

## Hebrews: Its Background (Part Seven)

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This is now the seventh introductory sermon that I have given on the epistle to the Hebrews and I think that this probably will be the shortest of the ones that I have given so far. And I am sure that many, many more could be given if we would go into greater detail on what was happening within the area of Jerusalem and in Judea.

I have given only an overview of what was happening within the Jewish culture surrounding Jerusalem and a few other portions of the Middle East following that dramatic Day of Pentecost in AD 31, when God gave His Holy Spirit. The unconverted Jews, in many cases, publicly reacted violently, as the book of Acts clearly shows. Saul of Tarsus became a primary violent antagonist of those converted. Nonetheless, many thousands were added to the church despite the persecution that was going on. By the time the narrative in the book of Acts reaches chapter 6, the number had climbed to 6,000 conversions.

In addition to that, God clearly demonstrated (using the apostle Peter as His instrument), He was opening entrance into His church, at full equality with the Israelites, to the Gentiles. The church was being used to continue the expansion of the knowledge of the true God to the entire world.

Jesus was very serious during the admonition that He gave regarding people coming to Him, given in Luke 14. I would like you to read that with me, even though we have already read it many times.

**Luke 14:25-35** Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first

and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

That admonition came from Jesus and came home to the newly converted in a very difficult way for almost all of those early conversions. Jesus was very serious as He was giving this admonition, because with the foresight that His Father had given to Him, He recognized what was going to happen when converts began showing up in people's personal homes, in a land in which the major religion was Judaism. To the new converts' family members, the converts very quickly found themselves living with enemies within their own households. Those persecutions were very personal. But it was highly likely they would not remain that isolated, that is, within one family.

Those converts caught in family circumstances may not have been treated violently, like others were. But they were considered traitors to what the unconverted in their family understood as the true God-founded and established religion, delivered to them through Moses and called Judaism. Being traitors to Judaism was the reason that they suffered the persecution.

This happened, despite the fact that the Jewish religion was, in reality, corrupt and almost thoroughly anti-God. Had the Jewish leadership not just proved that by putting God in the flesh to an agonizing death? They did not recognize the true God standing before them and preaching God's truth to them! That is how corrupt the people were in the use of the religion that they thought that they received from Moses.

The anti-God attitude that the Jewish religious leadership was able to stir up against Jesus as He was tried before Pilate was more widespread than it may

have seemed on the surface. The belief against the converts spread quickly through the communities of Judea and it was not long before the Jewish converts were excluded from any activities that involved the operations, the location, and the focus of the Temple. Though most of them may not have had to endure a violent persecution at the hands of a Paul, they must have felt that they were now living in an alien world. That quickly, it changed. They became traitors, enemies, of their own brethren. Not “brethren” religiously, but “brethren” in the sense of being people of the same nation. These persecutions were difficult to deal with because emotions were deeply involved in this issue.

How did the converts deal with this pressure that was so close, right in the family? And there was not yet any New Testament to use as supports to one's faith. Put yourself in that position. There was no New Testament. No Matthew, no Mark, no Luke, no John. Nothing. Not a single word of that had been written yet when this took place. In fact, there was no epistle to the Hebrews to look to for guidance, either. And it was specifically written for these very people, later on.

How many of those people even had an Old Testament? We are not talking about the New Testament. I am talking about the Old Testament. It was probably very few, because each Old Testament had to be handwritten, and it was very likely that in many cases, the only Bibles in the community may have been in the synagogue. You see what I am heading toward here? Those people, in many, many cases, did not even have a Bible, an Old Testament that they could turn to. How were they sustained? How did they keep going? How did they find comfort? How did they find hope? How did they endure?

I started this series because I am concerned about what is going to happen in this nation, because of what is building within it in terms of all the divisiveness that we hear of and see in this nation. And a lot of that is being aimed at people calling themselves Christians, who are not really Christians. But they are still, nonetheless, in many cases, in good attitudes and so forth, believing it sincerely. But one of these days, the truth is going to hit the fan, and they are going to find out the truth about what they should believe, and that what they have been told, in many cases, about God and about His law is not really true at all; it is still binding on people.

So, what sustained these people here in Judea in the first century? This leads me to believe that, in most cases, what sustained their spirituality was the spoken word delivered to people who listened very, very carefully and concentrated with great intensity. That is something we Americans do not have a good grasp on anymore because everybody lives in a New York minute. Zip! Off we go doing this, that, and the other thing. Hop in the car, go somewhere, do some shopping, watch some TV, and on, and on it goes.

Will that sustain us, as this comes upon us eventually? I hope it does not come on us, but I will tell you, it looks to me like something is building out there. So far, it looks like we are going through a bloodless revolution. But how long will it be bloodless? We are shifting gears from a republican form of government (I am not talking about the party, I am talking about the form of government) to one that is far more dictatorial, and may be able to react very quickly, like the communists do. Or like the fascists did.

About 3,000 people responded to Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost. Just try to put yourself back there for a little bit of time. He does not have any microphones, and he is simply speaking to those who were crowded around him. I do not even know whether he had a platform that he was on. I have no idea. I can guess he did, because his voice would carry out a lot better from a place like that. So about 3,000 people responded to Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost. And I am sure that they were listening intently, with God's inspiration of Peter's message, drawn entirely from the Old Testament, linking Jesus to the events quoted by Peter.

Regarding Jesus and those events, the spoken word of truth was very effectively used by 3,000 people that day. That is what the end of the chapter says. I am certain the apostles moved rapidly to organize into congregations so that the people would have as much contact with them (that is, with the apostles) as possible, in locations nearest to the bulk of those being converted, so that they could have Sabbath services and Bible studies with those people.

This is what Jesus did during His life and the apostles followed suit. Jesus went to places where people could congregate and listen to Him speak.

Sometimes it was a seashore. Sometimes it was on a mountainside where He did those things. So, they started repeating what He did as well, where they could form congregations.

What messages did the apostles begin with, in teaching these new converts? Undoubtedly, they had an education that they were receiving simply by being in Jerusalem and hearing all the scuttlebutt that was going on. And in many cases, they heard Jesus Himself speak. I would say that many of those people who were converted on that day of Pentecost were those who heard Jesus speak first, that is, before Peter ever got the opportunity after Jesus' resurrection.

So what messages do you guess that the apostles would begin with? I believe that since they alone were truly close to Jesus, they began with Jesus' personal fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, going into much detail regarding this, because He was, after all, God in the flesh. I know this, that I would be very tempted to begin with Genesis 3:15 and the promised Seed, the Messiah, all the way back there. Regarding the history of Jesus Christ, you would have a good foundation for beginning, by showing that He indeed was the promised Seed.

I believe, also, they would continue on with how He conducted Himself. They [converts] would want to know what He was like, personally. They would want to know how He conducted Himself as the apostles observed Him, as He lived His life during the time that they were with Him. And then, of course, would be some of the details of the gospel of the Kingdom of God and God's ongoing creative purpose for everyone to be created in the image of God. That is some of God's purpose.

They surely must have studied into the fact that he was indeed the God, the Lord who made the covenant with Abraham, and made the covenant with the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (which was their nation, of course, Israel). What was it like to deal with Him? And how did He deal with the apostles? Thus, the converts' behavior was also being addressed as this was underway, because as the apostles were teaching what He dealt like, they would surely also be saying, "This is what you ought to be doing, too, in terms of your behavior. Behave like He behaved."

The overwhelming majority of these people were not being converted to be on the front lines, preaching as the apostles were. They were called to continue growing in the grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ, in support of the apostles, by means of their witness within their communities. And thus, the converts' behavior representing Him was being addressed, as well as their personal responsibilities to Jesus Christ were being addressed at the same time.

Notice this statement that greatly shaped the lives of all concerned within what was going on in God's purpose and plan. And what Jesus said in this place continues to shape our lives almost 2,000 years later. So, turn with me in the book of Acts, to chapter 1, verses 4-8.

**Acts 1:4-8** And being assembled together with them [speaking of Jesus, and “them” was the apostles and others. I believe that there were probably about one hundred and twenty people there.], He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” Therefore [here comes a key question for our lives], when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Although Jesus did not say what I am going to say directly, the conclusion to what He said was that, if the apostles were expecting an imposition on earth of the Kingdom of God directly and soon, they should get to work and forget about that. Though that will eventually take place, it is very clear from what Jesus established there, that God has other things that must be taken care of in preparation for that event. And that pertains to the apostles' spiritual lives, and the spiritual lives of countless others yet to be called and given the education He had given them. In fact, brethren, what He was saying was, “This has only begun.”

His response lets us know that they were having to work through their apostleship responsibilities by faith, within their relationship with Him, just like everybody else. Nothing was going to be handed them just like that. They had work to do, and it was going to be hard work and it was going to be dangerous work. We know that every one of them was martyred, except for the apostle John.

What I am saying here is that what Jesus said to them was that it is going to be a long time before the Kingdom of God is actually established on earth. And here we are, almost 2,000 years later, and it has not come yet.

How much longer is this going to go on from this point forward? We have no idea, really. We can guess. We can speculate, and people are certainly free to do that. But do not be misled and be carried away toward a certain date, or even a certain period of time. What Jesus said to them is “get to work.” What did He call them to do? To preach the gospel.

As this was beginning, Acts 15 provides us an insightful overview into the internal, spiritual turmoil caused by the uncertainty the apostles and the membership were having to deal with, especially within Judea, because of the church's transition to the new work of the church in its function within the New Covenant. What was, in reality, beginning here in Acts 1, at this critical period of history, was that God's worldwide educational institution, the church, the Israel of God, was beginning to teach how *everyone* should live. Not just the people in Judea, not just them. This was the beginning here in Acts 1 of something really big.

2,000 years later, it is not done yet. And you are a part of it because it is not done yet. God is still teaching those that He calls the very things that the apostles had to learn directly from Jesus Christ. The same educational program that He gave to them is now being given to us.

So, what was underway was that the church, now the focal point, in Acts 1, of God's reeducation program for the world, was being transitioned from what was merely an Old Covenant, Israelitish religious organization of interest to relatively few outside of Israel, to an educational organization

that, in terms of time spanning thousands of years, would become of intense interest to everybody eventually. Billions of people are going to be contacted in some way or another by the church.

In other words, Christ, using the apostles, wanted the church to get things underway and yet keep it contained within parameters that only He and the Father desired as it progressively developed at the speed They could see the church handling. You understand, God was driving the car. If you understand, it was going at the speed He wanted it to go. And the people were learning what He wanted them to learn. They were being changed internally in their hearts, in their minds, by the conversion that He was bringing about within them, changing them into the image of Himself and Jesus Christ.

Let us go to another couple of very familiar scriptures, this time in the book of Matthew, in chapter 28.

**Matthew 28:18-20** And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

The apostles’ commission from Christ was that God's way and purpose was being opened up to the entire world. That was, and remains, very challenging, especially when one is operating by faith. But what was happening within the church had to be taken care of in order for peace to prevail, and unity of doctrine to be clearly established, in order for all to speak and teach as with one voice.

As we continue on today, we are going to first take a fairly detailed look into Acts, the fifteenth chapter, in order to get an overview of what the apostles faced as the church met its first truly spiritual challenges to the unity that God intends within the church so its commission is accomplished with His blessing. So, let us go to Acts 15. And I am going to read from verse 1 through verse 21. This was the first really big crisis affecting the possible unity of the church and the message that they were to carry to the world.



**Acts 15:1-21** And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.

So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they cause great joy to all the brethren. And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.”

Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: “Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”

Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, “Men and brethren, listen to me: Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: ‘After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord [This was what was happening. This was what these men were participating in.] ‘So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the

Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord who does all these things.’

“Known to God from eternity are all His works. [He is saying, this is all planned out by our Creator.] Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”

Let us go over some points here. Scholars have concluded that this meeting most probably took place in AD 49. So, it is already 31 AD TO 49 AD, almost, we will say, but not quite, 20 years has gone by here. This means the written guidance of the epistle to the Hebrews, which has a great deal of helpful information within it that would help these people, would not be generally available to the church for about another 15 to 18 years. I am giving you this so that you understand what a challenge these men faced. There was nothing that they could just jump up there and go to the library and get and read the answer out of a book at the library.

However, the apostles were not without the spiritual guidance of Jesus Christ decades before the epistle to the Hebrews was available in written form. In fact, the apostles had a great deal of guidance from Him because Christ had prepared them well during the three and a half years He taught them personally. It is the fact that they had a great deal of guidance from Him that led the members of the church through the cultural turmoil that they experienced in the first few years following the resurrection. But they nonetheless still had to use their faith in Christ’s teachings to support their knowledge given in sermons.

They were being schooled through the sermons. *There was no Bible yet.* Apparently the first epistle written (that actually appeared as a letter to church congregations), was probably I Thessalonians, and the scholars feel it was not written until about a year after this meeting here in Acts 15. And it did not address what they were talking about in Acts 15. So, these people were flying without a New Testament.

The dissenters in Acts 15 essentially wanted the Gentiles to become converts to Judaism. Well, the apostles knew right away that is not what Christ preached. Judaism was not what Christ preached. It was Judaism's teachings and attitudes that killed Christ. And there is a principle there: you shall know them by their fruits. So, they trashed that idea right away. I mean, the idea of the Pharisaical people who (supposedly) believed Christ. Judaism was not the religion God founded through Moses. The apostles knew that from their experiences with Jesus Christ. It was a badly flawed religion. And there were major, major differences between the gospel Jesus preached and the Judaism of the days of Jesus Christ.

I am going to read verses 14-20 again. Because the man who actually made the decision during this council was the apostle James. He was very highly regarded for his righteousness amongst even the apostles. And he was apparently the pastor, the leader, of the Jerusalem congregation. We could say that in terms of the kinds of organizations we have now, he was the Mr. Armstrong for them at that time (but way up above Mr. Armstrong). Here was Jesus' flesh and blood half-brother. And if anybody knew Jesus, it was James, above all the others apparently. So, he was sitting in a position of authority. So here was what he said. Here was the evidence.

**Acts 15:14-20** “Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: ‘After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down [referring to the true religion] ; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; so that the rest of mankind [and this is what the apostles were now involved in] so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord [meaning the Gentiles], even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord who does all these things.’ Known to God from eternity are all His works. Therefore I judge [James says, “I judge.” He is giving the decision.] that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.”

That is very interesting, because all of those things are part of the Old Testament law. And here is the church, making one of its first big decisions,

showing very clearly that those things (like abstaining from things polluted by idols, things strangled, and from blood) were not done away. Those things are still binding upon those who follow Christ.

We have to think about these things. This chapter is especially good for this. Think about these issues, thoroughly using what the apostles had available to them. What they did have available was considerable experience with the Captain of our salvation. They had day-to-day, face-to-face, issue-to-issue, practical experience with Christ as He tutored them in advance for that period when He would no longer be personally present with them because He was in heaven (as He was in Acts 15).

Remember also that the epistle to the Hebrews was not yet written as Acts 14 and 15 literally took place. They could not refer to it (we are looking at how they solved this circumcision problem). It would not even be available to local congregations for a couple of decades into the future.

The first general direction given is where James says, “Therefore, I judge . . .” The first general direction given is to absolutely stop all converts from doing all things obviously connected to those idolatrous, pagan acts of worship. That is in verse 20. Stop those things. They were not allowed to commit idolatry; that is part of the Old Testament law too.

So, what was the apostles’ course of action here? How could they know what Christ wanted them to do? That is, what actions did He desire that they take as they preached and people were converted?

Please go to II Timothy 2. Now see, we can turn there in the Bible. They could not. They could not, in these instances, quote chapter and verse. But here is the process that they followed.

**II Timothy 2:14-15** Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent [Be diligent, Timothy, Paul writes.] to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of the truth.

There is the answer to “What did the apostles do here in Acts 15?” They rightly divided the word of truth. This same responsibility falls upon us when issues come to us regarding a doctrine, when the people have asked for a change or explanation or whatever. We have to “rightly divide the word of truth.”

Here is the truth: the reality is that God had already spoken, either through Christ’s literal voice, giving the answers to these things through Christ’s literal voice, or through what was written elsewhere in the Bible, or by His example. They were getting their answer from Christ because of His words, because of what the Old Testament said, and because of Christ’s example as they followed Him around for three and a half years. It was their responsibility, if they were to continue following Christ and, at the same time, lead those being converted in the right way, to rightly divide the truths they already possessed.

Do you understand that? The apostles already possessed. Given first consideration was what Christ had already said on the questions at hand and His example, whatever it happened to be. The apostles could thus give firm counsel based on what they already had readily available. That is what James did. But there is more to this.

Here comes an example. Regarding circumcision, here is the reality that Peter witnessed at the conversion of Cornelius and his group. God required no circumcision! But He did require baptism before the giving of His Holy Spirit. That is very telling. That is exactly what Peter says at the beginning of Acts 15.

**Acts 15:7-8** And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: “Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them [That is, the Gentiles.] by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.”

The entire story is not given there. But Peter was witness to the fact that God Himself, that Jesus Christ did not require Cornelius or any other man in that group to be circumcised. That is weighty evidence. In addition, Jesus Himself was baptized, thus setting the example as He commanded it, by words, of all who became followers of Jesus Christ. Christ, remember, baptized more than John, and this includes women. And therefore, if we are going to follow Him in this way of life (this is what Peter is saying) we should be baptized too. There is no requirement for circumcision.

Nowhere did Christ ever command anything regarding circumcision of a convert, except those teachings relating to circumcision of the heart. Circumcision was indeed the sign and seal under the Old Covenant, and the covenant God made with Abraham. However, it is clear that is not so regarding the new spiritual covenant. Instead, death (regarding the [old] way of life through repentance), burial in a watery grave, and resurrection from it to a new way of life was demanded as the sign and seal of the New Covenant. So now we have an example that is what Jesus required: baptism, but not circumcision.

That significant step of commitment, that is, baptism, is far, far more spiritually momentous than cutting off a piece of skin from an eight days-old boy who has no comprehension whatever of what is going on. The difference in regard to significance is very noticeable between the two. And these men, I am sure, would all agree: circumcision has no spiritual effect. It is a pale shadow of a baptism, with a spiritual meaning far beyond that of a circumcision. Thus, if we are going to be a follower of Jesus Christ, circumcision is shown to have no spiritual value to a person who is intending upon dedicating his life to Christ under the New Covenant.

The answer to these issues is already in the Book for those of spiritual understanding intent on following Christ. So, they rightly divided what the Scriptures showed. That is all it was. And so those of the Pharisaical sect were left out in the cold because they could not come up with any scriptures that showed that circumcision had the same symbolic proofs to it that baptism does. Furthermore, Jesus Himself never required circumcision of the many baptized in His presence as a result of His preaching. And the apostles clearly understood the symbolism of the death of the old self and the rising,

from the watery grave to newness of life, and thus also a symbol of a resurrection to a new spiritual birth.

Everything came together. The arguing was heated but the apostles had all the bullets. And those “bullets” were words that were written either in the Old Testament, written in their hearts because of their experiences with Jesus Christ, or written in their ears because they heard what Jesus Himself preached.

This is something that I think I will go into a little bit later. But it was Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, who literally began the preaching of the gospel to the Gentile world. You may have thought it was Peter. No, it was Jesus. The Samaritans were a Gentile people who lived side-by-side with, especially literally north of, the Jews, and even claimed some Jewish relationships. Now their claims were probably not true. But nonetheless, they claimed it, that they were related to the Jews in some ways.

The one passage that we are going to look into, we are not going to look into it in detail right now. But I am going to read through it to you. And then I will try to tear it apart verse by verse. Because in it, Jesus gives some significant indication that changes were coming in the religion that we know of as Christianity.

So, turn with me to John, the fourth chapter. We will just read through this, get a little bit of understanding of it, and then we will go through it later on, in another sermon, in greater detail.

**John 4:9-19** 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. Jesus answered and said to her, “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.” The woman said to him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob [Notice, they called him their “father Jacob.” It was a lie; he was not.], who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?” 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.” The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.” 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.” The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.”

This woman, in a way, was actually pretty much on the ball, spiritually. She had a great deal of understanding.

**John 4:20-21** “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither [Now here comes Jesus’ indication of changes in the worship of God, that are going to be instituted by Him.] on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.”

Is Jerusalem going to be trashed? Where is the Temple going to be? It was on the mountain, there in Jerusalem. And here He is, saying, “neither...in Jerusalem...worship the Father.”

**John 4:22-25** “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.” The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” [she makes an interesting connection there] (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.”

I cannot give you much more than that, as a preview. What is being talked about here is not all that deep or anything, because we are somewhat familiar



with it already. But for the period of time in which He said this (John 4, that is pretty early in His ministry), He was already forecasting that a significant change was going to take place in the form of worship of the Father and the Son.