Mt Gerizim

The Samaritan Passover

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Every year, descendents of the Samaritan community gather on Mount Gerizim, the site of the old temple of Samaria, to celebrate the Passover sacrifice that was prescribed by Moses.

Perhaps a million Samaritans lived in this area in the time of Jesus. About 300 remain on the mountain, while a similar number live elsewhere in the Holy Land. For centuries, The Jews despised the Samaritans, considering them a mixed race descended from Israelites and foreigners. The Samaritans claim to be descendants of Israelites who were never taken to Assyria, or who returned from Assyrian captivity. According to the Samaritans, the Torah identified Mount Gerizim as God's chosen place for worship. They built a temple here c.300 years before Christ, and it is to those ruins that Samaritan priests still come each year to offer sacrifice.

In speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus was challenging these long-held animosities between Jew and Samaritan.