

John 24 – The Woman at the Well

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Scripture 1: (Jn. 4:1-26 ESV)

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. And he had to pass through Samaria.

So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.)

The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying 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 water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock."

Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

The woman answered him, "I have no husband."

Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."

The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship."

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people 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 (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things."

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

Sermon:

Following the first three chapters of John's Gospel, we experience a significant transition in the Evangelist's presentation. The first three chapters were principally a theological record about places that Jesus went, some of the things that He did early on in His ministry, and what they meant. But, apart from Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus, the early part of this Gospel does not cover Jesus' teaching ministry with any great detail; merely a few simple statements made in uniquely specific contexts: when calling some disciples, during a wedding, and at a festival in a crowded place. Most of the introduction is taken up by the Evangelist's explaining Who Jesus is.

Yet now, as we move forward in this Gospel, John will become more focused the stories about Jesus. He will give us his recollection of Jesus's words and deeds, presenting them to us as evidence in support of His ultimate thesis that Jesus is:

- the *Logos* who is *Theos* and *Andros*;
- both God the Son and the Son of Man;
- the One who is “*above all*”; and,
- the Redeemer of all God's Elect children.

That Jesus Christ is the Sovereign, Creator LORD and the Redeemer of all His Chosen Israel.

Continuing on, the first narrative that John presents follows close upon the Baptist's explanation concerning the difference between himself and Jesus, that “*He [Jesus] must increase, but I [John] must decrease.*” (Jn. 3:30 ESV). This next story will be very familiar to everyone who has been in the Christian faith for a long time: it is the story of the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well; but perhaps we do not know it as well as we think.

We know that it is not just a story, because Jesus shares several important spiritual truths. Through His words and by His conversation with her, Jesus teaches “theology”. He is teaching us to think through certain things theologically, keeping our spiritual focus upon the LORD God. We will consider these different points over the next several weeks, while today will be more of an overview as we consider the story's purpose and its context.

“Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. And he had to pass through Samaria.”

Addressing the “elephant in the room” first, when we remember that John's Gospel was written last and was written later in the 1st Century, likely after Paul and Peter died in Rome (c. 56 AD), the Evangelist makes an important and necessary clarification, that “... *Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples...*”.

Paul admonished the Corinthians, “*I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.)*” (1 Cor. 1:14-16 ESV), because he identified the divisions within the Corinthian church as being related to the question of 'who baptized whom': on superiority debates based entirely upon what specific church leader a person followed. Today, when we still risk turning our church heroes into idols, whether: John Calvin, John Wesley, John Piper, John MacArthur, or Billy Graham; can you imagine how bad things could have gotten if a baptismal priority was carried to the furthest degree?

If the person who baptized affected its effectiveness, then who might have been the **best** person to have been baptized by?

- I was baptized by John the Baptist.
- I was baptized by Apollos.
- Hmm. Not bad, but I was baptized by Cephas; by Peter, the Apostle.
- Oh yeah? Well, I have you all beat because I was baptized by Jesus, Himself, way back when, at the very start of things.

How bad might that have really gotten? A person arguing that might well try to claim great honor for themselves because they were baptized by Jesus. That is why we need to remember the difference between John's baptism and the post-Resurrection baptism commanded to the disciples and the whole church.

- John's baptism was a “*baptism of repentance*” (Mark 1:4); a public profession of one's sinfulness and a confessed desire to live a changed life for God's glory. The person being baptized confessed their sins and professed contrition for their transgressions against God and men.
- Whereas, Christian baptism is a visible sign and a spiritual seal of a person's admission into covenant with God, or their anticipated and hoped for admission in the case of believer's children (WCF 28.1). Whereas, the one baptizing, the Church, confessed the person being baptized as being received into the family of God as a child of God, professing them baptized **into** “...*the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...*” (Matt. 28:19 ESV) and therefore, united **into** Christ Jesus.

But, there is a different question here however, that should be brought to our attention. “...*when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John...*”. The Evangelist implies that Jesus' impetus for traveling north was His knowledge that “...*the Pharisees had heard...*” but, so what? Why did it matter if the Pharisees knew what Jesus was doing?

- Might they come out to try and stop Him?;
- Might they listen and decide to follow him?
- Might they infiltrate and corrupt, or disrupt, His ministry as “tares among the wheat”?;
- Might they be the righteous “well” and not His intended audience since He was sent to heal the wickedly “sick” (Matt 9:12)?; or,
- Might it have been something else?

We cannot know for certain, but remembering that the Pharisees had gone out to inquire of the Baptist concerning his “spiritual identity”, back in the first chapter (1:24), we can understand why Jesus was not ready to answer those same questions yet, since 'His hour' had not yet come.

- Jesus was ready to begin to show them Who He is, but He was not yet ready to say Who He is to them.
- Jesus was becoming more popular and more influential than the Baptist so, if they had subjected John to such an interrogation, then, surely they would have done the same (if not moreso) to Jesus.
 - If Jesus had been asked directly at this point in His ministry, as the Pharisees' representatives asked John, “*And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to*

ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.)" (Jn. 1:19-24 ESV), then He would have had no choice except to answer them truthfully and clearly {because I do not think a reply of, "Who are you to ask me this? or "Who do you think I am?", would work.} by answering, "Yes, I am the Christ." because Jesus could not have lied since, if He gave false testimony about Himself: about Himself as God; He would violate the 9th Commandment and become a sinner.

I suggest that it was to preserve His sinless virtue {by avoiding a clear, unnecessary temptation to sin}, that Jesus and company "...left Judea and departed again for Galilee."

Then, "...he **had to** pass through Samaria.". Except He did not **have to** travel that route because there were two other available options. Therefore, if Jesus **had to**, then He **needed** to because of His divine purpose.

Why was traveling that route a big for Jesus¹?

- It was the shortest and most direct route between Jerusalem and Galilee, requiring only three days of travel by foot².
- However, it was more dangerous and inhospitable than the eastern route through Perea and the Decapolis, a route avoiding Samaria by traveling west of the Jordan river.
 - The longer, eastern route (taking five to seven days) was preferable because there were many Jewish communities there friendly towards pilgrims. Whereas the shorter route was dangerous because there was (and still is) a deep seated animosity between the Samaritans and the Jews.
 - While we are often reminded about this issue, in a general sense, whenever we consider the parable of the "Good Samaritan" {which is a truly terrible label}, we usually gloss over the depth of their animosity.

There are many reasons explaining the negative relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans and I am certain that each plays a part in it. The division and hatred between the two people is a product of ethnic discrimination (I.e. racism), cultural and political differences, and religious deviations.

The problem goes back to the time of the divided kingdom when the northern portion, commonly called Israel {as opposed to the southern kingdom of Judah}, came to be called "Samaria", in reference to the later capital established by Omri {father of Ahab} (1 Kings 16:23-26). After Samaria fell to the Assyrian Empire in 722 BC, most of the populace was removed and replaced with transplants from elsewhere. Over time the few remaining Israelites and these foreigners intermarried and syncretized their culture and religion. Later, after the southern kingdom fell in 586 BC, Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians similarly removed the people of Judah, although they left the land desolate and empty.

When the Judeans returned after the Babylonian exile, relations with their Samaritan neighbors and cousins were very "strained". The Jews considered the Samaritans to be impure "half-breeds" because of their mixed

1 <https://library.biblicalarchaeology.org/department/jesus-and-his-pilgrimage-practices/>

2 <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/new-testament/3-pilgrimage-paths-from-galilee-to-jerusalem/>

ethnic heritage and they kept themselves separate from them because in their opinion, Samaritan religion was “corrupted”, as opposed to the “pure” Jewish faith centered around Jerusalem.

Although that would be enough to explain or justify a rivalry, their relationship got even worse with the passage of time. According to the book of Ezra, during the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple, Samaritans were numbered among those who caused trouble with the Persian king and impeded the holy work (Ezra 4).

During the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the Jews and Samaritans were effectively equal, social rivals in the land, but after the Persian Empire fell to Alexander the Great and his empire collapsed and divided, Judea experienced alternating periods of autonomy and subjugation allowing for a Jewish resurgence. When the Hasmonean dynasty {“the Maccabees”} rose to power after securing Jewish independence from the Seleucid Empire, they began a systematic program of conquest to reclaim Israel's former territory via resettlement and forced immigration {a tactic which has again been repeated by the modern nation-State of Israel, vis a vis the Palestinian territories and the West Bank}. This included persecution and prosecution against the {now indigenous} Samaritan people by forcing their conversion to contemporary Jewish “orthodoxy”. {Considering this may explain why so many American Christians fear the idea of “Christian Nationalism” so much; because then whose orthodoxy would become the official standard?}

John Hyrcanus, the Jewish High Priest and Ethnarch {an ethnarch was like a king, being the ruler of a specific people (or “race”), but lacking the full sovereign authority of a king, due to their subservient allegiance to a distant imperial overlord} effected the destruction of the Samaritan's temple to YHVH located on Mt Gerizim (c. 110 BC), during their re-consolidation of Jerusalem's religious priority. But, after the Jewish state surrendered its independence to Rome {by inviting Pompey the Great into Jerusalem to “mediate” their succession dispute (c. 63 BC); Josephus Antiquities 14:55} and the Herodian dynasty replaced the Hasmoneans, the Samaritans remained a marginalized people. They were an oppressed, ethnic and religious minority segregated in the midst of a larger, ethnic and religious minority, who were themselves limited in authority and autonomy. This Samaritan social status {or perhaps, lack of social status} inspired regional strife and violence against Jews “wandering” in Samaria, thereby worsening the generational ethnic conflict.

Lastly, the root cause for their strife was their differences in religion. Both Jews and Samaritans believed that they were worshiping the same God, YHVH, and that they alone worshiped Him properly, as commanded by His Word. Their religious division, their schism, is traced back to the division of the kingdom during the reign of Solomon's son, Rehoboam.

After Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, split away the ten northern tribes, he established two worship sites in competition with the Jerusalem Temple: one in Dan and one at Bethel (1 Kings 12:26-33). He raised up an idol of a golden calf at each site and implied that these **idols** were Israel's hereditary God, YHVH. {Alternatively, we could trace this syncretic heresy to the incident at Mount Sinai when Aaron fashioned a golden calf for Israel to worship and declared, “*These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!*” When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, “*Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD.*” (Exod. 32:4-5 ESV).} Then, during the Omride dynasty, during the days of Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 16:29-22:40), the worship of Ba'al and Asherah rose in ascendance while the worship of YHVH declined. Finally, after the Assyrians imported foreigners and they mingled with the remaining Israelites, Samaritan religion evolved again into this, its final form.

Beyond the evidence of Scripture, archaeology has also reliably demonstrated that idolatry: that worship of other gods along with YHVH {syncretism}; was {unfortunately} a very normative practice in ancient Israel.

However, that does not refute the requirement of worshiping the LORD alone; instead it confirms the Biblical account of the people's sinfulness and regular unfaithfulness to their covenant God.

By the 1st Century, the Scripture used by the Jews was the TaNaK: the Torah (Law), the Navim (Prophets), and the Ketuvim (Writings); whereas the Samaritans only accepted the Pentateuch {similar to the Sadducees}: the Torah. Yet their version of the Torah (called the Samaritan Pentateuch today) was different. It is very different from the modern Hebrew {Masoretic} text {Leningrad Codex}, with around six thousand variations in the text identified (1.e; p. 774). However, both sides claimed the same antiquity of their texts, the same divine inspiration of their Torah, the same God (YHVH), and the same “rightness” of their religion and similarly condemned the other because of their “corruption” of the Mosaic text. {According to “The Interpreter's Dictionary of the BIBLE” (Supplementary Volume), around thirty four specific examples have been identified where the text has been significantly expanded upon in the Samaritan text, often by repeating material that is also located elsewhere within the Pentateuch (1.a; p. 772).} Particularly noteworthy, are additions to the Decalogue following Ex. 20:17 and Deut. 5:18, based upon Deut 27:2-3a, 4-7, 11:30 in the Samaritan text, supporting the divine command to build an altar upon Mount Gerizim, rather than Mount Ebal, and to worship there perpetually as the “place of God's choosing” (1.b; p. 773). {Furthermore, twenty one of those “expansions” are found in Deuteronomy and relate to God's preferred worship site.}

- This doctrinal difference, concerning where to worship God, defined their religious division.
- Both sides claimed *Sola Scriptura*, but each believed that the other's text was false.

Thus, Hyrcanus' destruction of the “unorthodox” Samaritan Temple was an act of religious oppression {today, it surely would be labeled a “hate crime”} cementing the Jews and Samaritans in their division.

These historical examples of oppression which caused their generational animosity and their Scriptural differences were what defined the social context into which Jesus now intentionally traveled into by going to Samaria.

- The Jews hated the Samaritans because they were so close to the truth of God, yet far enough off to be worse than the pagans of the Roman Empire who could not care less about the One True God.
- The Samaritans hated the Jews as racist oppressors, for religious persecution, for Jewish deviance from their elder, historic, “orthodox”, and divinely inspired faith; hating them enough to engage in violence against them and not support them or join them in common defense against their Roman overlords.

Is it not amazing how some things just never change, especially when it comes to differences in religion?

So, as we consider this story, we must remember that this is the volatile environment which Jesus was walking into.

“So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well.”. The town of Sychar is known today as Nablus, but in even more ancient biblical times it was called Shechem and it has a long history within redemptive history. It cannot be a coincidence that Jesus stopped here to rest, especially since Jews traveling this route ordinarily tried to cross Samaria in one day; so as to not stop in “unclean” lands.

- Shechem was where Abraham first paused upon his arrival in Canaan. The LORD appeared to him and he built an altar there (Genesis 12:6-7).;

- After Jacob returned to Canaan from his time in Haran and met his brother Esau, he bought property outside of Shechem and settled there (Genesis 33:18-20).;
- Shechem was the city which Jacob's sons put to the sword in retaliation for the rape of their sister, Dinah (Genesis 34).;
- Shechem was located between and in the shadow of Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, near to where the Israelites crossed the Jordan river into Canaan, following their wilderness wanderings, and where the tribes called out the LORD's blessings and curses (Deuteronomy 27; Joshua 8), with Joshua building an altar on Mount Ebal in accord with Moses's command in (Deut 27:4-8).
- After the exodus from Egypt and the Canaanite conquest, Shechem was included in the territory of Ephraim and the bones of Joseph were entombed there (Joshua 24:32).;
- Joshua renewed the covenant with Israel following the conquest at Shechem (Joshua 24).;
- Shechem was the home of Gideon's son (by a concubine), Abimelech, who betrayed and murdered his brothers (Judges 9).; And,
- Shechem was the initial capital of northern Israel under Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:25).

So, Jesus stopping here was surely intentional. Shechem was important to the Samaritans, and it was important to the Jews, making it also important for Christ. It was important enough for Him to go where He was neither expected nor wanted.

Yet another reason for why Jesus stopping there was important, is because of how He was modeling the future expansion and the growth of the Church.

First remember, that this portion of Jesus' prophetic ministry:

- began in Jerusalem during the Passover and driving the money-changers out of the Temple courts (2:14-22) before meeting with Nicodemus (3:1-21); then,
- He was out in the Judean countryside teaching and His followers were baptizing (3:22); now,
- He stopped in Samaria on His way to “*Galilee of the nations*”/“*Galilee of the Gentiles*” (Isaiah 9:1; Matthew 4:15).

Then remember, that Jesus' last command to His Apostles before ascending into heaven was, “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in **Jerusalem** and in all **Judea** and **Samaria**, and to the end of the earth.*” (Acts 1:8 ESV), and their Christian ministry is recorded progressively expanding outward from Jerusalem, to Judea, through Samaria to all the world in the book of Acts. Yes, even as Paul explains, Christ came “*...to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*” (Rom. 1:16 ESV), we are reminded that Jesus never excluded anyone but opened Himself and made Himself available to everyone

But then, once Jesus arrived in Samaria and rested beside Jacob's well, the story becomes rather weird and I think that “weirdness” leads us to the whole point of John including this story.

1. Jesus was traveled through Samaria, a region commonly avoided by devout Jews unless circumstance absolutely necessitated it.

2. Jews and Samaritans did not engage with one another socially; both sides preferred to maintain their separateness. And then,
3. Jesus engages with a woman privately, yet in a public circumstance, something which would not be considered “proper social conduct” between any man and a woman who was not his wife; especially between a Jewish man, a Jewish “rabbi” and a Samaritan woman.

These three points are so unusual, so unlikely, and so unexpected that they could cast doubt upon whether the entire exchange happened. The story is just too unbelievable! Which is precisely why we should believe it. It is so strange that we must accept it as the truth; as having happened precisely as John records it because it is too weird to have been “made up”.

- The truth really is “stranger than fiction”.

This story could not and would not have been fabricated by someone with the Evangelist's Jewish background. It went against all common practice and convention. Furthermore, if this unusual story was entirely unique, then it might be dismissable; however, Jesus' frequent treatment of people considered as “other”, His outreach to the marginalized, and His lack of concern for unnecessary social mores and convention (like sharing meals with people considered “sinners” and “unclean”), demonstrates that this story {uniquely found in John's Gospel} is well within Jesus' character and the scope of His common practice. That is why we should and must receive and believe this story, which is why we shall pay close attention to the spiritual matters that Jesus and this woman will discuss sitting beside “Jacob's well” in Sychar.

Therefore, as we continue to study and examine the spiritual truths they discuss in this conversation, we may be confident and secure in our faith to believe them.

Finally, the “moral of the story” that we should take from this brief overview, is to understand this:

- Jesus intentionally went where He was unwanted and unwelcome; going without fear.
- He went at risk to Himself: physical risk due to Samaritan animosity against Jews, social risk because of the Jews racist attitude towards the Samaritans, and a perceived spiritual risk because the people of the land were “ritually unclean” and Jesus risked “contamination” by contact with them. But,
 - Jesus went into and through Samaria because He considered the Samaritans to be more important and more worthy to hear the Gospel He had to share, than preserving His own life.
 - He went to Samaria to bring a message of hope, peace, love, and reconciliation with the LORD to a people who did not understand how much they needed it.
 - Jesus was living out the Gospel in that “...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. 5:8 ESV).
 - Jesus went to a people not His own, before His own even rejected Him, to show us that God the Son came into the *kosmos* for all nations and for all peoples.

How then shall we live in response to this? How shall we go where we and Christ are unwelcome or unwanted, to shine His light in the darkness?

- We must go out into the world, but especially out into the local world right around us.

- Foreign missions, like our ministry with Eduations in Sierra Leone, are great and wonderful works for Christ;
- National missions, like our work with Samaritan's Purse, are great partnerships with fellow American Christians; but,
- Local missions, local engagement in the different communities of Richland county and across Ohio are where we may make the greatest, longest lasting, and most substantial impact **and know** the effect we have had.
 - We may hear testimonials from people we have personally helped or engaged with.
 - We get to see the transformation of individual lives and experience the social improvement.

So, what risks are we, are **you** personally, willing to take to share the message and love of Jesus Christ with others?

Do we fear men that can only kill the body, more than we fear the God who has saved and redeemed our souls (Matt 10:28)? Where are we willing to go, at some risk of a personal cost, to love others for Christ, to *agape* in the Name of Jesus?

I would challenge us, and remind us all to remember that every time we step out our front door we are standing in the “mission field”.

Let us remember that everyone needs Jesus, and we should not and cannot deny anyone the opportunity to meet Him.

Let us go where we might otherwise feel like we should not or could not go, going without fear and carrying the hope of Jesus' love for us and for our neighbors.

Let us be courageous in taking the light of Christ into the darker corners of life, where we do not usually shine it, because Jesus has gone before us and because Jesus commands us to take Him to the very “end of the earth” and there are still places which remain unreached.

Let us go now, in the love of God and in our shared love for all of our neighbors, taking the Gospel of Jesus Christ to them, no matter who they are.

Let us tell everyone about how Jesus loves them so much that He lived, died, rose again, and now reigns in heaven for them so that they may be reconciled to God and to one another, justified in His sight and received as His beloved children, to enjoy Him forever.

Let us tell them about this great gift of grace that they may receive, if they would only turn to Him in repentance and faith; if they would only believe and trust Him.

Let us tell them about the new life, the transformed and changed life of righteousness, obedience, and love that we now walk in; living now in the loving glory of His presence.

That is good news worth sharing, so let us take it where it is needed most; everywhere we go, but especially to the places that we might otherwise think of as Samaria.

AMEN

Appendix: Notes

- “And when it so happens that LORD God brings you to the land of Canaan, which you are coming to possess, you shall set up there for you great stones and plaster them with plaster and you write on the stones all words of this law. And it becomes for you that across the Jordan you shall raise these stones, which I command you today, in mountain Gerizim. And you build there the altar to the LORD God of you. Altar of stones. Not you shall wave on them iron. With whole stones you shall build the altar to LORD God of you. And you bring on it ascend offerings to LORD God of you, and you sacrifice peace offerings, and you eat there and you rejoice before the face of the LORD God of you. The mountain this is across the Jordan behind the way of the rising of the sun, in the land of Canaan who is dwelling in the desert before the Galgal, beside Alvin-Mara, before Sechem.”
 - ("Deuteronomy – Interlinear Pentateuch". Archived from the original on 2016-08-20. Retrieved 2014-01-05.)
- “Now Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, "Keep the whole commandment that I command you today. And on the day you cross over the Jordan to the land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall set up large stones and plaster them with plaster. And you shall write on them all the words of this law, when you cross over to enter the land that the LORD your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you. And when you have crossed over the Jordan, you shall set up these stones, concerning which I command you today, on Mount Ebal, and you shall plaster them with plaster. And there you shall build an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones. You shall wield no iron tool on them; you shall build an altar to the LORD your God of uncut stones. And you shall offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God, and you shall sacrifice peace offerings and shall eat there, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God. And you shall write on the stones all the words of this law very plainly.””
 - (Deut. 27:1-8 ESV)