

Exegetical Notes, John 4:43-54

“Unless You See...You Will Never Believe”

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Verses 43-45

After the two days he left for Galilee. ⁴⁴ (Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country.) ⁴⁵ When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, for they also had been there.

- Jesus remained with the Samaritans at Sychar for two days. See verse 40.
- Then Jesus went north to Galilee where Nazareth, Jesus' home town, was. He was returning to his "own country." While he was welcomed to Galilee by the people there, his welcome was only because of the miracles they had seen him do in Jerusalem at the time of Passover. They did not openly welcome him for who he was but because he was a miracle worker.

Verses 46-47

Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷ When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.

- Jesus went to the town of Cana where he had turned water into wine at the wedding feast. There "a certain royal official" came to Jesus. The term implies that this was a particular person, one who was known to everyone in the region, but his name is not given. This person was in the service of King Herod, but we do not know in exactly what capacity. He came from Capernaum, another town in Galilee on the northern edge of the Sea of Galilee a good distance from Cana.
- This important man begged Jesus to come home with him because his son was dying. He wanted Jesus to heal his son.

Verses 48-50

“Unless you people see signs and wonders,” Jesus told him, “you will never believe.”

⁴⁹ *The royal official said, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”*

⁵⁰ *“Go,” Jesus replied, “your son will live.” The man took Jesus at his word and departed.*

- Jesus recognized the general view of the people of the region. Unless they saw some great miraculous sign they would not believe in him. Here was the chance to perform for them and give them the sign that they needed. However, he also knew that seeing was not walking by faith. So, while he was handed the opportunity to give them the sign they needed, he did not do so.
- Instead, Jesus quietly urged the man to go home because his son would live. The man believed Jesus. He trusted Jesus to provide for his son. The man just turned and departed. He went home believing that Jesus had healed his son.

Verses 51-54

While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. ⁵² *When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, “Yesterday, at one in the afternoon, the fever left him.”*

⁵³ *Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” So he and his whole household believed.*

⁵⁴ *This was the second sign Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.*

- As the man was returning home a delegation of his servants met him with the news that his son was recovering and would be fine. When the man inquired of his servants, he learned that his son’s recovery had begun at the very moment when Jesus had said he would be healed.
- The result was that the man and his household believed in Jesus as Messiah, as Savior and Lord. But the miracle was not known throughout the region.

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