

“Miracle at a Distance”

February 8, 2026

John 4:43-54

I. Introduction

Each of the four Gospels has a particular emphasis and theme. Matthew wrote with his fellow Jews in mind and demonstrated over and over that Jesus of Nazareth had fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies. He emphasized the kingship of Jesus the Christ. Mark wrote for the Roman reader, and he presented Jesus as being the Servant-Messiah who came to minister to a needy people. Luke wrote his Gospel for the Greeks and introduced them to the sympathetic, understanding Messiah who was the Son of man. As a group, Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels since, although their themes are different, they follow the same general outline of Christ’s life and are similar in contents, structure, and perspective.

John wrote his Gospel some 30 to 40 years after the 3 Synoptic Gospels. By this time, Jews and Gentiles had had time to read and consider who Jesus was. So, John wrote with a different emphasis and theme, he wrote in [John 20:31](#), “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” John’s Gospel is basically the gospel of belief; it’s a Gospel tract. Some form of the word *believe* appears nearly 100 times in his Gospel and the majority of them refer to believing in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. Consider [John 3:16](#) or [John 1:12](#) that says, “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become the children of God.” Since he wrote his book for both Jews and Gentiles, John often interpreted or explained Jewish words or customs for his Gentile readers.

Unbelief is the unforgivable and damning sin. Unbelief is the sin for which people are ultimately sentenced to hell, since all other sins are forgiven for those who repent and believe in Jesus Christ. [John 3:36](#) says, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.” In [John 16:8-9](#), Jesus said, “When he , i.e., the Holy Spirit, comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment; in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me.”

Unbelief is the rejection of Jesus Christ and the gift of salvation offered by God through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. It's the rejection of verses like [John 14:6](#) where Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" and [Ephesians 2:8-9](#) which say, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

In the 1st four chapters of the Gospel of John, John has given four different reasons or levels of unbelief. Each reason or level is a little more entrenched or immovable than the preceding one. **The first reason for or level of unbelief is lack of exposure.** This is the unbelief of a prepared and ready heart just waiting to hear the truth of God. This is the least entrenched level. An example of this level of unbelief was seen when John the Baptist pointed out Jesus Christ to Andrew and John in [John 1:35-37](#). They immediately followed Jesus even though Jesus hadn't yet spoken to them. Their knowledge of the Old Testament and their love for God made them ready.

The second reason for unbelief is lack of information. This type of unbelief requires more than mere exposure to the person of Jesus Christ. At this level, hearts are less prepared and have to hear the Word of God to be persuaded or changed. The Samaritan woman at the well in the beginning of chapter 4 was not impressed by Jesus' appearance and she knew nothing of His miracles. But after she experienced His supernatural knowledge about her sin and heard His claim to be the Messiah, i.e., after gaining information about Jesus, she believed in Him.

The third reason for or level of unbelief is a seeming lack of evidence. Those who fall in this category have heard the claims of Christ but desire more evidence that those claims are true. Jesus performed miracles as proof that He was the Messiah. In [John 14:11](#) Jesus said, "Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves." Although everyone who saw these signs didn't believe, some were convinced. Nicodemus and the official in today's story are examples of those needing more evidence.

The fourth reason or level of unbelief is hearts that have been deliberately hardened. Such a condition is found in the extremely religious and the self-righteous. Those at this level refuse to believe in Christ and the Gospel of grace. No amount of evidence will convince them otherwise. The majority of the Pharisees are an example of this level of unbelief—their unbelief seldom gave way to repentance and saving faith.

II. Jesus Heals the Official's Son

A. Unbelief Revealed As Jesus returned to Galilee, He was about to encounter some people at the third level of unbelief. The Galileans were not impressed by Him or His words—He had grown up among them, and they thought they knew who He was. **Turn to Matthew 13:54-58.** Some just wanted to be entertained by signs and wonders; others needed evidence to verify what they had heard. The record of Jesus' healing the official's son, shows Jesus moving the official from the third level of unbelief to saving faith.

John began this section by writing, **“After the two days he left for Galilee.”** This interlude of Jesus with the Samaritans had been a training time for the disciples and a rewarding time since many of the Samaritans had **“become believers”** (John 4:42). The Samaritans had recognized Jesus as the Christ. But knowing what He and His disciples were going to experience in Galilee, Jesus warned them that **“a prophet has no honor in his own country.”** Or as John 1:11 says, **“He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.”**

It would seem somewhat surprising that Jesus went to Galilee at all because, as He Himself pointed out, He would receive no honor there. Perhaps He wanted to cultivate the “seed” He planted there when He attended the wedding feast and did His first miracle of turning water into wine. Regardless of the reason, the point is that He wasn't going to be surprised when many in His home region rejected Him. He went knowing that He would receive a cold reception, especially in Nazareth. But some in Galilee would believe and therefore honor Him. For this reason, just as He had to go to Samaria, Jesus **had** to go to Galilee.

John's statement, **“When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him”** didn't mean that they believed in Jesus as the Messiah. **Turn to John 2:23-25** Along with others that had been in Jerusalem for

Passover, the Galileans “**had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast.**” And now they welcomed Him as just a miracle worker. They flocked to Jesus because they wanted to be entertained. They hoped to see Jesus perform some more sensational miracles. In these opening verses, their unbelief is revealed.

B. Unbelief Confronted In Cana of Galilee “**where he had turned the water into wine,**” Jesus wasn’t met with belief in who He was; instead, the people simply demonstrated that they wanted to see more miracles. This included the royal official that came from Capernaum some twenty miles away from Cana because he had “**heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea.**” He had heard, maybe he had even seen Jesus do miracles in Jerusalem. The official came to Jesus not as the Messiah but as someone who would do a miracle for him. Urgent need forced this man to make this journey to backwoods Cana and to this one called Jesus. Finding Jesus, he frantically begged Him over and over to come down to Capernaum and heal his son. Swallowing his pride, this respected member of Herod’s court begged for help from this lowly carpenter’s son ([Matthew 13:55](#)) from Nazareth. The official came because he needed a miracle.

Faced with the royal official’s fearful, feeble, and imperfect faith in this Miracle worker and the unbelief of the Galileans in general, Jesus rebuked all of them as He confronted their unbelief as He said, “**Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders, you will never believe.**” They all disregarded His message and mission of salvation and focused instead on the amazing miracles He would perform for them.

But the official ignored Jesus’ rebuke, he believed or assumed that Jesus could heal his son, but he revealed 2 incorrect assumptions in his thinking when he said, “**Sir, come down before my child dies.**” His first assumption was thinking that Jesus had to go to Capernaum to save his son and the second was that if the boy died, it would be too late. Jesus wasn’t bound by either of these limitations. And, despite Jesus’ stern rebuke of the unbelief that surrounded Him, Jesus lovingly performed the miracle. By healing the man’s son physically, Jesus moved to heal the father spiritually.

C. Unbelief Overcome Instead of returning to Capernaum with the official, Jesus merely said to him, “**You may go. Your son will live.**” Even though he had no proof, because of something he saw in Jesus, the

man believed Him. Jesus' words to him and love for him overcame his doubt; they moved the official from the 3rd level of unbelief, needing miraculous signs, to believing this One called Jesus of Nazareth. **“The man took Jesus at His word and departed.”** His unbelief was crumbling.

The boy was healed the instant Jesus spoke those words. As soon as he was healed, the man's servants left to find the father so they could share the good news. Since there were no streetlights or paved roads, but there were robbers, it would have been dangerous for the man or his servants to make the journey in the night, so they didn't see each other until the next day. It is probable that Jesus' loving words to the man relieved his concern about his son and allowed him to remain in Cana in peace, perhaps to hear and see more of the Lord and understand His message—the message that would lead to his believing in Jesus.

When the servants found the official the next day, their report confirmed to him that a miracle had taken place **“yesterday at the seventh hour”** which would have been around 1 pm. It would appear that the father thought the healing would be gradual when he **“inquired of them the hour when he *began* to get better.”** But the servants reported a complete, instant recovery. The time of his son's recovery emphasized to the father that a miracle had truly taken place, because **“the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, ‘Your son will live.’”** When he heard the news and accepted the evidence, the royal official himself as well as his household believed. As John wrote, **“So, he and all his household believed.”** His unbelief was overcome.

John concluded this account with the footnote, **“This was the second miraculous sign that Jesus performed, having come from Judea to Galilee.”** This act of healing was the second of 8 major signs that John recorded as proof that Jesus was the Messiah. It was also the second sign Jesus performed in Galilee. It was not Jesus' second miracle overall—as we read earlier in [John 2:23](#), Jesus had done other miracles in Jerusalem at Passover. This second recorded miracle in John shows Jesus' power over space. Jesus was not limited simply because He was in Cana and the sick boy was in Capernaum. Jesus is not confined to place. He is able to do “miracles at a distance.” Jesus' ability, knowledge, and power go beyond human

imagination and ability. More importantly, Jesus' power lifted the royal official all the way from sign-seeking unbelief to genuine saving faith.

III. Conclusion

We may or may not recognize at what level of unbelief a person may be. But it is really not important—we have the Great Commission to go into the world and make disciples. The Apostle Paul gave some directions which are appropriate for all Christians, **turn to 2 Timothy 4:1-2.** *Preach the Word.*

Regardless of the time or the place or the person, we must tell others about Jesus Christ and salvation.

Romans 10:14 says, “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”

We may not see the results of our words, whether it is planting the seed or watering it—but we can rest assured that our efforts are not wasted. **Turn to Isaiah 55:10-11.** God can use you (your actions and your words) to bring lost souls to Him; as **1 Cor. 3:7** says, “God makes things grow.” God can heal at a distance. Just as He healed the official's son who was 20 miles away and moved the official from unbelief to belief, He can do the same today. Now you are God's witness—each one of you is God's ambassador; as **2 Cor. 5:20** says, “We are therefore Christ's ambassadors.” Jesus told His disciples and each one of us in **John 4:35**, “Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.” Regardless of the level of a person's unbelief, God can use you to bring about a person's salvation. **1 Peter 3:15** says, “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” **John 9:4** warns, “As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming when no one can work.”