



# John the Baptist

*John 3:30-36*





# The Woman at the Well

*John 4:1-42*



He must increase, but I *must* decrease. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure *unto him*. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. (John 3:30–36)



Looking in faith to the Redeemer, John had risen to the height of **self-abnegation**. He sought not to attract men to himself, but to lift their thoughts higher and still higher, **until they should rest upon the Lamb of God**. He himself had been only a voice, a cry in the wilderness. **Now with joy he accepted silence and obscurity**, that the eyes of all might be turned to the Light of life. (*DA* 179.4)



# Abnegation

- ✦ Renouncing or rejecting something
- ✦ Self-abnegation is the denial of self. The opposite would be self-exaltation, pride, outward show.



It is on the point of self-abnegation that many a heaven-bound soul fails, and gradually turns away from following Christ. (*SpTB05 33.4*)



Like the Saviour's disciples, John the Baptist did not understand **the nature of Christ's kingdom**. He expected Jesus to take the throne of David; and as time passed, and the Saviour made no claim to kingly authority, **John became perplexed and troubled.** (*DA* 215.2)



The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; on every hand were crying abuses,—extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty. Yet **the Saviour attempted no civil reforms**. He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments. Not because He was indifferent to the woes of men, but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart. (*DA* 509.3)



So Jesus was to do His work, not with the clash of arms and the overturning of thrones and kingdoms, but through speaking to the hearts of men by a life of mercy and self-sacrifice. (*DA* 217.2)



The principle of the Baptist's own life of self-abnegation was **the principle of the Messiah's kingdom**. John well knew how foreign all this was to the principles and hopes of the leaders in Israel. That which was to him convincing evidence of Christ's divinity would be no evidence to them. They were looking for a Messiah who had not been promised. (*DA* 218.1)



In training His disciples, Jesus chose to withdraw from the confusion of the city to the quiet of the fields and hills, as more in harmony with the **lessons of self-abnegation** He desired to teach them. (*DA* 291.1)



Jesus now explained to His disciples that His own life of self-abnegation **was an example of what theirs should be**. Calling about Him, with the disciples, the people who had been lingering near, He said, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his **cross** daily, and follow Me.” The cross was associated with the power of Rome. It was the instrument of the most cruel and humiliating form of death. The lowest criminals were required to bear the cross to the place of execution . . .



... and often as it was about to be laid upon their shoulders, they resisted with desperate violence, until they were overpowered, and the instrument of torture was bound upon them. **But Jesus bade His followers take up the cross** and bear it after Him. To the disciples His words, though dimly comprehended, pointed to their submission to the most bitter humiliation,—submission even unto death for the sake of Christ. No more complete self-surrender could the Saviour's words have pictured. (*DA* 416.3)



God proposes to **purify** and **refine** the defiled soul; then He will **implant** in the heart His own righteousness and peace and health, and man becomes complete in Him. (*II Lt Ms*, Lt 73, 1896, par. 37)



**This is the kingdom of God within you.** Day by day men are revealing whether the kingdom of God is within them. If Christ rules in their hearts, they are gaining strength of principle, power, ability to stand as faithful sentinels, true reformers, for there can be no reform unless there is a thorough co-operation with Jesus Christ. **Through the grace of Christ men are to use their God-given faculties to reform themselves;** by this self-denying action, which the Lord of heaven looks upon with approval, **they gain victories over their own hereditary and cultivated tendencies.**

*(II Lt Ms, Lt 73, 1896, par. 38)*



The kingdom of God comes **not with outward show**. The gospel of the **grace** of God, with its spirit of **self-abnegation**, can never be in harmony with **the spirit of the world**. The two principles are antagonistic. (*DA* 509.1)

For the kingdom of God is . . . righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.  
(Romans 14:17)



A congregation may be the poorest in the land. It may be without the attraction of any outward show; but if the members possess the principles of the character of Christ, they will have His joy in their souls. Angels will unite with them in their worship. The praise and thanksgiving from grateful hearts will ascend to God as a sweet oblation. (*COL* 298.3)



Never are we to seek for outward show. Let our showing be such that the light of truth can shine through our good works . . . (*CH* 276.3)

. . . real greatness can dispense with outward show.  
(*DA* 242.3)



And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with **observation**: (Luke 17:20). (Marginal reading is **outward show**.)

Jesus answered, “The kingdom of God cometh not with outward show; [margin]: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” **The kingdom of God begins in the heart.** Look not here or there for manifestations of earthly power to mark its coming. (*DA* 506.2)



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But today in the religious world there are multitudes who, as they believe, are working for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as an earthly and temporal dominion. They desire to make our Lord the ruler of the kingdoms of this world, the ruler in its courts and camps, its legislative halls, its palaces and market places. They expect Him to rule through legal enactments, enforced by human authority. Since Christ is not now here in person, they themselves will undertake to act in His stead, to execute the laws of His kingdom. (*DA* 509.2)



The establishment of such a kingdom is what the Jews desired in the days of Christ. **They would have received Jesus**, had He been willing to establish a temporal dominion, to enforce what they regarded as the laws of God, and to make them the expositors of His will and the agents of His authority. But He said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” John 18:36. He would not accept the earthly throne. (*DA* 509.2)



On the record of those who through self-abnegation have entered into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, stand—one in the Old Testament and one in the New—the names of **Jonathan** and of **John the Baptist**. (*Ed* 156.6)



Jonathan, by birth heir to the throne, yet knowing himself set aside by the divine decree; to his rival the most tender and faithful of friends, shielding David's life at the peril of his own; steadfast at his father's side through the dark days of his declining power, and at his side falling at the last—the name of Jonathan is treasured in heaven, and it stands on earth a witness to the existence and the power of unselfish love. (*Ed* 157.1)



John the Baptist, at his appearance as the Messiah's herald, stirred the nation. From place to place his steps were followed by vast throngs of people of every rank and station. But when the One came to whom he had borne witness, all was changed. The crowds followed Jesus, and John's work seemed fast closing. Yet there was no wavering of his faith. "He must increase," he said, "but I must decrease." John 3:30. (*Ed* 157.2)



Time passed, and the kingdom which John had confidently expected was not established. In Herod's dungeon, cut off from the life-giving air and the desert freedom, he waited and watched. There was no display of arms, no rending of prison doors; but the healing of the sick, the preaching of the gospel, the uplifting of men's souls, testified to Christ's mission. Alone in the dungeon, seeing whither his path, like his Master's, tended, John accepted the trust—fellowship with Christ in sacrifice. **Heaven's messengers attended him to the grave.** The intelligences of the universe, fallen and unfallen, witnessed his vindication of unselfish service.

*(Ed 157.3-5)*



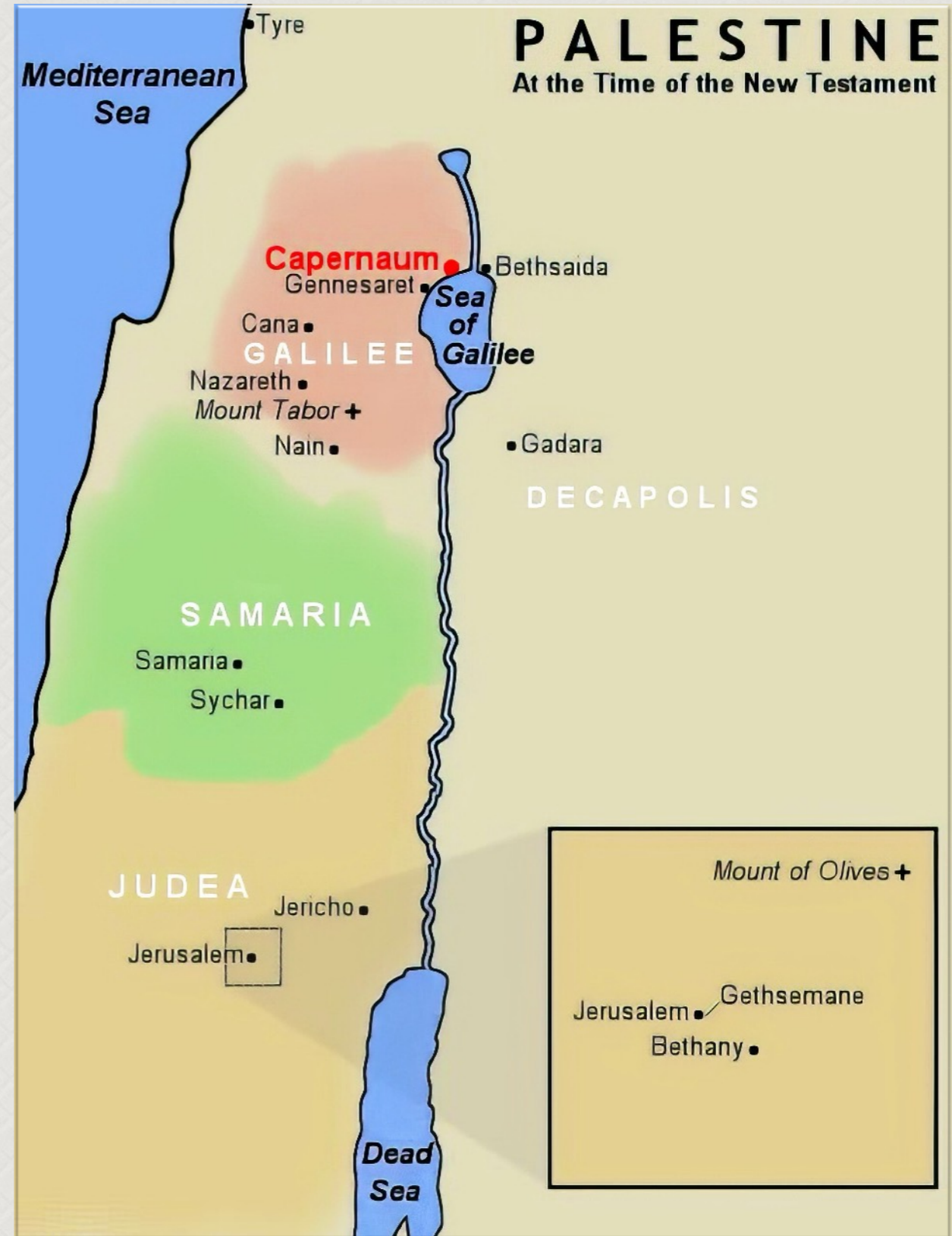
And in all the generations that have passed since then, suffering souls have been sustained by the testimony of John's life. In the dungeon, on the scaffold, in the flames, men and women through centuries of darkness have been strengthened by the memory of him of whom Christ declared, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater." Matthew 11:11. (*Ed* 157.6)



Christ made an infinite sacrifice when He became the head of the human family. His example of **self-abnegation** is to be repeated in the lives of His followers. **It is only thus that the followers of Christ become the sons of God, partakers of the divine nature.** (*22LtMs*, Lt 228, 1907, par. 12)



John 2:2—marriage in Cana  
V. 12—went down to  
Capernaum  
V. 13—went to Jerusalem  
for the Passover; cleansed  
temple  
John 4:3—Left Judæa for  
Galilee and on the way  
stopped at the well in  
Samaria





Jesus started his ministry in Jerusalem (John 3:1–21) and then extended it to the towns and villages of Judæa where he labored from about April to December AD 28.





1. Opening ministry was in Jerusalem and Judæa during part of AD 28)
2. Jesus then retired temporarily to Galilee (4:3)
3. Returned to Jerusalem for Passover AD 29
4. Then back to Galilee





1. Most likely John was not imprisoned until a year or more after the baptism of Jesus (*DA* 214; cf. p. 213) at approximately the time of the Passover of AD 29.
2. He remained in prison until the early spring of AD 30, and was beheaded a few weeks before the Passover of that year (see *DA* 360, 361, 364).





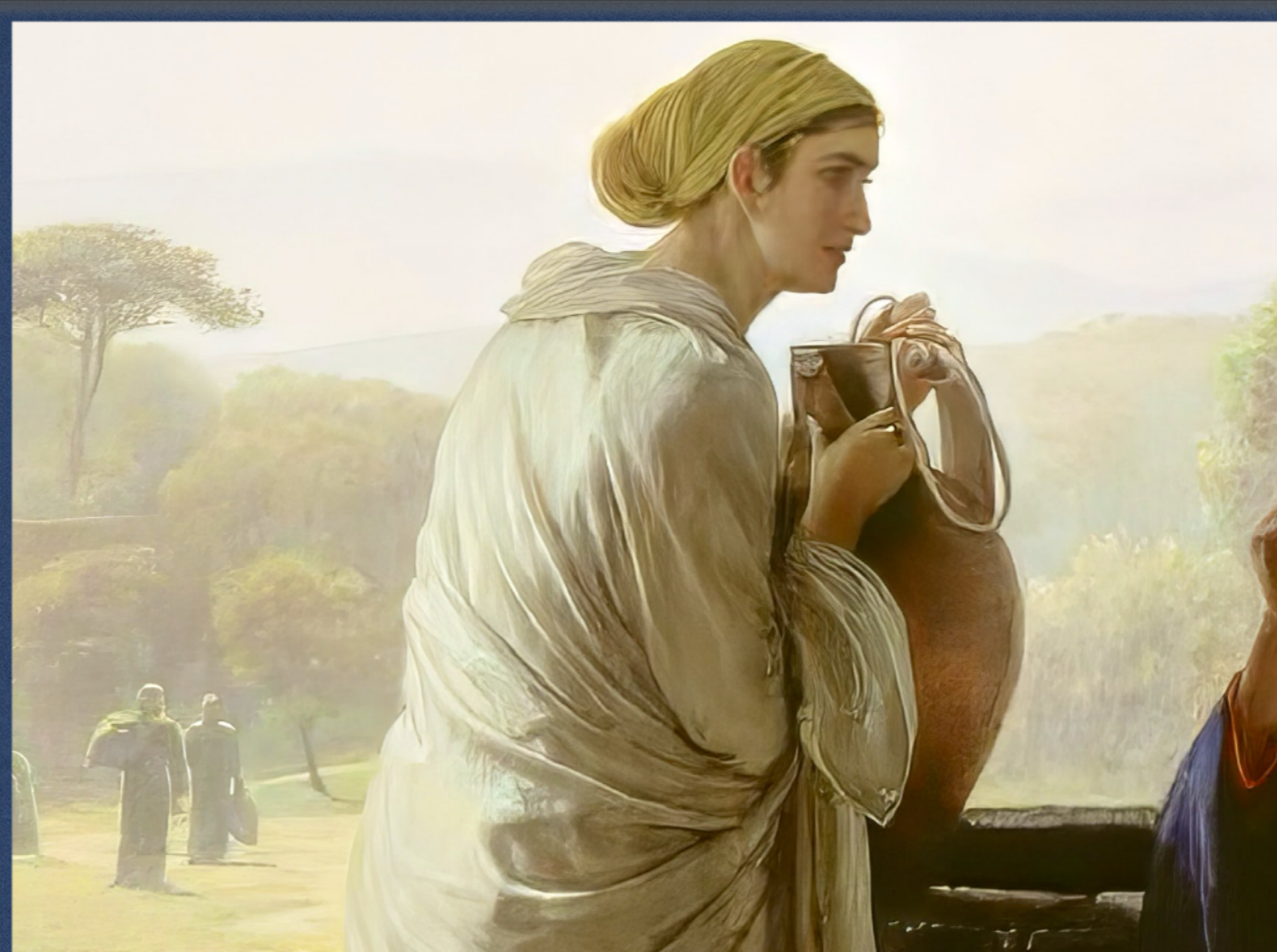
1. The ministry of John continued at least till after the time of Jesus' temporary withdrawal from Judea about December, when John was arrested and imprisoned.
2. He was in prison for about one year, from the Passover time, AD 29, to the Passover of AD 30.





Jesus knew that they [the priests and rabbis] would spare no effort to create a division between His own disciples and those of John. He knew that the storm was gathering which would sweep away one of the greatest prophets ever given to the world. **Wishing to avoid all occasion for misunderstanding or dissension, He quietly ceased His labors, and withdrew to Galilee.** We also, while loyal to truth, should try to avoid all that may lead to discord and misapprehension. For whenever these arise, they result in the loss of souls. Whenever circumstances occur that threaten to cause division, we should follow the example of Jesus and of John the Baptist. (*DA* 181.4)





# The Woman at the Well

*John 4:1-42*



On the way to Galilee Jesus passed through Samaria. It was noon when He reached the beautiful Vale of Shechem. At the opening of this valley was Jacob's well. Wearied with His journey, He sat down here to rest while His disciples went to buy food. (*DA* 183.1)



The Jews and the Samaritans were bitter enemies, and as far as possible avoided all dealing with each other. To trade with the Samaritans in case of necessity was indeed counted lawful by the rabbis; but all social intercourse with them was condemned. A Jew would not borrow from a Samaritan, nor receive a kindness, not even a morsel of bread or a cup of water. The disciples, in buying food, were acting in harmony with the custom of their nation. But beyond this they did not go. To ask a favor of the Samaritans, or in any way seek to benefit them, did not enter into the thought of even Christ's disciples. (*DA* 183.2)



*Jacob's well.* This well is situated about ten minutes' walk below the village of *Askar*, on the road to Jerusalem, and it still provides water.