

Yochanan ~ Part 9

We're picking up where we left off in the last post in the balance of Chapter 4. And again, this will be almost 3 pages.

A Galilean Welcome

⁴³ After the two days, He went on from there toward the Galil. ⁴⁴ Now Yeshua Himself said, "A prophet is not respected in his own country." ⁴⁵ But when He arrived in the Galil, the people there welcomed Him, because they had seen all He had done at the festival in Yerushalayim, since they had been there too.

After two days in **Samaria**, **Yeshua** traveled to **Galil**, resuming the trip that began in v. 3. A prophet has no honor in his own country. This proverb contrasts the believing response of the **Samaritans** (v. 39) with the characteristic unbelief of **Yeshua's** own people in **Galil** and **Judea**, whose reticent faith depended so much on **Yeshua's** performance of miracles (v. 48 below). While in **Samaria**, **Yeshua** had enjoyed His first unqualified and unopposed success. His own people's hearts were not open to Him but exhibited reluctance and hardness. The **Galileans** received Him. The apostle may have meant these words as irony, especially in light of the surrounding context of vv. 44, 48. The reception was likely that of curiosity seekers whose appetite centered more on seeing miracles than believing in **Yeshua** as Messiah.

⁴⁶ He went again to Kanah in the Galil, where he had turned the water into wine. An officer in the royal service was there; his son was ill in K'far-Nachum.

The deep irony of the statement in v. 45 is compounded by the fact that **Yeshua** had only recently performed a miracle at the wedding in **Cana**. Instead of responding in belief, the people wanted more. The basis of their welcome was extremely crass. *An officer in the royal service*. This term most likely designated someone officially attached to the service of **King Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee** from 4 BCE to CE.

⁴⁷ This man, on hearing that Yeshua had come from Y'hudah to the Galil, went and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

The language here indicates that he repeatedly begged **Yeshua** to heal his son. His approach to **Yeshua** was out of desperation, but he had little appreciation of who **Yeshua** was. In light of v. 46, apparently the nobleman's motivation centered on **Yeshua's** reputation as a miracle worker rather than as **Messiah**.

⁴⁸ Yeshua answered, "Unless you people see signs and miracles, you simply will not trust!" ⁴⁹ The officer said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." ⁵⁰ Yeshua replied, "You may go; your son is alive." The man believed what Yeshua said and left. ⁵¹ As he was going down, his servants met him with the news that his son was alive. ⁵² So he asked them at what time he had gotten better; and they said, "The fever left him yesterday at one o'clock in the afternoon." ⁵³ The father knew that that was the very hour when Yeshua had told him, "Your son is alive"; and he and all his household trusted. ⁵⁴ This was a second sign that Yeshua did; he did it after he had come from Y'hudah into the Galil.

Unless you people see signs and wonders. The "you" is plural. **Yeshua** addresses these words to the **Galileans** as a whole and not just to the royal official. The response of the **Galileans** was fundamentally flawed because it disregarded **Yeshua** as a person and focused on the need for constant miraculous signs. Such an attitude represents the deepest state of unbelief. **Your son is alive. Yeshua** met the demands of **Galilean** unbelief by healing the official's son, revealing not only His sympathy but His marvelous graciousness despite such a faithless demand for miracles. The time when the official's son improved

corresponded precisely with the time that he had spoken with **Yeshua**. This strengthened the official's faith and, as a result, the "whole household" believed.

The Third Sign: Healing the Sick

This section (5:1-7:52) evidences the shift from reservation and hesitation about **Yeshua** as **Messiah** (4:1-3) to outright rejection (7:52). The opposition started with controversy regarding **Yeshua's** healing on the **Sabbath** (vv. 1-18), intensified in chapter 6 with many of His disciples abandoning Him (6:66), and finally hardened in chapter 7 into official opposition against Him with the religious authorities' unsuccessful attempt to arrest Him (7:20-52). Accordingly, the theme of this section is the rejection of **Yeshua** as **Messiah**.

5¹ After this, there was a Judean festival, and Yeshua went up to Yerushalayim.

Although opposition to Jesus smoldered beneath the surface (e.g., 2:13-20), the story of Jesus' healing at the Pool of Bethesda highlights the beginning of open hostility toward Him in Jerusalem in the southern parts of Palestine. The passage may be divided into 3 parts: 1) the miracle performed (vv. 1-9); 2) the Master persecuted (vv. 10-16); and 3) the murder planned (vv. 16-18).

*2 In Yerushalayim, by the Sheep Gate, is a pool called in Aramaic, Beit-Zata,³ in which lay a crowd of invalids—blind, lame, crippled.⁴ *⁵ One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years.*

6 Yeshua, seeing this man and knowing that he had been there a long time, said to him, "Do you want to be healed?"⁷ The sick man answered, "I have no one to put me in the pool when the water is disturbed; and while I'm trying to get there, someone goes in ahead of me."⁸ Yeshua

said to him, "Get up, pick up your mat and walk!"⁹ Immediately the man was healed, and he picked up his mat and walked. Now that day was Shabbat,¹⁰ so the Judeans said to the man who had been healed, "It's Shabbat! It's against Torah for you to carry your mat!"

It's against **Torah** for you to carry your mat, that is, against the **Judeans** (see 1:19) or **P'rushim** (understanding of the Torah, against their tradition, against what later became **Jewish halakhah** (see my Glossary). Jeremiah 17:21-22 forbids bearing a burden on Shabbat. Still, the context suggests the prohibition concerns working for profit, as in Nehemiah 13:19. The **Mishna** makes carrying in a public area on **Shabbat** unlawful. But in a walled city like Yerushalayim, a special legal arrangement called an **eruv**¹ permits carrying on **Shabbat**. Perhaps the man had his home outside the walls of **Yerushalayim**, beyond the range of the **eruv**; or he may have been homeless and slept on his mat each night outside the city. Another possibility: he had not yet left **Yerushalayim** and was still in the **Temple** area, but the **Judeans** perceived he was about to leave. They warned him not to violate **Shabbat** by carrying his mat through the gates. Note, however, that the **Judeans** ignored the miraculous healing and concerned themselves only with the infringement of their version of the Law; they could not see that the formerly crippled man's ability to carry his mat attested to **God's** glory.

11 But he answered them, "The man who healed me—he's the one who told me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"¹² They asked him, "Who is the man who told you to pick it up and walk?"¹³ But the man who had been healed didn't know who it was, because Yeshua had slipped away into the crowd.¹⁴ Afterward, Yeshua found him in the Temple court and said to him, "See, you are well! Now stop sinning, or something worse may happen to you!"

Stop sinning, or something worse may happen to you. While disease is not invariably a consequence of sin, as Yeshua himself affirms (9:3), it can be.

¹⁵ The man went off and told the Judeans it was Yeshua who had healed him; ¹⁶ and on account of this, the Judeans began harassing Yeshua because he did these things on Shabbat. ¹

In public life, you might be hesitant to engage in spiritual conversations due to fear of judgment. Just as **Yeshua** engaged with the **Samaritans**, don't shy away from sharing your faith confidently. This week, take a moment to write down your personal faith story and practice sharing it with a friend. Being prepared can give you the courage to speak about your faith with those you meet in public, allowing them to see the real impact of **Yeshua** in your life.

In your public life, you might feel overwhelmed by the constant negativity and division around you, which can create a barrier to sharing your faith. Drawing from the healing in **Yochanan 4:43-5:15**, take intentional steps to be a peacemaker by engaging in conversations with people holding different views. This week, at the grocery store or a community event, aim to listen first and find common ground. Share a respectful insight into how faith brings hope and healing amid conflict, demonstrating **God's** loving nature in the midst of chaos.

In our next post, we will continue to explore the **Gospel of Yochanan**.

* Some manuscripts have verses 3b–4: ..., waiting for the water to move; 4 for at certain times an angel of Adonai went down into the pool and disturbed the water, and whoever stepped into the water first after it was disturbed was healed of whatever disease he had.

¹Yochanan 4:43-5:15.