

Bible Stories for Adults

The Samaritan Woman at the Well

John 3:22 - 4:42

Opening

- Gathering: What types of secrets do people try to hide from God?
- Today's Focus: After a few months ministering to Jews in Jerusalem and Judea, Jesus revealed Himself to Samaritans and they accepted Him as their Savior.
- Key Verses: *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.* John 4:14
- We know that this man really is the Savior of the world.* John 4:42

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Samaria (1 Kings 11-12)

- What did God do with the nation of Israel after Solomon turned to the gods of his foreign wives?
1 Kings 11:29-33 = Split it, Gave northern 10 tribes to Jeroboam, Judah left with Rehoboam
- Where did Jeroboam select for the capital of this northern nation of Israel?
1 Kings 12:25 = Shechem (Later to Tirzah, 7 miles north of Shechem – 1 Kings 14:17)
- Where was Israel's capital for most of the nation's existence?
1 Kings 16:23-24 = Samaria, 7 miles northwest of Shechem (Bought and built by Omri)

Faith of the Samaritans (2 Kings 17)

- How faithful to God did this new nation begin?
1 Kings 12:26-29 = Jeroboam immediately created his own religion
- What eventually happened to the nation of Israel and why? = 722 BC
2 Kings 17:21-23 = *Persisted in the sins of Jeroboam*, exiled to Assyria (253 yrs later)
- Why were the Israelites still in Assyria when this book was written?
2 Kings 17:6 = They were scattered throughout Assyria – Didn't stay together as a people
- What happened to the land of Israel, Samaria? = Also intermixed with Israelites left behind
2 Kings 17:24 = Settled by other peoples who had also been conquered by Assyria
- How did this melting pot of people learn about God?
2 Kings 17:26-28 = An Israelite priest sent back to teach how to worship Jeroboam's gods
- Did this group of non-Jews become faithful to God?
2 Kings 17:29, 33, 41 = Worshipped God, Jeroboam's gods and their gods – polluted mix

Help to Rebuild the Temple (Ezra 4) = 458 BC

- How did the Samaritans react when the Jews returned from exile and wanted to rebuild the temple?
Ezra 4:1-3 = They wanted to help; Jews rejected their offer since they weren't Israelites
- How did the Samaritans handle this rejection?
Ezra 4:4-5, 24 = They frustrated and stopped the reconstruction efforts
- What happened when the Jews listened to prophets Haggai and Zechariah and started building again?
Ezra 5:1, 3, 5 = Samaritans tried to stop them again and wrote a letter to King Darius
- How did King Darius respond to the Samaritans request to stop the Jews?
Ezra 6:7-8 = He ordered the Samaritans to stay away and to help financially

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Reconstruction of the City Walls (*Ezra 4; Nehemiah 4*)

- Did the effort to rebuild the city walls meet any opposition? = v21 - Xerxes ordered to stop work
Ezra 4:6, 12 = Samaritans wrote a letter to Xerxes and got him to stop the building
Note: King Xerxes married a Jew (*Esther*) who saved Jews from annihilation
- Did they meet any opposition when they tried again under Nehemiah's leadership? = 432 BC
Nehemiah 4:1-3 = The Samaritans ridiculed the Jews and their efforts
- How did the Samaritans respond when the wall reached half its height?
Nehemiah 4:6-8, 11 = They planned to attack Jerusalem and end the work
- Did this threat stop the efforts?
Nehemiah 4:16-18 = The Jews kept working but were always ready to defend
- What other opposition did Nehemiah resist?
Nehemiah 6:1-14 = Tried to harm Nehemiah out of town, charged treason and tried to discredit

Between the Testaments

- Manasseh, a renegade Jew, married a daughter of the Samaritan Sanballat (Nehemiah 13:28)
Founded a temple on Mount Gerizim (next to Shechem) to rival Jerusalem's
- 129 BC - John Hyrcanus (Jewish leader) attacked Samaria and destroyed temple on Mount Gerizim
Ecclesiasticus called the Samaritans "*no nation ... the foolish people that dwell in Shechem*"
Rabbis said: *He who eats their bread is as he who eats swine's flesh*

Those Beloved Samaritans

- How did Ezekiel show the Jews' feelings towards the Samaritans in his condemnation of Judah?
Ezekiel 16:46-47 = Judah became as evil and even worse than Sodom and Samaria
- What horrible curse name did a group of hate-filled Jews come up with to call Jesus?
John 8:48 = Accused Him of being a demon-possessed Samaritan

Jesus Travels to Galilee (*John 4:1-4*)

- What was the normal path Jews took to travel between Judea and Galilee?
Matthew 19:1 = Around Samaria, east of Jordan - 6 days vs 3 thru Samaria
- What path did Jesus decide to take on His trip to Galilee in today's story?
John 4:4 = *He had to go through Samaria* so that His disciples would see this story
- What had Jesus been doing in Judea?
John 3:22-23 = Preaching and baptizing
- Why did Jesus decide to leave Judea at this time?
John 4:1-3 = The Pharisees would try to say Jesus and John were competing
- What did John the Baptist think about Jesus' disciples baptizing more than him?
John 3:26-30 = *He must become greater; I must become less*

Jacob's Well (*John 4:5-6*)

- Where did this story take place? = Around noon (6th hour) - Jewish day is 6 am to 6 pm
John 4:5-6 = At Jacob's well near Sychar (still there today), next to Mt. Gerizim and Shechem
- What do we know about this place?
 - Genesis 33:18-19 = Jacob bought the land
 - Genesis 48:21-22 = Jacob gave the land to Joseph and his descendants before he died
 - Joshua 24:32 = Joseph's bones were carried out of Egypt in Exodus and buried there

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A Forbidden Encounter (*John 4:7-9*)

What happened while Jesus rested by Himself at Jacob's well?

John 4:7-8 = A Samaritan woman came to get water, Jesus asked for a drink

Notes: This well was over 1/2 mile from town, People normally used the village well

Women fetched water in morning and evening, It was noon

Woman was obviously an outcast trying to avoid contact with others

Despite Jesus being tired and thirsty, why was it amazing that He had asked for a drink?

John 4:9 = He was a Jew and she was a Samaritan and a woman

Notes: It was improper for any man to speak in public with a strange woman

Rabbis were forbidden to greet any woman in public

Strict rabbis wouldn't even acknowledge a wife/daughter/sister

Living Water (*John 4:10-15*)

How did Jesus answer her question in a way to tell her who He really was?

John 4:10 = You should instead be asking me for living water

How did the woman misunderstand Jesus' revelation?

John 4:11 = How can He give her water without any way of getting it

Notes: The well is over 100 ft deep fed by water percolated through the ground

Travelers carried leather bags for drawing well water, disciples had theirs in town

Living water referred to running water from a stream

What did the woman think about this stranger knowing where to get living water in the area?

John 4:12 = Even Jacob couldn't find any other water and had to dig this well

How did Jesus try to explain that He was talking about a different type of water?

John 4:13-14 = *Whoever drinks the water I give will never thirst* but have eternal life

It is said that mankind needs air, food and water to have life. How does this apply to Jesus?

John 20:22 = The eternal air is the Holy Spirit that Jesus breathes on us

John 6:48 = *I am the Bread of Life*

Revelation 21:6 = He gives water from the spring of the Water of Life

John 1:4-5 = He is the Light of Life, He is Life for men

How did the woman reply mockingly to this ridiculous statement?

John 4:15 = I'll play along - give me this water so I don't have to come here every day

No Conversion Without Conviction (*John 4:16-18*)

How did Jesus begin to show her the need to understand what He is saying?

John 4:16 = Told her to get her husband - Could be taken "So I can explain it to him"

How did this both reveal her need to us and how this stranger might help?

John 4:17-18 = Jesus told her seedy details of her life He couldn't know

Note: Jews allowed women to divorce twice, at most 3 times; 5 times was wicked

Mount Gerizim or Mount Zion (*John 4:19-24*)

Realizing now that Jesus had to be from God, how did she respond to His accusations?

John 4:19-20 = Changed the subject with a serious technical question

How did Jesus answer this controversial question and bring her further toward conversion?

John 4:21-24 (*Galatians 3:26-29*) = True worship not in a place but in spirit, a new Israel

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Conversion (*John 4:25-30*)

- How did the woman show that she was beginning to understand what Jesus was saying?
John 4:25 = She knew the Messiah would come and explain all these difficult questions
Samaritan bible only had Pentateuch (1st 5 books); knew little of Messiah, expected a teacher
- What final blow did Jesus then throw? = Only time before His trial when He said He was the Messiah
John 4:26 = He said He was the Messiah
- What forced the woman to stop asking questions?
John 4:27 = The disciples returned
- How did she react to this strange talk she had just had with Jesus?
John 4:28-30 = She forgot her water jar and told everyone to come see Jesus

The Result of Traveling Through Samaria (*John 4:31-42*)

- Why did Jesus reveal Himself this early in His ministry? = Samaritans didn't look for a political Messiah
John 4:31-38 = The harvest was ready, grain would be lost if not harvested now
- What did the villagers think of what this outcast woman was saying?
John 4:39 = They began to believe
- What did the people think after they heard Jesus for themselves?
John 4:40-41 = Many became believers
- What important lesson was taught by this walk through Samaria early in Jesus' ministry?
John 4:42 = Jesus was the Messiah, not just for the Jews, *but Savior of the world*

Spread of the Gospel (*Acts 1:8*)

- How does Jesus being called the Savior of the world parallel the growth of the gospel in Acts?
Acts 1:8 = Witnesses in Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria and to the ends of the earth
John 2:23; 3:22; 4:4; 4:42 = Jesus in Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria, Savior of world
- How does this parallel our own calling to witness of our faith?
Matthew 28:19-20 = Make disciples at home, of neighbors, of acquaintances, of world

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. How do I respond to those who have attacked me?
(*Genesis 34; 2 Samuel 16:5-13; Nehemiah 4:4-5; Matthew 5:38-48; Romans 12:14-21*)
2. How have I gone out of my way to avoid people I didn't like?
(*John 4:4, 9; Genesis 43:32; 46:34; Exodus 8:26; Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 10; Romans 12:16; Galatians 3:26-29*)
3. When have I tried to look more spiritual than others?
(*John 4:1-3; Matthew 6:1-18; 23:5-7; Luke 18:9-14; 2 Corinthians 11:16-12:10; Galatians 6:12-14*)
4. When have I felt satisfied by the Holy Spirit similar to how water satisfies me after being very thirsty?
(*John 4:10-14; 6:35; 7:37-39; Psalm 42:1-2; 107:9; Isaiah 44:3; 58:11; Matthew 5:6*)
5. How do I respond to knowing that Jesus can tell me everything I ever did?
(*John 4:29; 1 Samuel 16:7; Psalm 44:20-21; 94:11; 139:1-4; Proverbs 15:26; Matthew 9:4; Acts 1:24; Revelation 2:19*)