

John 4:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

Analysis

The woman's question whether Jesus is 'greater than our father Jacob' is ironic—she doesn't realize she's speaking to Jacob's Lord. Her appeal to ancestral authority and historical precedent reflects human tendency to value tradition over present divine revelation. Christ indeed surpasses all patriarchs as the eternal Son.

Historical Context

Samaritans claimed descent from the northern tribes and venerated the patriarchs, particularly Jacob/Israel. This well represented their connection to Israel's heritage, which they shared with Jews despite theological differences.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How do we sometimes elevate historical figures or traditions above Christ Himself?
2. What does it mean that Christ is 'greater than' all who came before Him?

Interlinear Text

μὴ σὺ μείζων εἶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰακώβ ὃς
G3361 **thou** G4771 **greater** G3187 **Art** G1488 G3588 **father** G3962 **than our** G2257 **Jacob** G2384 **which** G3739

ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν τὸ φρέαρ καὶ αὐτοῦ ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἔπιεν
gave G1325 **us** G2254 G3588 **the well** G5421 **and** G2532 **himself** G846 **thereof** G1537 **himself** G846 **drank** G4095

καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ θρέμματα αὐτοῦ
and G2532 G3588 **children** G5207 **himself** G846 **and** G2532 G3588 **cattle** G2353 **himself** G846

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