
a *Grace Notes* course

Life of Christ 100

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Lesson 109

The Samaritan Woman
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An Exposition of John 4:1-42

John 4:1, Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees heard that Jesus was making and baptizing a great many more disciples than John "

Christ finds out that the Pharisees are looking into things, and that they are aware that He is making and baptizing many more disciples than John.

The word PLEINOAS is "more" (disciples), but it describes a great many more. Not just a one vote majority, but a landslide. The Pharisees now would identify Christ as the threat here. They were quite worried about two things.

First, that nobody was paying attention to them.

Second, that as a result they were losing their grip of power over the people.

Christ knew it would be very much in their interest if he were eliminated. He knew that they hated Him from the Temple incident, and that though there were many coming to Him, their faith was still very weak.

John 4:2: "Although Jesus Himself was not baptizing but His disciples"

This is a parenthetical statement attached to verse 1. It explains that Christ was not the one doing the baptizing in this operation, but His disciples.

It clarifies the issue so that there is no confusion on the matter of baptism.

John 4:3, He left Judea and departed again into Galilee."

The word "left" is translated from APHIEMI, which means "to quit, cancel, forgive, or leave."

Christ left the region because of the real threat of the Pharisees. His destination is again Galilee, and He will have to travel through the ancient region of Samaria to do so.

Mark 1:14: "And after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God."

Mark 6:17: "For Herod himself had sent and had John arrested and bound in prison on

account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, because he had married her."

Luke 3:19-20: "But when Herod the tetrarch was reproved by him on account of Herodias, his brother's wife, and on account of all the wicked things which Herod had done, he added this also to them all, that he locked John up in prison."

From Josephus... Herod feared open rebellion from John's disciples.

The Lord moves in strange ways. Christ evaluates that the Pharisees are a threat to Him and the kingdom ministry, and decides that it is wise to move to Galilee and continue His ministry there. It is His aim to gain a following and bring in the kingdom through positive volition.

John clings tenaciously to his perceived but nonexistent niche in the kingdom ministry, and in the course of forth-telling manages to upset Herod Antipas.

Herod fears open rebellion from the followers of John, and is upset about John's calling into question his morals in marrying his sister in law. Herod has the Baptist arrested and placed in prison. John has been taken off the scene, and is no longer an impediment to Christ's kingdom ministry.

But fortunately Christ is out of the way and safe up in Galilee. Through intermediate means and wise behavior, Christ avoids disaster.

Note: the Pharisees had a tremendous amount of power in Judea, and only less so in Galilee. Things are becoming hazardous for Christ already.

Now Christ heads through Samaria, and there He will settle the issue of racial prejudice once and for all.

John 4:4, "And He had to pass through Samaria."

Christ had to pass through Samaria because of the threat from Herod. Herod's headquarters was to the northeast of where Jesus and His disciples had been. They could not go around Samaria, so they had to go through.

Samaria was not the usual route from Judea to Galilee. Because of racial prejudice, the more

devout Jews found other ways to go. The Samaritans had intermarried with the occupying Assyrian forces back in the eighth and seventh centuries, B.C. Of course, many of those Assyrians were believers in Jesus Christ, and true Jews, but no matter. The Samaritans themselves had a king-sized inferiority complex, due to the Jewish prejudice.

So it is providential that Christ go this route. There is a woman, really, an entire town that is on positive signals toward God. Christ had to go through Samaria because of Herod, and because of the woman and the town of Sychar.

This providence is a kind of Divine guidance to watch out for. It involves a change of your plans, and perhaps even suffering. But it takes you to people who want God.

John 4:5,6, "So He came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; and Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour."

Sychar is in central Samaria. It is in a hilly region, a region full of Jewish history. Jacob stopped near here, and set up camp for the first time in the promised land. It was here that his daughter was raped by the men of Shechem (about a mile from Sychar), and where his sons killed the Shechemites. When the Shechemites were dead, Jacob took their land for his own.

Later, he willed this parcel of land to Joseph. Gen. 33:18ff; 48:22. Joseph's portion of this land was an extra one, due to his spiritual maturity. There is a significance here. The people of this land were Joseph's people, long lost, now about to be redeemed. Christ here gives a region and a people an opportunity which has not been theirs for 2,400 years.

The country is hilly, and so naturally Christ would want a drink. It is late afternoon "the sixth hour", and summer. The hiking was exhausting work. Christ is sitting by the well, when along came the Samaritan woman.

John 4:7,8, "There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a

drink", for His disciples had gone into the city to buy food."

Now there was another well on the other side of Sychar that was much nearer the town. Why the woman came here is a part of Christ's insight.

There is no one at this well but Christ, and at a time when there would be much drawing of water.

In the summer, water would for the most part be drawn at sunrise and sunset, for water carrying is much hard work. Furthermore, this well is up on the side of a hill, making it that much more difficult. But Christ sees this woman coming his way, and rightly perceives that she is a social outcast. Women have a way of sticking together. This one is apart from the other ladies. Now what would be the reason for that?

Christ must ask her for a drink because He is at the point of exhaustion, and He has nothing to draw with. Here also is a reflection of Christ's true humanity: He really needed that drink.

John has His request in the imperative of entreaty, showing Christ's legitimate need for water. The imperative of entreaty is what a Greek used when he really needed something badly, and quickly.

Our Lord was in a state of dehydration. Christ's physical state paralleled the woman's spiritual state.

John 4:9, "The Samaritan woman therefore said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (for the Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)"

This woman exhibits also bitterness. One, social outcast; two, bitterness. You can see Christ tallying the score.

Here is a man weak from thirst who asks the woman to help Him, and puts a tone of urgency on the matter; and she responds his request with a remark that is bitter and sarcastic.

Her tone is like this: "Oh, so now, when you really need a drink you ask for one, but not when your prejudice is in the way?" She criticizes harshly, and has prejudice back toward the Jews. She assumes that Christ is a racist because He is a Jew.

The woman knows Christ is a Jew maybe from his robe, which probably had a Jewish fringe on it, but certainly from His Jewish accent. John's explanatory statement makes the Jewish prejudice clear. But we know this from many other sources.

There is a little bit of sexist suspicion here as well. She makes an issue out of her sex. The Jewish men did not exactly have a good record on sexism either.

This is the third clue to Christ about this woman's character: she is suspicious of men, and makes an issue out of her sex. Social outcast. Bitter. Sensitive about her sex. HmMMM.

John 4:10, "Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you "Give me a drink" you would have asked Him, and He would have given to you living water.""

Now comes the hook. I want you to notice first the innovation of our Lord. In this instance He skillfully turns the conversation to the gospel.

This part of the discourse has no small similarity to the conversation with Nicodemus.

In both, Christ sets out the bait with a statement that would be obvious to a believer, but an enigma to an unbeliever. Here He knows the spiritual status of the woman. With Nicodemus, He did not.

In both, the hearers of Christ come back with an earthly interpretation of His spiritual statement, thus identifying themselves as unbelievers. In both, Christ then goes on to explain the gospel.

Christ has identified this woman as a social outcast who is bitter and hypersensitive about her sex; now we see further that He knows she is an unbeliever. Christ's words form a complex conditional sentence. It is a contrary to fact condition. He sets up a condition that is not true.

"If you knew the gift of God (but you do not) and who it is who says to you "give me a drink" (but you do not), you would have asked Him (but you did not), and He would have given to you living water (but I did not).

It is based on a premise that is obviously not true. She is not a believer.

The gift of God must be His grace offer of salvation. It is the Greek word DOREAN, which

describes a gift of any kind. But this gift is further described as being from God. The descriptive genitive case of TOU THEOU makes it clear. Of course, Jesus is the Messiah, standing right before her eyes. Yet she does not know Him.

But what is the living water?

From this verse alone we see that it is some form of sustenance that it is a metaphor for real H₂O. But we will delay our analysis until verses thirteen and fourteen, where Christ gives a full description of this very special water.

John 4:11,12 "She says to Him, "Sir, you do not have the drawing apparatus and the well is deep; therefore where do you have the living water? You are not greater than our father Jacob, are you, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his sons and his cattle?"

The woman now speaks as one on the defensive. Being a social outcast, she is likely to be an expert at repartee. Her fellow townfolk probably hurl insults at her every day, and she is used to giving as good as she gets.

Now she is thinking: who is this guy? He makes noises like I should know him, and he alludes to some gift of God, and living water.

So she sticks with what is tangible. She looks around her. How could he have any water at all. She does not mention it, but this man has no drinking skin. Neither does he have the apparatus with which to draw the water. He cannot reach down into the well and get the water (it is reported to be about 75 feet deep). Her conclusion from the tangible is that he has no water on him, nor the ability to draw water here.

So then she goes to the intangible. The local legend is Jacob. Since it has been some 2400 years since Jacob, his life and person may very well have reached folkloric proportions in Sychar. She alludes to Jacob as if he is capable of miracles, because she has ruled out the tangible. The local legendary figure fits nicely here.

With her question, the woman implies that Christ is definitely not greater than Jacob. It is quite likely that she believes no more in Jacob than she

would in Santa Claus. But she assumes the truth of Jacob's legend for the sake of putting down Christ.

But she does go on to establish the historical validity of Jacob's person. He gave us the well... drank from it himself, so did his sons, and his cattle.

The cows she threw in. It stretches the imagination that Jacob watered his herd from a well that was 75 feet deep. If you have ever seen how much water a cow drinks, then you know that to water a herd from a well is pure fiction! Perhaps Jacob lowered the cattle into the well, let them drink, and then hauled them back up!

Our Lord may have had to bite His lip to keep from laughing at this point.

So in summary:

She goes over the possible, and finds nothing. She goes over the miraculous, and rejects Christ in favor of Jacob.

John 4:13,14 "Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water which I myself will give to him will certainly not thirst for eternity, but the water which I will give to him will become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life.""

Now we have the full description of the living water metaphor. Let's put together all the aspects of it.

You must know the gift of God and the Messiah to ask for it.

It is something you ask for.

It is called "living water". The participle *zo.n* reveals an eternally existing state.

If you drink from it you will never thirst again, not for all eternity.

It is a well of water that springs up unto eternal life.

The process of elimination.

Is the water the Word of God?

The Word could accurately be called the "living" word.

But, you do have a need to stay in the word throughout your life. This living water is more of a one shot deal.

Therefore, it is not the Word of God.

Is the water God the Holy Spirit?

Again, the Spirit could accurately be called "the living water".

But fellowship with the Spirit can be sporadic, and is an option to the believer. The portrayal of the living water leaves this in question. It is a once for all proposition, and the ministry of the Spirit is definitely not that.

Is the water the Gospel?

You must be positive to God consciousness to receive the Gospel concerning His Son.

You must be positive to the Son of God, who is the living gospel, the mediator between God and man.

You must ask for the gospel. That is, you must truly desire a relationship with God through His Son.

Christ is certainly the living water.

You must drink the living water in order to enjoy its benefits you must believe in the gospel.

If you drink from the gospel you will never need salvation again. It is the free gift of God and lasts for all eternity.

The result of belief in the gospel is eternal life, for time and eternity.

So yes, the water is the Gospel.

Some points of exegesis:

The adjective *PAS* plus the articular participle *pino.n* makes a universal statement. "Everyone who drinks"

This universal statement is applied to the water from Jacob's well.

The conclusion of the statement is *DIPSE.SEI PALIN* "will thirst again" The verb reveals the need of the human body for water replenishment. The declarative indicative mood makes this a dogmatic statement of reality the need for water is definite. The adverb of repetition is *PALIN* "again".

The conjunction DE is adversative, showing that verse fourteen is going contrast the statement in verse thirteen.

Another universal statement is made, this time with HOS AN PIE. This is a potential subjunctive verb, showing that a function of volition will take place here. That whatever God does depends on a free will decision of God.

HOS AN is translated "whoever" this opens the field to all, and the results are applied equally across the board.

The universal statement is applied to the living water, given by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ really did give us the living water, through His death on the cross.

Then the kicker, a statement that is so strong that it cannot be mistaken. OU ME DIPSE.SEI EIS TON AIO.NA "will absolutely not thirst for eternity." The idiom OU ME. is the most decisive way of negating something in the future.

EIS TO.N AIO.NA is an idiom for eternity. This phrase makes it clear that if you drink of the living water, you will never thirst again, in time or eternity. This is a clear statement of eternal security.

The living water has a function it becomes in the believer a well of water that springs up to eternal life. The metaphor is clear: you drink the water, and it springs up inside of you, resulting in eternal life.

The drinking is again belief in the gospel, which is the living water.

The new well of water is the human spirit, which springs up resulting in eternal life.

This is a nice double entendre here. The human spirit is the first component of the resurrection body, and an irrefutable appeal to God for a resurrection body in eternity.

But the human spirit is also a spiritual frame of reference for learning Bible Truth in time. So it too springs up to eternal life.

The springing up is the verb hallomenou, from hallomai. It is truly a word that belongs in the laboratory of Dr. Frankenstein. It describes the twitching, leaping, quick movements of a living being. It is used in a special way only to describe

movement that proves the existence of life. In Acts 3:8 it describes the leaping of the lame man who had been healed. There, it proved the new life in his legs. Same for the healing that took place in Acts 14. The human spirit is the very source of the spiritual life. John chose this word carefully!

John 4:15 "The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not thirst, nor come through here to draw."

Our woman is not all the way there yet. Her eyes are still firmly locked on terra firma.

She sees a way that she will not have to face the public again. If she never has to drink water again, then she will never have to come all the way out to Jacob's well to drink, and never have to walk through town to get here. Never have to walk under the disapproving glares of her townspeople. Never have to be ashamed of her own sinful activities again.

You must be careful with this woman's form of address to Jesus Christ. Kurie can be the equivalent of the English "Sir". She does not yet recognize Him as the Messiah.

So she goes from disrespect to respect. From disbelief to belief. From desiring Him to solve her earthly problems to the next stage.

And now she is ready for that next stage.

John 4:16 "He said to her, "Go call your husband and come back here."

This is the next hook. Now Christ does this from deductive reasoning, and from the gift of God the Holy Spirit, as we will see.

So far, Christ knows that this woman is a social outcast, that she loathes public appearances, that she is hypersensitive about her sex, bitter, suspicious of men. Plenty to get us to this point. Christ could very well work off a hunch at this point. But, He will also function under the spiritual gift of prophecy.

Christ brings out this woman's fatal distraction. The one thing that is between her and belief in Christ.

John 4:17,18 "The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband'; for you

have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly."

The woman's answer is firm and clear. She uses the negative particle OUK to tell Jesus of her marital status. The statement covers the truth however.

At the very least this is where Christ's spiritual gift of prophecy kicks in. He could deduce a lot from His own human genius, but not this. This divinely inspired information came to Christ from His spiritual gift of prophecy.

This woman is:

Immoral she is living with a man who is not her husband.

A failure at the marriage thing.

Disreputable, and the target of much public outcry.

She is not, however, a criminal she is not participating in adultery.

Adultery is a sexual relationship with someone other than your marriage partner, or a sexual relationship with someone else's marriage partner. Or both. Just because the woman is living with a man does not make her a criminal.

Not only would this woman have come under the Law of Israel for her adultery, but also the more stringent law of Christ's kingdom, Matt 5:27,28. But He does not get after her for it, so she is not in that state.

After Christ lays out the truth through the spiritual gift of prophecy (and definitely not through His Deity), He goes on to say to the woman that she has spoken truly. He uses the perfect tense of the verb to speak to emphasize the clinical truth of her statement, but also to make it clear that she understands that her statement was a white lie.

Give her credit for something: she stuck with the institution of marriage for five times before she gave up. That is much more than in our culture.

John 4:19,20 "The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship"

When the woman says that she perceives Christ is a prophet, it is a little stronger than it comes out in the English translation. She uses the word THEOREO, which means to be an eyewitness to a significant event, and no kidding this event is quite significant.

But she says something controversial here, actually anything controversial would do. The reason is that she tries to distract Christ from her sordid personal life.

The issue which she brings up is one of the great controversies of the day. When the Samaritans were cut off from the rest of the Jews they decided to make their own temple, and worship there.

But it is just a smokescreen. Look, a flock of turtles!

John 4:21-24 "Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father. You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

The first statement of our Lord brings attention back on the true issue for the woman. He does answer her question, but in doing so rivets the conversation back to what the woman truly needs.

He makes it very clear that the place of worship does not matter, and in fact will become a non-issue. By use of the word HORA Christ indicates the nearness of that very time.

But the absence of worship in either Samaria or Jerusalem is not a direct reference to the fifth cycle of discipline for Israel, but rather the coming of the church age, and its grace assets.

The Shekinah glory, the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ between the cherubs of the ark, was in the temple in Jerusalem. When the church age would come, the Shekinah as a center of worship would cease. Therefore, neither count.

The contrast between the Samaritans and the Jews serves to point out God's plan for the Jews and the exclusion of the Gentiles.

The statement, "salvation is from the Jews" communicates their historic ambassadorship. God used the nation of Israel as His ambassadors before all the nations of the world.

But note though salvation is from the Jews, it does not belong exclusively to the Jews. The Gentiles may believe and thence become true Jews.

True worshipers worship in Spirit and in truth. This refers to the ministry of God the Holy Spirit during the church age. It does not matter that the temple is here or there, but only one's positive volition to God.

The hour now is because the advent of Christ's ministry concentrated worship through Him as a visible witness to God. You could wherever because of the second advent.

The final statement makes it an absolute. If you desire to worship God, you must do so in Spirit and truth.

Christ speaks quite dogmatically here; He does so to establish His spiritual authority before this woman.

So also must we, whenever we witness to unbelievers. Notice that Christ satisfies the woman's question, and takes advantage of the question to establish His authority.

John 4:25 "The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us."

Perhaps the woman knows because of John the Baptist's ministry. She rejects Jesus' authority, and deflects it to the Messiah. This is her final effort to get away.

The issue is Christ, as the Messiah. The Son of God and King of kings.

Now finally the woman says that she places her trust in the Messiah, and it is put up or shut up time.

John 4:26 "Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

Jesus is the Messiah, and He answers her question.

Her response is interrupted by the arrival of the disciples from town.

John 4:27 "And at this moment His disciples came, and they marveled that He had been speaking with a woman; though no one said, 'What do You seek?' or, 'Why do You speak with her?'"

Second miracle of the day. The disciple did not blow it by opening their big mouths. They at least had enough respect for Christ to do so.

On the one hand, the disciples marveled (Thaumazon) that Christ spoke to this woman, because of her race, and because of her sex. They had the prejudice that Christ did not.

The particle MENTOI is adversative. It introduces a concessive clause and should be translated, "Though".

The first possible question of the disciples would have been "What do you seek?" This is the equivalent of "What do you want with her?" A rude question, but typical of the prejudicial, sexist Jews.

The second question, "Why do you speak with her", is more to the point. They witnessed, as they drew near, His conversation with her. But they did not hear the words, for John, among the disciples on that day, indicates the possibility of these questions based on their marvel.

Notice the disciples are tempted to ask the same question as the woman, but they do not. The woman had more bitterness to drive her.

John 4:28,29 "Therefore the woman left her water pot and went forth into the city and said to the men, 'Come, see the man who told me all the terrible things I did, He is not the Christ, is He?'"

She first leaves her water pot for Christ to drink; she has changed her mind about His prejudice and thirst; she now sees Christ as devoid of impure motive.

The record is incomplete as to when Christ got His drink. From what He says in a moment to His disciples, count on it being unimportant.

The woman went forth into the city. She has lost her public shame. This indicates that she has overcome her fatal distraction.

The woman said to the men. Now here is something interesting. Which men? All the men of Sychar, or just her men her five and a half husbands. The text just has it as generic men, plural. The definite article TOIS assumes that the readers would know to what men John referred.

It would seem natural for her to go to her men first, for they were the source of her fatal distraction before. All of her former husbands would think her weird, or nasty in some way. That she goes to them makes sense.

That she would just go to the men of the town does not make good sense. Hypersensitive about her public image, she would want to absolve herself before the women first. Also, this way does not fit because it would reveal a prejudicial act on her part, and perhaps spite toward the woman who had so maltreated her.

First, she uses the imperative of entreaty to urge the men to come and see Christ. It is the same imperative of entreaty which Christ used to indicate His need for water. She uses it here with DEUTE to reveal another, greater necessity. That for the gospel.

She makes her case for their need by telling them about Christ's revelation of her personal failures.

Now, this woman lives in a small town, and has been a spectacular moral failure. Her going to the victims of her failure, and saying these things would cause quite a ruckus.

Although about everyone in town would know of her personal failures, an outsider would not. Therefore, the supernatural aspect of it.

She uses the correlative pronoun HOSA to indicate the degree of her sin. "Hey, that was pretty bad" is the indication. The correlative indexes the degree of a thing, usually to show an extreme. That is definitely the case here.

By the use of the aorist tense of POIEO, the woman keeps her sin in the past. They are not the terrible things which she is doing. She does not consider that she is even living with husband number five and a half.

Her last statement seems strange at first. The negative adverb ME in a direct question expects a 'no' answer, and so under normal circumstances her question would be, "He is not the Christ, is He?" This would of course express doubt, and that would be uncharacteristic of someone who has just become a believer and is in the process of telling all of her former husbands about it.

Those of you with Greek Bibles will notice that it is not ME alone, but the compound adverb METI. This throws a little more light on the problem.

METI works to indicate the woman's manners. It proposes an element of doubt for her hearers, but not for her. So she is saying "come and see Him, He miraculously knew all sins that you know, perhaps He is the Messiah for you too."

It is a difficult idiom, but note that the woman addresses the men, and so she communicates what is not an issue for her, but for them. That issue is whether Jesus is the Messiah.

The woman is doubtful, not about the identity of the Messiah, but whether her five and a half husbands will accept that.

This is not a particularly effective way to witness. "I doubt whether you will accept Jesus as Messiah, but I want to tell you about Him anyway."

But even in her weakness, God the Holy Spirit picked up the slack. It is a fine thing to note. Your weakness is compensated by the Spirit's common grace ministry.

The strength of her words is in the evidence of her transformation. She is no longer afraid of publicity how could this come about?

I would suggest that this woman expressed the gospel in such doubtful terms because of the horrified look on the faces of her hearers.

John 4:30 "They went out from the city and were coming to Him."

The portrayal is interesting it confirms something we already know that Christ is up on the hillside, and the well is in a difficult location to reach by foot.

The aorist tense of the verb EXERCHOMAI makes it clear that they all left the city at the same time. This reveals that the action all occurred at

one point in time. They left the city at the same time, but...

The imperfect tense of the verb ERCHOMAI shows them arriving over a duration of time. They all got spread out due to the rigors of the climb. Now, we are not talking about Mt. Everest here, but at least a hill and enough distance where there is a stream of people coming to Christ, even though they all started together.

John 4:31-33 "Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But he said, "I have food to eat of which you do not know" At this the disciples said to one another, "Can someone have brought him food?"

The disciples are urging Christ to eat, because he must look pretty rough. The verb EROTAO means to "ask", or when the words are in the imperative, "urge". The note of urgency must come from the disciple's visual analysis of Christ's condition.

Again, we are reminded that Christ has a human body, and no matter how great his conditioning, it is susceptible to exhaustion. This has probably occurred a couple of months after His ordeal in the wilderness, and the extreme starvation of that experience may still have an effect on him now.

Regardless, food is not the way to treat a heat injury or dehydration. Food requires water for metabolization, and can hasten the demise of someone in the severe stages of dehydration. Not only is their advice spiritually incorrect, but it is medically incorrect as well.

Christ's reply is on the spiritual level alone. But it sounds like he may have his own stash. The statement of Christ in verse thirty two is intentionally unclear, so as to stimulate curiosity in his disciples.

So the disciples talk among themselves, mystified that Christ has food. But he still does not look well.

John 4:34-38 "But Jesus said, "It is food for me that I might do the will of him who sent me and that I might finish his work. Do you say, "Four months more and then comes harvest"? But I say to you, look, lift up your eyes and behold the fields that are already white for the harvest. The reaper receives pay

and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. That is how the saying comes true: 'One sows, and another reaps.' I sent you to reap a crop for which you have not toiled. Others toiled and you have come in for the harvest of their toil."

Christ puts his spiritual responsibilities ahead of logistics. This is the height of unselfishness.

He describes the realm of spiritual responsibility by using the term, 'the will of him who sent me'

The time frame for the execution of this responsibility is until he has finished God's work. This is another way to say, 'until I am dead'. Our lives model Christ's in this regard.

Christ employs two aorist subjunctive verbs, POIESO and TELEISO, to communicate the contingent nature of His execution of God's work.

It will depend on Him whether He accomplishes what God has prepared for Him, Eph 2:10, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good deeds which God has prepared beforehand."

This works much like unlimited atonement and salvation. God prepared the salvation, we must accept.

Christ then points out that it is a relatively long time to the harvest apparently four months to the grain harvest (that would, incidentally, place this incident in June).

And there below them, spread out in a panorama, comes the town of Sychar streaming to Jacob's well, and to once again seek the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The woman who was hardly noticed by the disciples has opened her mouth in a weak and human way; and that plus the common grace ministry of God the Holy Spirit is more than enough to impel the people.

As they come, Christ has more instructions for His disciples in the matter of ambassadorship.

The pay of the reaper is logistical grace. It is there to keep him alive so that he can gather the fruit of the harvest.

The harvest itself is the ambassadorial responsibility of every believer. This responsibility must come second to spiritual growth, but it is necessary nonetheless.

The harvest is for eternal life because those whom you harvest now have that life. They now wait along with us for the final harvest of the Great White Throne, where all of our names will be found in the book of life.

The purpose is so that the reaper and the sower may rejoice together.

Sowing the seed is tantamount to giving the gospel. Christ sowed the seed and reaped the harvest with the woman.

The woman has now sown seed among the people of her town, and they come to the harvest of their own accord.

Funny thing, but the reapers are the disciples, and the sower is the Samaritan woman. Christ is getting the disciples ready for a big shock: they are going to rejoice with one whom they would normally consider racially and sexually inferior.

The disciples have not toiled for this crop, but they will reap. The woman has toiled, and she will have the pleasure of watching the harvest.

John 4:39-42 "Many Samaritans of that town came to believe in him because of the woman's testimony: 'He told me everything I which did.' So when these Samaritans had come to him they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. Many more became believers because of his word. They told the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard him ourselves; and we know that this is in truth the Savior of the world.'"

A genuine revival welled up in Sychar on account of this woman who believed and was willing to give the gospel, no matter how weak the presentation.

Her testimony was simple: "EIPEN MOI PANTA HA EPOIESA" He told me everything which I did.

Again, this testimony is powerful, because everyone in this little town knew of this woman's affairs.

This woman may be someone that we know by name from other gospel accounts, but her identity is closely guarded by John, because her past life is really not an issue.

John makes this abundantly clear when he goes on to say that her testimony faded into oblivion when Christ began to speak. Therefore, this harvest divides into two: those harvested by the words of the woman, and those harvested by the words of Christ.

Who witnessed to whom is not an issue. But for John, this woman's privacy is. What does it matter how spectacularly you have failed in your life before God? What does it matter if you were the very pinnacle of average? None. You are a new creature in Christ.

It is with respect that the townspeople make their comment. They admit the validity of the woman's judgment when they concentrate on the words of Christ. Let us not forget that this woman's witness was particularly weak, while the words of Christ were no doubt quite dynamic. And this does not matter either, for the common grace ministry of the Spirit covered both.

Notice their salvation orientation: Christ is the savior of the world.

Christ is the savior not just of the Jews, but of the Samaritans, and the entire world.

Is it not significant that the first real harvest of Jesus Christ is of Gentiles? And now these Gentiles are true Jews.

Jesus' Galilean Ministry

Arrival in Galilee, John 4:43-45.

"And after the two days He went forth from there into Galilee. For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. But 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."

Christ is headed to Cana, a day or two's journey from Sychar. Galilee was His original destination.

Let's get this right: Christ went to Galilee, but He knew beforehand that a prophet has no honor in his own country.

He is not stupid or naive. He does have a sense of duty concerning the gospel, and willingly goes where He is quite sure of a negative response.

Christ's exact words were PROPHETES EN TE IDIA PATRIDI TIMEN OUK ECHEI - "A prophet has no honor in his own fatherland."

Christ uses PATRIDI for 'country'. It is a word that describes the land of one's forebears. Galilee was the land of Christ's fathers - it was where He grew up.

The word for honor is TIMEN, and here it describes something close to our idea of respect.

There are valid reason for this, which we will address fully when Christ goes before the synagogue in Nazareth. For now the simple: they watched Him grow up, and even though Christ was a perfect child it was difficult for them to perceive that He was the messiah all along. They are so arrogant, they think they would have noticed or something.

John concludes by noting that the Galileans actually did receive Christ. He uses the particle OUN in an adversative sense. This John also does in 9:18 of his gospel.

Christ was not wrong, here. Though the Galileans saw what Christ had done at the feast (many miracles), that is not the equivalent of following Him.

An interest in the spectacles of healing and miracles does not indicate a desire to accept Christ and His kingdom.

Miracles and healings are easy things to like. The kingdom requires sacrifice of self, and so is quite difficult to accept.

The reason for the Galilean acceptance is clear: the miracles at the Passover feast. There is therefore an exception to the rule. This incident serves to point out that you must never assume negative volition about any group - not Samaritans, and not even the people of your home town or nation.

Note also that Christ was not wrong in making His generalization. Christ did make that testimony, but He still went, trusting the Lord that people are truly free to make their own decisions about Him.

The Nature of the Galilean Ministry

Matthew 4:17: "From that time Jesus began to preach and say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"

Mark 1:14b-15: "preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Luke 4:14b-15: "and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. And He Himself taught in their synagogues, being praised by all."

This synoptic passage divides into three parts: the message, the time, and the method.

The message is one of repentance and belief in the gospel. Again, the concept of repentance. It means to change your mind, and does not refer to how you feel about a thing.

The time is the fullness of time - just the right time according to God's sense of order for Christ to appear on the scene and begin His kingdom ministry.

This is the true beginning of the kingdom ministry. Whereas before Christ baptized, or witnessed to the people of Samaria, now He offers His kingdom.

The method of Christ was to go to the synagogues in the region, and teach there. There He would have a gathering of at least religious people, if not a few who were faithfully waiting for the Him. Christ's ministry was naturally characterized by sound strategy.

An interesting thing at the end of Luke's statement: He was praised by all.

In Luke 4:14b and 15, the present participle DOXAZOMENOS shows simultaneous action with the main verb.

The main verb is the aorist verb EDIDASKEN, which summarizes the action of teaching in Galilee. It is in the past. So while Christ was teaching, all the people He taught praised Him.

This is more than just a fascination with miracles. God designed the miracles to validate Christ's teaching. All the people who saw Him in the synagogues responded positively to the message as well as the miracles.

Again, Christ's trust in free will is well justified. There is genuine positive volition in this region.

One more thing: at some time along in here, Christ must have released His disciples to return to their homes and jobs, for only a little while later He is going to place them on recall.

Christ Heals the Official's Child - John 4:46-54

John 4:46,47 "He came therefore again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain royal official, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him, and was requesting Him to come down and heal his son; for he was about to die."

This was apparently a part of Christ's course of travel from synagogue to synagogue. There was one in Cana, so he came there. It would be natural for Christ to come to Cana, because of His former miracle there. That miracle would be the perfect groundwork for a few days of ministry.

The royal official was a BASILIKOS. Since his son is in Capernaum, he must be from there. He is not from Cana, because he comes to Cana; presumably from Capernaum.

BASILIKOS was a somewhat generic term, which encompassed both members of the royal family, and those who were officials in the king's household. We can only speculate here. There is some significance here, even though the exact identity of this man remains hidden. Social status means nothing in the kingdom of God. You may be from the highest or lowest social class, but it does not matter to God. His grace offer extends to all.

This event is especially pertinent coming right after the narrative of the redemption of a complete social outcast, the Samaritan woman. So in just a few verses we go from the lowest class to one of the highest, and both are redeemed by the grace of God. If grace is extended to all, then there is no excuse for anyone. Race, social class, sex, etc.

This royal man is at the point of desperation - his son is sick, and really about to die.

The verb ESTHENEI describes the boy's illness. It describes the spectrum of bodily ailments, from weakness or minor illness to a fatal disease.

The phrase EMELLEN APOTHNESKEIN makes the grave nature of his condition quite lucid. It is literally, 'about to die'.

The boy is in Capernaum, the city of Nahum, while his royal father is in Cana with Christ.

The father has come to Cana because he had heard that Christ had come up from Judea. At the very least, this man knew of Christ. He may have even seen Christ at the feast in Jerusalem. But he knows Christ, and believes that He can heal his son.

The man goes to Christ. His son may be so ill that he cannot be moved. Such is likely.

He asks politely for Christ to come down to Capernaum (Cana was in the hills and Capernaum at the seaside). He certainly does have respect. It is unclear as yet whether this royal man believes in Christ.

John 4:48, "Jesus therefore said to him, "Unless you all see signs and wonders, you absolutely will not believe."

This is a statement about the general mental attitude in Galilee at this time. Although Christ addresses the man (HOUTOS), the statement is plural (IDETE), and thus impersonal.

SEMEIA is the word for signs. It is something miraculous done for a specific purpose. At this time to point the way to the Messiah.

TERATA is the word for wonders. But there is a terrifying side to this. At the least it is something so powerful that it would cause the witness to be stricken with awe. Terror is not out of the picture. Perhaps a good example is the baptism of Christ, where the heavens tore open, and the voice of God came out of the sky, and the Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove. Another example has yet to happen in our narrative - it is the transfiguration of Christ. An awesome display of power is a good way to describe this.

EAN ME is the Greek idiom for 'unless'. An equally good way to translate is "If you all do not see signs and wonders."

IDETE is the simple verb for seeing, in the aorist subjunctive. So, the people of Galilee must see signs and wonders in order for the event to come to pass.

This is the strongest possible negative in the Greek language. It is the watertight, absolute negative, OUME.

The verb is the aorist subjunctive PISTEUSETE. It reveals something about belief. The aorist shows that belief in Christ occurs in one moment of time.

The fulfillment is negative, the second half of a double negative. Turn this around, and it is "You all must absolutely see signs and wonders before you will believe."

It is not that the Galileans refuse to believe, but that they will not believe unless Christ proves it to them by the use of signs and wonders.

What would these people have done in the post-canon church age?

Notice that this is not a personal slam of this man. He is different from the class that Christ outlines because he is not there to believe in Christ, but to preserve the life of his son.

It is apparent that the man believes in the supernatural powers of Christ, and that he has followed somewhat the career of the Messiah.

John 4:49 "The royal man said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies."

The royal man addresses Christ respectfully, saying, KURIE. As we saw with the Samaritan woman, this title does necessarily mean belief in Christ.

The man assumes that Christ must be face to face with his son in order to perform the miracle; this is a mistaken assumption.

The aorist imperative of KATABAINO shows the man's sense of urgency. Again it is the imperative of entreaty. No man has the right to command the Messiah as though God were under the authority of man. The imperative of entreaty commands out of necessity.

The son of this man is young - just a PAIDION. This indicates that the boy is physically just a boy.

The royal man depicts the time crunch with the phrase PRIN APOTHANEIN TO PAIDION MOU.

PRIN is the adverb of time 'before'. It is before an undetermined time, which is the time of the death of his son.

The verb is APOTHANEIN, the aorist infinitive of the verb 'to die'. The aorist tense concentrates on the exact time of death. The royal man assumes that if Christ can get there at any time before death it will be in time, and the boy will be saved.

Again, there is an implied belief in the healing power of Christ. Whether this belief extends to Christ's future work on the cross is still to be seen.

John 4:50, "Jesus said to him, "Go; your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he started off."

Christ decided to heal this man on the basis of the man's belief in His power to heal. That was enough for the healing to take place. It is clear that there is perfect confidence on the part of Christ in the matter. He says, POREUOU, HO HUIOS SOU ZE.

The present imperative of POREUOMAI is the command of Christ. It is simply, 'Go'. The presumption is that the man is to return to Capernaum and the side of his son.

The present active indicative of ZAO is a simple statement of fact. The present tense reveals durative action. The man's son continues to live. The declarative indicative mood makes a dogmatic statement of reality about the son's life. He truly continues to live.

The man's response is belief in the word of Christ, but still not in Christ for eternal salvation. The man's action in returning to Capernaum without Christ reveals his steadfast belief in Christ's ability to heal. There is no question in his mind that he will find his son well.

John 4:51-53, "And as he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living. So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. They said therefore to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." So 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."

The slaves of this man left the side of the boy, because he could obviously be safely left. There were probably nurses in attendance. They were on their way to Cana, when they met one another.

Their message was of course one of joy. The son was living, and clearly out of danger for his life.

The very hour at which the son began to get better was the very hour that Christ spoke the words to the royal man. There was no coincidence here. The words of Christ healed the son.

The result is that this man and his household finally put their whole belief into the Messiah, and His future redemptive work.

The important principle from this story is that faith in miracles and healing does not mean faith in Christ unto salvation. It is an important theme in the context.

John 4:54, "This is again a second sign that Jesus performed, after coming out of Judea into Galilee."

The aorist participle ELTHON indicates that the signs were performed after coming out of Judea, but, and this is tricky, before He is completely into Galilee. The aorist participle shows action that occurs before that of the main verb. So the 'coming out' occurred before this, while the implied arrival was technically not complete. Compare this verse with John 4:43 to see it in the right light.

The first sign was the revelation of the Samaritan woman's personal life. The second the healing of the royal man's son.
