

Chapter 10: The Word of Jesus

John 4:43–54

After two days of successful ministry among the Samaritans, Jesus completes his journey from Judea and enters into Galilee (John 4:43–46; cf. John 4:1–3). Jesus leaves the Samaritans and comes to his own people, but in tragic contrast to the readiness of the Samaritans to believe, Jesus' own people do not receive him (cf. John 1:11). He comes as a prophet without honor in his home country (John 4:44), and that lack of honor immediately becomes apparent when a royal official asks Jesus to come with him from Cana to Capernaum to heal his sick child. Jesus probes the inadequacy of this father's faith in ways that challenge not only the man, but us as well.

What exactly has Jesus come to do, and how does his mission inform the ways in which he will interact with those who do not come to him with the right kind of faith? Furthermore, for those of us living today, how should we wrestle with our own faith to believe in Jesus from afar, with nothing more than his word and his Holy Spirit? What does this story tell us about the word of Jesus in the midst of our own trials and sorrows? In this story, we discover a surprising truth: *Jesus meets our deepest needs, even when he doesn't grant our most fervent prayers.*

Inadequate Faith (John 4:43–45)

The three transition verses between the story of Jesus' ministry to the Samaritans and Jesus' healing of the official's son in John 4 are puzzling. The overall sense of the story is more or less clear, narrating the fact that Jesus departs for his native country of Galilee after two days with the Samaritans (John 4:43), and that the Galileans welcome him, since they saw what he had done in Jerusalem during the feast (John 4:45). What makes this paragraph so complicated is the verse right between these two statements: "For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his hometown" (John 4:44). The word translated here by the ESV as "hometown" can refer more broadly to one's native country, or their "homeland," which for Jesus would be Galilee.¹ In this testimony, Jesus identifies a general sentiment that people struggle to follow someone who rises up within their own ranks. For Jesus, this means specifically that he does not expect to receive honor in Galilee. The fact that Jesus nevertheless goes to Galilee raises two thorny interpretive questions. First, why does Jesus go to Galilee, if he expects that he would receive no honor there? Second, how do we explain the welcome Jesus receives in Galilee, if Jesus (the Galilean) says that he expects no honor there?

The Necessity of Galilee

The simplest explanation is that Jesus here decides to go to Galilee in spite of believing that he will not be honored there—that is, perhaps on a mission to gain the honor of Galilee. To some degree, this interpretation makes sense, but the grammar of these verses make this interpretation

impossible to hold. John connects the first two verses in this section with the preposition “for,” which gives us the *cause* of something: “After the two days he departed for Galilee. (*For* Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his hometown)” (John 4:43–44). Jesus does not depart for Galilee in spite of the lack of honor he would receive there, but *because* of the lack of honor that he would receive there.² This seems like such a contradiction that some have argued that John must be speaking about Jesus’ lack of honor in a *different* homeland, so that Jesus now goes to Galilee to escape the lack of honor of *another* homeland. Along these lines, commentators have suggested that John perhaps considers Jesus’ homeland to be Judea (since he was born in Bethlehem) or even heaven (cf. John 1:1; 3:13, 31–32).³ Now, it is difficult to see how Jesus would be without honor in heaven, but the explanation of Judea is a possibility, since Jesus began this journey toward Galilee to escape the attention of the religious leaders in Judea who started to take notice of how many disciples Jesus was gaining (John 4:1–3).⁴

Still, Judea is *not* Jesus’ home country—Galilee is. John the Evangelist puts Jesus’ Galilean origins in the spotlight throughout this Gospel, beginning when Philip told Nathanael, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth [in Galilee], the son of Joseph” (John 1:45), to which Nathanael responded in skepticism, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46). Later on, the people of Israel will debate whether Jesus could possibly be the Christ since he comes from Galilee (John 7:41–42, 52). Finally, when the crowd comes to arrest Jesus, they declare that they are seeking “Jesus of Nazareth” (John 18:5, 7), and the sign that Pilate puts on the cross of Jesus identifies him as “Jesus of Nazareth” (John 19:19). From the beginning of this Gospel to the end, John insists at every turn that Jesus is from Nazareth in Galilee, and there is no good reason to suggest that here alone John wants us to consider Jesus as though he were a Judean.

Once we take all of these factors into account, William Hendriksen offers, in my judgment, the best explanation: “Jesus went to Galilee because here he did not need to fear such honor as would bring him into immediate collision with the Pharisees, creating a premature crisis.”⁵ As mentioned above, Jesus had to leave Judea because he was beginning to attract too much attention: “Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), he left Judea and departed again for Galilee” (John 4:1–3). If Jesus still wants to remain under the radar before coming in direct conflict with the Pharisees, what better place could he go than to his homeland of Galilee, where his reception would be lukewarm at best? There, Jesus can hide in plain sight from those who seek to hurt him until his hour comes.

Welcome Without Honor

Still, if Jesus does indeed go to Galilee to escape premature attention, how do we understand the welcome he receives from the Galileans?: “So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast” (John 4:45). Do not too quickly read over the little word “So” (or, “therefore”) at the beginning of this verse. John’s transition into this sentence does not suggest that the welcome of the Galileans is a welcome surprise since Jesus expected no honor. Instead, John tells us that Jesus sees exactly what he predicted, regarding the honor that he would find: “*Therefore* [just as Jesus predicted for a prophet in his hometown], when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him...”⁶

How does this “welcome” fail to honor Jesus? To understand what John is saying, it is important to note the reason John gives for the Galileans’ welcome: they saw what Jesus did at the feast. By “the feast,” John is referring back to the Passover of the Jews that Jesus attended, when he cleansed the temple (John 2:13–22). During that time, Jesus performed many signs that John does not tell us about individually: “Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing” (John 2:23). So, the Galileans *only* welcome Jesus now because of what they saw him do at the feast, since they were there too. If they had not seen him perform signs and wonders there, they would not be welcoming him as a prophet.

We should also remember the caution that John wrote about, regarding the faith of those who saw him performs signs at the feast: “But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people, and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man” (John 2:24–25). The faith of those who saw Jesus working at the feast did not recognize him as a prophet from God, but as a flashy wonder worker.⁷ Because the Galileans are among those from the feast whose faith is lacking, Jesus will directly confront their weak faith in the coming narrative (John 4:48). So, the Galileans welcome Jesus, but they do not honor him as a prophet. This point is critical to understand Jesus’ actions in the coming story—including his seemingly callous rebuke to a father whose son is dying.

What makes the tepid faith of the Galileans even more shameful is by putting this in contrast with Jesus’ “unqualified, unopposed, and open-hearted success” during his ministry in Samaria.⁸ The faith of the Samaritans needed to progress too, from faith based purely on the basis of the woman’s testimony to faith based on what they heard for themselves (John 4:42), but that kind of growth was a movement from good faith to better faith. By contrast, the faith of the Galileans needs not merely growth, but rather a wholesale transformation from false faith to genuine faith. In part, seeing the weak faith of the Galileans exposed fits the larger pattern in John’s Gospel where someone’s “initial ‘faith’...is subsequently exposed as inadequate.”⁹ But from another perspective, this story underscores what John told us in the prologue about the rejection of Jesus by the Jews: “He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him” (John 1:11).¹⁰

Incomplete Faith vs. Inadequate Faith

The inadequate faith of the Galileans should cause us to evaluate the nature of our own faith. Do we genuinely believe in Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God (John 20:31), or is our faith based falsely on something that Jesus can do for us? Put another way, if the blessings we receive from Jesus stopped flowing, would we continue to follow him, or would we move on to the next wonder worker we could find?

Now, it is critical that we avoid an unfair kind of introspection. One of Satan’s favorite strategies is to accuse us of having weak, incomplete faith, as he points out the many ways that we stumble and fail through life at multiple points. Satan wants us to overemphasize the *incompleteness* of our faith so that he can lead us to despair, but incomplete faith is very different from inadequate faith. Incomplete faith looks to Jesus alone, even though we continue to struggle with doubts, fears, temptations, and sinful desires. Inadequate faith, however, does not actually depend upon Jesus in himself, but on all the things that he can give to us. Certainly, incomplete faith also struggles with the temptation to desire the gifts of Jesus more than Jesus himself, but the difference between the two kinds of faith is that inadequate faith always has a bag packed, ready to walk away from Jesus at a moment’s notice if

things get too difficult, or if it seems that Jesus will not give us what we are looking for from him. Incomplete faith will struggle, wrestle, and experience grief, depression, anxiety, and fear, but incomplete faith recognizes ultimately that Jesus alone has the words of eternal life, and that there is nowhere else we could go apart from him (John 6:68–69).

Spend time right now in prayer. Consider using the words of Psalm 139:23–24: “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” The question is not *whether* we have grievous ways in us, but rather *what* we will do with them. Do we confess and repent in the areas where our faith is incomplete, asking that God would continue to cause our faith to grow, or do we run and hide from Jesus, seeking better fortunes elsewhere?

The Greater Need (John 4:46–48)

As Jesus returns to Cana, John does not want us to forget that this is the same town where Jesus had turned water into wine (John 4:46) as the first of his signs to manifest his glory (John 2:11). John does not draw our attention to this detail as an interesting coincidence, but to raise our expectations that Jesus may again do something remarkable in Cana—and indeed, Jesus does not disappoint. After Jesus has now dialogued with a thoroughly Jewish man in Nicodemus (John 3:1–21) and a sinful Samaritan woman at the well in Sychar (John 4:1–42), Jesus now engages in a conversation with a man who is almost certainly a Gentile, since he is a “royal official.” Jesus’ going first to Judea, then to Samaria, and then finally to the Gentiles at the ends of the earth forms a pattern that Jesus will give to his disciples for their evangelistic strategy before he ascends into heaven (Acts 1:8).¹¹

When this certain royal official in Capernaum whose son is ill (John 4:46) hears that Jesus has come from Judea to Galilee, he goes directly to ask Jesus whether the Lord will come down with him to heal his son, who is “at the point of death (John 4:47). We do not know whether this man also saw Jesus perform signs in Jerusalem during the feast (John 4:45), but he has clearly heard enough from the Galilean Jews who did attend the feast to realize that Jesus represents his child’s best hope for survival. What parent wouldn’t go as far as necessary to find a cure for a dying child?

Jesus’ Refusal

When this royal official approaches Jesus with his story, we readers fully expect that Jesus will be filled with compassion, going down immediately to Capernaum to heal this man’s son. Instead, Jesus responds with a shocking rebuke: “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe” (John 4:48). We find a similar story in Matthew 15:21–28 and Mark 7:24–30, where a Syrophenician woman—that is, a “Gentile” (Mark 7:26) and a “Canaanite” (Matt. 15:22)—asks Jesus to heal her daughter, who is oppressed by an evil spirit. In that story, Jesus responds with something that sounds even more outrageous: “Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs” (Mark 7:27). Jesus declines to heal *children*, once on the basis of race (“children” = Jews; “dogs” = Gentiles), and here in John on the basis of the father’s inadequate faith. How can we possibly square these stories with the idea of Jesus as a loving “Savior of the world” (John 4:42)?

In fact, Jesus does not refuse to heal these children altogether, but he says these things to test the faith of the parents. When the Syrophenician woman boldly implores Jesus further, saying, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table,” Jesus immediately heals the

little girl, saying, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire” (Matt. 15:27–28). In the same way, Jesus is not opposed to healing the son of this royal official; however, we see here the seriousness with which Jesus refuses “to be misunderstood in his miraculous power both for the sake of his mission and for the sake of this man himself...It has therefore been correctly remarked that Jesus’ answer in vs. 48 was not so much an accusation as a challenge. In other words, Jesus did not only want to give the son back to his father: he wanted to give himself (cf. also 6:27–29).”¹² If Jesus simply heals the boy and *afterward* turns to deal with the faith of the father, the father would have lost the urgency of the situation. He has come to Jesus for the salvation of his son, but Jesus insists that he consider his *own* salvation.

The Greater Need

More broadly, we should take notice of the fact that Jesus does not speak to this man alone, but to all the Galileans who were welcoming him with inadequate faith (John 4:45). This is clear from the fact that Jesus uses a plural form of “you” (“you all” or “you people”) in his response: “Unless you [all] see signs and wonders you will not believe.”¹³ The Galileans returned from the feast bubbling in excitement over the powerful wonder-worker that they had seen there, and when Jesus returns to Galilee, he gets a celebrity’s welcome. From this buzz, a Gentile royal official from Capernaum imbibes the inadequate faith of the Jews in the region, and he comes down to Cana to seek out healing for his son. When he makes his request to Jesus, Jesus rebukes all the inadequate faith in Galilee—not only that of the royal official, but of all those from his homeland who do not honor him as they should. Jesus is not merely someone who can come to work a miracle for his son, but he is Almighty God incarnate.

The royal official, then, comes to Jesus with two major deficiencies in his faith that he shares with the Galilean Jews: (1) he believes that Jesus can only save his child through his physical presence, which is why he asks Jesus to come down with him; and (2) he does not have any awareness that Jesus can raise the dead (cf. John 11:25–26).¹⁴ If Jesus does not confront these two errors, he heals this man’s wound lightly. The boy may be spared for the time being, but the man and his family will be lost for all eternity. Similarly, in C. S. Lewis’s *The Magician’s Nephew*, the book that tells the story of the beginning of Narnia, the White Witch tempts Digory to steal a piece of forbidden fruit for his dying mother, since the fruit gives immortality to any who eat from it. When Digory tells the great Lion Aslan about how close he came to falling into this temptation, Aslan explains, “Understand, then, that it would have healed her; but not to your joy or hers. The day would have come when both you and she would have looked back and said it would have been better to die in that illness.”¹⁵ What Jesus actually refuses, then, is to permit this man and his son an eternal future where they would both look back and say to each other that it would have been better for the boy to die in his illness. So far from lacking compassion, Jesus’ response is the *only* compassionate thing he could have done in that moment. Jesus first addresses the greater need of *faith* before he addresses the lesser need for physical healing.

The Patience of Jesus

So far, we have considered this story from the perspective of the royal official, and with good reason. We can easily imagine ourselves in the situation that this man finds himself in, with the life of someone we love on the line, desperate for help, and asking Jesus why he won’t do something for

us. There is, however, another perspective from which we must read this story: the perspective of Jesus. God from all eternity past (John 1:1), the One who created the cosmos and everything in it (John 1:3), stands in front of these people who should be bowing down in worship and adoration before him. It would be one thing if they fell before Jesus, weeping and pleading with him, seeking to trust him in the way that he will lead them through this terrible moment, but they do not exhibit that kind of trust. Instead, they only want to use Jesus for his power in their lives. Once the son is healed, this man can go back on his way, and the people of Galilee can start thinking through all the other things that they would like Jesus to do for them.

By right, Jesus could have judged them and condemned them to hell for their profound dishonor of him as God Almighty, standing in their midst. Yet, the kindness and patience of Jesus is evident in the way that he gently shepherds them toward total faith in himself. R. C. H. Lenski writes:

For in v. 48 Jesus makes no attempt to correct these limitations of the man's faith. Jesus takes only one step at a time, the true pedagogical way. He first attempts to turn this man's faith in a higher direction, namely upon Jesus' own person and his heart. And Jesus succeeds. With pleading reverence the man lays all his distress upon Jesus' heart. If we could have seen the expression on Jesus' face and could have heard his tone of voice, we could better understand his meaning and the man's response. "Unless you see signs and wonders," etc., really means, "Oh, that you would think less about the wonders and more about me!"¹⁶

We tend to evaluate our lives on the basis of our circumstances, so that physical health seems to be an absolute good, while we classify pain and disease as an absolute evil. Thankfully, Jesus does not operate in such flat, one-dimensional categories. Certainly, he hates the brokenness of this world so much that he will weep when he sees his friend Lazarus dead (John 11:35), but he also recognizes the ways that caring for busy, distracted, too-easily contented sinners sometimes requires pain to jolt us out of our complacency so that we can consider Christ in a new way—not as the Solver of our problems, but as Savior and Lord. We pray fervently about our circumstances, but Jesus know our truly deepest needs.

The Word of Jesus (John 4:49–54)

Just as the Syrophenician woman refuses to give up when Jesus tests her initially (Matt. 15:27; Mark 7:28), so also this royal official pleads again with Jesus: "Sir, come down before my child dies" (John 4:48). It is difficult to tell from the man's words themselves whether Jesus' rebuke changed any part of his heart, but the fact that the man doubles down in dependency on Jesus tells us everything that we need to know. He does not walk away to seek out another wonder-worker down the street who might come with him to heal his son more readily, but instead, he turns to Jesus in vulnerable trust. By asking Jesus to come with him again, it is as though he is saying, "Please come heal my son; I have no other hope outside of you."

Then, just as Aslan gives Digory a piece of fruit that heals his mother (but that would not grant Digory's mother forbidden immortality), and just as Jesus heals the daughter of the Syrophenician woman, so also Jesus now answers this royal official's prayer, saying, "Go; your son will live" (John 4:50). This is an extraordinary response, since Jesus does not grant the actual request of the man.

Jesus will not be coming along with the royal official to heal his son in person, but yet Jesus provides what the man is really after by healing the boy. John Calvin makes a remarkable observation about what this passage teaches us about prayer: “Thus it frequently happens that our Heavenly Father, while he does not comply with our wishes in every particular, proceeds to relieve us by unexpected methods, that we may learn not to prescribe to him in anything.”⁷ God knows all of our needs before we can mention them to him in prayer (Matt. 6:8), so we do not pray as though we were pronouncing a magical incantation, where God will respond directly to our *words*. Rather, God teaches us to pray so that we bring our needs to him without an accompanying strategy for meeting those needs, but with the expectation that our Father in heaven will do far more exceedingly above anything we can think or imagine.

Faith for Answered Prayer

What really makes this answer extraordinary, though, is the way that Jesus continues to test the man’s faith. Part of the reason that the father wanted Jesus to come with him is so that he would be able to verify the success of Jesus’ work instantly, and, in the case that Jesus’ first attempts do not work, he could ask Jesus to continue working for as long as it takes until his son is healed. Jesus promises the man that his son is healed, but he declines to give the man the security of having Jesus come with him. If the man persists in inadequate faith, believing that Jesus can only work a miracle in the immediate presence of his son, then Jesus’ response will not be enough for him, even though Jesus has just given him everything that he wants. So, will the man believe, or not?

In fact, John describes a cataclysmic shift in this man’s faith, writing, “The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way” (John 4:50). Jesus indeed performs a sign and a wonder, but since this particular miracle is not one that the man is able to verify immediately, the only thing he can do is to believe that the word Jesus has spoken is true. No longer does the man believe only when he can *see* the sign and the wonder (John 4:48), but he now believes on the basis of Jesus’ word alone. Do not miss the connection to Jesus’ earlier words about the Galileans: “For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown” (John 4:44). By believing the *word* of Jesus, it is the *prophetic* authority of Jesus—not merely his authority to work signs and wonders—that the man now honors, which sets his faith above and beyond the faith of the Galilean Jews around him. And again, if this man is indeed a Gentile, then we have now come to see Samaritans and Gentiles (the man and his household; John 4:53) come to full faith in Jesus “because of his word” (John 4:41, 50), while Jesus’ own people, the Jews, persist in their unbelief.

Life and Eternal Life

Eventually, the royal official is able to confirm that this miracle has taken place just as Jesus said it would, but not until the following day when his servants meet him to tell him the happy news, allowing the man to compare the time when his son recovered with the time that he was speaking with Jesus (John 4:51–52). This evidence did not create the man’s faith—the word of Jesus did that—but this evidence certainly confirmed his faith: “The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, ‘Your son will live.’ And he himself believed, and all his household” (John 4:53). The man has come to recognize this extraordinary miracle for what it truly is—not the sign of a wonder-worker, but the power of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Notice that in this verse, we read for a third time that the son “lives,” since “John does not let his

readers miss the emphasis on life, that life which Jesus gives.”¹⁸ Through this emphasis on life, John hints at the greater life that this household experiences when they come to believe: they not only find life for their son, but eternal life for themselves through believing in Jesus. While Jesus’ response seemed to put his compassion in doubt, we see now the way that Jesus’ compassion extends far beyond healing one boy from one sickness. Jesus has not come to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him (John 3:17), including this household of believers who have put their faith in the word of Jesus. In this story, Jesus miraculously gives life so that these people—and so that we, who are reading this story—may see that Jesus also gives eternal life. The miracle matches the message, for Jesus wants us to move beyond the faith that only looks to him for signs and wonders to the kind of faith that looks to Jesus for *Jesus*.¹⁹ Jesus, we discover, meets our deepest needs, even when he does not grant us our most fervent prayers.

The Word of Jesus

In the two signs that Jesus performs in Galilee (John 4:54), since in both cases Jesus’ miracles are privately witnessed. Only the disciples (John 2:11) and the servants who helped Jesus serve the wine (John 2:9) know that Jesus transformed water into wine, and only the man and his family know that Jesus spoke a word to heal the son. It seems that Jesus does not want to perpetuate the inadequate faith of the Galileans who see him only as a miracle worker, so he does not flaunt his signs and wonders. Rather, he wants people to believe in him because of his word.

For the very same reason, Jesus today gives us his word and his Spirit for our faith rather than perpetual signs and wonders. Certainly, the early apostles performed great signs and wonders to give powerful confirmation of the gospel they were preaching in Jerusalem and Judea (Acts 2:43; 5:12), Samaria (Acts 8:13), and the ends of the earth among the Gentiles (Acts 14:3), but we completely misunderstand the desires of Jesus if we imagine that true Christianity *needs* signs and wonders today. On the contrary, Jesus wants us to be attentive to his *word*, whether or not miracles that we desire attend the words he speaks. Moreover, if we insist that we *must* be performing signs and wonders still today, then we endanger ourselves to fall into the same inadequate faith that Jesus warns us about here: “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe” (John 4:48).

Instead, may we give ourselves to God’s word, praying that, through God’s Spirit, we might hear and believe the word of Jesus. Our faith will never be fully *complete* this side of glory, but by God’s grace, let us pray that Jesus will meet our deepest need: *adequate* faith in the word of Jesus.

Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe the difference between *inadequate* and *incomplete* faith from this passage? Ultimately, what does Jesus want from us? What moments in your life have caused you to evaluate the actual reasons you were following Jesus? How did you know whether you were seeking to gain his gifts, or to gain *him*?
2. Name a time in your life when Jesus did not give you what you asked of him in prayer. How did that challenge your faith? Did you grow through that experience in a way that you perhaps could not have apart from it? Even in the midst of pain, are you able to recognize the compassion of Jesus through it all?

3. What do your prayers look like? How do you ask God to meet your needs? Have you seen God reject your proposed solutions, while still giving you the overarching desire you presented to him in prayer? What does that teach us about how to pray to him?

4. Why do you think God does not give us more signs and wonders today? Are we lacking something that those who lived during the lifetime of Jesus and his apostles had? How does the ministry of God's word, his sacraments, and his Holy Spirit compare to the signs and wonders that God's people witnessed in the past? How is our situation worse off? How is our situation better?

Notes

1. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 234–35.
2. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, vol. I, 178.
3. For a summary of these positions with a critical evaluation, see Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 234–37.
4. Keener, *The Gospel of John*, vol. 1, 628–29.
5. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, vol. I, 179.
6. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 236.
7. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 346–47.
8. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 236.
9. Köstenberger, *John*, 168.
10. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 236.
11. Köstenberger, *John*, 169.
12. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John*, 176.
13. Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 256.
14. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, vol. I, 181–82.
15. C. S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew* (New York: Collier Books, 1955), 175.
16. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 351.
17. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. I, 181–82. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom34.x.viii.html>>
18. Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 258–59.
19. "It is from this latter point that this 'miracle story' derives its meaning in the series of encounters described by the Evangelist. Miracle belongs inseparably to Jesus' mission, as his witness to the Father (cf. 5:36; 10:25), as the sign of the salvation represented by him (cf. 9:1, 39; 6:32), and hence as a means of leading people to faith (10:38; 12:37; 20:30). But Jesus is more than the miracles he performs, more than the bread he distributes, and more than the child he restores to its father (and mother and whole family, vs. 53). He is himself the miracle from above; it is therefore also himself he imparts in his miracles, the bread of life (6:35), the resurrection and the life (11:25), the light of the world (9:35). The faith he demands is therefore more than faith in (his power to do) miracles; it is faith in him as the gift of God come down from heaven (4:10; 6:29, 33). For that reason the mere fact of being allowed to participate in a miracle does not yet by itself mean that the recipients have participated in the gift of God in Jesus (cf. 6:27; 5:14). The opposite rather is the case; only one who believes in him participates in the miracle he grants and is (11:25). Miracles not only precede faith as a means of coming to Jesus; they also come after as the ever-remaining 'benefit' of faith in him." (Ridderbos, *The*

Gospel According to John, 177.)