

Savior Of The World John 4:39-42

The scripture passage that we will study today is important to most all of us for many reasons, but for one reason in particular. This is the Lord Jesus reaching out past the Jewish nation with His blessed salvation to also include us gentiles, you and me.

And yes, we spoke about this in another study, but it deserves more thought from us. And so we will.

You'll recall that Jesus was first sent to His own, the Jews. But His own would not receive Him.

And while many of the Samaritans still did have some Jewish blood flowing through their veins, their birthright was not pure. And the Jews went out of their way to make sure the Samaritans knew they were outcasts to the Jewish faith.

But thankfully, though Jesus also knew the difference well, He knew that His salvation was fully intended for these outcast Samaritans as well as His own blood kin.

And that is the special meaning that is somewhat concealed within this simple declaration made by this Samaritan man when he said, "this One (Jesus) is indeed the Savior of the World".

Don't you love the way God reveals some of His most profound truths. In these words we're being told that Jesus is not just the "Savior of the Jews", He is "Savior of the world", Savior to both the Jews and the Gentiles alike.

Let's pause for a moment and read these few words given here in John chapter 4, beginning here in verse 39.

³⁹From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I have done." ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. ⁴¹Many more believed because of His word; ⁴²and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for

ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world." (John 4:39-42)

A question as we begin our study today . . . What would be your and my reaction if suddenly we were confronted by a stranger traveling through our town, a stranger who could tell us everything that we had ever done? Would we respond as these people did in this remote town in Samaria? Their response was, "We have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."

Folks, those are words that get a person into heaven!

It's one level of belief and commitment to be able to declare that Jesus is a "prophet", a simple "messenger" from God. The woman at the well first said that about Jesus. She said in verse 19, "Sir," . . . "I can see that you are a prophet."

But now, here in verse 42 these people of the town are going far beyond declaring Jesus to be a simple "prophet". They are declaring Him to be the "Savior of the world". That is a far stretch above declaring Him to be a mere "prophet".

If this same incident had of taken place today, our media would have immediately gotten involved. And among other things they would have quickly diverted our attention away from Jesus, the focal point of the witness, and would have demanded to know if the ones bearing witness were credible. Who were these people in this small Samaritan town anyway? Why should we believe what they have to say about Jesus? By what authority do these people make such an unbridled claim, that Jesus is the Savior of the world, the whole world?

We know that the media would respond in that way because that's exactly the way they are responding now to any mention of the name of Jesus. They cannot discredit Jesus, so they try to discredit the messengers.

But it's not only the unbelieving media. In more subtle ways, we believing Christians are just as hard to convince. We also demand great credibility in our teachers.

We tend to think that if we are listening to an Adrian Rogers or a John MacArthur, or if we are reading a book by James Dobson, the message holds more credibility than if we hear it from some unknown or unlearned person. But is that the right thing for us to do?

While it is true that we need to be careful who we follow after, is credible truth reserved only for the “masters” of our religion, those with Doctorial designations after their name, those who might have spent much of their lifetime studying in the best of seminaries?

Folks, the real truth is, Jesus has brought with Him a new day of “grace”, one filled with the knowledge and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, one in which even the unlearned are able to spread the good news of the salvation of Jesus Christ.

That's why each one of us has been given the command to,

¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. (Matthew 27:19-20)

Even little children are somehow able to understand and to tell the “good news” of Christ. In Matthew 11 Jesus said,

²⁵ . . . I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. (Matthew 11:25)

Folks, I am not railing against the concept of “professional clergy”. There is certainly a necessity for professional clergy in the church. But God has also made it possible for even the newest of believers and the youngest of Christians to be able to give His gospel.

. . . There is also another fundamental truth being discovered here in these words of our text, a truth that seems to puzzle many, especially some bible scholars. Let me bring it out by asking it in the form of a question. “Is any one part of the scriptures any more true, more valid or more important than any other part? Does it matter who is mouthing the words of scripture, King David in the Psalms, Matthew or Mark in the gospels, or Paul in his letters.

Are these more prominent “heroes” of the faith any more credible than some unknown two-day old newly converted heathen from Samaria? Are the Words that we read in this canon of scripture divided in any way whereas one part is more believable than any other part?

Many bible scholars will say from one side of their mouth that all scripture is the inerrant, infallible word of God, while from the other side of their mouth also say that some of these words are simply the “inspired thoughts” of David or Matthew or Paul. Did you note the subtle difference in the words that I just said to you?

If we are not careful, such manner of talking can creep into our thoughts and conversation and begin to divide our minds on certain portions of scripture.

I even heard recently, where someone was comparing something that the Apostle Paul had said to something that Jesus had said where they perceived an apparent inconsistency. They responded by saying, “Well, who are you going to believe, Jesus or Paul?” Folks, that is outrageous and dangerous thinking.

Any words or any thoughts that mitigate or diminish any one of these words of God, no matter who is speaking them, whether it is the Lord Jesus, or Paul, or Matthew, or Mark or even these strangers in Samaria, those thoughts must be stricken from our reasoning and from our preaching.

God does not need a David or a Matthew or a Paul to deliver His message. He can use a child or a Samaritan, or even a donkey. It still remains the pure unmitigated Word of God.

So in this situation, when a newly converted heathen is spilling forth with such praise to declare Jesus to be the “Savior of the World”, it is every bit as true as if it were spoken from the mouth of Paul or even from the mouth of Jesus. It is all simply coming from the person of the Holy Spirit who wrote these words of scripture to begin with.

So then, all of the words of scripture are inerrant and infallible, no matter who is saying them.

Let me also address another question, do we believe that God is sometimes simply rhetorical in some of the statements made in the scriptures? And do we

believe that in these scriptures God sometimes presents some thoughts and ideas to us in the form of “whimsical hyperbole”?

Listen to these words given in John chapter 21. Do they sound like whimsical hyperbole to you?

²⁵Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written. (John 21:25)

On the surface, these words do sound a bit whimsical and exaggerated. But are they?

Oh my dear friends, stop and consider the Almighty nature and power of God for a moment. His might and power and strength and knowledge and understanding are so vast that, for me, the word exaggerated just isn't a concept that I could imagine being applied to God.

Consider that verse again, that if everything Jesus did and is still doing were written down in books the whole world surely would have no way to hold them all . . . friends, just the thoughts that went into His creating trees and some of the other vegetation, and perhaps cows, and perhaps the planet Jupiter, that alone would probably fill that many books.

And besides that, Jesus is at this very moment and every other moment still holding together the very air that we breathe, the clouds in the sky, all the oceans and the seas. How many books would that require? Perhaps the whole universe!

And besides that folks, God doesn't just spout out whimsical allegories and hyperboles! Every word, every word that Jesus ever uttered had meaning and purpose and importance beyond any degree we can ever think or imagine. His words in Matthew chapter 4 are so very, very true . . .

“ Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4)

And He said in John chapter 6,

The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. (John 6:63)

As I consider these thoughts, it sounds like we might have drifted a little off-course from the scripture text, and perhaps we have, just a little. But it is so very important that we know as we read these scriptures that God has spoken every word onto these pages, and all of His words have real and purposeful meanings, meanings that reach beyond any understanding that we can know or imagine. "They are Spirit and they are life". They are simple and they are also profound. But more than anything else, they are absolutely true.

One more consideration along this same line of thinking! As Jesus was hanging there suffering and dying on that cross, He uttered the words, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Some who read those words think them simply to be some nice rhetorical thoughts to let us know that Jesus doesn't hold any hard feelings against His abusers?

But oh my dear friends, I am fully convinced otherwise. I am convinced that those words, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," were words of true forgiveness. And not just for those people who were mistreating Him that day, but also for many, many others throughout all of time.

By His death there on the cross, Jesus was making full atonement for not only each of the sins of all those present that day, but also was sufficient and powerful enough to pay for all the sins of the whole world, giving credibility to the words of that Samaritan man who declared that Jesus was the Savior of the whole world.

So then, No! His words there on the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," were not simple rhetoric. His words were words of "judicial pardon", words of "justification"!

. . . . With all of that being said then, when we read words like those given here in our text today, given by a simple, perhaps uneducated, unnamed man in a remote town of Samaria, what credence should we pay to it? He said, "We have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."

Should we believe that these words are coming from some private, human source, a man perhaps caught up in his own emotions. Or should we

understand that these words were placed in that man's mind and on his tongue by the Holy Spirit of God.

Many people would think not, that these words were spoken by just an ordinary man, perhaps even still not quite fully saved.

But folks, I'll say it again. God can use any person, sometimes even animals, a donkey, to speak His truths.

Later on, God would use the High Priest Caiaphas, the one who would plot to carry out the death of the Lord Jesus, to say some of the most profound words of God. He would say, "it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish".

And no, Caiaphas probably didn't know that he was prophesying for God, but he was.

Above all else, we know that all of these words of scripture are put here by God's Holy Spirit. And as God tells us in 2 Timothy chapter 3,

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

So then yes, I am convinced that these words uttered by this unknown person in Samaria declaring Jesus to be the Savior of the World are, as all of the other words of scripture, "God-breathed". It does not matter one iota who had the privilege of uttering them.

. . . . So then, before we close, let's consider for just a few more moments the words this person said. If God purposed to give these words to us, as simple as they are, what is their purpose to be in us? This person said,

"We have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world." (John 4:42)

The first part of this verse harkens back to the truths that we spoke about in an earlier study. These people had first believed because of the woman's testimony when she said, "He told me everything that I have ever done."

Real truth is shared and learned every day through preachers, and teachers, and through witnessing. But we must know that before a person can truly have a real “converting belief”, belief that leads to salvation, they must have a personal encounter with the Person of Jesus Christ, this Savior of the world that this Samaritan spoke about.

Let me say that again for us . . . real converting belief, belief that leads to salvation comes only through a personal encounter with the Savior, the Lord Jesus.

These people of Samaria had the delightful experience of seeing Jesus and being confronted by His truth face to face. But you and I will not have that same experience.

We have instead been blessed with the deeper requirement of “believing by faith”, the faith that Jesus spoke about when He said to His disciple Thomas,
²⁹ . . . Thomas, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. (John 20:29)

This dear friends is your and my lot. “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” You and I will most likely not see Jesus face to face while in this life. So, we are required to have our face to face encounter with Him through the eyes of “faith”.

Let me take a step further and put this in perspective. Just as with this Samaritan man, you and I are commanded to go and be witnesses for the Lord Jesus. And we are to accept the witness of others.

Preaching and witnessing the gospel is absolutely essential to instill “faith”. The words in Romans chapter 10 tell us that truth so clearly. Listen to these words,
¹⁴How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!”¹⁷So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. (Romans 10:14-17)

We are commanded by these words to witness and to preach. But the reality is, our preaching and our witness can only go so far. As messengers we can't save souls, only a Savior can do that.

Jesus was a prophet, yes! And He was also a "good teacher", yes! But beyond all of that, He was, and He is the "Savior". And we, you and I must take Him to be ours!

One last thought! Jesus is not only "the Savior of the world", He is "the only Savior of the world".

Salvation is found in no other. As much as we might want it to be otherwise, there simply is no possibility of that. The words given in Acts chapter 4 tell us that,
¹² . . . there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.
(Acts 4:12)

In some of the popular secular thinking, it is declared that there are many paths that lead to eternal life, other religions but essentially the same God. But that simply is not so!

Oh dear friends, please understand that these words of Acts 4:12 are an absolute, immutable truth, no variation and no substitute. Here again speaking of the Lord Jesus, these words tell us that,
¹² . . . there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.
(Acts 4:12)

Again, yes, Jesus was a prophet and He was a good teacher. But more than anything else, He was as that Samaritan man declared. He was and is the "Savior of the World". And you and I are sinners and we need a Savior. We need to be able to say, "We have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."

Pray with me