

Jesus Christ, Savior of the World

John 4:42

“... *this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.*”

Jesus Christ is presented as the Savior of the world both in our present text and in the preceding chapter. We there read in John 3:16, “For God so loved *the world* that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

These third and fourth chapters of John’s Gospel highlight two people who were convinced that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world: Nicodemus (3:1-21) and a Samaritan woman (4:1-42). The conversion of the Samaritan woman is cited in the passage regarding her. But the conversion of Nicodemus is indicated subsequently, in his defense of Jesus Christ (7:50f) and in his kindness to His Savior’s body (19:39f).

These two people are vastly different from each other. But Jesus saved them in the same way. Let us therefore consider these two truths regarding “the Christ, the Savior of the world”: 1. the Savior of the world saves all the sorts of people in the world; 2. the Savior of the world saves them all in the same way.

I. *The Savior of the world saves all the sorts of people in the world.*

1. Christ saves people regardless of their *gender*. Here He is the Savior of both a “man” (3:1) and a “woman” (4:7).

Some religions elevate men over women, and others elevate women over men. But the Savior of the world treats both alike. And in Him “there is neither male nor female” (Galatians 3:28).

2. Christ saves people regardless of their *name*.

- This “man” was “named Nicodemus” (3:1), meaning *Conqueror*.
- This “woman” is not named, and had sullied her name through the sin by which she was victimized (see below).

Your good name will not commend you to God – even if it is a Christian or Biblical name. Your bad name will not bar you from God – whether it was unwisely given to you by your parents or defamed by your own misconduct. Your anonymity among men does not render you anonymous to God. The Savior of the world saves all these sorts.

3. Christ saves people regardless of their *ethnicity*. Here He is the Savior of both a *Jew* (3:1) and a *Samaritan*

(4:7).

- Jews were distinguished from Gentiles.
- Samaritans were distinguished from both by virtue of being of mixed Jewish and Gentile blood from the time Samaria’s fall to Assyria (see 2 Kings 7:24).
- Jews and Gentiles and Samaritans shunned each other (4:9; Acts 10:28), as ethnic groups of every kind yet do today.

But the Savior of the world saves sinners from all ethnic groups.

- He sent His ministers to be “witnesses to Me ... in all *Judea* [i.e., to *Jews*] and *Samaria* [i.e., to *Samaritans*], and to *the end of the earth* [i.e., to *Gentiles*]” (Acts 1:8).
- His everlasting gospel has gone forth “to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6).
- The saved in heaven are “a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues” singing to Him, “You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Revelation 7:9 & 5:9).

4. Christ saves people regardless of their *deeds*.

- Nicodemus was “of the Pharisees”, who boasted of their *good* deeds (as in Luke 18:11f).
- This woman was an adulteress (4:16-18), one characterized by *bad* deeds.

Good deeds performed by men and women do not commend them to God, for salvation is “not by works of righteousness which we have done” (Titus 3:5) – “lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:9). Bad deeds performed by men and women do not bar them from God – else this Samaritan woman would not have been saved.

Both the good and the bad must acknowledge themselves as sinners alike before God. Then let them both remember that the most self-righteous man who ever lived declared, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*, of whom I am *chief*” (1 Timothy 1:15). This Savior of the world saves sinners regardless of their deeds.

5. Christ saves people regardless of their *religion*. Jews and Samaritans worshipped on two different mountains (4:20) and in two contrary ways.

- Nicodemus was of the *Jewish* religion (3:1), that of “Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and

from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen” (Romans 9:4f).

- This woman was of the *Samaritan* religion, which had apostatized from Israel in “the way of Jeroboam” (1 Kings 15:34; 16:2, 19; 22:52), which was characterized by ungodly idols and counterfeit shrines, altars, priests, festivals, and sacrifices (1 Kings 12:26-33).

The religion of the Jews was most *avored* by God; but it did not commend one to God – else Nicodemus would not have needed salvation from Christ. The religion of the Samaritans was most *abominable* to God; but it did bar one from God – else this Samaritan woman could not have found salvation in Christ.

Christ saves people from all the religions of men – including professing Atheism and Agnosticism – for He is the Savior of the world.

6. Christ saves people regardless of their *social status*.

- Nicodemus was “a ruler of the Jews” (3:1) and “the teacher of Israel” (3:10), therefore ranked at the top of his favored people.
- This sexually immoral woman was ranked at the bottom of her despised people.

Both needed salvation from God, and both found it in Christ, the Savior of the world. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile nor Samaritan, neither circumcised nor uncircumcised, neither barbarian nor silver-tongued, neither Scythian nor cultured, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, for all these in Christ are one in Christ (Galatians 3:28) and acknowledge that Christ is all and in all (Colossians 3:11).

7. Christ saves people regardless of their *time of meeting Him*.

- Nicodemus met Jesus at “night” (3:2), after the sun had set.
- This woman met Jesus “about the sixth hour” (4:6), when the sun was at its zenith.

Sinner, the time of day when you seek salvation in the Savior of the world is not important. What is important is that you do so before it is too late – “while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. ... Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts’” (Hebrews 3:13, 7). “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Do not forget that many who planned to come to Christ in the midnight hour died in the eleventh.

II. *The Savior of the world saves them all in the same way.*

1. Both these people came to Jesus because Jesus came to them.

- “Jesus went up to Jerusalem” (2:13) where Nicodemus lived, and while He was there “Nicodemus came to Jesus” (3:2).
- This Samaritan woman was able to come to the well where Jesus was waiting (4:5-7) because “He needed to go through Samaria” (4:4).

Christ must come to people before they can come to Him. And He comes to people so they may come to Him.

- God’s Word declares “that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15), and that “many sinners came and sat down with Him” (Matthew 9:10), “and they followed Him” (Mark 2:15).
- Jesus went to Jericho and said “the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10); and the man He sought in Jericho came to Him for salvation (vv.1-10).
- Jesus said “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance” (Luke 5:32); and repentant sinners come to Him, while the self-righteous refuse to repent and go further from Him.

2. Both these people recognized Jesus for whom and what He is.

- Nicodemus said to Him, “Rabbi [i.e., Master, as in Matthew 23:8], we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him” (3:2).
- “The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet’” (4:19). This is the same as saying, “I know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can speak these words that You do unless God is with him.”

Our text says Jesus Christ is the Savior of *the world*. It does not say He is the Savior of *everyone*. For Jesus Christ is not the Savior of any who reject Him through refusing to believe His gospel and trust in Him alone for salvation. He indicated this when He commissioned His preachers to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15f). Is the Savior of the world your Savior?