

John 4

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 06 January 2015 16:46

Here we see Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman. She was surprised by this because Jews normally avoided Samaritans because of their apparent subversion of the true Judaistic religion. Indeed, orthodox Jews despised them, even though they were mainly of Jewish stock themselves. Even so, Jesus spoke to her. He did not indulge in the modern error of 'dialogue' (that activity that mingles truth and sin), but spoke to her on His own terms.

This is how all Christians should be – do not speak to others on equal terms if what they believe is heretical or wrong, and do not attempt to 'understand' their viewpoint! Just tell them the Gospel and teach biblical truth. This is because *God* does not accept their unbelief nor their reasons for wayward understanding. Some, very few, may be called to discuss reasons and beliefs, but this is a one-off leading from God for a particular purpose.

The general way to act is to proclaim the Gospel and then to leave it, not to argue or debate. This is what the Lord commands us to do. The logic is simple – God cannot be wrong, so why waste time debating what is 100% correct? We may discuss inaccuracies and heresies at another time, but only on biblical terms. If we 'discuss' truth against error, or try to be 'balanced', what we are really doing is accepting error to be equal to truth. In essence this is calling God a liar.

Verses 1-6

1.

When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

2.

(Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

3.

He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.

4.

And he must needs go through Samaria.

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5.

Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

6.

Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

Jesus, referred in this verse as "the Lord", heard of the questions being asked about His baptising Jews, when John was already doing so. The word 'Lord' *(note the use of the capital 'L') here is *kyrios*. In context it is a clear statement of Jesus' supremacy and divinity. It means He Who owns everything and Who can decide upon their fate; He is in control of everything and the term is the equivalent of reference to an emperor or king. It is also a respectful address to a Master, but is also a title given to the Messiah as God. Listed as a masculine noun it is really in the form of an adjective, a description of what Jesus did on this earth.

Though the title 'Lord' in this verse can be interpreted widely, there can be no doubt, given the context and past/future references, that it points to a divine Master. Note that the Pharisees were already 'on the case' and knew of Jesus' activities. It would not be long before they would send out deputies to observe and question Him! It was another reason to leave the area.

Furthermore, not that Jesus Himself did not baptise anyone. He left this to His disciples. There is no variance with the previous chapter (3:22 and 26). It is a common enough statement to say that someone baptised, when, all along, was meant those who were with him baptised. In the same way we can say that a king goes to war, when, really, what is meant is that his army goes to war. One acts on behalf of this master. In the same way, as this verse advises, the disciples baptised on behalf of their Master, Jesus. Thus, 'Jesus baptised'.

Possibly to avoid further confusion, Jesus moved back to Galilee so as to be farther away from John. As he and His disciples walked to their destination they had to pass through Samaria ('guardianship' or 'watch mountain'). This was in the northern area of Israel about 30 miles north of Jerusalem. Samaria refers to both a region and a capital city. We see from the text that in this

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verse the region was meant, not the city.

Jesus went to the city of Sychar ('drunken') in the region of Samaria. Though not known for certain, this may have been the city of Shechem. It was very near to land given by Jacob to his son, Joseph, containing a well and the body of Joseph. It was to this well that Jesus made His way, for He was tired and thirsty.

Notes: If we trace Jesus' movements we can imply that he stayed in Judaea about six months, leaving the area about four months before harvest time. Jesus did not baptise, but had His servants, the disciples, to do so. In this way He was different from John, who baptised also as a servant (of the Messiah). He was also different because only He had the authority to baptise with the Holy Spirit. Overall Jesus baptised many more people than did John.

Another reason to go back to Galilee, was that He had many friends there and John had already paved the way. The writer Chemnitius says of this move, "*The pious have those, in this life, to whom they can fly; but they have none to fly to, who can afford them refuge, except thee, O God.*" (translated from the Latin). That is, ultimately only God can protect us.

Remember that the Samaritans were considered to be 'mongrel Jews' who built their own alternative Temple at Gerizim and corrupted the genuine Jewish religion. As those hated by ordinary Jews, they did not want to give free passage to Jesus, because He had gone to Jerusalem. For orthodox Jews it was an insult to be called 'a Samaritan'. Jesus commanded His disciples not to preach the Gospel in Samaria (Matthew 10:5), because His work was amongst and to the true Jews. Therefore, His passage through Samaria was of necessity, for the only other viable route was the other side of the Jordan, involving many more miles.

Jesus sat down at the sixth hour. But, the actual time cannot be fully defined. It can mean about 3pm, or 6 pm, or sunrise (six in the morning). I would suggest it was about mid to late afternoon, because, unless it was the height of summer when the sun would arise very early, Jesus and His disciples would not travel in the dark on rough roads and hills, and because of the possibility of attack by brigands.

Verses 7-10

1.

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There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

2.

(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

3.

Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

4.

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

This is an example of a 'one-off' situation. Of course, Jesus knew this woman was a Samaritan. Normally, Samaritans would be shunned, but Jesus already had her in His thoughts for an act of grace and mercy. While He warned His disciples not to preach in Samaria, this in no way stopped Him from looking upon the woman with compassion. When she reached the well, Jesus immediately asked her to give Him water to drink (which tells us the water had to be drawn up from a depth and was not running freely on the surface. The word 'draw', *antleō*, also supports this notion). As a side-issue we are told that His disciples had gone into the city to buy food.

Samarians and orthodox Jews must have dressed differently from Samaritans, who were of Jewish stock. Or, perhaps they had different dialects. Either way, she recognised Jesus to be a Jew. She openly asked why a Jew should ask her to give a drink, when Jews in general despised and shunned Samaritans.

Jesus was about to turn her world upside down! He told her that if she knew Who she was talking to and what He had to say, she would end up having Living Water. He completely turned the situation to His own ends, and spoke from His own terms, ignoring the minor matter of Jewish hate for Samaritans, because it was irrelevant to what He was about to talk about.

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What is this “gift of God”? It is *dōrea* – something given freely (what a true gift is: the root noun, *dōron*, is similar in meaning). The word is used only of divine/spiritual gifts. We see in this word the fact that when we are saved it is indeed a free gift from God, gratuitously given. We can neither choose it nor reject it, for the gift referred to is already destined for the person it is given to, from eternity. As God chose to give it in eternity it is a fixed fact that cannot be rescinded nor rejected. One may only accept, but even the acceptance is virtually irrelevant for once designated to a person it cannot be taken back and the one receiving it cannot refuse. In modern parlance, our acceptance is merely ‘academic’, though it is useful as an outward sign of God’s grace to us, and His mercy in giving the gift.

But, what IS this ‘gift’. We know it is freely given, so what is it? It is the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38, 10:45), effected through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and effective in all who are elect in eternity! The implications are several. For example, this gift is the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit only rebirths those who are elect, and only lives in them when they are saved through Jesus Christ. Because they are saved the gift includes living forever in Heaven (eternal life).

When Jesus said “who it is that saith to thee”, He again made an obvious implication – that He was indeed God, the Messiah. How can I say that? Because He told the woman that the One Who spoke to her was the same One Who could give her “living water”, *zaō*, true life, endless in God’s kingdom, a life having power in itself and affecting the soul. Jews and even Samaritans knew that only God could give such a gift. Thus, He was telling her He was God. He was telling her that to enter Heaven and to enjoy eternal life, she had to trust in him and receive the free gift (of salvation).

Verses 11-14

1.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

2.

Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

3.

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Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

4.

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Because Jesus spoke in a parable-style, the woman did not properly comprehend and asked how she could get this water, when Jesus had nothing with which to draw up 'living water' from the well. As with so many today, particularly Arminians, she was thinking in non-spiritual terms. Arminians believe they have to do something (choose) before they can get eternal life. This woman was askew in her thinking, being unused to knowing spiritual truths.

She was confused and asked if Jesus thought He was greater than their father, Jacob, who owned the well (and probably dug it). Jacob drank from the well, and so did his family and animals.

Again, Jesus ignored her plea for understanding and said that whoever drank from the well of Jacob would become thirsty again (because thirst for water is an human need, based on earthly life). But, Jesus said, whoever drank of the living water He gave, shall NEVER thirst again. This is because the living water came from Him, the Living Well, and it led to "everlasting life". Doctrinally, this tells us that one need only drink of this living water ONCE. This completely opposes Roman Catholic, and some charismatic, teaching. The election of who would be saved was once-only in eternity, the sacrifice of Jesus was once-only; the rebirth of a dead spirit is once-only; the repentance to salvation is once-only, the raising from the dead will be once-only.

There can be no repetition of these things because they have already been enacted in Heaven and are fixed not only for time but for eternity. And, as Jesus said, the well of water will be within the saved man or woman for all time and eternity. Once it is within, it cannot be removed nor run dry! Any theology that does not subscribe to the above is heretical and unworthy, never to be accepted nor entertained in the heart and mind.

Verses 15-18

1.

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The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

2.

Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

3.

The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

4.

For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that sadist thou truly.

The woman was intrigued and asked Jesus to give her the living water He spoke of. Jesus tested her heart by asking her to firstly bring her husband to Him. She answered truthfully (but seemingly only half the truth, hiding her life of fornication) by saying she had no husband. Jesus commended her for telling the truth (as far as it went). Then, He delivered what must have been a mental-blow to her mind, for He told her she has already had five husbands, and the man she now lived with was not her husband (which made her either a single-fornicator or an adulteress). No-one can deceive God! it is as well to remember this when we pretend to ourselves that our sins are secret! God sees everything and knows our hearts! Do not pretend.

Verses 19-24

1.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

2.

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

3.

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Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

4.

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

5.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

6.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

The woman must have been taken aback and presumed Jesus was a prophet speaking with God's spiritual guidance. The woman added something else – her ancestors worshipped “in this mountain”, referring to the mountain used by Samaritans... but, she said, “ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place men ought to worship”. In this she identified what was then the truth, a truth avoided or ignored by the wayward Samaritans, who set up their own holy mountain and Temple.

In reply, Jesus prophesied the time coming (70AD) when neither Samaritans nor genuine Jews would be able to worship in Jerusalem or the mountain used by Samaritans. The Romans would come down so hard that fear and death would replace both the practice and place of worship.

In His statement Jesus confirmed that the Samaritans were sinful partial Jews because they did not worship as the Lord demanded: “Ye worship ye know not what” because “salvation is of the Jews”. This was a very blunt rejection of the woman's beliefs and religion. This is how we must all respond to claims made by unbelievers and those who warp true belief. We must never, ever, ‘accommodate’ differences that cannot be found in God's word, whether the differences are seemingly minor or major. We do not have the right to accept anything other than what God says.

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Thus, as a teacher, I repeat the warning, that God hates these diversions from His truth. It is why we must never tolerate the major 'difference' called Arminianism, or any other humanistic deviance from truth. I repeat, that there is only ONE interpretation of scripture and it is this singular truth we must concentrate on and preach. We have NO RIGHT to say we have our own 'interpretation', when it is clearly not based on scripture... and, sadly, MANY Christians think they can believe as they wish! Hence, I will vigorously (and, sometimes, without any kind of consideration) defy and deny such bad interpretations, because such who twist scripture "know not what" they worship!

Just as Jesus prophesied the fall of Jerusalem and the Temple, so He now prophesied that the time would come when all who truthfully and faithfully worship God "in spirit and in truth". Though a prophecy of the future it also applied right then, as He spoke ("and now is"). Let us be strengthened by this fact when we see darkness looming above us in our modern despicable day of evil.

Jesus adds "God is a spirit". Therefore those who truly worship must do so "in spirit and in truth". In a time when so many false and duped Christians insist that 'love' is the main factor in our lives, Jesus speaks of 'truth' and 'spirit'. Those who concentrate solely on love are not just foolish, they are heretical, for love without truth is not of God. Indeed, such love is both worthless and impossible, and is a pretence. Note that when Jesus speaks of 'God' in this text, He is referring to the Holy Spirit, and yet, at the same time to the Father. He was not at that time referring to Himself, because He was a man, as well as being God. (Even so, in theological terms, we can say His statement also applied to Himself because of His own deity). Verse 24 should have a much deeper analysis than can be given here.

Verses 25-30

1.

The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

2.

Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

3.

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And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

4.

The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

5.

Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

6.

Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

Though the Samaritans were breakaway Jews, they did believe in the coming of the Messiah ('Messias' is the Greek form), the Christ (same meaning as Messiah). She acknowledged that when the Messiah came He would tell them "all things". In essence she was acknowledging Jesus was that Messiah for He told her all things about herself! As if He needed to, Jesus bluntly told her "I... am He"! Here we have yet another example of Jesus telling people He was God.

Just as He finished talking with the woman, His disciples returned from their trip to the city to buy food and wine. They expressed amazement that He spoke to a Samaritan, but only amongst themselves; they dare not question the Master directly.

This was the woman's cue to return to the city with her water-pot. When she reached the gates, she told the men what Jesus had done – told her everything about her life. Then, she asked (based on the revelations from a man she did not know), "Is not this the Christ?" She acknowledged what so many today refuse to acknowledge – that the very power of Christ's life proved Who He was and, by definition, proved the authenticity of His words and scripture. The men were excited and intrigued and went out of the city to find the Messiah.

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You will note that what convinced them and the woman was NOT their own meagre ideas and theories, but the actuality of Jesus' words and actions. Many today base what they believe on their own flawed thinking, or on second-hand testimonies of others, rather than on what God actually says and does. And this is why I reject what they say and believe out of hand. I will not 'enter into dialogue' with heretics and self-assigned men of dubious knowledge, whose 'Christianity' is borrowed!

Verses 31-38

1.

In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

2.

But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

3.

Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?

4.

Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

5.

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

6.

And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

7.

And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

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8.

I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

While this was going on, Jesus' disciples "prayed him, saying, Master, eat". In this text 'prayed' means to entreat or urge (Jesus to eat). See my full article on prayer (in A/01 Prayer Meetings) for more details.

Jesus replied with yet another parable-style statement – He had food to eat that they knew nothing about. Their response was typically worldly, for they thought He was talking about earthly food. Seeing their inability to understand, Jesus explained that His Father sent him to do an Heavenly work, and it was this that was His 'food'... though it is unlikely the disciples really understood what (and Who) He was referring to. Continuing the veiled mystery, Jesus then asked if they were able to sense the seasons to enable them to forecast the harvest? No doubt they could very well do so.

Jesus made a further statement – can you not see that the fields are now white with harvest? 'White', *leukos*, can refer to the ripeness of wheat grain ready to be gathered in, and also to the parallel meaning of a harvest of people ready to be captured for the Kingdom. (In this there is a meaning of brilliant white garments, denoting purity and innocence).

What is more, Jesus said, those who assist in bringing in the harvest will be paid a wage. The wage was praise from God with eternal life, for leading men and women into salvation. And so both the reaper and the one being reaped will express their great joy.

At this juncture Jesus gave a divine truth, that one will sow and another will reap. The one who sows invests time and effort in the task, sometimes for many years. He may not even see the result of the sowing of the seed of the Gospel. Then, along comes someone to reap the harvest of souls, sometimes speedily. They need do nothing except guide them to God and Heaven, for the hard work has already been done a while ago by someone else. Of course, on occasion, the one who sows may, by God's grace, also be the one who reaps. In both cases it is God, not Man, Who causes the harvest to be ripe and to be reaped.

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The principle still stands, that mainly the sower is not necessarily the reaper. This should temper the impatience of those today who want it all – both sowing and reaping. In this desire may be the sinful need to be recognised by others as the one who brings in the souls. In this the desire is almost Pharisaical... a desire often witnessed in charismatic circles, where praise is heaped upon white-suited individuals who love self-glory. In reality we should all rejoice at only one soul saved, rather than in the ones who work towards that result, regardless of any recognition any of us may, or may not, accrue.

Jesus told the disciples He wanted them to reap what they did not sow. In this, He said, they had no part and did not work hard to gather souls into the Kingdom. Other men had already done the task of sowing. The disciples were merely harvesting pre-sown seeds. This is interesting, for who had done this sowing? Was He referring to John the Baptist, or to some others we know nothing about? In every age God has His true worshippers and teachers, so perhaps Jesus was talking about these unsung believers who prepared souls for harvest, even amongst Jewry.

Verses 39-42

1.

And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

2.

So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

3.

And many more believed because of his own word;

4.

And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

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Through one Samaritan woman at the well, many Samaritans of the city believed in Jesus. Thus, she, too, was a sower in a lesser way. These wayward Jews asked Jesus to stay amongst them, so they could learn more. Jesus taught them and preached the Gospel (verse 41), and the people believed what He told them. Those who subsequently believed told the woman that she was only the catalyst, for they believed what *Jesus* said rather than what the woman testified to. That is, they heard what Jesus said from His own mouth. When they heard what He said they were utterly convinced He was the Messiah Who would save the Jews.

Here is a principle: today we may hear much from famed preachers, but it is only those who listen to God and repent who are saved. The preacher himself is nothing compared to the personal encounter with the Holy Spirit, firstly in rebirth and then in salvation. This is important, for huge numbers hear the Gospel and God's words from preachers, or denominational authorities, and comply with those words. But, they have never encountered the Holy Spirit in regeneration and consequent salvation. Thus, they are as spiritually dead as those who have never heard the Gospel at all.

Verses 43-45

1.

Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.

2.

For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

3.

Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

Jesus spent two intense days teaching the people of the city, before He travelled back into Galilee. He moved away from the district around Jerusalem because of the unbelief of the people and the growing doubts about Who He was. As Jesus said, a prophet has no honour in his own country.

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Even in our modern day, few people are accepted as genuine by their own kind and locality. "But that man is only a labourer! How can he proclaim such truth?" Or, they dismiss His words because they know him. This was done to me in my own city, by pastors who hated me for opposing their favoured 'Toronto' movement. Now, twenty years later, the same hatred follows me, and I am dismissed as of no consequence. But, it does not bother me, for many have listened outside my city and have come to Christ as a result. Do not be dismayed by critics who have no true spirit!

Verses 46-54

1.

So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

2.

When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

3.

Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

4.

The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

5.

Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

6.

And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.

7.

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Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

8.

So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

9.

This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.

The reception of Jesus in Galilee was so different from the way the people in the south treated Him. They heard about what Jesus did at the wedding feast, and some of them were even there as guests. They quickly told their family and friends back in Galilee, and so all of Galilee was ready to welcome Jesus.

Today, despite everything that points to God and His Son, people who witness truth refuse to respond to Jesus and the Gospel. What have they witnessed? The creation for a start! They prefer invented stories such as evolution, to the plain truth. Their eyes see wonders in the universe, yet they attribute it to human manufacture, when humans could never produce such things. Not even nature can produce such wonders – for nature itself was created by God. They are, then, blinded.

Jesus walked to Cana, the scene of His first miracle. While He was there a nobleman (*basilikos* – could be anyone from a courtier to a minister, but certainly a chief person, perhaps an aristocrat) came to meet Him with an urgent request. His son was ill in Capernaum ('village of comfort'), on the north western shore of Lake Galilee. The man was distraught, for the illness left his son close to death.

In our own day, many people, desperate for healing, are willing to go to any lengths, even to witches and mediums, and spiritistic faith-healers, not realising just how dangerous these people are to the spirit. But, here, the man went to Jesus, the ONLY proven minister of truth. Why? Because he heard of what Jesus said and did. Note that he believed in the *words* of

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Jesus.

Jesus replied to the man's plea to see his son – 'Unless you see miracles you will not believe!' This is true of so many modern people, who have been ravaged by their own intellects and darkness of soul. The nobleman, however, remained convinced and said 'Unless you come, sir, my son will die'. He thus proved his faith in Jesus, and Jesus rewarded it by telling him to go home, for his son would live.

Importantly, the man believed Jesus' assurance and started on his way back home. On his way he was met by one of his servants, who told him his son lived! The man asked at what time his son become healed, and he realised the healing took place at exactly the time he was talking to Jesus and Jesus proclaimed healing! (One of the marks of a genuine miracle). The impact of this must have been explosive, and one that was not unnoticed by the man and all who knew him. One result was that the nobleman and all his house believed.

This was Jesus' second miracle. What does it take for you and your family/friends to believe in Jesus?

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