

THE SUBJECT OF MESSIAH

JOHN 04:25–30

Introduction

This is a dramatic picture of conversion and witnessing. The Messiah was discovered, and the discovery was excitedly shared.

- I There was the sense that Jesus was the Messiah (v. 25).
- II There was the great claim of Jesus: He is the Messiah (v. 26).
- III There was the spirit contrary to the Messiah: a spirit of evil thought and pride (v. 27).
- IV There was the proclamation that Jesus is the Messiah (vv. 28-29).
- V There was the response of searching for the Messiah (v. 30).

I. *John 04:25 Sensing Jesus Christ as the Messiah*

There was the sense that Jesus was the Messiah. The woman's heart was burning within her. There was an intense, flaming sense of God's presence. The subject of her sin and of true worship was causing her heart to reach out for God. She sensed something very, very special about Jesus...

- that no man could speak as He had spoken unless He had a very special relationship with God.
- that perhaps He was the Messiah Himself.

She brought up the subject. Note the two things she believed.

1. That the Messiah was *coming* (erchetai). The idea is that the Messiah was *coming soon*. His coming was at hand, imminent. Her belief was based upon such Scriptures as Gen. 3:15; 49:10; Num. 24:17; Deu. 18:15.
2. That the Messiah would be the Supreme Authority: "He will explain everything to us."

The point is this: the woman did not deny the Messiah; she believed in the coming and authority of the Messiah. Her belief was not a saving belief, not a belief of commitment (see *Saving Faith*, Jn. 2:24). It was only a mental or an intellectual belief, a belief of knowledge; but the fact that she believed in the Messiah made her *open* to personal belief. She did not reject the witness of Jesus: she was not rude; she listened to Him. Therefore, God was able to give her a sense of His presence.

Thought 1. The person who constantly rejects Jesus Christ or claims to be agnostic or atheistic is seldom reached for Christ. However, a person who listens to the Scripture and believes intellectually, mentally accepting the facts of God's promises, stands a much better chance of being reached by God. Mental or intellectual belief is more open; it is exposed to God's Word. Thereby it is more likely to become a saving belief, the belief of commitment.

However, a warning does need to be issued. A person with only a mental belief can hear and reject so much that he becomes gospel-hardened, that is, so hardened against the gospel that he never trusts Jesus Christ as his Saviour. (see *Wayside, Path — Hardened*, Mt. 13:4, 19.)

Mark 12:32-34 *“Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.*

Hosea 14:9 *Who is wise? He will realize these things. Who is discerning? He will understand them. The ways of the Lord are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them.*

Isa 28:26 *His God instructs him and teaches him the right way.*

Prov 14:15-16 *A simple man believes anything, but a prudent man gives thought to his steps. A wise man fears the Lord and shuns evil, but a fool is hotheaded and reckless.*

Prov 18:15 *The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out.*

Prov 22:3 *A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.*

JOHN 02:24 SAVING FAITH: BELIEVE, COMMIT, ENTRUST

The word commit or entrust is the very same word “believe” (see Jn. 2:23). This gives an excellent picture of *saving faith*, of what *genuine faith* is — of the kind of faith that really saves a person.

1. Saving faith is not head knowledge, not just a mental conviction and intellectual assent. It is not just *believing the fact* that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. It is not just believing history, that Jesus Christ lived upon earth as the Saviour just as A. J. Abdul Kalam lived upon earth as the President of India. It is not just believing the words and claims of Jesus in the same way that a person would believe the words of Abdul Kalam.
2. Saving faith is believing in Jesus, *who* and *what* He is, that He is the *Saviour* and *Lord* of life. It is a man giving and turning his life over to Jesus. It is a man casting himself upon Jesus as Saviour and Lord.
3. Saving faith is commitment — the commitment of a man’s total being and life to Jesus Christ. It is a man’s commitment of *all he is and has* to Jesus. It gives Jesus everything; therefore, it involves all of a man’s affairs. The man trusts

Jesus to take care of his past (sins), his present (welfare), and his future (destiny). He entrusts his whole life, being, and possessions into Jesus' hands. He lays himself upon Jesus' keeping, confiding in Him about his daily necessities and acknowledging Him in all the ways of life. He follows Jesus in every area and in every detail of life, seeking His instructions and leaving his welfare up to Him. It is simply commitment of a man's whole being, all he is and has, to Jesus.

There are three steps involved in faith, steps that are clearly seen in this passage.

1. There is the step of *seeing* (Jn. 2:23) or *hearing* (Rom. 10:16). A man must be willing to listen to the message of Christ, the revelation of truth.
2. There is the step of *mental assent*. A man must agree that the message is true, that the facts of the case are thus and so. But this is not enough. Mere agreement does not lead to action. Many a person knows that something is true, but he does not change his behaviour to match his knowledge. For example, a man knows that eating too much harms his body, but he may continue to eat too much. He agrees to the truth and knows the truth, but he does nothing about it. A person may believe and know that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world and yet do nothing about it, never make a decision to follow Christ. This man still does not have faith, not the kind of faith that the Bible talks about.
3. There is the step of *commitment*. When the New Testament speaks of faith, it speaks of *commitment, a personal commitment to the truth*. A man hears the truth and agrees that it is true and does something about it. He commits (entrusts) and yields his life to the truth. The truth becomes a part of his very being, a part of his behaviour and life. □

MATHEW 13:04, 19 WAYSIDE PATH, HARDENED TO THE GOSPEL

Some dwelt by the path or wayside. In the day of Christ there were no fences to separate property lines. Instead, long narrow foot paths were used for the travelling public. These paths were trodden down as hard as pavement by the constant use of the travelling public. This is the hard path or wayside ground referred to by Christ.

Note: these hear the Word but they do not understand it (v. 19). They are in the church regularly, and the Word falls upon them. Some have made public decisions, and some have not; but no matter, they are all still off to the side, paying little attention to what is going on. Even those who have made decisions are not genuine. They are hard, very hard, with closed minds and concrete hearts; therefore, they pay no attention and give no heed to the Word. Their minds are elsewhere. They have no interest and are indifferent, failing to realize how important the Word is to life. They just feel they can get along without the Word of God, that it is not needed in life.

Christ said “the evil one” comes and snatches away whatever Word is sown. People whose hearts are not open and soft are easy prey for the devil. The Word always remains on the surface of the heart, thereby exposing it to whatever the devil may wish to grab.

There are at least four reasons why people become hardened to the gospel.

1. They rebel and rebel. They react because of some tragedy or some circumstance, and they blame God.
2. They do not stay awake or alert; they do not pay attention. They do not consider the gospel important enough to merit their attention. In their minds, other things need their attention more than the gospel.
3. They are careless in handling the gospel. They treat the gospel as an item, an additive, a part of life instead of life itself. When needed and when time is available, the gospel is acceptable. Their attitude is that the gospel has its place, but it is not the permeating factor of life that so many make it to be.
4. They are deceived. What matters to them is attendance, being present in worship services and associating with other Christians. A change of heart and life is meaningless. Religion to them is a matter of form and ceremony, not life.

Acts 28:27 ‘For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’

Eph 4:19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

Heb 3:13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.

Prov 28:14 Blessed is the man who always fears the Lord, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.

Prov 29:1 A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed — without remedy.

Rom 2:5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

Thought 1. Scripture gives a clear warning: “We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away” (Heb. 2:1 f) □

II. *John 04:26 The Claim of Jesus Christ: Messiah*

There was the great claim of Jesus, that He was the Messiah. Note three phenomenal claims.

1. He claimed to be “the Messiah” (see *Jesus the Messiah*, Jn. 1:20).
2. He claimed to be the great “I Am,” which is the basic name for God. (Jn. 6:20.)
3. He claimed to be the Supreme One, the Supreme Authority who would tell her all things. He claimed...
 - that what He told her about her sin was true
 - that she must take care of her sin
 - that the only way to take care of her sin was to worship God in spirit and in truth.

JOHN 01:20 JESUS, THE MESSIAH

The words *Christ* (christos) and “Messiah” are the same word. Messiah is the Hebrew word and Christ is the Greek word. Both words refer to the same person and mean the same thing: *the anointed one*. The Messiah is the anointed one of God. Mathew said Jesus “is called Christ” (Mt. 1:16); that is, He is recognized as *the anointed one of God*, the Messiah Himself.

In the day of Jesus Christ, people feverishly panted for the coming of the long-promised Messiah. The weight of life was harsh, hard, and impoverishing. Under the Romans, people felt that God could not wait much longer to fulfill His promise. Such longings for deliverance left the people gullible. Many arose who claimed to be the Messiah and led the gullible followers into rebellion against the Roman state. The insurrectionist Barabbas, who was set free in the place of Jesus at Jesus’ trial, is an example (Mk. 15:6f).

The Messiah was thought to be several things.

1. *Nationally*, He was to be the leader from David’s line who would free the Jewish state and establish it as an independent nation, leading it to be the greatest nation the world had ever known.
2. *Militarily*, He was to be a great military leader who would lead Jewish armies victoriously over all the world.
3. *Religiously*, He was to be a supernatural figure straight from God who would bring righteousness over all the earth.
4. *Personally*, He was to be the One who would bring peace to the whole world.

Jesus Christ accepted the title of Messiah on three different occasions (Mt. 16:17; Mk. 14:61; Jn. 4:26). The name *Jesus* shows Him to be man. The name *Christ* shows Him to be God’s anointed, God’s very own Son. *Christ* is Jesus’ official title. It identifies Him officially as:

- Prophet (Deu. 18:15-19)
- Priest (Psa. 110:4), and
- King (2 Sam. 7:12-13).

These officials were always anointed with oil, a symbol of the Holy Spirit who was to perfectly anoint the Christ, the Messiah (Mt. 3:16; Mk. 1:10-11; Lk. 3:21-22; Jn. 1:32-33).

John 1:41 *The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ).*

John 1:45 *Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”*

John 1:49 *Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.”*

John 4:25 *The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”*

John 4:26 *Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am he.”*

John 6:69 *“We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”*

John 11:25 *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.”*

John 11:26 *And whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?*

John 11:27 *“Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.” □*

III. **John 04:27** *The Spirit of Evil Thought and Pride*

There was the spirit contrary to the Messiah, the spirit of evil thought and pride. Just as Jesus made His phenomenal claims, the disciples arrived. They were *surprised* (ethaumazon): were astonished, amazed, bewildered because He was talking with the woman. There were two reasons for this.

1. She was a woman. The Rabbis of that day would not be *alone* or *talk* with women in public. They feared what people might think and say.

Thought 1. Very honestly, there is some merit to this idea. A person, especially a leader, must guard himself and his thoughts around the opposite sex. Of course, one can carry the practice too far. Wisdom and self-control are both needed.

Mat 5:28 *But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

2 Cor 10:5 *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

Phil 4:8 *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.*

Gen 6:5 *The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.*

Prov 6:18 *A heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil.*

Ezek 8:12 *He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the darkness, each at the shrine of his own idol? They say, 'The Lord does not see us; the Lord has forsaken the land.'"*

2. She was a Samaritan, a person considered despicable, below their social standing, unfit to be seen with in public.

Note how Christ tore down the barriers of both problems and how the disciples controlled their tongue from questioning and gossiping.

Acts 10:34-35 *Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right."*

Rom 10:12 *For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him.*

Gal 3:28 *There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Prov 30:32 *"If you have played the fool and exalted yourself, or if you have planned evil, clap your hand over your mouth!"*

Psa 39:1-4 *I said, "I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth as long as the wicked are in my presence." But when I was silent and still, not even saying anything good, my anguish increased. My heart grew hot within me, and as I meditated, the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue: "Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life."*

IV. John 04:28–29 Witnessing by the Woman

There was the proclamation that Jesus was the Messiah. Note the tender, yet meaningful statement: "Then, leaving her water jar." She was very excited. The Messiah had confronted her; she had actually met Him, and He had met the need of her heart and life. She had to tell everyone about Him.

Note also the strength of the woman's witness. She was an outcast from society, had no friends because of the immoral life she had lived. However, meeting the Messiah changed

all that. He dealt with her sin and shame. She could now face everyone. They, too, must have the opportunity to meet the Messiah.

Thought 1. What a lesson for every believer!

Mark 5:19 *Jesus did not let him, but said, “Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.”*

Acts 4:20 *For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.*

Acts 22:15 *You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.*

Titus 2:15 *These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.*

1 Pet 3:15 *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. But do this with gentleness and respect.*

Psa 66:16 *Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me.*

Isa 63:7 *I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done for us — yes, the many good things he has done for the house of Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses.*

Dan 4:2 *It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me.*

V. John 04:30 The Response: Seeking Jesus

There was the response of searching for the Messiah. Note two facts.

1. The woman was of no social importance, not to the men of the city. In fact, she had often been misused, and she was often the very subject of gossip and jokes. But now something had happened to her: she had met the Messiah. The event had so changed her appearance, behaviour, and attitude that people listened eagerly to what she said.

2 Cor 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

Titus 3:4-7 *But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

James 1:18 *He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.*

***1 Pet 1:3-4** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you.*

***Ezek 36:26** I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh*

2. The people responded — at least a good number did. The idea of the words “made their way toward him” is that of a long streaming procession. The people kept on “making their way toward him.” It was her dynamic witness, the striking change seen in her life, that caused this enormous response. Because of her witness, many set out to find the Messiah for themselves.

***Hosea 11:4** I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them.*

***John 12:32** But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself. ■*