

I. John 4:1-54 – Jesus’ departure from Judea and return to Galilee

A. John 4:1-4 – Jesus followed God the Father’s leading

1. John 4:1 – *Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John...* The Pharisees and other religious leaders kept a close eye on Jesus. Not only did they **watch** Him closely, they sent scouts to question Him. Matthew 22:15-22; Luke 6:7, 20:20-22
2. John 4:2-3 – *(although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were)* He left Judea and went away again into Galilee. Even though Jesus was having a “successful ministry” in Judea, He **left** and went back to Galilee.
 - a. Even though John was phasing out of ministry, Jesus was not willing to undermine him in any way. Jesus was not seeking to bring **attention** to Himself. He trusted God the Father’s timing and followed His leading to leave Judea. John 6:38, Philippians 2:3-8
 - b. If the Pharisees would have thought Jesus was in competition with John, they would have had reason to **gossip**, but Jesus did not give them any reason to discredit Him. Proverbs 16:28, Hebrews 7:26, 1 Peter 2:22-23
3. John 4:4 – *And He had to pass through Samaria.* In those days, virtually no Jew would choose to travel through Samaria. Jews avoided Samaria at all costs. But once again, Jesus did not follow Jewish **customs** or cultural guidelines; He followed God the Father and sought only to please Him. John 5:10
 - a. This verse emphatically declares that Jesus **had to pass** that way. This is probably because the Father directed him to take that route against the norm of the day.
 - b. Something special was about to happen among these “deplorable” Samaritans and Jesus had to be there as a **key** character in the unfolding story.

B. John 4:5-42 – The woman at the well

1. John 4:5 – *So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph .* Sychar was a Samaritan village built near the site of Jacob’s **well**. It was located near to Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal. Genesis 33:19
2. John 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 .* The trip from Jerusalem to Sychar was a dusty, hot, thirty-two-kilometer (20 mile) walk. The fact that Jesus was exhausted shows He was fully **human**.
3. John 4:7 – *There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink.”* This was not a chance meeting; it was a meeting **planned** by God.
 - a. In asking the Samaritan woman for a drink, Jesus was breaking some deep-rooted social **practices**, as we will see. John 4:27
 - b. However, this woman’s eternal **destiny** was more important to Jesus than following the protocol of Jewish society or the religious leaders’ code of conduct. Galatians 5:13-14
4. John 4:8 – *For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.* After their long journey, the disciples went to buy **food**, but Jesus had something more important to do than satisfy His hunger.
5. John 4:9 – *Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?”* (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) This woman understood the cultural **barriers** Jesus was breaking by asking her for a drink of water.
 - a. This woman had three things set against her: One, she was a **woman**. Two, she was a Samaritan. Three, as we are about to see, she was a woman of questionable character. John 8:48
 - b. Any one of these would have kept a Jewish **man** from talking to her.
6. 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 you living water.”* Jesus **ignored** the social and cultural barriers. Isaiah 55:1-3
 - a. He did not allow this woman’s objections to sidetrack Him. Jesus was an expert at turning conversations around to address the **real** underlying problem.
 - b. Just like Nicodemus, this woman needed the **gift** of eternal life that only He, the Savior, could provide. Neither one recognized their true need and neither one realized that the only one who could give them eternal life was standing there talking to them.
7. John 4:11 – *She said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water?”* As Nicodemus had done, she too interpreted Jesus’ words **literally**. Because the woman

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- was focused on the natural, she did not understand the spiritual implications of Jesus' statements. Jeremiah 2:13
8. John 4:12 – “*You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?*” Since there is no direct Old Testament reference to Jacob digging this **well**, this statement must have been based on oral tradition. Jesus did not answer her question but brought her back to her need.
 9. John 4:13 – *Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again . Jesus reminded her that physical water only temporarily quenches thirst. This statement was designed to **shift** her away from the natural to the spiritual.*
 10. John 4:14 – “*but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.*” The water Jesus offered would quench her spiritual thirst **forever**.
 - a. Ever since **Adam** fell, mankind has been spiritually thirsty. Because of this innate spiritual thirst, hopelessness abounds.
 - b. Humanity has tried to satisfy this **spiritual** thirst with idolatry, false religion, philosophy and every other kind of human effort and reasoning, but nothing can take away the longing deep within. Jesus Christ is the only fountain of eternal life; all else invariably leads to a dead end. Ecclesiastes 3:11, 8:17
 11. John 4:15 – *The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw.”* This woman continued to misunderstand the Lord’s teaching. She still believed Jesus was talking about **physical** water.
 12. John 4:16 – *He said to her, “Go, call your husband and come here.”* Wow! Jesus knew **all** about this woman. He knew just where she was vulnerable. Step by step He ingeniously led her to the conclusion that she was a sinner and that He was the Messiah who could give her eternal life.
 13. John 4:17 – *The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You have correctly said, ‘I have no husband.’”* Jesus knew her statement was only **partly** true; it was not the entire truth. He would use this to open her heart spiritually.
 14. John 4:18 – “*... for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.*” Since He is **God**, Jesus knows everything. Nothing you think or do is hidden from Him. Jesus knew all about this woman. Hebrews 4:12-13
 - a. Jesus knew that her thirst for love and acceptance had led this woman to many painful and broken relationships. What she may have wanted to **forget** was exactly what Jesus exposed to light.
 - b. Jesus brought it to her attention that she was telling only a partial truth. She only told the part that didn’t put her in a **bad** light; she conveniently left out that she was currently living with a man outside of wedlock.
 15. John 4:19 – *The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.”* This was a **logical** conclusion since Jesus knew precise details about her past.
 16. John 4:20 – “*Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship .*” She may have quickly changed the **subject** to the controversial topic of worship to take the focus off herself and her sinful brokenness.
 - a. When the Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel, they brought in foreigners to intermarry with the Israelites left in the land. The resultant mixed race became known as Samaritans. The Samaritans’ religion was a **mixture** of the worship of the God of Israel with the worship of foreign gods. 2 Kings 17:24-39
 - b. The woman at the well, however, was not interested in a theological debate as much as she was in diverting the focus from her sin and desperate condition. As is the case with all unsaved sinners, she did not want to be faced with her need for salvation. She preferred to remain in **denial**. John 3:18-20
 17. John 4:21 – *Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. After Christ paid the penalty for sin on the cross, the Jewish temple was no longer the **focal** point of worship.*
 - a. Since now in the Church Age the Holy Spirit lives in every believer, **believers** both individually and corporately are the temple of God.
 - b. Believers in Christ can **worship** God alone wherever they find themselves or as a group of believers in a gathering. 1 Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 2:21-22; 1 Peter 2:5
 18. John 4:22 – “*You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews .*” Jesus pointed out the spiritual ignorance of the Samaritans, stating that eternal salvation comes from the **Jews**.

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- Salvation comes through Jesus Christ, a descendant of Abraham, a Jewish man. Genesis 12:3, Matthew 1:1, Luke 1:30-33
19. John 4:23 – *But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.* God seeks those who will humbly worship Him in spirit and truth. Where one worships is not as important as **how** one worships.
 - a. Only born-again believers who have the indwelling Holy **Spirit** can worship God. Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 12:3
 - b. God looks for those who worship Him in **honesty**, not hypocritically. Jesus had nothing good to say about the hypocritical Pharisees who put on a show of worshipping God when really, they did not care about Him at all. Matthew 23:25-27
 20. John 4:24 – *“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”* God created mankind to worship Him and Him **alone**, but ever since the Garden of Eden, mankind has sought fulfillment outside of God. This, of course, always proves to be an empty search. Jeremiah 2:5, Psalm 86:9, Isaiah 53:6, Romans 1:18-25, 1 Peter 2:9
 21. 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.”* Despite their ignorance and spiritual darkness, the Samaritans maintained a **concept** of a coming Deliverer.
 - a. In her limited knowledge, the Samaritan woman knew how they would be able to **recognize** the Messiah when He came: *He will declare all things to us.*
 - b. Jesus had just declared to her, a perfect stranger, many detailed **facts** about her personal life!
 22. John 4:26 – *Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.”* With this pronouncement Jesus plainly **claimed** to be Messiah. His statement could be translated literally, “I am [he], who am speaking to thee.” (YLT) *I am* is a title of deity. See also the following references: John 6:48, 51; 8:12, 58; 11:25; 14:6; 18:5-6
 23. John 4:27 – *At this point His disciples came, and they were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman, yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why do You speak with her?”* When the disciples returned with food, they were shocked to find Jesus conversing with this Samaritan woman, a behavior that was totally unacceptable in the **culture**.
 24. John 4:28 – *So the woman left her waterpot and went into the city...* The woman immediately left to **tell** the men of the city the exciting news that the Messiah had come. Amazingly, in her great excitement, she forgot about the water she had come to draw. Her real thirst had been quenched. She left her pot and took the wellspring of life with her.
 25. John 4:29 – *... and said to the men, “Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?”* In verse 25 the woman said that when Messiah came, they would recognize Him by the fact that *He will declare all things to us.* When Jesus told her all about her past life, she started to realize He must be the awaited Messiah.
 26. John 4:30 – *They went out of the city and were coming to Him.* Imagine this! The Samaritans came to hear Jesus based on the testimony of a scorned, unnamed, Samaritan **woman**. God is a redeeming God. He can salvage and use even the most unlikely people, all to the glory of His amazing grace. Ephesians 2:7, 1 Timothy 1:13-16
 27. John 4:31 – *Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”* The disciples were **hungry**, but out of respect for their teacher (Rabbi) they would not eat before He ate.
 28. John 4:32 – *But He said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.”* The Lord indicated that there was a **higher** priority than eating at that moment. The disciples did not understand.
 - a. For three years the disciples went with Jesus everywhere He went. Real-life situations like this one provided useful teaching opportunities. It was in settings like this where the disciples saw Jesus in action and where Jesus **taught** them through both His words and His actions how to be “fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19). Acts 4:13, Ephesians 5:1-2
 - b. Jesus considered starting and completing the **will** of God to be that which truly sustained Him. He considered doing God the Father’s will to be His top priority, over and above eating physical food.
 29. John 4:33 – *So the disciples were saying to one another, “No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?”* It is good and right to take God’s words literally, but here the disciples needed to see through Jesus’ eyes to understand what He was really saying. Jesus was a master at teaching deep spiritual truth using **everyday** situations and language.
 30. John 4:34 – *Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work .* Although Jesus did God’s will every moment of everyday of His life, a large part of doing the will of the

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Father was dying on the **cross** to pay for our sins. Luke 22:42, John 5:30, 1 John 4:14

31. John 4:35-38 – A great harvest the disciples had not sown was taking place right before their eyes. They had just gone on a mission to find food, spending time and money getting something to eat. Jesus was showing them that a more important “**harvest**,” a rich bounty of souls, was on its way to being brought into the household of God.
- John 4:35 – “Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.” At that moment people from town were pouring out to meet Jesus. If the disciples would simply **look** up, away from their dishes, they would see a great harvest.
 - John 4:36 – “Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.” This is a principle in evangelism. One waters and another sows, but God alone gives results. Who does the planting and watering is irrelevant; what is relevant is **who** causes the growth.
 - John 4:37 – “For in this case the saying is true, ‘One sows, and another reaps .’” We often see ourselves as being the key person in some victory or breakthrough and forget that God has **many**, who are working in His field. We often reap where we did not sow. We need to humbly realize that God is the only one who causes growth. 1 Corinthians 3:5-9
 - John 4:38 – “I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor.” Indeed, this is often the case. Jesus Himself was building on the labors of others. Someone had planted the truth of a coming Messiah among these Samaritans. Jesus was building on their **work**.
32. 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.” This is nothing short of astounding. This woman’s enthusiastic testimony about Jesus provided the information her fellow townsmen needed to believe and be **saved**.
- This woman was not a religious, educated, distinguished Jewish citizen like Nicodemus in the previous chapter. Quite the opposite! She was a disreputable woman from a **despised** and rejected race.
 - Nevertheless, she became one of the greatest **evangelists** found in the biblical narrative. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29
33. John 4:40-42 – The overwhelmingly positive response to Christ by pagans in Samaria was in stark contrast to the shocking **negativity** towards Him among the Jews.
- John 4:40 – So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. These Samaritans begged Jesus to stay and minister to them. Even though Jesus’ ministry was specifically to **Israel**, He readily agreed to their request.
 - John 4:41 – Many more believed because of His word. As Jesus continued to minister, many more people came to believe in Him as Messiah. John made a **contrast** here between “His [Christ’s] word” in this verse and “the word of the woman” in the previous verse. It is notable that one of the greatest evangelists in the Bible remains anonymous.
 - 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.” These Samaritans **believed** what most in Israel failed to accept.

C. John 4:43-54 – The second sign miracle: the healing of a royal official’s son

- John 4:43 – After the two days He went forth from there into Galilee. This transitional passage continues the thought from John 4:1-3. Jesus intentionally left **Judea** behind. He would continue to minister, but in an area that was not so hostile to His message.
- John 4:44-45 – The Israelites’ reception of the Lord was superficial. Their real interest was in the miracles, not genuinely focused on Jesus’ message or **person**.
 - John 4:44 – For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. Isn’t that true? Often the last people to listen are those who know you best. Sometimes that is one’s own problem because of a bad testimony. That was not the case with Jesus. It was His **peers** who did not want to accept the truth from a hometown guy.
 - 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. What had Jesus done at the feast? The only thing recorded is that He had heroically **cleansed** the temple. This would have made Him a celebrity to some of these Israelites.

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3. 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.* This officer was possibly a Gentile and most likely a Herodian **official**. His son was critically ill. Coming to Jesus showed his desperation.
4. 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.* This royal official knew of Jesus and His power to heal, but he mistakenly thought Jesus had to be present to work a **miracle**.
5. John 4:48 – *So Jesus said to him, “Unless you (plural you = all Galileans) people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe.”* Although Jesus was speaking directly to this man, He addressed and rebuked **everyone** present. Sadly, the people of Galilee insisted on miracles before they’d believe. They refused to believe based on Jesus’ words alone.
6. John 4:49 – *The royal official said to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”* The official reiterated the **urgency** of the situation.
 - a. Jesus was going to do something extraordinary. He was going to heal without being present, and that from a great distance. This was a **sign** miracle that again proved Jesus to be the Son of God, the prophesied Messiah.
 - b. Like Jesus’ first recorded sign miracle where He broke the laws of physics by circumventing the fermentation process by making wine in an instant, here again Jesus broke the laws of physics by healing a critically ill child without being bodily present. Both miracles clearly point to His **deity**.
7. John 4:50 – *Jesus said to him, “Go; your son lives.” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off.* Without fanfare, Jesus simply **stated** that his son was alive. The official believed. He stopped imploring Jesus and went home. What amazing faith!
8. John 4:51 – *As he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living.* Because he unreservedly believed his son was healed, he **waited** till the next day to go home, as we see in the next verse.
9. 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 the fever left him.”* The official’s son was healed the **precise** moment Jesus said, “Go, your son lives.”
10. 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.* This sign miracle resulted in the **salvation** of the official and all who were in his home, family and slaves alike.
11. John 4:54 – *This is again a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.* The first two incredible sign miracles in the book of John **convince** people to believe in Jesus as Messiah. Christ’s miraculous power is unequalled. Do you believe?