

THE OFFER OF LIVING WATER

JOHN 04:01–14

John 04: 01–42 Division Overview: Salvation

Jesus offered the Samaritan woman living water, and she showed an intriguing interest. However, there were some things that she had to straighten out before she could ever have the living water. There was the matter of sin in her life, of worship, of the Messiah, and of labouring for God. Therefore, Jesus began to discuss these subjects with her one by one.

John 04:01–14 Introduction

This is one of the most profound revelations of Jesus: He is the Living Water, the water which men can drink and thereby never thirst again.

- I Jesus left Judea (vv. 1-9).
- II Living water is truly alive (v. 10).
- III Living water is from a Person much greater than a religious father (vv. 11-12).
- IV Living water is the only water that will quench thirst (vv. 13-14).

I. *John 04:01–09 The Mission of Jesus Christ*

Jesus left Judea. Note two significant facts.

1. Jesus left Judea out of necessity. He left for John's sake. The crowds were leaving John and coming to Jesus, and the religionists were using the fact to downgrade John's ministry (Jn. 3:22-26). Jesus did not want to create a competitive scene that would damage John's ministry, so He left the area to return to Galilee.

Note the words, "Now he had to go through Samaria." The word *had* (*edei*) means necessity, compulsion, destiny. Jesus was driven to go through Samaria for the sake of His mission. Samaria needed the gospel as much as other areas. (The words "had" and "must" are so often used in connection with Jesus' mission that it makes an excellent word study. See Jn. 3:14; 9:4; 10:16; 12:34; 20:9.)

2. Jesus left Judea to confront a Samaritan woman. He entered Sychar, a city of Samaria (Jn. 4:5). He sat on the wall of a well, for He was both tired and thirsty from His journey. While sitting there, one of the events for which He had come into Samaria happened: He confronted a woman with his claims of the Messiah.

She came to draw water, and He initiated a conversation by asking her for a drink of water. She was shocked, for the Jews did not associate with the Samaritans. She asked Jesus why He would ask her, a Samaritan, for a drink. It was this question, this subject of water, that Jesus used...

- to discuss one of the greatest truths of spiritual life, that of living water.
 - to present the claims of God upon a life.
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JOHN 04:05 SAMARIA, SAMARITANS

Samaria was the central part of Palestine. Palestine was a small country, stretching only 120 miles north to south. The country was divided into three sections:

=> Judea, the southern section

=> Galilee, the northern section

=> Samaria, the central section, lying right between the two

There was bitter hatred between the Jews and Samaritans. Two things in particular caused this hatred.

1. The Samaritans were mongrel or half Jews, a mixed breed *by birth*. Centuries before (about 720 B.C.), the King of Assyria had captured the ten tribes of Israel and deported a large number of the people, scattering them all throughout the Median empire (see 2 Kng. 17:6-41). He then took people from all over the Assyrian empire to transplant them into Samaria to repopulate the land. The result was only natural. Intermarriage took place and the people became a mixed breed, a breed including...

- the transplanted people
- the weak of the land who had been left behind
- the outcast and irreligious who had intermarried with the original Samaritans

The fact of a mixed breed, of course, infuriated the strict Jews who held to be a pure race.

2. The Samaritans were mongrel or half Jews, a mixed breed *by religion*. The transplanted heathen, of course, brought their gods with them. Eventually the God of Israel won out, but the Samaritan religion never became pure Judaism. Three things happened to cause this.

a. When Ezra led the Jews back from exile in Babylon, the first thing the Jews did was to start rebuilding their temple. The Samaritans offered to help them, but the Jews rejected their help, declaring that the Samaritans — through intermarriage and worship of false gods — had lost their purity and forfeited their right to worship the only true God. This severe denunciation embittered the Samaritans against the Jews in Jerusalem.

b. The Samaritans built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim to stand in competition with the Jewish temple at Jerusalem.

c. The Samaritans twisted both the Scripture and history to favour their own people and nation.

=> They twisted Scripture in that they accepted only five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch. (Just imagine! They missed all the richness and depth of the Psalms and prophets.)

=> They twisted history in that they claimed three great events took place on Mt. Gerizim that set it apart as a place of worship. They claimed it was the place where Abraham offered Isaac, where Melchizedek met Abraham, and where Moses built his first altar after leading Israel out from Egyptian bondage. □

JOHN 04:05 SYCHAR

Little is known about the city; however, three significant Biblical events happened there.

=> Jacob bought a piece of land in the area (Gen. 33:19).

=> Jacob, as he was dying, willed the land to Joseph (Gen. 48: 22).

=> Joseph's bones were buried there (Jos. 24:32). □

II. *John 04:10 Living Water, Jesus Christ, Salvation*

Living water is truly alive. To the Jew, living water was water that was always flowing and moving along, such as a creek fed by springs or a lake with both an inflow and an outflow. Dead water was stagnant water such as ponds or pools that were always sitting still with no inflow or outflow. However, when Jesus spoke of “living water,” He meant much more than living streams and lakes.

1. Living water is “*of God*”. It is of Him who is living, always has been and always will be living. The water that God gives is the most *alive* water. No other water, no matter how alive it may be considered, can compare with the living water that is of God.

Psa 36:9 For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

2. Living water is “*the gift*” of God. The word “gift” means it is freely given, is *not earned* and is *not deserved*.

Isa 55:1 “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

Eph 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast..

3. Living water is given by asking for it. Note what Jesus said: “If you knew...you would have asked.” The woman had never received living water because she *had never known* about it and *had never asked* for it. It was now available simply by asking for it.

III. *John 04:11–12 Living Water, Gift of Jesus Christ*

Living water is from a Person much greater than a religious father. The woman saw clearly that Jesus was making an unusual claim. She did not yet understand what the claim was, but she knew He was alluding to something. She noticed He had no leather pouch with which to draw water, so she asked two significant questions.

=> From where did He get this living water?

=> Was He *greater* than Jacob who was one of the great religious patriarchs of the Samaritans? Jacob had to dig the well in order to secure water for his family. Was Jesus greater, able to do more than Jacob did?

The point is this: the woman recognized something most people do not. Jesus was claiming to be greater than one of the greatest religious fathers, Jacob himself. He was claiming to have access to a much better water for quenching the thirst of men.

Thought 1. Throughout Scripture Jesus claimed to be...

- greater than the temple (Mt. 12:6)
- greater than Jonah (Mt. 12:41)
- greater than Solomon (Mt. 12:42; Lk. 11:31).
- greater than Abraham, “before Abraham” (Jn. 8:53, 58)
- greater than Jacob (Jn. 4:11-12)
- worthy of greater honour than Moses (Heb. 3:3; Jn. 5:45-47)

John 3:31 *“The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all.*

Col 1:18 *And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.*

Heb 3:3 *Jesus has been found worthy of greater honour than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honour than the house itself.*

IV. John 04:13–14 Living Water — to Quench Thirst

Living water is the only water that will quench thirst. Men have two thirsts: a physical thirst and a spiritual thirst.

Psa 42:1 *As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.*

Zec 13:1 *“On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.*

Men know immediately how to quench their physical thirst, but their spiritual thirst is a different matter. Within their hearts men sense a thirst for...

- purpose
- meaning
- significance
- satisfaction
- fulfilment
- something that is missing
- something to fill the void, the emptiness, and the loneliness
- deliverance from a sense of lostness
- freedom from undue anxiety, stress and pressure

Men have a problem, however. They usually misunderstand the spiritual thirst and try to quench it with the stagnant waters of the flesh and of this world. The result is poison and death.

=> The stagnant waters of the flesh and sinful nature are such things as lust, immorality, drunkenness, indulgence, and pride.

=> The stagnant waters of the world are such things as the love of money, cars, houses, lands, clothes, extravagant living, position, and power.

The stagnant waters of the flesh and the world never quench a man's thirst. They are like salt water; they only make a man crave for more and more. (Jas. 4:1-3.)

Jer 2:13 "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.

Several facts about the living water are mentioned here.

1. The living water comes from Christ. He and He alone is its source.

John 7:37 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink."

Rev 21:6 He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life.

2. The living water keeps a man from ever thirsting again. His inner thirst is gone forever. It is quenched and fully satisfied.

Zec 13:1 "On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.

Isa 58:11 The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

3. The living water is "a spring of water" placed "in" the man. The well is not placed outside the man, not placed anywhere out in the world, not in his home, nor in his business. It is placed "in" him.

John 7:38-39 "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

4. The living water springs up and continues to spring up and bubble, flowing on and on. It is ever in motion.

Isa 12:3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

5. The living water springs up into eternal life. It will never end.

Rev 7:17 “For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Rev 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

(Jesus interpreted what He was saying in Jn. 7:37-39. All five of the above facts are seen fulfilled in the Holy Spirit.) ■

THE SUBJECT OF SIN

JOHN 04:15–18

Introduction

Jesus promised the living water of spiritual rebirth. However, something had to be discussed before spiritual rebirth could be given: the subject of sin.

- I. There was the request for living water (v. 15).
- II. There was the first essential requisite: facing the truth, the fact of sin (vv. 16-18).

I. *John 04:15 The Effects of Living Water*

Satisfaction, Fulfilment and Purpose

There was the request for living water. Jesus had just made a profound claim.

John 4:14 *“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.”*

The woman wanted such water. She asked for it, but note the reasons:

- => That I won't get thirsty (physical thirst).
- => That I will not have to come and draw water every day.

The woman may have been jesting with Jesus; some commentators think she was. They hold that she certainly knew this man (Jesus) did not have a well of water from which she could drink and never thirst again, water that would cause her to live forever, never having to die. She thought that Jesus was jesting with her, so she played along, humouring Him. Others think she was sincere and just did not understand, but whatever the man's magical waters were, she wanted a drink.

Whatever the case may be, the woman was thinking in terms of the physical world, only of the physical benefits. She had grasped nothing of the spiritual meaning, nothing of the inner satisfaction that Jesus could give which would quench all the thirst of a person's heart.

Thought 1. Note two facts.

- 1) Man does thirst, but his thirst is much deeper than physical thirst. Man has an inner, spiritual thirst. (Jn. 4:13-14.)
 - 2) Christ alone can satisfy man's thirst. If a man drinks of the water Christ gives, he is infused with purpose, meaning, significance, energy, and motivation. Once a man drinks of Christ, he does not mind drawing water; that is, he does not mind work and labour. In fact, the water of Christ stirs him to work and serve, helping mankind in every way possible. He wants to help and to share the wonderful news of a saving God, a God who can save from the thirst of...
 - emptiness
 - despair
 - loneliness
 - hopelessness
 - lostness
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II. *John 04:16–18 Sin: Repentance and Deliverance*

There was the first essential requirement of facing the truth, the fact of sin. The woman had requested living water, but before she could be given the living water of spiritual rebirth, she had to be convinced of her sin and renounce it. Four things are revealed.

1. Jesus stirred conviction and the confession of sin. Why was this necessary? Why did the woman have to face the truth of her sin before she could be spiritually reborn? There are two reasons.
 - a. She was weary and burdened, and it was caused by sin. She had to know this in order to seek the cure. Sin had to be removed and renounced, forgiven and cleansed before *true rest* and *true relief* could come. Once she was freed from sin, rest and relief would come. She would no longer be weary and burdened under the load of sin and irresponsibility, guilt and shame. She would be set free and given a life of spiritual rest and security.
 - b. She had the symptoms of disease and did not know what the disease was; therefore, she was unable to find the cure for her disease. She needed deliverance and did not know how to be delivered. The woman's disease was the same as the disease of all men: sin. Sin had to be renounced before the living water of spiritual rebirth could be given.

James 1:21 *Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.*

Rev 22:14 *“Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.”*

Ezra 10:11 *Now make confession to the Lord, the God of your fathers, and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples around you and from your foreign wives.*

2. Jesus accepted no evasion. Note how the woman tried to evade the fact of her sin. She told the truth; she did not have a husband, but she was living with a man just as she would live with a husband.

Thought 1. The point is clear: the sinner cannot evade his sin. He has to face it and renounce it if he wishes the living water of spiritual rebirth.

Prov 28:13 *He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.*

Jer 3:13 *“Only acknowledge your guilt — you have rebelled against the Lord your God, you have scattered your favours to foreign gods under every spreading tree, and have not obeyed me,” declares the Lord.*

Jer 23:24 *“Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?” declares the Lord. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” declares the Lord.*

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

3. Jesus knew all about the woman, that she had five husbands. He knew the truth about her, what she had done to fail in so many marriages. He knew whether she was guilty...
- of making ungodly, worldly choices
 - of being argumentative and defensive
 - of being a poor housekeeper, wife, and mother
 - of being cold, distant, withdrawn, and indifferent
 - of being unfaithful and immoral

Jesus knew the truth about her sin, and He knows the truth about every man's sin.

Job 10:14 *If I sinned, you would be watching me and would not let my offense go unpunished.*

Jer 16:17 *My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from me, nor is their sin concealed from my eyes.*

Dan 2:22 *He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.*

1 Cor 3:20 *And again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."*

Jer 2:22 *"Although you wash yourself with soda and use an abundance of soap, the stain of your guilt is still before me," declares the Sovereign Lord.*

4. Jesus reproved her sin. She had not only gone through five different husbands, but she was now living with a man who was not her husband.

Thought 1. Christ not only knows all — He keeps an account. The sinner is guilty of every act of disobedience. He stands guilty of every law he breaks.

Gal 3:10, 12 *All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them."*

Man has to face the truth, the fact of his sin, and renounce it if he wishes to receive the living water of spiritual rebirth. A man has to do what Christ is pointing out to the woman: renounce his sin. Once he has done this, he can then ask for the living water and Christ will give it. But drinking the water of Christ is essential.

John 4:14 *"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."*

Acts 3:19 *Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.*

Acts 17:29-31 *"Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone — an image made by man's design and*

skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.”

Rom 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. ■*

THE SUBJECT OF WORSHIP

JOHN 04: 19–24

Introduction

Man's whole concept and approach to worship is changed by Jesus in this passage.

- I The woman was troubled (v. 19-20).
- II Fact 1: the place of worship is not what is important (v. 21).
- III Fact 2: true worship and salvation are from the Jews (through the Messiah Jesus Christ) (v. 22).
- IV Fact 3: true worship is worshipping God in spirit and in truth (vv. 23-24).

I. *John 04:19–20 The Response to Conviction*

The woman was troubled. Jesus had confronted her with her sin (vv. 15-18), and she could either respond or react. She could have reacted by...

- being angry
- arguing
- ignoring
- neglecting
- counting it as foolishness

However, she did not react. Instead, she was stirred and convicted, and she sensed two things.

1. She sensed that Jesus was a prophet, a man who was in touch with God; therefore, Jesus was a man who could help her.
2. She sensed her sin and the need to take care of her sin, to truly worship God. But where was she to worship? There was a dispute about where God's presence really was, a dispute about where a person could truly meet God. The Samaritans said that God's presence was in Mount Gerizim; the Jews said He dwelt in Jerusalem.

Standing before her was the prophet who wrought the piercing conviction in her that she was to worship. He was a prophet; therefore, He could help and direct her, so she asked Him where to worship. Where could she find help from God?

Thought 1. The woman was under a powerful conviction. She knew that she had to worship God, to make sacrifice for her sin. When a man is stirred and convicted, he needs to turn to God immediately. If he does not know how to turn to God, he needs to ask a person who is in touch with God.

II. *John 04:21 The Place of Worship*

First, the place of worship is not what is important. Note three things.

1. Note the phrase "a time is coming." Jesus said that *a time* was coming that would change the whole nature of worship. The way men approached God was going to experience a volcanic eruption. Worship of God was going to be radically and completely changed. There was a time, an historical event, coming, that would
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change it. Jesus was, of course, referring to His death and the coming of the Holy Spirit. The place of worship is no longer the temple or any other particular location on earth. God's presence now dwells in the hearts and lives of His people. His people worship Him wherever they are, and they can worship Him every day all day long.

1 Cor 6:19-20 *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.*

John 14:16-17 *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever — the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.*

Rom 8:9-10 *You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.*

1 John 2:27 *As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit — just as it has taught you, remain in him.*

Ezek 36:27 *And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*

2. The place of worship is not what is important. Some do worship in Mount Gerizim and some worship in Jerusalem, but the place is not what is important.
3. What is important is *the object of worship*, being sure one is truly worshipping *the Father, God Himself*. A person may be in the temple worshipping, and yet not be worshipping the Father: "You worship what you do not know" (v. 22). A man's whole being must be focused upon the only true and living God, the Father Himself, to be truly worshipping.

Isa 43:10 *"You are my witnesses," declares the Lord, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me."*

Rom 15:6 *So that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Heb 13:15 *Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise — the fruit of lips that confess his name.*

1 Pet 2:9 *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

III. *John 04:22 True Source of Worship and Salvation: Jesus Christ*

Second, worship and salvation are from the Jews. Note three things.

1. The word *salvation* in the Greek has the definite article (he soteria), “the salvation.” The Messiah, who is the salvation of all men, comes through the Jews, not from any other source.

John 14:6 *Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

Acts 4:12 *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”*

1 Tim 2:5-6 *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time.*

Heb 8:6 *But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.*

Heb 9:15 *For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*

Heb 12:24 *To Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*

1 John 2:1 *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.*

2. Jesus said “we.” He identified Himself with the Jews. He was a fully born Jew; He was not of another nationality, nor was He a mixture of bloods.
3. Salvation is from the Jews. All other worship is an expression of man’s own ideas, no matter how rational and highly esteemed and followed: “You worship what you do not know.” (see *Israel, God’s Special People*, John 4:22)
 - a. Men are ignorant of God Himself, of the only living and true God.

Mat 13:15 *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.’*

Acts 17:23 *For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: To an Unknown God. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.*

Rom 1:20-23 *For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from*

what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Rom 1:28 *Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.*

Rom 10:3 *Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.*

Eph 4:18 *They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.*

2 Pet 3:5 *But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water.*

2 Tim 3:7 *Always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.*

Job 21:14 *Yet they say to God, 'Leave us alone! We have no desire to know your ways.'*

Jer 4:22 *"My people are fools; they do not know me. They are senseless children; they have no understanding. They are skilled in doing evil; they know not how to do good."*

Jer 5:4 *I thought, "These are only the poor; they are foolish, for they do not know the way of the Lord, the requirements of their God."*

Jer 8:7 *Even the stork in the sky knows her appointed seasons, and the dove, the swift and the thrush observe the time of their migration. But my people do not know the requirements of the Lord.*

Jer 9:3 *"They make ready their tongue like a bow, to shoot lies; it is not by truth that they triumph in the land. They go from one sin to another; they do not acknowledge me," declares the Lord.*

Amos 3:10 *"They do not know how to do right," declares the Lord, "who hoard plunder and loot in their fortresses."*

Micah 4:12 *But they do not know the thoughts of the Lord; they do not understand his plan, he who gathers them like sheaves to the threshing floor.*

Zec 7:11-12 *"But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and stopped up their ears. They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the Lord Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the Lord Almighty was very angry."*

b. Men are ignorant of Christ, the Son of God.

John 1:10 *He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.*

John 4:10 *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."*

John 9:30 *The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes."*

John 8:19 *Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also."*

John 14:9 *Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

John 16:3 *"They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me."*

Acts 13:27 *The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath.*

1 John 3:6 *No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.*

JOHN 04:22 ISRAEL, GOD'S SPECIAL PEOPLE

*"You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews." **John 04:22***

Why did Jesus Christ come to the Jewish nation and come to earth as a Jew? Very simply stated, the Jews were God's special people. They had been born by a special act of God. It all started long, long ago. God had wanted four things.

1. He wanted a people who would love Him supremely and give Him their first loyalty. (See Gen. 17:7; Isa. 43:10.)
2. He wanted a people who would witness to all other nations that He and He alone was the one true and living God. (See Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Acts 13:26, 47.)
3. He wanted a people through whom He could send the promised Seed, the Saviour and Messiah, Jesus Christ, to all men everywhere. (See Gen. 3:15; 17:7; 22:18; Gal. 3:16; Jn. 4:22.)
4. He wanted a people through whom He could send His written Word, the Holy Bible, and preserve it for all generations. (Rom. 9:4-5; 1 Pet. 2:10-12.)

In searching the earth for such a people, God could find none (Rom. 1:18-32). God could do only one thing. He had to find one man and through him raise a new people, a new nation.

1. God found and chose Abraham and through him established the Jewish nation. (Gen. 12:1-5; 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8, 15-19; 22:16-18; 26:2-5, 24; 28:13-15; 31:13; 35:9-12.) God chose one man and challenged him to worship God supremely.

If that man would worship God supremely, then God would cause a special people to be born of his seed. That man was Abraham. Abraham was the first Jew (Gen. 12:1-4; Gal. 3:16). In the Old Testament the Jews and their land (Palestine) were continually pointed to as the very special people and land of God. They were called...

- => God's treasured possession (Exo. 19:5; Deu. 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Psa. 135:4).
- => the Lord's portion (Deu. 32:9).
- => the Lord's land (Lev. 25:23; Jer. 2:7; 16:18; Hos. 9:3).
- => the holy land (Zec. 2:12).

However, the Jewish nation failed to obey God supremely. The whole plot of the Old Testament centres around God's pleading and dealing with the Jews. Again and again, He gave the nation the opportunity to obey Him. He dealt with them in mercy and in judgment, but at every turn they refused to heed His pleading.

2. God chose the family of David. (see *Jesus Christ, King of Israel*, Jn 1:49). God had no choice but to make another move, so He chose one faithful family within the Jewish nation and gave to that family one great promise. The family was that of King David, and the promise was that of the Messiah, God's great King, God's very own Son. God's Son was to come through the line of David and establish an eternal nation of people who would love God supremely. However, the Jewish nation again failed God. They misinterpreted God's Word — the prophecies of His coming.
 - a. The Jews misinterpreted God's Word by saying the seed of Abraham included only the Jewish nation. In their minds, God had no children except the children of the Jewish nation. The Bible says explicitly that the seed of Abraham is Christ, and the special people of God are those individuals within all nations who worship God supremely (Gal. 3:16).
 - b. The Jews misinterpreted God's Word by saying that the eternal kingdom promised to David was the Jewish nation and the Jewish nation only. They expected Israel to be established as an earthly nation forever and all other nations to be subservient to Israel. But again, God's promise was not that narrow, nor was it that prejudiced. The Bible says there is not, and never has been, any respect of persons with God (Deu. 10:17; 2 Chr. 19:7; Job. 34:19; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Gal. 2:6; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; 1 Pet. 1:17). God did say that Christ was to come from the Davidic line, but He also said that He was going to establish an eternal nation made up of people everywhere who would love God supremely (Rom. 2:28-29).

By misinterpreting God's promises, the Jews failed to be the missionaries to the world that God had chosen them to be. They became earthly bound and materialistic minded. They twisted the idea of the promised Messiah to fit their own schemes. They conceived of Him as One who was to establish an earthly kingdom for the Jewish nation alone. They failed to see that God was speaking...

- of an eternal kingdom of righteousness.
 - of a kingdom that is of another dimension entirely — the spiritual dimension.
 - of a new heaven and a new earth that would give each person an eternal life beyond just one earthly generation.
3. God had no choice but to make a third move. This He did by sending His own Son into the world through the Jewish nation. God sent Him so that the world through Him might be saved (Jn. 3:16-19). However, man rejected God's Son and crucified Him. This act — the killing of God's Son — was the final blow. When man slew the only Son of God, the whole world was involved. Both Jew and Gentile were represented symbolically in the Jewish religionists and the Roman authorities. They both actually did the plotting, sentencing, and execution. If the world were ever to be saved, it was now perfectly clear that God had to make every move Himself.

This He did once-for-all. In His eternal purpose and plan for man's salvation, God took the sins of all men and laid them upon His Son while He was being slain upon the cross. He allowed His Son to bear the sins of the world (1 Pet. 2:24). Then He took His Son and raised Him from the dead — never to die again. He did what man had always failed to do: in His Son's resurrection God began to build a lasting kingdom of righteousness, a new nation that is presently being made up of men from all earthly nations who desire and are willing to follow Jesus Christ supremely. He is calling out and forming a new people who have genuinely been born again — spiritually. These new born people shall live eternally — beyond just one earthly generation. These people are identified as His church, as a body of people who genuinely believe and follow Him. They are destined to be the inhabitants of the new heavens and earth. Believers become God's new community, new society, new race, new nation of people. They become His church, His new creation — spiritually and supernaturally born again — who comprise the true family of God (Lk. 8:21; Eph. 2:11-18; 4:17-19.)

***Eph 2:18-22** For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

God, acting solely upon His own through the death and resurrection of His Son, has fulfilled His promises to both Abraham and David. All the people of the nations of the world now have the opportunity to become children of God, the special people of God. □

JOHN 01:49 JESUS CHRIST, KING OF ISRAEL

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

Jesus was declared to be the Messianic King. God had given to David and his seed (the Messiah) the promise of eternal government (2 Sam. 7:12; Psa. 39:3f; 132:11).

Note how often Jesus was called the son of David. (Mt. 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; Act. 2:29-36; Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8; Rev. 22:16.) It was the common title and popular concept of the Messiah. Generation after generation of Jews had ached and looked for the promised deliverer of Israel. The people expected Him to be a great general who would deliver and restore the nation to its greatness. In fact, they expected Him to make the nation the centre of universal rule. He would, under God, conquer the world and centre the glory and majesty of God Himself in Jerusalem; and from His throne, the throne of David, He would execute *the Messianic fire of judgment* upon the nations and peoples of the world (Mt. 1:18; 3:11; 11:1-6; 11:2-3; 11:5; 11:6; Lk. 7:21). □

IV. *John 04:23–24 The True Worshippers*

Third, true worshippers worship God in spirit and in truth. Note four points.

1. There is a change in worship: “A time is coming and has now come.” Christ changed worship. Before Christ, men worshipped God in special places, for example, in temples and before altars. Since Christ, place and locality mean nothing. Christ has opened the door into God’s presence from any place in the universe.
2. The nature of worship: Man is to worship God in spirit and in truth.
 - a. To worship God in spirit means to worship God...
 - with the *spiritual drive and ability* of one’s soul, seeking the most intimate communion and fellowship with God.
 - with the *spiritual core* of one’s life and being, trusting and resting in God’s acceptance, love and care.
 - b. To worship God in truth means...
 - to approach God in the right or true way. There is only one way, through His Son Jesus Christ.
 - to worship God sincerely and truthfully, not coming half-heartedly with wandering mind and sleepy eyes.
3. The reason for worship. The Father seeks men to worship Him. God desires worship, for He created man to worship him and to have fellowship with Him. Therefore, God seeks men who will worship Him in spirit and truth.

Prov 16:4 *The Lord works out everything for his own ends — even the wicked for a day of disaster.*

Isa 43:7, 10 *“Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.” “You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.”*

Rom 8:29 *For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brothers.*

Eph 1:4-6 *For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will — to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.*

1 Pet 2:9 *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

4. There is just one essential thing in worship. It is not the place that is important in worship but how a person worships God. A person must worship God in spirit and in truth. There is no other way. “God is Spirit, and His worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

To worship in spirit means...

- *from* the spiritual drive and depth of the soul
- *from* the spiritual core of one’s life and being

To worship in truth means...

- as God dictates, that is, worship must be in the name of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, in sincerity.

Mat 4:10 *Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”*

Luke 24:52 *Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.*

Heb 10:25 *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Rev 14:7 *He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”*

1 Chr 16:29 *Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come before him; worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness.*

Psa 95:6 *Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.*

Psa 29:2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness.

Psa 96:9 Worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.

Psa 99:5 Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool; he is holy. ■

JOHN 4:23 MAN IS CREATED TO WORSHIP GOD IN SPIRIT

*“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.” **John 04:23***

Man is to worship God in Spirit. Three points need to be looked at to fully understand what this means.

1. There is the creation of man.

***Gen 2:7** The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*

The material used to form man was dust; or as Isaiah said, “clay” (Is. 64:8); or as Luther translated, a lump of earth (erdenkloss). Man’s physical material or substance is of the earth; the forming of his body is like that of earthly pottery (Job 10:8-9; Rom. 9:21); the food he eats is of the earth (Job 28:5); and the end of his body is to return to the earth (Eccl. 3:20).

There is a sense in which man is a paradox. He was created with all the dignity and honour possible — created by the hand of God and given the very breath of God. Yet, he was also created out of the most base and lowly stuff of all — dirt. So in one sense man has every reason to glory; in another sense he has every reason to be humble. What is to be man’s attitude, his air? There is nothing wrong with glorying; there is nothing wrong with being humble. It is the reason or object for glorying and being humble that makes one right or wrong. Man is to worship and glory in God — that God gave him life and the dignity and honour (privilege) of life. Man is to walk humbly toward God and toward other men because all men come from the same material, the earth. (Jer. 9:24; see 1 Cor. 1:31; 2 Cor. 10:17; Rom. 11:36; Gal. 1:5; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 5:11). Therefore, man is exhorted to present his body to God as “a living sacrifice” and as “the temple of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 6:19-20).

But note: man is not only body and soul; he is also spirit. This is man’s distinctive difference from all other creatures. As the Psalmist says, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made....my frame was not hidden from you” (Psa. 139:14-15). Two distinctive facts need to be stressed here.

- a. It is not just the breath of life that is given to man. It is the very breath of God Himself. God's breath is life, eternal life; therefore, man was given the eternal life, the very Spirit of God Himself. Just think! God's very own breath, His Spirit, is within every person who is "renewed" (recreated) after the image of Him that created him.

Eph 4:24 *And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Col 3:10 *And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

- b. God breathes His own breath or spirit into the nostrils of man. Just imagine the picture. The body of Adam was lying before God; it had just been formed by God's hands from the dust of the earth. Adam was lifeless — just a body — never having breathed. God then breathed into Adam's nostrils His own breath or Spirit, the life of His very own being (which is the life that goes on and on, never ending, that is eternal).

Now, the point is that God made no other creature like this. God gave no other creature His own breath, nor did He use this method of creation with any other creature. These two facts make man's creation distinctive.

What a shame that man cleaves to this earth and its worldliness! "He who ignores discipline despises himself" (Prov. 15:32). How often the spirit of man should breath after God (Mt. 5:6)!

2. The creation of man is in *the image and likeness of God*.

Gen 1:26-27 *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

Whatever *the image and likeness of God* means, it is that which distinguishes man from all other life which God created. No where else does God say He created a being in *His own image* and *after His own likeness*. Only man is in the image and likeness of God. What is the *image and likeness* of God in man?

- a. It is unlikely that it means the *soul* of man. The Bible says all living creatures are souls. They were created as *living souls*. This is clearly pointed out in the Hebrew language of Gen. 1:20 which says, "Let the water teem with living creatures [souls, nephesh]." All living creatures possess the breath of life. (see *Soul*, Mt. 22:37.)
- b. It is unlikely that it means the ability to reason. Apparently animals have the

- ability to reason and learn to varying degrees. Animals show ability to think when facing an enemy or difficulties in the innumerable experiences of life.
- c. It is unlikely that it means the ability to be moral and just. Some animals (both individually and within family groups) have rules, practices, deeds, or acts that lead to moral and virtuous behaviour among themselves and even toward others. There seems to be an exercise of right and wrong among some animals. However, it needs to be pointed out that just as man is far superior to animals mentally, they are also far superior to animals morally. Man is far superior to animals both as a rational being (a being that reasons) and a moral being (a being that is just, relating to others as he should). (Note that being *spiritually* and *mentally renewed* in Christ affects the rational and moral powers of man. Man can be *created* in righteousness and *true* holiness. Man can be delivered from the legalistic bondage and rules of a man-conceived righteousness and holiness. See Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10.)
 - d. It means that God gave man His spirit: His immortal breath. His life that lives forever just like God. God went beyond what He had made when He created the animals of the earth (a soul, an earthly life, a temporal breath); God made man a spirit (an eternal life, an immortal breath) that is just like Himself, just like His own life. To be in the image and likeness of God means “God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship *in spirit* and in truth” (Jn. 4:24). Apparently, no animal is a spirit; animals are only souls. As living souls, they are enabled in varying degrees to breathe, to reason and to relate; but none of them have the inherent power to breathe eternally, nor the drive and ability to reason after God and to relate to God. Man does have that power, that drive, and that ability. *Man is spirit, even as God is Spirit.* Man is not only body and soul as the animals of creation. Man is not only *a living, breathing soul made for this earth; man is a spirit, an immortal being made to live with God eternally.*
3. In light of the above fact, there are at least two distinguishing marks of God’s image in man, two distinguishing marks of man as a spirit.
 - a. God’s image in man is the *spirit or power of immortality*. Man lives beyond this earth, lives eternally just like God. As mentioned above, according to the Bible, no animal is a spirit. Animals are only souls. As souls they are enabled to breathe and to live on this earth, but they do not have the inherent power to breathe eternally. However, man does have that power. Man is spirit, even as God is Spirit. *Man is not only a living, breathing soul and body like the animals made for this earth; man is a spirit, an immortal being made both for this earth and for eternity.*
 - b. God’s image in man is the *spirit or the drive and ability (choice) to worship*. Man has not only the soulish ability to reason and to relate, but an unquenchable

spiritual drive and ability to reason after God and to relate to God. Again, as mentioned above, no earthly animal has that spiritual drive and ability (freedom of choice). The Bible does ascribe to souls varying abilities, but no animal soul has the ability to reason *after God* or to *relate to God*. Worship is a spiritual drive and ability, an ability of spirit (of man) only. Just like animals, *man knows and understands the things* of this earth; but man is to know, believe, and understand God first and foremost (Isa. 43:10). Man is to worship God. God is Spirit and He has created man as spirit: therefore, man is to worship God in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24).

There are two very significant facts to be noted about the image of God in man or of man as a spirit.

1. The rebellion of man against God (man's fall) affected God's image within man. God had created man as an immortal being. Man was to live on this earth and to live with God forever. When man exercised his ability or choice and turned against God, he lost both rights. He could no longer live on the earth forever, nor could he live with God forever. In his rebellion against God, man was saying that he preferred a different world other than God's world and he preferred a different god (his own will) other than God Himself. Man thereby condemned himself to leave this earth (to die, Gen. 2:17; 3:19) and to be separated from God eternally (Jn. 3:18). Note that man was already created as an immortal being.

Therefore, man would continue on, he would exist forever — but he was (a) to be placed somewhere else other than this earth (he had chosen this); and (b) he was to be separated from God forever. It was his choice. The image of God — the power of immortality and the drive and ability to worship and live with God — was marred eternally.

2. The image of God within man can be renewed.
 - a. Man can now put on the new self or the new man.

Eph 4:24 *And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Col 3:10 *And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

- b. Man can be “born again” spiritually; he can be made alive to God just as he was in the beginning — never to perish. (Jn. 3:3f; 1 Pet. 1:23).
 - c. Man can live and worship God forever (Jn. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:4). He can now partake of God's divine nature and be assured of living forever in the new heavens and new earth (2 Pet. 3:3-4, 8-18; Rev. 21:1-7).

- d. Man is renewed, reborn, recreated in Christ Jesus. “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed” (1 Pet. 2:24; see 3:18. Notes, Rom. 5:1; 2 Cor. 5:1; see 5:17.)

Gen 1:26-27 *Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

1 Cor 15:49 *And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. □*

JOHN 04:23–24 SPIRIT, GOD IS SPIRIT

*“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is Spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and truth.” **John 04:23-24***

What is meant by *spirit*? At least three things are gleaned from Scripture.

1. Spirit is not flesh and bone. Spirit is not physical and material. Spirit is immaterial, non-physical, incorporeal. Spirit is of another dimension of being, another dimension entirely different from the physical and material dimension of being.
2. Spirit is the innermost part of being, the very core and heart of life. Spirit is the very *breath of God’s life*, the very *breath of God’s existence*, the very *being of God’s life*. That is, spirit is *eternal existence and being*. It is permanent, unending existence. A spirit has the breath of life, of existence, of *being forever*.

Gen 2:7 *The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*

3. God is Spirit. This means He is the very embodiment of life eternal, of permanent, unending existence. His nature is not flesh and bone; for the physical ages, deteriorates, dies, and decays — it ends. But not Spirit, not God. God exists forever and ever. He is life, the very embodiment of life eternal. Whatever life is — in all of its perfection — *God is*. God is the perfect Person, Life, Intelligence, Being. The basic nature of God is Spirit: eternal being, eternal life, the Perfect Being, the Perfect Life.

John 17:3 *Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. □*

MATHEW 22:37 SOUL (PSUCHE)

The seat of man's breath and life or consciousness. The soul is the life of a man, the consciousness, the breath, the essence, the being of a man. The soul is the *animal life* of a man. The soul is the breath and consciousness that distinguishes man and other animals from vegetation.

The world of vegetation lives and man and animals live, but there is a difference in their living. Man and animals are *breathing* and *conscious* beings. The essence of their being is breath and consciousness. They are living souls. This is clearly pointed out in the Hebrew language of Gen. 1:20: "Let the waters teem with '*living souls*' [nephesh]." The "living souls" that God created were different from the vegetation He had just created. The "living souls" were creatures (fish) that breathed and possessed consciousness.

Christ said we are to love God "with all our soul," that is, with all our life, our breath, our consciousness. We are to love God with all the breath and consciousness, all the life and awareness, we have. □

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. ■*