

The Parable of the Good Samaritan Luke 10:25 – 37

This parable is arguably the most well known of Jesus' parables. On the surface people (both Christian and non-Christian) use it as moralistic story to encourage people to be helpful, kind, and compassionate to each other. However, Jesus' goal and meaning goes much deeper. Let's dig in and find out more.

Let's read **Luke 10:25 – 28**.

Who is asking Jesus the question and what is his intent? What is he hoping Jesus will say?

What is the importance of the lawyer's question?

What is the basic problem with the lawyer's viewpoint toward the Torah (Law)?

How is this errant viewpoint injected into Christians and Christian theology today?

How does Jesus "answer" the lawyer's question and how can we learn the same strategy in dealing with unbelievers?

Upon what does the Lawyer base his answer to Jesus' question? See **Deuteronomy 6:4 – 9** and **Leviticus 19:18**.

Jesus knew he how he would answer the question and then compliments him, or at least acknowledges that his answer was correct and then says “do this and you shall live.” What is Jesus doing or trying to achieve in His response?

To understand this parable, it is important to understand who the Samaritans were and what their relationship was to the Jews.

Origin of the Samaritans (*from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986*)

Construction on the city of Samaria was begun by Omri about 880 B.C. and completed by his son Ahab (about 874 B.C. - 853 B.C.). Samaria became the new capital of Israel, and successive kings added to it and rebuilt sections to make it a well-fortified capital. But the city fell to the Assyrians in 722 B.C. - 721 B.C. Most of the leading citizens of the Northern Kingdom were deported to places in Syria, Assyria, and Babylonia.

*Sargon [i.e. Sargon II, King of Assyria who reigned 721 – 705 B.C.] replaced the deported Israelites with foreign colonists (**2 Kings 17:24**). These newcomers intermarried among the Israelites who remained in Samaria. Later their numbers were increased when Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal (the biblical Osnapper; **Ezra 4:10**) sent more Assyrian colonists to the district of Samaria. These people took the name Samaritans from the territory and attempted to settle the land. However, "they did not fear the Lord, and the Lord sent lions among them, which killed some of them" (**2 Kings 17:25**). In despair they sent to Assyria for "one of the priests" who would "teach them the rituals of the God of the land" (**2 Kings 17:27**). Thereafter the Samaritans worshiped the God of Israel. But they also continued their idolatry, worshiping the pagan gods imported from foreign lands (**2 Kings 17:29**).*

So the Samaritans were a "mixed race" contaminated by foreign blood and false worship. The Jewish historian Josephus indicates that the Samaritans were also opportunists. When the Jews enjoyed prosperity, the Samaritans were quick to acknowledge their blood relationship. But when the Jews suffered hard times, the Samaritans disowned any such kinship, declaring that they were descendants of Assyrian immigrants.

*When a group of Jews, led by Zerubbabel, returned from the Babylonian Captivity, the Samaritans offered to help Zerubbabel rebuild the Temple. When their offer was rejected, they tried to prevent the Jews from finishing their project (**Ezra 4:1-10**). When Nehemiah attempted to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, he was opposed by Arabic and Samaritan groups (**Nehemiah 2:10-6:14**). The breach between the Samaritans and the Jews widened even further when Ezra, in his zeal for racial purity, pressured all Israelite men who married during the Captivity to divorce their pagan wives (**Ezra 10:18-44**).*

The final break between the two groups occurred when the Samaritans built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, claiming Shechem rather than Zion (Jerusalem) as the true Beth-el (house of God), the site traditionally chosen and blessed by the Lord. The Samaritans trace their beginnings to the time of Eli, who established the sanctuary for worship of God in Shiloh. They also believe their religion is distinctive because they base their beliefs and practices on the Torah, or the Law-the first five books of the Old Testament. They recognize no other Hebrew Scriptures as authoritative.

Therefore, at the time of Jesus, the Samaritans were hated by the majority of Jews. Under Roman Rule there was apparently a peaceful coexistence between the Jews and Samaritans but nevertheless there was intense hatred between them. This could be categorized as a racist hatred.

Let's now read the rest of the parable, **Luke 10:29 – 37**.

Verse 29 is a key passage in understanding the interaction and goal that Jesus has in this parable. What does it mean to “justify himself”?

In what ways do we do the same thing?

What is the significance to the lawyer that a priest and Levite saw the robbed and beaten Jew laying to the side of the road and passed by on the other side? See **Leviticus 15:1 – 15**.

What is the significance of the level of care provided by the Samaritan?

How is this an example to us?

Who does the Samaritan represent in this parable? _____

What indication do we have that Jesus' point got through to the lawyer?

Let's look back at verse 27. Considering how Adam and Eve were at creation before the fall, what is the implication of this verse in terms of how we are made and how we are saved?
