

Many Samaritans Believe

John 4: 39-42

DIG: Given the social barriers between Jews and Samaritans, what do these verses teach you about Jesus?

REFLECT: What was significant about the Lord choosing a Samaritan woman as the first person to whom He revealed Himself? What do you learn about being a witness from the woman?

As the residents of Sychar came out of the town they made their way toward Him, Jesus was deeply moved (John 4:30). It was a foreshadowing of how the people outside Isra'el would later come to Him.

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did" (John 4:39). What a contrast between her and the reception Yeshua got from the religious leaders in Jerusalem. Luke wrote: **But the Pharisees and the Torah-teachers muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them: (Luke 15:2). They were outraged because He was willing to talk with prostitutes and sinners such as this woman. They mocked Him openly, saying: Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Matthew 11:19). They were offended, for example, when Jesus went to the house of Zacchaeus. All the people began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner" (Luke 19:7).**

The Pharisees, Sadducees and Torah-teachers were arrogant, believing when the Messiah came, He would vindicate them. The Samaritans, however, had the opposite view. They knew what the Meshiach had promised. Although the five books of Moses were the only part of the TaNaKh they believed, the messianic promises were still there. As our Savior had declared to the Pharisees: **If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me (John 5:46).** In Deuteronomy 18:18a, for example, ADONAI promised a great Prophet - a national spokesman like Moshe, saying: **I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put My words in His mouth. The Torah also included familiar promises about the Seed of the Woman who would crush the Serpent's head (Genesis 3:15); and the Seed of Abraham, in whom all nations would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3). That's how the Samaritan woman knew the Messiah would be coming.**³⁷¹

The rabbis taught that all Israel will have a share in the world to come (Masekhet Avot 1:1). But the Samaritans were not so sure of themselves. They had a definite sense that they were sinners. When they thought about the coming Messiah, they probably anticipated it with a degree of fear. But when one of their own announced that He had come and accepted her despite of her life of sin, the people of Sychar came-a-running.

So when the Samaritans came to Him, they urged Him to stay with them, and He stayed two days. And because of His words many more became believers. The woman did the sowing and Jesus did the reaping. They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world" (John 4:40-42). This was a remarkable revival and it must have completely changed the entire town.

Within three years of Christ's encounter with the Samaritan woman, the messianic community was born. It grew very quickly and branched out from Jerusalem into all Judea and Samaria, and from there to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). That meant the Samaritan woman and the people of Sychar would soon be able to find fellowship and teaching where there was neither Hebrew nor Samaritan, Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female, but were all one in Yeshua ha-Meshiach (Galatians 3:28).