



# Woman at the Well

## Lesson Overview

### 1. Critical Thinking

How does xenophobia impact your life?

### 2. Watch a Video

Watch John 4:3-45 at [bit.ly/GCEDGospelOfJohn](http://bit.ly/GCEDGospelOfJohn) from **25min 35sec to 31min 24sec** (4min 49sec).

### 3. Discuss

Compare the story of Nicodemus with the woman at the well; how is the woman's journey to recognize the Lord like our own journey, etc. p. 2.

## New Church Concept

### Jacob's Well

Because 'Jacob's spring' meant the Word, 'water' truth, and 'Samaria' the spiritual Church, as is the case many times in the Word, therefore the Lord talked to the woman from Samaria and taught that the doctrine of truth is derived from Himself, and that when it is derived from Himself, or what amounts to the same, from His Word, it is 'a spring of water welling up into eternal life'; also that the truth itself is 'living water'. *Arcana Coelestia* 2702.5

## FaithBuilder 3 | Lesson 10 | Gospel of John

### Xenophobia

Xenophobia is: “an unreasonable fear or hatred of foreigners or strangers or that which is foreign or strange.” Xenophobia differs from racism because it can involve people of the same race, such as an “in-group” and an “out-group.”

1. Why do some groups of people belittle or discriminate against others?
2. How does fear of what is “other” impact you—for example, your ability to freely say what you think when you know others disagree?
3. In what ways do people who are not like us challenge our thinking?
4. Today's story of the Samaritan woman at the well brings to light tensions between Samaritans and Jews. Read the box below to discover how the groups became different over time leading to tensions between them.

### Galilee | Samaria | Judea

In New Testament times Israel was divided into three regions: Galilee in the north, Samaria in the middle and Judea in the south. Samaria is about forty miles north of Jerusalem. It was an important place in the history of the Jewish people. Abram stopped there on his way to Canaan. The Lord promised to give the land to his descendants there. Later Jacob bought land and built an altar there and afterwards gave it to his sons. Joseph's bones were brought from Egypt to be buried there. Many years later Jeroboam divided the kingdom of Israel in two. He set up the kingdom of Israel in the north and the kingdom of Judah in the south. Jeroboam also started the custom of idol worship, and worshipping on Mt. Gerizim.—two things that were forbidden since idol worship idols worship was forbidden and all worship was to take place in Jerusalem.

In 722 BC Assyria conquered Israel and took the people living there captive. Idolatrous nations then settled in Samaria and it became a place of mixed marriages and idolatrous worship. Separated from other Jews, Samaritans maintained slightly different religious traditions. They had only the first five books of the Old Testament, and as the texts were copied, small differences came in. Jews who remained in the south (Judea) worshipped in Jerusalem would have nothing to do with Samaritans for the next 700 years.

### Watch a Video

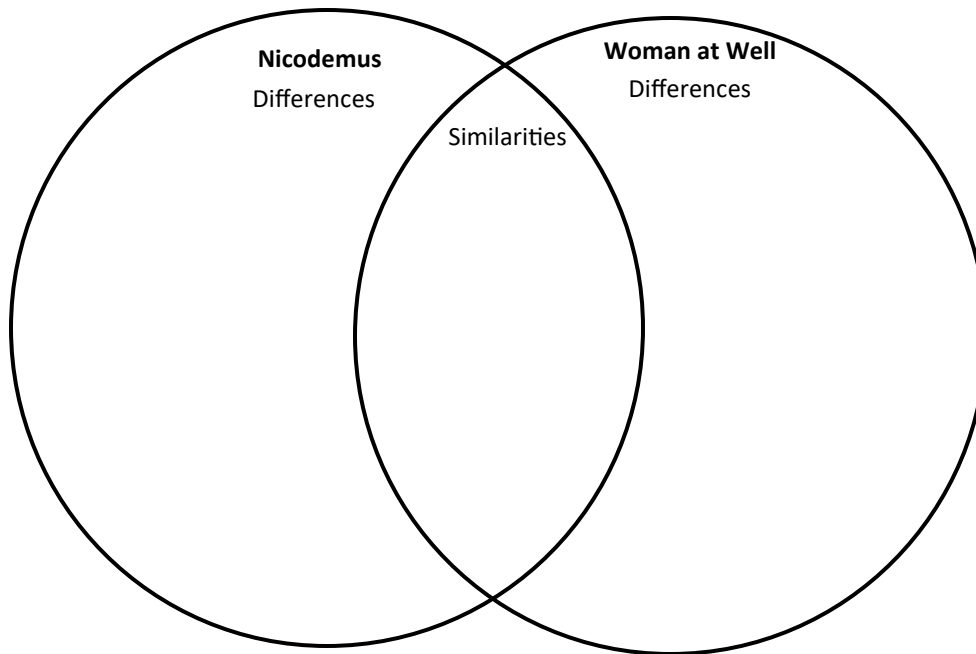
After Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Passover he traveled north through Samaria. Interestingly, this is the only place that Word says Jesus “felt weary.” He stopped at Jacob's well and asked a Samaritan woman for a drink of water.

Watch John 4:3-45 from *The Life of Jesus . Official Full HD Movie . English*, at [bit.ly/GCEDGospelOfJohn](http://bit.ly/GCEDGospelOfJohn). (Enter link in the web browser bar at the top of your screen.) **Start video at 25min 35sec. Watch until 31min 24sec; 4min 49sec.**

**Discuss**

Choose questions to discuss the story.

1. In what ways did Jesus go against the cultural xenophobia of His time?
2. Nicodemus, a Jewish Pharisee who knew other Pharisees would not approve of visiting Jesus, came to Jesus at night to learn more from him. (See John 3:1-21.) Compare the woman at the well (John 4:5-26) with Nicodemus. In what ways are the woman and Nicodemus similar? In what ways are they different? Use the Venn Diagram to help you.



3. Did the woman at the well understand the deeper level of what Jesus was saying to begin with? Eventually? (See John 4:14)
4. How is the Samaritan woman's journey of understanding what the Lord says in the Word like our own journey for genuine spirituality?
5. The Samaritan woman recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah. What happens when we recognize Jesus as the Messiah?
6. In acknowledging that He was the promised Messiah, Jesus said "I AM speaking to you." Can you think of another story in which the Lord called Himself, "I AM." What was Jesus saying by using "I AM" in relation to Himself?
7. Jesus said that true worship would not be in Jerusalem or on Mt Gerizim, but *in spirit and in truth* (John 4:24). What does that mean?
8. What does worshiping *in spirit and in truth* say about the attitude we should have when we worship the Lord?
9. What are people talking about when they discuss "faith?"
10. Can you have faith in things you cannot prove? Why or why not?
11. Is it possible to prove that a faith is true or false? Why or why not?
12. The woman at the well called other Samaritans to see the Lord. What name did the other Samaritans give Jesus? (See John 4:42) Why is this important?

Faith today is taken to mean no more than the thought that a thing is so because it is something the church teaches, and because it is not evident to the intellect. For we are told, "Believe and do not doubt." If we reply, "I do not understand," we are told that that is why it should be believed. Faith today is therefore a faith in the unknown and may be termed a blind faith. Moreover, because it is one person's assertion received by another, it is an inherited faith. We will see in what follows that that is not a spiritual faith.

Real faith is nothing else than an acknowledgment that a thing is so because it is true. For someone who possesses a real faith thinks and says, "This is true. Therefore I believe it." For faith is a faith in the truth, and truth is the object of faith. By the same token, if the same person does not understand a thing to be true, he says, "I do not know whether it is true. Therefore I do not yet believe it. How am I to believe what I do not comprehend? Perhaps it is not true."

It is, however, a common saying that no one can comprehend spiritual or theological matters because they transcend human understanding. Yet spiritual truths are as comprehensible as natural ones. And if they are not clearly understood, still, when they are heard, it falls within its scope of the intellect to perceive whether they are true or not.