

Healing a Nobleman's Son

John 4:46-54

Introduction

1. After Jesus turned the water to wine, He went to Capernaum and then went to Jerusalem to observe the Passover feast. (Jn. 2:12,13).
 - a. During the Passover feast “many believed in His name, **observing His signs which He was doing.**” (Jn. 2:23).
 - b. Nicodemus soon came to Him exclaiming He must “have come from God as a teacher” because “no one can do **these signs that You do** unless God is with him.” (Jn. 3:2).
 - c. Jesus then traveled “into the land of Judea”... “spending time with them and baptizing.” (Jn. 3:22).
 - 1) He was already in Judea.
 - 2) A literal translation is “the Judea land.”.
 - 3) McCord translates “the Judean country,” and the ESV has “Judean countryside.”
 - d. The Pharisees “heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John. (Jn. 4:1).
 - 1) They were upset with the great success of John the Baptist and his refusal to baptize them. (Matt. 3:5-9).
 - 2) The success of Jesus created even more anger and jealousy and even hatred from the Pharisees who loved the spotlight.
 - e. John added Jesus was not baptizing people personally, but His disciples were doing the baptizing. (Jn. 4:2).
 - f. Jesus left Judea for Galilee, but to get there He had to travel through Samaria.
2. Many Samaritans were converted to Christ because of the words of the Samaritan woman and the words Jesus spoke to them. (Jn. 4:39-42).

John 4:39 From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I *have* done."

John 4:40 So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.

John 4:41 Many more believed because of His word;

John 4:42 and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."

3. Jesus then traveled to Galilee. (Jn. 4:43-45).

John 4:43 After the two days He went forth from there into Galilee.

John 4:44 For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.

John 4:45 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.

4. This “sign” [miracle] of the healing of a nobleman’s son followed Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman and His great success with the Samaritans.

Jesus Returned To Cana Of Galilee

John 4:46 Therefore He came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum.

1. It is not known exactly the amount of time between these two visits of Jesus to Cana of Galilee. It may have been only a few weeks or months.
2. John made it known that “a royal official” from Capernaum came to Jesus. (Jn. 4:46, 49).
 - a. “Royal official” comes from the Greek adjective “basilikos” [bah see lee **kahs**] meaning “a person attached to the king, a courtier.”
 - b. This adjective appears 3 times in the New Testament - twice in this passage and once in James 2:8 where it is rendered “royal” and translated “royal *law*.”
 - c. The NIV has the same translation as the NASB “royal official.”
 - 1) McCord has “a certain officer of the king.”
 - 2) Marshall has “a certain courtier.”
 - c. It denotes an official under the command of the king - a person of authority and wealth.
 - 1) It is not so stated, but this man was likely a Jew.
 - 2) When a Gentile is discussed in the gospels, the writers usually reference that fact.
3. His “son was sick at Capernaum” - It was about 20 miles between these two cities.
 - a. This would be about a day’s journey on foot.
 - b. It would be much less on a horse.
 - c. We do not know his mode of travel.

Notes:

1. Some have alleged that this account of the nobleman’s son is another version of the healing of the centurion’s servant. (Matt. 8:5-13; Lk. 7:2-10).

Matt. 8:5 And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him,

Matt. 8:6 and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented."

Matt. 8:7 Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

Matt. 8:8 But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.

Matt. 8:9 "For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

Matt. 8:10 Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.

Matt. 8:1 "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven;

Matt. 8:12 but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matt. 8:13 And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed that very moment.

Lk. 7:2 And a centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die.

Lk. 7:3 When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave.

Lk. 7:4 When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, "He is worthy for You to grant this to him;

Lk. 7:5 for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue."

Lk. 7:6 Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof;

Lk. 7:7 for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.

Lk. 7:8 "For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

Lk. 7:9 Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith."

Lk. 7:10 When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

2. There are many differences between this account and the one recorded in Matthew and Luke.

John	Matthew and Luke
He records the healing of the son of an official who served king Herod of Galilee. (Jn. 4:46). He was likely a Jew.	In these gospels a Roman centurion comes to Christ. (Matt. 8:5; Lk. 7:2,3). This man was a Gentile.
John records a son who is ill to the point of death. (Jn. 4:46, 47).	Here the one healed is a servant. (Matt. 8:6; Lk. 7:2).
Here the nobleman begs Jesus to come to his home. (Jn. 4:47).	Here the Roman centurion asks Jesus not to come to his home. (Matt. 8:6,7; Lk. 7:3,6).
Jesus is in Cana of Galilee. (Jn. 4:46).	Jesus is in Capernaum. (Matt. 8:5).
Here this official pleaded in person.	There the elders pleaded for him. (Lk. 7:3).
The son is ill with a fever. (Jn. 4:52).	The servant has the illness of paralysis and was at the point of death. (Matt. 8:6; Lk. 7:2).
Nothing is said about the father's faith though he demonstrated amazing faith.	Jesus commended the centurion for his great faith. (Matt. 8:10; Lk. 7:9).

3. The differences are too great to make John's account another version of the account in the Synoptic gospels.

4. John was recording a different miracle.

5. He was not perverting the encounter with the Roman centurion into the healing of the nobleman's son.

Royal Official Implored Jesus To Come And Heal His Son

John 4:47 When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and was imploring *Him* to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death.

1. News travels fast and he had heard of the healing powers of Jesus.
2. In desperation he came to Jesus being confident Jesus could heal his son who “was at the point of death”
3. Here the word “huios” [**hwee** ahs, son] is used. Again this word “uios” [**hwee** ahs, son] was used by Jesus in verse 50.
 - a. He used the word “paidion” [little child] in verse 49 and there translated “..child.”
 - b. The servants used “pais” [pais] meaning “child” in verse 51.
 - c. All of these terms point to a young son.
4. The word “imploring” is in the present tense in the Greek [denoting continuous action] and suggests this man asked Jesus more than once to come and heal his son.
 - a. Some editions of NASB have “was requesting.”
 - b. NIV has “begged.”
 - c. The Greek has “erotao” [eh reh **tah** oh] meaning “to ask, request, beg, beseech.”

Jesus Spoke To Him

John 4:48 So Jesus said to him, "Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you *simply* will not believe."

1. Jesus did not want faith in Him to depend solely on miracles.
 - a. The Samaritans had believed Jesus without signs. (Jn. 4:41,42).
 - b. The Galileans, including this “royal official,” would not believe without signs [miracles, wonders].
2. He wanted men to believe in Him because of words.
 - a. The words of Jesus were the words of His Father.
 - b. Jesus spoke the words of life eternal. (Jn. 6:68).
3. These words were not addressed exclusively to the nobleman.
 - a. The pronoun “you” is plural in Greek.
 - b. The NASB has attempted to make this clear by placing in italics the word “peoples” following the plural pronoun “you.”
 - c. It was addressed to Galileans who refused to believe unless they saw “signs and wonders.”

d. This man was included because he was a Galilean.

Royal Official Responded

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

- One had to go down to travel from Cana of Galilee to Capernaum very near the Sea of Galilee.
 - Cana of Galilee was in the hills of Galilee whereas the Sea of Galilee and Capernaum were some 682 feet below sea level.
1. The word "Sir" literally meant "Lord."
 - a. The Greek is "kurios" [**koo** ree ahs] meaning, "lord, Lord." It could have the idea of "sir" and this seems to be the meaning here.
 - b. The word as used by the "royal official" can be used to denote a superior or as an expression of respect.
 - c. It is obvious he did not believe Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God when he came to Jesus with this urgent request.
 2. We do not know how much he knew about Christ.
 - a. It is evident by his actions he had great faith in Jesus and His power to heal.
 - b. Like Nicodemus it is clear he believed Jesus must be from God. (Jn. 3:2).
 3. Without question he had heard about the miracles of Jesus and came to Jesus in desperation to save his dying son.
 - a. He used "paidion" [pi **dee** ahn] meaning "a little child."
 - b. It was also a term of affection, and was used by Jesus and John as an expression of love for the disciples. (Jn. 21:5; 1 Jn. 2:1, 18).
 4. Though he had an unwavering faith in Jesus, he believed it was necessary for Jesus to come to his son and likely touch him and command his healing.

Jesus Assured Him That His Son Lived

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

1. This nobleman demonstrated much faith and believed the words of Jesus "Go; your son lives."
 - a. This was not a prophesy of what might eventually happen.
 - b. These words were words of power of healing that He was exercising at that very moment.
 - c. The healing occurred at that precise time - "the seventh hour." (Jn. 4:52).
2. He left Jesus with the assurance his son lived and was healed.

3. He had wanted Jesus to come to his home (Jn. 4:49), but Jesus did not go with him.
4. He left Jesus' presence without doubting or arguing with Jesus and contending He had to be present to heal his son.
5. Jesus did not use the words "great faith," but this nobleman demonstrated great faith.

Slaves Meet Him As He Was Returning Home

John 4:51 As he was now going down, *his* slaves met him, saying that his son was living.

1. We do not know the number of slaves, but this implied he was a man of wealth.
 - a. "Slaves" is from the Greek "doulos" [**doo** lahs] meaning "slave, bondservant."
 - b. The word "son" in the Greek is "pais" meaning "a child," but here "a boy."
 - c. The exact age of his young son is not given and is immaterial to the miracle.
2. It is hard to imagine how excited he was when he heard "his son was living."
 - a. "Living" is used to mean his son was alive and well.
 - b. This is evident by what is revealed in the following verses.

Royal Official Made Inquiry About The Time Of The Healing

John 4:52 So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. Then they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour [seven o'clock] the fever left him."

1. It seems he expected his son to gradually get better.
2. The servants informed him "the fever" had left the son "yesterday at the seventh hour."
 - a. "The seventh hour" may denote 1:00 p.m. Jewish time.
 - b. Jewish time began at dawn and ended at sunset.
 - c. Some believe John used Roman time that was 12 to 12 either A.M or P.M..
 - d. If this be the case it would be 7 p.m..
 - e. Scholars have argued both times, but it is difficult to be dogmatic about this.
 - f. This writer favors that John used Roman time.
 - 1) Pilate humiliated Jesus about 6 A.M.. (Jn. 19:14).
 - 2) Mark, who used Jewish time, informed us that the crucifixion began the 3rd hour, that is, 9 A.M. Jewish time.

Mk 15:25 and it was the third hour, and they crucified him;

3) The trial had been about 6 A.M. Roman time. (Jn. 19:14).

g. John referred to the hour of the day several times in his gospel. (Jn. 1:39; 4:6, 52; 19:14).

Jn. 1:39 He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. <Perhaps 10 a.m. Roman time or 4 P.M. Jewish time>

Jn. 4: 6 and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. <Perhaps 6 p.m. Roman time or noon Jewish time> Six P.M was the usual time to draw water.

Jn. 4:52 So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. Then they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." <Perhaps 7 p.m. Roman time or 1 p.m. Jewish time>

Jn. 19:14 Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. <Perhaps 6 a.m. Roman time or noon Jewish time.> And he said to the Jews, "Behold, your King!"

3. This was the exact hour Jesus had assured him his son was living. (Jn. 4:53).

4. It was not a gradual healing, but it was an instantaneous and complete healing.

5. This is the way Jesus healed with at one exception..

6. The New Testament records Jesus healing one man over a very short period of time. (Mk. 8:22-26).

Mk. 8:22 And they came to Bethsaida. And they brought a blind man to Jesus and implored Him to touch him.

Mk. 8:23 Taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?"

Mk. 8:24 And he looked up and said, "I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around."

Mk. 8:25 Then again He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and began to see everything clearly.

Mk. 8:26 And He sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."

a. It is obvious that this blind man was completely healed over a very short time.

b. This healing is not a justification for modern day faith healers who fail to heal immediately, but claim credit if one they prayed over improves or get well over a period of time.

John 4:53 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.*

1. There was no doubt Jesus had healed his son.

2. This man and his whole house whole [family] came to believe in Jesus because of this marvelous miracle.

a. He had faith in Jesus, but his faith was based on what he had heard.

b. He and his "whole household" now believed in Jesus because of this sign.

3. There could be no other explanation than Jesus had healed his son.

4. This sign produced saving faith.

5. John was not recording a mere acknowledgment of Jesus by the nobleman, but this must be understood with John 20:30,31 in mind.

John 4:54 This is again a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

1. John stressed to his readers that this was “a second sign that Jesus performed” in Galilee.
2. John 4:46 sets forth this healing was in “Cana of Galilee.”
3. The first sign was recorded in John 2:1-12 and mentioned in John 4:46.
4. This was not the second sign or miracle Jesus had ever performed.
 - a. Jesus had done other signs in Judea prior to this healing. (Jn. 2:23; 3:2).
 - b. This is the second sign John had described in this gospel that took place in Cana of Galilee.

Lessons

1. Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God - not a mere man.
 - a. No mere man could do what Jesus did!
 - b. Jesus healed this man’s son while He was about 20 miles away in Capernaum.
 - c. This son was instantly and completely healed demonstrating Jesus was truly God’s Son.
2. Jesus was a Man of mercy and compassion.
 - a. Jesus could be very harsh with hypocrites. (Matt. 23).
 - b. He manifested great mercy to those who sincerely sought His help as did this man.
3. This sign or miracle led to the conversion of this nobleman and his whole family.
 - a. All knew the son was at the point of death until Jesus told the nobleman to return home for his son was alive.
 - b. “The seventh hour” is most important in understanding their faith.
 - c. The healing occurred at the exact time Jesus told the nobleman to go home because his son lived.
 - d. The nobleman had carefully obtained the hour of his son’s healing.
 - 1) His son was healed at the exact hour Jesus had said his son lives.
 - 2) There could be no question it was Jesus who had healed son.
4. Those who objectively examine the facts of this healing and the other miracles of Jesus will come to Christ.
5. Even the enemies of Christ could not deny His miraculous power, they sought to give the devil the credit for His miracles. (Matt. 12:22-24).

Matt. 12:22 Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.

Matt. 12:23 All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?"

Matt. 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons."

7. Jesus immediately demolished that absurd argument. (Matt. 12:25-32).

Matt. 12:25 And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand.

Matt. 12:26 "If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?

Matt. 12:27 "If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges.

Matt. 12:28 "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Matt. 12:29 "Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

Matt. 12:30 "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

Matt. 12:31 "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.

Matt. 12:32 "Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

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