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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

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A Samaritan Women at the Well.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

In today's Bible Adventure, we have to look at some background for the cause of rivalry that existed between the Jews and their northern neighbours, the Samaritans at the time Jesus was on earth.

During his reign, King Solomon needed many workers for building God's Temple, a few palaces and fortresses for security. The taxes that the Jewish people were expected to pay were very heavy to provide for the king and his projects.

When Solomon died and was replaced by his son Rehoboam, the people asked for some tax cuts. The new king unwisely listened to his friends and spoke harshly to the people, telling them instead that he'd increase their taxes for furthering his own purposes. The kingdom was thus split between 2 southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin, while the 10 northern tribes took a leader called Jeroboam as their king. This happened in 930 BC.

God had designated the Temple in Jerusalem to be the place of worship to Him and through his servant Moses, had given instructions about a number of feasts to be celebrated there throughout the year. The northern king didn't want his people to be travelling back to Jerusalem regularly, as he thought they might decide to reunite with their southern relatives. So against God's laws, Jeroboam set up 2 golden calves as idols to be worshipped in a temple on the mountain called Gerizim. Devout worshippers of God were outraged and moved south, but the rest of the people seemed to accept what had been done.

God sent His prophets to the northern kingdom but they didn't change their ways. So in 722 BC, the Assyrian army came down and captured the capital Samaria. They took away 27,000 people into captivity but left the country districts alone. This new Assyrian province was weak and under-populated. Immigrants from Assyria were brought in and their idols came with them.

The immigrants, after nearly 200 years in the land, offered their services to help rebuild the walls of Jerusalem when a large group of Judean people led by Nehemiah returned to Judah after the Babylonian exile. The immigrants' offers of help were refused. Although they thought of themselves as Jewish, the Samaritans had intermarried with other nationalities and were not considered pure in the sight of God. This rejection angered them, and so from then on, they tried to stop the work. This rivalry was strong for hundreds of years. And although the temple on Mount Gerizim was destroyed by invaders, the Samaritan people still worshipped their false gods there.

And this is the background to the bad relationship between the Jewish people and the Samaritans.

The Jordan Valley is 800 feet below sea level and the Samarian hills climb steeply to being 2,000 feet above sea level over 7 miles. The Lord Jesus had chosen to go through Samaria but it's little wonder that He was tired from this walk by the time he and his disciples reached Jacob's well outside of Shechem.

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The tradition of conflict between the Jews and Samaritans was carefully preserved. However, the Lord Jesus spoke courteously to this immoral woman, who was an outcast among her own people. She came to the well for water in the middle of the day so she wouldn't meet the other women later in the afternoon. This account of her meeting with Jesus is told in John's Gospel, Chapter 4.

When Jesus asked the woman for a drink of water, she questioned why he, a Jew, should speak to a Samaritan woman at that. Jesus offered her living water, the Holy Spirit to satisfy her soul. What Jesus spoke of symbolically, the woman took literally. She was talking of visible things yet Jesus was talking about eternal invisible things.

Although Jesus was showing the human traits of weariness, hunger and thirst, His deepest desire was for the salvation of this sinful woman. He forgot his physical needs and concentrated on her spiritual needs. Patiently, He revealed Himself to her as a Jew, as one greater than Jacob, as a prophet and as the Messiah.

When the disciples returned with food, they too wondered why Jesus was talking to a Samaritan woman. But they knew it would be for some good reason and for some good end. After she'd gone, the disciples urged Jesus to eat something.

But Jesus explained to them His greater need was to do His Father's will. Doing the will of God should be the food that nourishes us and not medicine that upsets us. The disciples were satisfied with material food, but Jesus wanted satisfying spiritual food from God. The will of God gives us the strength we need to do our job in the great harvest of souls all around us.

The time to take part in the harvest is only short and we must be busy while we can do so. God sometimes uses very weak and unlikely people for beginning and carrying on a good work for Him. By teaching one poor woman, Jesus spread knowledge to a whole town. The townspeople came out to hear Jesus and He stayed there for 2 whole days.

A missionary working in a poor South American country was climbing a steep mountain to get to a town built on the plateau at the top. So steep was the road that rest areas with seats had been built for weary travellers on the roadside to refresh themselves until they were ready to continue their journey. When the missionary reached one of these rest areas, there was already a group of people there. He asked them if they were a certain religion and they all said that they were. So the missionary asked them if they wanted to know for sure that they were going to heaven.

Then he told them what the Scriptures said from memory. He hadn't planned to go talking about Christ that day. He didn't have any Bibles for the people who said they'd just given their lives to the Lord Jesus. The missionary told them to be at his house on Sunday morning and he would give them each a Bible. When a few days passed and it was Sunday, there was a knock on his door at 7 o'clock in the morning. All the people who said they would give their loyalty to Jesus and no longer to their religion, were there waiting for a Bible.

Just like the Lord Jesus, that missionary made the most of each opportunity to talk about the things of God whenever one came, even when he wasn't prepared.

Some people coming to Christ have a great deal more background knowledge of the Bible than others do. The initial confession of faith in the Lord Jesus is only the start. The convert must then be trained in the things of the Lord.

This can be explained from the four main points in the book of Romans. These are highlighted by the word "therefore" at the beginning of chapters 2, 5, 8 and 12. The first one is condemnation for those who are living their lives without Christ. The second is justification when God looks at each repentant sinner through the shed blood of Jesus and sees the sinner as He sees Jesus – perfect.

The third is sanctification, the process of making the believer godly through the learning of Scripture and obedience to the Holy Spirit's leading. And the fourth one is consecration, being the decision to dedicate our bodies as living sacrifices to God, wholly devoted to His service.

This record of Jesus explaining the things of God to an immoral woman teaches us a lot about attitudes towards other people.

Jesus didn't show prejudice against a foreigner or look down scornfully on the woman because she was a woman or judgmentally because she hadn't kept society's standards. Even when she was confused about what He was saying, He acted patiently with her.

If we want to speak to someone about the Lord Jesus, we need to show respect and be friendly too. Throughout His ministry, the Lord Jesus treated women as human beings of great value in the sight of God. Only pride leads a man to think he's better than any woman, for he himself was born of a woman and owes his early life to her constant care.

Make this the aim of your life: Colossians, Chapter 3, Verse 23: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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