

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. I want to invite you to take God’s Word and turn with me to John chapter 4.
2. We are looking this morning at verses 43-54.
3. It’s here where we see the “second sign that Jesus performed, when He had come out of Judea into Galilee” (v.54). The first sign was at the wedding “in Cana of Galilee” (2:11).
4. Read John 4:43-54.
5. God commands people to believe in His Son—the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. In John 6:28-29 Jesus was asked, “What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?”<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.’”
7. The Gospel of John was written for that purpose: “so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name” (Jn.20:31).
8. The verb translated “believe” (pisteuo) appears in this Gospel approximately 100 times and the majority of its occurrences refer to saving faith.
9. Through believing in Him people become children of God (1:12; 12:36), obtain eternal life (3:15–16, 36; 6:40, 47), avoid judgment

(3:18; 5:24), partake in the resurrection of life (11:25; cf. 5:29), possess the indwelling Holy Spirit (7:38–39), are delivered from spiritual darkness (12:46), and find empowerment for spiritual service (14:12).<sup>1</sup>

10. As we come to John 4:43-54, we find a different kind of belief.
11. It’s not like that of verses 3-42 which was the result of the word Jesus spoke.
12. It was based on signs.
13. If you remember in John chapter 2, after Jesus turned the water to wine and chased out the money changers out of the temple, it says in verses 23-25 that “many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for he Himself knew what was in man.”
14. It’s at this point in John’s Gospel where we encounter those whose belief was based on signs.
15. This is what set His disciples apart from others who wanted to follow Him.
16. He told Nathanael in John 1:47-49 (NASB) <sup>47</sup> Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said\* of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" <sup>48</sup> Nathanael said\* to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called

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<sup>1</sup>John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 162.

you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." <sup>49</sup> Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel."

17. This is belief based on Christ’s words not His miracles.
18. But again the story changes in the text we are considering this morning.
19. We move from the conversion of the woman of Sychar and many of the Samaritans to Jesus’ encounter in Galilee and with a royal official.
20. The first encounter occurs in verses 43-45 with *Jesus’ reception in Galilee*.

## **I. Jesus’ Reception in Galilee (vv.43-45)**

### **A. Jesus Resumes His Trip to Galilee (v.43)**

John 4:3-4 says, “He left Judea and went away again into Galilee. And He had to pass through Samaria.”

Before entering Galilee “He had to pass through Samaria” because He was to have a divine encounter with a woman from Sychar as well as with many other Samaritans that God gave Him.

Verses 4-42 serve as a parenthesis and now Jesus resumes in verse 43 his trip to Galilee.

John says in verse 43, “After two days.” This refers to the “two days” in Sychar (v.40).

Now He proceeds to “Galilee.” Galilee was “the northern most province of Israel, Samaria being more central” (Lawson). Galilee was where He grew up in the town of Nazareth.

### **B. Jesus’ Testimony of Galilee (v.44)**

1. John quotes in verse 44 a proverbial statement that Jesus made in Matthew 13:57; Mark 6:4; and Luke 4:24.

He says, “For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country” (v.44).

2. This statement, along with the other three references where it occurs, refers to Nazareth, Jesus’ hometown. He was born in Bethlehem but grew up in Nazareth (Lk.4:16). That’s why in John 1:46 (NASB) Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."
3. This proverbial statement **a prophet has no honor in his own country** (cf. Luke 4:24) contrasts Jesus’ acceptance by the Samaritans with His general rejection by the Jewish people (1:11).

It also explains His motive for returning to His home region of Galilee (as the conjunction *gar* [for] indicates).

At first glance it seems somewhat perplexing that **Jesus** went to Galilee because, as He **Himself testified**, He would receive no honor there. The point, however, is that Jesus was not taken by surprise when many in His home region rejected Him. He went there knowing that He would be given a cold reception, especially at Nazareth, where He had been raised (Luke 4:16ff.). But some in Galilee would believe and, therefore, honor Him.<sup>2</sup>

A.W. Pink says, “When we hear Him testifying, “A prophet hath no honor in his own country,” we can almost catch the sob in His voice. For two days He had experienced the joys of harvest. His spirit had been refreshed. The “meat” which had been ministered to His soul con-

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<sup>2</sup>John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 165.

sisted not only of the consciousness that He had done the will of the One who had sent Him, but also in the faith and gratitude of the woman who had believed on Him. This had been followed by the Samaritans beseeching Him to tarry with them, and the consequent believing of many of them because of His word. But such joyful harvesting was only for a very brief season. Two days only did He abide in Samaria. Now, He turns once more to Galilee, and He goes with sad foreboding. “For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honor in his own country.” His use of the word “prophet” here is very suggestive. It was the word that the woman had used when her perceptive faculties began to be illumined (verse 19). There, in Samaria, He had been honored. The Samaritans believed His bare word, for no miracles were performed before them. But now in Galilee He meets with a faith of a very inferior order.<sup>3</sup>

#### C. Jesus’ Welcome in Galilee (v.45)

Verse 45 says, “So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast.”

##### 1. John says “the Galileans received Him”

The word that he uses for “received” (dechomai) means they “welcomed Him.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Arthur W. Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John, Three volumes complete and unabridged in One* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1975). 230.

<sup>4</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Robertson’s Word Pictures*.

2. But their welcome of Jesus was only based on what they saw at the Jerusalem feast

John says they welcomed Him “having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast” (v.45).

The word “so” at the beginning of verse 45 gives us some insight as to their welcome of Jesus.

This is the Greek conjunction *oun* and refers back to Jesus’ statement in the preceding verse, and confirms that the Galileans did not honor Him for who He really was. On the contrary, having **seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast** (cf. 2:23), they welcomed Him merely as a miracle worker. They were curiosity seekers, eagerly hoping to see Jesus perform some more sensational feats.<sup>5</sup>

So when John says they welcomed Him, John is writing with a sense of irony because the Galileans’ reception of Jesus was not genuine. It was superficial and shallow.

A.W. Pink says, “How this brings out the fickleness and the shallowness of human nature. For upwards of twenty years the man Christ Jesus had lived in Galilee. Little or nothing is told us about those years which preceded His public work. But we know that He did all things well. His

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<sup>5</sup>John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 165.

manner of life, His ways, His deportment, His every act, must have stood out in vivid contrast from all around Him. Had His fellow-townsmen possessed any spiritual discernment at all they must have seen at once that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Holy One of God. But they were blind to His glory. The perfect life He had lived quietly among them was not appreciated. As the Son of God incarnate He was unknown and unrecognized. But now things were changed. The humble Carpenter had left them for a season. He had commenced His public ministry. He had been to Jerusalem. There He had sternly corrected the Temple abuses. There He had performed such miracles that many believed on his name” ( John 2:23).

Many of the Galileans who were in attendance at the Feast had also witnessed His wonderful works, and they were duly impressed. On their return home they would doubtless tell others of what they had witnessed. And now that the Lord Jesus returns to Galilee, He is at once “re-ceived.” Now that His fame had spread abroad the people flocked around Him.

Such is human nature. Let a man who lived in comparative obscurity leave his native place, become famous in some state or country, and then return to his home town, and it is astonishing how many will claim friendship, if not kinship, with him. Human nature is very fickle and very superficial, and the moral of all this is to warn us not to place confidence in any man, but to value all the more



highly (because of the contrast) the faithfulness of Him who changes not.<sup>6</sup>

The same is true in the next account that John gives in verses 46-54. John tells us in verse 54 that the healing in Cana was “a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.” The first sign was also in Cana where He turned water to wine (2:11).

## II. Jesus’ Healing in Cana (vv.46-54)

Jesus now leaves this area of Galilee and returns to “Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine.”

Verse 46 tells us first...

### A. He is Greeted By A Royal Official (vv.46-49)

The word “royal” (*basilikos*) indicates that he was “a palace official” (Friberg) or more specifically an “official of a king” (LN).

Most likely he was an *officer in the service of the king*, i.e. Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, who was popularly known as “king.” Matt. 14:9. The word (*βασιλικός*) is used by Josephus (e.g. ‘B. J.’ 1:13 (11). 1) for any person employed at court. Some have conjectured that this officer was Chuza, “Herod’s

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<sup>6</sup> Arthur W. Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John, Three volumes complete and unabridged in One* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1975). 230-31.

steward” (Luke 8:3), or Manaen, his foster-brother (Acts 13:1).<sup>7</sup>

The fact that Jesus encountered a royal official in **Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine** (cf. 2:1–11) only added to the irony of the situation. This was the very place where Jesus had performed His first miracle. Yet, instead of exhibiting true belief in Him because of His undeniable, supernatural power, the people simply displayed a desire to see more miracles. As this incident demonstrates, the reception of the Galileans, like that of most Judeans (2:23–25), was superficial, curious, thrill-seeking, non-saving, sign-based interest.<sup>8</sup>

Jesus wanted men to believe in him because of his self-evidencing character and words ([John 10:38](#); [14:11](#); [15:22–24](#); [20:29](#)). But the people required to have their faith buttressed by miracles. There is a vast difference between believing in a man, and believing his credentials. Miracles were our Lord's credentials; his ministry among men cannot be thought of without them; and when the Baptist's faith in Christ himself wavered, Jesus referred him to them ([Matt 11:4-5](#)).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>*The Gospel According to St. John Introduction and Notes on the Authorized Version*, ed. Brooke Foss Westcott and Arthur Westcott (London: J. Murray, 1908). 78.

<sup>8</sup>John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 166.

<sup>9</sup>J. W. McGarvey and Philip Y Pendleton, *The Fourfold Gospel: or A Harmony of the Four Gospels*, (Cincinnati, OH: The Standard Publishing Co., 1914), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "(Time: One Year.)".

1. The official came “imploring Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death” (v.47).

At the beginning of verse 47 it says “he went to Him.” The verb “went” (aperchomai) indicates that there was some reluctance on the part of the official to come to Jesus.

J.W. McGarvey says, “The verb contains a delicate suggestion that the father was reluctant to leave the son, even to seek aid.”<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless he came to Jesus “imploring Him.” This word (erotao, imperf.act.ind.) means “to ask a question” (GING) but here it means “to beg” (Friberg). The imperfect tense is used here and indicates that he repeatedly begged Jesus to cure his son’s disease.

Swallowing his pride, this respected member of Herod’s court begged for help from a carpenter’s son (cf. Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3).<sup>11</sup>

His need was so urgent that he came begging since his son was home dying some sixteen miles away.

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<sup>10</sup> J. W. McGarvey and Philip Y Pendleton, *The Fourfold Gospel: or A Harmony of the Four Gospels*, (Cincinnati, OH: The Standard Publishing Co., 1914), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: “(Time: One Year.)”.

<sup>11</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 166.

A.W. Pink says, “This nobleman evidently had a measure of faith in the ability of the great Physician, otherwise he had not sought Him at all. But the measure of his faith was small. He had probably learned of the miracles which the Lord had performed at Jerusalem, and hearing that He was now in Galilee — only a few miles distant — he goes to Him. The weakness of his faith is indicated in the request that the Lord should “come down” with him to Capernaum. He believed that Christ could heal close by, but not far away; at short range, but not at a distance. How many there were who thus limited Him. Jairus comes to Christ and says, “My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her , that she may be healed; and she shall live” ( Mark 5:23).

The woman with the issue of blood said, “If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole” ( Mark 5:28). So, too, Martha exclaimed, “Lord, if thou hadst been here , my brother had not died” ( John 11:21). But let us not censure them, rather let us condemn our own unbelief.”<sup>12</sup>

2. Jesus’ first responds in verse 48 by saying, “Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you *simply* will not believe.”

This was a rebuke to both the royal official and the Galileans who were witnessing this.

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<sup>12</sup> Arthur W. Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John, Three volumes complete and unabridged in One* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1975). 233.

His faith was no different than the Galileans. They “disregarded His message and mission of salvation and focused instead on the sensational miracles He performed on their behalf.”<sup>13</sup>

As we have already noted, verses 43-54 serves as a contrast to His ministry among the Samaritans. They didn’t need a “sign.” Verse 39 says “many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman.” Verse 41 also says, “Many more believed because of His word.” But this is not true here. The Galileans were only interested in signs. The same is true of this royal official. He didn’t come to Jesus for salvation but came only for his dying son.

- a) After Jesus “cleansed the Temple” in John 2:13-17, “The Jews then said to Him, ‘What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?’”
- b) They wanted “signs” to validate who Jesus was but as John 12:37 indicates “though He had performed so many signs before them, *yet* they were not believing in Him.”
- c) They were not interested in giving Jesus the glory due His name. They only wanted a miracle-worker or a king to replace their Roman oppression.

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<sup>13</sup>John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 167.

3. The royal official ignores Jesus’ rebuke (v.49)

He single-mindedly poured out his heart saying, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”

Here he uses the word “child” (paidion) which is a more endearing, affectionate term than “son” (huios).

B. Jesus Heals the Officials Son (vv.50-54)

1. He doesn’t come down to Capernaum as requested but heals his son with a word

He says in verse 50, “Go; your son lives.”

2. The official “believed the word that Jesus spoke” abandoning his desire for a sign
3. He now “started off” back to Capernaum and was met by some of his servants who told him that his son “was living” (v.51). He “inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. They said to him, ‘Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him’” (v.52).
4. This confirmed his belief in Jesus. Verse 53 says that “the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, ‘Your son lives’; and he himself believed and his whole household.”

John MacArthur says, “The **seventh hour** would have been early afternoon, sometime between 1 and 3 P.M. in the broadest reckoning. By the time he left Cana and arrived in the vicinity of Capernaum, it was after midnight (**yesterday**). It is possible that Jesus’ word to him relieved his anxiety about his

son, allowing him to remain in Cana, perhaps to hear and see more from the Lord and understand His message. That would have been critical, because it led him to fully believe in Jesus when his servants reported the complete healing of his son, confirming the Lord’s claims (v. 53).”<sup>14</sup>

A.W. Pink says, “The nobleman had heard the word of God from the lips of the Son of God, and real faith, saving faith, was now begotten within him. He raises no objections, asks no questions, makes no demurs; but with implicit confidence in which he had heard, he believed and went his way. No ‘signs’ were needed, no feelings required to impart assurance. ‘He believed and went his way.’ This is how salvation comes to the sinner. It is simply a matter of taking God at His word, and setting to our seal that He is true. The very fact that it is God’s word guarantees its truthfulness.”<sup>15</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

1. What kind of faith do you have this morning?
2. Is it fickle like that of the Galileans?

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<sup>14</sup>John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 168.

<sup>15</sup> Arthur W. Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John, Three volumes complete and unabridged in One* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1975). 237.

3. Do you require a sign before you will believe that Jesus is who He claimed to be?
4. Take Jesus at His Word and believe!
5. Romans 10:17 (NASB) So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.
6. On this Mother’s Day it would be the greatest gift to your children that you believe Jesus is who He claimed to be and take Him at His Word and become a fully surrendered follower.
7. Let’s pray.