

JESUS ACCEPTED IN SAMARIA

John 4:1-42 / Yeshua §36

Alan Shlemon / Sexuality: Truth & Compassion

In this episode of Jesus Messiah King, Jesus presents Himself to the Samaritans. As we will study, the Samaritans and Jews despised each other. Many of us probably know this. But how many of us know that the Samaritans exist to this day?

In Israel there are about 850 Samaritans who live in two communities: one near Tel Aviv and one near Mt. Gerizim in their historical territory.

These Samaritans trace their history to the Northern Kingdom of Israel over 3000 years ago. Many are Muslim, others continue to practice Samaritanism which is related to Judaism. They worship in a synagogue, speak ancient Hebrew, observe the Sabbath, celebrate Jewish holidays such as Passover and Sukkot and follow their holy text which is called the Samaritan Torah. Today, the Samaritan community is a destination for tourists. But in the days of Jesus, the territory of the Samaritans was generally avoided by the Jews.

Having presented Himself to Israel at Passover, Jesus and His disciples were making their way north towards Galilee. The most direct route from Jerusalem to Galilee went through the territory of Samaria. But to avoid contact and potential conflict, most Jews went around Samaria via the Way of the Plain on the eastern bank of the Jordan river. On this trip, however, Jesus intentionally went through Samaria.

JESUS PRESENTS HIMSELF TO THE SAMARITANS (4:1-6)

JOHN 4:1-6 (ESV)

1 Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), 3 he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. 4 And he had to pass through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

Historically, Samaria was the northern kingdom of Israel after the split provoked by King Rehoboam¹. In 723 B.C. God used the Assyrians to punish Israel for decades of idolatry. After conquering Israel, the Assyrians relocated other conquered people groups to Samaria for the purpose of intermarriage and assimilation. This occurred and from then on, the Jews of Judah viewed Samaritans as half-breeds.

¹ The northern kingdom was called *Israel*, the southern kingdom *Judah*.

Part 1.	The Coming of the King
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When the Jews of Judah returned from the Babylonian captivity and began rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem, the Samaritans offered to help. But the Judean Jews rejected their offer. This deeply offended and embittered the Samaritans against the Jews of Jerusalem. In reaction, the Samaritans, who only recognize the first five books of the Bible as Scripture, removed all references to Jerusalem from the Torah. They also built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim. This temple was destroyed in 129 B.C. by the Jews deepening the hatred between them and the Samaritans.

From a strategic point of view, going to Samaria was risky business. This would get Jesus a lot of bad press among some of the Jews. But Jesus wasn't running a campaign, He was doing what His Father sent Him to do - deliver all people from God's wrath. Here, in the beginning days of His ministry, Jesus demonstrated that He is the Messiah King of all people, not just the Jews; He is the *Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world*.

JESUS PRESENTS HIMSELF TO A SAMARITAN WOMAN (4:7-26)

JOHN 4:7-26 (ESV)

7 A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." 8 (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." 11 The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." 13 Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." 15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." 17 The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." 19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." 25 The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." 26 Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

From a first century rabbinic Jewish perspective, there could not have been a more inappropriate person with whom to meet. And yet Jesus met with her and had intended to meet with her.

The Samaritans were every bit as committed to keeping the Law of Moses as the pharisees. They were as legalistic if not more so than the pharisees. This woman was a religious outcast for her life of sexual immorality. She was a social outcast shunned by the women of her village as evidenced she came to the well alone.

But Jesus came to meet her and more than that, offer her spiritual life. As Jesus so often did, He used physical objects to introduce spiritual truths. She came to the well to satisfy the thirst of her body; Jesus offered to satisfy the thirst of her soul.

A thirsty soul is one that is driven and ruled by unsatisfied desires.

Like Nicodemus, this woman struggled to move from the physical to the spiritual. She was having trouble identifying with the idea of being thirsty in her soul.

Why do you think Jesus abruptly told her to go and get her husband?

He did so in order to show her how desperately thirsty she was. Over and over again she has drawn from the well of men which has failed to slake her thirst and in fact, has only made her life more difficult.

By doing this, Jesus revealed not only her spiritual thirst; by His knowledge of her personal history He revealed He was no ordinary man. This she recognized as is indicated by her statement, *"Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet."* The Samaritans believed Moses was the final prophet. They believed that after Moses the Messiah will come. By referring to Jesus as a prophet, the woman was really leaning into the possibility that He was the Messiah.

Is it possible her statement, *"I know that Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will tell us all things."*, was said in hopes of hearing what she had already come to believe?

"I who speak to you am he."

In the Gospel record, this is the first person to whom Jesus explicitly identified Himself as the Messiah.

She was born again. Her thirst was quenched. And in the joy of her new life, she immediately joined Jesus in sowing the Word.

JESUS IS PRESENTED TO THE CITIZENS OF SYCHAR (4:27-42)

JOHN 4:27-42 (ESV)

27 Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" 28 So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, 29 "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" 30 They went out of the town and were coming to him.

31 Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." 32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." 33 So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" 34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. 35 Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. 36 Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. 37 For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

39 Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his word. 42 They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

The transformation of this woman must have been evident for the citizens of her village to respond as they did to her testimony.

In the interim between the woman's departure and the arrival of the villagers, Jesus had time with His disciples. Again, using the physical to illustrate the spiritual, Jesus taught the disciples two lessons.

First, doing God's will nourishes the soul like food nourishes the body. The soul thirst of the spiritually dead, the condition of being driven and ruled by unsatisfied desires, can only be quenched by the living water of the Holy Spirit. The soul hunger of the spiritually living, that is, the desire to accomplish things of eternal value, can only be satisfied by doing God's will.

Second, reaching the lost is like farming; it takes sowing and reaping. Some, like the woman and Jesus, sow; some, like the disciples reap. In their particular case it's not going to take four months for the harvest: they can see the people from the village coming towards them as the result of the woman's sowing! In their case, the sowers and reapers can rejoice together as they *gather fruit for eternal life!*

In the early part of His ministry, Jesus presented Himself to Israel as her Messiah King. If they had believed and accepted Him, He would have ushered in the Messianic Kingdom. In presenting Himself to the Samaritans, Jesus fulfills God's will that He be the Savior of the world. "God so loved the *world* He gave His only-begotten Son."

God has always loved the world; every human being is created in His image and meant to have a personal relationship with Him. God's intent in Abraham was that through Abraham all the families of the earth would be blessed. God chose Israel for the purpose of making Himself known to all the nations of the earth through Israel. But after King Solomon, this purpose was never realized. In reaching beyond Israel, Jesus is fulfilling what has been the Father's will all along. The villagers of Sychar understood this when they declared, "...*we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.*"

In presenting Himself to the Samaritan woman Jesus signaled He doesn't play by anyone's rules but God's. Jesus' offer of salvation is genuine and extends to everyone who will believe.

In presenting Himself to the Samaritans Jesus challenged the messianic expectations of the Jews. They expected a Messiah who would essentially affirm their theology and rule Israel according to their interpretation of the Law. Time and again Jesus will declare their theology and practice wrong and out of step with God. Like He did with Nicodemus, Jesus will be the cause of great consternation among the Jews.

For those of us who realize we're driven and ruled by unsatisfied desires, Jesus still offers to satisfy our thirst. Through faith in Him, we can be born again, made alive to God through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit living in us is the living water that satisfies our soul.

For those of who are born again, Jesus teaches us that serving God, in this case, doing the work of evangelism, satisfies the deepest longing of our souls to accomplish things of eternal value. Evangelism takes sowing and reaping. Some of us plant the seeds of God's Word in a person's heart and mind. Others have the joy of reaping when that same person responds to the Word in faith. For those who have had the joy of sharing Jesus' story with those not yet saved and/or had the joy of helping a person respond in faith to Jesus' work on the cross there is a deep, deep satisfaction of soul. The very thing Jesus felt on this occasion as He brought salvation to the Samaritan woman and the men, women and children of the village of Sychar in Samaria.

ALAN SHLEMON – SEXUALITY: TRUTH AND COMPASSION

Alan Shlemon is an author and speaker for Stand to Reason and trains Christians to share their convictions in a persuasive, yet gracious manner. Known for teaching on some of the most controversial issues of our time, he tackles topics such as abortion, evolution, homosexuality, bioethics, and Islam. Alan has been a guest on both radio and television, and has spoken to thousands of adults and students across the country at churches, conferences, and college campuses.

Saturday, July 20

12:00N	BBQ	
1:30PM	Session #1	"Homosexuality: Truth and Compassion"
3:30PM	Session #2	"Transgender: Truth and Compassion"

Sunday, July 21

8:30/10:15AM		"Bad Arguments Against Religion"
12:00N	Lunch & Session #3	"Bulletproof"
4:00PM	Session #4	"If God is good, why is there evil?"