

“Jesus and a Samaritan Woman”

January 25, 2026

John 4:1-26

I. Introduction

During the 3 years of His ministry, Jesus interacted with a variety of people—some were upstanding citizens like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea; others were not quite so upstanding--people like Zacchaeus the tax collector or this Samaritan woman. **Luke 15:1-2** says, “**Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law muttered, ‘This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.’**” But “**Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners**” (1 Tim. 1:15) regardless of their pedigree; **Galatians 3:28** put it this way, “**There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**” Turn to the reason John wrote his Gospel—**turn to John 20:30-31**. Because of its importance, out of the many stories, John included this story of Jesus and a Samaritan woman.

The woman’s reaction to Jesus at the end of this encounter strongly suggests that she eventually accepted Him as her Lord and Savior—in **verse 29** she said, “**Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?**” But her conversion is not the main point of these verses. The central truth of this story is found in Jesus’ revelation of Himself as the Messiah. The first time Jesus revealed His identity as the Messiah or the Christ wasn’t to the members of Israel’s religious elite but to an immoral, Samaritan woman.

The Samaritans were a mixed race, part Jew and part Gentile, who dated back to the Assyrian captivity of the ten northern tribes in 727 B.C. When the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon to rebuild the temple around 300 years later, the Samaritans offered to help, but their help was adamantly refused. Rejected by the Jews because their genealogy wasn’t pure, the Samaritans established their own temple and religious services. They accepted only the 5 Books of Moses as true Scripture and established their own temple and religious services on Mt. Gerizim. And thus, began centuries of mistrust, animosity, hatred, and

even violence between the Jews and Samaritans until Jesus' day. In fact, when the Jews wanted to insult Jesus, the worst they could come up with in **John 8:48** was to call Him a **"Samaritan."**

As well as announcing that He was the Messiah or the Christ, by going to the Samaritans, Jesus was showing, even at the beginning of His ministry, that He had come for the whole world not just the Jews; as **John 3:16** says, **"For God so loved the world."**

II. The Background

A. John wrote that Jesus had to leave Judea. The Jewish authorities, in particular the Pharisees, were beginning to view Jesus with suspicion, just like they did John. Jesus knew that in His Father's sovereign timetable, a public confrontation with the Jewish authorities at that time was premature. Also, a competition between John's followers and Jesus' followers was beginning to develop, so to avoid both of these problems, Jesus **"left Judea and went back once more to Galilee."**

As He prepared to lead His disciples northward to Galilee, Jesus had three possible routes from which to choose: there was a route along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea; there was a route along the eastern side of the Jordan River; and there was a route that went straight north through Samaria. Although the route through Samaria was shorter by 3 days, because of the animosity and hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans, the Jews would avoid this 3rd route if at all possible. They would choose one of the other two less evil routes even though they went through Gentile lands.

B. But Jesus "had to go through Samaria." Jesus was compelled to pass through Samaria and stop at a certain village, not to save time and steps, but because He had a divine appointment there. He **had** to meet a woman there and lead her into saving faith which would lead to many of her village being saved as well. Jesus was no respecter of persons. Earlier, He had met with a moral Jewish man, and now He would witness to an immoral Samaritan woman.

III. The Encounter Jesus and His disciples arrived at Jacob's well outside Sychar in Samaria around noon. **"Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well."** While the disciples went to Sychar for food,

Jesus deliberately waited at the well. He was weary, hungry, and thirsty. Even though Jesus was the Son of God, He was also truly human. He was God Incarnate. As such, Jesus entered into all the normal experiences of our lives and is able to identify with them. He knows what it is to be tired and hungry and thirsty.

The cool of mornings and evenings were the times when women normally would come to the village well to draw water. This woman, however, came at noon when the other women would not be present. For reasons that John explained a little later, she would rather come in the hottest time of the day rather than face the hostility and scorn of the other women.

Jesus's request, **"Will you give me a drink?"** was an extreme breach of social custom. Jews, especially a rabbi, did not talk to Samaritans. Men did not speak to woman in public—not even to their wives. So, when Jesus initiated a conversation with this Samaritan woman, He crossed many cultural boundaries. As the conversation progressed, the woman's evaluation of Jesus' identity changed.

IV. The Conversation—Who is this man?

A. In the beginning, she saw him just as a Jew. When Jesus spoke to her, He set aside social customs because her salvation was at stake. It certainly surprised her when He asked for a drink of water. **"You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?"** Why would Jesus, a Jew, want to use her "polluted" water pot to get a drink of water? What did he really want? But Jesus' request was simply a way to open the conversation and share with her the truth about **"living water."** In **Jeremiah 2:13** God said, **"My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water."** Jesus talked about this **"living water"** in other places--
turn to John 7:37-38. The living water that Jesus offered was salvation in all its fullness, including forgiveness of sin and the ability and desire to live an obedient life that glorifies God.

B. He is greater than Jacob. When **"Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water,'"** Jesus was

pointing out to her that she was ignorant of 3 important facts: Who He was; What He had to offer; and How she could receive it. When Jesus spoke of giving her spiritual water—**living water**, she interpreted His words to mean literal water. She was confused, but He had aroused her interest, so she continued the conversation.

She was skeptical of this stranger's ability to provide the **"living water"** He offered. **"Where can you get this living water?" she asked.** She was concerned about the *how* instead of simply asking Him to give her a drink of it. Jacob had to dig the well. Was Jesus **"greater than Jacob"** in His ability to supply this water?

She still didn't understand, so **"Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'"** Jesus was talking about satisfying a spiritual thirst—a thirst for a relationship with God, a transformation and filling of the Holy Spirit and the promise of eternal life. Being a source of **"living water,"** Jesus was more than "just a Jew;" He was even "greater than Jacob."

Finally, she said, **"Sir, give me this water."** She didn't know what it was, but she had made progress. But she still was thinking of physical water, and she had a way to go. But Jesus didn't give up; he dealt patiently with her. He doesn't want **"anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance"** (2 Pet. 3:9).

Since the woman failed to understand the nature of the water He spoke of, Jesus directed the conversation to her need for repentance and salvation from sin. **"He told her, 'Go, call your husband and come back'"** exposing the heart of the issue—her sin. To receive this **"living water"** there had to be a change in her heart. Those who truly thirst for the righteousness God provides in salvation must confess their sins and forsake their wicked ways. **Turn to Isaiah 55:6-7.**

C. He is a prophet. The woman's answer, **"I have no husband"** is the shortest statement she made in this whole conversation. Although she wasn't lying, she wasn't telling the whole truth. Jesus commended her for telling the truth, as far as it went. But He also opened up her whole confused situation. **"The fact is, you have five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband."** With this answer, she determined that Jesus was **"a prophet."**

Like many people, rather than face the issue of her sins and salvation, she tried to sidetrack the conversation. “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.” Jesus’ reply was that the issue would soon be irrelevant. In the near future, true worship would take place “neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.” The new covenant that He had come to establish would do away with all external ceremonies and rituals. Jesus went on to say that “God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.” True worship doesn’t consist of outward conformity to religious standards and duties. Turn to Micah 6:6-8. True worship comes from the heart, that’s why Romans 12:1-2 says, “I urge you . . . to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God . . . Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

D. He is the Messiah. Once again, she tried to change the subject, “‘I know that the Messiah’ (called Christ) ‘is coming.’” Based on Deut. 18:18, the Samaritans believed in the coming Messiah. The woman implied that both she and Jesus would have to wait; “When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

When Jesus responded with, “I am who speak to you,” He was identifying Himself as the promised Messiah. He hadn’t identified Himself to the Jews because of their expectations of a warrior Messiah—someone who would lead a revolt to throw off the rule of the hated Romans. But the faith of the Samaritan woman was not warped by such incorrect misconceptions, so Jesus identified Himself with the name of God: “I AM.”

Jesus’ words must have shocked this Samaritan woman. The man who just a few minutes earlier had made a simple request for a drink of water now claimed to be the long-awaited Messiah. Unlike Nicodemus, she knew nothing of any signs and miracles Jesus had performed earlier. But merely because of what He knew about her, this woman did not doubt the truth of His claim. She believed in Him. As we’ll see next week in John 4:28, “The woman went back to the town and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?’” He was more than a Jew, or Jacob or a prophet, He was the Messiah.

V. Conclusion

John included this particular story for several reasons. **First**, regarding dealing with people. Jesus is no respecter of persons, [turn to Acts 10:34-35](#). [Rev 7:9](#) says, “There before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language.” All are precious in God’s eyes ([1 Pet. 2:4](#)). **Second**, when He witnessed to people, Jesus didn’t use a “canned” or prepared sales talk; He adapted His conversation to meet each individual situation. To Nicodemus, He spoke about new birth; but to this woman, He spoke about living water. **Third**, when this woman didn’t come to faith in Jesus immediately, He didn’t give up. He was patient with her. She may have appeared to be an unlikely prospect for salvation, but God knew her heart and knew that her testimony would win almost the entire village of Sychar.

Similarly, when the Spirit moves us to witness, we need to act regardless of who that person may be. Like Jesus, we must be willing to talk to everyone. As [1 Peter 3:15](#) says, “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” Second, when we talk to others about salvation, we need to share from our hearts. Third, we need to be patient with the one we are trying to reach; it may be days, even years of witnessing before that one comes to Christ.

Finally, John also showed some truths about salvation. Salvation only comes to those who recognize their need for a spiritual life they do not have. Living water will be received only by those who realize that they are spiritually thirsty. Second, salvation comes only to those who confess and repent of their sin and desire forgiveness. Before this Samaritan woman could come to the Savior, she had to acknowledge the full weight of her sins. Third, salvation comes only to those who embrace Jesus Christ as their Messiah, as their Lord and Savior. Jesus said in [John 14:6](#), “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”