67</sup> The *εδει* in 4:4 is linked to the *δει* in 4:20 and 4:24. It could be argued that the necessity that led Jesus to travel through Samaria was divine and that the purpose was to teach the divine necessity of true worship (cf. Lincoln 2005:171; Ridderbos 1997:153; Schnackenburg 1987:422).

<sup>68</sup> Stibbe (1993:66) notes that the signals of exhaustion and thirst speak of Jesus as a real human savior, not of “some proto-gnostic, superhuman redeemer.”

was prompted by a necessity, the necessity of doing the Father's work (4:34; cf. 6:29). To demonstrate that He did not go to Samaria for a physical gain, Jesus refuses to eat the food which the disciples had brought from the town (4:32) and instead, He invites them to engage in a spiritual harvest, that is, the reaping of souls for eternal life (4:35-38).

The woman is characterized by what she does or says and by what the narrator and Jesus say about her. Firstly, she is characterized as one who misunderstands but learns through questions (cf. Carter 2008:161). She actively engages in the dialogue and challenges Jesus when His behavior moves beyond the acceptable boundaries of social convention (4:9).<sup>69</sup> When Jesus speaks of living water, she mistakes it for a flowing stream. She questions where and how can Jesus provide such water, more importantly, is He greater than Jacob who gave them the well? Through Jesus' explanation though, the woman begins to perceive that what He is offering somehow supersedes the water in Jacob's well, it could transform her life although she understands it only on a physical mundane level. This is evident in her request, "Sir, give me this water so that so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water" (4:15).

However, it seems that the woman is moving slowly but surely from misunderstanding to some knowledge, but she will not fully understand unless Jesus opens her blind eyes to perceive the heavenly things that she has failed to recognize. Jesus does this by asking her to go and bring her husband (4:16) and when she responds that she has no husband (4:17), Jesus confirms that it is true and then He supernaturally narrates her marital story (4:18). Jesus' supernatural knowledge into the woman's past marks a reversal in her life, which leads her to adopt a new point of view that Jesus is a prophet (4:19). In the Old Testament, a prophet was someone who was "endowed with supernatural knowledge and to whom one could turn to hear the word of God" (Ridderbos 1997:161).<sup>70</sup>

With this insight, the woman understands Jesus as a prophet and thus brings the question of worship, "Our fathers worshipped on this mountain" but you Jews, "say in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship" (4:20) (cf. Painter 1993:204). This brings the reader to the

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<sup>69</sup> See Beck (1997:72-72).

<sup>70</sup> See Luke 7:39 where a prophet is also described as one who has supernatural knowledge. The Pharisee Simon says to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of a woman she is – that she is a sinner."

second portrayal of the woman; she is not just a water bearer, she is also a religious person who follows the religious practices of the Samaritans, which was established by the ancestors. In essence, the woman brings up “the question of the centre:’ where and with whom is God” (Kok 2010:176). Is He with the Jews or with the Samaritans? Again, Jesus transcends this barrier by referring to a new era in which God will be worshipped neither on “Mount Gerizim” as the Samaritans claimed nor in “Jerusalem” as the Jews demanded (cf. Witherington 1995:117). He “decentralizes and deterritorializes the worship of God” (Otto & Strauss (2010:27) and states that those who worship the Father must worship Him in spirit and truth (4:23) because He is spirit (4:24) and He seeks people<sup>71</sup> who will worship Him in spirit and truth (4:23).<sup>72</sup> Since Jesus is the revealer of God (1:18), the truth, the only way to the Father (14:6), the new tabernacle (1:14) and the new temple of God (1:51) (Coloe 2001:112), there can be no other place apart from Jesus in whom the Father can rightly be worshipped.

To illustrate the fact that Jesus is the central figure around whom all nations will gather, the narrator fixes Jesus at the well, “the dramatic pivot of the narrative” (Thettayil 2007:21; Beck 1997:74; cf. Olsson 1974:139) where all come and meet Him (Resseguie 2001:76). The Samaritan woman comes and goes to bring others. The disciples depart and return to the well but Jesus remains stationary. He becomes the centre around whom every nation (represented by Jews and Samaritans) gathers and in becoming the new centre, He transforms the Jews’ and the Samaritans’ localized worship into a universal worship and by so doing, He indicates that God’s presence can no longer be localized or confined to specific mountains or places like Gerizim and Jerusalem. God is to be found wherever Jesus is, whether with the Jews or with the Samaritans or even with the Gentiles (Kok 2011:46, footnote 89).

Thirdly, the woman is depicted as a believer and a witness. The woman, having learned from Jesus the nature of true worship and the fact that it is not dependent on particular ancestral sacred places, is reminded of the Taheb who was to restore true worship (cf. Ridderbos 1997:164). “I know that the Messiah is coming when he comes he will explain everything to us” (4:25), says

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<sup>71</sup> According to Painter (1993:204), God seeks true worshippers through “the sending of his emissary” who is His Son.

<sup>72</sup> This form of worship, unlike the temple worship, will not separate men and women; it will not have special gender or ritual (clean/unclean) restrictions and neither will it be restricted to certain localities, but it will be universal and will be open to all people including the Samaritan woman and her townspeople (Witherington 1995:121).

the woman. To this, Jesus immediately replied, “I who speak to you am he” (4:26) and after that, the disciples returned (4:27) and the woman departed to the town (4:28) and shares her story with the people (4:29).<sup>73</sup> This indicates her dynamic or developing character. She who circumvented the public by going to well at a strange hour now comes to the public scene and invites men to come and see not just as ordinary man but a man who is possibly the Christ (cf. Neyrey 2009:163). So far, her knowledge has grown from the initial recognition of Jesus as a Jew (4:9) to the recognition of Him as the Messiah (4:29). By calling Him the Messiah, she has left behind “the narrow Samaritan categories of a prophet like Moses” and believes in Jesus the universal Savior (Coloe 2001:105).

There are a number of analepses between the woman’s call and her mission and the call and the mission of the first disciples (1:35-51).<sup>74</sup> This is evident in the parallel between Philip’s “come and see” (1:46) and the woman’s “come and see” (4:29).<sup>75</sup> In addition, there are proleptic<sup>76</sup> echoes between the woman’s word and Jesus priestly prayer in John 17. In this prayer, Jesus prays for both the disciples and those who will come to believe through their word (διὰ τοῦ λόγου) namely, their preaching. In Samaria this is already happening: many have come to believe in Jesus διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς γυναικὸς (Stibbe 1993:67). The analepses and prolepses seem to suggest that the Samaritan woman has truly become a disciple (Stibbe 1993:67; Edwards 2004:59; Coloe 2001:105); not only does she invite people to Jesus as a result of her testimony, many have “crossed ancient boundaries to ascertain for themselves the possible fulfillment of their long-cherished hope” (Ridderbos 1997:168).

Fourthly, the woman is characterized as the only member of her gender in the episode (Beck 1997:74). Although, the word γυνή/γυναικὸς (woman or wife) which indicates femininity appears throughout the narrative (4:7, 9, 11, 15, 17, 19, 21, 25, 27, 28, 39, 39, 42) and ἀνδρα/ἄνδρας (4:16, 17, 18), which indicates masculinity is less visible as Stibbe (1993:62-63) notes, the woman stands alone among the male figures - Jesus and the twelve disciples. The other males referenced but not present include, Jacob and his sons (4:12), the five husbands and the

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<sup>73</sup> Lincoln (2005:179) and Skreslet (2006:97) are of the opinion that the statement, “come and see” echoes the language of witness used for calling the first disciples (1:35-51).

<sup>74</sup> Stibbe (1993:67).

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Lincoln 2005:179; Skreslet 2006:97.

<sup>76</sup> Analepsis is the allusion to previous events and prolepsis is the anticipation of coming events (Culpepper 1981:56)

man with whom the woman is living (4:16-18), “our fathers” (4:20) and God as the Father (4:21, 23).<sup>77</sup> However, as the narrative unfolds it is discovered that the woman’s gender is not an issue for Jesus (although His disciples do not seem to like it [4:27]) and His missionary activity (Beck 1997:74). Thus, Neyrey (2009:164) is right when he states that no one “is excluded from kinship with Jesus because of gender, ethnicity, or social status.”

Finally, the woman’s encounter with Jesus is set up as a contrast to His earlier encounter with Nicodemus, one of the Pharisees (3:1-15). Nicodemus and the woman have some similarities. Both come to Jesus at strange hours, Nicodemus comes at night and she comes at midday (Kerr 2002:169). All misunderstand Jesus and interpret His words on a mere mundane level when He is actually speaking of spiritual realities. Nicodemus sees the impossibility of going into his mother’s womb to be born again and therefore asks, “How can this be” (3:9)? Similarly, the woman sees the impossibility of providing living water apart from the ancestral well, which Jacob provided, and therefore wonders how and where Jesus can get the living water (4:11).

Although these encounters share some similarities, there are many striking differences. Nicodemus is a highly educated man and a well-respected member of the Jewish society in Jerusalem but the Samaritan woman is a social outcast with a history of immorality (Kerr 2002:169). Nicodemus has a name but the woman is nameless<sup>78</sup> (Lincoln 2005:182). She is simply identified as a Samaritan woman, a common citizen who earns a living by supplying water on daily basis (see Schottroff 1998:168). Nicodemus is a Jew but the woman is a Samaritan. Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night (3:2) and sinks into misunderstanding, but the

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<sup>77</sup> Beck (1997:74).

<sup>78</sup> Resseguie contends that anonymity accents a character’s marginalization because the unnamed is also unseen but sometimes it can also work in the opposite direction like in the case of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 7:36-50. The anonymity of the rich man “parallels his loss of position. His selfishness devours everything, leaving him with nothing – not a drop of water, not even a name” (2005:129-130).

woman encounters Jesus at daytime (4:6)<sup>79</sup> and comes to faith. She, unlike Nicodemus, bears witness to others and together they confess Jesus as the Savior of the world (Carter 2008:161).<sup>80</sup>

In the discussion with Nicodemus, Jesus stated that His mission was to save the entire world (3:16). The encounter with the Samaritan woman becomes the first cross-cultural mission that Jesus undertakes (Coloe 2001:107). Thus, it seems that John has purposely juxtaposed these encounters to show us that no matter how different people can be, they all have the same need for Christ (Xenos Christian Fellowship 1995). These encounters (with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman) depict Jews and the Samaritans as people who have the same need for salvation; they all thirst for the water of life that fulfills the human desire for deliverance (Koester 2006:410).

While the Pharisees in Judea remain as walk-on characters (they remain in the background), the Samaritans are dynamic. Not only do they move from the city to the well, they also abide with Jesus (4:40) and because of their own hearing many more believed. It is no longer<sup>81</sup> just what the woman had told them, their faith has grown because they have now heard for themselves, and are convinced that this man Jesus is indeed the Savior of the world (4:42). Through their experience with Jesus, they now relate to Him not as a possible messiah but as one whom the Father has sent to bestow the gift of salvation to all humankind (3:16, 4:10). O'Day (1995:571) is right in stating that the Samaritans' acknowledgment evidences the truth of Jesus' own words in 4:21-24, that the hour has indeed come when neither Gerizim nor Jerusalem will define worship but Him who is the new dwelling of God (1:14) because in this narrative both Jews (the disciples) and Samaritans gather around Jesus.

In this way, the socio-religious boundaries that separate Jewish believers from the Samaritan believers are dissolved because Jesus is the new focal point around whom every nation will

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<sup>79</sup> According to the prologue, light and darkness are two opposing points of view : "The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it" (1:5). Nicodemus is linked to the darkness (although in 7:24 he seems to be in the light when defends Jesus and in 19:39 when he brings a hundred pounds of spices for Jesus' burial) because he comes to Jesus at night and fails to understand Jesus' teaching causing Jesus to reprove him for unbelief (Koester 2006:414).

<sup>80</sup> According to Coloe (2001:90), "the local geography of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, with their sectarian religious faith, is expanded to encompass the whole world."

<sup>81</sup> The Samaritans' statement that, "We no longer believe...because of what you said" (4:42a) is intended to minimize the woman's testimony, in fact it is her testimony that had awakened faith in the Samaritans. This statement is a confirmation of what the woman has so tentatively told them (Ridderbos 1997:171).

gather (Ott & Strauss 2010:28). A strange encounter between Jesus and an isolated woman has resulted in people being restored to a new relationship, namely, a relationship of faith (cf. Kok 2011:28). Not only are they restored to God, they are also restored to one another, the woman who circumvented the public by going alone to the well is re-socialized into her community, and the Jews and the Samaritans would have no dealings with each other are re-integrated into one family who dwells with Jesus.<sup>82</sup> This encounter, which was first seen as a desecration of social and religious codes is now seen as a commendable act of boundary crossing,<sup>83</sup> which has enabled those whom social convention deemed outsiders to be saved (O'Day 1995:563).

In this narrative, the disciples are characterized as those who go to the town and return with mere mundane food, while the woman goes and does the opposite (cf. above). They like the Samaritan woman misunderstand Jesus (4:33) but unlike her, they fail to voice their concerns (4:27) and therefore lapse into silence while Jesus speaks of spiritual things they do not comprehend (Beck 1997:76). Although they, unlike the woman (she is told only to go and call her husband), are commissioned to reap souls for eternal life (4:35-38), their misunderstanding suggests that they have not fully understood Jesus' mission and as such, their "sending" in 4:38 cannot be regarded as a formal commissioning. This will only happen after the resurrection when they will receive the Holy Spirit (cf. Schnelle 2009:740-741). However, in John 4, the disciples are already drawn into Jesus' mission field as harvesters.<sup>84</sup> Their mission is derived from Jesus' own mission (17:18; 20:21). They are sent into His mission, which is in essence the mission of the Father who is actively seeking sinful human beings to restore them (3:16; 4:23; cf. Schnelle 2009:741). This mission according to John is universal and inclusive as the Samaritans profess (4:42).

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<sup>82</sup> See Kok (2011:46, footnote 89) who correctly notes that in this narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman, a "restored and reconciled existential reality is (re)presented: reconciliation and restoration on horizontal (people/nations) and vertical (people/God) levels."

<sup>83</sup> Neyrey (2009:162) notes the followings facts: "1) The narrative begins by calling attention to a sharing of vessels that contravenes cultural expectations about ritual purity, thus indicating the breaking of a boundary. 2) The narrative explicitly attends to cultural expectation about ethnic boundaries (4:9), which are likewise broken. 3) This Samaritan female, moreover is perceived by other characters in the narrative as violating the gender expectations of that culture (4:27), thus breaking gender boundary..."

<sup>84</sup> See also Köstenberger and O'Brien (2001:210) who describe the disciples' mission in John's Gospel in terms of harvesting (4:38), fruitbearing (15:8, 16) and witnessing (15:27).

## 2.8 Narrative point of view on ideological<sup>85</sup> level

The narrator's ideological point of view develops around the phraseology of coming and going. When Jesus arrives at the well, the disciples ἀπεληλύθεισαν (depart or go away) into the town (4:8) while the woman ἐρχεται (comes) to the well (4:7), the disciples ἦλθον (come or return) to the well (4:27) and the woman ἀπῆλθεν (depart or go away) to the town (4:28) causing many Samaritans to ἐξῆλθον and ἦρχοντο (go out/come out and go/come) to Jesus (4:39). Despite these movements, the character Jesus does not move, He remains at the well, the centre stage where all other characters come and go (Beck 1997:74). Not only does this remind the readers that the actions of the narrative are taking place on two fronts, namely, the well and the town (O'Day 1986:76-77), it also draws attention to Jesus as the central figure around whom the entire action is taking place (Thettayil 2007:22).

From a spatial point of view, Jacob's well is the centre of the narrative (Olsson 1974:139), the fact that Jesus who offers living water occupies this focal point implies that Jesus Himself is a well and thus, highlights the ideological perspective that just as a well is an abundant source of water, Jesus as a well is an endless source of life-giving water that gushes out into eternity and just as water from a well is an essential necessity for physical life, the water that Jesus provides is an essential necessity for eternal life (Resseguie 2001:77). Suddenly, the narrator presents the readers with two types of water, mundane and supramundane, as well as two different sources, Jacob and Jesus and by implication creates in the readers the desire for Jesus' water (Resseguie 2001:79). This desire is created by the words of Jesus (see 4:10, 13) and through the actions of the woman, who comes to well for ordinary water but in the end abandons the mundane water for living water indicated by the fact that she no longer needs her water jar (4:28) but instead, she goes into the town and invites others to the new source of spring that she has discovered (4:29, 39).

Also, by having Jesus at the centre, the narrator symbolically demonstrates that it is no longer this mountain or that mountain but Jesus who is the new Temple to whom every man shall now gather to worship the Father in spirit and truth (4:23). This is evident from the fact the

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<sup>85</sup> The concept of ideology is used here to refer to the network of themes or ideas that occur in the narrative as an imagined version of a specific reality (Van Aarde 2009:406).

Samaritans who would normally have no dealings with the Jews have left their town to come to the Jew Jesus and when they arrive, they welcome Him together with His Jewish disciples into their town and after hearing from Jesus for two days, they conclude that He is the Savior of the world (4:42). From this, the readers suddenly realize that through the ministry of Jesus in the world and particularly here in Samaria, Jews and Samaritans are being brought into a single fellowship and all the divisions and aggression (cf. 4:9) are completely broken down (see Ridderbos 1997:164) or, as Van Tilborg (1993:187) correctly highlights, that in and through Jesus God creates something new on earth, the restoration of the covenant between God and all of Israel. Here too, the eschatological hope of Ezekiel<sup>86</sup> that God would one day gather into one people the Northern and Southern Kingdoms is being fulfilled (Coloe 2001:111). In the person of Jesus, the dwelling place of God is being established in the midst of the Samaritans and they the children of Jacob who were once given land (Ezek 37:25), are now given a far greater gift in the true sanctuary present in their midst, as such, true worship can now replace the former apostasies (Coloe 2001:112).

From the above analysis, the universality<sup>87</sup> of Jesus' mission is emphasized, not only does He call the Jews (represented here by the disciples), He also calls the Samaritans (4:7-42) and gives them the gift of God, the living water that gives salvation. The ideological/theological perspective of Jesus (the protagonist) corresponds with that of the narrator: Jesus who is a Jew (4:9, 22) is also the Savior of the Samaritans, in fact, He is the Savior of the world (4:42), from His well of eternal life, both the Jews and the Samaritans are welcome to have a drink (4:42). Through Him as the new dwelling of God, every person has access to the Father regardless of

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<sup>86</sup> Ezekiel 37:21-27, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God. My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people" (NIV).

<sup>87</sup> The conversion of the Samaritans is the first sign of Jesus' universal salvation (see Morris 1995:251, footnote 100) and is fulfilled in Acts (see 1.8; 9.31; and esp. 8.25).

race, gender, social status or any synthetic boundaries as He has done with the Samaritans. Here the readers are expected to adopt the ideological perspective of the narrator, which is in essence the point of view of Jesus and “to live the way Jesus lived” and to “embody the ethics and ethos of Jesus” as Kok (2011:48) notes. Furthermore, the narrator presents the faith of the Samaritan people as a prototype to be followed, their faith unlike Thomas (cf. 20:29) was based on testimony and not on signs. While the implied readers are expected to dissociate themselves from the Pharisees who distance themselves from Jesus’ ministry and reject Him as the Messiah, they (implied readers) are expected to associate with the Samaritan woman who believes, goes out, and invites others into their own encounter with Jesus.



## DETAILED EXEGESIS OF JOHN 4:1-42

### 3.1 Introductory remarks

This chapter is intended to provide an exegesis of John 4:1-42 using the exegetical framework discussed in chapter one as a guideline. The investigation will commence with a textual criticism, an attempt intended to reconstruct the original text of the narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman. This will be followed by a demarcation of the text, with some comments concerning the structure of the narrative, the socio-historical setting and the place of the micro text within its macro structure. After that, will be a detailed verse-by-verse analysis, which will also incorporate some insights from the narratological analysis.

### 3.2 Textual criticism

Checking the Greek text of John 4:1-42 reveals that there are a few major variants that need to be considered, but none of them create too great a difficulty. The first variant occurs in 4:1 where it has been argued that the verb ἔγνω originally was without a subject and that subsequently some copyists inserted Ἰησοῦς and others κύριος<sup>88</sup> to clarify the statement (see Beasley-Murray 1999:58). However, there is no doubt that Jesus is intended as the subject of the verb ἔγνω (cf. 4:3) (Barrett 1978:230).

The second variant is found in 4:3, where πάλιν is missing from A B\* G L P Y 28 249 579 700 1194 1424 syr<sup>h</sup> *al.* But, it is strongly supported by ϳ<sup>66, 75</sup> ⚭ B<sup>2</sup> C D L M W Q 053 083 0141 f<sup>1</sup> f<sup>13</sup> 33 565 it<sup>a, b, c, e, ff2, 1</sup> vg syr<sup>c, s, pal</sup> cop<sup>sa, bo</sup> arm eth *al.* (Metzger 1994:176). According to Metzger

<sup>88</sup> Some authorities (including ϳ<sup>66c, 75</sup> B) read κύριος while Ἰησοῦς is read by ϳ<sup>66\*</sup> ⚭ and western tradition (Beasley-Murray 1999:58; Aland & et al 1993:324).

(1994:176), the omission may have been accidental or a desire to clarify that Jesus does not arrive in Galilee until after two days (4:43) and that an overly punctilious reader could take πάλιν to mean that Jesus returned a second time to Galilee after leaving Judea.

The third variation is found in 4:5 concerning Συχάρ. Sychar is not mentioned in the Old Testament in relation to Jacob's piece of land, as John indicates in the Samaritan episode, but Schechem is mentioned at Genesis 33:19 (cf. Gen 38:22 & Josh 24:32). However, despite this problem of identifying Sychar, the textual critics are unwilling to accept Συχέμ or Shechem on the basis of only syr<sup>c, s</sup> and several patristic witnesses (Metzger 1994:177). Metzger (1994:177) further refers to another variant reading, Συχάρ found in 69 as a late Greek orthographic variant of the prevailing Συχάρ.

The fourth variation is found in 4:9 where the explanatory comment that Οὐ γὰρ συγχρῶνται Ἰουδαῖοι Σαμαρείταις is missing from several witnesses<sup>89</sup> (see Nestle-Aland 1994:256). Although some have argued that this comment could have been a later addition (Schnakenburg 1987:425; Barrett 1978:232), such comments are typical of John (cf. 4:8 & 11:49-52).<sup>90</sup> Metzger (1994:177) notes that, "the omission, if not accidental, may reflect scribal opinion that the statement is not literally exact and therefore should be deleted."

The fifth variation is found in 4:11 concerning ἡ γυνή. These words are missing from two Alexandrian witnesses (P<sup>75</sup> B) and two versional witnesses (syr<sup>s</sup> cop<sup>ach2</sup>) and because it was difficult to decide whether they were introduced to clarify the subject of λέγει or whether the omission was a result of editorial process, they are retained within the text but enclosed within square brackets (Metzger 1994:177).

The sixth variation occurs in 4:35-36. The word ἤδη may be taken either as concluding 4:35 or as beginning 4:36 but considering the Johannine usage (see 4:51; 7:14; 11:39 & 15:3), it is plausible that ἤδη be taken with 4:36 and not with 4:35, although this option is doubted by P<sup>75</sup> (Barratt 1978:241; Beasley-Murray 1999:58).

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<sup>89</sup> For example, it is missing from κ\*D a b e j and P<sup>63.66.75.76</sup> rell (see Nestle-Aland 1994:256).

<sup>90</sup> See O'Day (1986:58) and Eslinger (1993:176-177, footnote 4).

The last variation, which is worth noting here, is that of verse 37, which is missing from  $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$  (Nestle-Aland 1994:258). According to Schnackenburg (1987:184), this is an oversight on the part of the copyist given that both 4:36 and 4:37 end with  $\acute{o}$   $\theta\epsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega\nu$ . With these variants only demanding a little discussion, the demarcation of the text will now follow.

### 3.3 Demarcation of the text and comments concerning the structure

In order to obtain some insight into the structure of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman in John 4:1-42 and to have manageable units, which can be adequately analyzed, the text will be divided (demarcated) into smaller units. This division of units will also be used in the detailed analysis. The following observations are relevant here:

Firstly, the narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman begins with an itinerary fragment (4:1-3) which recalls and qualifies the fragment in 3:22 (Stibbe 1993:62). Although some have considered verses 1-6 as an introduction,<sup>91</sup> it seems best to divide this section into two. Verses 1-3 as a transition (cf. Morris 1995:222), which concludes the baptismal ministry of John the Baptist (3:22-30) and brings to the fore the ministry of Jesus just as the Baptist himself had testified: "He must increase and I must decrease" (3:30). In this regard, John 4:1-3 as a unit, does not function not as an introduction to the specific events recounted in Samaria but as a transition in which the ministry of the Baptist gives way for Jesus' ministry, the Revealer to whom John (the Baptist) was only a messenger (O'Day 1986:52).

From verses 4-6, the following are noticeable: Verse 4 provides the specific reason (namely, a necessity implied by  $\epsilon\delta\epsilon\iota$ ) why Jesus had to pass via Samaria. Verses 5-6 furnish the specific details of where in Samaria the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is about to take place (O'Day 1986:52). This section ends with the indication of time, "it was about the sixth hour" and then, a woman from Samaria comes to draw water (4:7) (Boers 1988:2). Since verses 4-6 indicate the reason and the setting for what is about to take place in the rest of the pericope, it serves as an introduction to the Samaritan episode (see Thettayil 2007:15).

Secondly, the arrival of the woman (4:7) signals the beginning of a new section. The dialogue between Jesus and the woman opens with Jesus' request (4:7) and ends with the revelation that

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<sup>91</sup> For example, see Painter (1993:201); Moloney (1998:115) and Bruner (2012:234).

Jesus is the Messiah (4:26).<sup>92</sup> This section however, can be divided into two sub-units, the theme of living water (4:7-15) and the theme of true of worship (4:16-26). The first sub-unit (4:7-15) begins with a command/request from Jesus, Δός μοι πειν (4:7) and it ends with a similar command/request from the woman, δός μοι τοῦτο τὸ ὕδωρ (4:15). Similarly, the second sub-unit begins with a command by Jesus, Υπαγε, φώνησον τὸν ἄνδρα σοῦ, καὶ ἔλθε ἐνθάδε (4:16) but unlike the first sub-unit, it culminates with the self-revelation of Jesus as Εγώ εἰμι (4:26).

Thirdly, there is a transition in 4:27-30, where the narrator introduces the disciples who have been away (4:8) to the scene while reporting the woman's departure and her testimony to the townspeople. This section begins with temporal indication Καὶ ἐπὶ τούτῳ (just then [4:27]) and ends at 4:30, since 4:31 also begins with a temporal indication, Εν δὲ τῷ μεταξύ (in the meantime or meanwhile) and contains the dialogue between Jesus and the disciples (Botha 1991:96). Therefore, 4:27-30 is also considered as a separate unit, which will be analyzed as such.

Fourthly, a new unit begins with the disciples' request that Jesus should eat (4:31). This becomes an occasion for Jesus to teach the disciples what His real food is, namely, the divine mission, which the Father has given Him to implement and from which the disciples' mission of harvesting and gathering fruits for eternal life is derived (4:35-38). This is brought to a close by the coming of the Samaritans (4:39).

Fifthly, after the discourse with the disciples, the narrator immediately reports the arrival of the Samaritan people and explains the reason why Jesus extended His stay in Samaria (Thettayil 2007:16). In this section, the story gets to its climax when the Samaritans confess Jesus as the savior of the world (4:39-42). In 4:43, a new sequence is introduced with the shift in both temporal and spatial setting indicating that the Samaritan episode has ended in 4:42 (Botha 1991:96; also see Boers 1988:3).

From the above discussion, four themes have been identified: Living Water (4:7-15), Worship in Spirit and Truth (4:16-26), Jesus' Food (4:31-38) and finally, Jesus as the Savior of the world

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<sup>92</sup> See Eslinger's (1993:171) chiasmic structure, which indicates that Jesus begins and concludes each half of the conversation.

(4:39-42). According to Howard-Brook (1994:101-114), there is a particular chiasm in each of the four themes as indicated below:

1. *Living water (4:7-15)*

- a: 4-7: *Jesus asks for a drink: Jacob's well*
- b: 8-11: *division between Judeans/Samaritans; Living water*
- c: 12: *are you greater?*
- b<sup>1</sup>: 13-14: *unity among those who drink living water*
- a<sup>1</sup>: 15: *the woman asks for a drink: become a fountain*

2. *Worship in Spirit and Truth (4:16-26)*

- a: 16-19: *Jesus is a prophet*
- b: 20-21: *worship on the mountain/hour is coming*
- c: 20: *you don't know/we know*
- b<sup>1</sup>: 23-24: *worship in spirit and truth/ hour is coming*
- a<sup>1</sup>: 25-26: *Jesus is the messiah*

3. *Food for which you do not know (4:27-38)*

- a: 27-30: *the woman gets people to come to Jesus*
- b: 31: *disciples' 'eat'*
- c: 32: *food of which you do not know*
- b<sup>1</sup>: 33-34: *disciples' 'eat'*
- a<sup>1</sup>: 35-38: *parable of harvest*

4. *The Savior of the world (4:39-45)*

- a: 39: *Samaritans believe/ all that I did*
- b: 40-41: *Two days*
- c: 42: *Savior of the world*
- b<sup>1</sup>: 43-44: *two days*
- a<sup>1</sup>: 45: *Galileans welcome/all that he had done*

The heart of chiasm 1 is the identity of Jesus, which the woman ironically professes without realizing it.<sup>93</sup> The mutual request of Jesus and the woman (a, a<sup>1</sup>) envelops the chiasm and the schism between Jews and Samaritans and the unity (whoever drinks from the water I give him... [4:14]) of those who drink from Jesus' water make the inner parallelism (b, b<sup>1</sup>). In 2, two important titles are ascribed to Jesus, Prophet and Messiah (a, a<sup>1</sup>) which envelops the two contrasting worships, that is, the place bound worship and the worship, which is offered in spirit and truth. The centerpiece is knowledge of the object of worship. Dealing with food in 3, the chiasm is enveloped by the harvest the woman reaps for Jesus and the parable of harvest (a, a<sup>1</sup>). The disciples' concern for food forms the inner parallelism (b, b<sup>1</sup>) while Jesus unknown food becomes the centerpiece. Finally, in 4, the centerpiece is the acclamation that Jesus is the Savior of the world and there are two time references of two days' (b, b<sup>1</sup>), which is enclosed by the belief of the Samaritans (4:39) and the welcome accorded to Jesus by the Galileans (4:45).

The chiasmic structure proposed by Howard-Brook is indeed a helpful tool in showing how the text of this narrative works as a unity; however, the inclusion of 4:43-45 as part of the Samaritan story is open for criticism.<sup>94</sup> The temporary and spatial setting in 4:43 (after two days He left for Galilee) signals the beginning of a new episode (Boers 1988:3; Botha 1991:96) and thus suggests that the episode in Samaria has clearly ended with the climax in 4:42 that Jesus is the Savior of the world (see Morris 1995:251-252). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the below outline is suggested and as such will be used in the detailed analysis.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> The analysis of Howard-Brook chiasmic structure provided here is based on the work of Thettayil (2007:31), only few elements are modified.

<sup>94</sup> Thettayil (2007:31, footnote 104) rightly indicates that Howard-Brook is the only one seen including 4:43-45 in the pericope of Jesus and the Samaritan. Many commentators agree that the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman ends at 4:42 (see Schnackenburg 1987:456; Barrett 1978:244; Brodie 1993:224; O'Day 1995:564-565).

<sup>95</sup> It should be noted however, that there is no unanimity among scholars concerning the structural division of John 4:1-42. For example, Painter (1993:201) divides the text into the following scenes: 1) Introduction including Jesus and the disciples (4:1-6). 2) Jesus and the woman (4:7-26) with the following subunits: a) the gift of God: the life giving water (4:7-15) and b) the mysterious giver of the gift of God (4:16-26). 3) The disciples (4:27). 4) The woman and the men of the city (4:28-30). 5) Jesus and the disciples (4:31-38). 6) The Samaritans and Jesus (4:39-42). O'Day (1986:52) starts her analysis from 4:4-42 and she dissects the narrative into five units: vv. 4-6 as introduction and setting of the narrative, vv. 7-26 as the first dialogue - Jesus and the woman, which she divides into two sub-units: A. vv. 7-15, Give me a drink, B. vv. 16-26, 'Go call your husband.' Vv. 27-30 is transition scene, vv. 31-38, second dialogue - Jesus and the disciples and vv. 39-42 is the conclusion: Jesus and the Samaritans. See also Boers (1988:2-3) who structures this narrative differently.

- i. Transition from previous section (4:1-3)
- ii. Introduction to the Samaritan episode (4:4-6)
- iii. The dialogue with the woman (4:7-26)
  - a. The gift of Living water (4:7-15)
  - b. The nature of true worship (4:16-26)
- iv. Transition scene (4:27-30)<sup>96</sup>
- v. The dialogue with the disciples (4:31-38)
- vi. Conclusion: the faith of the Samaritans (4:39-42)

### 3.4 Determining the socio-historical setting of the text

Jesus' ministry enters a new stage when He leaves the confines of traditional Judaism in Judea and turns to the Samaritans whom His Jewish contemporaries reckoned as outcasts and rivals (O'Day 1995:565). The encounter with the Samaritan woman is problematic for the following reasons: firstly, as a woman, she belongs only to the private space. Her appearance at the well at midday when there are no other females around is not gender appropriate (see Neyrey 2009:155). Secondly, as a Samaritan, she would be considered by many Jews of her time to be ritually impure and not to be associated with (Nissen 1999:90). This is implied by the woman's response to Jesus, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" and the narrator's comment that Jews do not *συγχρωδνται*<sup>97</sup> with the Samaritans (4:9). Given such conventions, Jesus as a Jew risks the danger of being contaminated when He intends to have a drink from the waterpot that belongs to a Samaritan woman.

As Talbert (1992:112) notes, Jews did not only warn against Jewish contact<sup>98</sup> with the Samaritans they also express divine displeasure with the Samaritans because they accepted only the five books of Moses and worshipped God on Mount Gerizim rejecting Jerusalem as the right place of worship (see Ridderbos 1997:154). The Jews on the other hand, maintained Jerusalem as their sacred place and therefore regarded the Samaritans who rejected it as a damned people, who were detached from the presence of God in the Jerusalem temple (see Kok & Niemandt 2009:6).

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<sup>96</sup> Cf. O'Day (1986:52).

<sup>97</sup> See Eslinger (1993:176).

<sup>98</sup> Talbert (1992:112) cites the following statements from the Jewish antiquity literature: "He that eats the bread of the Samaritans is like one who eats the flesh of swine." "The daughters of Samaria are menstruates from their cradle."

The location of the cultic centre as the heart of the antagonism (see Van der Horst 2006:144-145) is also raised by the Samaritan woman in the narrative (4:20). This enmity can be traced back to the Assyrian occupation of the northern kingdom about 721 B.C (2 Kings 17), which during the years intensified (O'Day 1995:563-564). Therefore, when Jesus meets with the Samaritan woman and her country's people, He meets with the people of an enemy state who would normally have nothing to do with Him as a Jew and His Jewish contemporaries (4:9; cf. Lk 9:53).

### **3.5 Determining the place of the micro text within its literary macro structure**

The Samaritan episode belongs to the context of chapters 2-4 where there is a concern for the question of faith, and a definite movement can be discerned from lack of faith, through insufficient faith, to absolute faith in the person of Jesus (Scott 1992:184). The incident in Cana, the changing of water into wine (2:1-11) reveals the faith of Jesus' mother. However, in 2:13-22 where Jesus cleanses the temple, the Jews openly challenge Jesus' authority and express their disbelief in Him (Scott 1992:185). Following that incident is the encounter with Nicodemus, one of the powerful elites in Jerusalem (see Carter 2008:161), who comes to Jesus on his own accord (expressing some faith in Jesus) but does not really come to grips with Jesus' teaching concerning the new birth (3:1-12).

In contrast to the Jews and Nicodemus, John the Baptist in 3:22-36, shows complete faith in Jesus, he identifies Him as the bridegroom and indicates that Jesus must increase and he (the Baptist) must decrease (Moloney 1998:114). It is important to note that all these responses to Jesus are among His own people, that is, within the confines of Judaism. After this, comes the encounter with the Samaritan woman (4:1-42), which deals with the question of faith outside the borders of Judaism (Scott 1992:185). The Samaritans in contrast to the Jews in Jerusalem (2:23-25) as well as the suspicious Pharisees in Judea (4:1-3) unconditionally accept Jesus (4:40) and believe in Him as the world's Savior (4:42) (see Schnackenburg 1987:419).

As noted in the narratological analysis,<sup>99</sup> the encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well is reminiscent of the Old Testament betrothal type-scenes. The mention of Jacob and his well (4:12) and the hour (4:6) are all reminders of such scenes. However, the difference is that

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<sup>99</sup> See chapter two.

while the usual scene takes place amid friendly people, here it takes place among hostile people, the Samaritans who have no dealings with the Jews (see Botha 1991:117).<sup>100</sup> By bringing up the marital and extramarital relationship of the woman, this seems to suggest an underlying inference that Jesus like the Old Testament figures at the well is offering to the woman a fulfilling relationship (Scott 1992:186). This will become clear only after the whole narrative has been read. However, it is worth noting that the supernatural knowledge of Jesus reveals to the woman that Jesus is a prophet. She then raises an outstanding issue, which has been a source of contention between Jews and Samaritans: where is the right place to worship? Is Jerusalem or Gerizim? The theme of God's temple in 2:13-22 is thus reopened in a wider context of worship (Barrett 1978:228) when Jesus declares to the woman that the point of contact between humanity and God is no longer the options she has mentioned but the person of Jesus who is the new Temple (Thettayil 2007:226). In the wider context of this Gospel, Schnackenburg (1987:421) divides the pericope (4:1-42) into three themes and notes the following:

*The first theme, the question of what the reveler gives and promises believers, runs through the whole Gospel and is constantly elucidated under different images (the wine at Cana, ch. 2; the bread of life, ch. 6, etc.). The second theme (worship) already appeared in the background of 2:13-22. The third theme (missionary work) is suggested by the narrative itself (work in Samaria) and is only set in a broader perspective.<sup>101</sup>*

However, within the micro context, two dimensions of the story are dealt with, namely, social and spiritual (Nissen 1999:90). The social issues treated include the fact that Jews and Samaritans do not associate and that a man and a woman should not converse in public space (Neyrey 2009:156). All these barriers are transcended when Jesus and the disciples cross over into the land of the Samaritans with whom Jews had dealings (Hakola 2005:96) and by conversing with the Samaritan woman in the public space, Jesus also breaks down gender barriers (see Neyrey 2009:162). Even moral barriers are transcended if the woman could be seen as sinful as some commentators have contended (Thettayil 2007:11-12). This will be discussed later in the exegesis. Theologically, as noted above, the theme of worship is reopened in a

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<sup>100</sup> The other difference is that Jesus is not given water to drink even though it is requested and also no actual betrothal is concluded like that of Jacob and Rachael (Beck 1997:72). Thus, Brodie (1993:218) is right in referring to this as a betrothal of belief.

<sup>101</sup> See also Thettayil (2007:8) who cites Schnackenburg in this regard.

different perspective, namely, the crossing of boundaries of functionalism in relating to God and the Christological revelation that is given gradually and progressively to people who encounter Jesus (Thettayil 2007:11-12).

In addition, the barrier of ungodliness is broken through, when the Samaritans who do not know what they worship (cf. 4:22) are converted to faith in Jesus as the Savior of the world (4:42). All this reminds the readers that Jesus is the barrier-breaker<sup>102</sup> who came into this world to narrow the gap between God and man (5:24; cf. 8:19, 54-55; 9:27-41) “creating a symbolic bridge” which enables people “to hear the voice of God in a new way (cf. John 1:18; 10:1-8)” (Kok 2011:28). Thus, this crossing of boundaries by Jesus on the one hand indicates that His mission is across boundaries and on the other hand, it teaches the disciples, who are sent by Him as He was sent by the Father (4:38; 17:18; 20:21), to understand themselves as those who are charged with a message to the whole world (Schnelle 2009:692). Suddenly, in John 4, Jesus’ mission<sup>103</sup> widens just as the disciples’ mission will soon widen (as already implied here) after the resurrection (20:21; cf. Acts 1:18).<sup>104</sup> This again puts the Samaritan episode in the wider context of Jesus’ mission, which is a prominent theme in this Gospel<sup>105</sup> and the mission of the disciples, which is also the mission of the contemporary church.

### **3.6 Detailed analysis**

#### **3.6.1 Transition from previous section (4:1-3)**

Text:

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<sup>102</sup> According to Bruner (2012:246), Jesus breaks down all unnatural and inhuman barriers, one by one, until finally at His death, the greatest barrier of all, sin itself is level when Jesus cries out that it is finished (19:30). Then, when the stone of death is removed from the tomb and Jesus is raised from the dead, the greater barrier of all, death itself is abolished as well.

<sup>103</sup> Although John 4 stands seems to contradict Jesus’ own words that He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel (Mt 15:25) and His command to the disciples not go to any of the Samaritans’ towns (Mt 10:5ff; cf. Lk 9:52-56), the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman shows that Jesus made some exceptions (Schnackenburg 1987:459).

<sup>104</sup> Bruner (2012:233) is right when he states that Jesus’ deep desire to reach out to the world that God so loved is indicated in John 4. In the first four chapters, Jesus has dealt with different people, the Jews in Jerusalem (2:23-25), Nicodemus (3:1-12), the Samaritans (4:1-42) and the royal official (4:46ff) symbolizing that His mission is across ethnic boundaries.

<sup>105</sup> See Kostenberger and O’Brien (2001: 203) who argue that the mission of Jesus is the focus of the Fourth Gospel.

4:1 Ὡς οὖν ἔγνω ὁ Κύριος ὅτι ἤκουσαν οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ὅτι Ἰησοῦς πλείονας μαθητὰς ποιεῖ καὶ βαπτίζει ἢ Ἰωάννης 2 καίτοιγε Ἰησοῦς αὐτὸς οὐκ ἐβάπτισεν, ἀλλ' οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ 3 ἀφῆκεν τὴν Ἰουδαίαν καὶ ἀπῆλθεν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν.

These verses (1-3) serve as a conclusion to the previous section (3:22-30) and turn the narrative's focus to Jesus. The narrator relates the success of Jesus' baptismal activity vis-à-vis that of the Baptist (Okure 1988:80) and simultaneously narrates that the Pharisees have heard how Jesus is gaining more followers than John the Baptist (4:1). The mention of Jesus' success, John the Baptist, and the Pharisees is important because it relates this pericope firstly to 1:24ff where the Pharisees had sent their representatives to question the Baptist as to why he was baptizing. Secondly, it relates to 3:26 where the disciples of John the Baptist had complained that Jesus was recruiting more and more followers and that all were going to Him. Thirdly, this pericope relates to the last testimony of John the Baptist where he identified Jesus as the bridegroom, referred to himself as the friend to the bridegroom, and finally stated that Jesus must increase and he (the Baptist) must decrease (3:27-30).<sup>106</sup>

Jesus' successful ministry in Judea (and later in Samaria) should be understood in the light of the Baptist's words – "He must increase and I must decrease" (3:30). That is the point of 4:1. To demonstrate further that Jesus and the Baptist are not equals, the narrator (in 4:2) adds a remark that unlike the Baptist, Jesus did not baptize anyone, His disciples did. This raises the question, did Jesus baptize or did He not? Scholars have various opinions concerning this comment. For example, Brown (1970:164) notes that the comment in 4:2 is an "indisputable evidence of the presence of several hands in the composition of John." Barrett (1978:230) takes a similar route and notes that 4:2 is a later insertion by an editor who was anxious to distinguish between Jesus and John the Baptist. Brodie (1993:220) however, is of the opinion that the statement in 4:2, alerts the readers of Jesus' changing of roles. Time has come when Jesus will no longer do what He used to do; His role is giving way to that of the disciples (cf. Moloney 1993:136).

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<sup>106</sup> All these are indications that the Samaritan episode is related to the preceding chapters (as well as the later chapters as we shall later demonstrate) and therefore cannot be interpreted in isolation because it forms part of a more comprehensive whole and contributes to the understanding of the Gospel as a whole (Botha 1991:97).

A close reading of Brodie's proposition seems to suggest that Jesus indeed did baptize, and later on left this ministry to the disciples. But here in 4:2, the narrator seems to negate such a view. Staley (1988:96-98) tries to solve this problem in terms of what he calls "reader victimization". This occurs when readers are "set-up" through their confidence in their superior understanding of the Fourth Gospel, only to have their rug pulled out from underneath them by words or actions that undercut information about which they were confident (Beck 1997:71). This strategy, according to Staley (1988:98), reminds the readers that in spite of their high degree of knowledge, they still do not know everything and that "the Gospel as well as being an aesthetic whole, is a learning program." By using such a technique, the narrator unsettles the readers' confidence, challenges their prior understanding and therefore, prepares them to expect the unexpected in the characterization of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel (Beck 1997:71). The advantage of such an approach is that it focuses on the rhetorical effect of the Gospel's contradictory statements and it avoids disregarding or exercising such statements as later editorial insertions (Beck 1997:71).

Although these interpretations could be valid, I take the most conservative approach, which regards 4:2 not as an insertion made by a later editor<sup>107</sup> but rather an explanation given by the author himself.<sup>108</sup> The reason is that the narrator of John often uses such literary technique of inserting his own "explicit, summarizing comments in the narrative" (O'Day 1986:58).<sup>109</sup> This is also quite recognizable in this particular story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman, verses 8 and 9b correlate with this technique (see Botha 1991:99). Firstly, by making use of such a technique, the narrator gives an indication of being a meticulous and reliable narrator (Botha 1991:102), who tries by all means to give an accurate account of Jesus' earthly ministry, by giving explanations and corrections (cf. Resseguie 2001:21). Secondly, he differentiates between Jesus'

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<sup>107</sup> It should be noted however that the author does not dismiss the editorial process but is simply suggesting that it would not be strange to consider 4:2 as the narrator's own comment since he also makes use of such comments elsewhere in the Gospel.

<sup>108</sup> However, it is agreed with Bultmann (1971:176, footnote 2) and Ridderbos (1997:153) who acknowledge that it is not clear altogether why the correction in 4:2 is not made in 3:22, 26 (where it is also stated that Jesus baptized). According to Barrett (1978:230), "No other gospel states that Jesus or his disciples baptized during his ministry, but it is not impossible that they did so, especially if the mission of Jesus was (as the synoptics also suggest) closely connected in its origin with that of John." One could also argue that since the author is an eyewitness (19:35; 21:24) who is reflecting back on Jesus' earthly ministry and writing about it, remembers in chapter four of his Gospel that Jesus did not baptize, His disciples did.

<sup>109</sup> See 4:8, 9b, 11:49-52.

mission and that of the disciples (and that of John the Baptist), that is, the different roles played by Jesus and the disciples in the missionary enterprise as I shall later explore (Okure (1988:83; also see Köstenberger 1998:141). According to Okure (1988:82), the word ποιεῖ used for Jesus' making of disciples (4:1) is a technical term "for God's work of salvation done either by God himself or through Jesus (5:20; 14:10) or given to Jesus to do and complete (4:34; 17:4; cf. 5:30; 8:29; 10:25, 32; 11:37, 47)." She also mentions that this same verb describes the negative response of human beings towards God's mission. Those who do not believe in Jesus do the works of their father the devil in contrast to Jesus who does the works of God (4:34; 8:38, 41, 44; cf. 15:21; 16:2, 3). Hostile unbelievers will also do evil deeds to the disciples (15:21; 16:2, 3). In conclusion, Okure (1988:82) notes that whenever the word ποιεῖ is used positively, it is emphasized that the deeds are done in or through God and Jesus (3:21; 6:28; 15:5) (see also Köstenberger 1998:73). From such analysis, it could be argued that the task of making disciples is part of Jesus' exclusive mission from the Father (3:34; 17:2-4; cf. 4:23; 4:44-45) and the fact that He does not baptize, but His disciples do, indicates that He has drawn them into His ministry as agents<sup>110</sup> (cf. 4:38, 17:18; 20:21). They are the ones who baptize and through their ministry, many are attaching themselves to Jesus (4:1).

The success of this ministry makes the Pharisees suspicious in Judea. Jesus, being aware of this, decides to withdraw to Galilee (4:3). Although, there is no mention of any clash between Jesus and the Pharisees at this time, it is certainly implied. This is the third time (1:24ff; 3:1; 4:1) that the Pharisees have been mentioned, and each time they are involved with the question of authority (Botha 1991:97). As noted above, the Pharisees earlier sent their emissaries to question John why he was baptizing (1:24) and now that another baptizer has arrived, to whom all are going including John's disciples (3:26, 4) is indeed a great concern to the Pharisees (see Ridderbos 1997:152). Therefore, Jesus, aware of this friction, withdraws to Galilee. Many have fittingly proposed that by leaving Judea, Jesus evaded any premature conflict with the Pharisees, since His hour<sup>111</sup> has not yet come (Schnackenburg 1987:422; Moloney 1995:136; Ridderbos 1997:152; Kok 2011:21). According to Okure (1988:80), this interpretation finds support in the Gospel itself as there are other times in this Gospel when Jesus escapes arrest because His hour

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<sup>110</sup> Cf. Carson who notes that Jesus baptized only by using His disciples as agents (1991:215).

<sup>111</sup> According to Schnackenburg (1987:422), Jesus is under the law of the hour, which the Father has fixed for Him (cf. 2:4). This hour comes at the death of Jesus (19:30).

has not yet come (7:30; 8:20; cf. 12:27, 13:1; 17:1). Those who read this narrative from a betrothal type-scene perspective see a parallel with the betrothal scene in Exodus 2:17-20 (Lincoln 2005:171) where Moses fled to Midian because of Pharaoh's hostility and found his bride Zipporah. Here, Jesus flees from the Pharisee's opposition in Judea and finds His bride in the Samaritan town of Sychar: the Samaritan woman and the townsfolk who believed in Jesus (Stibbe 1993:68). All this, indicates that Jesus' withdrawal to Galilee is occasioned by the hostility (implied hostility) of the Pharisees in Judea.

### 3.6.2 Introduction to the Samaritan episode (4:4-6)

Text:

4:4 Ἔδει δὲ αὐτὸν διέρχεσθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας. 5 Ἔρχεται οὖν εἰς πόλιν τῆς Σαμαρείας λεγομένην Συχάρ, πλησίον τοῦ χωρίου ὃ ἔδωκεν Ἰακώβ Ἰωσήφ τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ· 6 ἦν δὲ ἐκεῖ πηγὴ τοῦ Ἰακώβ. Ὁ οὖν Ἰησοῦς κεκοπιακῶς ἐκ τῆς ὁδοπορίας ἐκαθέζετο οὕτως ἐπὶ τῇ πηγῇ. Ὠρα ἦν ὥσει ἕκτη.

Many commentators note that ἔδει in 4:4, implies a necessity, which caused Jesus to travel through Samaria (Schnackenburg 1987:422; Stibbe 1993:65; Ridderbos 1997:153; Lincoln 2005:171; Kok 2011:21). However, it is debated whether the necessity was geographical (short cut to Galilee) or was it the divine will of the Father?<sup>112</sup> According to Moloney (1998:116), there were two roads to go to Galilee from Judea. The quick way was through Samaria and for rapid travels this route was necessary. Another road was behind the Jordon valley, but it was hot and difficult and was mostly avoided (see Schnackenburg 1987:422). Therefore, the fact that the Jordon road was generally avoided supports the idea that it was necessary for Jesus to take the road via Samaria. However, if ἔδει is read in the context of what happens in Samaria, there seems to be a deeper meaning.<sup>113</sup> Also, if the usage of ἔδει is considered in the macro narrative of John's Gospel, it is discovered that it is mostly connected with Jesus' saving mission (see 3:14;

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<sup>112</sup> See Barrett (1978:230); Carson (1991:216); cf O'Day (1995: 565).

<sup>113</sup> See O'Day (1995:565) who notes that it is best "to read the necessity as both geographical and theological. Jesus' itinerary may have been governed by geographical expediency, but his stay in Samaria was governed by the theological necessity of offering himself to those whom social convention deemed unacceptable."

9:4; 10:16; 12:34; 20:9; cf. 3:30; 4:20, 24).<sup>114</sup> This implies that if Jesus goes to Samaria because of a necessity, then this necessity must be His divine mission. A number of scholars uphold this perspective, for example, Morris (1988:123) notes that it was necessary for the Son of God to go through Samaria in order to meet the needs of the Samaritans. These needs are nothing else than the salvation which Jesus has brought into the world (see 3:16; 4:42; 10:10). According to Michaels (1989:69), the need to pass via Samaria was not geographical; it was theological because there was work to be done. Samaria was a mission field ripe for harvest (4:35), and Jesus' intention was to do the will of the Father who sent Him to do His work (4:34).<sup>115</sup> If ἔδει is interpreted in the light of Jesus' mission, then John 10:16 comes into play. Jesus has other sheep that are not of the Jews' fold and He wants to bring them into one sheep pen so that they may be one flock and one shepherd. As the Samaritan story unfolds, this becomes apparent, the Samaritans become members of Jesus family, they invite Him, they abide with Him, and they acknowledge Him as their savior (4:40-42).

Verses 4 and 5 describe in detail the exact place where Jesus arrives in Samaria and the exact time at which He arrives. Jesus arrives in a town called Sychar, which is commonly (although it is not certain) identified as Askar (Barrett 1978:230; Schnackenburg 1987:423; Beasley-Murray 1999:58; Blomberg 2001:99). Jacob is said to have bought some land in this vicinity, which he later gave to his son Joseph. Genesis 33:18-20 and 48:22 confirms this. In Joshua 24:32, it is stated that when the Israelites conquered Canaan, they brought the bones of Joseph and buried them on this ancestral land (Carson 1991:217). In addition to Joseph's grave, there is Jacob's well<sup>116</sup> where Jesus, as fatigued as He is from the journey from Judea, decides to get some rest (4:6). Note that the narrator has so far referred to Samaria twice (4:4, 5), probably to emphasize the fact that the whole scene is taking place in Samaria (Botha 1991:107). More importantly, the scene takes place at the well, which is connected with the patriarch Jacob and in Sychar, a town

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<sup>114</sup> See Olsson (1974:128); Moloney (1993:137) and Lincoln (2005:171).

<sup>115</sup> Also, see Okure (1988:85) who notes that since Jesus depends totally on the Father's will, there can be no other imperatives in His life than the Father's will. He goes to Samaria because of His divine mission, which is to save the world (3:16ff).

<sup>116</sup> The issue of Jacob's well is only mentioned here in John 4, it does not appear anywhere in the Old Testament. However, Ridderbos (1993:153) notes that the well is mentioned in pilgrim stories from the fourth century and to this day it is pointed out alongside the road to Galilee by the city of Schechem.

which Olsson (1974:142) considers as the religious and national centre of the Samaritans.<sup>117</sup> All this will have implications for what is about to happen in the story.

However, what is important to note here are the following themes: the idea of giving, Jacob as a father, and the well as a gift. These themes will take on new meaning in the context of the whole narrative (O'Day 1986:56). The mention of Jacob, Joseph, and the history of the well are indications that the author has in mind the readers who were familiar with Old Testament traditions. He knew that to such readers, the allusion to Jacob and Joseph would immediately produce images of faith and the history of salvation (Botha 1991:107). Also, the mention of Jesus' arrival at the six hour (midday)<sup>118</sup> is important for both the characterization of Jesus and the Samaritan woman who comes to the well at that same hour. It is important to note that the mention of the hour is in relation to Jesus. His arrival at the hottest time of the day explains why He goes and sits by the well and not in the town. He is thirsty and He definitely needs a drink, confirming John's testimony that the "Word became flesh" (1:14). All this background information serves as an introduction that prepares the readers for what is about to take place in the narrative, namely, the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman.

### **3.6.3 The dialogue with the woman (4:7-26)**

#### **a) The gift of living water (4:7-15)**

Text:

4:7 Ἐρχεται γυνή ἐκ τῆς Σαμαρείας ἀντλήσαι ὕδωρ· λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Δός μοι πιεῖν. 8 Οἱ γὰρ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἀπεληλύθεισαν εἰς τὴν πόλιν, ἵνα τροφὰς ἀγοράσωσιν. 9 Λέγει οὖν αὐτῷ ἡ γυνή ἡ Σαμαρεῖτις, Πῶς σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὦν παρ' ἐμοῦ πιεῖν αἰτεῖς, οὕσης γυναικὸς Σαμαρεΐτιδος;- Οὐ γὰρ συγχρῶνται Ἰουδαῖοι Σαμαρεΐταις. 10 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ· εἰ ᾗδεις τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τίς ἐστιν ὁ λέγων σοι, δός μοι πιεῖν, σὺ ἂν ἤτησας αὐτόν,

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<sup>117</sup> According to Thettayil (2007:64), the words, ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ (4:20) points to Mount Gerizim at the foot of which the well of Jacob is situated.

<sup>118</sup> Van Tilborg (1993:178) indicates that there is a difference in determining the six hour. If one follows the Jewish reckoning, the six hour will be about noon but in the Roman mode, six hour is six PM. In this study, we follow the Jewish mode that interprets the six hour as midday because the high noon fits well with the narrator's portrayal of Jesus. He is tired, thirsty and needs a drink (see Bultmann 1971:178; Schnakenburg 1987:424; Resseguie 2001:78; Neyrey 2009:155).

καὶ ἔδωκεν ἄν σοι ὕδωρ ζῶν. 11 Λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ γυνή, Κύριε, οὔτε ἀντλημα ἔχεις, καὶ τὸ φρέαρ ἐστὶν βαθύ· πόθεν οὖν ἔχεις τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ζῶν; 12 Μὴ σὺ μείζων εἶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰακώβ, ὃς ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν τὸ φρέαρ, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἔπιεν, καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὰ θρέμματα αὐτοῦ; 13 Ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ, Πᾶς ὁ πίνων ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος τούτου, διψήσει πάλιν· 14 ὃς δ' ἂν πίη ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος οὗ ἐγὼ δώσω αὐτῷ, οὐ μὴ διψήσῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα· ἀλλὰ τὸ ὕδωρ ὃ δώσω αὐτῷ γενήσεται ἐν αὐτῷ πηγὴ ὕδατος ἀλλομένου εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. 15 Λέγει πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡ γυνή, Κύριε, δός μοι τοῦτο τὸ ὕδωρ, ἵνα μὴ διψῶ, μηδὲ ἔρχομαι ἐνθάδε ἀντλεῖν.

Having placed Jesus at the well, the narrator now introduces the Samaritan woman to the scene who comes at the same hour to draw water (4:7a). The appearance of the woman is extremely problematic; she comes at a strange hour when there are no other women at the well. Neyrey (2009:155) notes that women at wells were a common phenomenon, since water was needed for cooking, but they came only at certain hours, namely, in the mornings and evenings (Gen 24:11; see Gen 29:7). Therefore, noontime was a culturally ‘wrong’ time for women to be seen at a well for domestic purposes.<sup>119</sup> Generally, the unusual setting of the woman’s coming to the well, together with her strange marital history is used to characterize her as a notorious sinner and a social deviate (see Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:98), something which does not seem to be in the interest of the narrative. The mention of the hour as indicated above is made in relation to Jesus’ arrival, not to the woman’s, in order to emphasize the weariness of Jesus and His need for water (see O’Day 1986:58). Thus, it could be agreed with Spencer (2010: 307-308) who states that:

*drawing water at noon...would not have been the most propitious time for such activity in the hot Middle East, but it indicates nothing about the Samaritan woman’s supposed ‘outcast’ status in the community. Literarily, ‘noon’ functions as a temporal foil to ‘night’ in the Nicodemus story (3:2)...that this woman’s getting and toting water by herself without community support (no other women appear on the scene) poses an especially toilsome task.*

What is important for the story is the fact that the “woman” is a “Samaritan” (not that she comes at midday) and that she comes to draw “water” (O’Day 1986:58). These words, “woman,” “Samaritan” and “water” are precisely what will dominate the conversation that follows (Ridderbos 1997:154). As the woman arrives, Jesus immediately requests her: Δός μοι πιεῖν

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<sup>119</sup> Neyrey 2009:155; see also Schnackenburg (1987:425); Carson (1991:217); Malina & Rohrbaugh (1998:98).

(4:7b) but before she can respond to the request, the narrator interrupts and explains to the readers that the disciples are away buying some food (4:8). This commentary does not only stress the fact that Jesus is alone with the woman, it also interrupts the flow of the discourse since it is something that could have been introduced before the dialogue started (Botha 1991:116). Why then does the narrator give this information here and not before?

Botha (1991:117) explains this in the following ways: (1) in narratological terms, he argues that 4:8 serves to slow down the tempo of the narrative and thus enables the readers to digest the problematic situation which has just been described, the fact that Jesus has started a conversation with a “woman” who is a “Samaritan.” Because the author does not want this to escape the readers’ attention, he pauses the story and allows it to sink in, by using a delaying tactic. (2) By removing the disciples from the scene and having Jesus ask the woman to do something that His followers would normally do, the author could be implicating that the request of Jesus is actually an appointment of the woman to the position of Jesus’ disciples - “something which the woman later in the narrative indeed becomes”. (3) The request of a lone figure (a man requesting a drink from a woman) by the well is reminiscent of the Old Testament betrothal type-scenes (Genesis 24:10-19; 29:1-14). Thus, to create this expectation in the readers, the author removes the disciples from the scene and has Jesus to be alone with the woman at the well.

While Botha’s proposition could be a valid one, it is uncertain if the narrator had the three possibilities in mind, something Botha (1991:118) himself doubts. However, the nuptial image created by the well scene cannot be denied although this expectation is afterwards dashed when it is discovered that Jesus is not seeking a wife but a witness through whom He will get to the Samaritans in town (O’Day 1995:565). The purpose of such a setting could be the narrator’s technique to create suspense in order to involve the readers in the narrative so that they can discover for themselves who Jesus is and what He is about to do in Samaria (cf. Botha 1991:117-118). It seems that the comment in 4:8 is to emphasize the fact that Jesus is alone at the well without the disciples to help Him. In that case, it is only rational<sup>120</sup> that Jesus, who is fatigued by

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<sup>120</sup> According to O’Day (1987:58), verse 6 provides one rationale for Jesus’ request for water, verse 8 provide another reason. Not only is Jesus tired, He is also sitting alone at the well with no one to help Him because His disciples have gone to town, so, “the only possible source of nourishment and refreshment” Jesus has is the Samaritan woman who stands before Him and she concludes that, “the beginning of the story appears logical enough.”

the journey, should ask the woman for assistance. Furthermore, the well is too deep and Jesus does not possess any equipment or a bucket (ἄντλημα) (4:11) that He can use to draw the water but the woman has. As a human, Jesus needs the woman's assistance, but as the divine Son of God, He is not limited. He can get a drink from a spiritual source, just as He will later be fed by a spiritual food and not by the physical food which the disciples will bring from the town (4:34). Although, the readers of this Gospel know from the very beginning that Jesus is both human and divine (1:1; 1:14), here in John 4 it is made even clearer. The λόγος who became σὰρξ is portrayed as an ordinary Jewish man who is asking a favor from a Samaritan woman (4:7) and by so doing breaks the social conventions of the day.

Firstly, Jesus as a Jewish man, and especially as a rabbi, should not initiate conversation with strange women and neither should He speak with such women in public (Milne 1993:86; Lincoln 2005:178). Secondly, as a Jew, Jesus would normally have no dealings with the Samaritans due to the long history of hostility that existed between the two groups (see section 3.4 above).<sup>121</sup> Howard-Brook (1994:103) notes that for people of different clans and cities, the inclination towards noninteraction was even stronger and that for foreign men and women, even more of presumption against discourse existed. Therefore, Brodie (1993:221) is right when he states that the woman is “a formidable double handicap,” not only is she a woman, she is also a Samaritan. In the eyes of most Jews of Jesus' time, she would be considered unclean, especially if one considers the Jews' view that “the daughters of the Samaritans are deemed as menstruants from their cradle” (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:99). Talbert (1992:112) notes that, “if a Samaritan woman is considered as unclean, her uncleanness would be conveyed by any vessel she touched.” However, despite all of this, Jesus requests a drink of the woman, calling attention to the sharing of vessels that contravenes the cultural expectations of His day (see Brodie 1993:221; Neyrey 2009:162).

Therefore, given such a background, the woman refuses to comply with Jesus' request and thus challenges His behavior: Πῶς σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὢν παρ' ἐμοῦ πιεῖν αἰτεῖς, οὔσης γυναικὸς

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<sup>121</sup> Certain Jewish writings warn against speaking with women in public, for example, “Talk not much with womankind” for he that “talks much with womankind brings evil upon himself” or “it is forbidden to give a woman any greetings” (Talbert 1992:112).

Σαμαρείτιδος (4:9). Her objection is valid<sup>122</sup> in this specific context, because Jesus is acting as if He were oblivious of the barriers that alienated men from women and in particular Jews from Samaritans (see Ridderbos 1997:154). Beck (1997:72) notes that “the woman’s response is, according to acceptable practice, more correct than Jesus’ request – it would seem that she is rebuking him.” As a Samaritan she clings to her beliefs and traditions, she is more conservative and adheres to the boundaries of social convention in contrast to Jesus who is more liberal (Botha 1991:119). The comment Οὐ γὰρ συγχρῶνται Ἰουδαῖοι Σαμαρείταις (4:9c) is a further justification that in terms of social context, the woman behaves correctly and that Jesus does not (Botha 1991:120). By means of such a comment, the narrator directs the readers’ attention not only to the Jew/Samaritan relations but also to the breach of conduct that is taking place in the scene (O’Day 1986:59), leading the readers to ask themselves why does Jesus behave the way He does?

Morris (1988:123) notes that, “For the Son of God the bitterness that divided the two nations was not something to be complied with but something to be overcome.” This is evident from Jesus’ own words to the woman; He does not comment directly on the polarity that she has mentioned (“You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan...How can you ask me for a drink” [4:9]) but He refers her to a different reality in which the barrier she has mentioned plays no role (Ridderbos 1997:154-155). However, He does not simply dismiss her concerns, as if they were invalid. He acknowledges that she is right by not pursuing the topic any further. Instead, He tells the woman that she lacks the knowledge of God’s gift and the one who gives that gift because, if she knew, she would ask and He would give to her ὕδωρ ζῶν (cf. Botha 1991:122-123). Now the conversation shifts from Jesus’ need to that of the woman<sup>123</sup> or as Van Tilborg (1993:180) notes, Jesus “redefines his request in new terms in which he is no longer the one who asks but the one who gives.”

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<sup>122</sup> Botha (1991:118-119) notes that by objecting to Jesus’ request, the woman is actually protecting Jesus because she does not want a Jewish man to become unclean but at the same time, if she completely denies His request, she is also in danger of contravening the principle of politeness concerning interpersonal relationships. What Botha is saying is that the woman is in a dilemma both by doing what Jesus wants and by not doing what He wants. However, although, the woman is not willing to give Jesus a drink, her interrogative response indicates the possibility that she wants to further the conversation with Jesus.

<sup>123</sup> In this regard, it could be agreed with Okure (1988:93) that the statement, “Give me a drink” (4:7) is actually “an offer made in form of a request” and that what Jesus was asking from the woman is receptivity on her side.

Two important themes are raised here, “the gift of God” identified as “living water” and Jesus as “the giver” of that gift. The genitive (τὴν δωρεάν τοῦ Θεοῦ) is objective and it indicates that the gift is from God and is sent by God (Moloney 1993:140). This gift in the immediate context refers to living water but in the macro context of John’s Gospel, it refers to Jesus Himself through whom God’s gift of salvation is bestowed (3:16, 17; 4:42; cf. 10:10).<sup>124</sup> Similarly, Okure (1988:97-98) states that Jesus is God’s primary gift<sup>125</sup> without whom the gift of ‘Living water/Spirit/word’ is impossible” (see also Carson 1991:218). In the Old Testament God Himself is “the fountain of living waters” (Jer 2:13; 17:13; cf. Ps 36:8) and therefore, the fact that Jesus has revealed Himself as the one who provides living water is an implicit equation of Himself with God because He gives that which God alone can give (see Stibbe 1993:65). Also, if God is the fountain of living waters and Jesus claims to be the giver of that which is divine, then He is truly the revealer of God (cf. 1:18).

With this imagery, Jesus draws the woman’s attention (and the reader who is following) to His identity, something that she has not grasped. However, the woman is still locked in the world of spiritual blindness does not recognize who Jesus is and neither does she understand His gift of living water. Like Nicodemus, she sees the impossibility of how Jesus can provide water from another source apart from the ancestral well (see Ridderbos 1997:155). Furthermore, if Jesus is to provide fresh water from the very bottom of Jacob’s well He will need a bucket because the well is too deep,<sup>126</sup> which He clearly does not have (4:11). Also, it is not credible for the woman that Jesus, who had just asked her for a drink of water because He was unable to acquire any for Himself, could now supply her with better water (O’Day 1995:566). With this in mind, the

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<sup>124</sup> According to Beasley-Murray (1999:60), “The Gift of God denotes the salvation of God in an inclusive sense. The living water from Jesus here is equated with it.” However, it is evident that ‘living water’ has a variety of nuances that must be taken into account; chiefly it appears to denote the life mediated by the Spirit sent from the (Crucified and exalted) Revealer-Redeemer” (Kok 2011:30, footnote 48).

<sup>125</sup> Although, the rabbis regarded the Torah as the supreme gift of God (Carson 1991:218; cf. Edwards 2004:55), it is unlikely that Jesus is referring to this here. According to John, Jesus is the supreme gift of the Father given for the world’s salvation (see 3:16ff; 4:10; 4:42; 10:10). He is the one from whose fullness believers have received (1:16) a new and perfect gift, which replaces the former gift of the law or Torah (1:17) (Moloney 1993:140). Therefore, in this context, Jesus alone is the gift of God because He is the one who gives eternal life and not the Torah (see 5:26; 6:33ff; 10:10; 11:25). See Schnackenburg (1987:427) for other nuances attached with the symbolism of living water.

<sup>126</sup> According to Engelbrecht (2009:1786), Jacob’s well is said to have been the deepest well in Israel at that time.

woman asks, “from where can you get this living water?” She brings “the inevitable Johannine question of origins” (Moloney 1993:141). The word *πόθεν* or “from whence” in John is frequently used by people to question either the origin of Jesus or the origin of His gifts (1:29; 3:8; 4:11; 6:5; 6:41-42; 7:26; 8:14) and in such contexts, it is usually associated with the ignorance of the people involved (Lincoln 2005:175; see also O’Day 1995:566).<sup>127</sup> Similarly, the woman does not know the origin of Jesus’ living water, neither does she recognize from whence He came. All she knows now is that the man with whom she is conversing is a Jew (4:9).

Talking about origins, she articulates that the water in the well has its origins from the patriarch Jacob. He, his family and his entourage drank from it and they all were satisfied (4:12) (Moloney 1998:118). Given such a background, she challenges Jesus’ claim that He is in a position to provide her with something better by referring to the highest authority who gave the Samaritans the well (see Botha 1991:125).<sup>128</sup> Moloney (1993:141-142) rightly indicates that not only is the woman unable to go beyond ordinary wells and ordinary water, she is “unable to accept any origin for ‘living water’ beyond Jacob.” She interprets Jesus’ offer in terms of a running or flowing stream and it is from such standpoint that she reacts to His identity and compares Him “to Jacob, the giver of the well whose water, in her view, Jesus seems to slight” (Okure 1988:99). The only “life-giving water” which the woman knows, is that which is in the well, which already belongs to her and her country’s people (Michaels 1989:70-71). Jesus’ claim that He can supply her with better water than that which the fathers gave is just absurd (4:12).

Thus, she teasingly questions Jesus whether He is claiming to be greater<sup>129</sup> than Jacob, who gave this precious well to the Samaritans (Brodie 1993:222). The use of *μή* to introduce the woman’s question is a construction that anticipates a negative reply (i.e. no Jesus does not surpass Jacob) and as such, indicates the ironic false assumption that the woman is making concerning the

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<sup>127</sup> Kok (2011:31, footnote 54) observes that *πόθεν* is used 13 times in John and it is usually associated with the fact that many people according to John “do not know from whence Jesus came (e.g., 7:27 and 8:14; also see 6:41-42). Similarly, the Samaritan woman did not know or understand from whence Jesus received this living water (4:11). It seems that at the heart of human misunderstanding about Jesus is the question of recognizing his origin.”

<sup>128</sup> See Okure (1988:99) who argues that the woman’s response in v.11-12 is a defense of the ancestral well. According to O’Day (1986:62), “the woman patriotically defends Jacob (our father) and the magnitude of his gift by stressing the numbers that drank at the well: not only did Jacob himself drink from it, but also his sons and his cattle.”

<sup>129</sup> Later in this Gospel (8:53), the Jews will also question Jesus whether He thinks that He is greater than their father Abraham and the prophets who died (cf. Edwards 2004:56).

identity of Jesus (O'Day 1986:62; also see Botha 1991:132).<sup>130</sup> Although she has clearly not understood a thing that Jesus has been telling her, she has asked the most fundamental questions without even realizing it. Firstly, "Where is the source of living water to be found?" and secondly, "in what way is Jesus greater" than the patriarch Jacob? (Kok 2011:31).<sup>131</sup> As in 4:9, Jesus does not respond directly to her questions. But neither does He dismiss them, because as far as the history of the ancestral well is concerned the woman is right, while concerning the gift of God and the identity of Jesus, she is wrong. Again, Jesus takes the initiative and clarifies to the woman that He is not speaking of ordinary water or ordinary well but of supramundane water and well (4:13-14). The water that He provides does the following: (1) it quenches thirst forever (2) it becomes a spring within the drinker (3) and it gives eternal life in contrast to the water in Jacob's well, which only satisfies for a while, and therefore requires a vessel and repeated drinking.

To maintain the difference even further, John uses a present participle (Πᾶς ὁ πίνων) for drinking from Jacob's well indicating a repeated action, while drinking from Jesus' water is expressed by an aorist subjunctive (ὅς δ' ἂν πίη) implying a one-time event (O'Day 1986:78; Resseguie 2001:78). Not only do the waters have different effects, they also come from different sources – ordinary water comes from ordinary wells like Jacob's, while the living water that gives eternal life comes from God just as the true bread (6:33ff) that gives life comes from God (Resseguie 2001:78; also see Ridderbos 1997:155; Lincoln 2005:174). The fact that Jesus' gift has its origin from God and that it offers eternal life to those who drink of it surpasses both the water from the well and the giver Jacob.<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, Jacob gave the well only to his children, the Samaritans as the woman claims (4:12) just as manna was only given to Israel, however,

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<sup>130</sup> According to Bultmann (1971:187), the woman "can only see the miracle as a welcome means of making natural life easier, which is of course a usual misunderstanding of the revelation." See also O'Day (1986:62) who states that, "since Jesus has no visible means with which to draw water, the woman's comparison with Jacob seems to imply that only a miracle similar to the one performed by Jacob at Haran could produce the water."

<sup>131</sup> Since Jacob is not only the father of the Samaritans but the father of all Israel, it could be argued that the woman wants to know the position of Jesus in comparison to the patriarch of the entire people of God (Hakola 2005:99).

<sup>132</sup> See also Schnackenburg (1987:43) who argues that Jesus' gift of living water is "a divine gift brought...from the heavenly world and given to men to quench fully and forever their most radical 'thirst for life', penetrating and permeating man, unfolding its vital powers and continuing to work unflinchingly till eternal life."

Jesus gives His gift to everyone implied by whoever (ὅς δ' ἄν) without distinction as He has proposed to the Samaritan woman (cf. Ridderbos 1997:157). In other words, Jesus is superior to the Samaritans' ancestor Jacob, because He is able to quench the thirst of every human being, something the ancestor could not do.<sup>133</sup>

Jesus' explanation of His gift speaks of His identity, His origin, that of His gift and the superiority of His person, but the woman still does not seem to get it. However, her perception about Him has changed. Instead of viewing Him as an ordinary man or somewhat socially ignorant Jew, she now views Him as a miracle worker who can supply her with extraordinary or magical water (O'Day 1986:64). She, who was asked to give but refused, has now become the one who is asking to be given. This is exactly what Jesus had earlier asked of her that she should be the one asking and that He would be the one giving (4:10). Suddenly, she moves "from the position of asking questions (4:9, 11, 12), to that of speaking imperatives ("give me," 4:15)" and interestingly enough, she mouths even Jesus' original words (Neyrey (2006:159).

Jesus: Δός μοι πιεῖν (4:7)

Woman: δός μοι τοῦτο τὸ ὕδωρ (4:15)

Ridderbos (1997:158) is right in stating that what at first seemed utterly absurd to the woman "is now beginning to assume the form of something miraculous, of which the stranger apparently knows the secret and that might perhaps be useful to her" (Ridderbos 1997:158).<sup>134</sup> This becomes clear from her words, she needs the living water because she does not want to get thirsty nor come to the well to draw water again (4:15). She misses the point and her request parallels that "of the Jews in 6:34 who request to be given this bread always, without really understanding what it is all about as the sequel (vv.60-66) shows" (Okure 1988:103). Her motivation however, does not only indicate a misunderstanding, it also indicates that the whole conversation has been conducted on two levels (O'Day 1986:61). Firstly, the physical/ordinary/earthly level where the woman understands the gift of living water as earthly

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<sup>133</sup> Cf. 3:31 where John the Baptist testified that "the one who comes from above is above all" and "the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth..."

<sup>134</sup> See Carson (1991:220) who notes that "the Samaritan woman, with what degree of skepticism or hope we cannot ascertain (cf. Jn. 6:34), wants to get in on any blessing that will enable her to abandon these trips to Jacob's well."

gift or magical water at best. Secondly, the supramundane/heavenly/spiritual level which Jesus uses ὕδωρ ζωῆς to refer to the gift of salvation, which God the Father has given Him to bestow on all humanity (3:16ff).

However, the woman like Nicodemus (3:4ff) and the disciples (4:33) sticks to the earthly level and thus misinterprets Jesus' words and this to the readers seems as if Jesus' effort up to now has been in vain (Schnackenburg 1987:432). Naturally, the question that comes to mind is whether Jesus is going to stand up and leave her "at this point of unbelief, or is he going to 'heal' her spiritual blindness (cf. John 9:40-41; 12:41)...?" (Kok 2011:35). This only becomes clearer in what follows in the narrative. At this point however, it is important to note that the conversation, which began with Jesus' request for a drink, has now been concluded by a request from the woman. She who was a giver has become the receiver of what Jesus has to offer although she does not really understand what it is.<sup>135</sup> Now, how are the readers to evaluate the character of the woman in her portrayal in this dialogue?

Firstly, it should be noted that her characterization acts as a foil to further the characterization of Jesus (Ball 1996:63). Even though, she lacks insight concerning who Jesus is and what He has to offer, her misunderstanding is primarily not meant to reveal her ignorance or stupidity<sup>136</sup> but "to bring into focus the central Christological question concerning the identity of Jesus" (Boers 1988:166). Secondly, through her questions, "Where can you get this living water?" (4:11), "Are you greater than Jacob...?" (4:12), she ironically reinforces "the primacy of effect" of the preceding chapters in which the narrator has firmly established who Jesus is<sup>137</sup> (1:1, 14, 18, 1:29, 3:16) and the gift which He has to offer the world (3:17) without realizing it (see Resseguie 2001:181). Thirdly, the purpose of the woman is to show how Jesus broke through social conventions of His time in order to bring the life-giving water, the message of love, which is in

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<sup>135</sup> According to Lincoln (2005:174), "the woman's response is enthusiastic but misses the point, as she continues to operate within a this-worldly-horizon...Nevertheless, from within this limited perspective, the woman has made a little progress and "whatever it is that she thinks Jesus is offering, she is at least open to receiving it" (also see O'Day 1995:567).

<sup>136</sup> Boers (1988:163) notes that the woman is not a foolish person, she knows "how things function in the real world," however what she does not recognize is that "by talking sense, in mocking Jesus, she speaks the truth contrary to the way she understands it."

<sup>137</sup> Thus, Ball (1996:64) is right in stating that it is through this interaction with the Samaritan woman that the readers' lingering questions concerning who John in the previous chapters claims Jesus to be are addressed.

itself barrier-breaking (Nissen 1999:90). Therefore, because the woman at this point does not recognize the irony of her situation, Jesus changes His attempt in order to get through to her and as such, brings the readers to the second round in the conversation (Boers 1988:169).

#### **b) The nature of true worship (4:16-26)**

Text:

4:16 Λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ὑπαγε, φώνησον τὸν ἄνδρα σου, καὶ ἐλθὲ ἐνθάδε. 17 Ἀπεκρίθη ἡ γυνὴ καὶ εἶπεν, Οὐκ ἔχω ἄνδρα. Λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Καλῶς εἶπας ὅτι Ἄνδρα οὐκ ἔχω· 18 πέντε γὰρ ἄνδρας ἔσχες, καὶ νῦν ὃν ἔχεις οὐκ ἔστιν σου ἀνὴρ· τοῦτο ἀληθὲς εἶρηκας. 19 Λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ γυνή, Κύριε, θεωρῶ ὅτι προφήτης εἶ σύ. 20 Οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ προσεκύνησαν· καὶ ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐστὶν ὁ τόπος ὃπου δεῖ προσκυνεῖν. 21 Λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Γύναι, πιστευσόν μοι, ὅτι ἔρχεται ὥρα, ὅτε οὔτε ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ οὔτε ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις προσκυνήσετε τῷ πατρὶ. 22 ὑμεῖς προσκυνεῖτε ὃ οὐκ οἴδατε, ἡμεῖς προσκυνοῦμεν ὃ οἴδαμεν· ὅτι ἡ σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν. 23 Ἄλλ' ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν, ὅτε οἱ ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ πατρὶ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ· καὶ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ τοιούτους ζητεῖ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας αὐτόν. 24 πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός, καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας αὐτόν ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ δεῖ προσκυνεῖν. 25 Λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ γυνή, Οἶδα ὅτι Μεσίας ἔρχεται- ὁ λεγόμενος χριστός· ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, ἀναγγελεῖ ἡμῖν πάντα. 26 Λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἐγὼ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι.

The woman clearly desires to be spared from all further trips to the well (4:15), but Jesus is asking her to make this same trip twice, namely, to go home and to bring her husband to this place (ἐνθάδε) (4:16) (Okure (1988:107). One might even ask why does Jesus want the woman to go and fetch her husband and to return to the well again? According to Michaels (1989:71), it appears that Jesus' mission in Samaria "will begin with the conversion of the whole family. Such things happen in the book of Acts (16:15, 33-34; 18:8; cf. 11:14)" and also "at the end of this very journey in John's Gospel when Jesus reaches to Galilee." Does this mean Jesus is going to convert both the woman and her household? Two things are striking: (1) Jesus does not comment on the woman's request and (2) He abruptly shifts the conversation from living water to something totally unrelated (Stibbe 1994:18), namely, "Go, call your husband and come back" (4:16). Scholars differ greatly in their explanation of this shift.

Some have proposed that this is meant to expose the woman's sinfulness, and to call her into repentance (Morris 1995:234; Ridderbos 1997:159). This view finds its support from the unusual time at which she comes to the well (4:6) and her strange marital history (4:18). However, this does not seem to be the point of the narrative. Although the woman's life may not be acceptable according to Christian standards, the text does not say anything about her sin, immorality, Jesus' mercy, or His forgiveness<sup>138</sup> (Spencer 2010:308) and neither does it appear anywhere again in the narrative (see Moloney 1993:148). As noted earlier, the time indication, high noon is made in relation to Jesus' arrival not the woman's and is "designed to give as natural and human a picture of Jesus' presence at the well as possible" (Ridderbos 1997:153).

Botha (1991:141) in his speech act reading of Jesus' story with the Samaritan woman provides an alternative explanation of the shift. According to him, the twist represents "unwillingness" on Jesus' side to continue the current conversation about living water, because the woman has totally misunderstood Him. Jesus signals this by introducing a new topic. Although, Botha's proposition is interesting, it seems strange why Jesus would want to discontinue the conversation with this particular woman. Also, nowhere in this Gospel has Jesus stopped a conversation with anybody who misunderstands Him. Stibbe (1994:18) however, explains the shift in terms of what he calls "a technique of deliberate transcendence" which according to him is employed by Jesus in John's Gospel in His use of language. Here in John 4:16, Jesus makes use of such a technique to draw the woman's attention to His supernatural knowledge the fact that He knows about her private life, even though He is a complete stranger from a rival terrain (see Okure 1988:108; cf. O'Day 1995:567) and thus leads her to His true identity.

Similarly, Barrett (1978:235) explains that the woman continues to misunderstand, and then Jesus initiates a fresh approach in order to win her and to make her more receptive to His revelation.<sup>139</sup> Ridderbos (1997:159) writes, "In the view of what follows the intent can hardly be

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<sup>138</sup> Also, see Botha (1991:142) who argues that despite the fact that the statement about the woman's irregular life is made, "the implications of her immoral life are not exploited any further. Therefore, it seems that here on the story level or the level of the characters, this information given by Jesus serves another purpose: that of revealing to the character of the woman what Jesus and the readers already know, that is, that Jesus' identity has something to do with his omniscience."

<sup>139</sup> See Carson (1991:220) who comments that though the change of subject is abrupt, it is not artificial. It is because the woman has failed to grasp the identity of Jesus and the nature of the living water that He offers (cf. 4:10).

other than that, by bringing up the subject of her husband, Jesus wanted to lead the woman to the realization that he knew her past and present life and thus to make her more open to the meaning of his words.” Considering what happens after the shift, the fact that the woman identifies Jesus as a prophet, it is plausible to say that Jesus continues the conversation but changes His strategy not only to expose the sinfulness of the woman but more importantly, to reveal to her that He is more than what she thinks of Him. In fact, He teaches her the same lessons; namely, the gift of God and the identity of the giver, which she has failed to grasp (Carson 1991:220).<sup>140</sup> She must first know who the giver is before she can truly ask Him for His gift and therefore, to repeat these same lessons, Jesus moves to the next level commanding (“Υπαγε”) her to go and call her husband (4:16).

In response to Jesus’ command however, the woman replies, Οὐκ ἔχω ἄνδρα and immediately Jesus commends her, “You are right in saying ‘I have no husband’” (4:17) and then, He reveals to her the secret of her life, the fact that she has had five husbands and is living de facto with the sixth man (Stibbe 1993:66). This is followed by another commendation, “What you have just said is quite true” (4:18). The narrative does not tell us whether the woman has been divorced five times or that her husbands had died or that she was trapped in “levirate marriage” (Lincoln 2005:175). The only ones who really know are Jesus and the woman (Spencer 2010:310).<sup>141</sup> Since John did not wish to include all such details, “Jesus’ courtesy may be the best policy for church interpretation as well” (Bruner (2012:260).

Those who take the woman’s five ex husbands and her current relationship to represent the Samaritan religion are not exactly right because in Samaria there were not five nations but seven nations, which worshipped their gods simultaneously and not successively (cf. 2 Kg 17:24ff) (Morris 1995:235). Also, long before the days of Jesus as noted by Okure (1988:111) the Jews knew that the Samaritans had five gods and that their worship of Yahweh was an aberration from the truth (2 Kg 17:24-41; Ezra 4:1-4).” As such, there would be nothing extraordinary, in a Jew telling a Samaritan this.<sup>142</sup> It seems best to regard the woman’s five husbands and her sixth non-marital relationship as realistic. Her words to the townspeople (“come see a man who told me

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<sup>140</sup> According to Brown (1991:343), Jesus in a typical Johannine style shifts the focus to her husband in order to make progress in another way.

<sup>141</sup> See the different perspectives given in chapter one about the Samaritan woman’s marital history.

<sup>142</sup> Okure (1988:111).

everything I ever did” [4:29, 39]) support this view that her five husbands and her sixth relationship (4:18) are factual (Moloney 1993:248).

Another reason is that when Jesus reveals to the woman that she has been living such a life, she does not “react by defending or trying to justify herself,” but she immediately acknowledges Him as a prophet – “Sir, the woman said, I can see that you are a prophet” (4:19) (Botha 1991:143).<sup>143</sup> Jesus’ supernatural knowledge into her life becomes the initial revelation that suddenly opens her “spiritual eyes” (Stibbe 1993:66; also see Kok 2011:35). She who was suspicious of Jesus (4:9) is now ready to receive Him as a prophet<sup>144</sup> (Hakola 2005:101). The Samaritans according to Deuteronomy 18:15ff, expected a prophet like Moses, a figure they called the Taheb who would reveal all things (4:25) and would restore true worship (see Miller 2009:76). According to Carson (1991:221), “If there cannot be another prophet between the first Moses and the second Moses, then to call Jesus ‘prophet’ is virtually to call him ‘the prophet.’” With this image of a prophet (a revealer and restorer), the woman seizes the opportunity to ask Jesus “the prophet” (προφήτης) about the correct place for worship, an issue which has been the source of contention between Jews and Samaritans for years (Moloney 1993:149; also Ridderbos 1997:161).

Some commentators think that by bringing up the controversy over the right place for worship, the woman is trying to deviate from her personal life or is seeking to dodge Jesus’ conviction of her sin (Morris 1988:138; Milne 1993:85; O’Day 1995:567; Brown 1997:342). This is unlikely because the purpose of Jesus’ prophetic insight into the woman’s private life was never a conviction of her sin<sup>145</sup> but “a prelude to bringing to the fore the true identity of Jesus” (Okure 1988:107). Ridderbos (1997:161-162) is right when he states that, “the psychological

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<sup>143</sup> Therefore, Okure (1988:110) is right when she states that the only interpretation, which makes sense in the light of 4:19, 29 and 39, is that which takes the five husbands as five husbands, literally. Also see Ridderbos (1997:159) who argues that the woman’s speech in 4:29 “in no way points to an allegorical interpretation, any more than one can interpret the later dialogue concerning the true worship as a further application of this ‘allegory.’”

<sup>144</sup> In the Old Testament, a prophet was someone who was “endowed with supernatural knowledge and to whom one could turn to hear the word of God” (Ridderbos 1997:161; also see Olsson 1974:187).

<sup>145</sup> Although “it is undeniable that by the standards of most cultures, five husbands is excessive, and living with a man not one’s husband is usually deemed unacceptable” (Beck 1997:73), the implications of the woman’s immoral life are not exploited any further (Botha 1991:142). Also, there is no textual evidence of the woman’s repentance or of Jesus asking it from her (Beck 1997:73; Spencer 2010:308), this is because the sinfulness of the woman is not simply the point of this narrative (cf. Moloney 1993:148).

interpretation, which views the shift in the conversation as diversionary tactic of a confessional nature, takes us into the wrong direction.” The woman’s identification of Jesus as a prophet has the implications that Jesus as a prophet of God speaks the words of God and as such, she brings before such a man the central issue of the Jewish and the Samaritan worship.<sup>146</sup>

Furthermore, her inquiry about the right place of worship is an “act of deepening engagement with Jesus, because she anticipates that the prophet Jesus will be able to speak an authoritative word on the subject” (O’Day 1995:567). It may be worth noting that it is the first time that the woman initiates a topic of the conversation although her topic reflects the same polarity of thought with which she began: Οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν versus ὑμεῖς (4:20) “parallels *you, a Jew versus me, a Samaritan woman*” (O’Day 1986:68).<sup>147</sup> In any case, there is a progression in her understanding of Jesus: from a Jew who needs a drink from her to someone from whom she needs a drink, and to a prophet who could settle an old controversy that separates Jews and Samaritans (Hakola 2005:101).

Jews held that Jerusalem was the only place where the temple of God could rightly be built, the Samaritans by contrast considered Mount Gerizim as the right place for worship, since in their scriptures, most notably the five books of Moses, Abraham and Jacob had built an altar for Yahweh in this vicinity<sup>148</sup> (Morris 1988:138-139). Mount Gerizim was also a place where people were to be blessed according to Deuteronomy 11:29, 27:12 (Ridderbos 1997:161). According to Edwards (2004:56), the shrine at Gerizim is said to have been founded by one Manasseh, whom the Jews had expelled because he married the daughter of the Samaritan governor in Palestine (cf. Nehemiah 13:27ff). Ridderbos (1997:161) notes that John Hyrcanus, a Jewish king, later destroyed the Samaritan temple in 128 BC but even after that the Samaritans did not give up and they refused to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem (see Schnackenburg 1987:423). All these

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<sup>146</sup> Olsson (1974:187) notes that προφήτης in the Samaritan context leads to concepts of a prophet like Moses, who is to come (Deut 18:15ff) and that the characteristic of this prophet will be that he is sent by God and he speaks the words, which God places, in his mouth. Olsson concludes that from the Samaritan point of view, it would be natural to expect that a true prophet of God will reveal the right as regards the very heart of the conflict between Samaritans and Jews: which is the legitimate cult site, Gerizim or Jerusalem? Also, see Ridderbos (1997:160) who notes that it is in the light of discovering Jesus to be a prophet that the woman now brings up the heart of the issue that has from the beginning made her reserved towards Him.

<sup>147</sup> O’Day (1986:68) furthermore, mentions that the Samaritan woman still understands the relationship of the dialogue partners as that of Samaritan versus Jew.

<sup>148</sup> See Genesis 12:7, 33:20 and Deuteronomy 27:4-5.

different religious views, together with purity concerns (cf. above) resulted in extreme hatred, discrimination, marginalization and even a “socio-religious exclusion of one another” (Kok 2011:32).

The woman, as a Samaritan, knows this fact and therefore takes the opportunity to ask Jesus (the prophet) what He thinks about this issue (see Moloney 1993:149) or as Olsson (1974:188) notes, she wants to know “where is the true Temple of God on earth?” In essence, she brings a classic Johannine question, “Where, and with whom, is God?” Is He to be found with the Jews in Jerusalem or with the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim? (Kok 2011:32). Here the woman is suggesting two alternatives – either the Jews are right in their claim or the Samaritan fathers are right. But the one possibility must exclude the other, according to her; the right place for worship must be either Jerusalem or Gerizim (Botha 1991:144). However, Jesus negates both, “it is neither on this mountain nor is it in Jerusalem” (4:21).

While the woman uses past (προσεκύνησαν) and present (προσκυβεῖν) tenses to express the act of worship (Botha 1991:145), Jesus directs her attention to the future (προσκυθήσετε), namely the time of eschatological fulfillment (O’Day 1995:567). He predicts to her that when this time comes (ῥα) “the divisions between Jews and Samaritans over the proper place for worship will be transcended” (Lincoln 2005:177). According to Carson (1991:223) the word ‘hour’ (ῥα) “always points in John’s Gospel to the hour of Jesus’ cross, resurrection and exaltation, or to events related to Jesus’ passion and exaltation (as in 16:32)” (also see Brodie 1993:223). Jesus tells the woman that when this hour comes, the worship of the Father will not be restricted to Jerusalem nor to Mount Gerizim (Rev 21:22) or as Carson (1991:245) writes, “true worshippers will not be identified by their attachment to particular shrines, but by their worship of the Father in spirit and truth.”

It is important to note that in bringing up the question of the right place of worship, the woman did not mention the object of the ancestors’ worship; Jesus is the one who has introduced the Father as an object of true worship (Botha 1991:145). The word πατήρ was first used in relation to Jacob (4:5, 12) but in 4:20, it is used to refer to all the ancestors of the Samaritans, which of course, includes Jacob as well (Thettayil 2007:63). According to O’Day (1986:69), these referents for father are dramatically undercut by Jesus’ expression that “you will worship the Father.” Furthermore, O’Day notes that through the repetition and juxtaposition of the word

“father,” the woman is ironically being shown that she has no idea of who the Father is (O’Day 1986:69). This becomes clear in Jesus’ own words to the woman that the Samaritans do not know what they worship but we (Jews) know what we worship, “for salvation is from the Jews” (4:22a).<sup>149</sup>

Jesus speaks here as one of the Jews and evaluates the Samaritan religion from a Jewish point of view<sup>150</sup> and He somewhat seems to admit that Jewish worship is superior to that of the Samaritans (Hakola 2005:105). His positive attitude towards His Jewish heritage here is in keeping with the ethnocentrism of texts like Matthew 10:5-6 and 15:24 (Blomerg 2001:101). Furthermore, it indicates that the Gospel of John does not display hatred towards the Jewish people;<sup>151</sup> “though, it regards them with a certain aloofness,”<sup>152</sup> in fact, it also uses οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in a neutral sense when speaking of Jewish institutions and historical characteristics<sup>153</sup> (Schnackenburg 1987:436). As Beasley-Murray (1999:62) notes, John does not reject Judaism as such, it is the unbelieving Jewish leaders against whom he polemizes. Therefore, the saying is not an editorial gloss as noted by Bultmann (1971:189, footnote 6) but an affirmation that John does not doubt the fact that it was to the Jews that Jesus came (Barrett 1978:237) and that it was through them, i.e. through the Messiah that God had promised the salvation of the world (see Beasley-Murray 1999:62). The Samaritans did not have this knowledge but the Jews did have it, though most Jews in Jesus’ time did not understand that Jesus is the fulfillment of this knowledge (5:36-47; 8:37-59).<sup>154</sup>

Concerning the Samaritans’ worship, Hakola (2005:105) is of the opinion that Jesus’ criticism here refers back to the Jewish anti-Samaritan tradition, which was based on 2 Kings 17:24-41,

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<sup>149</sup> This is parallel with John 3:10-11 where Jesus tells Nicodemus that ‘we speak of what we know’ and here too He declares to the Samaritan woman that you (Samaritans) worship what you do not know but we (Jews) worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews (Lincoln 2005:177).

<sup>150</sup> According to Kok (2011:32), there are three distinct groups in this narrative and each one is claiming the “true worship of the real God and the fact that God was to be found exclusively with them.” First, the Samaritan woman who speaks of worship from the standpoint of the Samaritans (Stibbe 1993:66), second, the Jews who had claimed that God was to be found exclusively with them and finally, Jesus who points the woman to the new form of worship that which is universal offered in spirit and truth (4:23, 24).

<sup>151</sup> See Bieringer, R., Pollefeyt, D and Vanecastele-Vanneuville, F (2001), *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel* for detailed analysis on whether John’s Gospel is anti-Jewish or not.

<sup>152</sup> See 5:37-38; 7:28 and 8:55.

<sup>153</sup> See 2:13; 5:1; 6:4; 7:2; 11:55; 18:20; 19:40 etc (cf. Schnackenburg 1987:436).

<sup>154</sup> Hakola (2005:106).

where it is stated that the nations that were brought to Samaria did not know the law of the god of the land. This was mainly because they continued to worship their gods jointly with the God of Israel (Morris 1995:235), which from a Jewish point of view was a total misunderstanding of what it meant to worship the only God of Israel.<sup>155</sup> Also, the Samaritans could be ignorant because they only read the Pentateuch without the Jewish commentary (Edwards 2004:57), which would be an incomplete picture of God's revelation from a Jewish point of view (see O'Day 1995:568).

The statement ἡ σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν (4:22b)<sup>156</sup> stresses the position of the Jews in the salvation history of God's people. "For in virtue of the revelation given to Israel, salvation is 'from the Jews,' and all worship that puts itself in opposition to that revelation or separates itself from it is worship of one's own choosing" (Ridderbos 1997:162). Here Jesus claims to be part of this long tradition in which God has manifested Himself within the story of the Jewish people (Moloney 1993:150-151). Although, Jesus emphatically states that, "salvation is from the Jews," He does not regard it as an "exclusive commodity for the Jews" and as such, individual Jews cannot simply presume upon their ethnic heritage as though it were sufficient for a right standing before God (Erdmann 1998:219). The fact is that they have not ceased to be God's covenant people, but their privileged position does not guarantee them salvation. For them as for everyone else, "the way of salvation is through believing in Jesus - 'no one can come to the Father except through me' (14:6)" (Erdmann 1998:219-220). What Jesus is telling the woman is that the Jew who asked her for a drink (4:7), who she desires His water (4:15), He who revealed her past is not only a prophet (4:19), He is also the bringer of salvation (4:22). In this context, salvation is from the Jews because Jesus who brings salvation is from the Jews.<sup>157</sup>

However, in John's Gospel, though salvation springs from the Jews, it is the non-Jews who accept it: "He came to that which was his own, but His own did not receive Him" (1:11) (O'Day 1995:568). For example, Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish society did not accept Jesus'

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<sup>155</sup> See Hakola (2005:105).

<sup>156</sup> Collins (2010:165) notes that Jesus' utterance to the woman (4:22) sets "the Jews over and against the Samaritans and clearly identifies Jesus as a Jew. It is Jesus the Jews who speaks as the revealer (4:26) and implicitly promises to give to give the Samaritan woman the living water, the gift of God that Jesus alone is able to give (4:10)."

<sup>157</sup> According to Hakola (2005:103), Jesus' words that, "salvation is from the Jews" is an emphasis of His Jewishness and that the fact that salvation is closely connected to His person, implies that the words can be interpreted christologically.

teaching (3:1-15) but the Samaritans will (4:42). Also, after the Samaritan episode, another non-Jew, the royal official in Galilee and his entire household will accept Jesus, in contrast to Jesus' own people (4:46ff). The fact that the Samaritan woman (and her people), who is an outsider by race and religion, accepts that Jesus is the bringer of salvation is an implicit criticism of the Jewish people who have failed to receive Him as the Messiah (Hakola 2005:103-104). Also, however much the Jews may have been right in their arguments against the Samaritans, now Jesus draws a line between the past and the present age by making use of *ἀλλά* (4:23) indicating to the woman that the dispute she has referred to in 4:20 and that what He has described in 4:22 belong to the past (Hakola 2005:107). In fact, the time/hour, which He said would come (4:21), has now come when the worship of the old age will be supplanted by the worship in the new age (cf. Bruner 2012:258).

Jesus' utterance that the worship in the new age will not be tied to specific mountains (4:21) implies that the worship will be open to all people including the old worshippers (both Jews and Samaritans),<sup>158</sup> if they are ready to abandon their former modes of worship (Hakola 2005:108). In 4:23, Jesus explains to the woman that, worship in the new age or the eschatological age is firstly characterized by "spirit and truth" and secondly, it is characterized by the fact that God Himself is in search for people who will worship Him in this way. The reason for this is stated in verse 24, "God is spirit" and as such, people must worship Him in "spirit and truth." The statement, "God is spirit" as Ridderbos (1997:164) notes is not intended to "emphasize God's inaccessibility to earthly, material beings (so that they would have to draw near to God by way of interiorization and spiritual self-emptying)." It is rather a description of God being present in His own realm to which human beings as such have no access (Bruner 2012:258). Because God belongs to the realm of the Spirit, which like the wind blows wherever it pleases (3:8), His presence cannot be confined to specific mountains as the woman assumes (cf. Lincoln 2005:177-178).

Therefore, if human beings desire access to this realm, God Himself must intervene with His "transformative power" of the Spirit to enable human beings to access Him (see Schnackenburg

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<sup>158</sup> See Spencer (2010:310) who notes that, "...spirit-oriented rather than space-centred worship is open" to all people including the Samaritan woman and her people because "the Father seeks such worshippers wherever they may be found."

1987:439). In other words, only those who know where the “locus of the Spirit” is (Talbert 1992:115), that is, those who are ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος γεγεννημένοι (Bultmann 1971:191) and who have been made capable of it by God’s grace can truly worship God (Talbert 1992:115; also see Schnackenburg (1987:437).<sup>159</sup> It is important to note that it is God Himself (ὁ πατήρ) who has taken up the mission of seeking people and enabling them through spiritual birth to worship Him in “spirit and truth” (4:23b). Just as one cannot come to Jesus unless he or she is drawn by the Father (6:44), even so, one cannot naturally seek to worship the Father unless the Father takes the initiative (see Thettayil 2007:122). The fact that it is the Father, who is actively seeking worshippers, adds a new perspective to the story and calls for an alternative understanding of Jesus’ encounter with the woman.

Throughout the episode Jesus has been acting out a divine necessity (4:4) and as the one who does the work of the Father (4:34, 5:20, 36) and speaks His words (3:34; 12:49, 50; 14:24) He is seeking worshippers for the Father (see Schnelle 2007:681). This theme of seeking will ironically be raised in the unvoiced question (Τί ζητεῖς?) of the disciples when they return from the town (4:27). The reader however, who has moved with John through the Gospel knows that it is the mission of Jesus to be an instrument of salvation to the world (3:16ff) and that here in Samaria the Father in and through Him is seeking the Samaritan people to offer them the gift of salvation (Coloe 2001:107). What is stressed however, is the Father’s action who takes the initiative to seek a relationship with mankind through the revelation, which He manifests through His Son Jesus Christ and those who accept this revelation become true worshippers who are not bound to specific mountains but are bound to adoration in spirit and truth (4:23) (Thettayil 2007:121).

If true worship does not happen on the Jew/Samaritan holy mountains, where then does it take place? Also, what does it mean to worship ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ? In John’s Gospel, spirit and

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<sup>159</sup> Bultmann (1971:192) is right when he states that, “there can be true relationship between man and God unless it is grounded in God’s dealing with man. Any attempt by man to establish such a relationship remains within the sphere of human works from which God is unattainable; for God is πνεῦμα.” See also Talbert (1992:115) who notes the following: “If God belongs to the realm of Spirit, only those who have experienced a birth from above can participate in heavenly reality. The Godlike person alone can have fellowship with God. Where does true worship take place? It occurs neither in a Temple of stone nor in the holy of holies of human spirit but in the realm of Spirit (= Holy Spirit) accessible only to those who have been reborn from above.”

truth are closely connected to the person of Jesus (Hakola 2005:108). Jesus Himself is the truth of God's revelation (1:14; 14:6; 17:17). He is also the one who bestows the spirit or through whom the spirit of truth is given (14:17; 15:26; 16:7, 13). On the one hand, being a true worshipper is to respond to the revelation brought by Jesus according to Father's expectation, namely, to believe in the revealer Himself (Thettayil 2007:121). On the other hand, because Jesus is the truth, in the sense that He reveals God's truth to human beings, and because the Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus who guides human beings in the truth (Olsson 1974:189), therefore, true worship in *πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθεία* can only take place through Him (see Thettayil 2007:165). Continued support for the view that Jesus is the new space where true worship can be offered is found in 2:19-22 where Jesus identifies His body as the new dwelling of God (see Coloe 2001:100).

The whole point is that a new age has come when God's presence will no longer be localized to specific mountains because God is now to be found in the person of Jesus who is the new dwelling (1:14), the new Bethel (1:51), and the new temple of God (2:19-22) (Coloe 2001:112). In the words of Kok (2011:46, footnote 89), "God has moved from the localized materialistic to the 'glocal' (Global and local) spiritualistic. With 'glocal' it is meant that God will be localized wherever Jesus is, but 'globalistic' in the sense that Jesus is to be found not only with the Jews but also with the Samaritans (4:1-42) and even the Gentiles (4:43-54)." However, as Thettayil (2007:165) notes, this does not mean that, at the coming of Jesus, locality has ceased to be relevant for worship. Rather, it means that locality confined in space and time, is now redefined in the person of Jesus. This means that wherever worship is conducted, it must be done in and through Jesus and wherever worship is not explicitly through Jesus, it falls under the description: "you worship what you do not know" (4:22) because only through Jesus, who alone is at the Father's side (1:18), can the Father be truly worshipped (Milne 1993:90).<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> See Bruner (2012:264) who rightly observes that, "it is not mountains or places that make worship authentic" but "the special gifts of the Christocentric Holy Spirit, the truthful Son, and the worship-seeking and worship-receiving Father who together, make true worship possible. Where all these realities are honored – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – true worship occurs." See also Carson (1991:225) who holds a similar view that worship in "spirit and truth" is "God-centred" and is "made possible by the gift of the 'Holy Spirit, and in personal knowledge of and conformity to God's word-made-flesh, the one who is God's 'truth', the faithful exposition and fulfillment of God and his saving purposes" (cf. Edwards 2004:77).

The woman after hearing this teaching from the lips of Jesus, the man she calls a “prophet” (4:19) is indeed reminded of the coming Messiah (4:25). She has moved from the position of asking questions to that of expressing faith. It is worth noting that the woman calls the expected figure Messiah, a title that was not used by the Samaritans (Olsson 1974:191; Botha 1991:152). The Samaritans expected a prophet like Moses according to God’s promise in Deuteronomy 18:18, a figure; they called the Taheb as noted earlier (Thettayil 2007:182). By talking about the coming Messiah, it could be that the woman is simply expressing her belief in such a figure like the Taheb or that she uses the term Μεσίας in a generic way to refer to the future bringer of salvation (Ridderbos 1997:164). Although she has indeed responded with a statement of faith (Stibbe 1993:66), she is far from knowing that the long awaited expectation, which she shares with her people, has now become a reality. She has missed the meaning of, “Yet a time is coming and **has now come,**” the only thing she understands is that Jesus is talking about the eschatological age, which is the age of the Messiah (O’Day 1986:72).

To the woman’s faith that she awaits the coming Messiah, Jesus immediately revealed to her that He is that figure: Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ λαλῶν σοι (4:26) or in the words of Bultmann (1971:192), “the person whom she has been asking after is Jesus; the Messiah for whom men wait is already present.” Jesus reveals this to the Samaritan woman that He who sat by the well, asking her for a drink of water was none other than the promised Messiah, the one who could indeed provide her with living water (Carson 1991:227). If the woman had used Μεσίας (4:25) to express only her belief in the Samaritan expectation of a prophet like Moses, Jesus’ Ἐγώ εἰμι here transcends such a limited notion because Jesus is not only in the future (as the coming Messiah, who “will show us all things”) but here and now (“I who speak to you”) (Ridderbos 1997:165). What is important to note is the fact that this revelation is made manifest to a non-Jew indicating that the revelation, which the Johannine Jesus has brought is not only for the Jews but it is universal (4:42) and as such, transcends both the Jewish and the Samaritans’ expectations of a future bringer of salvation (see Schnackenburg 1987:456).

Therefore, the basis on which Jesus had told the woman that a time is coming (4:21) and has now come (4:23), is made clear by this revelation and the purpose of Jesus’ conversation with her, namely, to reveal that Jesus is the Messiah is achieved. Ἐγώ εἰμι which has always been used to refer to the living presence of a God who makes Himself known among His people (Moloney

1993:155), is for the first time spoken here in this Gospel through the lips of Jesus Himself (Kok 2011:39). With these words, Jesus claims to surpass all the figures (Jacob, Joseph, our fathers) that the woman has so far named as well as the titles (Jew, someone greater than Jacob, prophet) that she has ascribed to Jesus because Jesus is the incarnation of the God who revealed Himself to Moses as I AM in Exodus 3:14 (Coloe 2001:112).<sup>161</sup> This great revelation brings to an end the discussion between Jesus and the Samaritan woman or as Bruner (2012:273) rightly notes that Part A of the mission is accomplished; the woman has the living water and Part B of the mission begins in which she departs to the town and brings the townspeople to the Fountain of living waters.

### 3.6.5 Transition scene (4:27-30)

Text:

4:27 Καὶ ἐπὶ τούτῳ ἦλθον οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐθαύμασαν ὅτι μετὰ γυναικὸς ἐλάλει· οὐδεὶς μέντοι εἶπεν, Τί ζητεῖς; ἢ, Τί λαλεῖς μετ' αὐτῆς; 28 Ἀφῆκεν οὖν τὴν ὑδρίαν αὐτῆς ἡ γυνή, καὶ ἀπῆλθεν εἰς τὴν πόλιν, καὶ λέγει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις· 29 Δεῦτε, ἴδετε ἄνθρωπον, ὃς εἶπέν μοι πάντα ὅσα ἐποίησα· μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστός; 30 Ἐξῆλθον ἐκ τῆς πόλεως, καὶ ἤρχοντο πρὸς αὐτόν.

After Jesus' revelation to the woman, the disciples who have been away buying some food (4:8) return to the scene and they are amazed that Jesus is conversing with a woman, perhaps not just a woman but a Samaritan. The interaction between Jesus and the Samaritan woman breaks social conventions as noted earlier. The disciples' astonishment on the one hand is in conformity with the cultural expectation of the day (Milne 1993:86) but on the other hand, it shows how social constraints have shaped their understanding of Jesus and His mission and as such, contrasts them to Jesus in their attitude towards the woman (see Beck 1997:74). Furthermore, the fact that they do not question Jesus (despite their astonishment) why He is conversing with this woman (4:27) sharply contrasts the woman's behavior who always voices out her thoughts and concerns when anything is staggering or incongruous (O'Day 1986:74).<sup>162</sup> Because the disciples do not voice

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<sup>161</sup> For a comprehensive survey of the different uses of *Εγώ εἰμι* see Thettayil (2007:193-212).

<sup>162</sup> Although the disciples' silence has been explained as reverence or awe towards Jesus their master (Schnackenburg 1987:443; cf. Ridderbos 1997:166), it is important to see that the woman actively

out their concerns, the narrator who is omniscient enters into the story-world and tells the readers what the disciples really would like to have said: “What do you seek (ζητεῖς)<sup>163</sup> or why do you speak (λαλεῖς) with her” (see Moloney 1993:156). These unvoiced questions of the disciples touch the core of Jesus’ discussion with the Samaritan woman; the reader who has been following the story already knows the answer (O’Day 1986:75; Coloe 2001:107). He or she knows that Jesus is speaking with this woman because He wants to give her the gift of salvation (4:10). What He is seeking are true worshippers who will offer adoration to the Father in truth and spirit and in the place where God “is truly and fully present, i.e., in Jesus who is the truth incarnate” (Thettayil 2007:164). Because the disciples were not present to hear and to witness Jesus’ conversation with the woman, their understanding of what they see remains on a mundane level and because they do not ask, they remain without an explanation from Jesus or the Samaritan woman (see Van Tilborg 1993:187). As the disciples are pondering what could possibly be happening, the woman quietly leaves her waterpot and departs to the town to share her experience with the townspeople (4:28-29).

Although, John does not state any particular reason why the woman has left her waterpot, many commentators are intrigued by the fact that she has done so. Some have argued that the woman abandons the waterpot in her eagerness to run with zeal and speed to share the news of her encounter with Jesus (Okure 1988:135; cf. Milne 1993:86; Culpepper 1998:140). Others have argued that the waterpot signifies that the woman is not simply going home, she is going to return and this indeed happens when she returns with the townspeople (O’Day 1986:75; Lincoln 2005:179). According Barrett (1978:240), the woman has left her waterpot so that Jesus can drink from it but Brown (1970:173) on the other hand argues that the living water that the woman has found does not require a jar because it is a spring within the drinker.

Other scholars have proposed a symbolic interpretation, for example, Schottroff (1998:169) indicates that the abandoned jar symbolizes the woman’s new found freedom from her entire oppression, namely, that “she has found new brothers and sisters and new household in which

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engages with Jesus in the dialogue rather than the disciples, just as she will later engage in the mission of bringing people to Jesus. She who asks questions goes to the same town where the disciples went and returns with people while the disciples do the opposite.

<sup>163</sup> Brodie (1993:224) argues that what “the disciples perceive in their wonder is not God but the whiff of scandal” and therefore, “the allusion to the fact that Jesus was ‘seeking’ something (4:27) contains an evoking of the Father’s seeking of true worshipper (4:23).

she can survive – in the economic sense as well – as an independent woman.” According to Coloe (2001:105), she has left behind ethnic antipathy and her initial focus on Jacob’s well for the gift of water that Jesus offers and the narrow Samaritan categories of a prophet like Moses when she speaks about a coming Messiah and in exchange has become a disciple. Others have noted that the woman’s leaving of her water jar is a visible demonstration of the first prerequisite for discipleship, that is, leaving behind everything to follow Jesus as found in the Synoptic Gospels (Beck 1997:75; Edwards 2004:59; also see Stibbe 1993:67).

Although, these views are indeed helpful in trying to explain why the Samaritan woman abandoned her water jar and why it was important for the author to have recorded it, unfortunately, not all can be evidenced from the story itself and furthermore, some do not seem to take seriously the context of the narrative (see O’Day 1986:75). The only interpretation, which has textual evidence is that the woman has left her water jar because she intends to return (O’Day 1986:75; Lincoln 2005:179). She indeed returns and her presence for the second time is supported by the direct speech of the townspeople, which is directed towards her: “We no longer believe just because of what you said...” (4:42) (Moloney 1998:146-147). In the context of the whole narrative, verses 8 and 28 seem to have the same function, just as the disciples departed into the town leaving Jesus behind (4:8), as an indication that they will return to the well, the woman also departs and leaves behind her jar indicating that she will surely return. Another interpretation which is closest to the narrative point of view is that the woman has indeed understood Jesus’ teaching on living water and that she realizes that the living water that Christ offers unlike ordinary water does not require an ordinary vessel but a new vessel which is herself (Resseguie 2001:80).

The fact that the disciples are off when Jesus converses with the woman and that she is off when Jesus converses with the disciples is the literary technique of dual stage setting (Stibbe 1993:64; Beck 1997:74), which enables the readers to observe the characters on two stages, namely, the well and the town (O’Day 1986:55; Talbert 1992:115). It is worth noting that the narrator has sharply contrasted the actions of the disciples on both stages. Not only are the disciples unable to bring Jesus people from the town, the back stage, they are also unable to verbalize their concerns in the front stage when they return (see Beck 1997:76). Because the disciples are unable to speak up in the front stage, which is essence their private space with Jesus, they behave like

outsiders<sup>164</sup> while the woman who is an outsider by race, gender and religion behaves as a true insider who freely communicates with Jesus and even shares insider information with others in the town (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:101). In this regard, Neyrey (2006:163) is right in stating that the woman through her interaction with Jesus has undergone a change of status, from “not in the know to in the know” from an “outsider to an insider” and has finally moved from “public space to the private world of Jesus’ kinship circle.” However, the disciples are unaware of this, they still think in terms of their own tradition (4:27) that “public space” equals male space and “private space” equals female space (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:98), an attitude, which intensifies further their status as outsiders.

To emphasize the woman’s transformed status, the narrator portrays her as an active witness in the town, calling people to come and see a man who has told her everything she ever did and she adds, μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστός; (this is not the Christ, is he? [4:29]). The woman having been transformed becomes an agent of transformation. She hastens into the “public space” where males gather in the city (remember Jesus had told her and call her husband – “private space”) (Neyrey 2006:163) and initiates conversation with those males (4:28), inviting them to come and see (4:29), “in a world where women never did such things, especially a woman with notorious character” (Kok 2011:40). Firstly, it should be noted that the statement “come and see,” echoes the language of discipleship initiated by Jesus when He called His first two disciples (1:39) and Philip continued the pattern with the same invitation to Nathaniel (1:39) as noted by most scholars.<sup>165</sup> Skreslet (2006:97) rightly notes that, “What took place among the Samaritans merely repeated the pattern established near the beginning of the Gospel, when John the Baptist pointed the way to Jesus for two of his disciples by identifying him as the Lamb of God.” Secondly, “coming and seeing” indicate the “experimental dimension of faith” (Nissen 1999:220), which calls others to come and experience Jesus for themselves and to enter into a relationship with Him and to get to know Him and eventually to participate in His mission (O’Day 1986:76).<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> See O’Day (1986:74) who argues that by not questioning Jesus why He is speaking with a woman, they keep themselves removed from immediate engagement with Jesus and at that moment, they become outsiders who are merely observers of the scene that is taking place (also see Howard-Brook 1994:110).

<sup>165</sup> See Culpepper (1983:137); O’Day (1986:76); Beck (1997:76); Nissen (1999:219) Lincoln (2005:179); Skreslet (2006:97).

<sup>166</sup> O’Day (1986:76) notes that the woman’s invitation to the townspeople to come and see is ironic because the woman “has experience so little, it is the correct invitation but the woman offers it unknowingly.” This is does not seem to be the case because Jesus did not only reveal her past, He also

Therefore, by calling others to come and see, the woman is portrayed as a disciple-maker and as such, a model for true discipleship (Culpepper 1983:137) whose actions as Kok (2011:41) notes, “culminates in true Johannine confession, becoming a witness to Jesus’ true identity.”

Her faith is also a Johannine authentic faith, which does not only imply the “acceptance of Jesus as the Son of God, but also existentially influences and determines one’s deeds due to the fact that the believer’s identity is transformed” (Kok 2011:43).<sup>167</sup> Therefore, those who contend that one could not speak of ethics in John<sup>168</sup> are not correct because faith is the “central ethical action” in this Gospel (Van der Watt 2010:140). The Johannine ethics is not so much about the law or its messianic interpretation but about Christ and the life in His name, that is a life formed and informed by love (Nissen 1999:200). In other words, ethics in this Gospel has to do with the question of identity,<sup>169</sup> for example, a person who believes in Jesus abides in His love and acts according to Jesus’ command (15:9-17) but an unbeliever acts contrary to Jesus’ way of life.<sup>170</sup> For example, the Samaritan woman in the story started as unbeliever and as such acted contrary to Jesus’ request (4:9) but after her conversion she begins to model behavior, which is appropriate to Jesus’ group and as such moves from an outsider to an insider (Neyrey 2009:171). Her new status/identity enables her to cross the boundaries of the social exclusion that she as a woman and a Samaritan faced (cf. Segovia 1998:299).

As a woman, she was not supposed to be taught theology nor was she allowed to engage in its discussion with men (Scott 1992:188; also see Morris 1988:126) but Jesus freely engaged with her and shared with her the spiritual reality of God (Kok 2011:29).<sup>171</sup> Also, as a woman, she was

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revealed Himself as the messiah. The woman believed and her immediate response is “an active witness to others concerning Jesus’ words, the paradigm of appropriate response to Jesus as established with Jesus’ mother at Cana” (Beck 1997:76).

<sup>167</sup> See 1:12, 3:3-6; 5:24; 8:44; cf. also 1 John 1:5-7.

<sup>168</sup> See Schrage (1988:297) and Matera (1996:92).

<sup>169</sup> See Van der Watt (2010:141) who notes that “the ethical system of John proved to be primarily relational, grounded in Christology. Actions cannot be separated from identity and the one flows naturally into the other...” because from the identity of a believer as a member of God’s family flow his or her behavioral patterns (8:38-41; 13:15; 14:10-11).”

<sup>170</sup> Cf. the actions of Mary anointing Jesus’ feet and wiping them with her hair (12:3) flows from her identity as a “true disciple” but the unbelieving Judas, who is a traitor, “a lover of money” and a person with “excessive wickedness” rebukes her (De Wet & Stander 2007:140).

<sup>171</sup> See Carson (1991:227) who notes that, “Some rabbis went so far to suggest that to provide their daughters with the knowledge of the Torah was as inappropriate as to teach them lechery, i.e. to sell them into prostitution.”

confined to what was known as “private space” designated only for female jobs (see Neyrey 2009:156-157). Even within the women space, some have argued that the woman was also an outcast, “she was expelled because of the way she lived” (Nissen 1991:90).<sup>172</sup> However, through her encounter with Jesus, she was enabled to break through these barriers because of her new identity. She invokes the mission to the Samaritans (Culpepper 1983:137; also see Coloe 2001:105) and persuades others to “come and see” (4:29) not just a prophet like Moses as the Samaritans expected (Miller 2009:76; Deut 18:15-18) but the very Savior of the world as the Samaritans will soon attest (4:42). Suddenly, the readers who have been following the narrative discover that the dialogue, which Jesus initiated with the woman, was a medium for His revelation and simultaneously a journey of self-discovery for the woman (Nissen 1999:91), which in the end leads others to Jesus.<sup>173</sup>

“Come and see” (4:29), the woman exhorts the townspeople. It is however striking that the woman in her witness to the townspeople does not report the discussion about living water, the nature and place of true worship or the revelation that Jesus is the Messiah. She leaves out all of these and reports only what Jesus had told her concerning her private life – “everything I ever did.” (4:29, 39). Does the woman not know who Jesus is even after the Εγώ εἰμι? Also, her testimony is ambiguous, μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστός? This ambiguity is caused by the particle μήτι that introduces her question so hesitantly as though she is not sure herself (Barrett 1978:240; Ridderbos 1997:166). Because of this, some have described her faith as “a partial conditioned belief” (see Moloney 1993:158; Neyrey 2009:161). However, in the light of Jesus’ Εγώ εἰμι (4:26), it is unlikely that the woman has not understood who Jesus is. Although, she did not respond with a verbal confession, she has responded with an active witness (Beck 1997:76) and as a result of her testimony the Samaritans have gone out of the town and are coming towards Jesus (4:30).

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<sup>172</sup> For the woman’s outcast status as a Samaritan, see the discussion on the socio-historical setting of this narrative (cf. above).

<sup>173</sup> See Kok (2011:62) who rightly argues that, “Jesus’ presence gives birth to spiritual movement and lives that are transformed – leading to transformed and restored people who move and invite others.”

As such, it could be agreed with O'Day (1986:76) that the purpose of the woman's tentativeness<sup>174</sup> is to draw the readers' attention back to Jesus' self-revelation and to leave room for individual response.<sup>175</sup> The fact that the people are moved by what she has told them and are on their way to Jesus proves her credibility as a witness and a true member of Jesus' movement. Schnelle (2009:741) correctly observes that when people are called into the community of believers, they are also led to continue the Christian mission. This is true with the Samaritan woman, who having become a disciple; also helps others to become disciples (Stibbe 1993:67). According to O'Day (1986:76-77), the coming of the Samaritans (4:30) functions analogously to verses 8, 27 and 28, and it reminds the readers that the actions of the narrative have been taking place on two stages, i.e., at the well and in the town and on both stages the woman participates actively compared to the disciples. She who actively engages with Jesus in the dialogue also engages energetically in mission work (see Beck 1997:72). Suddenly, the harvest that Jesus will shortly speak about (4:31-37) and into which the disciples' will enter (4:38) is made possible through the testimony of the woman (Scott 1992:193).

### 3.6.5 The dialogue with the disciples (4:31-38)

Text:

4:31 Ἐν δὲ τῷ μεταξὺ ἡρώτων αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταί, λέγοντες, Ῥαββί, φάγε. 32 Ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Ἐγὼ βρώσιν ἔχω φαγεῖν ἢν ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἶδατε. 33 Ἔλεγον οὖν οἱ μαθηταὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους, Μὴ τις ἤνεγκεν αὐτῷ φαγεῖν; 34 Λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἐμὸν βρώμά ἐστιν, ἵνα ποιῶ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με, καὶ τελειώσω αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον. 35 Οὐχ ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι Ἔτι τετράμηνός ἐστιν, καὶ ὁ θερισμὸς ἔρχεται; Ἴδού, λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐπάρατε τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὑμῶν, καὶ θεάσασθε τὰς χώρας, ὅτι λευκαὶ εἰσιν πρὸς θερισμὸν ἤδη. 36 Καὶ ὁ θερίζων μισθὸν λαμβάνει, καὶ συνάγει καρπὸν εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον· ἵνα καὶ ὁ σπείρων ὁμοῦ χαίρη καὶ ὁ θερίζων. 37 Ἐν γὰρ τούτῳ ὁ λόγος ἐστὶν ὁ ἀληθινός, ὅτι Ἄλλος ἐστὶν ὁ σπείρων, καὶ ἄλλος ὁ θερίζων. 38 Ἐγὼ ἀπέστειλα ὑμᾶς θερίζειν ὃ οὐχ ὑμεῖς κεκοπιάκατε· ἄλλοι κεκοπιάκασιν, καὶ ὑμεῖς εἰς τὸν κόπον αὐτῶν εἰσεληλύθατε.

<sup>174</sup> Coloe (2001:106) notes that μήτι is a necessary rhetoric device, which allows the villagers to hear the woman's words as an invitation and to make their own journey of faith.

<sup>175</sup> See Ridderbos (1997:166-167), who correctly states that the way the woman "involved herself sounded to the Samaritans who heard her like a strong motivation not for immediately suspecting her for credulity or a desire for sensation but for determining for themselves what could possibly be happening."

The readers aware of the traditional hostility that existed between Jews and Samaritans do not know exactly what to expect when the Samaritans arrive at the well and as they are anxiously waiting, the narrator delays the Samaritans arrival by inserting the dialogue between Jesus and the disciples, and therefore, increases suspense (Botha 1991:166). The “meanwhile” with which 4:31 begins directs the readers’ attention back to the front stage while the narrative focus shifts to Jesus and His disciples (O’Day 1986:77). The disciples’ request spoken as imperative, Παββί φάγε (4:31) opens the discussion in the same form in which Jesus had earlier initiated the conversation with the woman, Δός μοι πιεῖν (4:7).<sup>176</sup> The invitation to eat however becomes an occasion for Jesus to reveal a profound reality about Himself (Schnackenburg 1987:45). He says to the disciples, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about” (4:32).<sup>177</sup> Like the woman, the disciples too lack knowledge and they interpret Jesus’ words on a mere mundane level (Blomberg 2001:102).

Their reaction to Jesus’ claim to have access to other sustenance, which they do not know, is an incredulous question introduced by μή similar to the woman’s earlier question to Jesus (4:12) (Botha 1991:169; Blomberg 2001:102). Μή τις ἤνεγκεν αὐτῷ φαγεῖν (4:33), the disciples asked. Again, instead of addressing their concerns to Jesus, they only question each other, verbalizing a question but not really asking it (Botha 1991:169) in contrast to the woman, who would ask questions and challenge Jesus whenever His behavior would move outside acceptable boundaries of social convention (Beck 1997:72-73). It is worth noting that the disciples do not ask what type of food Jesus has eaten, they question the origin, namely, the source of His nourishment: **who** could have brought Him food (4:33) similar to the woman’s question **where** can Jesus get the living water? (4:11) (see Botha 1991:173).

According to John, many people do not know the origin of Jesus and that of His gifts (7:27; 8:14 see also 6:41-42),<sup>178</sup> including the disciples, demonstrated here by the fact that they do not know the source from which Jesus gets His nourishment or what really is Jesus’ food. This lack of insight often results in a misunderstanding or a literal understanding of the words that Jesus has

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<sup>176</sup> See Coloe (2001:107).

<sup>177</sup> From a betrothal type-scene perspective, Lincoln (2005:179) sees a parallel with Genesis 24:33 where Eliezer after his encounter with Rebekah was first offered food but he refused to eat until he accomplished his mission. In the same way, Jesus refuses to eat, stating that He has food, which the disciples know nothing about.

<sup>178</sup> See Kok (2011:31, footnote 54).

used for spiritual reality (see Morris 1988:147). For example, the Jews did this when Jesus spoke of destroying the temple and raising it again in three days (2:20). Nicodemus did the same with the new birth (3:4), and the Samaritan woman has done it with Living water (4:15), and now the disciples with Jesus' food. It also seems that the truth, which Jesus has brought into the world, is not so obvious and open to everybody, there is a mystery about it and so, no one can grasp its meaning unless Jesus explains it Himself (cf. Bruner 2012:257). Jesus does this all the time in this Gospel (see 3:4ff; 4:10-24; 6:33-34ff etc) and here again, He does it with the disciples (4:34).

“My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work” (4:34) says Jesus to the disciples. These words echo Deuteronomy 8:3 (also see Mt 4:4), “Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord” and Carson (1991:228) correctly states that no one has ever exemplified this truth in anything like the degree Jesus has.<sup>179</sup> By revealing to the disciples that He lives by doing what the Father commands, Jesus draws their attention from the earthly to the spiritual reality. The change in vocabulary βρῶσιν (a general term for consuming [4:32; also see Rom 14:17; 1Cor 8:4]) and βρῶμα (food [4:34; also see Lk 3:11; Rom 14:15; 1Cor 6:13]) could be a signal that Jesus is introducing a new category that must be distinguished from the previous one as indicated by the context (O'Day (1986:79). Instead of βρῶσιν, Jesus uses βρῶμα to explain to the disciples the type of food by which He lives, namely, His divine mission, which is the realization of the Father's will and the accomplishment of His work.<sup>180</sup> This is the plan of salvation, which God has given Jesus to realize, summed up in this phrase, “will and work”<sup>181</sup> (see Ridderbos 1997:168). For Jesus, the enactment of this mission as the sent one is His top priority and accomplishing it is an essential part of His very being, as though He could not exist apart from it (Ensor 1996:151). This

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<sup>179</sup> Schnackenburg (1987:445) rightly notes that the discussion about food is a positive affirmation about the food, which Jesus has to eat which is of a completely different source. However, this statement cannot be considered as an affirmation of Jesus superiority to bodily needs or a divine mode of existence not subject to earthly condition, much less like a Gnostic contempt for the material.

<sup>180</sup> According to Okure (1988:140), τὸ ἔργον (in relation to God) emphasizes “the centrality of the Father in the work of salvation: he owns it... and sends Jesus for its execution” and also “Jesus' uniqueness and dependence on the Father in the execution of this work – he is the ‘sent one’ and his whole livelihood consists in doing and completing this work.”

<sup>181</sup> See also 5:30, 36, 36; 6:38-40; 9:4; 10:37; 17:4, where the mission of Jesus is described as doing the Father's will and accomplishing His work (Lincoln 2005:179).

relationship between Jesus and the Father as His sender will later have implications for the mission of the disciples who will be sent by Jesus (17:18; 20:21; cf. 4:38).

However, before getting to that point, it is worth noting that it is for the first time that the readers encounter “the designation – one that occurs more than twenty times in the Fourth Gospel on Jesus’ lips – of God as ‘he who sent me,’ sometimes (as in 5:23; 6:39f) with ‘the father’ (cf. also 3:34f)” (Ridderbos 1997:167-168). According to Erdmann (1998:210), “Christ’s designation of the Father as the “one who sent me”” occurs approximately forty times in John’s Gospel. This clearly indicates that the mission of Jesus derives from the Father just as the disciples’ mission will also derive from Jesus’ mission (4:38; 17:18; 20:21). Schnelle (2009:681) explains the sender/sent relationship that exists between Jesus as the Sent One and God as the Sender in the following terms:

*The Sent One not only represents the Sender, the sending is as though the sender himself has come; he not only brings a message, but is himself the message. He acts in the place of the Sender; his acts have the same validity as those of the Sender: as the Sent One, Jesus speaks freely and openly the words of God (3:34; 12:49, 50; 14:24; cf. 14:10); his teaching does not derive from himself, but from the one who sent him (7:16); it is from God (17:17). The same is true of the Son’s authority to judge (5:30; 8:16). When Jesus works he only does the work of the one who sent him; he acts in the name of the Sender (10:25), and not on his own authority (5:19, 30). He cannot do otherwise than what the Father himself does (5:19); the Father shows him all that he should do (5:20), 36). All this means: the one at work in what Jesus does is the Father himself (14:10). As the Sent One, Jesus has no independent will but seeks to do the will of the sender (5:30), puts it into effect (4:34; 6:38ff), follows his command (8:29; 10:18; 14:31), and completes his work (4:34; 17:4).*

Therefore, in the light of Jesus’ ἔργον (as the sent one), a new perspective is added to the Samaritan episode, which enables the readers to interpret the whole pericope as part of Jesus’ doing of the Father’s will.<sup>182</sup> From this context, it now becomes clear why Jesus had to pass through Samaria, His presence to the Samaritan woman had to happen, as He does the will of the one who sent Him (Moloney 1993:161). The definition of God’s work in 6:29, which is to

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<sup>182</sup> Also, see Olsson (1974:145) who notes that the whole of John 4 should be considered from a specific aspect, that is, “how the Son performs his work on earth, work that is of the Father and justified by his redeeming will.”

believe in Him whom the Father sent, is also applicable here since the result of Jesus' stay in Samaria is ultimately faith (O'Day 1986:80). The movement of the Samaritans towards Jesus is already the accomplishment of Jesus' mission in Samaria and with this visible evidence (the coming of the people); He shifts the conversation from food to harvest (Coloe 2001:108).

Throughout this narrative, there seems to be a continuous theme of "replacement" worship offered on specific mountains (4:20) was replaced by adoration in "spirit and truth" (4:23) (Brown 1997:344). Now "sowing and harvesting coincide" replacing the old pattern in which the sower had to wait for crops (Ridderbos 1997:169). The image of harvest is a traditional biblical image used for completion and by using such an image Jesus is providing the disciples with the insight necessary to understand His work as the one who completes the work of the Father in this world (O'Day 1986:81) and in particular, this is happening in Samaria. As such, Jesus exhorts His disciples with "great emphasis and authority – 'I tell you!' – to lift up your eyes...He is evidently referring to what is literally taking place in the field in front of them, namely, the exodus... of the Samaritans who at the woman's saying, 'Come and see,' have started out to go to Jesus" (Ridderbos 1997:168). To emphasize the urgency of this mission, Jesus overturns the agricultural wisdom that there is a period of waiting between sowing and harvesting (Lincoln 2005:180) and indicates that in the salvation-historical plane, the harvest is now, in fact, it has already begun as Jesus speaks with the disciples (Carson 1991:250).

Furthermore, Jesus states that the reaper already receives wages and gathers fruit for eternal life so that the sower and the reaper may rejoice together and that one sows and another reaps (4:36-37).<sup>183</sup> This agricultural metaphor on the one hand, points to the "unity" that the sower and reaper have, and "the diversity of the gifts that go into the harvest field: one sows and another reaps, and the work of both the sower and the reaper is essential" (Carson 1991:230). On the other hand, it implies that the mission of Jesus is not simply an "individualistic enterprise" (Köstenberger 1998:211) but a "partnership" (Milne 1993:87), which is carried out by the community of believers in mutual love and unity (see 13:34-35; 15:12; 17:11). After explaining that the sower and the reaper are different but both work for the same goal, that is, to reap souls

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<sup>183</sup> According to Carson (1991:230), the last clause of 4:36 extends "the agricultural metaphor in two new directions. First, it calls to mind the eschatological promise of Amos 9:13: 'the days are coming declares the LORD, 'when the reaper will be overtaken by the ploughman and the planter by one treading grapes.' Second, it allows for other sowers than Jesus, thus preparing the way for vv. 37-38."

for eternal life (4:36), Jesus now says to the disciples, “I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor” (4:38).

This is the first time that the disciples are commissioned<sup>184</sup> (4:38). Although it is not a formal commissioning (Jesus will only do that after His resurrection), it certainly links “the sending motive with that of John 20:21” (Kok 2011:47; also see Milne 1993:87 and Köstenberger 1998:113). This sending motive indicates that the disciples are already in John 4 drawn into Jesus’ mission as harvesters.<sup>185</sup> Jesus becomes their “Sender” and they become His “Sent Ones” just as He is the “Sent One” of the Father (4:34) and as such, a new relationship exists, namely, that of the sender and the sent one. In this way, Jesus’ total devotion to accomplishing the will and the work of His sender (4:34) is held up as a prototype for the disciples, just as Jesus sought to complete His sender’s work, the disciples too should seek to complete the work of Jesus (Köstenberger 1998:113). According to Köstenberger and O’Brien (2001:222):

*Jesus’ followers are to embody the qualities characteristic of their Lord during his earthly mission. As Jesus did his Father’s will, they have to do Jesus’ will. As Jesus did his Father’s works, they have to do Jesus’ works. As Jesus spoke the words of his Father, they have to speak Jesus’ words. Their relationship to their sender, Jesus, is to reflect Jesus’ relationship with his sender.*

The statement, “others have labored, and you have entered into their labors” (4:38b) could be another way of saying that the disciples’ mission is derivative of Jesus’ own mission, which is in essence the mission of the Father (Köstenberger & O’Brien 2001:209). In the context of 4:34 and other passages in John (e.g. 5:36; 10:37-38; 14:10; 17:4), it is into God’s labor, which He has given to Jesus that the disciples enter. Just as the reaper completes the work of the sower, even so, Jesus completes the work of the Father who sent Him and in this way, God the Father is the sower and Jesus is the reaper (O’Day 1986:84). However, since Jesus has given His disciples the role of harvesters by sending them in the harvest fields, He no longer can be regarded as the reaper in the context of John 4 but as the sower Himself. He sowed the seed in the woman’s heart

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<sup>184</sup> Three times in this Gospel, Jesus explicitly commissions His disciples (4:38; 17:18; 20:21) (see Erdmann 1998:221).

<sup>185</sup> See Köstenberger and O’Brien (2001:210) who note that the mission of the disciples in the Fourth Gospel is described in terms of “harvest” (4:38), “fruitbearing” (15:8, 16) and “witnessing” (15:27). This is true in John 4, the disciples are sent into the labor of others and will harvest that for which they did not labor (4:38).

and she went and sowed it in the hearts of her country's people (4:29) and as result of her labor harvest time has arrived and the disciples can be involved. Therefore, this implies that the others in whose labor the disciples enter are Jesus and the woman (see O'Day 1995:570).<sup>186</sup>

It is worth noting however, that Jesus here in John 4 includes the Samaritans as part of the harvest in sharp contrast to the Synoptic account. For instance, according to Matthew's Gospel (10:6ff; cf. Lk 9:52-53), Jesus' mission was only directed to the "the lost sheep of Israel" and specifically excluded "any town of the Samaritans" (Michaels 1989:74; Bruner 2012:233; see also Miller 2009:73). Also in the Synoptics, it is only after the resurrection that Jesus commissions the disciples to embark on a universal mission (see Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15; Lk 24:47). However, in John, Jesus' mission at the very beginning is universal.<sup>187</sup> He is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (1:29), He comes to save the world (3:17; also see 6:33; 12:47), He has other sheep apart from the ones in Israel that He wants to bring into one sheep pen (10:16), He intends to draw all men to Himself (12:32). Finally, He sends His disciples into His labor just as the Father had sent Him (17:18; 20:21; cf. 4:38) not only after His resurrection but during His earthly ministry to engage in a universal mission indicated here by the mission to the Samaritans (4:1-42) the first cross-culture mission, which Jesus undertook as a prototype to be followed (Carson 1991:232).

Scholars who contend that "John has little or even no interest in mission"<sup>188</sup> and particularly Hahn (1965:156) who contends that, "The view of mission held in the Johannine writings is a very controversial subject... it is comparatively seldom that John's Gospel makes real statements

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<sup>186</sup> Although it has been claimed that the others into whose labor the disciples enter include Old Testament figures like the prophets and John the Baptist (Moloney 1993:167; find other sources), such suggestions seem to ignore the context of the saying. However, if one takes the specific context of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman, it will be recognized that apart from Jesus the only person who is portrayed as a sower, laboring for harvest, is the Samaritan woman (Beck 1997:76-77). After her conversation with Jesus (4:10-26), she went out and propagated the news and therefore led many to faith (Schnelle 2009:741). It was because of her labor that the disciples could suddenly engage in spiritual harvest and as such, she cannot simply be excluded from the others who have done the hard work.

<sup>187</sup> See (Nissen 1999:227) who notes that the universality of Jesus' mission in John's Gospel is further supported by the fact that Jesus meets with persons from various religious traditions. He met with Nicodemus, a representative of the Jewish leaders (3:1-15), the Samaritans (4:4-42) and the Greeks desire to see Jesus (12:20-22).

<sup>188</sup> See Köstenberger and O'Brien (2001:203) and Nissen (1999:213).

about mission” have ignored the most explicit biblical basis of the church’s mission.<sup>189</sup> The mission theology in John is clearly defined from the context of God’s sending activity - “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (17:18; 20:21). Both sendings, Jesus’ and the disciples’, are to the world, Jesus was sent to save the world (3:16-17) and the disciples are sent so that the world may believe (17:212, 23, 25) (Nissen 1999:217). No other Gospel speaks of this reality (the sending of the Son and the sending of the disciples) as explicitly as John’s Gospel (Otto & Strauss 2010:62).

Furthermore, although John’s Gospel may be encouraging to believers in their faith (Erdmann 1998:208), its purpose is “evangelistic and thus missionary” (Otto & Strauss 2010:39; also see Witherington 1995:32) because it is primarily directed towards unbelievers<sup>190</sup> in order to move them from unbelief to faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, who gives eternal life (Erdmann 1998:208). Therefore, to deny mission in this Gospel would be a deviation from its purpose because not only is it intended to strengthen believers’ faith, it also intended to be a missionary tool to be used by those who have believed to bring others to Christ who is the only way to the Father (14:6) just as the Samaritan woman did.

### 3.6.6 Conclusion: the faith of the Samaritans

Text:

4:39 Ἐκ δὲ τῆς πόλεως ἐκείνης πολλοὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτὸν τῶν Σαμαρειτῶν διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς γυναικὸς μαρτυρούσης ὅτι εἶπέν μοι πάντα ὅσα ἐποίησα. 40 Ὡς οὖν ἦλθον πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Σαμαρεῖται, ἠρώτων αὐτὸν μέναι παρ’ αὐτοῖς· καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐκεῖ δύο ἡμέρας. 41 καὶ πολλῶ

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<sup>189</sup> Stott is right in stating that, “the church’s mission finds precise articulation in the Fourth Gospel” (see Erdmann 1998:221).

<sup>190</sup> The variant readings of the Greek text (πιστεύετε or πιστεύσητε) in 20:31 concerning the readership whom John addresses with “so that you may believe” has presented interpreters with difficulty in trying to determine whether this Gospel was intended to be missionary or edificatory (see Ridderbos 1997:652). The present subjective πιστεύετε (that you may go on believing) suggests that the Gospel’s purpose is to strengthen the already existing faith of the believers, however the aorist subjunctive, πιστεύσητε (that you may begin to believe) suggests that the purpose is missionary, intended to bring non-believers to faith (see Barrett 1978:575). Although, the relation of the tenses to the meaning and to the purpose of John’s Gospel is complex, the Christological focus of this Gospel is the key to understanding its mission theology as rightly noted by Nissen (1999:77). This point is underlined by the so-called “sending Christology” and furthermore, the sending of Jesus and the disciples are both characterized as a mission to the world (4:38; 17:18; 20:21) (Nissen 1999:77; also see Erdman 1998:210).

πλείους ἐπίστευσαν διὰ τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ, 42 τῇ τε γυναικὶ ἔλεγον ὅτι Οὐκέτι διὰ τὴν σὴν λαλιὰν πιστεύομεν· αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκηκόαμεν, καὶ οἴδαμεν ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου, ὁ χριστός.

In these verses, the narrative focus returns to the Samaritans who in 4:30 were said to have set to come to Jesus. The testimony of the woman is again repeated (4:29; 4:39) but important details are added that many from that town believed because of the woman's word (O'Day 1986:87).<sup>191</sup> The story that started with one woman now ends with the entire town (Culpepper 1998:143) and the Samaritans who had come from Sychar to the well of Jacob now invite Jesus, a Jew without hard feeling. Theologically, as Schnackenburg (1987:455) notes, "this means that faith overcomes any scandal that may be given by the external circumstances of the revealer's origin (contrast 6:42; 7:27, 41f., 52) and listens to Jesus as the eschatological envoy of God" (also see Painter 1993:204). Carson (1991:231) argues that for the Samaritans to urge Jesus, "a Jewish rabbi to stay with them attests not only the degree of confidence he had earned, but their conviction that he was none less than the promised Taheb, the Messiah" and because of this, many more believed (4:41). Here there is a "contrast between the more open faith of the Samaritans and the less adequate belief of those in Jerusalem (2:23-25) and Nicodemus" (Brown 1997:344; also see Edwards 2004:60). Not only do they believe because of the woman's words they also request Jesus to stay with them (4:40) and at their request Jesus stays for two days (4:40). Jesus' stay with the Samaritans indicates His unconcern about contracting any ritual uncleanness (cf. 4:9). Talbert (1992:117) notes that two days was a genuine length of time for a missionary/prophet to stay in one place (Didache 11:5) and that according to Acts 16:15, staying with a convert was seen as evidence that the conversion was genuine.

The infinitive verb μένειν used, which means to remain or to abide, is often used in John to designate "the intimate union that expresses itself in a way of life lived in love" (15:9, 17) (Nissen 1999:220). It also calls to mind what occurred at the beginning of this Gospel when Jesus called the first two disciples (1:39) and elsewhere (see e.g. 8.31; 15.4-7) it signifies a

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<sup>191</sup> The Samaritans' belief on account of the woman's words is the first positive response to any of the characters' words. Jesus' request was denied by the woman (4:7, 9) and her request too was not answered positively. Instead of giving her a drink, Jesus asked her to bring her husband (4:16). Also, Jesus did not eat as the disciples had requested. Another positive response comes after the Samaritans, who request Jesus to stay and He stays two days (see Botha 1991:183).

lasting relationship between Jesus and His followers (Lincoln 2005:181). Therefore, to stay/remain/abide with Jesus is to enter into a relationship with Him (O'Day 1995:570). In this context, Stibbe (1993:67-68) is right in stating that Jesus' stay in Samaria was not just an extended visit but "a lasting master-pupil relationship." More notably, it is the first time that such a relationship is established outside the Jewish borders (cf. Miller 2009:73) and what makes this relationship even more profound is the fact that Jesus entrusts Himself to the Samaritans whom His "Jewish contemporaries reckoned as outsiders and enemies" (O'Day 1995:563).<sup>192</sup>

After their experience with Jesus for just two days, the Samaritans moved from their ignorance, *Υμεῖς προσκυνεῖτε ὃ οὐκ οἶδατε* (4:22) to a very important knowledge *οἶδαμεν ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου, ὁ χριστός* (4:42) (Lincoln 2005:181; also cf. Schnelle 2007:740). Suddenly, the marginalized Samaritans who for centuries were told that, "they have been shut out from God's mercy" experienced Jesus' exclusive love and they arrived "at the conviction that this same love was big enough, wide enough and indiscriminating enough to embrace the whole world" (Milne 1993:87). Their belief, which was based on the woman's testimony, has now been confirmed by their own hearing (4:42) (Carson 1991:231). Moloney (1993:171) notes that the time span separates the "two moments of faith: their past sharing in the faith in Jesus as the Messiah who was able to tell the Samaritan woman everything she ever did (v.39) and their present experience of faith, based on the words of Jesus (v.41)."

The Samaritans' statement, "We no longer believe just because of what you said..."(4:42) however is not intended to dismiss or minimize the woman's testimony as if it were "mere talk or chatter" (Schnackenburg 1987:457). On the contrary, the Samaritans sought to embrace it and to make it their own indicated by the fact that many of them believed on account of words that she spoke and they immediately left the town and went to Jesus (4:30). Therefore, it was the woman's word that prepared the way for the *λόγος* of Jesus, which became available to the Samaritans when they invited Jesus to stay with them for two days (Skreslet 2006:97). In John 17:20, Jesus prays not just for the disciples but also those who will come to believe *διὰ τοῦ λόγου αὐτῶν* in Him. The Samaritan woman is the first and only person during Jesus' earthly

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<sup>192</sup> Here in Samaria, something new is happening, the ingathering of the scattered children of God into one place, a return to the time when the children of Jacob was not yet divided and the reunion of the Northern and Southern kingdoms as foretold by the prophets (Jer 3: 31; Eze 37, 15-27; Am 9: 11-15) in and through Jesus, the Messiah (Tilborg 1993:186).

ministry through whose word of witness (διὰ τὸν λόγον [4:39]) a group of people are brought to “come and see” and to believe in Jesus (Nissen 1999:91).

In addition, the fact that the narrator refers to her as “testifying” (μαρτυρούσης is worth noting because μαρτυρία and the verbal form μαρτυρέω are important words in the Gospel of John (Scott 1992:192). The purpose of μαρτυρία in this Gospel is to bring people to Jesus so that they may believe and have life in His name (20:31) (Scott 1992:192), a requirement which the μαρτυρούσης of the woman has fulfilled (4:30, 39-42). In this regard, the missionary role of the woman can be compared to that of John the Baptist, like the Baptist (1:35-37), her hearers leave and seek after Jesus (4:30, 39) and as she decreases (cf. 3:30), Jesus increases (4:42) (Beck 1997:76). Her role was merely to lead the townspeople into their own encounter with Jesus like the Baptist did (see Coloe 2001:106).<sup>193</sup> In missiological terms, it means that there is a stage beyond a mere belief in Jesus on the basis of the witness of a believer, namely, that of the personal encounter with Jesus through His revelatory word (Scott 1992:194).

It should also be noted that the Samaritans’ personal encounter with Jesus (4:42) is in keeping with the pattern established in John. In this Gospel, all must come and see Jesus for themselves, be it Simon Peter, Nathanael (1:35-51), the Samaritans (4:40-42), or the Greeks (12:20-22) (Spencer 2010:318). However, this does not mean that those who receive second-hand testimony from preachers today have less valued faith than those who believed on account of their direct interaction with Jesus (Kok 2011:42, footnote 79; also see Bultmann 1971:202). The position of coming and seeing was that of an eyewitness, which couldn’t be the privilege of all people. That is why Jesus Himself prays for those who would come to believe through the testimony of the disciples (17:20) and for that reason He says to Thomas, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed (20:29).<sup>194</sup>

Therefore, the Samaritans are among the few privileged individuals (in comparison to those who have come to believe without meeting Jesus in person) who encountered the Word-Made-Flesh personally through the testimony of the Samaritan woman, which directly led them into faith in

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<sup>193</sup> Cf. Bultmann (1971:200) who notes that, “just as the Baptist’s mission was nothing of itself, its only purpose being to bear witness to Jesus (3.22-30), so too the witness of Jesus’ messengers is nothing of itself, but finds its meaning only in him.”

<sup>194</sup> See Ridderbos (1997:172).

Jesus as the Savior of the world (4:42). It is worth noting that the Samaritans do not call Jesus by the name Taheb, which was typical for their future expectation or by that of the Jews, Messiah, but by the name, which is in accord with the universal salvation, “Savior of the world” (Ridderbos 1997:172). According to Carson (1991:132) numerous Greek deities (Zeus, Asclepius, Serapis) and even the Roman emperors were ascribed the title “savior of the world.” Therefore, by calling Jesus by such a title, the narrator claims that “the true savior of the world” is “not Zeus or Serapis and certainly not the Roman emperor, but the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (1:29, 34)” (see Schnelle 2009:692).<sup>195</sup> Therefore, Morris (1995:251, footnote 100) is right when he notes that, “the title Savior of the world is a great insight from a little people.” Nicodemus, a Jewish rabbi in Jerusalem could not understand Jesus’ message that God had sent Him into the world so that the world might be saved through Him; yet these peasants of Samaria readily come to know that Jesus is really the Savior of the world (Brown 1970:185).<sup>196</sup> Their faith, in contrast to the people of Galilee (cf. 4:48), is based on testimony and the words of Jesus and not on signs and wonders (4:48; cf. 20:29).

Jesus’ earlier comment that salvation is from the Jews (4:22) is also confirmed here by the Samaritans, when they acknowledge Him as the Savior of the world (see Collins 2010:165). This indicates that although ἡ σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν, it is not only for the Ἰουδαίων, it also includes other nationalities outside Jewish borders as indicated here by the Samaritans, who have received the σωτηρία brought by Jesus (cf. 1:11; 4:43ff) (Hakola 2005:107; also see O’Day 1986:89). In 3:17, Jesus commented that His mission was to save the world, now in John 4, the Samaritan woman and her country’s people in John 4 are one of the first people outside the Jewish borders to have experienced such a reality. Therefore, Nissen (1999:227) is right in

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<sup>195</sup> The title “Savior of the world” is ascribed to Jesus only here in John 4 and in 1 John 4:14 (see Carson 1991:232). According to Schnackenburg (1987:456), John may have chosen the title “Savior of the world” on several grounds. [1] In the Messianic sense, Jesus fulfils the hopes of the Samaritans as well as the Jews. [2] Jesus’ self-revelation has taught the people of Samaria that a true savior sent by God neither belongs to one group of people nor sets up a special form of worship in Samaria or Judea (4:21-24), instead He establishes a universal worship (4:25). [3] The evangelist may have chosen “the title with an eye to his readers” since the title savior of the world corresponds to the fact that God sent His Son for the salvation of the world (3:17; 12:47; cf 1:29; 3:16ff; 6:33, 51; 1 John 2:2; 4:9).

<sup>196</sup> See Morris (1995:2520) who correctly notes that, “...what was hidden from the wise and understanding...is revealed to these spiritual babes, and while Scribes and Pharisees stand aside, the pagan world flocks into the kingdom.”

stating that, “the mission of the Johannine Jesus is not only to fulfill the hope of Israel...but to reveal the face of the unseen God to all humanity (1:18)...”

It is worth noting that while the mission to outsiders (non-Jews) in the Synoptic Gospels waits until after Jesus’ death, John presents it as part of Jesus’ own ministry (O’Day 1995:570). The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman represents such a mission and as Carson (1991:232) notes, it is “the first cross-cultural evangelism, undertaken by Jesus himself and issuing in a pattern to be followed by the church: ‘you will be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth’ (Acts 1:8).”<sup>197</sup> Therefore, the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman is rightly referred to as “the mission to the Samaritans” (Kok 2011:45, footnote 87; cf. Nissen 1999:91) and as such, has implications for the mission of the disciples, which is also the mission of the contemporary church as will be shown in the final analysis.

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<sup>197</sup> Also see Michaels (1989:75) who correctly notes that, “In passing, by divine necessity, through one Samaritan town and talking to one sinful woman, Jesus reaps a harvest and anticipates a greater harvest to come, the church’s mission to the Gentiles” (also see Lincoln 2005:182).

## SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introductory remarks

In this chapter, the findings from the narratological and exegetical analysis of John 4:1-42 in chapters two and three will be used to address the research questions posed in the first chapter of this study and thereafter, conclusions will be drawn.

### 4.2 Is John's Gospel a missionary document?

It was discovered that the question of whether John is a missionary document or not has been answered differently by scholars. Some have argued that John is quiet uninterested in mission to the outside world in the sense of winning new converts (Nissen 1999:77) while some have advocated for the missionary purpose of this Gospel. The disagreement lies in the variant readings (πιστεύετε or πιστεύσητε) found in the Greek text of 20:31 concerning the readership whom John addresses with “so that you may believe” (Ridderbos 1997:652). The present subjective πιστεύετε (that you may go on believing) suggests that the Gospel is intended to strengthen an already existing faith. However, the aorist subjunctive, πιστεύσητε (that you may begin to believe) suggests that the purpose is to bring non-believers to faith and in this sense would serve a missionary purpose (see Barrett 1978:575; Beasley 1999:387).

This study found that the relation of the tenses to the meaning and to the purpose of John's Gospel is complex and as such could not resolve the problem.<sup>198</sup> However, it was discovered that those who contend that John was uninterested in mission are not correct because the Christological focus of this Gospel is seen as the key to understanding its mission theology (Nissen 1999:77). This point is underlined by the so-called “sending Christology” and in

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<sup>198</sup> Cf. Barrett (1978:134).

addition, the sending of Jesus and that of the disciples in this Gospel are both characterized as a mission to the world (4:38; 17:18; 20:21) (Nissen 1999:77; also see Erdman 1998:210) and no other Gospel speaks of this sending as John does.

### **4.3 Going through Samaria and conversing with the Samaritan woman, what barriers did Jesus overcome and how relevant is that to our present society?**

The analysis (narratological and exegetical) has shown that Jesus openly challenged and broke through socio-ethnic barriers when He and the disciples crossed over to the Samaritans' territory with whom Jews had no dealings,<sup>199</sup> and the gender barrier when He spoke to a woman who was a Samaritan in the public space (Thettayil 2007:11). Not only did He speak with her, He was also willing to drink from her water jar breaking down the purity laws of the day, which considered especially all Samaritan women as unclean including vessels that were held by such women (see Talbert 1992:113). He even transcended moral barriers by speaking to such a person like this Samaritan woman who had a dubious past (five ex marriages and an extra non-marital relationship). Finally, in becoming the new temple in which both Jews and Samaritans would worship the Father in spirit and truth, He broke through the spiritual barrier (this mountain, Gerizim, or that mountain, Jerusalem) that separated Jews and Samaritans for many years.

How is this relevant to our society? Firstly, it is important to note that the story has two dimensions, namely, social and religious. As regards to the social dimension, the Samaritan woman and her country's people are examples of those who are marginalized and rejected in this world (Nissen 1999:90). The woman because of her gender was an inferior person<sup>200</sup> in her culture and her race and moral history in the eyes of the Jews in Jesus' time would make her a social outcast and as such, as somebody not to be associated with. Religiously, she and her country's people, were disconnected from the temple in Jerusalem and on the Jewish concentric maps of persons and places, they "were seen as fundamentally out of place, and cut off from

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<sup>199</sup> According to the Jews, the Samaritans were outcasts, unclean, lost, and a condemned people. However, Jesus, for the sake of His mission appeared right in the middle of such "crisis and disorientation" (Kok 2010:173) and requested a drink from a Samaritan woman as if He was oblivious to the realities of the day.

<sup>200</sup> According to the Jewish custom, a woman was not allowed to learn or study the Torah (see Morris 1988:126) but here Jesus is seen teaching the Samaritan woman an important knowledge of God's gift (4:10-14), the nature of true worship (4:22-24) and finally revealing to her, His identity as the Messiah (4:26).

God's chosen people – on the symbolic maps they were positioned on the periphery, marginalized to the fullest sense of the word” Kok (2011:24). Secondly, the fact that these social and religious conflicts between Jews and Samaritans resulted in the exclusion and marginalization of one another (Botha 1991:114) challenges the readers of today to think of the barriers that exclude and marginalize people in this time and age. For example, the history of race relations and the tribal conflicts that wax and wane across the Middle East and Africa, all have their roots in the same fears that divided Jews and Samaritans, namely, the fear of contamination (4:9c) and the fear of sharing one's gift and privileged call with others (O'Day 1995:571).

Socio-religiously, the hostile relations between Islam and Christianity especially in the so-called Islamic countries is prominent. In Sudan for instance, religious animosity<sup>201</sup> is one of the factors that led the country into a deadly civil war for decades (see Dau 2002:40-45). Earlier as 1968, Sudan was very close to adopting an Islamic constitution. In being told to accept the rule of a constitution based on religion, the Southerners were afraid that they would become aliens in the Arab world and its cultures, exiles from their Negro-African world. They also saw in the Islamic constitution a legal instrument of state discrimination against non-Muslims (Deng 2004:104). However, the Muslims in the North of Sudan saw this movement as a means of preserving the national unity and the identity of the Sudanese people (see Dau 2002:41). In 1983, when President Ja'afar Numeiri declared Sudan an Islamic state, this unfortunately led to a new liberation war<sup>202</sup> by the people of South Sudan (Baur 1998:288). All these resulted in the marginalization and exclusion on one another and at present, the people who used to be citizens of the same nation are divided into two separate states. While Christianity is the main religion of South Sudan, Islam predominates in the neighboring North (see Dau 2002:45).

Globally, we hear cries and torture of women and children who are being abused by their fellow human beings. People are suffering and are dying from extreme poverty especially on the continent of Africa, civil wars, genocide, terrorism, HIV/AIDS and all kinds of unspeakable

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<sup>201</sup> See Dau (2002:24-48), *A Theological Reflection on the War in Sudan* for the different factors that has contributed to the conflict in Sudan.

<sup>202</sup> By mentioning religion as one of the factors behind the conflicts in Sudan, I do not intend to reduce the cause of these problems merely to religious differences. There are many factors involved, for example, historical factors, political and socio-economic factors, but they fall beyond the scope of this study (see Dau 2002:26-46) and as such are not discussed here.

crimes are everywhere. All these like the Samaritan story, “has to do with stigmatization, symbolic bridges that marginalize and exclude” and therefore, calls “for a missional-incarnational ethos of healing, restoration and reconciliation” (Kok 2011:63). To embark on such a mission, we will need to familiarize ourselves and to understand from the inside the issues that this particular group of people face (Hirsch 2006:140). It will also require patience, genuine love and compassion as Jesus demonstrated with the Samaritan woman. In essence, this will mean going back to Jesus “the Founder of Christianity and having done that, recalibrate our approach from that point on” (Hirsch 2006:142).

#### **4.4 In what way did Jesus cross barriers to reach out to the Samaritans and how can that shape the way we do mission today?**

The study has shown that that by going to Samaria, Jesus moves away from conventional Judaism to a place that was avoided by most Jews (Howard-Brook 1994:100). As Bruner (2012:236) notes, most observant Jews circumvented Samaria by going around it to the east for reasons of purification. However, Jesus ignores this custom and withdraws from “the Jewish holy mountain, Jerusalem, to the foot of the Samaritan holy mountain, Gerizim” (Pryor 1992:21). He does all of these because of His mission, which is also the mission and calling of the contemporary church (20:21). By crossing over to Samaria, Jesus engaged the Samaritan woman and her community from within the worlds that made sense to them (Simon 2009:142). He demonstrated that the whole universe is “God’s space” and that His mission was to bring God’s presence into all spheres of life and even into marginalized areas where such presence is usually believed not to be found (Kok & Niemandt 2009:6). He openly engaged with the marginalized Samaritans and in this way made the kingdom of God accessible and alluring to them (see Hirsch 2006:143).

It was also discovered that while the mission to the outsiders in the Synoptics Gospels waits until after Jesus’ death, John presents it as part of Jesus’ own ministry (O’Day 1995:570). The mission to the Samaritans is an example of such a mission directed towards outsiders, it is a movement away from comfort zones to hostile places, which therefore challenges the church to move out of its comfort zones and to share the Gospel of Jesus, which is boundary breaking, with outsiders and the nonbelievers. Carson (1991:232) rightly notes that the Samaritan mission is “the first

cross-cultural evangelism, undertaken by Jesus himself and issuing in a pattern to be followed by the church: ‘you will be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth’ (Acts 1:8).”<sup>203</sup> Listening to Jesus and the Samaritan woman, especially the way He engaged and related to her seems to call for an alternative way or even a methodology of disseminating the Gospel in an indiscriminating manner. In this narrative, the method of Jesus is fundamentally dialogical, the movement of the entire dialogue centers on the woman and her needs (4:10, 13-14) and while it climaxes in the self-revelation of Jesus, it becomes a journey of self-discovery for the woman (Nissen 1999:91). Not only does Jesus supernaturally know about the woman’s past, He is also well conversant with Samaritan ways of thinking about things and He couches His conversation in a way that the woman can relate to (Witherington 1995:123). This suggests that mission work requires not only Bible training but also a good knowledge of what the views and belief system of the persons to whom one is witnessing, if real communication has to happen (Witherington 1995:123).

Also, in the conversation with the woman, Jesus refuses to be sidetracked. He limits Himself to the superiority of what He has to give (Ridderbos 1997:156) and His goal is clear and He keeps it in sight (Milne 1993:86). The goal is to lead the woman to a point where she will recognize Him as the Messiah, the source of living water who has come into the world to quench all spiritual thirst. Jesus directly deals with this situation of what the woman needs and how He can help her achieve it and His compassion and persistence until she is actually helped are clear throughout the passage (Witherington 1995:123). Therefore, Milne (1993:86) is right in commenting that the failures in evangelism is often failures in love because “people want to know that we care before they care about what we know.” The Samaritan episode has shown that the mutual love that exists within the community of Jesus’ followers extends beyond ancient hostilities like that of Jews and Samaritans. The communities of believers are all friends of God and as such are free from social hierarchy and partiality (Nissen 1999:212).

Schnelle (2009:741) rightly argues that the way Jesus relates to the Samaritan woman “is a model that illustrates that both Christian missionaries and those to whom they are sent are challenged to cross over traditional religious and cultural boundaries.” According to Hirsch

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<sup>203</sup> Also see Michaels (1989:75) who correctly notes that, “In passing, by divine necessity, through one Samaritan town and talking to one sinful woman, Jesus reaps a harvest and anticipates a greater harvest to come, the church’s mission to the Gentiles” (also see Lincoln 2005:182).

(2006:94), this will mean “acting like Jesus in relation to” those who are victimized, the disadvantaged and the poor and “taking the Gospels seriously as the primary texts that define” what we say and do. Therefore, in this regard, the narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman does not only illustrate how Jesus broke through the major religious and cultural barriers of His day; it also serves as a paradigm that the followers of Jesus could use to break through the major mores in their day. This paradigm therefore calls the contemporary church to “a life that imitates Jesus, the loving friend of sinners and outcasts, those who are often on the periphery of this life” (Kok 2010:193; also see Michaels 1989:69). It challenges the contemporary church to engage in missional journeys that will break down all barriers and cultural codes that limit the opportunities of sharing of resources among people (Howard-Brook 1994:103). Thus, “The way of Jesus fundamentally calls us to become missional-incarnational agents of healing and restoration, bringing light where there is darkness, life where there is death, meaning where all meaning is lost, hope where there is no hope” (Kok & Niemandt 2009:6).

#### **4.5 Looking at the narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan woman in its Gospel context, what is the mission of Jesus and that of His followers? And what are the implications for the mission of the contemporary church?**

The analysis of John 4:1-42 has shown that Jesus came to this world to do the will of the Father and to accomplish His work (4:34). As the Sent One, His mission originated from the Father, the unsent sender and the mission centre from which all missions derive (Köstenberger 1998:8). God sent Him to be the Savior of the world as seen in the confession of the Samaritans (4:42) and for Him, this mission was the food by which He lived (4:34). In the Gospel context, Jesus fulfils this mission in the dark hour when He bowed down His head, in the agony of death and cried, “It is finished” (19:30). The words used to describe mission in this narrative (Jesus and the Samaritan woman) include harvesting, receiving wages, and gathering fruits for eternal life (4:35-38).<sup>204</sup> The idea of “gathering” plays an important role in other passages in John. For example, Jesus as a good shepherd intends to gather His other sheep outside Israel into one sheepfold (10:16). He also wants to gather into one place the scattered children of God (11:52) and when He is finally lifted up from this earth, He intends to draw all people to Himself (12:32) (Nissen 1999:81).

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<sup>204</sup> Cf. Olsson (1974:241) who alludes to the fact that 4:35-38 has been described as the most pregnant words of mission in the Fourth Gospel.

It is to this mission of “reaping and gathering fruits for eternal life” that Jesus sends His disciples (4:38) and therefore, making His mission a model for theirs (cf. 17:18; 20:21).<sup>205</sup> Although, the disciples are not sent to be the saviors of the world like Jesus (Stott 2008:38), the sender-sent relationship that existed between God the Father and Jesus the Son during His earthly ministry is presented as a paradigm for their mission (Köstenberger & O’Brien 2001:226). Just as Jesus obediently depended on God in carrying out His mission, the disciples/church too should totally depend on Jesus as they implement their mission (cf. 4:34). As the sent ones of Jesus, the disciples/church must do the will and the work of their sender. As Jesus imitates and represents the Father who sent Him, the disciples/church must also represent Jesus in the way they live, the way they relate to other people and the way they conduct their mission (see Van der Watt 2007:67). Therefore, since the mission of the disciples (which is also the mission of the contemporary church), is derived from Jesus’ mission, it is imperative that the understanding of the church’s mission be deduced from the understanding of Jesus’ mission (Stott 2008:38).

The study has also shown that Jesus undertook the Samaritan mission (the first cross-cultural mission during Jesus lifetime) as a practical example for the disciples’ later mission. This is parallel with chapter 13:1-15 where Jesus gives His disciples an example to follow in serving one another. Similarly, He goes to Samaria and challenges His followers to exemplify His missional motif<sup>206</sup> and “to embody the missional ethos of love” as stated in John 17:26, *καὶ ἐγνώρισα αὐτοῖς τὸ ὄνομά σου, καὶ γνώρισω ἵνα ἡ ἀγάπη, ἣν ἠγάπησάς με, ἐν αὐτοῖς ᾗ, κἀγὼ ἐν αὐτοῖς* (Kok 2011:54). Therefore, if the church understands Jesus’ mission, it will also understand its mission and will missionally transcend the indescribable boundaries that exist within our communities to propagate the Gospel and to testify to Jesus as the only Savior of the world (4:42). In this way, not only is the church challenged to stop shaping its life according to societal definitions, it is also challenged to cross boundaries as Jesus did instead of constructing

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<sup>205</sup> See Bosch (1991:390) who rightly noted that, “The classical doctrine on *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit was expanded to include yet another ‘movement’: Father, Son and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world.... Our mission has no life of its own; only in the hands of the sending God can it truly be called mission, not least since the missionary initiative comes from God alone.”

<sup>206</sup> Therefore, Hirsch (2006:94) correctly remarks, when he states that Christianity is a messianic movement, which “seeks to consistently embody the life, spirituality, and mission of its Founder...becoming like Jesus our Lord and Founder, lies at the epicenter of the church’s task. It means that Christology must define all that we do and say.”

them (O'Day 1995:571). Firstly, this will mean acting in ways that will mirror God's engagement with the world and secondly, by learning from how Jesus engaged with the people during His life ministry and thirdly, by following His ways and by allowing Him to lead us (see Hirsch 2006:147).

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

In conclusion, it could be argued that when the mission of Jesus and the encounter with the Samaritan woman are integrated "an ethical missional paradigm" is constructed which calls for a life that imitates Jesus (Kok 2011:64). This paradigm serves as the basis and the motivation for continuing the missional motif, which started with the mission of Jesus. It was also found that from the identity of a believer as a child of God flows his or her behavioral patterns (Van der Watt 2010:141). This is evident in the character of the Samaritan woman who according to the narrative started as a nonbeliever and as such, acted contrary to Jesus' words (4:9) but when she was converted into the family of faith, she became an insider of Jesus' group and modeled behavior that was appropriate to Jesus' private world (Neyrey 2009:171). She became an agent, expanding Jesus' mission to her community (4:29, 39-42). Her conversion in essence implied "a destruction of her worldview and a reconstruction of a new worldview which entails her becoming part of a new symbolic universe (cf. 1:12). This new worldview leads not only to a new way of life (ethos) but also to a new understanding of God, self and others which could be seen as the motivation or basis from which the new lived identity is realized" (Kok 2011:60).

Finally, the study has shown that mission work is not simply a human initiative or undertaking; it is the work of God the Father, which He gave to His Son to accomplish (4:34). It is the Father who is actively seeking people through His Son to restore them (4:23). The Samaritan woman and her country's people are examples of those who on account of the Father's mission through the Son are reconciled and restored not only to God but also to one another. Therefore, the church as the sent people of God is called to be an instrument of this salvific mission in the world and as such, it is called to a greater humility in the conception of this task and to reflect God's love and unity in this world, which is full of hatred and divisions (Köstenberger 1998:211). Therefore, let us always remind ourselves of Jesus' words in John 20:21 to His disciples: Just as the Father has sent me, I am sending you...

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