

4.CHAPTER 1

5.RESEARCH PREMISE

6.1.1 Problem statement

Recently, JG van der Watt stated in his book, *Family of King. Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel of John* (2000), that the Gospel of John communicates its messages by means of refined use of imagery, which mainly consists of metaphors which are inter-related to form a network. The individual metaphors are linked on both syntactic and semantic (thematic) levels and form a unity throughout the Gospel. He has found that those metaphors that belong to the same semantic field, functioning as small building bricks of a larger imagery, should be read as part of this network of metaphors.

What is most interesting and important for this study is that Van der Watt (200:397-398) identifies the family imagery as the constitutive and most essential imagery in the Gospel of John. This is of course not the only imagery in the Gospel, but indeed the most pervasive imagery. Elements of this imagery also occur in a network throughout the entire Gospel. The reason for the importance of the family imagery lies in the complex and inclusive nature of the imagery. Most of the metaphors or groups of metaphors in John's Gospel are related to the idea of family life. This complex network of different metaphors is woven together to form the family imagery. It indeed forms the focal point of argumentation, to which most themes in this Gospel are directly related. Metaphorical use of friends, slaves, orphans, husbands, forensic elements and so on, actually form part of the extended family imagery, which supports the centrality of this imagery in the Gospel. Throughout the Gospel two central groups of metaphor- namely 'birth-life' and 'father-son'- form the basic points of orientation in the development of the family imagery.

The use of father-son language dominates from the beginning of the Gospel (cf.1:14,18) and constitutes a familial relationship into which the believers are born

(cf. Jn 1:12-13). The activities of the father and son, such as providing food, protecting their property, educating the family and so on, as well as the notion of property (such as their kingdom, home, vineyard, sheep and so on) establish and broaden the family imagery. Van der Watt (2000:399) thinks that this Gospel unfolds as part of the family history of the Father and the Son.

The narrator develops the family imagery on the basis of the birth-life language and the father-son language. The birth-life and father-son language prepare the reader for the family imagery. The strong functional presence of the family imagery is not a pure abstraction in the mind of the reader, but the vocabulary and the way in which the different aspects are thematically and even syntactically related (life to different family related aspects; father to relevant topics, etc.) suggest such a thematic construct. In metaphorical terms 'family' functions as a suspended metaphor. It is not directly mentioned, but it is functionally present in the text. The father, the son and all the other children born of God, form the family. But the family is even broader than this. It includes house and property, which was a typical way in which an *oikos* was seen in ancient times.

Since the fourth century before Christ the family has been seen as the most basic unit of society. Aristotle said already that the smallest and most elementary parts of the household are the relationship between master and slave, man and wife and father and child (Politics 1.1253b). This micro cosmos as the family is called, reflects the structure of the whole society and even the whole universe. The influence of this ideology has already become so much part of everyday thought and activities that by the first century AD most influential Jewish and Greco-Roman ethicists have formulated rules for each member of the household. The head of the household has fulfilled all three superior roles, master and slave, husband and wife and father and child (cf. Osiek & Balch 1997:54-64).

Scholars in their works about the Jewish families in antiquity wrote that most Jewish families usually lived in a middle- sized or small town; they shared a courtyard with other families and lived in a house with at least two storeys (Safrai & Stein 1987:732).

Jewish family usually shared their daily and weekly task or chores (cf. Jer 7:18). Jewish families were patriarchally structured with power and authority vested in the person of the father. Daughters remained under the control of their fathers until they got married, while married women on their part were subject to the authority of their husbands (Archer 1990:209).

Tal Ilan in a monograph *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine* (1995), inform us that women in the Jewish society provided what was asked of them, be it doing housework, remaining faithful to their husbands, or producing legal heirs.

In John 4:1-42 we read about Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman. The story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman is set against the understanding of the socio-cultural functioning of Mediterranean family life in the first instance but also the functioning of the Christian family in the second instance. According to Schneiders (1991:187), the meeting of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well recounts the meeting of future spouses who played a central role in Salvation history, e.g. Abraham's servants finding Rebecca the future wife of Isaac at the well of Nahor (cf. Gn 24: 10-61) and Jacob meeting Rachel at the well in Haran (Gn 29:1-20) and Moses receiving Zipporah at the well in Median (Ex 2:16-22).

The story of the Samaritan woman in John 4 fits somehow into the family history of the father and the son. The questions I am concerned with are 'How does Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman in John 4 fit into the network of imagery of the family in John's Gospel? What other imageries related to the imagery of the family are also functioning in the story of the Samaritan woman and what significance does this encounter have in relation with the rest of the Gospel?

Theological studies cannot be done in isolation; it must be done in context. Therefore, the study of the Samaritan woman will serve as a guideline for our quest for moral regeneration in South Africa. The pandemic disease HIV/AIDS and poverty threaten to destroy families and family life in South Africa, and especially women are in a particular vulnerable situation. We need strong examples and role models to restore

the balance in our community. Can the story of the Samaritan woman function as an example for women discriminated against, to beat the system and their poor life conditions?

1.2 Objectives of the research

1.2.1 General objectives

South Africa is facing a massive problem of abuse especially sexual and physical abuse of women and children. In many cases the abuser is a member of the family or someone closer to the woman or the child. As a people we cannot fold our arms while this is taking place. I am optimistic that my research will help us as a people to turn the situation around so that we can have a very moral conscientised nation. This will boost the moral regeneration that was launch in the beginning of 2002 by our deputy President Mr Jacob Zuma.

1.2.2 Specific objectives

I hope at the end of my Research I will be able to point out family metaphors in John 4 and be able to explain how they are used in this chapter. How they are employed at a micro, meso or macro level in the Gospel of John.

1.3 Motivation

JG van der Watt (2000) forms the basis of this study. He has explored the network of imageries used by the author of the Gospel of John. He has also pointed out that the metaphor of the family is the constitutive and most essential imagery in Gospel . Although his work is comprehensive on the network of imageries in John, detailed analyses of specific pericopes has not been done. Therefore, the principle of the

family metaphor will be used to analyse John 4:4-42. Although this pericope forms part of the structural unity of John 2-4 defined as 'different reactions of individuals and groups to Jesus' (Brown 1982: CXL111), the theme of 'Samaritan' is unique in John's Gospel and therefore the encounter of Jesus with this woman is unique in many ways. Only once more is there a reference to 'Samaritan' and this is in John 8:48 where the Jews accused Jesus of being a Samaritan in an attempt to humiliate and dishonour him. (cf. Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:272-273)

The encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman has been selected because as a priest in the Church of God I am always in contact with members of different families within the family of God, the Church.

1.4 Methodology

Living in a complicated world means using various methodologies to be able to read, analyse and interpret the ancient biblical texts for today's communities. Literary criticism, social-scientific criticism, rhetorical criticism and theological criticism together are used into an integrated approach to interpret this pericope. When they are used interactively, a rich and responsible approach is available for dealing with belief, action and life in the world today (Robbins 1996:2). Special attention will be paid to the narrative method as used by Gail O'Day and Sandra Schneiders. The narrative of the Fourth Gospel presents the ministry of Jesus in a dramatical fashion. In the narrative the reader is drawn subjectively into the drama and challenged to make the authentic response of faith. Also it will include exegesis of John 4 as well as the comparison of scholars' commentary on the pericope. During my research I will consult books, articles, journals from recently published works of various theologians.

1.5 Paradigm and point of departure

I am a Priest in the Anglican Church serving in a Parish in Johannesburg. I am deeply influenced by books and articles that I read written by Liberation theologians. What I

read in this material taught me that in every situation God always takes the side of the oppressed. It has always being my conviction that the church should and must preach liberation.

My sad experience of witnessing the weak and vulnerable, children and women in particular being oppressed and abused by the strong and powerful made me change the way I used to read the bible as taught by classical theology. I now read the bible as an instrument of liberation. I regard myself rightly or wrongly as a liberation theologian and that played a big role in making me want to embark on this research. I only want to prove that the Family of God is and must be different from the families that we see. We have to model our families on the family of God.

1.6 Further development of the study

Chapter 1 gives us the premise of research. Chapter 2 will be an investigation of the socio-cultural function of the Jewish, Roman and Samaritan families. I will use the social-scientific approach to obtain the information. In Chapter 3, I will look at metaphors in general and metaphors in the Fourth Gospel. This will be a literature overview of existing literature on metaphors using as a basis the work of Van der Watt (2000). In chapter 4, I will use the text immanent method and narratology; I will do a detailed exegesis of John 4 looking closely at family metaphors. Chapter 5 will be my concluding chapter. In this chapter I will look at the family in South Africa; the aim is to determine how can family metaphors in John 4 help to build good family relationships in South Africa. In this chapter I will use the social-scientific approach.

CHAPTER 2

JEWISH AND ROMAN FAMILY

Introduction

In this chapter I will do a social historical background of the Jewish and Roman family because it is from this background that the families that we come across in the bible come from. Anthropological studies of the present Mediterranean cultural and social context have proved to be very helpful both Classical studies and for the studies of early Christianity. Moreover, a number of cross-cultural, historical studies of family and family development focus particularly on the family in the context of the Mediterranean. I am going to look at the meaning of family in those cultures and roles and functions of individuals within the family. At the end of my study I will use that information to look at the family in South Africa and how the family can play a meaningful role in our quest for moral regeneration.

2.1. What is family?

There is no specific word for family in the meaning of husbands, wife and their children in Latin and Greek like in English. What place did family have within the total social and cultural system of the Graeco-Roman and Jewish world of the first century?.In Greek Literature we find extensive discussions of *oikonomia* that is the management of household. Economics was thus concerned with the house, *oikos*.

The Greek word *oikos* can be used with two different meanings related to property: some used it to refer to the material possessions of the head of the household but other writers used *oikos* to include all the members of the household, those who were under the authority of the head, that is wife, children, and other blood relatives, as well as slaves and servants (Moxnes1997: 21).

In Latin we find a similar situation: the words we commonly think of as terms for family that is *familia* and *domus*, do not carry this connotation (Moxnes 1997:21). *Familia* indicated things and possessions, but it could also be used of persons. *Domus* was used in the meaning of household so that it included husband, wife, children, slaves and others living in the house.

In this paper we will study family under the perspective of household. The terminology that we do find, *oikos*, *domus*, *familia*, is primarily used of the large households of prosperous people, who had slaves, servants and other dependants. In the Gospels we hear them speak of family not as brothers, sisters, mother and father but also of their house and fields (Mk 10:29-31).

Moxnes (1997:23) writes that in the Jewish society we meet the family as a household, a group of people bound together by close kinship, who live together and make a living together. Also the family description in the Gospel is that of a group that lives and works together within the context of socio-economic inter-relations. The household is part of a larger social structure, the village; people come into the picture as relatives, neighbours, and friends, participating in one another's lives.

The household was the centre of religious life and of transmission of values. Households were multi generational and consisted of two or three families, related by kinship and marriage, who lived in a residential complex of two or three houses connected together (Perdue et.al 1997:166).

Moxnes (1997:57) writes that we can identify four types of families in the first century Jewish Society. The first family type is the large family. The family types were set apart by the houses they inhabited. Only a small percentage of the population belonged to large families. They lived in simple houses of large proportions and in some of the courtyard houses, whereas the most hellenised and wealthy ones would live in the Roman style.

The houses they inhabited show that not all large families were equal either in their composition or in their life-style or economic position. For these families, ownership of land was not only a source of income, but also of social prestige, hence their tendency to accumulate and to exploit it. In this family type belong, rulers, high Priests, prominent landowners. You find this family type in Cities.

The basic family group living in the same house consisted of the father, the mother, the unmarried children, one or more married sons with their wives and children and servants and slaves (Moxnes 1997:59).

A more significant group of people belonged to multiple families, a very common type of family in the whole of the near east. The basic unit consisted of two or more conjugal families that were related to each other with independent living quarters. In this family type we find the retainers, priests, military men and modest landowners. Some possess land or other resources; some receive part of the surplus of the elite. You find this family type in Cities and towns.

The great majority of people were members of nucleated families. This family type consists of people with little capability to help because they live on the margin of subsistence. Some own pieces of land; some have lost lands and therefore they became tenants and day labourers. The houses in which these families lived consisted of a single room both in urban and rural areas. The family component consisted of father, mother, one or two sons and other relatives. In this group we find peasants and craftsmen.

The last class is that of which the Gospels speak indirectly, the Scattered: those who for different reasons, had descended the social scale to the lowest: the slaves, beggars, thieves, bandits, impoverished widows, orphans, the disinherited. Most of these did not have a house or a family; they could not count on support from any relatives. They have, neither land, nor jobs, many are beggars. We find them in Cities and country.

2.2 Family functions in the Jewish household.

The basic functions in a Jewish family-household were common though no two households were exactly alike as our modern families are not alike in their human configuration.

Carol Meyers et al (1997:23), writes that functions in the Ancient Jewish families-households consisted of economic functions, sexual reproductive, educational and sometimes Judicial.

Their household functions were interlocked and interdependent. Daily and seasonal, annual activities formed the core of the everyday life because Israelites were an agrarian society. The household was both workforce and workplace. The work required for subsistence agriculture would have taken up all available daylight hours.

Families also had to process food products into forms to be stored for the seasons when few foods could be grown. Other survival chores, that is producing and maintaining tools and implements, garments and other textiles accompanied core tasks in the Jewish families.

Meyer (1997:23) further said that men, women and children collectively carried out the household activities. But certain individual members of the family like adult males carried out farm work. This includes tasks such as to clear new fields of undergrowth field and trees, also engaged in the plough agriculture.

Female tasks we heard involve amongst others parenting infants and small children. Other women's work involved keeping the home in order, tending gardens and small animals, producing textiles and preparing food. They had to work at a small distance from the residential compound.

Child bearing was an additional component of a woman's life. Child bearing was integral to the family survival. Economic conditions mandated large families. Many children in a household meant more workers for the household, especially boys.

But both men and women performed other kinds of agricultural tasks such as harvesting because harvesting required all available hands at key periods. Also many other activities were distributed across gender as well as age lines. The labour of juveniles was essential to the household economy, many light but time-consuming tasks were assigned to children.

As early as age five or six, both boys and girls might be assigned tasks of fuel gathering, caring for younger children, picking and watering garden vegetables and assisting in food preparation. Children eased the burden of female labour, which consumed more total hours per day than did the male specific tasks (Meyers et. al: 1997:27) According to Meyers (1997:27), by the age of thirteen, children reached nearly full adult labour input in farm household.

2.2.1. Jewish Family and community solidarity

The father of the household exercised authority to determine how the household would farm and herd. Also the father had to decide whether to adopt a newborn child into the household. If the father likes the baby he can adopt the child into his family and if he does not like, he can decide not to adopt the child or even an adult into his family.

In the Jewish family, birth into a family was not enough to make you a member of that family. According to Meyers (1997:27) you were adopted by the father of the family into the family when he likes you. Some of the functions of the father were to recruit workers and warriors, negotiate marriages and covenants, host strangers and designate heirs.

According to Meyers (1997:32) all residents of the family -'household were bound together by their mutual goals, needs and tasks. Children were dependent on their parents and parents also were dependent on their children. Ageing parents were cared for by those children especially sons and their spouses who were to inherit the family holdings.

Meyers (1997: 32) also tells us that male and female were interdependent on one another in caring out the myriad household tasks. The above statement differs with what we were taught, that is, the designation of the household by the masculine term e.g. in my fathers house.

That has given the impression of male dominance in the economics and dynamics of family life. According to Meyers (1997:33) men and women were farm partners. Men and women were clearly interdependent, because of the essential contributions of both to subsistence labour.

Meyers (1997:34) further said that the high level of gender interdependence in the early Israelites farm families, may mean that the biblical term for the complex family unit that the father's house refers, points to the descent reckoning along male lines but not necessarily to male dominance in household functioning. When a certain work to needs to be done by a group of people, people from nearby household joined in and work together.

According to Perdue (1997:172) most education occurred within the household through the oral transmission of knowledge and skills relating to household tasks, social customs, and religious tradition. The mother taught small children and girls, while the father assumed responsibility for teaching boys and younger men.

Israelites households within larger clans established a protective agency of defence against military invaders who threatened them. In the book of Judges 5 we hear of a larger coalition of various tribes and clans banding together to fight the Canaanites in

the valley of Jezreel. Men from the associations of families in the clans formed a non-professional militia led by the charismatic warrior.

On matters of the Judiciary, Perdue (1997:174) informs us that the male head of the household was responsible for maintaining order and adjudicating disputes, arranging marriages, assigning tasks, maintaining the economic and social support for daughters whose husbands died or divorced them, and settling matters of inheritance.

According to Perdue (1997:182) the Hebrew bible has no word or laws for marriages. The households normally looked within the boundaries of the kinship structure to find suitable partners for their children, though incest restrictions in Leviticus prohibited most sexual relations and marriages among members of the same household. Parents of the two households arranged marriages with or without the concern and knowledge of the son and the daughter.

Marriage to foreigners was prohibited, for religious reasons and also because foreigners would not as easily adapt to the social customs, work patterns, and religion of the household. In ancient Israel and early Judaism monogamy was the preferred marriage arrangement. On the other hand Polygamy allowed the household to increase its labour force and its chances to provide a living male heir to inherit the estate (cf. Perdue 1997:185).

We also hear from the Hebrew bible that only the husband could initiate divorce. Celibacy was rare in the ancient Israel and Judaism. We find celibacy in the sect known as Essenes, and among the people like the Nazarites.

According to Bermant (1974:500) the Jewish woman was synonymous with purity, nobility and high mindedness. One of the most fundamental aspects of Jewish tradition is the great significance attached to virginity. Virginity was so essential a quality in a woman that a man had an automatic right to divorce his wife if he found her to be otherwise.

On the other hand to suggest that a woman was not a virgin without adequate proof was the vilest calumny that a man could perpetrate against his bride. If the elders found the proof convincing, the husband had to pay 100 shekels to the outraged father because he had brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel. The husband forfeited all right to divorce her and he remained tied to his wife till the end of his or her days. The token of virginity were the bloodstained sheets that the bride presumably handed over to her parents after the first night of marriage.

Bermant (1974:53), further said that a woman other than a virgin, unless widowed or a divorcee was not thought to be a fit member of a Jewish household. Not that non-virgins were unmarriageable, some of them proved to be more readily marriageable than their maiden sisters but they were regarded as damaged goods with less value and less standing in the community, and often married into a class beneath them.

Judaism's stress on virginity was twofold: first was the belief in chastity as an end in itself, for the person who was pure in both body and spirit came that much closer to his or her maker; second was the extent to which sex entered into the ritual of several Near Eastern cults, especially those connected with Baal, and fornication, thus interpreted, constituted a form of idolatry. One began with strange women and ended with strange gods.

But Bermant (1974:55)-57) writes also that virginity also had its defenders on plain social grounds. It was believed to strengthen marriage and establish a sense of mutual respect that formed the basis of the family life. A virgin often falls in love with the first man she sleeps with, and her virginity thus establishes an emotional bond that might not otherwise exist.

Adultery was regarded as a capital offence only when a married woman was involved. According to Bermant(1974:55) men, married or single were all cautioned to be chaste, but where they were overwhelmed by desire, they were ordered to be at least

discreet. They should garb themselves in black, go to a place where they are unknown and do their dirty work there.

2.2.2 Cleanness and uncleanness in the Jewish family

According to Bermant (1974:55-57) a virgin bride becomes impure from the moment the marriage is consummated and must remain separate from her husband for the next twelve days. Similarly, a woman is rendered impure by a pregnancy or miscarriage, or through any injury to her reproduction organs that may give rise to bleeding.

She must keep a careful record of her periods and should not cohabit on the day she is due in case bleeding should result during intercourse. Women who for one reason or another are prone to frequent or irregular bleeding are unable to cohabit at all and, according to some authorities, their husbands should divorce them. Also a descendant of the priesthood could not make the priestly blessing if his wife, mother, or daughter were menstruating.

Bermant (1974:127-129), further said that, during her unclean days a woman should wear special clothes as a reminder that she is in her menstrual period. She may prepare food and drink for her husband, but not in his presence, and may not prepare anything for his toilet, nor may serve him any beverage. If her husband falls ill and she has no one else to attend to him, she may raise him up or lay him down, but not with bare hands. And if she should fall ill likewise look after her, but only in times of absolute need when there is no one else available.

After the necessary term of separation is completed, the woman remains prohibited to her husband until she has immersed herself in a pool specially constructed for this purpose, though one may use a spring, river or bathe in the sea. The main provision is that the waters must be moving and free of any discolouring matter.

2.3 Roman family

Roman tradition respected the family throughout the classical period. The family was the heart of the society. According to Moxnes (1997:103 -104) metaphorical language formed an important part of any culture and that Romans would relate to Christianity partly by relating to the Christian use of family metaphors. The Roman family was headed by the *Paterfamilias* that is the oldest male in direct line in the family. He exercised his power over the people under his care called the *Patria Potestas*. The *Patria Potestas* included children, grandchildren, and great grand children.

In legal terms they were called *Potestas*, meaning that they were in another's right. They were under the authority of the head of the family. Depending on their sex they were named *Filius* and *Filia* in legal documents. *Filius* was the male person and *filia* was the female person.

According to Moxnes (1997:104), biological paternity was not a necessary condition to be the *patria potestas*. A minor or adult might become a member of a family through adoption. If the person had the father figure already or the head, the adoption was called *adrogation*, If that person does not have the head of the family or *paterfamilias* already the adoption was called *adoptio*.

The father of the child born outside marriage had little to do with his illegitimate offspring. He did not have power or *potestas* over the child, and he was not required to support it (Moxnes 1997:104). Legal fatherhood was most often created through the Roman marriage.

But the husband or his father or grandfather might decline to accept a newborn child into the family. In order to acknowledge the paternity and admit the child into the family, the head of the family was required to perform an ancient roman rite, which involved lifting the newborn from the floor. Moxnes (1997:104) further writes that the *patria potestas* was a legal document, which gave the head of the family an almost

omnipotent position that is all-powerful position. Also the modern idea of growing up away from parental guidance and control did not exist in Rome.

The *patria potestas* ended only when the head of the family died or when he terminated it himself or when the child or adult under his care is adopted into another family.

A *filius* or *filia* could not marry against their father's wishes. Also a *filius* and *filia* could only get married if they themselves consented. But the law gave room for enforced marriages. A *filius* could find himself married against his will and a *filia* had less chance to resist marriage arranged by her father. She could only refuse if the bridegroom is known of bad behaviour or character (Moxnes 1997:105).

The control by the head of the family continued even in marriage both for the male and female. The head of the family had the right to dissolve the marriage even if the couple lived happily together. There were other ways and laws that made things little bit easier for the *filius* and the *filia*.

Because the head of the family was the oldest male in direct line, it was practically difficult for the head of the family to control his grown up children because they set up their own nuclear families at marriage and live apart from the head of the family (Moxnes1997: 106).

Also the life expectancy of the Romans was short; few adults over 30 years had a living father. The head of the family died early and that gave children freedom from the head of the family. The other reason is that certain legal regulations made it possible for a relationship between a head of the family and his adult sons to work fairly smoothly.

The father could offer the son a share in the family fortune for the son to administer. This is called *peculium*. Also the Roman family had what they called *pietas*, meaning a bond of reciprocal love where parents and children should relate to each other well.

All the things that I have mentioned above helped the *filius* and the *filia* to survive to a certain extent the power and control by the head of the family.

2.4 Similarities and differences between Jewish and Roman families

The Jewish and Roman families were headed by a male person called, the head of the family. The wife and children as well as slaves and servants and all people living in the household are under the husband's authority.

In both the Jewish and Roman culture the word family refers to people who are living in the same household. They do things together, like working together and praying together. The function of the family is common in the Mediterranean.

The function or authority of the father was similar in the Jewish and Roman family. In both, the father had the power to adopt a child or adult person into his family or to refuse to adopt a person into his family altogether. In both the Jewish and Roman family to be born from the family does not guarantee you the right to belong to that family. You have to be adopted into the family by the head of the family after birth.

Marriage also was decided in both Jewish and Roman family by the parents. In the Jewish family the parents can arrange the marriage with or without the knowledge and approval of their son and their daughter. In the Roman family the head can arrange the marriage for their sons and daughter but the daughter can only refuse if the man is known of his bad behaviour. Other than that the daughter had little say in their marriages. The head of the family in the Roman family had also the power to dissolve the marriage even if the couple are happily living.

There are more common things in the Jewish and Roman families than differences. My observation is that all the families in the Eastern Mediterranean were almost structured the same and the functions of members were almost similar. The male head in all cases was the one who decides the destiny of his family and the wife, children and other family members and slaves who were in a subordinate position .

2.5 Samaritan family

2.5.1 The Origin of the Samaritans

The Samaritan and Jewish culture have more in common than differences, so is their families. The Samaritans and Jewish people are both Israelites. The Samaritans are from the Northern Kingdom and the Jews are from the Southern Kingdom. The Samaritans are a branch of the Israelites. We get the traditional Jewish version of the origins of the Samaritans in 2 Kings 17.

According to Purvis (1968:88), the Samaritans maintain that the Samaritans have existed from the very beginning of Hebrew history. Also they did not separate themselves from Judaism. Samaritans claim that Judaism came into existence as the result of schism in Judaism. But Samaritans do not regard themselves as Jewish schismatic.

Purvis (1968:88) further wrote that the only schism the Samaritans know, was when Eli desired to be high priest of the cult at Shechem but was of the wrong family. The legitimate successor to this office was Uzzi. When Eli withdrew to establish a rival and illegitimate cult at Shiloh, God's displeasure was so great that he hid the tabernacle and its furnishings in a cave on Mount Gerizim.

Purvis (1968:89) further said that the Samaritan said that Judaism is an extension of Elijah's heresy, through Samuel, Saul, David and the Judean monarchy, with the rival cult shifting from Shiloh to Jerusalem. Also certain Jewish traditions have contended that Samaritanism came into being as the result of the settlement of Mesopotamian colonists in Samaria in the late eighth century B.C.

Both these views on the Samaritans origin agree with the origin of the Samaritans in the pre-exilic era. Samaritans themselves say that they are composed of the tribes of

Joseph, which remained loyal to Gerizim and the priesthood of Uzzi after the Eli schism.

According to Purvis (1968:6-12), the primacy of Gerizim is such a central element in the Samaritan's thought that the presence of an Israelite cultic centre at Schechem appears to them to be the factor determining the origin of their community.

But Purvis (1968:7), further said that the Jewish traditions regard the inter marriage of Assyrian colonists and northern Israelites and the subsequent development of a syncretistic Yahwism as the origin of the heresy which caused them so much consternation. Therefore we deduce from the above statements that the building of the temple on Gerizim and the development of a priesthood and laity around it is the most important factor in the emergence of the Samaritan sect. We also note that Jews and Samaritans shared in common the mosaic faith. The Samaritans were predominantly Yahwistic when the exiles of Judah returned to Palestine in the early Persian period.

The temple on mount Gerizim had a good claim for legitimacy because Patriarchal legends were associated with the site. Joshua had gathered the tribes together at Shechem. Also Dt12 made specific references to Gerizim and Ebal not to Jerusalem. Therefore Samaritans maintained that they, not the Jews were the true Israel. In the Samaritan Pentateuch we note that in Deuteronomy 27:4, Samaritans have the reading Gerizim instead of Ebal.

2.5.2 Samaritan beliefs and traditions

Samaritans believe in monotheism. They believe in the oneness of God, his infinity and omnipotence. Jews and Samaritans were of one view in opposition to the worship of an image and Samaritans were even stricter than the Jews in regard to images and they regarded the Jerusalem cult with suspicion on these grounds (cf. Coggins 1975:132).

Coggins (1975:133) further said that Samaritans and Jews exhibit a basic similarity in their conception of God and the manner in which God should be worshipped. They were also alike when coming to Sabbath observation. Coggins (1975:135) further said that Samaritans were strict when coming to circumcision. They insisted that circumcision must be done on the eighth day. Also the synagogue in the Samaritan household played an important part as in Judaism. Pummer (1987:23) wrote that Samaritans make three times a year a pilgrimage to the summit of Mt. Gerizim.

2.5.3 Marriage and divorce in the Samaritan community

A large number of marriages of Samaritans are contracted between first and second cousins. Though some Samaritan men married Jewish women. According to Pummer (1993:6), the marriage contracts of Samaritans show that many men and women were married more than once.

The great majority were persons whose spouses had died. Widows usually did not remarry so that they could devote themselves wholly to the upbringing of their children and if they enter into a new marriage, any sons they may have had from the previous husband were cared for by the new husband, but they inherited the name and possessions of their father. The number of divorces in the Samaritan community seems to have been exceedingly small, whereas the mortality rate was high. Also polygamy was permitted among Samaritans. (Pummer 1993:6)

The Samaritans considered it unlawful at any time to marry one's wife sister or one's husband's brother. Also there are three successive acts that lead to a Samaritan marriage. They are the proposal, betrothal and wedding. Also it is the betrothal, which establishes a legal marriage. The wedding completes the betrothal. (Pummer 1993:9)

Pummer (1993:121) wrote that the incidents of divorce were very few in the Samaritan since the chances for a new marriage were extremely small. Pummer (1993:123) further wrote that even though the specification in the *ketubah* allows the wife to divorce her husband.

The husband if he does not redeem the marriage contract when his wife demands it, he shall pay to her the stipulated money in twofold. Further, everything else in the Samaritan marriage contract and their divorce bills as well as in their *halakha* presupposes that it is the husband only who has the capacity to divorce his wife.

Pummer (1993:123), further said that in the case of infidelity the wife forfeits all her dowry for herself, her heirs, and her relatives at divorce. She does not lose her dowry if minor indecencies, such as discarding the veil in public or going out too much led to divorce. Also with certain kinds of permanent illness she does not lose her dowry, and the husband must give her all that belongs to her and continue to care for her.

The wife becomes free when the husband does not pay the agreed dowry. Pummer (1993:124) further wrote that only divorced women who had not consummated their previous marriages are allowed to remarry.

2.5.4 Education in the Samaritan community

According to Pummer (1987:19), when a Samaritan child, boy or girl is four or five years old, he or she begins to learn the torah and is instructed in the Samaritan traditions and faith. When the reading of the torah is completed a special ceremony, the completion of the torah is held.

2.5.5 Cleanness and uncleanness in the Samaritan community

According to Boid (1989:285), women in the Samaritan faith are made unclean by an emission of blood from the vagina. They are segregated for a week. The woman is made unclean not only by the event of the emission of blood, but also by her contact with it. She must wash the blood off herself at some time. Boid (1989:287) further wrote that the count of seven days could only start when the blood has been removed.

Also any person or artefact that comes in contact with the blood is made unclean for seven days.

Boid (1989:301) wrote that a man is put in the state of uncleanness by abnormal discharge from the penis for two days in a row. The man can start the process of becoming clean once the discharge is finished. He is to wash the stuff off, then count seven complete days from sunset to sunset. Any person or artefact that the man touches became unclean.

2.5.6 The place of a woman in the Samaritan family

Thurston (1998:14) writes that, the image of women in Hebrew society have much in common with what is common with what is known of the lives of women in the ancient Near East. Thus we believe the Samaritan woman in the family was not different from other women in the ancient Middle East. The traditional view is that women's place was domestic and maternal. Samaritan family like many families in the ancient near east the husband was required to support his wife, to provide her food and clothing (Thurston 1998:14).

The wife's duties were domestic: to wash, cook, care for children, and tend the home. Spin and weave, and provide for her husband's needs. The traditional responsibilities of a woman in the family include washing the husband's face, hands and feet. The wife was obliged to obey her husband as master. Polygamy was permissible as we said above in this paper and that only a husband could sue for divorce, even in religious matters a woman was secondary to her husband (Thurston 1998:14).

CHAPTER 3

MEANING AND FUNCTIONING OF METAPHORS

3.1 Introduction

The Gospel of John overflows with imagery and metaphors. Jesus is the word, the light, the lamb, the bridegroom, the giver of living water and spirit, the life-giving bread, the light that lights up the world, the good shepherd, the door, the resurrection, the true way to life, the vine. He comes from above and returns to above. He is lifted up, his body must be eaten and his blood drunk, he prepares dwelling-places for his own, they must remain in him and He dwells in them, they must bear fruit (Van den Heever 1992:92).

In this chapter I do not want to ‘invent the wheel again’ (so to speak), but will only give a broad introduction of the metaphor and its functioning in John’s Gospel. This is essential to place the use of the metaphor of the family in John 4 in the context of the whole gospel.

Van den Heever (1992:89-100) gives a very useful introduction to the metaphor in general as well as the use of the metaphor in the Gospel of John. His initial explanation of the function of the metaphor in John’s Gospel was later worked out in detail by Van der Watt (cf. 1999).

3.2 Definition of Metaphor

Metaphor (or *metaphora* in Greek) literally means transfer: *meta* -trans and *pherein* – to carry. Metaphors are part of everyday speech and an important part of human communication. There are several ways of communication: words, sounds, body and hand signs etcetera. What they all have in common is that all communication, including spoken language, are symbols or signs that symbolize something else. The

word 'dog' is not a dog but it symbolizes a 'dog'. According to Soskice (1985:1), amongst Greek grammarians metaphors were recognized as a means by which language was both ornamented and extended. By such transfer of a word from an original to a secondary application, one spoke not only of the neck of a person but also of the neck of a bottle, and not only of a person's mouth but of the mouth of a river.

Soskice (1985:15) further said that metaphor is that figure of speech whereby we speak about one thing in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another. Similarly 'thing' signifies any object or state of affairs and not necessarily a physical object; the moral life and the growth of the 'soul' are all equally 'things' in the sense. Finally, 'seen to be suggestive' means seen so by a competent speaker of the language.

According to Van den Heever (1992:93) it means that instead of giving a thing its usual common name one designates it by means of a borrowed name, a foreign name. The rationale behind this transfer of name was understood as the objective similarity between the things themselves or the subjective similarity between the attitudes linked to the grasping of these things. The bearer of metaphoric meaning is not the word but the sentence and even the text as a whole. What distinguishes metaphor from symbol is that it cannot be interpreted literally. A metaphor can also be identified if it complies with three prerequisites; the complete phrase must be deemed as impossible; unenforceable and logically improbable (Havemann 1997:88).

3.3 Metaphors in the Fourth Gospel

Just as there are speech acts so there are also text acts. Therefore we can consider John's Gospel as a communicative act. This text also provides other kinds of dialogue by way of codes, characterization, irony, parody, style and metaphors. But, as a communicative text, the textual signs do not stand only in relation to the inner textual signs, they also refer to the intra textual signs, e.g. 'social codes, historical constructions and meaningful actions' (Van den Heever 1992:89-90).

‘Symbolism’ can easily be identified as the central feature of the text of John’s gospel. There is indeed not a single discourse reported in the text where the use of metaphors does not play a central role. ‘It is exactly through the use of metaphors that the significance of the narrated events is made clear to the readers. The text is thoroughly metaphorical and its metaphorical nature forces one to consider the role metaphors play in this communicative process’. (Van den Heever 1992:92).

Metaphors create their own system of reference. They are used to word and explain the unexplainable, the invisible. The film ‘Star Wars’ is an example of a complete metaphor. It explains and makes visible the unknown, a reality other than our own reality. But, the metaphor (Star Wars) does not function in *abstracto*; it is embedded in our everyday experience. In the same way we can explain the use of metaphors in John’s gospel. God or the divine is invisible, the ‘Ganz Andere’, therefore we need to find ways of making known or understanding God. John emphasizes in his gospel the divinity of Jesus and his relationship with God. The author is using human relational images to portray this relationship as well as Jesus', the divine’s relationship to the world and to other people. In the words of Van den Heever: ‘The metaphors in John are all embedded in contexts made up by other metaphorical expressions: descent/ascent, living in you/you in me, partaking of Me as food, walking in the light, etcetera. It means that the connoted micro-metaphors must be understood macro-metaphorically.’ (1992:94).

This brings us to the contribution of Van der Watt who has indicated a whole network of metaphors on micro-, meso- and macro- level in John’s Gospel.

According to Jan G. Van der Watt in his book *Family of the King, Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, theories about figurative language and metaphor in biblical material are common in theological discussions. He writes that metaphor in the Fourth Gospel has not received attention from scholars maybe

because of the lack of parables in the Fourth Gospel. Metaphors are figures of speech. Metaphors provide a way of speaking about one thing that is suggestive of another.

The metaphor maintains the individual meaning of both words at the same time that it combines them to form a new meaning; the new meaning is a metaphor. The transference of meaning takes place when what is said can be linked to what is meant through some kind of identification and comparison.

A metaphor may be defined as giving the thing a name that belongs to something else. Van der Watt further said that the writer of the Fourth Gospel frequently uses events or objects from everyday life to communicate figuratively certain aspects of his message. But the understanding of a metaphor is dependent on sufficient knowledge about the objects referred to in Metaphor.

Also it is difficult to determine the meaning of a metaphor without certainty about the socio-cultural ecology involved. In case of John 1:29, 38 Jesus as the lamb of God, because the idea of sacrifice is central then the metaphorical dynamics take place on an interactive basis. Jesus is sacrificed like a lamb is sacrificed. In this sense the qualities of a lamb are transferred to Jesus. To use the word father as a metaphor for God is therefore to speak of a familiar being a father in such a way to suggest the unfamiliar and indeed the unspeakable God.

In the Fourth Gospel groups of related metaphors are found e.g. the imagery of eating is found in John 4: 32 and 34. Also food is described in terms of actions in verse 34 which suggests figurative language. The object food is identified with the actions of doing the will and finishing the work. Food in the passage is substituted with doing what fulfils his basic needs. The actual doing the will of the father does something to Jesus, food fulfils Jesus' needs.

In verse³⁰ the Samaritans are the fields while the disciples are the reapers of the harvest, this also required sufficient knowledge about harvest and reapers to be able to understand the metaphor.

3.3.1 Types of metaphors

Van der Watt identified three types of metaphors (cf. also Soskice 1985:25-31 for theories of metaphor). Firstly, he says that metaphors function on the basis of substitution. The metaphoric expression may be substituted for the literal expression without loss of meaning. The substitution may take place between words, phrases or even stories, replacing one word, phrase, or story with another.

Secondly metaphoric function may be defined as comparison or similarity. In this case an attempt is made to explain why the substitution takes place. This kind of metaphor is halfway between the substitution and interactive metaphors. To avoid confusion between metaphors of comparison and actual comparisons, metaphors of comparison will rather also be called metaphors of substitution.

The third type is the interaction metaphor because there is the view that metaphor functions on the basis of interaction. According to Culpepper (1983:198), light, bread and water are the core symbols in the Fourth Gospel. He does not deny that there are also other symbols but they do not occur with equal frequency, e.g. Jesus is the word, John 1:1-18 # Word can be substituted by revelation or to makes known.

3.3.2 Theories of metaphors and imagery in the Gospel of John

Van der Watt (2000:394) writes that the theory of metaphors was developed on the basis of the use of metaphors on micro-, meso- and macro-level. That means that metaphors function in smaller contexts (meso), corresponds to the way in which they

function in larger contexts (macro). Therefore the theory of metaphor is valid for both smaller (meso) and larger (macro) contexts.

Substitution is used to develop imagery on macro-level. John indicates two realities: the earthly and the heavenly. In the development of the earthly reality images are exchanged with elements from the heavenly or spiritual reality, e.g. the believer becomes a child and God becomes a father. In this way God, Jesus and the believers become the father, son and children of God, which are thematically related and activate the imagery of the family.

Van der Watt (2000:395) further writes that in the world of metaphors interaction also occurs e.g. the teaching of the son by the father, loving each other within the family, obeying the Father or eating. Both the Father and a father teach their children, but the way in which they do it differs.

Also comparison is found e.g. John 3:8. The mysterious working of the spirit is linked to the person who is born from the spirit. In 8:34 the comparison: he is a slave of sin may be read: he is obediently acting like a slave of sin. And in some cases explanatory expansion occurs, for instance in 12:50, where the command of the Father is eternal life. The will of God is expressed as eternal life, which means that God wants Jesus to communicate eternal life.

According to Van der Watt (2000:396), the writer of the Fourth Gospel uses a wide variety of different types of metaphors for different reasons, namely submerged metaphors(bread, John 6:50-58) suspended metaphors(John 1:12-13), copulative surface metaphors (words which are spirit and life, John: 6:63), and genitive metaphors (kingdom of God, 3:3,5; light of life 8:12). The author uses these techniques in a complicated way.

Major metaphors in the Fourth Gospel are life, light, and father. This was done on the basis of both the frequency of use as well as the structural position of the metaphors.

That means , the position where a particular metaphor occurs within the development of the narrative as well as thought structure. The different central metaphors are presented different ways. Life for instance is used often in central positions in this Gospel. It is a key metaphor.

On the other hand where believers are described as children, this relationship is implied in John 1:12-13, but the implied reader is kept in suspension until 20:17, where God is directly called their Father and Jesus, by implication, their brother. Equivalent metaphors in the Gospel are e.g. large number of metaphors are linked to life, for instance, birth, bread and light. Syntactically, that is the grammatical arrangement of words, and they also share qualities on semantic level.

According to van den Heever (1992:95) the micro – metaphors reciprocally support each other by being organised around the root metaphor of John's Gospel, the concept of life. You must have life through the life that was the light of mankind, by walking in the light, by drinking living water, by eating and drinking him , by belonging to his flock, by being raised up by him , and by being in Him like a branch to a tree.

3.3.3 The elements of the family imagery

According to Van der Watt (2000:397), the fourth Gospel uses imagery which mainly consists of metaphors which are interrelated to form a network. The individual metaphors are linked on both syntactic and semantic levels which results in cohesion. The family imagery is the most essential imagery in the Fourth Gospel, but it is not the only one.

Elements of the family imagery occur in a network throughout the entire Gospel. The family imagery is made more important in the fourth Gospel by the complex and inclusive nature of the family imagery. Metaphorical use of slaves, friends, orphans and so on actually form part of the extended family imagery.

Van der Watt (2000:398) also writes that birth-life and father-son groups of metaphor also form the basic points of orientation in the development of the family imagery. Birth-life language forms the backbone of the family imagery. By being born as a child of God (Jn 1:12-13), the person is able to participate in the spiritual world of God (Jn 3:1-8). This implies that a person has eternal life in all its dimensions.

The concept of life is linked to several related concepts to form the core of broader family imagery. Because the person has life, he or she can and must eat, drink, has a father and family (John 20:17), lives in love (John 15:9-10,12) and serving one another (John 12:25, John 13), is protected by the father and son (John 10:28-30, 17:11-12), knows the other members of the family, is educated and is obedient to the rules of the family as the father has given them. All this is possible because the person lives.

Father-son language also constitutes in the Fourth Gospel a familial relationship into which the believers are born. The activities of the father and Son, such as providing food, protecting their property, educating the family and so on, as well as the notion of property (such as the kingdom, home, vineyard, sheep,) establish and broaden the family imagery.

For the reader sharing these conventions he or she is born into a fixed social structure where it will be expected of him or her to respect the will of the father, to be loyal to the family. According to Adele Reinhartz (1999:1), the image of God as father is deeply entrenched in Jewish and Christian scriptures.

God frequently calls Israel God's son (Hos 1:10; Ps 2:7). The relationship between God and Israel is often described in analogy to human father and son. The use of father for God is particularly well attested in the Gospel of John. God is referred to as a father approximately 118 times in the Fourth Gospel.

According to Van der Watt (2000:400), in the metaphorical terms family functions as a suspended metaphor. The father, the son and all other children, born of God, form

the family. But he further says that the family is even broader than this. It includes house and property, which was a typical way in which family (*oikos*) was seen in ancient times. The family as primary model social order is part and parcel of the everyday life of every person in the ancient Mediterranean world.

Simply calling a person a child of God activates a whole set of social-cultural associations relating to family life, for instance why a person should heed his or her parents. Why he or she should be loyal towards the family. Events that usually take place in the lives of ordinary people, such as birth, living one's life, eating, drinking, talking, obeying, fearing are used to project on analogical figurative world.

The basis of the dynamics of metaphor lies in the incongruence that exists between the world above and the world below. But fathers, physical and heavenly, protect their own. However the protection the father provides is completely different in nature from that of the earthly father. Earthly language is used to describe the spiritual reality figuratively.

Just as an earthly person is born into this world, a person is also born into the spiritual world. Once a person is alive, the person can participate in the reality into which he or she is born. One eats and drinks as well. Communication takes place within the household and the children listen to the father. Education takes place within the confines of or at least according to the choices of the head of the *oikos*.

3.4 Conclusion

We have discovered the meaning of the word metaphor and how metaphors have been used in language by various scholars especially in the science of religion. The above information will help in the quest to study family metaphors in John 4. In chapter four of this paper we are going to investigate how metaphors are used in the Fourth Gospel looking mostly at family metaphors in John 4.

CHAPTER 4

EXEGESIS OF JOHN 4: 1-42

4.1 John 4:1-3

Scholars differ about the beginning of the story of the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Some say that the story begins at John 4:1 because these verses establish the itinerary for Jesus journey from Judea to Galilee through Samaria. They further said that vv1-2 provides the reasons for the journey, i.e. the controversy over Jesus baptismal activity and verse 3 where Jesus starts his return to Galilee.

Those who are against reading John 4:1-3 as part of the introduction to the Samaritan narrative argue that although these verses do provide the context for Jesus journey, they also function as the conclusion to the preceding section, particularly John 3:22-30 with its final testimony of John the Baptist.

They further argue that the primary function of vv1-3 is to bring to completion the role of John the Baptist by focusing attention on the successful activity of Jesus and his disciples. Therefore, John 4:1-3 could be both a transitional section in the entire Gospel narrative, and an introduction to the specific events recounted in the Samaria episode.

According to Brodie (1993:204), the scenes at the well suggested a mood, not of dynamism, but of inertia, a mood that moves between the heavenly and the earthly. Also in this scene Jesus does not appear particularly heroic. Jesus seems to be giving in to the Pharisees.

Scholars are fairly divided on whether or not verse 4 implies theological or geographical necessity. They say John almost always uses it with the sense of theological necessity, e.g., John 3: 14,30 and John 9:4 (O'Day 1986:55). Brown

(1966:178) thinks that the statement is an expression of the understanding that God's will or plan is involved.

But Barrett (1955:193) differs with that argument and says that it was the custom of the Galileans when going to the festivals to Jerusalem to go through Samaria. Jesus had to pass through Samaria on his way to Galilee, because this was the shorter way from Jerusalem to Galilee.

Some scholars are convinced that the story of Jesus in Samaria is not a historical event in the life of the earthly Jesus (Schneiders 1991:186). They say according to the Synoptic Gospels we are told that the Samaritans refused to receive Jesus (e.g., Luke 9:52-53). Matthew 10:5 also tells us that Jesus command his disciples whom he sent on a mission not to enter any town of the Samaritans. Also in Acts we are told that the first Christians mission to Samaria was initiated after the death of Stephen. Therefore, the Fourth Gospel has read the sources of this mission back to the earthly ministry of Jesus.

In the Gospel of John it seems that women play an important role as witnesses to important moments in the life of Jesus. The first sign that was initiated by a woman led others to faith, and witnessed to Jesus and manifested his glory (cf. John 2:11). Now in John 4:1-42 we read about Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman. The story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman is set against the understanding of the socio-cultural functioning of family life in the first instance but also the functioning of the Christian family in the second instance.

Maccini (1996:119) says that there is similarity between the story of the Samaritan woman and the mother of Jesus at the wedding in Cana. He says both stories happen in small towns beyond Judea, i.e. Cana in Galilee and Sychar in Samaria. Both stories happen on specified time: the third day and sixth hour. Also the characters in the stories are briefly the same: Jesus; his disciples; a woman; and others (servants, bridegroom, chief steward, villagers). Water also is central to both stories as in the

drawing of it and the vessels employed. Also, in both stories Jesus addresses the nameless women as 'woman'.

They further say that the wedding in Cana is echoed at Sychar by the well itself, a common Old Testament setting for meetings between men and women involving marriage (e.g., Gen. 24:29). According to Schneiders (1991:187), the meeting of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:6 recounts the meeting of future spouses who play a central role in salvation history, e.g., Abraham's servants finding Rebecca the future wife of Isaac at the well of Nahor (cf. Gn 24:10-61) and Jacob meeting Rachel at the well in Haran (Gn.29: 1-20) and Moses receiving Zipporah at the well in Midian (Ex 2:16-22). Then here at Jacob's well Jesus meets the Samaritan woman (Schneiders 1991:187). This well is the most famous of them all and it is in Samaria, the ancient northern kingdom of Israel.

According to Carmichael (1980:333), there is a possible link between John 3:22-30 and John 4:1-42. In one section John's disciples are in a discussion with a Jew about purification by water and they report to John that Jesus (meaning the disciples) is baptising and many are going to him. In the other section Jesus is in a discussion, at a well with a Samaritan woman who herself raises the question of Samaritan uncleanness as it affects a Jew. John the Baptist acknowledges the superiority of Jesus' position by means of a metaphor which makes Jesus a bridegroom and hence the one who possesses the bride.

Carmichael (1980:333) further said that the Baptist remark about Jesus as a bridegroom was inspired; his comments on the subject are very much concerned with birth as well as marriage. John the Baptist speaks about being the friend of the bridegroom, how he greatly rejoices to hear his voice; in fact he says, his joy is now fulfilled and he adds that Jesus must increase while he must decrease (John 3: 29-30). The reference to increasing that follows immediately the reference to a bride and a bridegroom itself suggests prospective offspring.

Jesus met the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. In the encounter with the woman Jesus transgressed an ethnic boundary and social boundary by speaking to a woman and a Samaritan. Rabbis were not to be seen with women in public. For a rabbi, to be seen in public speaking to a woman, was the end of his reputation. According to Comfort&Hawley(1994:&78) Jose ben Johanan (150 BCE) said "He that talks much with womankind brings evil upon himself and neglects the study of the law and the last will inherit Gehenna" (Pirge Aboth 1.5). But the Johannine Jesus risks his reputation by speaking to the Samaritan woman. Jesus, through his encounter with the Samaritan woman, was breaking the barrier of nationality and orthodox Judean custom. Therefore it was an unusual conversation between a man and a woman, also a Samaritan and a Jew.

What is interesting in the story is that the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is placed between the story of Nicodemus the Judean leader, who fails to recognise Jesus as the Messiah, and the story about the royal official, the pagan authority, who recognises Jesus' life giving power and comes to faith through and in his saving word (Schneiders 1991:188). Nicodemus is a representative of Judaism and the Samaritan woman representative of the Samaritans and the new Israel.

According to Schneiders (1991:187), the Samaritan woman is contrasted with Nicodemus (3:1-15) who comes to Jesus at night and disappears into the shadows, confused by Jesus' self-revelation. She encounters Jesus at high noon, accepts his self-revelation, and brings other to Jesus by her testimony.

The Samaritan woman engaged Jesus in a theological discussion. Firstly the woman questions Jesus about breaking the ethnic barrier by asking water from a Samaritan and the Judean tradition by speaking to a woman in public. Through the conversation with Jesus, the Samaritan woman recognises who Jesus was. This is contrary to what the conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus did not bring true faith in him.

According to Schneiders (1991:186) the purpose of the Samaritan woman's story is to legitimate Samaritan mission and to establish the equality in the community between the Samaritan Christians and the Judean Christians.

4.2 John 4:4-42

Verse 5 gives us the scenario against which we have to interpret the metaphor of the family in this story. This verse introduces us to the head and patriarch of a family, which the narrator calls Jacob. He owned a piece of land and gave it to his son Joseph. Since the beginning of the story the relationship between the father and the son is indicated and forms the basis for the family metaphor. It is also the sons that inherit land and other important family heritage which had to be passed on from generation to generation. Part of this inheritance was a fountain. In those days it was extremely important and valuable, because this was a source of life for the whole household as well as for the community.

In these opening verses the reader is introduced to the macro metaphor of the family that dominates John 4. This links this pericope with the rest of the Fourth Gospel. What is significant in this pericope is that it seems that it is two families in conflict with each other. The two families are represented by the nameless Samaritan woman and Jesus. Her forefathers are named as Jacob and his son Joseph. In verse 12 the head of the family is mentioned as 'our father Jacob'. Jacob is the father of the Samaritans and as a true father, he has provide for his family until the last days and for ever. He gave his children the well and also in verse 2 he provided the plot of ground to his son. As a father he also provided for his children a place to worship. Ironically enough, in this qualification of Jacob' s sons lies the hidden claim that the Samaritans are also the children of Jacob, like the Jews claim they are. This implies that the Samaritans are also 'Israel' namely 'the people of God'.

From the beginning they were also herdsman who looked after their herds and fed them from the same source they are drinking now. We pick up the same theme in John 15 when Jesus says that he is the true shepherd and that he is looking after the

sheep properly. In this pericope Jesus' forefathers are not mentioned, but ironically in John 6:42 Jesus is called the son of Joseph and his brothers (7:3-5) are also mentioned.

The following images in John 4 are also linked with the metaphor of the family: water, food, water jar, sons, life and living, father, women, worship, well, ancestor, husband, sower, reaper and labour. These images will come into consideration together with the discussion of the image of the family in John 4.

The scenario for the encounter between these two 'families' is a functioning household. Firstly, the normal functioning of everyday activities like a woman who is going on a regular basis to a community well to fetch water for her family or household. She fetches water from the well at a certain time. She uses a container or bucket to draw water and pour it into her jar. The woman has had a husband or husbands.

People buy food as we heard that Jesus' disciples had gone to city to buy food (verse 8) or have food to eat at lunch or dinner. The community and the family value sons, plot of grounds are given to sons (verse 5). They have life stock and look after them and feed them. They are also involved in agriculture: they plant crops and harvest at a certain time. The community and family are also involved in cultic activities; they worship on the mountain Gerizim.

This well was since the beginning a source for feeding households. With this water the people of the village feed and bath their children and animals. Sons are explicitly mentioned because they were the ones during that era who carried the family line and traditions.

This conversation plays also against a wider cultural, political and religious background. Jesus comes from another family, namely the Jews. They have their own fathers and traditions. These two traditions are symbolized in John 4 by two places of worship, Gerizim and Jerusalem. Jews claim that the proper place of worship is Jerusalem and the Samaritan claim that the proper place of worship is Gerizim. The

Jews also claim that they are the true Israel, the people of God and that salvation is coming through them (v.22).

It is also from the beginning of the conversation quite clear that these two families are not getting along too well: The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans).

According to Brodie (1993), by the time Jesus reaches the well, his mood seems even less heroic. He is tired, thirsty, and presumably hot because it was about the sixth hour or noon. Jesus also appears to have been hungry because his disciples had gone into the city to buy food. Jesus was alone when the woman came. Because of the social behaviour Jesus should not have spoken to the woman because she was a Samaritan and because she was a woman.

Within the culture of her time she was not considered as important. Culturally, politically and religiously she is portrayed as coming from the lowest parts of society. Even her name is not mentioned. She is a woman with no status and no power. She stands in sharp contrast to Nicodemus which represents the religious and moral establishment (cf. McGann 1989:52-54).

For the male moralists, the fundamentalists and the chauvinists, she is a seducer: Kuyper (1934:44-45) sees her as bold, her forwardness 'positively uncouth' or rude, she was never embarrassed and had grown 'calloused to appropriate feminine modesty'. She was superficial, mundane, gullible and vulgar (Bouyer 1964:87-89). Sueltz (1979:55-57) compare her to the sexy, cynical, swinging single of today's western society. Cantwell (1983:79ff) sees her as a victim in the sense that she is inadequate rather than malicious. Her life was not as much morally a mess because of a broken series of false relationships and empty promises. Rather She is one of the unthinking mass. For those interpreters who do not want to be so hard on this woman, she is fascinating, complicated and enigmatic. She is poised and self-confident. She is

aware of her own tradition and in touch with that of the Jews. She is open and honest, ready to interact. But, she is a mere woman with no status and no power. She has a shameful and hidden past. For the feminists she is a victim of male domination, manipulation and sexual lust. The Samaritan woman is an example of female bodies as object of male desire (Exum 1993:87).

The woman's knowledge of the tradition and religion is remarkable. She engaged Jesus in a theological discussion about worship and the very important issue about the Messiah. She was aware of the ethnic differences between the Jews and the Samaritans and therefore she questions Jesus about breaking the ethnic barrier, by asking water from a Samaritan and Judean tradition by speaking to a woman in public.

She questions Jesus about the place of worship, because the Samaritans claim that true worship is at mount Gerizim and Judeans claim that true worship is in Jerusalem. The woman's knowledge might have come from listening to teachings and stories about legends and the religion. The Samaritans in general were probably well informed about the differences between themselves and the Jews.

But, we can also look at the woman from a different perspective. She is tough and individualistic. She dare to come on her own to the well at six in the evening and does not group with other women for protection against seduction or gossip. She is irreverent. Her reaction to Jesus' request for water, gives no indication that it is out of curiosity as if he is another potential customer. Her reaction is rather aversive or even aggressive in the sense of 'You, Jews who do not want to mix with us, why do you now suddenly speak to me? What do you want?' Her answers and reactions to the following discussion with Jesus also do not show any submissiveness. She put him into place by saying that he is not greater than their father Jacob, although somewhere else Jesus claims to be greater even than Abraham (8:56-58). She is well informed about her traditions, the history of the well and what it symbolizes (cf. Gn 33:18; 48:22; Josh 24:32). Even her answer to Jesus when he said that he would give her

'living' water and that she will never thirst again and that it will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life, shows a kind of sarcasm. Especially, because she had already doubts about his greatness and abilities (cf. vv.11-12).

But, cleverly she took the initiative and turned the conversation away from her personal circumstances to matters that are of national and international concern. The issues are of religious, political and social nature, domains where women do not feature. The alienation between the Jews and Samaritans came after the Babylonian exile in 428BCE when the Samaritans were officially excluded from the temple in Jerusalem and the Jewish community (cf. Dodd 1968:216). There was opposition between the Samaritans from the northern region and the Judeans from the south because of the refusal of the Samaritans to worship in Jerusalem, and that the Samaritans had helped the Syrians in the 2nd cent BCE in their war against the Jews. In 128 BCE the Jewish High Priest burned down the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim (Brown 1982:170). In the Samaritan Pentateuch we read in Deuteronomy 27:4 the instruction to Joshua to set up a shrine on Gerizim. This reading maybe correct, for the reading 'Ebal' in the Massoretic Text may be an anti-Samaritan correction (cf. Brown 1982:172). Is it possible that this woman was so well informed that she knew this?



The woman was not led astray by Jesus comments. She let him not involve her in his argument. God is not the Samaritans' Jewish father. She constantly avoids referring to God as father. The way God can deal with her, as a Samaritan is not the Jewish way, but the Samaritan way (cf. vv.22-23). Therefore, she brought up the issue of the Messiah (cf. Nortje-Meyer 2001). In this theological conversation with Jesus, the Samaritan woman wanted Jesus to clarify the misunderstanding that the Samaritans and Jews had about the Messiah and Salvation. According to the Samaritans, and some Judeans the Messiah would be a prophet like Moses, Restorer *Taheb* (cf. Dt 18: 18-19) and according to the Jews the Messiah will be a descendant of David. He will act as a mediator between Yahweh and His people. He will make Known the will of the Lord.

Jesus transcends both the Judean claim that true worship is in Jerusalem and the Samaritan claim that true worship is at Mount Gerizim, in favour of worship in Spirit and in truth. The conversation led Jesus to reveal himself as the new prophet like Moses, thus vindicating the Samaritan claim to be spiritually a legitimate part of the chosen People and thus the new Israel (Schneiders 1991:190).

At the end of the conversation with the woman it became evident that Jesus is not the 'Messiah' who will announce certain religious truths, but he will be the inaugurator of a new era in religion (Dodd 1953:314). Schneiders (1991:191) thinks that Jesus' declaration that Samaria has no husband is a classic prophetic denunciation of false worship like Hosea (cf. Hos.2: 2).

The Samaritan woman is a symbol, not only of the Samaritans who come to Jesus through the witness of the Johannine community, but also of the new Israel who is given to Jesus the bridegroom. The disciples seem not to understand the kind of Messiah Jesus was. They were startled to see Jesus speaking with a woman. As at the beginning of his ministry when he did the first sign the disciple here also do not understand Jesus, but a woman understands the kind of Messiah that Jesus is.

We see the woman abandons her daily concerns and goes off to evangelise the town (v.28): 'Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city' (Schneiders 1991:192). Unlike Nicodemus who could not make a decision of faith, the Samaritan woman, after the conversation with Jesus, decides to go and tell her community about the Messiah and the new life that he brings.

Here again a woman is part of the inauguration of the new order where the new religion will transcend the gender, ethnic and racial division. A woman is the first one to hear that the new age has come (cf. Jn 4:23). She shares the news with her community. She becomes the Apostle to her community. The role of a woman as a missionary is profoundly unsettling to the male disciples (Schneiders 1991:192).

We see in the Fourth Gospel women taking apostolic roles (e.g. 2:5) and missionary roles, (e.g. 4: 28ff). Jesus also told his disciples that they would be reapers in the mission that was initiated by a woman. It was through the woman's testimony that the Samaritans came to Jesus and asked him to dwell with them, cf. John 1:14, 'And the word became flesh and lived among us and we have seen his glory the glory as of the Father's only Son full of grace and truth'.

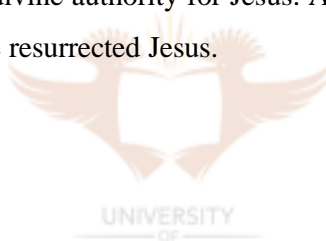
We see this pattern in the Fourth Gospel of people coming to faith through the witness of others and on the basis of Jesus' own word to them. The Samaritans came to faith through the testimony of the woman and the word of Jesus. According to O'Day (1986:76), the story of the Samaritan woman shows that even if verse 22b says that salvation is from the Jews, the Jews represented by Nicodemus did not accept the one who is bringing them salvation.

John writes, 'He came to his own home and his own people received him not' (1:16), but the Samaritans accepted him (4:42). According to O'Day (1986:72), Jesus confirming to the woman that he himself is God's Revealer, the sent one of God. Also O'Day (1986:76) further say that 'Come and See' for John, is the invitation to come and see Jesus. We saw twice in the Fourth Gospel people being invited to come and see, (1:39, 46). For John the invitation is an important step in understanding whom Jesus is. Scholars like Schneiders (1991:192) believes that 'to seek' in the Fourth Gospel is a term for deep desire. They say Jesus' first word to his disciples in the Gospel is, 'What do you seek?' (1:38) and also his question to Mary Magdalene on the morning of the resurrection is 'Whom, do you seek?' (20:15).

Therefore in the story of the encounter between Jesus with the Samaritan woman, John is showing us, that Jesus is the universal Messiah not the Judean Messiah or Male Messiah. And this Messiah stands in a special relationship with God. He is the Son of God. And this is the overall aim of the Gospel, to convince the believers that Jesus is the Son of God (cf. Jn 20:31-32). Women played a leading

role in God's plan of salvation for human beings. Jesus, as the universal Messiah, came to break all barriers and to give God's gift of life to everybody. Jesus came to save people from wrong worship and from alienation. Without the full participation of women in our churches worship is still not whole.

The Fourth Gospel emphasizes the active not passive participation of women in the new Israel, i.e. the church. This we noticed when the Mother of Jesus was initiating the first sign and the Samaritan woman becoming a missionary to her community, bringing her community to Christ. 'I am' verse 26: According to scholars, the Samaritan woman was the first one in the Fourth Gospel to receive self-revelation concerning the true identity of Jesus. The second person in the Fourth Gospel to receive such revelation is Martha of Bethany, cf. Jhn 11:25. God also spoke to Moses in a similar way, 'I am' cf. Exodus 3:6 Scholars believe that when Jesus uses 'I am' he claims divine authority. They differ about whether his claim also includes divine identity. John claims divine authority for Jesus. And Mary Magdalene who was the first person to witness the resurrected Jesus.



4.3The metaphor of water

4.3.1The significance of water in John's Gospel

According to Van der Watt (2000:228), the imagery of water plays an important role. In chapter 4 the context is a well which supplied the nearby town with water. In chapter 7:37-39 the context is the feast of tabernacles, during which the life giving power of water also played a role.

Marsh (1968:209) believes that 'water' in verse 7 has provided the symbol for John to speak of purification and initiation into the Christian life and community. Water is mentioned in John 2: 6 and John 3:5 as that with which human beings wash. According to Brown(1966:178) Jesus is seen to supersede the means of cleansing known to Judaism.

In this pericope Jesus gives 'the living water' and also in John 7:38-39, the Holy Spirit provides for human beings to drink. In the earthy family water sustains life and the well is provided by the earthly father but in the heavenly family living water does not only sustain life but also eternal life given by Jesus and the hearts of believers also becomes the cisterns of living water.

According to Brown (1966:178), the very use of the symbol of water shows how realistically John thought of eternal life, i.e., water is to natural life as living water is to eternal life.

They also link Jesus' request for water with the request made by Jesus from the cross, 'I thirst', in John 19:28 (Marsh 1968:210), and the sixth hour was the hour in which Jesus was handed over to be crucified (cf. John 19:14). Brown (1966:169) opposes the idea and thinks that there is little likelihood that the scene is deliberately being related to the crucifixion.

According to Van der Watt (2000:229), in chapter 4:5-6, the well as a gift of the Father Jacob to his son Joseph is described. The well also carries the name of the original donor, the father Jacob, and his children are still using this well. Jesus in this chapter will replace the well with the true source or the well of true water. Therefore water remains a suspended metaphor.

4.3.2 The significance of water in John 4

a) Physical water

In the fourth Gospel John employs metaphors that are related to the world of a woman in a family. These family metaphors permeate throughout the Gospel. In the family water is used for several functions in the household. In the ancient Middle East it was the duty of a woman to fetch water for her household. Brown (1968:169), writes that the chore of fetching water for the household was usually done in the morning and evening. Noon in the ancient Middle East was peak heat of the day. According to

Carmichael (1980:336), Rachel is said to have come to the well at an odd time of the day (Gen. 29:7). The Samaritan woman came at the same time and commentators point out that this is a most unusual time, morning or evening being the regular hour.

The woman in the household after fetching water, that water was used for cooking. Also the woman's family was using water for bathing. But Bouquet (1953:41) wrote that it may well be that in the Old Testament days, and in village communities in New Testament times, there was a good bit of neglect of personal cleanliness, but the influence of Greece and Rome was certainly on the side of washing. There was too little water for everybody to take a nice bath everyday.

Therefore by the first century after common-era bathing must have become common and this would only happen at least once a week. There are remains of public baths in several parts of Palestine. Therefore water in the household was also used for bathing.

(b) Symbolic water

Water that is fetched by a woman for her household is also used for religious function. Water is a symbol of new birth. When a religious function was performed, a person after being cleansed by water became a new being. Suggit (1993:58) writes that the encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus in chapter three is the reference to a new birth by water and the spirit, with a clear allusion to the baptism.

The fourth Gospel has many instances where water was symbolically used for new birth. Culpepper (1983:193) writes that, early in the fourth Gospel water is associated with baptism and cleansing. Water as a means of washing or external cleansing points to the inner cleansing, which occurs when one accepts Jesus.

The changing of water to wine in chapter 2 symbolises the fulfilment of John's prophetic announcement (cf. Culpepper 1983:193). Jesus in the fourth Gospel is the source and giver of good wine and living water. This we see when the Samaritan

woman left the water vessel behind (4:28). The Samaritan woman gives Jesus water from her vessel and Jesus gave her living water in return. That made the vessels no longer necessary.

Derrett (1988:293) wrote that the Samaritan woman came to draw water, which she would take home, in her pitcher. But actually left the pitcher having no need of that container, so that she took the pure living water home inside herself, leaving the inferior well water behind. The rivers of living water will flow out of the belly of a person who hears Jesus' revelation and teaching like the Samaritan woman (cf. Jn 7:37-39).

Jacob's well provided subsistence to the Israelites (4:12) but the Samaritan woman; she is a cistern of living water. Suggit (1993:59), said that Jesus in the fourth Gospel is shown as fulfilling the promises of the Old Testament (cf. Jer 2:13). He is the fountain of living water and the Samaritan woman the cistern.

Water also was used for purification before prayer or eating common food. Derrett (1988:24) writes that the best water for purification is the living water (cf. Lv 15:13). Water also in John becomes an ineffective means of healing. Jesus is the source of healing that was thought to reside in water (Culpepper 1983:194). Usually water is drawn from a source for everyday use, but the water Jesus gives is there for eternity and the spring is located in each believer. The water will not only result in life, but will also sustain it.

The imagery of drinking water relates to an ordinary, everyday event which was necessary for sustaining life, and it was part of the daily routine to fetch water. The one who supplies water in the family of God is Jesus. He is the water and his presence becomes the well. In his presence the spiritual needs of the family are fulfilled forever. Just as an ordinary family needed water, water is needed for spiritual life. Jesus supplies that water, but he is also that water (Van der Watt 2000:233).

In chapter 7:37c-38, another reference to water is found, stating that if somebody thirsts he or she should come to Jesus and drink. The person who believes will experience streams of living water flowing from him or her. According to Brown (1966:178), living water is Jesus' revelation or teaching. Water is also used for cleansing in John 13, the washing of the disciples feet. Culpepper (1983:195) said that with profound irony the giver of living water must himself thirst (19:28), and the giver of good wine must drink vinegar or common wine.

4.4. Metaphors of *light* and *life*

According to Van der Watt (2000:235), *light* is directly connected to *life* in two places in the Gospel, in John 1: 4 and 8:12. In John 1:4 *life* is linked to *light* by way of a copulative surface metaphor. Because Jesus has *life* in himself, he is *life*. *Life* creates the possibility of a positive relation with God. Jesus as the one having divine existence in himself, he serves as the example of how Christians should live. As *life* Jesus is the *light* in the sense that he reveals and brings the divine alternative of existence to humanity. Jesus as *light* is the one who serves as and provides the example of divine life to people.

Light makes it possible for people to see and act correctly. *Light* can be described as the revelation to people, who should live as people who have life, in other words, people who belong to God's family. The presence of this life makes it possible for people to live this alternative life in the presence of darkness. Jesus as *life* and *light* is not only the place where the divine life can be seen, but also to be experienced. Jesus shows his followers how life should be lived.

Jesus offered the Samaritan woman a new life within the household of God. He invites her into a new family as someone who is born into that family. To be born into the family of God, one needs to be born from above (Jn 3:3). By leaving her water jar

(her source of life) with Jesus, she indicated her entry into the new relationship with a new family.

4.5 Relationships in John

4.5.1 The Samaritan woman's relationship with men

In verse 16 Jesus is commanding the woman to call her husband. It is reported in the Gospel that she had had five husbands and the one she is presently living with is not her husband. The woman might have had five husbands, but it is not clear what her living circumstances were.

According to Domeris (1988:49ff) the Samaritans were exclusively religious people. Therefore the issue of the Samaritan woman's impurity is a Jewish propaganda. He said the woman might have had five husbands because she was following the levirate marriage. She might have been widowed five times (cf. Mark 12:20ff)

He further argued that she was not a prostitute or immoral woman, though her life was chaotic because she is living with a man who is not yet her husband. Therefore Jesus is the only man who breaks the tradition of not speaking to a woman in public by speaking to her, and that is making the disciples uncomfortable and therefore they question her presence.

Neyrey (1991:274) wrote that Jesus expressed willingness to drink from the same jug as the woman, risking ritual uncleanness. Thus Jesus is portrayed as disregarding the purity system of the Rabbis in order to incorporate her into the new household of God. Other than the men in her life, Jesus offers her a place in the household of his Father: 'In my Father's house are many rooms ... I am going to prepare a place for you' (14:2) and '... whoever comes to me, I will never drive away' (6:37). Finally, the woman got someone to look after her forever.

4.5.2 The Samaritan woman's relationship with the disciples

In the ancient Middle East there was a division between space for men and women. The space for women was private space and men public space. Therefore it was unacceptable for women to be seen in public talking to men. The disciples of Jesus were startled to see their Rabbi speaking with a woman in public, all the more because she was a Samaritan. Rabbis did not carry on conversations with women because it was considered frivolous, even evil. The disciples are made uncomfortable by the new role of the woman (Comfort 1994:76).

After reserving the living water she is going to be the cistern of the living water. She is going to be an apostle to her community. That role was threatening the role of the disciple because a woman is going to share the public space with them.

4.5.3 The Samaritan woman's relationship with the men in the village

According to Neyrey (1991:83), although Jesus commands the Samaritan woman to go and call her husband (v16) she goes into the village marketplace where all the men are gathered.

He said that even if the narrative does not say marketplace but from our knowledge of the culture, we would be culturally accurate in imagining males gathered an open-air space, such as the marketplace. She did not go from door to door, interrupting the private lives of her female neighbours.

Neyrey (1991:83), further said, that she did not return to private space at all but went into the public space, to the one place where males would be expected to congregate. We hear that many in the village believed Jesus because of the testimony of Samaritan woman (v39). Therefore men of the village discarded the cultural norm of the day by believing the word of a woman. They did not only believe but they followed her to Jesus, for the village people she was not an ordinary woman but an apostle.

4.5.4 Family relationships of Jesus

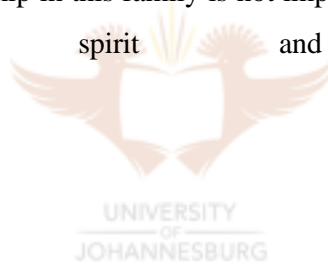
The physical family of Jesus is definitely present in the Gospel. Jesus is part of a physical family which comprises his father, mother and brothers, but his real priority might serve as an example for believers. In John 1:45-46, Nazareth is mentioned as the hometown of Jesus, which was situated in Galilee (4:43-44, 7:41). According to Van der Watt (2000:260), there is not much specific information about family life in the Fourth Gospel. There are however references to physical families. The crowd in Chapter 6:42 knew the physical family of Jesus. This is also the way in which Philip introduces Jesus to Nathaniel, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Jesus is presented as a member of a physical family.

The narrator refers only twice to Jesus' earthly father, Joseph in 1:45 and 6:42. This was said by the Jewish officials as part of their reaction on Jesus' divinity. We also hear about the brothers of Jesus. They presumably accompany Jesus and their mother to a wedding feast (2:1 and 12). We meet them again in 7:3-10. They did not believe in Jesus. We also meet the mother of Jesus in 19:25-26. She is present at the cross with her sister, the aunt of Jesus (19:25). Again the priority of the heavenly family is stressed when Jesus gives his mother as mother to the beloved disciple and makes the beloved disciple the son of Jesus' mother. Jesus asks the beloved disciple to take care of his mother, which means that the mother of Jesus is introduced into the fellowship of God's spiritual family.

In the Fourth Gospel we meet another family in chapter 9, the family of the man born blind. The question of the disciples in 9:2 illustrates a typical familial convention. A child shares the characteristic behaviour of his parents, whether positive or negative. The blind man's parents also did not try to protect him (9:18-23). In Jn 9:35-38 the man is introduced into the family of God. There he will be protected until the end, nobody will be able to snatch him out of the hand of the Father or the Son. The superiority of the heavenly family is again established (Van der Watt 2000:262).

The family of Lazarus and his sisters is depicted as a family where the members cared for each other (chapter 11) they are a unique family i.e. the sense that no father or mother is mentioned but only a brother and sisters. This is a family Jesus loved. In 12:1-8 we find Jesus and this family eating together. This was a basic social act among friends. Mention is also made of physical brothers such as Andrew and Peter (1:40-41; 6:8), their father is also mentioned, namely John (1:42; 21:15).

But Jesus belongs to the family of God. This family is different from the physical families. In this family, faith in God and love for one another is what keep the family of God together. In this family it does not matter whether you are from which racial or ethnic group or gender group, you are treated as an equal and important member of the family of God. We notice this with the Samaritan woman who is from a different racial group as Jesus, but after she meets Jesus she realised that in the family of God it is not important whether you are a Jew or Samaritan. What is important is faith in God. Even the place of worship in this family is not important but how you worship is important: in spirit and in truth.



CHAPTER 5

FAMILIES IN SOUTH AFRICA: CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Fourth Gospel shows from the beginning the positive attitude that Jesus had for women, and I believe it is how he wanted us to live in the family of God or in society. Women participated in the ministry of Jesus. Even before the male disciples could believe and participate in the ministry of Jesus, women were already participating.

Many passages in the Fourth Gospel show that Jesus had a good relationship with women. He did not discriminate against them because of their gender, but he used them more than men for ministry. Also in the Fourth Gospel we see the women becoming apostles before men, the mother of Jesus in the story of the wedding at Cana (Jn 2:1-12), and the Samaritan woman (4:1-42), the subject of my research. Jesus even reveals his true identity to a woman.

According to Nortjé (1986:27), women and their femininity are honoured and accepted in the Fourth Gospel. When a woman is instrumental in the ministry of Jesus, it is a woman and never as a woman with a chip on her shoulder. She is never exploited or ignored. She further said that the Fourth Gospel does not concern itself with questions like parity, equality, discrimination or grounds of her sex, and so on. The evangelist subtly weaves her into the pattern of a man's world where she is as at home as he is (Nortjé 1986:27)

Our country South Africa is passing through a period of transition towards a new and successful modern society. Yet we are faced with a massive problem of moral degeneration, this moral crisis manifests itself in the following crimes, murder, rape, women and children abuse and domestic violence. Our history is of oppression, discrimination and dehumanisation, of poverty, of the breakdown of family life.

In my research about the family metaphor in John 4, we note that the family in the household of God is different from the Jewish family and Samaritan family or any other family in the Mediterranean . These families were not different from our South African family that we see today. In the above mentioned families we note that discrimination was rife and oppression of other social groups and gender group exist.

Nortjé (1986:21) wrote this about women in Israel, that all her life a woman remained a minor. She was not self-supporting or independent. All the hard domestic work certainly fell on her. She took care of the flocks, worked in the fields, cooked the food, did the spinning and so on.

Ursula King (1990:275) writes that we hear a great deal about the third World and its suffering, about the need for development, justice and peace and for a more equitable distribution of the world's resources. Perhaps few are aware that there exists also a 'Fourth World' of deprivation, injustice, subordination and suffering – and that is the world of women who experience themselves as the alienated 'other' in the Church and society.

If our families and society can be structured according to the family of God represented by Jesus in chapter four of the Fourth Gospel, we will not experience the problems we are facing in South Africa. Households in the Jewish family were the centres of religious life and the transmission of values. Even in the South African society, families or households can play that role in helping the country in its quest for moral regeneration.

Contrary to what we see and hear of what fathers and uncles are doing to their families today, it is that in the ancient African society the male members of the household used to play important roles in the household. Setiloane (1976:28) writes that the Sotho-Tswana family consists of the head of the household and his wives, his aged father and mother, dependent sons and daughters and even children of married sons still living in the household. The head of the household is the father and they are

his children. He is protector and judge, provider of their needs, their security against the outside world. Sotho-Tswana are related as closely to the ancestors of their mother as to those of their father. The maternal uncle is the agent through whom the maternal family expresses its concern and exerts its influence over the whole life and development of its daughter's children, whether male or female. At every major event – their birth, initiation, marriage, parenthood and death, he plays a central ritual and moral part (Setiloane 1976:22).

Children are a gift of the living dead and of God. As the child grows, the role of its parents as formers of character and as disciplinarians increases. There is an intense concern for educating the young in the ways of their ancestors, that they may also transmit the same ways to their descendants. Under parental supervision education takes place, in fact through association with other children. Active participation in rituals introduces them to the basic values of their society and to the correct emotional attitudes to animals and crops. As they grow into puberty the girls begin to receive guidance at home in home economics, feminine hygiene and the graces of womanhood. Responsibility for this devolves upon all the womenfolk of the community.

A true Sotho-Tswana man is one who follows the accepted pattern of social living, who shows equanimity and maturity. He is generous and kind, but also strong; not only physically, but morally and spiritually. He has established his household, whose foundation is mutual respect and regard for other. He supports his household, while they in turn support him with honour and service. Similarly, a true woman is mother of the household one who gathers all its members, not only those of her household into her love and care.

In the Fourth Gospel we note two families in conversation with each other. The Samaritan family represented by the woman and the Jewish family represented by Jesus and the disciples. But, Jesus himself is from another family and his father is not from these two families. He is from the family of God.

We can draw some similarities between these two families and our South African society. The role of the woman has been limited in our society for many years. A woman's role in her society is restricted and she is not allowed to speak to men in the public space. A woman was not allowed to do certain things in society, like doing certain jobs or take leadership position in the Church. In certain cultures she was supposed to be subdued by men. A woman was treated more or less like a child. Woman and child had no rights. They were treated like sub humans.

All this is contrary to what Jesus is teaching us about the family of God in John's Gospel. We see that in the family of God women become apostles to their communities, as we see the Samaritan woman talking the message to her community, a role she was not allowed to take in the Samaritan and Jewish families and Mary Magdalene who was the first to bring the news to the disciples that Jesus has risen. According to Nortjé (1986:27), there is a certain climatic progression in John's treatment of women in the Fourth Gospel. If Mary and Martha were the first witnesses to the raising from the dead, and Mary the first witness to proclaim his death by anointing him, then Mary Magdalene is the first witness to Christ's resurrection. The above mentioned statements confirm the fact that in the family of God women are allowed and encouraged to take leadership roles. Also Jesus breaks the barrier that separate people from different social groups to intermingle with one another, the same barrier that separated Jews and Samaritans.

As South Africans we can look no further than the family of God that we see in John 4 and the rest of the Fourth Gospel to build a truly moral society. A society where all people are equal regardless of gender or race. A society that respects its women and children; a society that does not use violence to solve its problems.

We notice that the Samaritan woman who is from a different racial group as Jesus but after she meet Jesus she realised that in the family of God it is not important whether

you are a Jew or Samaritan. What is important is faith in God, and even the place of worship in this family is not important but how you worship is important.

In the family of God we note that the role of a woman is changed from the traditional stereotype where a man was the one who provides for the family to a woman who is the bringer of the message of eternal life. We see the Samaritan woman taking care of the needs of her family by providing water that is going to be used for cooking, drinking and bathing in the family. But not only that, she is also the bringer of living water, a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

We also note that in the family of God women can free themselves from oppressive husbands. We see that the Samaritan woman who left five husbands has still survived. Therefore South African women can learn from what is happening in the family of God, they can free themselves from abusive husbands and continue to live normal lives. Regardless of the fact that in many cases the men who abuse women and children are the ones who are supporting them.

Also in the family of God women are able to evangelise and speak to both men and other women in public. Therefore South African women can also make their voices heard by contributing to topical issues in society at large, being it political or religious issue. They must also fight for their rightful places in the churches. I believe it is immoral to deny women leadership positions in the Church. During his earthly ministry Jesus trusted women as we see in the case of the Samaritan woman. I believe that Jesus wanted woman to continue where he left off, because women understood him better.

The Church is sidelining women and according to the Fourth Gospel Jesus wanted the Church to grow so that the family of God can become bigger. Therefore, he entrusted the leadership of the Church to those who understood him better; those who have faith in him; in these cases women fall in that category. Therefore, the Church should give women the prominence that Jesus was giving them.

Louise Kretzschmar (1995:30) writes that women need to critique the cultural context which fosters male fears and prejudices, challenge the structures of male power which serve to both imprison men and disempowered women, and lead the way to a less rigid and hierarchical understanding of ministry in the Church and effective participation in the society at large.

She further writes that, in order for their freedom in Christ to become a social reality, women in churches need the empowerment that knowledge brings. Not simply the acquiring of information, but knowledge in the sense of knowing God, knowing oneself, and having a grasp of how the Church and society function. Also women need to embark upon a process of theological re-education and within the context of gaining knowledge in the broad sense the category of experience is vital. Women today need to know and understand the experiences of their foremothers in the faith as well as the experiences of the contemporary women. This is because society as a whole and the churches in particular function both as means of the liberation and oppression of women.

She further said that women are well placed to take the debate concerning the interpretation of the relevant biblical texts into their homes, schools and churches.

Women form the bulk of people who attend church services every Sunday and other days, and yet they are not part of the high echelon of the Church, at local level in parishes and in the dioceses and provinces. I believe that the treatment that women are receiving from the Church is not in line with the teaching and ministry of Jesus which the Church claims to follow. Christina Landman writes (1998:138), that it is only recently that African women were able to take co-responsibility for theological and religion training. And at present many African women theologians train themselves and listen to one another through organisations such as EA TWOT and the circles of African women theologians established all over Africa.

I do recognise the complexity of the South African society and family practice. South Africa is a country with diverse cultures and I do not assume that there is one South African culture or family. But I do hope that the message of liberation for women from the Gospel of John will be heard by women and men throughout South African.



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