

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL PART III
(There is a New Age Coming)
(John 4:20-24)

There is an old Scottish tune that people sing at midnight to welcome in the New Year. The name of the song is Auld Lang Syne and Auld Lang Syne means something like “Old Times Past.” It is sort of a sentimental song that calls to remembrance the friendships of the past and the good old times of the past. And it suggests that maybe we shouldn’t forget those old friendships and those old times past as we move forward into new times.

People will be sitting around in the bars on Monday night singing,

Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and old lang syne ?

And they will be cherishing and sentimentalizing over the good old days.

But we are going to find in our text this morning that Jesus was about to ring in a new age. And Jesus probably would not have sung *Auld Lang Syne* in fond remembrance of the olden days. And we are going to see that Jesus came to bring in an entirely new and better age. He came to put an end to that old age, that Old Testament age, and to bring in the age of the New Testament.

Now we are in the middle of the discourse between Jesus and the woman of Samaria. And Jesus is bringing salvation to this poor, outcast of a woman. She is a helpless sinner, who is hopelessly sinful. (John 4:16-18) And worse than that, her very religion is a false aberration of Judaism. She doesn’t even perform her rituals in the true manner. She doesn’t go to Jerusalem. She goes to Mt. Gerazim to worship. She doesn’t have Levitical priests like God prescribed, but she has pseudo priests with no attachment to Levy at all. She doesn’t believe in most of the Old Testament. The Samaritans believed

only in the first five books and they disavowed all the writings of the prophets and the poetical books.

But Jesus came to this woman at a famous Old Testament landmark, Jacob's well, and offered her living water. Of course, we have learned that Jesus used the figure of water to illustrate the work of the Holy Spirit. So, Jesus taught this woman about salvation using the figure of living (running) water. And we will see later in the passage that this woman's heart was changed. It is evident that the Holy Spirit made her alive because she came to believe in Jesus as the Messiah and also as the Savior of the world and she brought others to Christ (John 4:42).

We are going to take a look this morning at a portion of this discourse with the woman where Jesus teaches her that a new age is coming, a new age which puts a definitive end to the religious requirements of that old age.

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

John 4:21

Now to preface this message, let me say that we live in a time when there is tremendous confusion about the nation of Israel, about the significance and continuing relevance of Jerusalem, about the prospects of the Jewish temple being rebuilt, and about the continuing relevance of the Jewish people in general. In general there is confusion about the relationship of that old age to this age that we live in.

Now I think we have made some progress in our understanding of these things through our study of Hebrews and Galatians. Both of these books taught clearly about the inferiority of that old religion of Judaism compared to Christianity, the inferiority of that old Mosaic Covenant compared to the everlasting and saving Abrahamic Covenant, the inferiority of that old priesthood compared to our Great High Priest, the inferiority of those old sacrifices compared to that final and effective sacrifice, the inferiority of the tabernacle and the temple compared to the true Temple which is Jesus, the inferiority of the Law compared to grace, the inferiority of Moses compared to the real deliverer and of Joshua compared to the real conqueror, the

inferiority of the land of Canaan to the real promised land which is heaven. We could go on and on and on showing how the things of Christ far exceed the things of Judaism in splendor and greatness and in permanence.

The things of Judaism were typical in nature.

This is the very nature of the things under the Mosaic Covenant. They were pictures. It wasn't time for Christ to come yet, but it was a time to teach about his coming. And so God instituted earthly things to paint a picture about the real things in Christ. Let me give you some examples.

God chose a people in the Old Testament. You know, many people hate the doctrine of election. But very rarely do you ever hear anyone object to the obvious fact that God chose Israel in the Old Testament.

For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

Deuteronomy 7:6

Now when God chose Israel, he chose them in contradistinction to other peoples of the world. He chose them and exalted them above all people that were on the face of the earth. In other words, he chose Israel, but he did not choose the Canaanites. And he made a distinction between Israel and all others.

This shows that God is an electing God. He chooses some and bypasses others. In the Old Testament, he chose Israel and bypassed the other nations. This shows God to be a choosing God. God chose a very earthly way to demonstrate that he is a choosing God. And when Israel went into Canaan, God went before them and absolutely demolished the other nations in favor of Israel.

But we must ask the question: Was this choosing of Israel in the Old Testament the ultimate choosing unto salvation? Or was it a typical choosing? Was it an earthly choosing, to typify spiritual choosing.

Now let me ask you this. Did God save all Israelites? And the answer is that God did not save all Israelites. In fact, of the thousands of Israelites who came out of Egypt, all but two died in unbelief in the wilderness. The history of Israel is a history of national sin and failure. It is a history of unbelief and hatred toward God. Elijah sat down under a juniper tree and asked to die because he felt he was the only one in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal. God told him that there were 6,000 who had not bowed the knee. All the rest had bowed the knee to another god. Both Israel in the north and Judah in the south were eventually carried away into slavery in Assyria and Babylonia because of utter unbelief and rejection of the true God. In Jesus' day, there was hardly a breath of spiritual life in Israel. And yet they existed under the designation as the chosen of God, the elect of God. But it is perfectly obvious that the election of national Israel in the Old Testament was not an election unto spiritual salvation. If they had been elect unto salvation, then they surely would have been saved. But it was an earthly election and it was a typical election.

God elected the nation of Israel in an earthly way, to serve as a type and to teach about spiritual election. Israel of the Old Testament was elect, but they were elect unto special earthly privileges. When they went into battle, God overwhelmed their enemies. When they planted their seeds, God caused their crops to be bountiful. God spoke to them through human prophets. God gave them his Law to guide them in their civil matters and religious matters. And in every earthly way, God was the God of Israel. But they were the earthly example of true, spiritual election.

The election of a people unto salvation is the greater election of which national Israel was merely the picture. All other things in the religious service of Israel were also typical.

Israel was instructed to construct a tabernacle and later a temple to be the one place of worship. But this was the mere type of the true Temple. Jesus said,

Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.
John 2:19

You see the physical temple was a mere earthly type of the true temple. The temple of the Jews suggested that God must be worshipped in a place. All religious service was to take place in the temple. Why? Because true and ultimate worship must be in a place. He who worships God must come to the true Temple. And so the Jewish temple was a type of Christ himself.

The sacrifices that were brought to the temple were typical. Killing animals did not save anyone, but it served as a picture of that true sacrifice which was to come.

The altar was a type of the cross of Christ. The High Priest was a type of our Great High Priest. And the types of this Old Covenant go on and on.

The Holy of Holies was a type of that infinite and holy heavenly place where God really resides. The incense was perhaps a type of prayers lifted up which are a sweet savor unto God. The lampstand was a type of the True Light of the world. The showbread was a type of that True Bread of life. Everything was a type of Christ and of true worship in Christ.

And so we can easily see that the things of Judaism, including the elect people of Judaism, were types of something greater and more substantial that was to come.

The things of Judaism were temporary in nature.

I think a major error in eschatology is made when we view Judaism as the permanent religion and Christianity as the temporary parenthesis in history. This is the most popular viewpoint seemingly in our country these days. And the view is that the New Covenant did not put an end to the Old Covenant, rather, it simply moved in for a time. Israel and Judaism were not types. Rather, they were the real substance of things.

But you may remember that we covered this extensively when we studied Galatians. And there we found that the whole Mosaic system was always intended as a temporary system.

Wherefore serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.

Galatians 3:19

The Mosaic Covenant, the Law, was an addendum. It was a temporary system, designed to serve a purpose until the seed should come. And once the seed came, there was a natural expiration to all those things under the Mosaic system. Of course the simplest example of this is the animal sacrifices. Animal sacrifices were a picture of the coming sacrifice. But when the true sacrifice was made for sin, animal sacrifices became obsolete.

Example: Before the house is built we look with fascination at the blueprint, don't we? But when the house is completed we don't care about the blueprint at all. The blueprint was just a picture until the house was built. And so the value of the blueprint is temporary.

In our passage for this afternoon, we see that,

The death of Christ began a new age.

You will notice that Jesus told the woman that something momentous in terms of the nature of religion would occur at some hour.

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

John 4:21

Now when Jesus said, "The hour cometh," it appears that he is speaking of the hour of his death. And this is certainly the way the Apostle John uses the term "hour" in his gospel.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.

John 2:4

Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone . . .

John 16:32

And so, Jesus tells this woman that the hour is coming when the former place of worship would no longer be the place of worship.

Now Jesus confirms that the Jews were right, Jerusalem was the proper place for worship.

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

John 4:22

Of course, at first, the authorized place of worship was the portable tabernacle which the Jews would disassemble every time they left one location and would assemble every time they settled in a new location during their wilderness wanderings. And the tabernacle was the proper place of worship. And God authorized this place of worship and confirmed it by coming down and residing in the Holy of Holies.

When the Jews entered into the land of Canaan the tabernacle survived through the period of the Judges, but due to the sin of the Israelites it was eventually ransacked by the Philistines. The ark of the covenant was eventually recovered, but it is clear by the time of David that the tabernacle itself was no longer in existence.

So, David desired to build a temple. But God withheld this privilege from David and allowed his son Solomon to build the temple in Jerusalem. And so, Jerusalem became the authorized place of worship for the Jews.

One of the things about this woman of Samaria was that she was not a full-blooded Jew. She may have had some Jewish blood mixed in, but she was not full fledged. She is a part breed at best. She was a product of much intermarrying with foreigners and she was probably more Gentile than Jew.

This woman was despised by the Jews. She was worse than the Gentiles. She was trash. When the Jews travelled from

place to place they tried to avoid Samaria because in their minds the people of Samaria were unclean.

This woman was religious like almost all human beings. She joined herself with the other Samaritans in their religious practices. But she had abandoned the religion of the Jews and joined in with the Samaritans who made up their own religious rules.

You will remember that at one time, Israel was one nation under God. They were united under one king. They were united under one set of Scriptures. They were united in one form of worship in one place of worship and that place of worship was Jerusalem. They had one temple and everyone came to the temple each year in Jerusalem to observe Passover and the other various feasts of the Lord. They all paid their tithes into the temple treasury to support the one Levitical priesthood which performed the ceremonies from day to day which God prescribed under the Law.

But then, after King Solomon died, the kingdom divided into two kingdoms and the two kingdoms were called Israel and Judah. Now Israel in the north had wicked kings from the very beginning and the whole nation soon fell into idolatry and they worshipped the gods of the heathen.

Of course, Jerusalem was within the borders of Judah and so Israel had no centralized place of worship. So, they made Samaria their capital city and it was the rival of Jerusalem. Eventually, they built a temple on Mt. Gerizim and the Samaritans practiced their religion there on Mt. Gerizim.

Now the Samaritan woman is beginning to perceive that Jesus is from God. She thinks perhaps that he is a prophet. And she supposes that he can answer her difficult theological question. Her theological question is:

Where is the proper place of worship? Is it in Jerusalem or on Mt. Gerizim? Who is right the Jews or us Samaritans? And the answer of Jesus follows.

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

Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

John 4:21, 22

The hour is coming in which neither Jerusalem or Mt. Gerizim will be the appropriate place of worship.

At this point, the woman is beginning to realize that Jesus is some sort of a Jewish prophet.

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

John 4:19

Jesus has not yet revealed that he is the Messiah, but the woman knows he is somebody special. She knows he is a Jew and she suspects he is a prophet of the Jews. But if he is a prophet of the Jews, her theology is incompatible with his.

Remember that the Samaritans were half-breed Jews who had built their own temple on Mt. Gerizim. They believed that the only proper place to worship God was on Mt. Gerizim. The Jews believed the only place to worship was at the temple in Jerusalem. And so, this woman had a major religious issue with Jesus.

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

John 4:20

Now let's take a look at the answer of Jesus to this theological issue that was posed by the woman.

- I. A new age is coming when true worship will be neither in this mountain, nor at Jerusalem.

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

John 4:21

So Jesus told her there was a time coming. But look at verse 23 where he clarifies further.

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

John 4:23

There was evidently a period of transition from the old age to the new age. It was already coming in when Jesus was in his public ministry. But it would come in its fullness when he died.

You might remember that Jesus was under the law. He placed himself under the law and one of his purposes was to fulfill the law. And therefore, there was no putting away of the law until he fulfilled it and until he died.

But Jesus came advocating more than a mere adherence to the outward requirements of the law. He came advocating and inward worship. And this is what he is advocating to this woman.

- II. A new age is coming when true worship will be in spirit and in truth.

The old age featured a religion (Judaism) which was carnal and typical in nature. But the new age will feature a religion (Christianity) which is spiritual rather than carnal and true rather than typical.