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HEAR THE VOICE OF SILENCED: A POSTCOLONIAL READING OF JOHN 4:1-42

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ABSTRACT

Colonialism is often portrayed as beneficial for development, but this paper reveals its destructive impact on nations, societies, and individuals. By analyzing the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman from the Bible and uncovering how colonialism breeds hostility, and creates social and religious conflicts and discrimination and show how colonial rule divides communities, causing strife and disrupting peace. Hearing the voice of the silenced is a potent reminder to acknowledge the voices marginalized by colonialism. Despite having stories to share, they remain unheard. In a world where winners dictate the narrative, the voices of the defeated are suppressed and overlooked.

Looking beyond history, colonialism still affects us today in different forms and practices and its lasting consequences. By studying the Bible's lessons in a modern context, the author highlights the importance of addressing colonialism's legacy and working toward Justice and peace.

1. Introduction

Assyrian colonialism led to a significant divide between Jews and Samaritans, which persisted through the Hellenistic and Roman eras. The Samaritans faced a complex social and religious situation due to their displacement, mixed population, and distinctive religious practices. The Jewish community in Judah, with a more continuous identity and cultural heritage, often viewed the Samaritans with suspicion and considered them outsiders. The biblical narrative and historical records suggest that the Samaritans faced social and religious isolation, leading to a sense of separation and silence within Jewish society. This research aims to a postcolonial reading of John 4:1-42 and seeks to amplify the muted voices that have often rendered silent.

2. Brief Overview: Colonialism

Imperialism and colonialism are often employed interchangeably. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term colonialism has its roots in the Latin word "*colonia*," signifying "farm" or "settlement," originally used to describe Romans who moved to other lands while retaining their citizenship.[1] Accordingly, the Oxford English Dictionary describes it as,

> a settlement in a new country…a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state; the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up.[2]

Colonialism is the acquisition and control of another's property and resources through conquest. However, it extends beyond the manner in which various European nations expanded into Asia, Africa, or the Americas from the sixteenth century onward; it has consistently been an enduring and widespread element of human history.[3]

Empires such as Ancient Greece, Rome, Egypt, and Phoenicia engaged in colonialism, which comprised founding colonies and extending borders, starting approximately 1550 B.C. To grow stronger, these forces used the resources of the people they had subjugated. They used the legal and theological imperative to govern the land and culture of Indigenous peoples as justification for their conquests. They presented themselves as ferocious countries on the path to civilization, working for the good of their homelands and populations. [4] Historically, religious authorities have endorsed and actively engaged in the exploitation of labor and land in other nations, often under the guise of converting populations to Christianity. Catholic popes, in the fifteenth century, invoked the Doctrine of Discovery to justify colonization, asserting that it was crucial for the growth of the Church and the salvation of souls. Christian

[1] Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "colonialism, n.", https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/5887041016. Accessed on December 09, 2023.
[2] Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "colonialism, n."
[3] Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 2.
[4] Erin Blakemore, "What is colonialism," National Geographic, October 6, 2023, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/colonialism

missionaries frequently arrived in new areas early, bringing with them cultural and religious traditions as well as a paternalistic outlook toward the local populace.

3. The Bible and Colonialism

Imperialism and colonialism are not specifically discussed in the Bible. Undoubtedly, there were empires throughout the Bible, and to the degree that they persecuted Israel and other countries. The biblical story of the land promise from God is associated with a heavenly command to wipe out the native population. Millions of people have suffered as a result of this story, and loss of respect for the Bible. By today's secular standards, the biblical story justifies crimes against humanity and war crimes. To prevent the Bible from being used as a weapon of oppression, prior challenges the removal of moral considerations from traditional biblical studies.

The Christian Bible has both predatory and oppressive aspects that serve as literary weapons for both spiritual and physical conquest, despite its complex theological ideals of compassion and tolerance. It gives people confidence and a reason to invade other peoples' territories and convert non-Christians to Christianity. The biblical story of Joshua's mass execution of the Canaanites and the English army's devastation of their cities has served as a model for contemporary invaders who pose as the descendants of Israel. This resulted in the annexation of territory belonging to other people, as seen by Oliver Cromwell's 1649 war in Ireland. When the Irish towns refused to submit to the English army, Cromwell asked them to do so and slaughtered them. This biblical story gives Cromwell's military policy of driving out the native Irish people credibility and authority. [5] Early colonial pioneers, like Christopher Columbus and Bartolome de las Casas, utilized this biblical concept as a justification for acquiring other peoples' countries.

The biblical idea of a selected race elected to bring out God's purpose was another aspect that fostered the idea of colonialism. Numerous instances emphasize the unique reason Europe and America were selected in missionary literature. Educator George Smith (1833–1919) stated in his writing that,

> "in working out this process the Christians of the United States of America are allied and cooperate with those of the British empire on almost equal terms. We together, 100 million strong, in Europe and America with the same origin, the same history, the same tongue, the same literature, the same faith, and therefore the same Christ-commanded duty and assured hope, are set over or over against the 300 millions of India in the providence of God."[6]

[5] R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: History, Method, Practice* (UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 32.
[6] George Smith, *The Conversion of India: From Pantaenaus to the Present Time A.D. 193 – 1893* (London: Murray, 1893), 3.

Smith suggested that the Aryans, or Indo-Europeans, were now destined to fulfill their role in God's plan, like the Jews succeeding the Turanians. He asserted that Providence was priming the English-speaking West for the Christianization of India and other races with darker skin.[7] The belief that the West served as a chosen instrument of God was prevalent even among the colonized.

The biblical view of the empire is complex, with both sides presenting it as a tool for liberation and an object of god's condemnation. The Old Testament portrays Cyrus as a Persian king who released enslaved Jews while condemning the Assyrian empire for ambition and arrogance. In the New Testament, Jesus and his followers live under a domineering empire but do not openly challenge Roman power. The New Testament letters also offer conflicting messages, with Paul advising obedience to civil authorities and the Epistle to the Ephesians arguing against leaders and structures.

According to postcolonial biblical scholars, colonialism had an unavoidable impact on and is ingrained in the contents of the Bible since it was a byproduct of the process of successive colonial dominations.[8] They contend that because the Bible was essentially born out of colonial environments like the Assyrian, Babylonian, Hellenistic, and Roman empires, it embodies the worldviews, ideologies, and practices of colonialism. According to R. S. Sugirtharajah, the Bible is a "colonial document" whose content is determined by colonialism.[9] Postcolonial biblical criticism aims to challenge the Bible's support for imperial ideology, considering that many biblical texts were crafted under significant colonial influence.

The incorporation of colonial elements, codes, and legacies into the Bible rendered it a crucial instrument for the British Empire. It served as a symbol affirming the perceived superiority of Englishmen in terms of race, culture, and knowledge, thereby providing justification for colonialism and contributing to the formation of the modern British Empire. R. S. Sugirtharajah argues that the Bible was a minor writing during the pre-colonial era without significant support from the British Empire's colonial apparatuses.[10] The Bible was used as a tool by the dominant culture to establish their superiority and normative status over other cultures. The colonists selectively used Bible stories to support their positions, silencing anybody who dared to question their power and stifling any voices that may contradict it.

[7] Smith, *The Conversion of India*, 6.
[8] Naw San Dee KD, (Be)Longing and/or Nation a Postcolonial-Diasporic Reading of the Narrative in John 4:1-42," Ph.D. diss., (Mary Couts Burnett Library, 2011).
[9] Sugirtharajah, Asian Biblical Hermeneutics and Postcolonialism, (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1998), 19.
[10] R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 29.

4. Postcolonial Biblical Criticism

The roots of postcolonial biblical criticism can be found in postcolonial theory.[11] The theory suggests that humans are trapped in history and a catastrophe, with ongoing conflicts between binaries like the powerful and powerless, oppressed and oppressor, and colonizers and colonized. Postcolonialism, as a response to colonialism, contends that settlers acquired land and subjugated indigenous peoples through power and coercion, subjecting them to oppression and exploitation for the sake of power, supremacy, and their well-being. Even though colonialism is said to have ended, its detrimental impacts are still present, especially in post-independence nations like Southeast Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania. Despite the advantages of liberty, many countries however have to face the burden of history, lose their sense of cultural identity, battle to eradicate colonial legacies, and stay underdeveloped.[12] Sugirtharajah asserts that these are the prevailing systems of thought, textual codes, and symbolic practices crafted by the West during its colonial supremacy.[13]

Postcolonial critical approaches emerged in the 1980s, influencing English literature departments on British and American campuses. Rooted in anti-colonial resistance writings, Marxism, feminism, psychoanalysis, and poststructuralism, these approaches explore social, cultural, and political conditions before and after colonialism.[14] Postcolonial biblical criticism emerged in the 1990s and significantly influenced biblical studies.[15] Originating in humanities, it gained momentum from humanities departments focusing on the history of colonized and colonizers post-colonialization, challenging the production and interpretation of texts and knowledge. Postcolonial biblical criticism aims to restore dignity and authenticity to sidelined, silenced and often maligned biblical figures and incidents. It also investigates how colonized people responded imaginatively to the empire and rejected missionary hermeneutical presumptions. The final task involves locating hermeneutical writings from European administrators and missionaries who were conflicted about the empire's logic and goal during colonization.[16]

5. Decolonizing Reading of the Gospel of John

The historical context in which the Gospel of John was written, includes the Roman occupation of Palestine. Consider how colonization and imperialism shaped the experiences of the people during that time. Also, the Gospel of John explores how Jesus can be seen as a subaltern figure, challenging the dominant powers of his time and how his teachings and

[11] Ferry Y. Mamahit, "Postcolonial Reading Of The Bible: (Evangelical) Friend Or Foe?," *Jurnal Jaffray*, Vol.19, no.2 (October 2021):132-133. http://ojs.sttjaffray.ac.id/index.php/JJV71/index
[12] Mamahit, "Postcolonial Reading," 133.
[13] R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Reconfiguration: An Alternative Way of Reading the Bible and Doing Theology* (St. Lois: Chalice, 2003), 15.
[14] R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: History, Method, Practice* (UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 11.
[15] Sugirtharajah, "*Postcolonial Biblical Criticism*," 42.
[16] Sugirtharajah, "*Postcolonial Biblical Criticism*," 47-50.

actions might align with the struggles of colonized peoples against oppressive forces. The Gospel of John is interpreted by postcolonial scholars as a political document that exposes the perspectives and assertions of both religious and political domains. According to these scholars, the gospel unveils geopolitical dynamics within the Roman Empire, echoing colonial language and ideology. Moreover, the Gospel actively participates in a transformative postcolonial initiative by envisioning an alternative community that disrupts the discourse imposed by imperial power on the colonized.[17] Even while the Gospel of John is a decolonizing work, its colonized writers are also portrayed in it as victims of colonial oppression, thus embracing colonial ideology while striving for their emancipation.

Johannine interpreters have emphasized the text's concern for mission, validating Christian outreach to other places and people. John 4 is classified as a missionary text due to the account of Jesus' trip to Samaria and the Samaritans' participation in the worshippers' community. Johannine scholars argue that the narrator's assertion in John 4:4 justifies the Christian mission as a divine necessity or will. According to Musa Dube's analysis of John 4, there is a secret goal at play. The contact between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is both accidental and approved by God. She challenges the gendered rhetoric on land ownership, the hierarchical spatial construction, the supremacy of Jesus, and uneven inclusion. Musa Dube offers a critique of the interpretative tradition surrounding the Gospel of John, pointing out its exclusive emphasis on the internal struggles of the colonized while overlooking the presence and role of the colonizer. This approach, according to Dube, neglects to address the exploitation and oppression perpetuated by the Empire.[18] John's colonial ideology prompts academic readers to decolonize the text's structure and focus on interpretations of liberating interdependence between women and men, Western and non-Western, One-Third World and Two-Thirds World, and Christians and Jews.

5.1. John 4:1-42

The Gospel of John was written following the demolition of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Roman Empire in CE 70. The Pharisees, Jesus, and John the Baptist were among the many national groups who engaged in power struggles, cooperated, and revolted against the Roman Empire. The Samaritan woman and John's Gospel are intertwined with the competition for power between the Pharisees and Christian Jews during the Roman occupation of Palestine. Both groups sought to define Jewish identity after the destruction of their religious symbols, Jerusalem and the Temple. The narrative of the Samaritan woman underscores how imperial oppression can drive colonized individuals to resist, collaborate with the oppressor, or engage in internal conflicts.[19]

[17] San Dee KD, "(Be)Longing and/or Nation a Postcolonial-Diasporic Reading of the Narrative in John 4:1-42."
[18] Musa W. Dube, "Savior of the World but not of This World: A Post-Colonial Reading of Spatial Construction in John" in The Postcolonial Bible (ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah: London: Sheffield, 1998), 131.
[19] Musa W. Dube, "Reading for Decolonization (John 4:1-42)," *Semeia* 75 (1996): 45-47.

The event in John chapter 4:1-3, it's unclear why Jesus left Judea at this specific moment for unknown reasons. He had undoubtedly previously in the Temple publicly disagreed with the Jewish authorities. John omits to explain Jesus' decision to go back to Galilee at this particular moment. Some have speculated that because John the Baptist was now in jail, the Pharisees switched their focus to Jesus.[20] However, this is not hinted at in the text. Anyway, maybe Jesus was just trying to avoid starting a fight right now.

There were three divisions within the 120-mile territory of Palestine: extreme north, extreme south, and between. Jesus decided to shift his ministry to Galilee to escape controversy around his baptism. Samaria was the quickest path, taking three days, to go from Judaea to Galilee. It would have taken twice as long to cross the Jordan, avoid Samaria, cross it again north of Samaria, and enter Galilee. Therefore, to take the quickest route to Galilee, Jesus had to pass through Samaria.[21]

After a long journey, Jesus and his followers arrived at a crossroads in the path. Jesus felt thirsty and exhausted about noon when the temperature was at its maximum. In the Jewish calendar, a day spans from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with the sixth hour corresponding to twelve o'clock midday.[22] John narrates the deliberate journey of Jesus to his hometown, traversing through Sychar in Samaria, where he has a predestined encounter with a woman who is socially, emotionally, and sexually marginalized. Despite her lack of social prominence, the Scriptures omit her name, and prejudiced Jews, harbouring racial bias and condescension, avoid interacting with her. Jesus challenges societal norms by initiating a conversation with her, even going so far as to ask for a drink.[23]

In John 4:5–9 occurs at Jacob’s well. In the Old Testament, wells were locations of betrothals, and the Samaritan capital city was Sychar, also known as Shechem. Jacob gave his son Joseph a piece of land in Shechem, which is a prophecy from Genesis 48:22. Joseph's bones were buried in Shechem, and his sons would inherit the land. This tradition is based on Genesis 33:19 and Joshua 24:32.

Jesus, in asking the Samaritan woman for a drink, breaks social barriers and traditions, symbolically bridging the gap between Jews and Samaritans. This act echoes his later request for a drink from the cross in John 19:28. The conversation at the well revolves around themes of wisdom, highlighting Jesus's willingness to share spiritual insights with all, regardless of societal norms. Despite cultural taboos against a Rabbi speaking with a woman outdoors, Jesus engages in deep discourse with her, aiming to overcome divisions and bring forth

[20] “Exegetical Commentary on John 4,” bible.org, https://bible.org/seriespage/exegetical-commentary-john-4. Accessed on December 10, 2023.
[21] “Commentaries,” StudyLight.org, https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/dsb/john-4.html. Accessed on December 10, 2023.
[22] “Commentaries,” StudyLight.org, https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/dsb/john-4.html. Accessed on December 10, 2023.
[23] Gerardo Daniel Ramos, “Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (Jn 4:1-42),” *ResearchGate*, January 2009, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269874461_Jesus_and_the_Samaritan_woman_Jn_41-42

spiritual enlightenment. The timing of the conversation, during the brightest hour of the day, contrasts with the traditional practice of studying Torah at night, further emphasizing the transformative nature of Jesus's teachings.[24]

The conflict between Jews and Samaritans, who were originally of the same origin and religion. The Samaritans, who claimed to be real Jews, were viewed as foreigners by the Jews, leading to a racial conflict that escalated into religious and political tensions. The Johannine statement expresses the separation between the two groups, "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans" (John 4:9), which also recalls the events of the Assyrian deportation and, particularly, the Jewish unwillingness to acknowledge the Samaritans as Jews.

The Samaritans were a group of Israelites who lived between Judea and Galilee in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. They were believed to be descendants of Israelites who survived Assyria's destruction of Samaria. In history, the Samaritans are a mixed group consisting of a few surviving members of the Ten Tribes, whose monarchy in Samaria was destroyed by King Sargon of Assyria in 722 B.C. More than twenty-seven thousand Samarians were sent into exile to Habor, the river Gozan, Halach, and the towns of Media. In their stead, people from Babylonia, Kutha, Ava, Hamath, and Sfarvaim were placed. The newly arrived peoples and the surviving members of the Ten Tribes eventually blended, giving rise to the group known as the Samaritans. During the second Temple's existence and for a while after it was destroyed, the Samaritan population was significant.[25] Josephus identified them as *Kuthim*, the foreigners who lived in Samaria.[26]

According to the Jewish account of their origin, they were banished from Mesopotamian villages and transported to Samaria by Assyrian king Shalmaneser. They adopted a deceptive Judaism, worshipping Yahweh and their national deities. It is an awful crime for Jews that the majority of Samaria's residents were compelled to marry Gentiles. Because a son or daughter who marries a Gentile is regarded as dead in Orthodox Judaism, this resulted in the loss of racial purity. Most of them were sent to Media and they were absorbed into the nation. Those who continued to live in the nation married outsiders, forfeiting their ability to identify as Jews. The dispute occurred around 450 B.C., and it was just as venomous as it was during Jesus' time. Social conservatives saw Samaria as a spiritually polluted area and saw it as a site of racial and religious persecution and Jewish chauvinists believed that Samaritans were

[24] Daniel Ramos, "Jesus and the Samaritan Woman."
[25] Gershom Bader, "The Jewish Spiritual Heros," *Sefaria*, https://www.sefaria.org/The_Jewish_Spiritual_Heroes%2C_Volume_I%3B_The_Creators_of_the_Mishna%2C_Introduction?lang=bi. Accessed on December 08, 2023.
[26] Christopher Naseri and Mutiti Naseri, "Jews Have no Dealings With Samaritans: A Study of Relations Between Jews and Samaritans at the Time of Jesus Christ," *LWATI: A Journal of Contemporary Research* Vol. 11, no. 2 (2014): 76-77.

genetically dirty. Lutzer and Lutzer indicate that many Jews avoided Samaria, they felt at ease traveling through places like Judea, Galilee, and Jerusalem.[27]

The Jews were viewed as first-class citizens, and the Samaritans as second-class. Despite being brothers and sisters and worshiping the same god, the two groups—Jews and Samaritans—were enmity-driven against one another. According to McKenzie, "the dispute between Jews and Samaritans was the greatest breach of human relations in the modern world, and the breadth and depth of Jesus' doctrine of love could demand no greater act of a Jew than to accept a Samaritan as a brother."[28] Jacobs and Jaynes highlight Jesus' historic conversation with the Samaritan woman as the longest he had ever had. Guided by divine inspiration to confront injustice rooted in gender, class, race, lifestyle, culture, and religion, Jesus established a firm groundwork for social liberation—a message he continues to encourage his followers to embody.[29]

In verse 9, Jesus asks the woman to fetch him a glass of water. This request surprises and even unsettles her, as she observes that Jews generally do not associate (NIV) or have dealings (NASB) with Samaritans. The Greek word "συνχρῶνται" (synchrōntai), translated as "associate," could imply the sharing of eating utensils and dishes. In this specific context, Jesus is indeed requesting this, as he lacks the necessary utensils to collect water from the well.[30] Here was Jesus breaking both nationality and traditional Jewish customs.

John uses misunderstanding as a literary device in verses 4:10–15, which is a prime example. The woman believes Jesus is referring to some form of tangible water that would quench her thirst, but in reality, he is speaking about living water, which is spiritual. The Samaritan woman leaves her waterpot behind since she won't need it to carry the sort of water Jesus now has her interested in, indicating that she has now realized that Jesus is referring to water, which is more than just physical.[31] This is made evident in 4:28.

In verses 16-19, Jesus asks the Woman "*Go, call your husband and come back*." Biblical traditions unveil the apostasy of the Israelite people, notably through the historical background presented in 2 Kings 17:30–31 concerning the Samaritan people, and the life history of Gomer, the wife of the prophet Hosea, particularly her sexual life history. Johannine scholars have examined the actual life history of the Samaritan woman with men, which symbolically represents the historical narrative of her people. This analysis is conducted in the context of biblical tradition and the writings of Josephus.[32] Roman colonial

[27] Log Raditlhokwa, "Jesus Christ's Transformative Encounter with the Samaritan Woman: An Exposition of a Revolutionary Mission," *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Studies* Volume 2, no. 5 (October 2014): 609.
[28] Christopher and Mutiti, "Jews Have no Dealings With Samaritans," 83.
[29] Raditlhokwa, "Jesus Christ's Transformative Encounter with the Samaritan Woman," 610.
[30] "Jesus and the Samaritan Women in John 4:1-42," Marg Mowczko, August 1, 2009, https://margmowczko.com/john-chapter-4/
[31] "Exegetical Commentary on John 4," bible.org, https://bible.org/seriespage/exegetical-commentary-john-4. Accessed on December 10, 2023.
[32] San Dee KD, "(Be)Longing and/or Nation a Postcolonial-Diasporic Reading of the Narrative in John 4:1-42."

stories often portray local women as immoral and arrogant, a portrayal reflected in John 4:16-19's interpretation of the Samaritan woman. This story creates a hostile imaginary community, revealing the Samaritan people's insecure religious rituals and highlighting the need for stability and authenticity through Jesus' portrayal of the Samaritan woman. The story of the Samaritan woman in John 4 reflects national and colonial ideologies in which women are marginalized, domesticated, Silenced, and disregarded.

In verses 20-26, the Samaritan woman serves as a symbol of entrenched or historical traditions. She embodies the perpetuation of traditions that necessitate change, holding onto the land associated with their ancestor Jacob and the traditions linked to Mt. Gerizim. The Samaritan woman emphasizes the connection between place and people in verses 12 and 20 and asserts their inheritance of the land and well from Jacob. She contends that places of worship like Mount Gerizim and Jerusalem are remnants of pre-colonial eras (John 4:22). Her deliberate efforts to uphold native culture, contrasting with the culture influenced by colonial rule, mark the beginning of a nationalist or anti-colonialist dis-identification that extends beyond the self-hatred and alienation induced by colonialism.[33]

In verse 27, the disciples' express astonishment, not due to Jesus' conversing with a Samaritan, but because He is engaging in a public conversation with a woman, directly contradicting Rabbinic regulations. According to these regulations, the words of the Law were deemed more suitable for burning than for imparting to a woman.[34] It was forbidden for Rabbis to welcome women in public, not even their spouses, daughters, or sisters. The term bruised and bleeding Pharisees was also used to describe Pharisees who would close their eyes when they saw a lady walking down the street. A Rabbi's reputation would suffer if they were observed chatting with a woman in public.[35]

As per John 4:28-42, Jesus' engagement with the Samaritans results in the people of Sychar acknowledging him as the Savior of the world. This title diverges from the conventional first-century Jewish or Samaritan perspective but finds frequent usage in the Greco-Roman realm, where it was often attributed to the emperor. From Julius Caesar to Hadrian and subsequent emperors, the term carried imperial connotations.[36] Jesus encountered the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, situated beyond the outskirts of Sychar. Following their conversation, the woman returned to the city, exclaiming, "Come see a man who told me all that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" (4:29). Upon hearing this, the townspeople "went out of the city and were coming to him" (4:30), while Jesus stayed outside the town with his disciples. Although Caesar utilized the title Savior of the world, the

[33] San Dee KD, "(Be)Longing and/or Nation a Postcolonial-Diasporic Reading of the Narrative in John 4:1-42."
[34] "John 4:27," *Bible Hub*, 2023, https://biblehub.com/commentaries/john/4-27.htm. Accessed on December 08.
[35] "Matthew 23- Woes to the Scribes and the Pharisees," *Enduring Word*, https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/matthew-23/. Accessed on December 10, 2023.
[36] Craig R. Koester, "The Savior of the world (John 4:42)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* Vol. 109, no.4 (1990):665-680. https://doi.org/10.2307/3267369.

Samaritans recognized it as belonging to Jesus, whom they welcomed in a manner befitting royalty.

6. Conclusion: A Call to Listen to the Silenced

Hear the Cry of the Silenced is a powerful phrase that suggests the need to bring attention to the voices and experiences of those who have been marginalized, oppressed, or silenced, particularly in the context of colonialism. Colonialism, as a historical and ongoing phenomenon, has indeed left a profound impact on numerous societies, often resulting in the silencing of certain narratives and the suppression of voices.

The story of Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman at a well, highlights spiritual thirst, salvation, and the inclusive nature of his message. The story takes place during the Roman Reign in the New Testament period, and it highlights historical tensions between Jews and Samaritans. The Samaritans were viewed with suspicion due to their mixed heritage and distinct religious practices. John 4 doesn't explicitly reference the Assyrian colonization, but the historical background helps illuminate the significance of the encounter and the broader themes of cultural, religious, and social dynamics that were at play during this period in the region.

Colonial powers often imposed their own culture, language, and values on the colonized inhabitants, suppressing indigenous traditions, reinforcing gender norms, exploiting resources, and propagating their beliefs, leading to forced displacement and land dispossession. This caused indigenous cultures and customs to become marginalized and, in certain situations silenced. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for addressing historical injustices and promoting social justice.

The Assyrian colonialism in Samaria resulted in cultural infiltration and displacement of native traditions. The forced resettlement of deported Israelites led to the imposition of Assyrian cultural elements, potentially marginalizing indigenous languages and causing linguistic diversity loss. The assimilation of the conquered people into Assyrian religious and cultural practices has affected indigenous Israelite traditions, leading to the suppression or erasure of certain practices. The Assyrian conquest influenced the region's religious identity, leading to a mix of populations and a significant impact on the region's economic, political, cultural, and religious landscape.

Traditionally, John 4:1-42 is often interpreted through the lens of evangelization. Still, it's crucial to recognize an underlying silenced narrative within the text. The influence of colonialism becomes evident, particularly when delving into the historical conflicts between Jews and Samaritans. The Assyrian colonial legacy significantly impacted relationships, societal status, cultural practices, and religious customs. A comprehensive exploration of this passage requires a reflection on how historical events, particularly colonialism, contributed to the marginalized status of the Samaritans in the eyes of the Jewish people. Understanding the

silenced voices and marginalized perspectives in historical narratives is crucial for a more comprehensive interpretation of biblical texts.

Economic instability, economic inequality, ethnic rivalries, cyclical poverty, loss of language and culture, racism, xenophobia, gender discrimination, and intolerance are examples of how colonialism is still present today. The historical context of colonial rule, marked by the imposition of racial hierarchies, cultural hegemony, economic exploitation, and the creation of artificial divisions, has left a lasting impact on the dynamics of power, identity, and societal attitudes. It's crucial to acknowledge the historical roots of prejudice and inequality to tackle current issues and work to dismantle institutions that perpetuate such issues. Recognizing the long-term impact of colonialism on racial norms, culture, and society, people can work towards more inclusive, just, and equitable futures. A multidimensional strategy is needed, including addressing systematic injustices, opposing discriminatory attitudes, and promoting the voices of historically silenced individuals.

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