

GOSPEL OF YOHANAN

Chapter 3b, 4

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Nicodemus finally reached the point of his saving knowledge of God, following the difficult conversation he just had with Jesus. He was then given some of the finest, encouraging and most powerful words we find in our New Testament, those written in that one verse of **John 3:16**.

Here Yeshua says:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Yes, God loves the world. He loves the world so much that He sent His only Son. That is encouraging, **except** for one word in this verse that is disturbing and troubling—the word *perish*.

This verse brings another truth that goes counter what Judaism and most other religions teach. Judaism taught, and is still teaching, that all Jews go to heaven. Other religions and sects speak in the same way for their adepts by using all kinds of elaborate systems, **but** the Bible brings the unpopular teaching that all are perishing.

Think about it. If this is not the truth, why risk offending and losing people to the Word of God? But the Scriptures are uncompromisingly sincere. Man is heading for perdition. This Gospel strongly brings out this fact. It also, gracefully, gives the solution that God sent His Son.

We always tend to accuse God as the author of man's hardship. Last week I spoke to a man who proudly called himself an atheist, because, he says, there is no proof of any God around and it is man who created God in his own mind. But when it came to evil and suffering, God became real and personal and this man accused Him of all the evils and wars in the world. This God, that did not exist, suddenly surfaced up. So, I told him that I believe that deep in his heart there is a belief in God—as I believe it is in all men—and that he was mad at God, but for the wrong reasons.

The following verses of **John 3** give us more insight on this misconception—this mistaken belief—that keeps many men from knowing and enjoying their Creator. These verses speak to the wounded hearts, reminding them that God is not the author of evil and is not the cause of man's destiny. But that He is working so that the whole world might spend eternity with Him. See what **John 3: 17, 18** say:

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved

He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

The very reason why Jesus came on earth is clearly stated here—that *the world through Him might be saved*. Let us stop accusing God for the evil of this world; He gave the best that He has, for you. A proper understanding of the Coming of the Son of God on earth, and of His death and

resurrection could only be understood if one sees that man **is** , as the Scriptures says, *condemned already*.

Jesus did not come to make matters worse; he did not come to send us to hell, but to save us from this condemnation. In this light, God is the Restrainer and the Savior, not the one who is the author of suffering. Man is the author of his own suffering, not God.

The next verses give us an even broader perspective of the whole situation. They remind us of the sad reality that many will refuse this grace from God because they don't like their bad actions to be brought to light.

See John 3: 19-21

And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.

These verses are very clear. There is no room for other interpretation, because the stakes are high. The reason why men do not come to God is because *their deeds were evil*. Furthermore, man does not come to God *lest his deeds should be exposed*.

People do not like it when you tell them that they are doing wrong and, even less, when you tell them that they are sinners. They so strongly dislike the notion that you are infringing upon their private lives that they actually forfeit a blessed eternal life, in order to enjoy their evil deeds. But sin is not a matter of privacy. In the same way that any breaking of the law is not a private matter but a judicial one. When it comes to sin, God is involved. Sinning is mainly and primarily against God. It is an affront to God.

A few verses later, John the Baptist enhances this truth and says in **John 3: 36**

He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

Later, John the apostle also says in **1John 5:12**

He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Yes, God loves the whole world. He desires that everyone would come to believe and He insists on repeating these Words because he knows what the end would be like. Since God is loving and righteous, He cannot allow sin to go unpunished.

Yeshua did not come to judge the world, but He is ultimately going to have to because evil deeds are not free. They need to be dealt with and God is offering a way out. God is offering the world salvation, in that He sent His son to pay for these sins and to give us everlasting life.

There are three concepts that are prominent in this passage: *believe*, *eternal life*, and *perish*. One's *belief* will lead him to *eternal life*. For the other alternative we are given the word *perish*. To *perish* does not mean to cease to exist; it means to experience utter failure and uselessness. This word depicts the opposite of salvation. It is used in **Mark 3:6** of death as opposed to life. In **1Corinthians 1:19** it is used for destroy as opposed to preserve. In **2John 8** it is used for loss as opposed to win or gain.

So man is here awakened to the choice he has to make. **Not** making a choice is to head in the opposite direction. All that one has to do to perish is nothing.

It is my prayer that, as we go along this great Gospel, we will readily see how much God loves the world. We will observe the extent to which He goes, in order for everyone to come to Him.

Starting in **John 3: 23**, John the Baptist is spoken of, one more time, as we are brought to the last moments of his ministry. We find his last words at the end of his mission, before Herod Antipas, the mad man, jailed him and put him to death. Antipas was the son of Herod who is mentioned in **Matthew 2**; the one who wanted to kill Jesus when He was just two years old. It is here that John the Baptist utters words that any believer, at the end of his life and ministry on earth, would want to utter. At the end of verse **John 3:29**, knowing that he had done his work and seeing that Yeshua was increasing as many had come to Him, John the Baptist said: *Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.*

These are the words of a true and faithful man of God, who always put Yeshua first. We recognize, from these last words, that John the Baptist was one who followed the narrow path of God. Even just before his death and while in prison, Jesus' testimony about him also shows God's approval of his faithful work. In **Matthew 11: 7**, speaking of John the Baptist, He says: *What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?*

By these words, Yeshua testified of John's strong faith that he upheld throughout his life. He was not like these papyrus reeds that could be shaken by every wind that blew. John the Baptist had succeeded, amid the temptations and the trials, in leading a godly life.

The life of Paul also testified of his straight walk. As Paul was approaching the end of his life on earth, he said in **2Timothy 4:7**

I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith.

In other words Paul appealed to the way he led his life as proof of one who kept the hard and straight path.

What about some leaders today?

A few days ago I picked up a Christian magazine which featured articles about the fall of three important leaders. One article spoke of a new pastor of an eleven thousand member church who was replacing a pastor who fell into homosexuality with a male prostitute. Another article spoke of a leader of one of the largest churches in Brazil, who got a prison sentence because he smuggled money into the US. The third article reported that a well known pastor was going

through a divorce because his wife complained of domestic violence. He was arrested and a \$40,000 bail was posted. That is not all. As I watched an advertisement for some television show, I was surprised to see that two very well known leaders—one who had committed adultery and another who had scammed his flock with hundreds of thousands of dollars—were back again hosting their own television show.

Let us pray that this magazine does not fall into the hands of unbelievers. What a bad testimony it is before our God. But there are still many men and women of God today who will be able to say, along John the Baptist: *Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.*

They are not as loud and prominent, but they are there. Thank God for these workers. Moreover, we have a cloud of witnesses in **Hebrews 11**, where we see men and women of God who kept the faith.

Gospel of Yohanan

Chapter 4

As we approach the fourth chapter of John, we are introduced to more of Yeshua's conversations. In fact, there are three such conversations following each other. The first one is with Nicodemus, the second with a Samaritan woman and the third with a nobleman. What we readily notice here is that we have a Jew (Nicodemus), a Samaritan (the woman) and a Gentile (the nobleman). The likelihood that the nobleman was a Gentile will be presented later.

These three people may represent the whole world of **John 3:16**—the Jews, the Samaritans and the Gentile nations. To each one, Yeshua speaks in terms and images with which they are most familiar.

Let's begin by reading **John 4:1-4**

Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John

(though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples),

He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.

But He needed to go through Samaria.

As Jesus left Judea to go up to Galilee, we are told that Jesus *needed* to go through Samaria. How can the Son of Man *need* to go through a certain region? What does that mean? The Greek word is elsewhere translated as *must* or *ought to*, in other words, something that was necessary to do. So, what was so necessary, vital or pressing in this story?

This account demonstrates a great truth, in that it shows us the extent of God's love for all. The Messiah saw the urgency and necessity of going through Samaria, because one woman was ready to be saved. The time for that one soul to meet her creator had come. God made it his business to be there at the proper time and He was. You can see how much *God so loved the world*. God is of no need, but He allows Himself to be pressed by His desire to save. That tells us that He will meet anyone who is ready to give Him his life.

Notice that in this incident, our Messiah actually did two things that would be considered not so kosher for many. He was in Samaria and He spoke to a Samaritan. This was not any Samaritan, but a Samaritan woman; something that the religious Jews of the time would certainly not do. In fact, if a religious Jew had to go to Galilee, he would go around Samaria so as not to get defiled. Speaking to any of them was something they avoided.

Even the Samaritan woman was surprised that Jesus actually spoke to her. See what we read in **John 4:9**

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

Even the disciples were surprised at this scene. See **John 4:27**

And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman;

But that did not matter to Yeshua. The salvation of a soul is more important than what the people say. All of this is to tell us how far God is ready to go to save a soul.

And before we start looking at the conversation between Yeshua and the Samaritan woman, let us briefly see who these Samaritans were. All began at the fall of northern Israel in 722 BC, we read in **II Kings 18:9, 11, 12** that the Assyrian king came and took the northern tribes of Israel away from their land.

Now it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it

Then the king of Assyria carried Israel away captive to Assyria, and put them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed His covenant and all that Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded; and they would neither hear nor do them.

It is from here that the legend of the ten lost tribes came about, but no tribe was ever lost. However many people of these tribes were deported and lost. These inhabitants were deported to various parts of Assyria and to "the cities of the Medes." Different people from other nations were sent to take their place. As time went on, these people would intermarry with the Israelites who never left and a new mixed race emerged—the Samaritans.

We are further told that the people that came from other parts of the world had problems in the land. At that time, they believed that each territory had its own god and they asked the king of Assyria for help. See what it says in **2Kings 17:26, 27**

So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, "The nations whom you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the rituals of the God of the land; therefore He has sent lions among them, and indeed, they are killing them because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land."

Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, "Send there one of the priests whom you brought from there; let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the rituals of the God of the land."

As the religion of these people started to flourish under this Jewish priest, a mixed belief of biblical and other religions emerged. About 120 years after the Assyrian deportation, the southern part of Judah was also taken into captivity, but this time by the Babylonians. This Diaspora lasted for seventy years. When Ezra and Nehemiah came back to rebuild the temple, the Samaritans offered to help. But they were rejected because they were not considered Jews.

A list of the people who came back from the Babylonian captivity is given in **Ezra 2**, where the people are named and numbered according to their ancestry. Each Jew had to prove his ancestry, but the Samaritans could not produce a Jewish ancestry so they were rejected.

Due to this rejection, they bitterly opposed the rebuilding of the temple as we see in Ezra and Nehemiah. Since then, they became enemies of the Jews and there are many stories about this ongoing conflict. Even the Gospel shows that animosity; it was an insult for a Jew to be called a Samaritan. They even accused Jesus of being a Samaritan.

John 8:48

Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

This was after learning that He had conversed with the Samaritan woman.

Back to the scene, in **John 4:5-7**, we find the Messiah at a well, in front of a Samaritan woman. Before we look into the conversation, let us first look at the surroundings. Why there? Why a well? Why use the symbol of the water and speak about spiritual water?

This setting, in itself, is great because Yeshua could not have chosen a better place and a better symbol to bring His message to the Samaritans. Let us see what these Samaritans believed. There is a six book document written in the fourth century by a Samaritan scholar called Marqah. His writing came to be known as the "Memar Marqah," Aramaic for "The Teaching of Marqah." These later writings are representative of the Samaritans' beliefs. They shed light on Yeshua's reason for choosing a well and the symbolism involved.

There is an important section in this book that speaks of the "Waters of Life" and the "Well of Living Water."

Marqah, Memar 2.1

In the depths of an abundant spring is the life of the world. Let us rise with understanding to drink from its waters! We thirst for the waters of life.

In a later chapter, **Marqah, Memar 6.3**, we read of a Prophet that seems to be the Messiah:
*There is a Well of living water
dug by a Prophet whose like has not arisen since Adam
and the water which is in it is from the mouth of God.*

*And the glory was around, for it was the word of God.
His hand wrote and the Prophet received it with signs from on high.
And YHWH came down and dwelt with him.*

Furthermore, speaking of this prophet, we also read in another part: **Marqah, Memar 4.7, 12**
*Let us believe in YHWH and in Moses his servant!...
A Restorer [Taheb] will come in peace;
he will rule the places of the perfect and reveal the Truth.
Heed and hear! Stand in Truth! Clear your arguments!
"For YHWH will judge his people" (Deut 32:36a):
The "people" of YHWH is Jacob, the branches and the chief root,
and the branches from fathers to sons;
from Noah, the root, even to the Restorer, the branch...
The word of Truth will penetrate and illumine the world,
in which he will come to dwell.*

It is with this background that Yeshua meets the Samaritan woman at a well. The words He used spoke directly to her heart. Here again, we see that God will always use ways to make His message easier when speaking to a certain person.

The religion of the Samaritans, at that time, was very much like that of the Jews except for one major point. They believed that the place that God chose for worship was on Mount Girizim, not in Jerusalem. This is an argument the woman brought to Jesus in **John 4:20**:
Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.

That point is also the main difference between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Masoretic Bible that we use. It is found in the additional text regarded by the Samaritans as the tenth command of the Decalogue. The actual Ten Commandments of the Masoretic Bible are regarded as nine by the Samaritans, so they added a tenth of their own; a very long one, saying that the place that God chose for His temple was Mt. Gerizim.

Let us now see how the conversation between the Messiah and the Samaritan woman unfolds.

John 4:5-7

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

Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."

As Jesus entered the territory of Samaria, He went to Jacob's well. It was probably so named by the Samaritans because it is mentioned nowhere else in the Bible. We notice in **Verse 6** that Yeshua was *wearied*, meaning tired and exhausted. Yeshua was tired, having spent the morning walking, as it was the sixth hour which is twelve noon. How can the Messiah, the one who came from above, be tired? There is a great truth, here, that we ought to grasp. In order to offer eternal life, he had to live as we did. He did not need to do that, but He chose to be wearied so that He could fulfill His mission.

Later, speaking of the coming of the Messiah on earth, the Spirit of God quotes **Psalm 40** in **Hebrews 10:5**

Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me.

Yes, Yeshua came into a body prepared by God the Father; one that is like yours that gets tired, hungry and thirsty. No one can then say that God is very far off and cannot understand man. Of course He can, because He lived in a body like ours. We also read in **Hebrews 4:15**

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

The deity and humanity of Jesus was always a battle ground for many and this existed from the very beginning. In the fourth century, Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, began to propagate the view that Jesus, though the Son of God, could not be co-eternal with His Father and that He must be regarded as external to the divine essence and is only a creature. Also in the fourth century, Apollinaris, bishop of Laodicea in Syria, wrote against Arianism so much so that he denied the Messiah's full humanity. He declared that Christ had a human body but did not possess a human spirit.

In the fifth century, Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, taught that Christ was both God and man, but that the Godhead was one Person, the manhood another. Instead of a union of two natures with distinction, Nestorians taught that there were two persons.

But the Scriptures clearly show that the Messiah is fully man and fully God. I find it comforting that my God thirsted as we do, because He can understand my pain and my suffering. It would have been otherwise had He only created us, even though it would have been enough, but He also lived as we lived.

The original wording in **Verse 7** is somehow different from what the translations are saying. *A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."*

It is much stronger. It actually says that the woman “came out of Samaria.” What does that mean? Were they not in Samaritan territory as **Verse 5** says? This is similar to what we read of Nicodemus in **John 3:2**, when we were told that he came by night to see Jesus—he came from darkness unto Light. Similarly, the woman is seen as leaving her turmoil territory and coming into the presence of the Messiah.

This applies to all of us; before coming to a saving knowledge of Yeshua, we need to leave our old ways and come to the light. We go through the same circumstances and the places are the same, but we are given a new perspective on things. It is a new birth.

The Life Giver begins the conversation by asking the woman for a drink. We see her surprise when she realizes that a Jew is actually asking a Samaritan woman for a drink. As He had done with Nicodemus, Jesus seems to interrupt her and brings her right to the essential matter. He says to her in **John 4:10**

If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.

At this point, I believe that the woman started to understand something about the Man who was in front of her. But it was not yet clear to her as she protests and says in **Verse 11**: *"Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water?"*

In **Verse 12**, we have an indication that she understood that something of a great spiritual nature was happening, because she now compares Yeshua to Jacob.

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

She could have simply disregarded the whole thing and kept on with her work, but she protested. This is when Yeshua gives her very comforting words.

John 4:13, 14

Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

As Nicodemus felt disarmed by the words of the Messiah and responded with sarcasm, so did the woman under the power of these words.

John 4:15

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

At this point Jesus shows her that He is omniscient and that He knows her well, by speaking of her past and present life. Knowing very well that she was not with her husband at this time, but with another man, Yeshua tells her to go get her husband.

John 4:16-18

*Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."
The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,'"*

"for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

It is at this time that she understood that she was in front of someone greater than Jacob, as she says in **John 4:19**

Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.

Perhaps she thought of a prophet spoken about in her religion.

As the Woman slowly started to recognize Yeshua as the Messiah, she tried to shift the focus away from her, by bringing in the very point of disagreement between the Jews and the Samaritans. In **verse 20**, she brought out the controversy about their place of worship, but Yeshua kept on.

John 4:21-24

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.

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

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Yeshua was speaking of a time beyond the Messianic times, when Jews and Gentiles would soon be one in God. The time of the Church that was soon to come, where there will be no Jews, or Samaritans or Gentiles. Here we have the counterpart of the announcement of the Kingdom of God through parables. Yeshua clearly announces this Kingdom to the woman, who, by now, was probably a believer. Otherwise He would have hidden the mystery of the Kingdom from her, as He explained in **Matthew 13**.

It is also interesting to notice that when Phillip later went to preach the Word to the Samaritans, he preached to them *concerning the Kingdom of God*, as we are told in **Acts 8:12**. These Samaritans needed to know that worshiping on Mount Girizim or in Jerusalem was not an important issue anymore. Because, in the Kingdom of God, we can all worship God anywhere and everywhere.

As it was said, some of the greatest pronouncements of the Scriptures occur in unexpected places, like **John 4:24**, where we are told that *God is Spirit*. The primary meaning of this statement is that God does not have a body. Therefore, He needs no local dwelling place, no temple and no material offerings. As D.L. Moody said, "The tendency of the human heart to represent God by something that appeals to the senses is the origin of all idolatry."

(http://www.fbminstitute.com/moody/The_TenCommandments_Text.html)

God is spirit and man is spirit also. Man is made in the image of God and is made to know God. Because God is Spirit, we are told that *those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth*. Not through buildings or pictures, but in spirit.

After Yeshua's reply, the woman rests her case and says:

John 4:25

"I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things."

That was her confession. She was saved. Congratulations, Mazeltov!

If you are wondering where in the Bible Jesus says that He is the Messiah, it is in the following verse:

John 4:26

Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

That is a powerful way of saying it. He did not just say "I am the Messiah," He said: *I am He.*

This is quite remarkable. Elsewhere Jesus avoided saying that He was the Messiah because of political implications. He would speak of Himself as the Son of Man, a Jewish title showing He is the Messiah. But here, He revealed it to this woman. That shows us that she prevailed just like Nicodemus. To Nicodemus, Yeshua gave the very famous verse in **John 3:16**. To her, He declared Himself as He never did to others.

See how she names him as the conversation progresses:

- 1- "Jew" in **Verse 9**
- 2- "Sir" or "Kurios" or "Lord" in **Verses 11, 15, 19**
- 3- From "Sir" to "Prophet" in **Verse 19**
- 4- She wonders if he is the "Messiah" and He confirms it **Verses 25, 26**
- 5- She calls Him the "Messiah" in **Verse 29**

In her excitement, she left everything to announce the good news.

The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city.....

She went to share it with others. Many came to see Him and many believed.

Arthur Pink, in his commentary on John, made an interesting correlation between Hagar and the Samaritan woman.

In both cases we see a well. In both cases the Angel of the Lord was present. The Messiah comes to the each one of them. Both were rejected. Hagar was rejected by Sarah and the Samaritan woman by Sarah's descendent. It is possible that the rejection of the Samaritan woman is more extensive. We notice that she came to take water at noon. This was an unusual hour for drawing water. It is possible that her condition, of living unlawfully with a man, made her unaccepted by the other women.

But the most interesting correlation is to see how Hagar called the Angel of Lord.

Genesis 16:13

Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?"

Her words could very well have been spoken by the Samaritan woman who also confessed in **Verse 29** that Jesus told her all the things that she ever did. He was, to her, the *God Who Sees* all things.

After this time the disciples came back. They did not understand what was happening, when they saw so many people come to Yeshua. The Messiah took this occasion to speak about the work of evangelization. **John 4:35-37**

Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!

And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.'

This is the commission of evangelization, or of announcing the good news, that should prevail in the Kingdom of God on earth. That was part of the training of the twelve disciples. Perhaps they could not fully understand then, but later, they knew they had to bring the Word everywhere else but Israel.

Someone said "Crops go through three stages: green, ripe, rotten. Harvest is effective only at one stage. Likewise, intervention, at the right time, can produce a rich spiritual harvest."

And for this Yeshua tells them to look up.

I read about a man once who found a one hundred dollar bill. After that, he always looked down when he walked along the street. Over the course of the years, he found twelve hairpins, five paper clips, a ballpoint pen, one nickel, four pennies, and a very large assortment of gum wrappers. But during those years he never saw a flower, a tree, or the smile of a passing stranger. If we just look down at our problems, we will never succeed. We will be like the centipede that was doing fine until someone asked him: which of his one hundred legs came after which other? He'd never thought of that before. The more he thought about it, the more he couldn't remember, and he found he couldn't walk at all. Lift up your eyes!

Concerning the Samaritans, after the first century, we find a great concentration of these people in Egypt. They composed one of the three sects of the Jews, along with the Karaites and the Rabbinical Jews.

Today there are some six hundred Samaritans that survived, not having lost their identity through intermarriage. These have their own religion which is a mixture of Judaism and Islam. For instance, in their place of worship, they stand on rugs spread out on the floor and before one enters the synagogue he must remove his shoes. Today, most of them live in the city of Nablus, in the area now known as the West Bank. They still celebrate Passover every year around their ancient temple site of sacrifice, on Mount Gerizim. Like the Jews, Yom Kippur or the Day of

Atonement is their holiest day of the year. They also observe the Sabbath. They even have their high priest who acts as their political official and representative. The rest of the Samaritans live in the Holon district right outside Tel Aviv, in Israel.