

Iconography

Adult Spiritual Enrichment

December 6, 2020

Class 10

- The Samaritan Woman
- The Transfiguration
- High Priest and King Melchizedek
- Prophet Elias (Elijah)

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN



The Gospels of Matthew (4:12), Mark (1:14), and Luke (4:14) all speak of Jesus going to Galilee and preaching throughout that region. Samaria is a region north of Jerusalem, between Judea and Galilee. Although the Samaritans worshipped the God of Israel, they only followed the first 5 books of the OT, they mixed with pagans and pagan culture, and were enemies with Jews. In the Gospel of John, we are told of a specific encounter on their way to Galilee.

John 4:3--:27

He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria.

So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. (6th hour = noontime)

A woman of 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.

Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews had no dealings with Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says 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 with, and the well is deep. Where do you then get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank

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from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

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

The woman answered and said, "I have no husband."

Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

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

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

And at this point His disciples came and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?"

Additional Information:

The Samaritan women is identified in Church tradition as St. Photini, "the enlightened one." According to tradition, after the Resurrection, she was baptized. Along with her 2 sons and 5 daughters she went to Carthage to spread the gospel. She was martyred with her family (they were thrown into a well) under Emperor Nero. She is commemorated on March 20 and on the 4th Sunday of Pascha.

THE ICON:

- In iconography, the well is shown in various shapes (round, cross, hexagon, etc.). Early icons show the well as round, however, we then see versions appear where the well is in the shape of a cross, representing the form of many ancient baptismal fonts.
- Renowned iconographer, Photios Kontoglou, explains colors have symbolic meaning. *"White is symbolic of the light of purity. Black is symbolic of the mystical depth. Cyan is symbolic of refreshment and clarity. Green is the color of hope and rest. Orange is the color of divine glory and brilliance. Red symbolized the incandescence and warmth of the mystic essence. Sky blue represent scintillation (flash or spark) of the heavenly light."* What Do You Know About Icons, p. 31.
- Notice the perspective and colors. As you look at the icon, you can see that it does not follow optical laws. But notice, due to this, even will all that is in the icon, you easily find Christ and the well, and the Samaritan woman, and you are drawn into the icon.

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THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST

Feast Day August 6



The Transfiguration, is a theophany. God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and divinity of Christ is revealed through a display of His uncreated, diving energy.

Matthew 17: 1—:9

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles; one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, “Arise and do not be afraid.” When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

Now when they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.”

Mark 9:2—:8

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good

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for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles; one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”—because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.

And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore but only Jesus with themselves.

Luke 9:28-:36

Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles; one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”—no knowing what he said.

While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.

THE ICON:

- Mountain with 3 peaks, representing Mt. Tabor in Palestine.
- Christ
 - He is on the center, most prominent of the peaks.
 - He faces forward, with a mandorla of light emanating from Him in all directions. (Most often, the mandorlas are pointed ovals).
 - His garments are white.
 - His right hand blesses.
 - In His left hand he holds a scroll, symbolic of His Gospel.
 - Although manifesting Himself in His divine glory, His attitude and face show calm and humility.
- The Prophets
 - Prophet Elias is usually on the peak to the right (as in ours) and the Prophet Moses on the left peak.
 - Both are slightly bowed towards the Lord, in an attitude of reverence.
 - St. Joh Chrysostom says they represent the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elias)
- The Light is representing by a mandorla with rays emanating from Him.
- The Three Apostles: Peter, John and James
 - They are shown lying on the ground, in awkward positions, indicating they had fallen down abruptly, dazed by the bright light emanating from Christ, and astonished by the voice which came from heaven.
 - Peter is on his knees with one hand raised. See also 2 Peter 1:16-:18.

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- Halos and the Divine Light.
 - Typically, Christ, Moses and Elias have halos, while the Apostles do not.
 - The Apostles are not yet saints, they are not yet filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit. This is evidenced by the fact that they are dazed by the Divine Light and cannot endure it.
 - The festal hymn that is chanted: *“Thou was transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God, and didst show Thy glory to Thy disciples, to the extent that they were able to behold it.”*
 - Moses and Elias show they have attained sainthood because they could behold the Divine glory without being blinded by it.



MELCHIZEDEK

“King of Righteousness and Peace”

Genesis 14:18 –:20

Now Melchizedek the king of Salem brought out bread and wine; was the priest of God Most High. He blessed Abram and said, “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into you hands.” Then Abram gave him a tithe of all.

Hebrews 7:1–:3

(Paul says) For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace”, without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

Hebrews 6:20

...where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according the order of Melchizedek.

He brought out bread and wine. Christ’s priesthood is called “the order of Melchizedek.” (See Psalm 109). Melchizedek’s priesthood is superior to that of the Levites.

PROPHET ELIAS (ELIJAH)

See notes from Class 1 which covered the Pantocrator and the dome.

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THE PRIESTHOOD — EARTHLY AND ETERNAL

A major theme of the Book of Hebrews is the contrast between the earthly, or Levitical, priesthood and the eternal priesthood of Melchizedek, which is fulfilled in Christ.

The Levitical priesthood, established by Aaron of the tribe of Levi, is limited simply because those who fill it are ordinary human beings. The Levitical priests carry out God's instructions and assist the people in their worship, but they cannot ultimately reconcile people to God.

The mysterious figure of Melchizedek, on the other hand, represents an entirely different kind of priesthood. Melchizedek appears in Genesis 14:18–20, long before the establishment of the Levitical priesthood. He is given no genealogy, and nothing is said of his death. He receives tithes from Abraham, implying he is superior to Abraham in rank—and by extension, superior to Abraham's descendants, the Levites. Melchizedek is not only a priest but a king as well. In this dual office he is able to reconcile the justice of God (the business of a king) with His mercy (the business of a priest). His name means "King of Righteousness," and his title "King of Salem" means "King of Peace." He maybe a theophany—a preincarnate appearance of Christ; at the very least he is a type of Christ, as the author of Hebrews explains in detail.

There are several specific points of contrast between the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Melchizedek, which is fulfilled in Christ.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF LEVI

1 *Genealogical requirement:* The Levitical priesthood is limited to one tribe. It cannot transform mortal and corrupt humanity because it consists of mere men.

2 *Ordination:* The power given at ordination is incomplete. The Levitical priesthood is weak, its sacrifices have to be repeated, and it cannot perfect the worshipers. It cannot reconcile people to God nor give them the inner power to obey. The ordination is without direct confirmation from God.

3 *Term of office:* The Levitical priesthood is temporary. Since it is composed of mortal men, it requires many members.

4 *Moral and spiritual requirements:* These must be less than perfection, for the Levitical priests are all created beings subject to sin.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHIZEDEK

As Melchizedek was without earthly genealogy, so is Christ by virtue of His virgin birth. He is God incarnate, immortal and sinless, and therefore His priesthood is able to transform humanity.

The power given at ordination is strong and effective. The power of Christ's priesthood is perfect and draws us near to God. His sacrifice is offered once for all. The Father Himself ordains the Son.

Since Christ is immortal, the priesthood of Melchizedek needs only one, eternal priest.

The requirement of perfect holiness is met in Christ, the only sinless One. He is more than mere man—He is the Son of God.