

## Worksheet #5: John 4:1-54

**Summary:** Chapter four takes us back out of Jerusalem. The action begins with Jesus in Samaria speaking to the woman at the well. The chapter concludes with Jesus again in Cana of Galilee, bringing the “Cana Cycle” to a close. The events in Samaria predominate, occupying the first 42 verses while the subsequent sign in Cana appears in verses 43-54.

Note the significant contrasts in the woman at the well story. At this place in the broader context, the story serves as a deliberate contrast with the story of Nicodemus. One commentary notes that “unlike Nicodemus (whose comments decrease in length and reveal ignorance), the Samaritan woman progresses in her understanding, from calling Jesus a prophet (4:19; cf. 4:29, 39) to serving, albeit somewhat ambivalently, as a witness (4:27-30).”<sup>1</sup> Within the context of the story itself, the woman is also contrasted with the disciples, who demonstrate that they misunderstand Jesus’ mission, and with the Samaritan townspeople who unambiguously affirm Jesus’ Messianic identity (4:42).

The story of the healing of the royal official’s son includes a theme of rejection that will continue to develop over the course of John’s gospel, especially in chapters 6 and 12. Here, the theme appears in 4:44, where we learn that “Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country” (NKJV). This rejection occurs despite the conclusive message of the signs that all should believe in him.

### Abbreviated Outline<sup>2</sup> (current passage in bold):

- I. INTRODUCTION: THE WORD MADE FLESH (1:1-18)
- II. THE BOOK OF SIGNS: THE SIGNS OF THE MESSIAH (1:19-12:50)
  - A. *The Forerunner and the Coming of the Messiah* (1:19-51)
    - 1. The Testimony of John the Baptist (1:19-34)
    - 2. The Beginning of Jesus’ Ministry (1:35-51)
  - B. ***The Cana Cycle: Jesus’ Inaugural Signs and Representative Conversations* (2:1-4:54)**
    - 1. Sign 1: Changing Water into Wine at the Wedding in Cana (2:1-12)
    - 2. Sign 2: One of Jesus’ Jerusalem Signs: The Clearing of the Temple (2:13-22)
    - 3. **Representative Conversations: Nicodemus the Jewish Ruler, the Samaritan Woman (2:23-4:42)**
    - 4. **Sign 3: The Second Sign in Cana: The Healing of the Royal Official’s Son (4:43-54)**
  - C. *The Festival Cycle: Additional Signs amidst Mounting Unbelief* (5-10)
    - 1. Sign 4 at an Unnamed Feast in Jerusalem: The Healing of the Lame Man (5:1-47)
    - 2. Sign 5: Galilean Passover: Feeding the Multitude and Bread of Life Discourse (6:1-71)
    - 3. Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles (7:1-8:59)
    - 4. Sign 6: The Healing of the Blind Man and the Good Shepherd Discourse (9-10)
  - D. *Final Passover: Climactic Sign, the Raising of Lazarus, and Other Events* (11-12)
    - 1. Sign 7: The Raising of Lazarus (11)
    - 2. Final Events of Jesus’ Public Ministry (12)
- III. THE BOOK OF EXALTATION: PREPARING THE NEW MESSIANIC COMMUNITY AND THE PASSION OF JESUS (13-20)
  - A. *The Cleansing and Instruction of the New Covenant Community, including Jesus’ Final Prayer* (13-17)
  - B. *The Passion Narrative* (18-19)
  - C. *Jesus’ Resurrection and Appearances, Commissioning of Disciples* (20:1-29)
  - D. *Concluding Purpose Statement* (20:30-31)
- IV. EPILOGUE: THE COMPLEMENTARY ROLES OF PETER AND THE BELOVED DISCIPLE (21)

<sup>1</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 142.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, The Cross, and The Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Academic, 2009), 307-308.

**Interpretation:** *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. Why is it significant that Jesus, the Incarnate Word, was weary (4:6) and thirsty (4:7)?

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2. What are some of the barriers that Jesus ignored in his conversation with the woman? [You may wish to consult a study Bible or commentary for some insight into this.]

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3. What statements in the text reveal a progression in the woman's understanding of Jesus? Specifically, what does she actually know about him by the time we reach 4:29?

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4. Based on 4:27–38, how would you summarize the main point of the story of the woman at the well?

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5. What do we expect Jesus to do in Galilee, based on the foreshadowing in 4:43–45?

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6. How do we explain Jesus' statement in 4:48, especially in light of the action that immediately follows?

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7. Specifically, who believed (4:50, 53) as a result of this "second sign" in Cana?

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**Application:** *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

8. What does this passage tell us about Jesus? How does it help us to understand "his place in the sweep of redemptive history"?<sup>3</sup>

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9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

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10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

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<sup>3</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 102.