

Research: John 4:46-53 Healing of Nobleman's son

John 4:46-53

46 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.

“A certain nobleman - One who was of the royal family, connected by birth with Herod Antipas; or one of the officers of the court, whether by birth allied to him or not. It seems that his ordinary residence was at Capernaum. Capernaum was about a day's journey from Cana, where Jesus then was” (Barnes' Notes).

Capernaum was a port of international commerce and industry and a bustling border town between two territories: Gaulanitis and Galilee. Large revenues of taxes would have been collected at this site, and members of the Roman Army might have been stationed there.

47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa 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.

“The distance of Capernaum from Cana was from twenty to twenty-five miles. The report of Christ's return to Galilee had spread, then, over this wide area” (Elicott's Commentary).

“He went unto him - Though high in office, yet he did not refuse to go personally to Jesus to ask his aid. He felt as a father; and believing, after all that Jesus had done, that he could cure his son, he traveled to meet him. . . . This man showed strong faith in being willing thus to go to Jesus, but he erred in supposing that Jesus could heal only by his being present with his son.

“Would come down - It is probable that the miracles of Jesus heretofore had been performed only on those who were present with him, and this nobleman seems to have thought that this was necessary. One design of Jesus in working this miracle was to show him that this was not necessary. Hence he did not go down to Capernaum, but healed him where he was” (Barnes' Notes).

Besought: *erotao*: ask; request; entreat; beg

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

“*signs and wonders*] Christ's miracles are never mere 'wonders' to excite astonishment; they are 'signs' of heavenly truths as well, and this is their primary characteristic.

“This man's faith is strengthened by being put to test. The words are evidently addressed to him and those about him, and they imply that those addressed are Jews” (Cambridge Bible).

The word “sign” in Greek is *semeion* and means “a sign of miracles and wonders by which God authenticates the men sent by him, or by which men prove that the cause they are pleading is God’s; an unusual occurrence, transcending the common course of nature” (Thayer 573).

The word “wonders” in Greek is *teras* and means “something so strange as to cause it to be ‘watched’; or ‘observed’; a portent; miracle; always in the plural in the NT” (Thayer 620).

“His aim was to inculcate a genuine commitment rather than merely to perform a cure” (EBC 60).

49The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

“Come down ... - The earnestness of the nobleman evinces the deep and tender anxiety of a father. So anxious was he for his son that he was not willing that Jesus should delay a moment - not even to address the people. He still seems to have supposed that Jesus had no power to heal his son except he was present with him” (Barnes’ Notes).

50Jesus 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.

“This was a dilemma of faith for the father” (EBC 60). Jesus may have been testing his faith. Can you trust before you see the results? Will you believe after you see the healing or before? The father’s thought was filled with different stages of growth: first fear and doubt, then anticipation and hope, and finally trust and confidence. He was ultimately convinced that Jesus did not have to be physically present to heal his son.

It took a day and a half to walk the 21 miles from Cana to Capernaum. The man believed the Word that Jesus spoke: “the assurance he gave, convinced the man that he could heal him there as well as to go to Capernaum to do it” (Barnes 286).

“Go thy way; thy son liveth—Both effects instantaneously followed:—“The man believed the word,” and the cure, shooting quicker than lightning from Cana to Capernaum, was felt by the dying youth. In token of faith, the father takes his leave of Christ—in the circumstances this evidenced full faith” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary).

Believed: *pisteuo*: was persuaded of; placed confidence in; had conviction and trust; to trust in Jesus or God as able to aid in

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

The servants come to tell the father that his son has recovered. The father is “going down” from Cana to Capernaum. He had to go east across the Galilean hills and then descend to the Sea of Galilee. “The twenty-mile journey was not accomplished in one day, so it is the next day when the servants meet the official who had already begun his descent” (AB 191).

“**And as he was now going.**—Many a long mile lay between him and his child, and many an anxious thought must have come to his mind as he journeyed homeward. Now faith would be strong, and now almost give way; but he travels on with the words, “Thy son liveth,” which had come to him as a voice from heaven, sustaining and cheering him. Again he hears the same words, “Thy son liveth!” but they are spoken by the servants, who have come to meet him, and bring from Capernaum the glad news that he had himself heard at Cana” (Ellicott’s Commentary)

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

“The seventh hour - About one o'clock in the afternoon.

“The same hour - The very time when Jesus spoke.

“The fever left him - It seems that it left him suddenly and entirely; so much so that his friends went to inform the father, and to comfort him, and also, doubtless, to apprise him that it was not necessary to ask aid from Jesus” (Barnes’ Notes).

The Words that Jesus spoke came from the Father, and the Word and action are one. Immediately there is a result, an effect.

53 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.

What you see there is something that physicists say exists in nature to some degree, namely, action-over-a-distance. Physicists define as part of this action-over-distance, what? Light, magnetism, electricity, sound, things like that. Action-over-a-distance.

“Jesus said humanity better consider another candidate for action-over-a-distance, a candidate that will eventually replace all. Namely prayer.

“You didn’t have to be physically near someone to have someone healed. What freedom that announces to mankind if there’s no physical prerequisite for healing! Healing can occur regardless of time and space (and time and space are no obstacle to healing). It occurs mentally

or in thought. Prayer travels faster than a man could walk from Cana to Capernaum. The healing got there before the father” (Crisler, Gospels Vol. 4, 31).

And thus the nobleman’s whole family believed. [had faith, confidence, and conviction]