

The Saviour of the World

Introduction

In this remarkable chapter of John's gospel we read of Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman of questionable morals, someone who is thus the very antithesis of Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel. Strikingly enough however she is precisely like Nicodemus, failing to understand Jesus' words and resorting to religious jargon at the expense of recognizing the Messiah. However, once she does come to see Jesus for who He is, she becomes a witness and succeeds in something in which the disciples themselves are still clueless, namely, recognizing the kingdom and the importance of doing kingdom work while there is still time. The people of the village thus believe not only because of her words, but also as a result of Jesus' own words. The chapter ends with a return to Galilee and to Cana in particular. We are reminded by John of the events in Jerusalem and the danger of superficial faith. Yet we are also told that Jesus' miraculous deeds do reveal the truth about Him and should lead to faith. The royal official does provide a 'better way' though since he 'takes Jesus at His word'.

Study Questions

These questions help you to see clearly what the text is saying. This is a vital first step towards understanding what the section means. The questions should be answered from the text itself.

Read John 4vs1 -54. Answer the following questions:

1. Why did Jesus withdraw to Galilee from Judea? (John 4vs1-3)

2. What was the woman's response to Jesus' request for a drink? (John 4vs9) Why?

3. What two things does Jesus want the woman to know? (John 4vs10)

4. What does He want her to do? (John 4vs10)

5. Trace the conversation between Jesus and the woman. How does Jesus lead her to faith?

6. What do we learn about the disciples from their conversation with Jesus? (John 4vs31-38). What do these verses teach us about who Jesus is and what His mission is?

7. What do the Samaritans conclude about who Jesus is? Why? (John 4vs39-42)

Think it Through

1. What, in your opinion, is the point of the story of the healing in John 4vs43-54.

2. How does this story fit in with what we have learnt thus far about the way people come to faith?