

not being unwittingly snared by humanist doctrines.

Warnings for today

Returning to Revelation 16, it must be noted what the Lord Jesus Christ had to say, following his statement about the spirits like frogs going forth: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (v. 15).

The first warning in this verse is to watch. Our Lord gave another warning, which is relevant to our watching and his return, in Luke 12:39: "And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through". The man who was not watching suffered his house to be broken up. Those who are not watching when the Master returns will suffer their lives to be broken up.

Taking the warnings in Revelation 16 and Luke 12 together, the message is clear. Being deceived by human thinking into placing emphasis on this life and its achievements will result in losing life eternal: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it" (Mk. 8:35).

The second warning in Revelation 16:15 is about 'keeping our garments', keeping an effective covering for our sin. Humanist thought, with its resultant action, will rob us of that covering if we are not aware of the deceitful and destructive influence it can have on believers. The Lord Jesus Christ has given a specific warning to the household of faith today to beware of the froglike spirits, but sadly many will not even be aware of the warning because Revelation is possibly the most neglected book in Scripture. It is surely incumbent on all who are aware of this warning to sound the alarm while there is still time. The antidote is, of course, to read and meditate on the Word of life:

"Salvation depends upon the assimilation of the mind to the divine ideas, principles, and affections exhibited in the Scriptures . . . The infallible advice then to every man and woman anxious about their salvation, is—READ THE SCRIPTURES DAILY. It is only in proportion as this is done, that success may be looked for".²

(Concluded)

2. Robert Roberts in the Introduction to the *Bible Companion*.

The woman by the well

An exposition of John 4:1-42 (2)

John M. Forbes

C. The woman with no husband

THE FACT THAT Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman took place at Sychar is significant. It was at Sychar, earlier known as Shechem (according to most authorities; others believe that they were located on two adjacent sites), that God first appeared to Abraham in Canaan and promised that that land would be given to his seed (Gen. 12:6,7). That promise, made to one who was to be the father of many nations, was not restricted to Abraham's physical descendants but applied to those of all nations who would demonstrate belief in the Lord Jesus Christ through the cleansing waters of baptism (Gal. 3:27-29). And, as was the case when Jesus met the woman, the land at that time was under

the rule of the alien, a fact which testifies to the gift of God, the promise of resurrection made to Abraham (Acts 7:2-5).

Sychar/Shechem is described as being in "the plain of Moreh". Strong states that "Moreh" means 'teacher' and 'early rain'. Joel speaks of the two advents of the Lord Jesus in these terms. These rains describe the "teacher of righteousness", who was to appear on two separate occasions, both relating to the times and the seasons. As the "former [early] rain" he was to come to give life to the seed which had been sown. As the "latter rain" he is to appear immediately before the harvest which was promised to Abraham, and to which Jesus refers in John 4:34,35 (Joel 2:23 with mg.; vv. 28-32; Acts 2:16-21).

It was as the early rain that the Teacher of Righteousness, who would "tell us all things"

(Jno. 4:25), appeared to the woman by Jacob's well in Samaria.

The challenge of the Truth

When Jesus travelled through Samaria he did not preach in the cities, that is, to the people of the land. He was the bridegroom, come to those to whom God was "an husband" through the covenant made at Sinai (Jer. 31:32). He did not come to those who, by reason of their union with a false god, were espoused to the alien.*

And the woman, despite her belief in Jacob as her father and in the coming Messiah, was of Ephraim, and Ephraim was not God's people. Those who were like the woman were lost sheep. They had lost their way, and their uncertainties regarding the place and the manner in which God was to be worshipped were exposed by Jesus when he said, "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews" (Jno. 4:22). Yet those in Samaria would have been aware of the preaching of the Baptist, whom Jesus likened to Elijah in terms of his mission (Mk. 9:11-13; Isa. 40:1-5; Mal. 4).

Centuries before, the prophet Elijah had been sent to the northern ten tribes to deal with the very problem that faced the woman: "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kgs. 18:21). Regarding Elijah's challenge, we read that "the people answered him not a word". But what ought they to have done? The answer is clear: "Salvation is of the Jews". Jerusalem was the place where the Lord had chosen to place His Name and the place where He was to be worshipped. They ought to have repented and returned to the worship of God, centred in the temple at Jerusalem, in obedience to the Law.

What, then, of the woman and the others who believed Jesus? What ought they to have done? They were faced with the same challenge. Despite what we read in John 4:1 of the baptisms carried out by Jesus' disciples, there is no record of the woman or of the other believing Samaritans being baptized at that time.

Indeed, baptism would not have been appropriate. Prior to the sacrificial death of Jesus it was only for those who were God's people, those espoused to God through the Law. And Ephraim, having been adulterously espoused to another, and still apostate, were not God's people.

So what ought the Samaritans to have done, that is, those who believed Jesus? They recognised him as the Teacher of Righteousness, the one of

whom the woman said, "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things" (v. 25). Having been taught, they ought to have demonstrated the faith and the works of their father Abraham, in order to become again God's people, the true seed of Abraham.

The faith of Abraham

Abraham, having been called of God, "went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11:8). This was the necessary beginning of a faith by which he was to receive the "gift of God" offered to the woman by Jesus, which is eternal life (Rom. 6:23). This was a step which, in different ways, all the faithful are required to take if Abraham is to be their spiritual father. The faithful must follow the example of Abraham, as did the faithful forebears of the woman.

When forced to choose between the truth and apostasy at the separation of the ten tribes, those who chose truth withdrew from Ephraim and moved to Judah, an act which would have involved hardship and suffering, loss of homes and division of families, but which is commended to this day to those who seek to worship the Lord in sincerity and truth (2 Chron. 11:13-17; cf. Mt. 19:27-30). Seventy years later they were faced with the same test when that double-mindedness which accepts the introduction of falsehood into the truth of the gospel was exposed by Elijah. And we read in 2 Chronicles 30 of those who forsook idolatrous Ephraim to worship God in Jerusalem in the reformation of Hezekiah, and this despite the scorn of their contemporaries.

The seed of Abraham must do the works of Abraham, who separated himself from false belief and went out, not knowing where he was to go, for the Kingdom of God's sake.

The woman and her companions ought to have forsaken Samaria and joined with Judah, which at that time was still God's people. There the baptism of John would have accomplished two things as a result of their repentance and faith. They would have been forgiven past sins, and by that symbolic death they would have been freed from their espousal through the Law in preparation for espousal to the risen Christ. Heeding the cry of the Elijah figure they would have prepared the way of the Lord (Mt. 3:1-3;

* Nevertheless, after the episode of the woman by the well, he did stay and preach to the people (Jno. 4:39-42).

Rom. 7:1-6). Through their obedience to the cry of the Baptist, which was “the counsel of God” (Lk. 7:30), they would have become God’s people with the hope of resurrection to glory at the second advent of the Lord Jesus.

The command to believers under the new covenant, “come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters,

saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:17,18), applied equally to those in Samaria who were unequally yoked together with unbelievers, those who embraced a corrupted truth. The gift of God, the hope of eternal life, brings with it corresponding responsibilities. The gift cannot be separated from the test of faith. Jesus brought both the gift and the test to the Samaritan believers.

But what about Ephraim?

[\(To be concluded\)](#)

Another marvel of the human frame

David Burges

THE WONDERS and complexities of the human body are well known to us. The Creator made man “in His own image . . . male and female created He them”, and consequently we are “fearfully and wonderfully made”. One of the fundamental features of the body with which we are all familiar is the continuous circulation of the blood, first demonstrated by William Harvey in 1628. The marvellous organic pump which is the heart, the lungs which oxygenate the blood, together with the arrangement of arteries and veins, form a superbly designed system to circulate oxygen and essential nutrients to the tissues of the body. Here is a complex, life-sustaining arrangement which God has chosen in Scripture to represent the life of the person itself, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood” (Lev. 17:11).

The lymph system

Much less well known is another circulating fluid system that is equally vital to the healthy functioning of the body: the lymph system. The brief, simplified description that follows is, it is hoped, sufficient to convey just how extraordinarily complex is even this relatively unrecognised structure of the body, and how it bears all the hallmarks of intelligent design.

Lymph fluid originates from a component of the blood known as plasma. The plasma of blood flowing in the arteries is rich in nutrients for the cells. When it reaches the capillaries, the flow of blood is slowed so that plasma can leave and permeate the body tissues as so-called tissue fluid. Tissue fluid delivers the essential nutrients, oxygen and hormones required by the cells. It also collects and carries away some cellular waste products.

About ninety per cent of the tissue fluid returns to the capillaries, where it again becomes blood [plasma](#) and continues its journey throughout the body as part of the circulation through the veins. Lymph is the ten per cent of the tissue fluid that is left behind, amounting to one to two litres in the whole body.

The role of lymph

The function of tissue fluid is to deliver the nutrients to the cells. The role of lymph is to take out the waste products that are left behind, including dead blood cells, pathogens and cancer cells, and to dispose of them. It thus forms an essential component of the immune system. The lymphatic system collects this fluid by [diffusion](#) into lymph [capillaries](#), and returns it to the veins via the lymph nodes, which filter the fluid to prevent bacteria entering the blood stream.

The lymphatic capillaries form a mesh-like network of tiny tubes that are distributed throughout the tissue spaces and are located just under the skin. These capillaries branch and interconnect freely so that they extend into almost all tissues in the body. The lymphatic system acts as a secondary circulatory system. Unlike the blood circulation system, the lymphatic system is not closed and has no central pump; the lymph moves slowly and under low pressure. Like [veins](#), lymph vessels have one-way valves and depend mainly on the movement of skeletal muscles to squeeze fluid through them. Rhythmic contraction of the vessel walls may also help draw fluid into the lymphatic capillaries. This fluid is then transported to progressively larger lymphatic vessels before draining into veins in the circulatory system.