

Upfront Bible 7

Jesus is a friend who knows our past and our future-- now and always.

John 4 (selected)

Characters:

Host

Professor Wellington (British Museum) -- an old English 'chap', intellectual, but jolly

Dr. Wellhausen (University of Prague) – a passionate Prussian, serious and intense

Host: Ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys, damsels and knaves, tourists and campers, seagulls and jellyfish, harley riders and volvo drivers – one and all! Tonight we have for your entertainment pleasure, your cultural enrichment and your intellectual stimulation two giants of the archaeological, geological, anthropological, historiological, longtimeago-ological world. Their brains are so enormous - we had to park them across the road and set up a wi-fi connection! They know an enormous amount about history, the past, things that have already happened, previously occurring events, long time ago-ness, the way things were, what used to be and a fair bit about your grandma, too.

Let me introduce you to them: the colossal Professor Wellington from the British Museum, Department of dustable objects ...

(Applause)

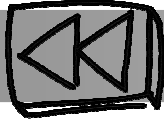
And the inestimable Dr. Wellhausen from the University of Prague, Department of Diggability.

(Applause)

Well, well...Welcome chaps.

It is fantastic to have you with us; a tremendous, tremendous honour. But during the week we also caught you on location in the Middle East, investigating a site in the ancient town of Sychar.

What can you tell us about that site?



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Prof. Wellington: Well, it's a site with an amazing history – going back 4000 years. I discovered an original well, dug there by the ancient ancestor of the Jews and Samaritans.

Dr. Wellhausen: Correct. It voz known as 'Jacob's vell'. And vee haff done a beet of verk in ree-kon-stuct-ion. Here ist das vell.

Host: That is very impressive. You could really tell it was Jacob's well? And I see you've reconstructed it from the ruins. What condition was it in and what work did you have to do?

Prof. Wellington: Oh, yes, well it's all technical mumbo jumbo to you, I'd say, but in plain terms ... the sign had fallen down. *(Pulls out a sign saying 'Jacob's Well')*

Dr. Wellhausen: Und vee put it back up! *(Prof. and Dr. hi-5 each other)*

Host: Well, good work chaps.

Prof. Wellington: But the site has a more complex history. Later, it became the site of a bitter feud between the Jews and Samaritans.

(Professor Wellington and Dr. Wellhausen mime comic strip type fight action with "Biff, Pow, Wham" commentary)

Dr. Wellhausen: 2nd century BC a very dark time.

Host: Anything else?

Dr. Wellhausen: Oh poy! Vee are ohn-lee just getting varmed-upp! Vaiiht until you hear vot vee deescoffered – tell zem professor about circa thirty AD.

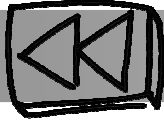
Professor Wellington: This concerns a local figure, well known at the time, who appears to have visited the well.

Host: He was a "well" known figure then!

Dr. Wellhausen: Excuse me! Za professor does zee "Vell" jokes.

Host: Fair enough, you're the Professor. But do you have a re-construction of this for us?

Professor Wellington: *(to him/herself)* Ah, right, well, a re-construction. I just refer to my notes, my research here. I didn't see this coming. What do they think I am? I'm an historian not a fortune teller. *(Aside to Dr. Wellhausen)* Helmut – do we have a reconstruction?



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Dr. Wellhausen: *(aside to Prof. Wellington)* Nein, Nein – but you can try the Beethoven manoeuvre – improvisation!

Professor Wellington: *(aside to Dr. Wellhausen)* Improvise, right, ok. Good plan. But you'll have to help.

As Prof. Wellington reads the text, Dr. Wellhausen and the host mime the action.

^{John 4:3} Jesus left Judea and started for Galilee again. ⁴This time he had to go through Samaria, ⁵and on his way he came to the town of Sychar. It was near the field that Jacob had long ago given to his son Joseph. ⁶⁻⁸The well that Jacob had dug was still there, and Jesus sat down beside it because he was tired from travelling. It was noon, and after Jesus' disciples had gone into town to buy some food, a Samaritan woman came to draw water from the well. Jesus asked her, "Would you please give me a drink of water?"

Dr. Wellhausen: So from zis vee can see zat ze vell voz still in use at zis time- you vill note that zee vell is deserted except for zis voman and Jesus ze traveller, because ze mittle of der day is not the traditional time to get vasser. Everyone else has already been to get their day's vasser earlier in ze cool of ze morning.

Host: So why didn't this woman get her water then?

Dr. Wellhausen: Probably I vood say, because of somezing in her past.

Host: You *would* say that! You mean she's an outcast, or she's avoiding other people?

Dr Wellhausen: Ja, Ja.

Prof. Wellington: so continuing...

⁹"You are a Jew," she replied, "and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink of water when Jews and Samaritans won't have anything to do with each other?"

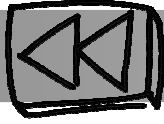


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- Host: Because of the long standing conflict between Jews and Samaritans.
- Dr. Wellhausen: Ja! Zee Biff, Pow, Wham! (*Dr. and Prof again mime the comic strip beat up*)
- Prof. Wellington:

¹⁰Jesus answered, "You don't know what God wants to give you, and you don't know who is asking you for a drink. If you did, you would ask me for the water that gives life." ¹¹"Sir," the woman said, "you don't even have a bucket, and the well is deep. Where are you going to get this life-giving water?" ¹²Our ancestor Jacob dug this well for us, and his family and animals got water from it. Are you greater than Jacob?" ¹³Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again. ¹⁴But no one who drinks the water I give will ever be thirsty again. The water I give is like a flowing fountain that gives eternal life." ¹⁵The woman replied, "Sir, please give me a drink of that water! Then I won't get thirsty and have to come to this well again."

- Host: The water in the well, it has no special powers?
- Dr. Wellhausen: Nope. Just regular water. You drink, you are refreshed, you walk in the hot sun, you get thirsty again, you have to go back and get more water.
- Host: Like every other well.
- Dr. Wellhausen: But Jesus says – he is like water that you never run out of – like an endless supply that goes on and on and on forever.
- Host: Tricky ... how can that be? And how can he prove that he's not just making that up?
- Prof. Wellington: Great question...



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¹⁶Jesus told her, "Go and bring your husband." ¹⁷⁻¹⁸The woman answered, "I don't have a husband."

"That's right," Jesus replied, "you're telling the truth. You don't have a husband. You have already been married five times, and the man you are now living with isn't your husband." ¹⁹The woman said, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet."

²⁵The woman said, "I know that the Messiah will come. He is the one we call Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." ²⁶"I am that one," Jesus told her, "and I am speaking to you now." ²⁸The woman left her water jar and ran back into town. She said to the people, ²⁹"Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! Could he be the Messiah?"

Host: She's convinced! It seems that Jesus also knows an enormous amount about history, the past, things that have already happened, previously occurring events, long time ago-ness, the way things were, what used to be and probably a fair bit about your grandma too.

Prof Wellington:

³⁰Everyone in town went out to see Jesus.

³⁹A lot of Samaritans in that town put their faith in Jesus because the woman had said, "This man told me everything I have ever done." ⁴⁰They came and asked him to stay in their town, and he stayed on for two days.

⁴¹Many more Samaritans put their faith in Jesus because of what they heard him say. ⁴²They told the woman, "We no longer have faith in Jesus just because of what you told us. We have heard him ourselves, and we are certain that he is the Savior of the world!"

Host: What a history this well has – but I'm not sure that this well is your greatest discovery. I think our greatest discovery here today is that Jesus is a friend who knows our past and our future -- now and always.

