

JOHN

AND THE WORD WAS GOD

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

John 4:1–42

RELATED SCRIPTURES

Genesis 33:18–20 | Zechariah 14:8 | Ezekiel 36:25

STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 3.8.26

SUMMARY

The gospel writer John continues to develop a theme that began in John 2, showing a series of interactions Jesus has with different people. John tells us Jesus “needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man” (John 2:25). He then describes Jesus’ interaction with Nicodemus, a Pharisee, ruler of the Jews, and a “teacher of Israel” (John 3:10). It could be said that Nicodemus had all the “right” knowledge and credentials, yet Jesus had to plainly explain to him how he, Jesus, was the fulfillment of passages (Ezekiel 36:22–28; Numbers 21:4–9) with which Nicodemus should have been familiar.

There appears to be a deliberate contrast that John wants his reader to notice between the “qualified” Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman who, by the Jewish standards of that time, would have been considered unworthy to speak to a Jew, let alone a (male) Rabbi. At the historical site where their ancestor Jacob built a well (Genesis 33:18–20), Jesus asks the woman for a drink (v. 7). Taken aback by his willingness to engage her, the woman asks Jesus a series of questions, which prompts Jesus to gradually reveal his Messianic identity to her, while also bringing her to a point where she must confront her spiritual emptiness.

Jesus *first* reveals his Messianic identity, the one who would bring “living water out of Jerusalem” (Zechariah 14:8), and water that would cause his people to “be clean from all your uncleanness” (Ezekiel 36:25), not to the teacher of Israel, but to the broken and outcast woman, showcasing the lengths to which Jesus would go to save his own. Moreover, this encounter amplifies the Lord’s promise to Abraham that through him, all the families of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3)—the Jew and the Gentile; Jesus saves to the uttermost!

GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of John 4:1–42.

List all the reasons why the Samaritan woman was shocked that Jesus would approach her and ask her for a drink. What does this tell us about Jesus, and what does it tell us about the nature of his salvation?

Is there any significance to the setting of this story? Does the water motif play a key role? Why are these details important to understand?

If there’s one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today’s themes in what you bring before God.