

Connect the Jots

The Bridegroom

Part 4 – March 2, 2014



What's the one critical thing that shapes *everything else* about your life? It's *How you choose to view God*: Harsh Judge? Harmless Grandpa? Disapproving Dad? Santa Claus? 911? The Big Guy Upstairs? Or, the Lamb and Groom who was slain? **Where might your view need to be challenged? And, how do we do that? **How do you engage God?** In His word. **Scripture is where He reveals, proposes, and vows.** And, that's why **it's critical to seek Him *after* you've accepted Him.****

... anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. – Hebrews 11:6b NIV



Is the wedding ceremony when you cease from getting to know your spouse, or is it the starting point of when it *actually* begins? **Scale of one to ten; how much do you actually believe and live out the 2nd half of that verse?** Last week, I told the story of The Woman at the Well; John's Gospel, chapter four ... which is *just a chapter* to a *much larger story*; for, John is building on chapters one, two, three. This morning we're Connecting the Jots to that larger story. And our jots are *the Bridegroom*. And, our first jot is the Lamb ... *being groomed*. **John wrote five books of the Bible,¹ all building toward one incredible revelation.**



Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. ... 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" – Revelation 19:7, 9b NIV



So, what were marriages like in Jesus' day?² **Marriages were typically arranged** ... like *ours*. Ephesians (1:4) says **the Father chose us in Jesus before He created this world.** The **two fathers agreed on a bride-price, and established a marriage covenant.** Just as the God of Abram (*Glorious Father*), changed Abram's name, and made a covenant with himself, as the God of Abraham (*Father of a Multitude*), the Father of the *bride*.

When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." – Hebrews 6:13-14 NIV

¹ The Gospel of John, First John, Second John, Third John, and Revelation

² Although various sources describing the practice of Jewish marriage at the time of Christ differ in the details, there is general agreement concerning its major elements.

The marriage covenant was recorded and given to the bride ... like ours. The Old Testament paved the way for the groomed Lamb.



... “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ... I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.” The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. **[John and Andy]** When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!” When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. – John 1:29b-37 NIV

The next day is the wedding in Cana.



There are 788 bottles in this photo

You see, **the fathers sealed their agreement with a toast of wine.** The next day, on the way to the wedding, Jesus calls two more disciples: Phil and Nate. This brings us to our second jot: the wine. **Jesus’ 1st public sign was the wedding toast that proclaimed the price He’d pay.** (1 Cor 6:20) John tells how a crisis of shame came to the wedding when the symbol of God’s blessing and joy ran dry. But, **since this is God’s toast, it’s only right He supply the wine.**

The guests were ritually purified by having water ladled over their hands. **It was vital that the water be moving (they called it ‘living water’),** in order to carry away their impurities. **Jesus uses, and ruins by wine-contamination (thus declaring an end to ceremonial washing),** (John 2:6-7) six jars holding 2½ metrētēs (39.4 liters x 2½ x 6 = 591 liters), which make 788 modern (750 ml) bottles of wine! **The excess is the point (an overkill of abundance and joy), as is the excellence of the wine, a sign pointing to the feast to come!**

Just imagine. Wedding reception. Tail end. 66 cases. *Fine wine. Vintage.* Each bottle worth more than all the prior wine combined. **Father God transforms this unknown bride’s crisis-of-shame into her glory and honor, raising the bar of wedding feast hospitality in tiny Cana so high it could never be equaled again.** Jesus day-old disciples *believed,* but they would’ve been *bothered.* They were as strict as the Pharisees, (Mat 9:14-15) and their former rabbi, John the Baptist, had never taken a *sip* of wine. (Luke 1:15)



Then the bridegroom cleanses and prepares his father’s house. Only John writes about our Third jot: the *first* time Jesus clears the Temple ... and the *only* time Jesus not only chases out the merchants, but the *animals.* (John 2:15)

He’s preparing to replace the entire sacrificial system! He’s sayin’ to those lambs: **“There ain’t enough room in this Temple for the both of us!”**

The groom then reveals himself, proclaims his love, and proposes. This is what Jesus begins in Jerusalem and finishes in Samaria, at the well, where He proclaims himself to be the Messiah. (John 4:25-26) First, He takes Johnny, Andy, Phil, and Nate to the Judean countryside to baptize in His name. Meanwhile, John-the-Baptist is baptizing on the far side of Samaria, at Aenon. [eye-KNOWN]

An argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. – John 3:25 NIV



The Riddle of the Certain Jew! The policy of John-the-Baptist's disciples would've been strict adherence. And, what certain Jew in his right mind would argue *against strict adherence*? And, how does Johnny, who *wrote* this, who was in Judea, know about a fight on the far side of Samaria? **Did he and Andy argue with a Certain Jew who declared an end to ceremonial washing?!** And, did they cross the Jordan, and take the 'clean' path that avoids Samaria, and run back to their former rabbi ... to *squel*?

They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him." ... You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.' The bride belongs to the bridegroom. ... He must become greater; I must become less. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." ["So, if I were you, I'd high-tail it back. And, whatever you do, don't argue with *that Certain Jew*"] – John 3:26-36 NIV condensed

So, back across the river, along the Jordan, avoiding Samaria, and back into Judea, to Jesus, who said, **"Ah! Just in time. Get your things; we *have to go through Samaria*.** (John 4:4) **Oh, and don't bring any kosher food, I'm going to send you into a despised and vile Samaritan town called Drunken, to get our dinner."**



And that brings us back to John, chapter four, the Woman at the Well, and our fourth jot: the Samaritans! Those are *modern* Samaritans dressed in their traditional white religious robes. **The disciples thought Jesus had only sent 'em into town for food.** He'd later scold 'em.

"My food," [My *satisfaction*] said Jesus, **"is to do the will of him [the Father] who sent me ...** – John 4:34a NIV



And, the Father's will would be what? Producing children! Heirs! Same reason Abraham sent his servant to a well to find a wife for Isaac, (Gen 24:14) the son of promise he'd been asked to sacrifice. **Most scholars believe the Samaritan woman was barren.** Adultery will get you stoned. Barrenness will get you five husbands and the scorn of your people, who believe that you're cursed.

To the disciples, she probably qualifies as the most despised woman in the Gospels. They had no idea that she's *them* ... and *us* ... symbolic of the bride Jesus came to redeem. That's why she had to be 50% Jew, 50% Gentile, and 100% despised by *both*, while living with a man who's abusing her situation, in the very place where God promised the Promised Land to Abraham. (Gen 12:6-7) **No son to support her and no children to accompany her to that isolated well, where her true Bridegroom is waiting to woo her out of a crisis of shame and into eternal honor and glory.**

... Jesus said to her, **"Will you give me a drink?"** [Same thing Abraham's *servant* said to the woman at the well when *he* was finding a bride] – John 4:7b NIV

This is like Jesus asking if you'll earnestly seek Him. **It might sound like He wants us to serve Him, but it's *always* the opposite.**

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?" – John 4:27 NIV

What a sad commentary John writes. **Jesus could've explained. But, He didn't. Why? As John points out, they didn't ask, didn't seek.** The Bible was written to be questioned. **When you're in God's word, do you ask Jesus why He does the things you don't understand?**

Then, leaving her water jar, [This term (G5201, hydria) is used three times in the Bible: twice when Jesus makes the toast, and here, when He reveals himself] the woman went back to the town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" They came out of the town and made their way toward him. [It's twins! No, wait ... it's triplets! I mean quadruplets! Quintuplets!] – John 4:28-30 NIV

Jesus told His disciples to open their eyes and see the fields, white for harvest. (John 4:35) I'll bet it was awash in a white sea of Samaritans! And, John got to see Isaiah's prophecy come to life.

"Sing, O barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband," says the Lord. ... "Do not be afraid; you will not suffer shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood. For your Maker is your husband — the Lord Almighty is his name — the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth. The Lord will call you back as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit — a wife who married young, only to be rejected," says your God. – Isaiah 54:1-6 NIV



Jesus stayed with the Samaritans for two days. They received Him as their Savior, and I assume they prepared a feast that was fit for a King. Samaritans still prepare lamb their traditional way, on a wooden stake, over a fiery pit.



And because of his words [His answers to their questions] many more became believers. They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, [Children ask a lot of questions] and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world." [Are you becoming like a child?] – John 4:41-42 NIV

Finally, **the groom departs to prepare all things.** Jesus left Samaria, and *then* the home of His *earthly* father and mother, to become one with His bride, on the cross, to cleanse us by His blood, and the *living water* that poured from His side.