

John 4: 3-28
Theme: Jesus
Series Apostles Creed

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WHO IS JESUS?

It was in at the noon day hour. The sun was high and it was hot. Jesus and the disciples had stopped just outside of a little town called Sychar at a well. Jesus was tired and the disciples were hungry. So, the disciples left Jesus and went into the town to buy food.

Why was Jesus here? The city of Sychar was in the region of Samaria. Notice that John tells us that Jesus had to go through Samaria. No Jew had to go through Samaria. The Samaritans were considered unclean and if a Jew was going to go to Galilee, he would cross the Jordan river and go the long way around. You see the Samaritans were a mixed breed of people. They were exiles who were brought into the land by the Assyrians who felt that transplanted exiles would be less trouble in a conquered land. These exiles had married the left over Jews in the area and had adopted their religion, but it was a corrupted form of Judaism and was therefore totally unacceptable to the Jew. So this and several other historical incidents had caused great hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans. Yet John says that Jesus had to go through Samaria. We can only guess that He was compelled to go because there was someone in darkness who needed to be confronted by God.

This was quite an unusual meeting. The first reason is obvious, this woman was a Samaritan. "Give me a drink." This was a surprise to the Samaritan woman because he was a Jew. No Jew would drink after a Samaritan because they were unclean, not in our sense of cleanliness, but because they were sinners. One Rabbi Eliezer said that, "He that eats the bread of the Samaritans is like one that eats the flesh of swine," and we know that the Jews would never eat pork. Yet Jesus asked her for a drink.

The second reason that it was a surprising request is because this was a woman. Women were not highly thought of in the first century Israelite culture. But we often find Jesus breaking the social customs in order to tell others about the kingdom of Heaven.

Besides being a Samaritan and a woman, she was a sinner. Many have noted that the woman had come to the well at midday. That was the hottest part of the day. No one drew water in the middle of the day. It was done early in the morning or late in the evening. She went to the well when no one else would normally be there, she could draw water alone. No doubt she was too scandalous to be seen with the rest of the women who would talk about her and make scathing remarks about her. No doubt she felt ashamed. Why put

up with the grief, she would avoid them.

Yet Jesus talked to her any way! He began to tell her about the water of life that would gush up in her soul forever and never run dry. She did not understand, she wanted water to sooth her physical thirst. He was offering her eternal life. She did not know to whom she had the privilege of speaking.

However, Jesus made her feel uncomfortable. Somehow he knew too much about her. There were no secrets at that well. Jesus knew about her series of husbands. Jesus had told to her to go and call her husband. She said that she had no husband. Jesus told her that she had been married five times. She had gotten so use to the routine that she had not bothered marrying the last man and they were living together. She called him a prophet.

She is embarrassed by his knowledge of her private life and if he was a real prophet, he knew all about her, so she changes the subject and raises a religious question. Jesus tells her quickly that she does not know what she is talking about and then she makes the statement, "I know that Messiah is coming; when that one comes, he will declare all things to us." Jesus does something for her that he does not do for anyone else in the NT until the day that he was crucified, he told her that he was the Messiah. She now knows that he is not a rabbi or a simple prophet, he is the Messiah, God in the flesh.

At that point she leaves her water pot and ran into town and said to the men, "Come see a man who told me all the things that I have done; is this not the Christ?" Verse 39 said that many came to believe because of her testimony.

Jesus is the Messiah of God. The word means anointed one, one who has been set aside for a special purpose. In this case however, the Messiah is more than a special man. We just came through Christmas and at that time we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Scripture says that he was born of a virgin. They were not dummies, they knew what they were writing. And if we left at that, then we might be right in questioning it. But Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, knew things about people that no one else could know. He caused the lame to walk and the blind to see. But most of all, Jesus claimed that he would die for his people and rise again on the third day. It is a pretty tall claim. Yet, the eleven disciples, the women who had followed Jesus and about 500 other individuals plus Paul all claimed to have seen the risen Jesus. Furthermore, they went into the world proclaiming that this man Jesus was God in the flesh and they literally died for that testimony. Would these people die for a lie?

John 1: 1 says that Jesus was the Logos, the creator force of the universe and that the Logos is God. The writer of Hebrews says in 1: 3 that in relationship of the Son to the Father he is the “radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature.” In other words, he is light of light, the very radiance of the light of God. John said that Jesus was the light of the world. And the exact representation of his nature means a mirror image, identical. Paul says in Colossians that in Jesus the “He is the image of the invisible God” and “all the fullness dwells in Him.” There is no doubt what the Bible teaches about Jesus. He is God in the flesh.

Last week I talked about the attributes of God. We need to understand that all of those attributes dwell in Jesus as well. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all equally share in these attributes such as holiness, infinity, omnipotence, omniscience, etc. In John 8, Jesus himself says that before Abraham was “I am.” He claimed the personal name of God for himself.

C. S. Lewis once wrote:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God." That is one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says that he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was and is the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. (Lewis, *The Case For Christianity*, 440.)

Lewis doesn't leave us any room to compromise does he? This is what the Bible teaches. This is the basic content of the Christian faith. It has been taught for 2000 years. It has weathered attack upon attack. There are many who are scared to death at the implications of God becoming flesh. And the common response has been the same: it is a lie, he was a crazy man or he is Lord and God.

Who is Jesus? I know what I believe. I know what every committed Christian believes. The Question that some of you must answer this day is what do you believe? Is he a liar to flee from? Is he a lunatic to lock up? Or is he Lord and God? If he is Lord and God then we must fall before him and worship.