

# DO I ACCEPT HIS TESTIMONY?

Two episodes — and thus two examples — of hearing and responding to surprising words of Jesus: by a Pharisee named Nicodemus and by an unnamed woman from Samaria.

First Nicodemus:

**John 3:1–2** Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. **2** He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." [NRSV]

Nicodemus had recognized, by the Spirit, the divinity of Jesus, Who, he stated, "has come from God."

Then the woman:

**John 4:7–9** A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." **8** (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) **9** The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) [ESV]

At first, the woman had no clue about Jesus. In response to her inquiry, Jesus offered a truth of the New Covenant, an unexpected truth — and counterintuitive — now, as it was then:

**John 4:10** Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." [NRSV]

Jesus offered Nicodemus, as well, an unexpected and a shocking truth:

**John 3:3** Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." [NRSV]

Nicodemus right away expressed honestly his inability to conceive of the physical possibility of such an event:

**John 3:4** Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" [NASB]

In a similar manner, the Samaritan woman expressed her puzzlement about the mechanics:

**John 4:11** The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? [KJV]

Jesus did not explain His means to either one; rather He repeated His message to each.

To the Samaritan:

**John 4:13–14** Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, **14** but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." [NKJV]

and to Nicodemus:

**John 3:5–7** Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. **6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'" [NKJV]

Nicodemus' reply and Jesus' immediate disappointment and rebuke followed:

**John 3:9–11** Nicodemus said to Him, "How can these things be?" **10** Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things? **11** Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony." [NASB]

However, the woman did not wonder, "How can these things be?" She immediately believed Him and accepted His testimony and His truth:

**John 4:15** The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." [NRSV]

Hence, Jesus revealed to her more truths about her life and about Himself. Then,

**John 4:25–26** The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." **26** Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he." [ESV]

Nicodemus remained, not accepting His testimony; rather trusting in his own judgment, trusting in himself and in his own unbelief.

The woman of Samaria did not trust in her unbelief or in herself; rather she believed, not because she comprehended intellectually or physically how Jesus was going to produce His "water"; but because she believed in Him: she accepted His Testimony and the Son of God fully revealed Himself to her: "I ..... am he."

I may then ask myself: do I prefer to trust in myself and in my judgment or do I accept His testimony and His counterintuitive teachings so that He will reveal Himself to me?

**John 20:29** Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me." [NLT]