

John - Commentaries by L. Douglas Nicolet

The Christian Shepherd: 2001, Editorial: "Give Me to Drink" (4:6-7)

"Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink" (John 4:6-7).

What an amazing request! Here, the eternal Son of God—come in flesh—is found weary with His journey. Was He feeling this only as Man? He surely did feel that which we feel—hunger, thirst, loneliness and sorrow. But this weariness was more than merely human, for, as the eternal Son of God, He had come unto His own only to find rejection. The light of His personal glory had shone into the moral darkness of this world—a darkness so great that the world had not comprehended it.

The One full of grace and truth walked in lowly submission among the "all things" that were made by Him. And what did He find? All was ruined by sin. He was in the world, but it knew Him not.

The Pharisees—religious leaders of His beloved earthly people—rejected Him too. They sought, in jealous hatred, to turn the people that they were responsible to guide to Jehovah against Him. Oh! we say again, how weary with His journey the blessed Man of Sorrows must have been, as He sat at that well!

Jacob's Fountain and the Divine Fountain

What a picture we see in Sychar's well. That fountain, where Jacob found refreshment for himself, his children and his cattle, now hosts its divine antitype—"Jesus . . . sat thus on the well" (John 4:6). The true Fountain of living water replaces Jacob's fountain with that which is eternal.

The Thirsty Saviour

How wearying to the Lord's holy soul was the unbelief that He met! But if those of His own would not have Him, He then must needs go through Samaria. If the lips of His beloved earthly people are silent, the Lord will have praise of stones (Luke 19:40). His loving heart, if not refreshed by the Jews, will find its joy in meeting the need of a thirsty, outcast sinner.

He who became poor that we through His poverty might be rich thus perfectly fulfills Jacob's prophecy. He is that "fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall" (Gen. 49:22).

Thus the God of Jacob, having taken upon Himself the form of a Servant, sits there—"just as He was" (JND)—humble, weary, rejected, the divine fountain of living water—the source springing up into everlasting life—and He requests of the outcast Samaritan woman, "Give Me to drink."

The Thirsty Sinner

Who was this one of whom the Creator condescends to make such a request? A despised, moral castaway because of her lifestyle and belonging to a race of spiritual outcasts (Samaritans). Thus does she blindly claim what is not hers: "Our father Jacob, which gave us the well." In principle she is "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). What a hopeless condition!

She who had drunk at this world's well five times and was yet seeking to quench her thirst in a futile sixth attempt is about to receive the true water of eternal life. Finding this seventh time the living water she has longed for, she then must immediately share her discovery with those very men who knew her best. "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

The Satisfied Saviour

The disciples, oblivious to the desires of their Lord, were gone away into the city to buy meat for Him. But He had meat to eat which they knew nothing about (John 4:34). When they come back to Him with this world's food, saying, "Master, eat," He tells them of that which has fully satisfied His heart—to do the will of God.

The woman came back with something better than the meat offered by the disciples. She brought the men of the city—those whose spiritual needs provided the eternal Giver's heart joy as they too drew from the Fountain of eternal life (John 4:30).

A Drink for Him From the Redeemed

Oh! that we too may respond to the expressed desire of His blessed heart—"give Me to drink"—as did David's mighty men who brought their beloved king water from Bethlehem's well. Let each redeemed soul give Him daily a refreshing drink of love, worship and devotion. What a high and holy service—what a privilege belongs to the redeemed—to be able to give Him that which He desires in a world that only knows how to take for itself.

A Drink for Him From the World

Let us never forget the final, awful insult this world rendered to our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. There, hanging on the cross after those six long hours of mockery and agony and those three awful hours of forsaking of holy God, knowing that all things were now accomplished, He said, "I thirst." Was there any sympathy, pity or compassion shown that innocent Victim's request? Ah! they offer the Lord of glory water made bitter with sour wine (vinegar) to satisfy His thirst (John 19:29).

May we be stirred to ever give that peerless, glorified Man the desire of His blessed heart—a refreshing drink, suitable and acceptable to Himself.

"Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name" (Heb. 13:15).

Ed.

The Christian Shepherd: 2001, Editorial: "Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled" (20:19)

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you" (John 20:19).

In a day when there seems to be so much weakness and discouragement in assemblies, this verse contains great comfort for the two or three gathered together to His name. Christ's assembly, and its local expression, is ever a target of Satan's unrelenting attacks and religious men's ridicule. Yet, in the midst of this spiritual conflict, the Holy Spirit has provided this precious verse that He might "comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work" (2 Thess. 2:17).

Let's briefly consider, for our solace, a few of the sparkling gems it contains, relative to the assembly.

First: "The same day at evening." The event recorded here happened on the first day of the week—the Lord's Day, the day which saw our Saviour rise triumphant over death and the grave, after finishing—once and forever—the work of redemption. The glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from among the dead is the foundation of all blessing. In Christ's death, God has been forever satisfied about sin. In Christ's resurrection, God has given proof of His eternal satisfaction (Eph. 1:20).

"He is not here: for He is risen" (Matt. 28:6). How glorious are these blessed words of Scripture! The grave could not hold Him, corruption could not touch Him, and death could not overpower Him. Now He who died is "risen again, who is even at the right hand of God" (Rom. 8:34). Thus believers by faith look up and see "Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:9).

Is it any wonder then that the first day of the week—the Lord's Day—is connected with the gathering together of His own (the assembly) to remember Him in His death (Acts 20:7)?

Second: "Where the disciples were assembled." How wonderful that today there is still a place where His own can, as gathered by the Spirit, enjoy collective fellowship with Himself. The Lord gave principles regarding that place when He sent His disciples to find the "large upper room furnished" (Luke 22:12), where they were to make ready the passover feast. There is room enough for every redeemed child of God to gather around Himself, in the place of His appointment. It is a large upper room and all that is needed to be able to enjoy His blessed presence has been furnished.

Third: "The doors were shut." The room where the disciples assembled had doors that could be shut to keep out the adversary. The disciples had good reason to fear the Jews, for those inveterate enemies of the Lord Jesus and His followers would stop at nothing to stamp out the truth, which they could not deny. Today the assembly still needs strong doors—doors closed against false teaching and wicked doctrine, which the religious world seeks to bring into the very midst of Christ's assembly.

The assembly must be on constant guard against evil men who, as in Jude's day, had crept in unawares into its very bosom. By their invidious presence, wicked ways and false doctrines, they corrupt the pure, divine truth—the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

"Came Jesus."

Person.

loved

in Person.

Remember, dear fellow-believer, He has said, "There am I" (Matt. 18:20), and it is to this blessed Person we gather. His promised, personal presence leaves no room for dogmas, sects, man-made standards of conduct or any other such thing. When believers are so gathered to Himself, by the Holy Spirit, He is collectively in the midst—even as He was bodily in the midst of the disciples that Lord's Day evening.

"In the midst."

in the midst.

Is it not sweet to think that, in like manner, we gather—not to a place—but around a divine Person. He is there in the midst as He has promised, equally accessible to all who are gathered there with Him. In a coming day in glory, our blessed Saviour will sing "in the midst of the assembly" (Heb. 2:12 JND). Should it not be our joy to sing to Him now in the midst of the two or three?

“And saith unto them.”

who loved me and gave Himself for me.

strange

sheep

Chief Shepherd!

Seventh: “Peace be unto you.” What precious words to hear our blessed Saviour utter. Isaiah, by divine inspiration, twice tells us that “there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” But the Prince of Peace has come and, standing in the breach, is our peace, has made our peace (through the blood of His cross—Col. 1:20), and has preached peace to those otherwise who could never possess and enjoy peace with God (Eph. 2).

The foundation on which the Lord Jesus came to them with the message of peace is found in John 20:20: “When He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.” We too will be glad when, gathered in His blessed presence, we see Him by faith and realize, in our measure, what it cost Him to redeem us to Himself.

(Little Flock Hymnbook, #283)

Ed.

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