

Believing is the major theme of the Gospel of John. He repeatedly forces the reader to consider their belief in Jesus. Throughout the Gospel we encounter varying levels of belief.

First, there are those like the disciples in the first chapter who only need exposure to Christ. They do not need miracles. They believe based on the word of the Old Testament. They are ready to believe in Jesus when they encounter Him. The only thing they lack is exposure.

In the second group are those like the woman at the well and the Samaritans from the village. They needed more information. Again, they do not need a miracle. They believe based on His words.

Then there are those in a third category who have not believed based on a perceived lack of evidence. They had the Scriptures and had heard the claims of Jesus, but needed further proof often seeking miracles. The royal official who appears in our text is in this category.

A fourth group is made up of those who refuse to believe, like the Pharisees. Despite all the evidence given to them, they stubbornly resist. They have the OT, the words of Christ, and even many miracles, yet don't believe.

In the following passage, Jesus moves the royal official from the third level to saving belief.

***<sup>43</sup>After the two days He went forth from there into Galilee. <sup>44</sup>For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. <sup>45</sup>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.***

***<sup>46</sup>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. <sup>47</sup>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. <sup>48</sup>So Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe." <sup>49</sup>The royal official***

***said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." <sup>50</sup>Jesus said to him, "Go; your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off.***

***<sup>51</sup>As he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living. <sup>52</sup>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." <sup>53</sup>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. <sup>54</sup>This is again a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.***

### Entering the Country of Unbelief

After Jesus had spent two days with the Samaritans He continued on to Galilee as He had planned before He stopped at the well. He had been to Galilee before; in fact His first miracle had been there at Cana. It was there that He had turned water into wine and started His public ministry. It was in Nazareth, His hometown, that the people tried to throw Him off a cliff to kill Him after hearing His message.

We are told in verse 44 that the reason Jesus returned to this unbelieving area was because "a prophet has no honor in his own country."

Jesus was not surprised at the hard-heartedness and rejection by many in Galilee. "He knew what was in the heart of man" (John 2:25). He went there knowing the kind of reception He would receive, but also knowing that there were some who would believe. Unlike the Samaritans who readily believed, the Galileans rejected Him. But, like His divine appointment with the woman at the well, He went because there were those like the official in our story who would believe.

The people welcomed Him when He showed up, not because they believed in Him, but because they had been at the feast and had seen the miracles that He did there.

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They were hoping that He would do more miracles for them.

This story contains the second sign recorded in John, but obviously not the second miracle He did. The other gospels contain many stories of the miracles that He did in Galilee for the roughly 16 months He spent ministering there. Many of them were in Capernaum where the official in the story is from. In Matthew 11:23 Jesus rebuked Capernaum for their unbelief. "And you, **Capernaum**, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day."

### **Confronting Unbelief**

The royal official would have been someone from the court of Herrod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee from 4 BC to AD 39. This was the same Herrod who had John the Baptist beheaded. Capernaum was about 16 miles NE of Cana. This official had heard of Jesus and the miracles He had done, and because of the dire condition of his son he came to Jesus.

He was an important official used to commanding others, now he implored Jesus, a carpenter, to come with him to heal his son. His son was near death, and he desperately needed Jesus to come. No one else could save his son now.

The official showed signs of faith; he clearly believed that Jesus could heal his son. Jesus rebuked him (and those around) by pointing out their lack of faith. They needed signs and wonders. The official did not believe at this point that Jesus could heal his son from afar or that Jesus could raise him from the dead. His faith was limited.

The official was determined to get help for his son, so he continued to beg Jesus to come. Jesus' response was not what the official had requested. He did not go with him to Capernaum. He simply told the man to go because his son was alive and well. This was a severe test of the man's faith. The official believed what Jesus had told him and started for home. Jesus had moved the man's faith from level three to level two – He now believed the words of Jesus.

### **Conquering Unbelief**

On his way home, the slaves of the official met him to tell him that his son lived. He immediately inquired as to what hour his son had gotten better. As the slaves told him the time, he knew it had been Jesus who healed his

son for it was at the very same moment that Jesus had said "go, your son lives."

As the official realized the timing of what had taken place, he believed in Jesus. He went from believing that Jesus could do miracles, to believing the words of Jesus, to believing in the **Person** of Jesus. He now knew that Jesus was the Messiah, God incarnate, the Savior of the world.

Again, John tells us of the salvation, not of a Jew, but of a gentile. This time it was not an outcast of society, but instead one who held an important station in life. There is no type of person who cannot be saved.

Here, in this unbelieving part of the country, Jesus performed not just a miracle to heal the official's son, but also a miracle in the official's heart to bring him to saving faith.

As stated earlier there were many from the same town who saw hundreds of miracles who refused to believe in Jesus. Unbelief is a damning sin; it is the sin for which all people are ultimately sentenced to hell. For those who repent and believe in Christ, all sins are forgiven. John 3:18 says – "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

If you have not done so already, won't you believe in Jesus? Believe in Him not just as a miracle worker, or a moral teacher, but for all of who He is and what He has done. Believe in Him as God, Savior, and Lord.



### **Bible Studies:**

**7:00 am Tuesdays – Bible study –  
Governor's Large Conference Room – Open  
to All: Legislators, Constitutional Officers,  
Lobbyists, Staff**

**8:00 pm Tuesdays – Legislator Only Bible  
Study – Perkins**

