

# The Picture on the Father's Desk

John 4:3-42

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*Video and audio versions available online:*

<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/the-picture-on-the-fathers-desk-2/>

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*This document was prepared by Heather using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please let Heather know. Thank you!*

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## Prayer

So Father, I pray that you would help us—to help me in particular—not to lie about you. It seems incredibly strange that you ask us to even talk about you. So Lord, I thank you for your Spirit. Holy Spirit, we ask that you would do the talking and that you would provide sacred filters for the ears of everyone in the room, if I say something that is not true about you. God, I thank you that you like to speak through earthen vessels like us. So, I pray that we would speak your Word. In Jesus's name, Amen.

## Message



I think this may be my favorite Christmas present ever. It's a picture I took about 26 years ago, which Susan and the kids placed in this little frame and gave to me as a gift. It sits on my shelf as you enter my office at church or on my desk at home where I can look at it all the time.

Fathers put stuff like this on their desk to fill them with hope and remind them what it's all about—this picture holds my heart.



These are my kids; each one is like a deep well.

Jonathan is my firstborn is on the right; no words can adequately describe him. Jonathan feels things very deeply. That can become a trap within oneself, or that can lead a person to hang on a cross for others. Jonathan was our youth pastor for a couple of years and is now working as a counselor in Seattle; he works primarily with the indigent population of downtown Seattle.

Elizabeth is our second. Even in this picture, she's telling me what to do. Every night when she was little, she prayed the same prayer with great sincerity: "Thank you, Jesus, that I know everything in the world." Elizabeth is strong willed—that's terrifying if that will has turned inward, and yet it's the very image of Jesus when directed at others... and that's Elizabeth. Elizabeth is one of the kindest people I know. Next month, she's moving home from Chile, and a few months later, her husband, Francisco, will join her in our newly finished basement.

Rebekah (or Becky) is in the center. You remember that Isaac met Rebekah by a well... and that's Becky: centered and deep—she has a deep concern for justice. That can become a dungeon of self-pity, or it can become a fountain of compassion and salvation when it's focused on others.

One night around Christmas when she was this age, she put my head on her tummy, stroked my hair, and said, "I'll be the big Mommy and you be the little baby," and my heart rested in her tremendous love.

Becky is the one who got in the little boy's face at Elitch's who pretended to shoot me with a toy gun, saying, "Please don't shoot my daddy; he's the only one we've got and we love him very much!" Becky is the friend you want when the whole world is shooting you down.

Coleman is the youngest and being cared for in this picture by his older, counselor brother Jonathan, while Elizabeth tells me what to do, and Becky is lost in her own world with a toy elephant. Coleman may be the toughest person I know. He's the one who just fell seventy feet off of a cliff in Utah. When he was little, he was nearly impossible to discipline because nothing seemed to hurt him—his bottom was made of Teflon.

Coleman is a warrior which of course is wonderful, as long as he is engaged in the right war. Coleman is newly married, working on a PHD in geology, and I think he wants to be a dad—I'm convinced that he'd die for me and wouldn't think much of it; he's a warrior with a very tender heart.



This is a picture of the four kids on vacation in Glenwood Canyon twelve years ago.





This is the last picture that I have of all of us together in one place. We took this in a parking lot at the Grand Canyon the morning after Coleman's wedding two years ago.

Well, when I see them in a picture like this [above], I also see this:



You understand? For the people in this picture, no matter what they've achieved and no matter how much they've failed, I know that buried beneath all that they've done or haven't done is this utterly priceless miracle that I've come to believe is the very breath of God.

To be honest, I have a hard time looking at this picture, for it feels as if my heart is going to beat right out of my chest, and I just can't handle all the emotion, the passion. It's overwhelming. But I don't think you have to be a father or mother to feel these feelings; you just have to hang around a little child for a long time and watch them become what we would call "an adult."

As toddlers, they can be terrible at times but also so delightful, because for them, everything is delightful, and oddly enough, they are unaware of how delightful, how beautiful, how good, they themselves actually are.

But then there comes a day when they become aware of their own beauty; they gain the knowledge of good and evil—they become self-conscious. And so instead of simply being good, they try to make themselves good, and ironically that can make them quite bad... or even evil.

If you're a parent, you probably remember an age at which your child stopped simply expressing themselves and felt the need to prove themselves. It's the age at which they get trapped within themselves and become more like a well and less like a fountain.

It's the age at which they begin to doubt your love.

It's the age at which they begin to compare and compete, one with the other.

It's the age at which they begin to be tempted to exalt themselves by humiliating the other.

It's the age at which they start to wonder: "Daddy, do you love Jonathan more than me, Elizabeth, Coleman, or Becky... more than me?"



And this is the really weird thing about being a father: When I reflect on it, I don't know that I can love one more than the others. Each is utterly unique, and I don't want any one of them to be just the same as any one of the others.

I'm saying, each one is different, but I love each one the same amount, and that's with all that I am and all that I have.

Weirder still: If, at a particular time, I do feel more love for one than I do for the others, it's usually when that one is hurting more than the others...and often times, that hurt is self-inflicted.

It's when they have trapped themselves in dungeons of self-pity, shame, and fear, it's then that I most want to find them there and sit with them there—there in the dark, at the bottom of their well. And weirder still: When they share those dark places, pits, and dungeons with me, I'm deeply grateful. And those dry wells are often transformed into fountains of living water.

The stories are too personal to share, but I think you've all experienced this—it's pretty much what every movie ever made is all about. It's the miracle of Grace: Love that suddenly wells up from a broken heart in a dry place, like a fountain—a fountain that becomes a river—a river of life.

There are those who would say, "That's dangerous. That's weak. That makes you a bad father, for:

- It means your children can sin and your grace will abound all the more.
- It means they have the power to nail your heart to a tree and walk away.
- It means that they have no need to fear you."

But now, this is weirder still: In one sense, the people in this picture need to fear me more than any other person in this entire world—and why is that? Well, I just won't leave them alone.

If one of their friends decides to destroy their own life—I'll say, "Oh, that's so sad. We should say a prayer for them." But if they decide to despise themselves and seek to destroy themselves—I'll do everything in my power to violate their own judgment and make them believe my judgment of them—They are the pinnacle of God's creation. (That's my Judgment of them.)

If you harm one of the people in this picture, I will become enraged and have to remind myself that you are in someone else's picture. And if the people in this picture harm each other, I will be even more enraged, and yet that rage will rip my heart in two... because they are my heart.

But, if the people in this picture love each other, I'm saved... I'm saved... Dad is saved. You see, as long as they are torn apart, I'm torn apart. And as long as any one of them sits alone in hell, I also sit alone in that hell with them.

I'm saying that even though I'm a delinquent, insufficient, and deeply flawed father, I cannot *not* love the people in this picture. And it is not like that for me with other people. But it is like that for me with the people in this picture.

And now for some of you, it may feel like I'm sticking a knife in your heart. You are thinking: "I wish that I was, in a picture, in a frame, on the desk of my father."

Well, you are.

[On screen image shows John 4:3-42]

We preached on this passage last week and focused on the topic of worship; this week we'll focus on something else, but I'm hoping you remember absolutely everything we said last week, right now.

**<sup>3</sup> [Jesus] left Judea and departed again for Galilee. <sup>4</sup> And he had to pass through Samaria. <sup>5</sup> So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar ["drunk"], near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.**

**<sup>7</sup> A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." <sup>8</sup> (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) <sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." <sup>11</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob? [She claims that Jacob (that is Israel) is the father of the Samaritans, and Jesus, who is a Jew, does not argue]**

She says:

**[Jacob] gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." <sup>13</sup> Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."**

[Normally water goes down our gullets and into our bellies—like a well. But Jesus promises to reverse the flow: Give her water in the temple of her own soul and turn that well into a fountain.]

**<sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."**

**<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." <sup>17</sup> The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; <sup>18</sup> for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." <sup>19</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. <sup>22</sup> You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and is now here [that would be the seventh hour], when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him... The Father.**

Did you notice that Jesus keeps saying "the Father," as if there is only one father? And did you notice that he is saying it to a Samaritan—an estranged, sinful, female Samaritan?

We miss all of this today, but you can get the gist by substituting the most derogatory descriptor you can think of in place of the word “Samaritan.” We miss the animosity behind the words, and we miss all the references that a Jewish student of Scripture would have picked up in an instant.

You can read all about these references in Genesis 33 through 50. They involve the city of Shechem, called *Sychar* (or “drunk town” in Jesus’s day) and an amazing story of how Jacob acquires land there, shortly after he wrestles with the God/man at the river. He buys land and then takes more land in war, for Jacob’s sons tell the prince of Shechem that he can marry their sister if the city is circumcised.

On the third day, when all the men of Shechem are sore, the sons of Jacob attack and kill them all, as punishment for having violated their sister. This is not a boring story. And then we read about Joseph, the youngest of the brothers and Jacob’s favorite.

You’ll remember that Joseph was sent by Jacob to find his brothers herding their father’s flocks near Shechem. And jealous of Joseph, the brothers throw Joseph in a well—a dry well<sup>i</sup>. It’s Judah that comes up with the idea of selling Joseph into slavery in Egypt.

The Samaritan woman is almost certainly a descendant of Joseph.<sup>ii</sup> And Jesus is the King of the Jews, as in Judah—the lion of the tribe of Judah—and they’re sitting by a well which Jacob gave to Joseph before he died. This story is dripping with drama, irony, and super- duper, double irony.

Well, about 1000 years after Joseph is thrown in the pit and then saves all of his brothers from famine... David, a descendant of Judah, becomes King of all Israel, for the twelve brothers have now become a great nation.

But soon after, ten tribes separate and become the Northern Kingdom, now called “Israel,” and are led primarily by the descendants of Joseph.<sup>iii</sup> They separate from the two tribes to the south, that then comprise the Southern Kingdom called Judah. They divide.

They battle each other time and time again over the next 200 years. In 722 BC, the Northern Kingdom falls to the Assyrians, and all its leading citizens are taken captive never to return—they could be you; they have long since been mixed into the genetic soup of Europe and Asia. But some common-folk remain in the land, and over time intermarry with others, and to this day are known as the “Samaritans.”<sup>iv</sup>

In 586, the Southern Kingdom of Judah also falls, and its leading citizens are taken into captivity in Babylon, but they return 48 years later... To this day, they are known as the Jews, but ironically, they are not actually Israel—or all of Israel—and God’s promise of return was to all Israel. That’s all Israel, including the dead, the “dry bones,” already buried in the bottom of the pit.<sup>v</sup>

Well, my point is that the whole Bible is this outrageous family drama. And now, Jesus is acting like this despised, estranged, Samaritan woman belongs in the picture on the Father’s desk. And of course she does... for she is the great, great granddaughter of Joseph.

But now, this is what is utterly scandalous about Jesus: Not only does he act as if the hated Samaritans belong in the picture on the Father’s desk, Jesus acts as if everyone that’s anyone is already in the picture on the Father’s desk... not just Judah but Joseph; not just Jacob but Esau; not just Isaac but Ishmael; not just Abel but Cain; not just Jesus but you.



Jesus believes, “There is... one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and through all,” as St. Paul puts it in Ephesians chapter four. So, when Paul speaks of “adoption” [*huiiothesia*—literally “to place as a son”], he’s not saying that God, at one time, was not your Father.<sup>vi</sup> He’s saying that at one time, God your Father did something so that you would believe he is your Father, and you are his beloved son or daughter.<sup>vii</sup> And what God did was send the spirit of his Only Begotten Son into your heart, crying, “Abba Father, Daddy Father.”

In the previous chapter of John, Jesus refers to himself as the “Only Begotten Son of God” right after he tells Nicodemus that we must be “begotten of the Spirit” and “begotten from above,” which clearly implies that not only is God our Father, but we must also be the very body of God the Son—which means God is our Father, just as God is Jesus’s Father.<sup>viii</sup> And Jesus makes this all profoundly clear when he commands us and a crowd of “non-Christians” on a hillside to simply pray “Our Father.”

The Father of Jesus is your Father, and when you say “Daddy Father,” it is the Spirit of Jesus, given to you from behind a veil in the temple of your soul that is now rising up your windpipe and doing the talking.

Now some will say, “Hey, in just four chapters, Jesus will say to some people, ‘you are of your father the devil.’”<sup>ix</sup> And that’s true... but who are those people?

They are—quote—“the Jews” (v.48)<sup>x</sup>, that’s the Judeans of the tribe of Judah. They are “the Jews” and they are a “lie” (v.44), for after Jesus says that their father is the Devil, he immediately says that the Devil is the “father of lies.” The Devil can’t father real people, only false people—people who might act very religious, but believe that they have created themselves and thus have no father.

The Judeans then say, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” And Jesus says, “Well, I don’t have a demon...” He implies that he, the king of the Jews (Judah), is a Samaritan. In the story of the Good Samaritan, he even casts himself as the Samaritan. And the challenging question for all is “Would you want to be saved if it meant being saved by a Samaritan?”

You see, Jesus reveals that the line separating Good and evil does not run between groups of people, like races, classes, genders, and orientations. The line between Good and evil runs through every human heart.<sup>xi</sup>

It runs between that part of you that St. Paul calls the Old Adam (or the false self) and that part of you that Paul calls the New Adam (or the true self). The false self assumes that it has created itself, and the true self trusts that it is the beloved creation of God our Father. The true self believes he or she is chosen. And you see, that’s the utterly insulting thing about fathers—you don’t choose your father; in some way, he chose you.

Well, my point is that to this estranged, reviled, Samaritan woman, Jesus reveals that she is in the picture on the Father’s desk. And because he reveals this in the very place where she knows the most failure and feels the most shame, her well turns into a fountain. She knows she didn’t choose, but she is Chosen... by Grace... through Faith... and this is not of herself.

She is one of “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”<sup>xii</sup> And she’s just been found.  
She is Jesus’s long-lost sister, with the very same Father—not just Jacob, but God.  
She is the Bride of the Christ, who is the seventh man, the *eschatos* Adam.  
She is so “in the picture,” she even gives birth to the picture.

She is the Bride of Christ... and she is also his mother.

This is really wild, but very rarely does Jesus refer to himself as “the Son of God” in the Gospels—just once, directly. But 81 times, he refers to himself as “the Son of Man.”<sup>xiii</sup> If God is his Father, who is his Mother? Wouldn’t that be “man?”

- Jesus was in Joseph in the bottom of the well and then saving all Israel.
- Jesus is now in the Samaritan woman trusting his Father.
- Jesus in you is righteousness in you.

You see, your true self is somehow Christ’s self being formed within you.<sup>xiv</sup> It’s the “you” that believes you are the beloved child of God. And your false self believes that you have created yourself... in other words, it believes that you are a “bastard.” If that word sticks in you like a knife, listen closely: It’s your false self that believes the lie and is a lie—that’s not who it is that you actually are!

And so, in the place where she had believed the lie...this Samaritan woman now receives the Word of God—who is Jesus, and she gives birth to the Word of God—who is Jesus.

She was a well, and she turns into a fountain.  
She worships in Spirit and in Truth (last week’s message).  
And she is the very first evangelist (this week’s message).

**John 4:23 · The hour is coming, and is now here, says Jesus, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” <sup>25</sup> The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” <sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, [“I Am... the one who is speaking to you”]**

**<sup>27</sup> Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you seek?” or, “Why are you talking with her?” <sup>28</sup> So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, [The people that had rejected her] <sup>29</sup> “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did.**

[She doesn’t hide her failure; she advertises the fact that Jesus knows all her failures. “Come see the man that told me all that I ever did.” Now, He couldn’t have told her everything she ever did, and yet he did reveal the reason that she did everything she ever did: She was thirsty... for the Word of Love... that comes from the Father.]

**<sup>29</sup> “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” <sup>30</sup> They went out of the town and were coming to him.**

**<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” <sup>32</sup> But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.”**

[Perhaps he’s nourished by nourishing her with himself?]

**<sup>33</sup> So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?” <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish [teleioo: “finish”] his work.”<sup>xv</sup> <sup>35</sup> Do you not say, “There are yet four months, then comes the harvest”? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.**

[And now, pay attention: They're standing in Samaria looking at Samaritans. The harvest of the earth is Faith and Mercy; it's Bread and Wine; it's the Life of Christ manifest in the Body of Christ... in Samaria.]

They can believe that they're created, saved, and sanctified by God in Samaria. But in Judah, they believe they have created, saved, and sanctified themselves. In other words, they think they've chosen God, so they can't believe that they're chosen by God—that is, beloved children in the picture on the Father's desk.

**<sup>36</sup>Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup>For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' <sup>38</sup>I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."**

**<sup>39</sup>Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." <sup>40</sup>So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup>And many more believed because of his word. <sup>42</sup>They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."**

Not "some of the world," "the World."

This Samaritan woman is the very first Evangelist. In Judah, Jesus will still command folks to keep his identity a secret, but in Samaria, they're ready for the Good News.

You see some people think the Good News is bad news if it means that people that they like to judge are also in the picture on the Father's Desk. But in Samaria, they have been to the bottom of the well, and now they are totally cool with Jesus being the savior of the world—the whole world. To them, that's Good News.

*Euangelia* is Greek for "Good News," and the word from which we get the English word "Evangelism."

I think I used to hate "doing evangelism" because I was beginning to realize that the so-called "Good news," was bad, and not even news, but something more like a bribe or a threat. I think I also felt that when I shared the so called "good news," I was actually lying about God, about the people I spoke to, and about me.

I had been trained to tell people that they weren't in the picture on the Father's desk, and so they were subject to his endless wrath...unless, of course, they trusted my word, and made a choice that would land them a place in the picture... and so save them...from God.

"Take my knowledge and save yourself... from God."

Do you hear the lie? "You can save yourself from God by trusting my word and making your choice."

But the Gospel is this: "God saves you from yourself by sending his Word that you have been chosen from the foundation of the world, by God your Father."

In other words: "You are in a picture sitting on our Father's desk."



Jesus “finishes” the work of God by causing us to trust our Father. He finishes the work of God by delivering up his Spirit on the Sixth Day of Creation, sixth day of the week, around the sixth hour of the day. That’s the Spirit that meets you in the dust and ashes at the bottom of your well, and with you cries, “Abba Father...Our Father.”

We are out of time, and I wanted to talk about racism, social justice, and most of all, principles of evangelism, all derived from this text... but I don’t think any of that is really necessary.

- It’s not necessary, if only we would learn to see the people around us—people we like and people we hate, black people, white people, gay people, straight people, Arab people, Jewish people, female people, and male people, religious people and even satanic occult Nazi people.
- It’s not necessary, the list is not necessary, if only we would begin to see all the people around us as people in the picture sitting on the Father’s desk.
- It’s not necessary, if we just “get the picture.”

Before we end, I just need to say, I now love evangelism... seriously. I like to sit next to people on planes, stuck in their seat, who can’t run away... people who think God hates them, who think they’ve failed one to many times, who think God could never forgive someone on their sixth marriage, or sixth abortion, or sixth indictment, on the sixth day at the sixth hour. I love to sit next to people like that and say, “Hey, Our Father, (your Dad and my Dad), has a picture on his desk, and you are in it. To think it’s not true, that must be Hell... but it is true, and can I tell you why I think it’s true?”

I will usually then tell them about the time that God revealed to me the reason for everything I’d ever done—I’ll tell them how I went into the ministry because I hated the church—I’ll tell them about my sin. And then, I’ll tell them how, in that place, God revealed to me that he had always been, and would always be everywhere, loving me. I tell them about our Father’s Relentless Love; that’s Grace.

I don’t do it because I have to but because I want to. And in that moment, I’m not a well; I’m more like a fountain...

A few years ago, a Gallup poll asked Americans what they most wanted to hear.

These were the top three answers:

#1. I love you.

#2. I forgive you.

#3. It’s time for dinner.

[image on screen shows previous photo of Peter’s four children]

I can still hear four little voices running through my house after a day of hopes and fears, failures and successes, laughter and sorrow... I can still hear them running through the house, yelling at the top of their lungs, “Daddy’s home! Time for dinner!”

And now, that’s your job.

## Communion

So, on the night The Word of the Father was betrayed by all of us, he took the bread and broke it saying, “This is my body given to you. Take and eat; do it in remembrance of me.” And in the same way, he took the cup saying, “This is the covenant in my blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins; drink of it all of you... all twelve of you.”

It’s time for dinner.

## Benediction

And so, in other words, and by way of benediction, believe the Gospel, and you will become the Gospel. For you, that might look like a cup of cold water given to a child; it might look like expositing the book of Romans in a sermon series on Sunday mornings; it might look like dancing in your underwear, praising God in the forest under the moon, all alone; it might look like suffering patiently, but it will be the Word of the Father, rising up like a fountain from deep within you and giving life to the world. In Jesus’s name, Amen.

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> The Hebrew word “*bowr*” is translated pit, well, dungeon and cistern.

<sup>ii</sup> Shechem is located in Manasseh, just north of Ephraim.

<sup>iii</sup> Ephraim and Manasseh are the two sons (tribes) of Joseph that inherit land in Canaan in their father’s place. Their portion makes up most of the territory of the Northern Kingdom and the first King, Jeroboam, is an Ephraimite. Because Levi doesn’t inherit land, there were still twelve regions for the twelve tribes, for Joseph’s portion was both Ephraim and Manasseh.

<sup>iv</sup> This is rather amazing, but there still is an ethnically pure group of a few hundred Samaritans still living by Mt. Gerizim. And recent Genetic testing clearly reveals ethnic descent from males in the tribes of Levi, Ephraim, and Manasseh. That’s Israel! Ephraim and Manasseh were the sons of Joseph, of whom the brothers grew Jealous, so they sold him into slavery in Egypt, faked his death, and lied to their father. They lost Joseph on purpose.

Don’t go to “Samaritans”... what you call “Samaritans”... said Jesus. But go to your brothers, the lost brothers of the House of Israel.

<sup>v</sup> Ezekiel 37:11-14

<sup>vi</sup> Romans 8:15,23, 9:4, Galatians 4:5, Ephesians 1:5

<sup>vii</sup> <sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. – Romans 8:15-17

<sup>viii</sup> <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again [literally “begotten from above”]’... <sup>13</sup> No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is*, the Son of Man who is in heaven. <sup>14</sup> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

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<sup>18</sup> "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

--John 3:5-7, 13-17 NKJV

<sup>ix</sup> John 8:44

<sup>\*</sup> Actually in v. 31 we read that they were the "Jews who had believed him." That makes this all the more shocking. And yet I believe him, or through him, and that is my true self, but I also doubt, and that is my false self.

<sup>xi</sup> And it was only when I lay there on rotting prison straw that I sensed within myself the first stirrings of good. Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either-but right through every human heart-and through all human hearts. . . . All the writers who wrote about prison but did not themselves serve time there considered it their duty to express sympathy for prisoners and to curse prison. I . . . have served enough time there. I nourished my soul there, and I say without hesitation: "*Bless you, prison*, for having been in my life."

- Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, as quoted in Malcolm Muggeridge, *The End of Christendom* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), p. 47

<sup>xii</sup> In Matthew 10:5 Jesus says to his disciples "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But then he leads them into Samaritan towns. Perhaps he didn't see them as "Samaritans," but what they truly are "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." In Matthew 15:24 a gentile woman begs for mercy and Jesus repeats the line saying, "I am sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and then, he heals her, clearly indicating that she to is one of the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." Since we will all be grafted into Israel, by covenant and by blood, aren't we all the lost sheep of the house of Israel?

<sup>xiii</sup> This is truly SO fascinating:

According to my count, Jesus is referred to as the Son of God 25 times in the gospels and only one of those times does he refer to himself directly as the Son of God (once in John), but he is called the Son of God by others, including angels, disciples, demons and satan—he is called "Son of God" by satan, more than he calls himself "Son of God."

However, no one calls Jesus "Son of Man" except Jesus (twice people quote him as calling himself Son of Man). He calls himself "the Son of Man" 81 times. That's amazing. It's like the fact that he's the "Son of God" is old news known by angels, demons, satan and everyone in the "heavenly places," but the fact that he is also the "Son of Man" is utterly shocking news—news that Jesus wants everyone to hear and seems most pleased to announce to the world. God is his Father, and humanity is his mother—he is born of each one of us. He is God in flesh, even our flesh. He is the Eschatos Man, the New Man, the True Self, born in our False Self, the Old Man. He is who we each truly are—I'm not sure how to say it, but I'm more truly him, than the person I usually consider to be me; "it's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."

<sup>xiv</sup> Galatians 4:19

<sup>xv</sup> Remember he "finishes" [*teleioo*] his Father's work on a tree in a garden, on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of creation, 6<sup>th</sup> day of the week, around the 6<sup>th</sup> hour of the day, at the edge of God's promised rest—the eternal 7<sup>th</sup> day. Also note, that if he is still to finish his Father's work in John 4, it has never been the 7<sup>th</sup> day in our temporal reality when Jesus makes this statement and God is still making humanity in his image.