



AN ADVENT SERIES STUDY GUIDE

# GO AND TELL



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**From prophets and magi to shepherds and Samaritans, God revealed Jesus through unlikely witnesses. Their stories remind us of our own calling: when we've truly encountered Christ, we are transformed, and we can't keep this good news to ourselves. Just as the disciples said in the book of Acts, "We cannot help but speak about what we have seen and heard." Throughout this series, we will focus on living out the call to make Christ known by telling others about the good news of the gospel.**

# WEEK ONE

## ACTS 1:8

<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

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These are the final words of Jesus before He was taken up to heaven after His resurrection. Final words are something that have been highlighted for centuries.

“Do you have any last words?”

These final words of Jesus point to a future rooted firmly in history. To understand the full measure of what this is pointing forward to, we must understand where this comes from.

We will start in the middle. Just where one would think we should start right? You will be my witnesses...witnesses of what? The answer to that starts centuries before anyone who heard the statement in person was alive.

In Genesis 3, God made this promise speaking to the enemy: *“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head and you will strike his heel.”* This is the first promise of a rescuer (Jesus). This gives hope that someone is coming to free us from the sin that Adam and Eve had brought upon us. This is not the last time that we hear this promise in Scripture.

God called Abram to Himself, as He did so, He said, *“I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”* God is pointing to one who will come later through the line of Abram, from his

family, who will bless all the people of earth. Who could God be referencing? Blessing all the people of the earth is a tall task. He was pointing to Jesus.

As God called Moses to lead His people out of slavery in Egypt He made it clear through Moses that this wasn't the ultimate salvation. There is someone else coming. In Deuteronomy 18:15-19

*<sup>15</sup> "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. <sup>16</sup> For this is what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the Lord our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die."*

*<sup>17</sup> The Lord said to me: "What they say is good. <sup>18</sup> I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. <sup>19</sup> I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name."*

One is coming.

In the book of Numbers, Moses writes again of one who is coming after Him:

*"I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel...A ruler will come out of Jacob...". Numbers 24:17,19*

All of these passages, and many more, are pointing towards the Messiah. He is the Savior of God's people, and the One who is to restore Israel in the eyes of God. The people of Israel had waited a couple thousand years for the Messiah. In addition to waiting for centuries, they had also spent the 400 years before Jesus' arrival not hearing from any of God's prophets either. 400 years of nothing.

Those standing around Jesus on the day He ascended were witnesses to Jesus being the fulfillment of all this messianic prophecy. It was obvious to them that He was the long awaited

Messiah. Most of them had seen every miracle He had performed. They had seen Him raise Lazarus from the dead. They had watched Him die on a cross.

They had hid in a room afraid to show themselves publicly because they were certain they would meet the same fate as the one who they thought was the Messiah. They hid there until Jesus showed himself alive among the believers.

From that point on, they weren't hiding. They became bold when the Holy Spirit showed up. They were not afraid to die, because they had seen that the Messiah had defeated death.

They were witness to so much, where would they even start.

Thankfully Jesus gave them insight into that as well. Start in Jerusalem, then go to all Judea and Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth...

Jesus came to the Jews first, *"I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."* Matthew 15:24. On the first instance of sending out his disciples He even said, *"Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel."* There were lost among them, who didn't see Him for who He really was. Start with your brother and sister, your mom and dad, your next door neighbor.

Once that's complete, there is more work to do. Go to those who you haven't had much to do with over the years. Maybe even those in places you've been told to stay away from. The story of the Messiah coming, the Savior of the world having come, must be taken to every place. Even places we don't want to go.

Lastly, Jesus encourages them to go to the ends of the earth. At the time this was said, the world felt much smaller. Most people never traveled more than 20 miles from where they were born except to go to the Temple for worship. By no accident, during Jesus' time, the Roman Empire was near its peak of power and control. It consisted of a vast area centered on the Mediterranean Sea.

There was information about other parts of the world besides this but it was limited and often just rumors. For most of the people in Jesus' time, even the concept of the world being inside this map was bigger than they could conceive.



Jesus was asking them to again expand what they thought was possible.

Really that's what this passage asks of us as well. Go and tell what you know to be true of Jesus based on your experience. It's not a suggestion, it's a command. It's not just for those who watched Jesus ascend that day, but for all of us. We can try to make excuses but the reality is, this is what we have been called to do.

# QUESTIONS

What parts of your own transformation story with Jesus do you feel the most confident sharing? Is there someone you can share your story with this week?

How is Jesus asking you to expand your view of what is possible in regards to how you share the gospel?

# WEEK TWO

## MATTHEW 28:18-20

<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

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This is one of the most famous passages of Scripture, hands down. Most people who claim to be followers of Jesus could quote some version of the Great Commission. That makes sense, this is a really important piece of Scripture which basically provides the marching orders for all believers, for all time. But what is said immediately before verse 18 starts?

*"...but some doubted."*

They knew Jesus had been killed. It was over. He was dead. It couldn't be possible that He was the Messiah, and they had all just wasted three years of their lives. For what? They couldn't even go back home and pick up their lives because they were certain the people who killed Jesus wanted to kill them as well.

But the women had found Jesus' tomb empty. Peter and John had seen it empty. The women said they had seen Jesus alive, and He had told them to go on to Galilee and wait for Him there.

They saw Jesus together on the mountain, alive...*but some doubted.*

It would seem that doubt has been around a while. It's not a new phenomenon. It's no surprise some of us doubt our calling or our role, we come by it honestly through our spiritual ancestors.

It's okay to doubt, but we can't get stuck there. Doubt isn't a permanent place. It's something we work through. One way or another, we eventually have to move out of doubt into one certainty or another.

Eventually, the disciples moved on too. They moved on to the task that had been assigned to them by Jesus on this day. What is that you may ask?

### **Make disciples.**

Jesus was passing the torch. He had done the work He had been given by the Father. Now, He was assigning what was next. Go make disciples.

Do for others what I have done for you.

Jesus had been preparing them for this moment for years by showing them what it looked like to help people mature in their walk with the Lord. He had given them opportunities to learn, to grow, to take risks, to fail, to learn from their mistakes, and to try again.

We have a record of some of what Jesus talked about with His disciples in the Bible. It's a guide for us to be able to do the same thing Jesus is asking His disciples to do. Make disciples.

That's great, but frankly, how do you do that? What does that entail? I'm kind of busy, and I'm not sure if there will be enough time.

Thankfully, Jesus' command is to make disciples as you are living your life. As you are going, make disciples. Bring people into your life, and walk with others in the direction you are already going. Be intentional.

If we were asked to add something else to our plates, most of us would answer that there isn't room. It is possible that we have things on our plates that aren't from God. They are taking up time and space in our lives, and they are adding no value to the mission God has given us. We may need to get rid of those things

to make room for things that matter more. That is challenging for a lot of us.

Maybe we can just be more intentional within some things we are already doing. Everyone eats something at sometime, why not invite someone to eat with you? While you are eating, have an intentional conversation with them about Jesus. Ask where they are at with Him and what they are doing to grow in relationship with Him.

Pro Tip: If you are going to ask this question to someone else, you may want to know what your answers are because the person you ask may need your answers as an example of what they may say.

Jesus tells us disciples should get baptized. Adult believer baptism is an outward reflection of an inward reality. When we surrender our life to Jesus, our old life dies and is buried under the water, and we are raised to new life in Christ.

The only way forward in Christ is through surrender. Without total surrender, we will battle our old lives for direction at every step.

With total surrender, we get our future direction from the Holy Spirit, who Jesus sent to be with us when He left. The guidance will be needed.

Jesus told the disciples to teach others to obey everything He commanded them. That is a tall task. They spent nearly every waking moment with Jesus for three years. He taught them a lot. How did the disciples know what to share with those they were walking with, and how do we?

We have to rely on the Holy Spirit. Which is a great place to be in life.

The main thing Jesus taught His disciples was how to treat people. How to love the unlovable, those who most people don't see, respect, or honor. The majority of the times the Sanhedrin was offended by Jesus, it was because of how He treated people

they deemed unworthy. How did Jesus treat the woman caught in adultery? How did Jesus treat those suffering from leprosy? How did Jesus treat the poor?

Jesus comes on the scene and turns society upside down, and it threatened the lifestyle of the Sanhedrin.

# QUESTIONS

Do you know what it means to make disciples? Explain what this could look like for you to put into practice.

Making disciples can be as simple as sharing the gospel throughout your day. What everyday activities could become disciple-making opportunities?

Who are you already “walking with” that you can be more intentional about sharing Christ with?

# WEEK THREE

## MATTHEW 3:1-17

<sup>1</sup> In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea <sup>2</sup> and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” <sup>3</sup> This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,  
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.’”

<sup>4</sup> John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. <sup>6</sup> Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? <sup>8</sup> Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. <sup>9</sup> And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. <sup>10</sup> The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup> “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. <sup>14</sup> But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”

<sup>15</sup> Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented.

<sup>16</sup> As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. <sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

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One of the ways Jesus’ mom, Mary, knew something special was happening with her and her child was through her cousin, Elizabeth. Elizabeth was past childbearing age, but she was pregnant at the same time as Mary. She had never had a child so this pregnancy was a huge deal.

Elizabeth’s husband, Zechariah, was a priest in the temple. God met him in the temple during his service one night and told him that his wife was going to have a child. Zechariah didn’t believe the angel, Gabriel, who had met him. Mostly because this had to sound crazy. No kids, now they are old. What is the point of all of this? It’s a display of God’s power and a preparation for the coming Messiah. Zechariah got a sneak peak as we hear in his prophecy after the birth of John.

<sup>68</sup> *“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,  
because he has come to his people and redeemed them.*

<sup>69</sup> *He has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
in the house of his servant David*

<sup>70</sup> *(as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),*

<sup>71</sup> *salvation from our enemies  
and from the hand of all who hate us—*

<sup>72</sup> *to show mercy to our ancestors  
and to remember his holy covenant,*

<sup>73</sup> *the oath he swore to our father Abraham:*

<sup>74</sup> *to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,*

and to enable us to serve him without fear  
<sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.  
<sup>76</sup> And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for  
him,  
<sup>77</sup> to give his people the knowledge of salvation  
through the forgiveness of their sins,  
<sup>78</sup> because of the tender mercy of our God,  
by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven  
<sup>79</sup> to shine on those living in darkness  
and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the path of peace.”  
<sup>80</sup> And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he  
lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.

Zechariah mentioned the prophecies of long ago. Both those that Jesus fulfilled and those that his son John fulfilled can be pointed to here. For now, let's look at what John fulfilled.

Isaiah 40:3 says, “A voice of one calling: “In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert highway for our God.”

And Malachi 3:1, “‘I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,’ says the Lord Almighty.”

Zechariah was the first to understand who his son was in the story of the Messiah. He called it out and then John lived it out.

One of the main things John focused on was providing a baptism of repentance. People were coming from Jerusalem out to the Jordan River to hear John and be baptized after confessing their sins.

It seems that John knew his role in the world for his entire life. When he shows up on the scene, he is immediately pointing towards Jesus. He's pointing to Jesus, who is coming after him and will do way more than he ever could.

John also took seriously the warning he was bringing to the Pharisees and the Sadducees (the teachers of the Law). He warned that the one who was coming after him was going to clean house.

He was kind of in the position of not knowing what he was looking for, but he was confident that he would know it when he saw it. Then one day:

John saw Jesus coming toward him and said,

<sup>29</sup> ***“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”*** <sup>30</sup> *This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’* <sup>31</sup> *I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.”*

John called it as he saw it. Now, he had been saying a lot of things that the people around him may have considered crazy. At the very least, the people wouldn't have known what he was talking about.

So, maybe people heard this and just chalked it up to another crazy thing John was saying. It's easy for us to understand what John means because we have the context of Jesus being the Messiah. The people around John didn't have that.

Not only did John understand who Jesus was immediately, he also understood what his role was quite clearly. John knew he wasn't the main event. That attitude almost feels counter-cultural. We may think we aren't interested in being the main event, but the reality of our actions shows a different story.

Our interactions on social media are primarily self-focused. Our comments on someone else's post usually point to ourselves, and we struggle not to insert our experience into other people's stories. John had the amazing ability to take himself totally out of the story and lift Jesus up to His proper place.

John famously said, *“That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less.”* He also started

sending his own followers to follow Jesus. That is something we would struggle with.

What can we learn from John the Baptist? We still have the opportunity to point people to Jesus, and to help people understand who Jesus is to them.

John was clear that he couldn't keep this knowledge to himself. He was one of the first to know who Jesus was, and he knew his role was to tell everyone who would listen. Do we have the same attitude? We know Jesus is our Savior, and He has transformed our lives. Do we want the same thing for everyone around us, or do we just keep that to ourselves without considering anyone else?

## QUESTIONS

What can we learn for John the Baptist's humility?

What do you regularly do in your life to help people understand who Jesus is? How do you point people to Jesus as Savior, and in what ways do you model Jesus as Lord?

What desires and hopes do you have that do not magnify Jesus? Are you willing to let Jesus reshape those desires?

# WEEK FOUR

## MATTHEW 2:1-12

<sup>1</sup> After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup> and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

<sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup> When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup> “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

<sup>6</sup> ““But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for out of you will come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel.””

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

<sup>9</sup> After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. <sup>11</sup> On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

One of the stars of the movie *Shrek* was a talking donkey named Donkey. That's such an outlandish thing, who could ever believe a talking donkey? Thankfully, we have a reasonable document like the Bible to speak some sense into society, because there would never be anything like a talking donkey in the Bible, right? **Right?!**

Well...that's not actually true.

In the book of Numbers there is a guy named Balaam. Balaam, a prophet of God, had a donkey that talked to him. Wild story, but that's not actually what we are talking about here. Balaam was the kind of prophet who just spoke what God told him to speak. He was in the midst of being wooed by a Moabite named Balak when this little nugget of prophecy was dropped.

*"I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel."*

*Numbers 24:17a*

The Magi of the East had come across this prophecy somehow. How? Well, most believe they were from Persia, although we don't actually know. When the Israelites were exiled out of Jerusalem into Babylon, one of the first things that was taken was the information. The Babylonians were seekers of wisdom. They took the smartest people and all the information, including the scrolls from the Temple.

One of the grandest places in Babylon was the great library they created to hold all the information they had gathered. Citizens had access and could go there to learn. Learning had a high value in their society.

These wisemen, or magi, had read the scrolls from the Israelites, and they were paying attention when an anomaly, something out of the norm, showed up in the night sky west of them.

A typical person would be like, "Wow that's cool," and go on about their lives, but the magi were not typical men.

They started a journey towards the star, traveling weeks, or even months, to get to the place the star was leading them.

There is a ton we can learn from the magi. Their story is one of unabashed worship, perseverance, investment, and faith.

# QUESTIONS

The magi were paying attention and noticed something different in the sky. What practices help you stay alert to how God is moving in your life?

To what lengths would you go to worship the one true King?

What obstacles hinder our worship - busyness, culture, fear, comfort, etc.?

# CHRISTMAS EVE

## LUKE 2:1-20

<sup>1</sup> In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup> (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup> And everyone went to their own town to register.

<sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup> He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup> and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

<sup>8</sup> And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people."

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Christmas. It's all about Jesus, right? And it always has been? Well, not exactly.

In the 4th century, the Emperor Constantine converted the entire Roman Empire to Christianity. So it would make sense to start celebrating Jesus in some way. There was already a winter solstice party going on in later December anyway, why not just add a Jesus celebration onto that?

Pope Julius decided to commit to a specific day so he deemed December 25 as the day the celebration of Jesus would happen. This celebration was still within the winter solstice party, but now it was designated to a specific day.

By selecting a time that was already a popular celebration, the leadership of the Roman Empire was hoping to ensure that the celebration of Christmas would become popular. By the middle ages, the Christian celebration of Christmas had overtaken the original pagan celebration altogether.

In the United States, the practice of Christmas didn't really take hold until the 1800's. Oliver Cromwell was the founder of the Puritan movement that worked to push decadence out of their community. In this time, Christmas had evolved into a raucous, drunken, multi-day festival. The Puritans, hoping to push this lifestyle out of society, effectively cancelled Christmas in England.

The Puritans were a large part of the group that initially came to the US, and when they hit the ground running in the "New World," they didn't bring Christmas with them. They made it illegal to celebrate Christmas in America, and it actually took until 1870 for Christmas to become a national holiday in the U.S.

It took a number of years for all the states to adopt Christmas. Most places around the country were regularly practicing Christmas by the mid 19th century as a purely Christian holiday.

Over time, the focus of Christmas has drifted away from celebrating the birth of Jesus to celebrating the buying of presents. The focus has turned from the Savior of the world to the saving of the sales year.

What is the Church's response to modern day Christmas? How do we approach it? Our hope is to keep the main thing at the center, so we focus on the story of Jesus' birth from Scripture.

The story of the birth of Jesus has two of the most powerful announcements of all time. First, the angels show up to the shepherds in the fields. Can you imagine how that had to feel for

the shepherds? The forgotten people of society are being given a front row seat into the throne room of heaven.

Now, it's one thing to experience that, but their response is even more spectacular. They went into town and found Jesus. From there, they went into the town to share what had happened. They talked to the people who wouldn't normally want to be around them. They shared who Jesus was, what they had experienced, and the fact that a prophecy had been fulfilled that day in their presence.

## QUESTIONS

Do you look at celebrating Christmas as a chance to share the Gospel? Is it a time to share about who Jesus is, why He came to earth, and why He chose to come as a baby and submit to human parents for a season?

What do you want the future of your Christmas celebration to be? It's easy to get caught up in what everyone else is doing and to buy into the commercials we are overwhelmed with in this season. What do you want your family to focus on during the holiday season?

What are three ways that you and your family can center your Christmas celebration on Jesus?

# WEEK FIVE

## JOHN 4:4-42

<sup>4</sup> Now he had to go through Samaria. <sup>5</sup> So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

<sup>7</sup> When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" <sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

<sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

<sup>10</sup> 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."

<sup>11</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

<sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

<sup>16</sup> He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

<sup>17</sup> "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband.<sup>18</sup> The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

<sup>19</sup> “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet.<sup>20</sup> Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

<sup>21</sup> “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.<sup>22</sup> You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.<sup>23</sup> Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.<sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

<sup>25</sup> The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

<sup>26</sup> Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

<sup>27</sup> Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

<sup>28</sup> Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people,<sup>29</sup> “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?”<sup>30</sup> They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.”

<sup>32</sup> But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”

<sup>33</sup> Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”

<sup>34</sup> “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.<sup>35</sup> Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months

until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. <sup>36</sup> Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. <sup>37</sup> Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. <sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."

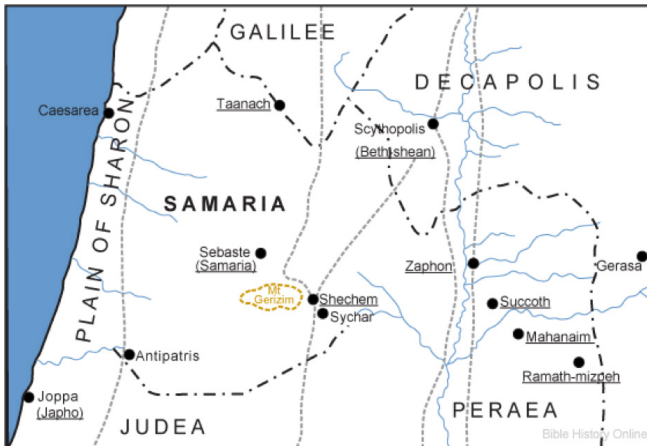
<sup>39</sup> Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." <sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. <sup>41</sup> And because of his words many more became believers.

<sup>42</sup> 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."

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What is wrong with Samaria?

In Jesus' time Samaria was such a hated area that good Israelites would go the long way just to avoid walking through it.



If you look at the outline of the regions on the above map, you can see that this avoidance makes the trip from Galilee to Judea significantly longer. Why would anyone do that? Well, the Samaritans were hated because of something that happened almost a thousand years before this chapter in John. In the time

of Solomon, all of the tribes of Israel were still together spread out throughout the whole of Israel. After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam was made king.

Now, Solomon had placed pretty heavy taxes on the whole of Israel during his reign because of the building of the Temple. With the Temple opened and Solomon gone, the hope of the people was that they could get some relief.

The elders who had served with Solomon tried to convince Rehoboam to honor the people's request for relief, but he didn't choose that. Instead, he chose to make the burden heavier.

From that time on, the northern tribes of Israel seceded from Israel. When that happened, they walked away from a lot of the Laws of God. One of the major issues the rest of Israel had with them was the fact that they intermarried with the conquerors while the rest of Israel was exiled to Babylon.

When they were allowed to resettle the land, the northern tribes were ready to welcome them back and stand together against the Persians, but the Israelites wanted nothing to do with that.

In response to that, the 10 tribes living in Samaria actively worked against the returning exiles as they tried to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and the new Temple.

Closer to Jesus' time the Samaritans aligned themselves against the Judeans in the Maccabean revolt. Then there was a back and forth of desecrating each others temples for worship.

The hate was thick in both directions. This is why all of passages that include Jesus and a Samaritan are so powerful. We get this passage and we get the story of the good Samaritan.

Jesus was breaking news in the Jewish world by making it clear He had not just come for the Jews, but the hope He offered was for all people. Even (or especially) for the people you hate the most.

The Samaritans weren't just out of favor, they were truly hated

and thought of as less than human. Jesus was all about investing in people no one else wanted anything to do with. Just before this passage, Jesus spoke with Nicodemus who could not have been more opposite to the woman at the well.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a member of the Council known as the Sanhedrin, and an important and powerful man.

The sharing of this story in the place it shows up is on purpose to show the breadth of the love, grace, and mercy of Jesus. The power of this story is the fact that the Samaritans were waiting for the Messiah, just like those in Jerusalem.

Just like Nicodemus, the Samaritans need a Savior and are waiting for the Messiah to show up and transform everything.

Jesus' focus was on eternity from the beginning of His conversation with this woman. He didn't let her current state, living in sin, impact His approach to her. He was not impacted by the fact that Jewish men shouldn't be talking with women alone in public. Especially not a Samaritan woman, who had been divorced five times.

Everything in the rules of Jesus' life would have led Him to stay as far away from this woman as possible, but He didn't care about that. He wanted to show a new way. The way of love.

## QUESTIONS

Who are the "Samaritans" in your world - the people you tend to judge, look down on, or avoid? How might Jesus be asking you to walk *toward* those people rather than away?

After talking with Jesus, this woman went back and shared her faith with many people leading many in her city to be saved. What is the potential *positive* impact of choosing to share the gospel with one person?