

1:1-18

Introduction:
The prophet greater
than Moses comes
From God to deliver
Israel and
the world

1:19—4:54

SETTING
Jesus presented
as the O.T.
expectation of the
Davidic King come
to deliver (Gtr.Moses)
To the Kingdom
(the Psalm 2 Christ)

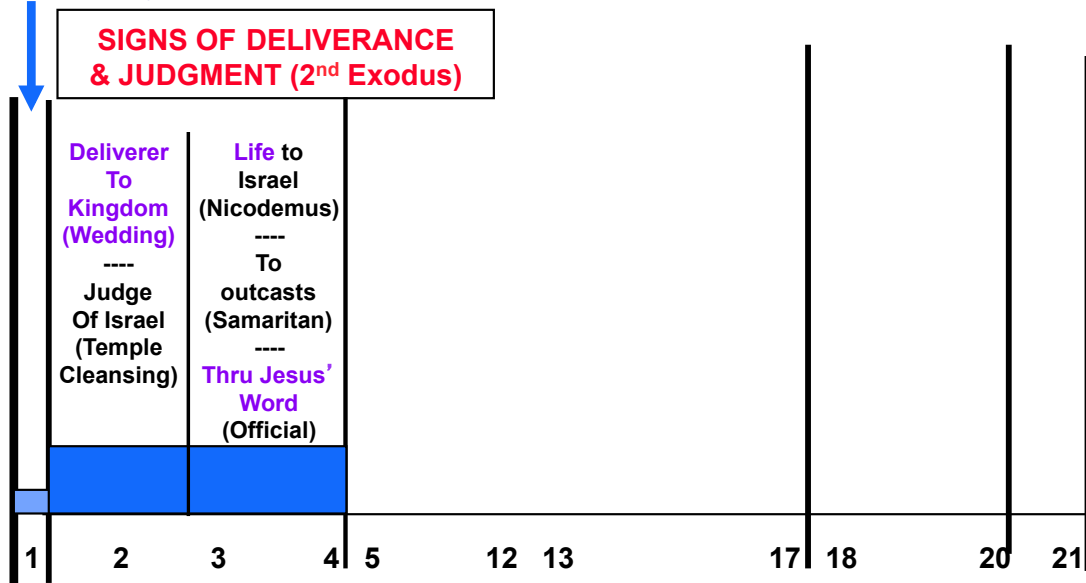
Baylis
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John: Signs to Follow the New Moses in the New Exodus

LIFE FROM GOD

Jesus as the LIFE

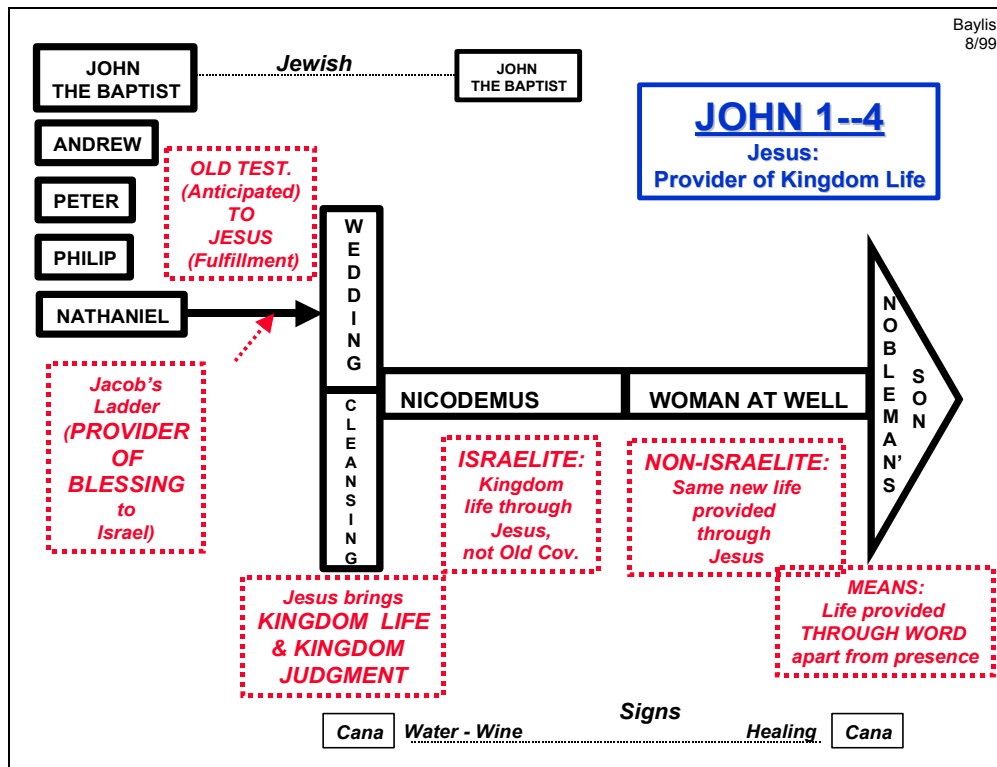
Anticipated by the O.T.



THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Jesus: The New Moses Delivers Israel to Life

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01/03



John 2:23 – 4:54 (continued from previous section)

II. The New Life in Christ for the Kingdom of Israel is presented to Israel but rejected, though many believe and become children of God¹ (1:19—12:50)²

A. Jesus reveals Himself through words, works and signs as the fullness of the Old Testament, that the promised Kingdom life is in Him, to individuals (1:19--4:54).

d. The results of the signs were that men were believing in Jesus but were not willing to die for Him (2:23-25).

Now that Jesus has shown that He is the One to bring both the life and the judgment required for the kingdom, many are willing to trust Him as the Messiah. Unfortunately the belief that they have is very infantile as they are not willing to identify with Him for fear of persecution. The book begins here presenting a motif of endurance unto death, as it introduces Nicodemus, a secret inquirer and closes with the announcement of Peter's death for the cause of the sheep of Christ. Jesus was willing to die for the cause, yet the believers here were not, thus they could trust Him, but not vice versa. This likely is an introduction for Nicodemus, one who had seen the signs and was pondering the place of Jesus, yet, since he "came in darkness" was not willing to step out for Jesus.

23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name,³ observing His signs

¹ One of the major emphases in the Book of John is the determination of 'who are the children of God.' This is based on Deut. 14:1 where Israel is called the 'sons to YHWH Elohim.' Thus Israel felt that they were the sons of God based on genealogy. However, while Israel possessed a physical sonship from Abraham (and thus the Abrahamic Promise), they needed the spiritual (representative) sonship which must come from God through Jesus. Thus only those who believe would be the sons of God.

² This section is frequently outlined on the basis of the 'book of seven signs'. However, overriding that seems to be the presentation to Israel and their subsequent rejection. The signs were what were given to them, but also the witness of the Old Testament and John the Baptist. In addition, the sign of resurrection is the overriding sign of the book.

³ To 'believe in His name' is to have saving belief in John according to John 1:12, and thus become "children of God." This is probably a reference to Exodus 4:31 where

which He was doing.⁴ 24 But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting⁵ Himself to them, for He knew all men, 25 and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.⁶

- e. **Jesus corrects Nicodemus, a Jew who believes the works of the O.T. will provide the Kingdom life to Israel, and there is no need for a new life (3:1-12).**

Now that Jesus has introduced Himself as the Kingdom provider of life and of judgment, the first example is Nicodemus, a man who believes that life under the O.T. economy can bring in the kingdom through man's good works. Jesus straightens him out that the O.T. did not provide life, that it predicted that the life would come in the Messiah. Thus Israel would never receive its kingdom without the prophesied life of Ezekiel 36—37. Recall that Ezekiel 36--37 was prophesied during the Babylonian

Moses appears to the people and they believe in him. But only one chapter later they reject him when the oppression grows (Exodus 5:21).

⁴ Of course, this is not the ultimate state of belief, which is the validation of who He was according to the Scriptures (Deut. 13:1ff.), but it was belief in the right person. It was based on signs, but was belief and it was valid. They were believing in Him, but there was a lack of perception regarding what He had come to do for them.

⁵ This reversal of "belief" is interesting. They were believing in Him, but He was not believing in them. This indicates that they could trust Jesus to do what He said, but He could not trust them to endure on His behalf. This is the message of the gospel is to bring people to the point that they would believe in Him even to the point of death.

Notice that 'believe' here is never used in a false sense. Since Jesus uses it positively (it indicated a real movement) accompanied by a negation ("did not believe"), thus their "belief" (unaccompanied by negation) is also positive. In other words the addition of a "not" is what makes Jesus 'belief' in them absent. By contrast their belief is present. The point is that their positive belief was not matched by Jesus positive belief in them. In other words, they could believe in Jesus, but since Jesus knew they would fail him, he did not believe in them. He was God. They were not. Peter will later deny to show Jesus lack of belief in them was well founded.

⁶ This is not indicating an absence of true faith. As Beasley-Murray states in Word Biblical Commentary, "This does not mean that faith prompted by the miracles of Jesus is spurious, rather that "such faith is only the first step towards Jesus; it has not yet seen him in his true significance, and it is therefore not yet fully established" (Bultmann, 131).

captivity and looked forward to the time when Israel would have those sins forgiven which had sent them into captivity and be given a heart which would insure their obedience.

3:1 Now there was a man⁷ of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; 2 this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him⁸." 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again⁹ he cannot see the kingdom of God."¹⁰ 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"¹¹ 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and (the) Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God¹². 6 "That which is born of

⁷ Based on the continuation of context here Nicodemus is one who may (or may not) have believed in Jesus at this point. However, he is not aware of what Jesus says concerning "life", that He is the life, and thus Nicodemus comes to him by night.

⁸ This could be an allusion to Deut. 13:1 that signs were only an indicator if validated by the word of God.

⁹ It seems from the other uses of *anōthen* in John 3:31, 19:11,23 that this should be translated "born *from above*".

¹⁰ Jesus *answered*, indicating Jesus' response is based on Nicodemus' statement. The point is that Nicodemus has seen the signs, yet Jesus wants Nicodemus to respond based on the Old Testament witness indicated by the signs. Thus Jesus begins by pointing out that the Old Testament required a new birth prior to the entrance to the kingdom, which is probably a reference to Ezekiel 37 and the resurrection of Israel.

¹¹ Nicodemus shows his lack of understanding by proposing that one is born of his human father once more, or a creation similar to the first creation.

¹² The "water" and the "Spirit" are both references to the Ezek. 36:25-26. Also see Isaiah 44:3, Neh. 9:20. But these seem to be more applicable to the Woman of Samaria than to Nicodemus, where water seems to be cleansing water as opposed to drinking water. Some (Zane Hodges, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 135 (1978), 206-20) have seen Proverbs 30:4-5 as providing multiple literary word links to the John 3:1-16 passage. While there are multiple word-links, the messages seem to be disparate in the use of some of these words (waters = the deep of creation, not the cleansing water, unless this is a continuation of the creation motif of Genesis 1:2 where Spirit and water occur in one verse. However, in Johannine symbolism the deep is a negative to be harnessed since it disappears in Rev. 20. In addition, the "wind" in Proverbs would seem to be something

the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the¹³ Spirit is spirit. 7 "Do not be amazed that I said to you, ' You¹⁴ must be born again.' 8 "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."¹⁵ 9 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can these things be?" 10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?"¹⁶ 11 "Truly, truly, I say to you, we¹⁷ speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. 12 "If I told you earthly¹⁸ things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"¹⁹

to be harnessed or controlled. The mention of “Son” and that of “trust” would be synonymous to John 3:15-16, but those two have multiple O.T. referents, not the least of which is Psalm 2.

¹³ In this instance the word “Spirit” is articular. Ezekiel 36:25-27 utilizes an anarthrous “Spirit”. In Ezekiel 37 the word *ruach* is articular and anarthrous. When speaking of the four *winds, spirits, or breaths*, it is anarthrous. When speaking of a singular *Spirit, Wind, or Breath* it is articular. Here it seems to be speaking of the new birth from heaven, which must be spirit like God is spirit, which must thus be produced by the Holy Spirit, or born of the Spirit.

¹⁴ This “you” is in the plural while the rest are singular, perhaps an allusion to the nation.

¹⁵ This seems to be an allusion to Ezekiel 37. One cannot see the wind when it does its work, so also can no one see the Spirit, yet it’s work is seen in regeneration.

¹⁶ Jesus reference here is to the Old Testament prophecies (particularly Ezek. 36-37), which spoke of the coming Spirit’s act of the regeneration of Israel prior to the Kingdom. Nicodemus should have known these things without Jesus’ explanation indicating that the message that Jesus is explaining is inherent in the Old Testament message.

¹⁷ The question of the plural “we” here is somewhat interesting. There is no one else in the scene with Jesus so there are two possibilities. One is that Jesus is including John the Baptist with Him (also sent from God). The other is that Jesus is speaking of the Father with Him (the O.T. Scriptures). And the third is that he is including both with Him (and thus all revelation of the Father). Another possibility is that this is more of a literary response to Nicodemus’ “we know” in 3:2. This gets some weight in that Jesus reverts back to “I” in the next verse.

¹⁸ The “earthly” things seem to be the things that were forecast in the Old Testament (prophecies, signs, symbols) regarding the Kingdom (which Nicodemus should have known but did not). Thus the “heavenly” things are the things of Jesus that

- f. **As in the O.T. at the plague of serpents, anyone could come to look at the lifted up serpent and be saved, so also those who the O.T. condemned to death for their sin would anticipate the Messiah and come to Him when He appeared (3:13-21).**

This section appears to be spoken by the narrator. On the other hand, the question which is asked by Nicodemus to Jesus in 3:4 does not seem to be answered if Jesus' dialogue stops in verse 12. It is answered if one continues at least to 3:15 or even to 3:21. He uses the example of the serpent plague which was a judgment on Israel for rejecting Moses (and thus YHWH). Yet Moses interceded and the plague was stayed by looking on the conquered serpent which Moses had held up. The parallel is that Jesus is the fullness of the O.T. story and thus while in the O.T. they could look at a serpent, now they must look at the One who conquered the serpent, the full salvation through the Messiah.

Thus this life has come and those who do not know Him do not know the O.T. predicted Him and thus do not come to Him since they, like the serpent of Gen. 3, reject God's word (their deeds are evil). But those who understood the O.T. do come to the life (light) in the Messiah since they awaited the gracious provision of God in the Messiah.

- 1) Like the Old Testament plague of serpents was a judgment on Israel's sin and the serpent was lifted up as the means by which God provided healing, so also Jesus is the means by which God provides life from the curse of death on Israel (3:13-21).

He would reveal about Himself (since He came from heaven) as the fullness. If Nicodemus did not see the Old Testament prophecies of Jesus, then how would he believe when Jesus reveals Himself as coming from the Father? John the Baptist seems to make the contrast between himself (earthly) and Jesus (heavenly) in 3:31ff. John had represented the O.T. knowledge and had pointed to Jesus who had revealed Himself as the One through His words and works.

¹⁹ Note that while Jesus is the revealer of the Father, He is also the witness of the Father.

13²⁰ "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man."²¹ 14 "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;"²² 15 so that

²⁰ The question of who is speaking from verse 13 on is interesting. Prior to this verse Jesus has been speaking and using the first person. Following this Jesus is always referred to in the third person, yet this could be explained by the fact that the third person reference is used in order to introduce Him in His title as the Son, and also the Light. On the other hand this is not narrative, but theological information. Narrative begins once more in verse 22. Theological information is a trait of the author as can be seen in 1:1ff. John the Baptist conversation continuity is also difficult to identify as in 1:16.

²¹ The similarities here Prov. 30:4-5 are interesting. In Proverbs it seems to be stating that God has ascended and descended. This would be likely in reference to the communication with man, or the revelation of God, so that men might know Him, either in creation or subsequent activities of God with man (i.e., God walking with man or Israel). Thus, the Son in His activity as the Word (connection between God and man) is the instrument by which God communicates with man in the Old Testament, and now that One is revealed as the Son, Jesus. Thus, the perfect tense here would be appropriate, especially in light of that issue. Of course the ascent and decent here are the ultimate ascent of the Son of Man into heaven as the perfect acceptance of the Lamb of God. This, if the author has now taken the narrative as opposed to the words of Jesus (who now would be speaking of Himself in the third person), would be considered explanatory and thus in essence speaking to the audience as opposed to Nicodemus. If one compares this to 1:51, where Jesus claims that the ladder of Jacob is Himself, then this would be ultimately fulfilled after His death and resurrection (the sign to Israel), although the prophecy is totally in Him at that point, even though Israel is not making use of it, nevertheless access is now through Jesus. This would seem to be in line with the following verse where the crucified Son is made to be the access to the Father.

²² This reference is to Num. 21:8, as a parallel to the deliverance through Moses as the prophet of YHWH. The people had sinned presumptuously by murmuring against Moses and the Lord, asking them why they had brought them out of Egypt to die in the wilderness. They had rejected Moses, their prophet. Yet Moses interceded and God instructed Him to place the conquered serpent on the pole. The serpent was a representation of the conquered serpent held up for all to see. Thus, those who saw the serpent as conquered by God lived as they were healed from the effects of the serpent's bite. This parallel to Genesis 3 is indicated. The substitution of the Messiah for those dying of the serpent's infliction of death through deceit is apparent. To see the Messiah on the cross as a substitute was to see the indication of the judgment of the serpent (12:31, 16:11). The interesting parallel is that Israel then, like the Israel of Moses, is rejecting their leader and the sin will be judged, and escape would only be through the conquered serpent, by Christ.

In addition the reference in Isaiah 52:13 is interesting.

whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.²³ 16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten²⁴ Son, that whoever believes in Him²⁵ shall not perish,²⁶ but have eternal life. 17 "For God did not send the Son into the world²⁷ to judge the world,²⁸ but that the world might be saved through

^{NAS} **Isaiah 52:13** Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up, and greatly exalted.

^{BGT} **Isaiah 52:13** ἰδοὺ συνήσει ὁ παῖς μου καὶ ὑψωθήσεται καὶ δοξασθήσεται σφόδρα

^{NAS} **John 3:14** "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;

^{BGT} **John 3:14** Καὶ καθὼς Μωϋσῆς ὑψωσεν τὸν ὄφιν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, οὕτως ὑψωθῆναι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου,

The “lifting up” here could be referring to the crucifixion or the ascension. Since the ascension itself is not in John’s gospel (as it is in Matthew) but is referenced strongly, it might seem more likely that this is the crucifixion.

²³ This is a major issue in the book, that of eternal life, and how one receives it. It is synonymous with being “born from above”. It is a contrast with the life given in Adam and through parentage (1:12). The term “eternal life” is mentioned predominantly in Daniel 12:2 where it is life in the Kingdom.

²⁴ The term emphasizes uniqueness, as Isaac was the only begotten son (unique) of Abraham.

²⁵ Note here that the ones believing are the same ones who receive Him, believing in His Name according to 1:12, a remnant from Israel.

²⁶ This term is used in the LXX most prominently in Deut. 28 where the blessings and curses are outlined for disobedience. The term indicates a cessation of life, whether physical or spiritual (i.e., eternal). Thus one may perish eternally, or temporally in this life (even though they may continue to live) since they can walk not representing God. Here, of course, by contrast to the eternal life, this means eternal (and thus incorporates temporal) death.

²⁷ This is regarding the first coming. He only spoke of the Law’s condemnation, and His own provision.

²⁸ The world was judged (condemned) under the Law (1:17) and now Jesus had come to provide the grace for those sins through His substitutionary death.

Him. 18 "He who believes in Him is not judged²⁹; he who does not believe has been judged already,³⁰ because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.³¹

2) The Old Testament proclaimed judgment with anticipation of the new life (light) in the Messiah, and those who knew the O.T. came to Jesus when he appeared, while those who did not understand did not come to Jesus (3:19-21).

The Genesis motif continues as the revelation of life (light) comes from God into the chaotic world (1:3) of the lack of revelation, death (darkness). But the Jews loved their O.T. works (the O.T. through the eyes of human wisdom) since they rejected the revelation of God (deeds were evil). But those who had understood the O.T. (does the truth) anticipated the forgiveness which would come in Messiah and came to Jesus (the light) when He appeared.

19 "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light,³² for their deeds were evil³³. 20 "For

²⁹ The one who believes has escaped the judgment of the Law through the Substitute who incurred the judgment on His behalf.

³⁰ Under the Law he is condemned without any means of real grace or mercy, and thus stands condemned.

³¹ Which would allow him to escape the condemnation of the Law. In addition the point of this verse is that the difference between judgment and escape is belief, not works, nor genealogy.

³² The judgment is that God (as forecast in the Law) has brought forth the revelation (the Light) of escape in the Son. This makes the truth of the condemnation of the Law fulfilled, since the full grace has also come (had not the grace come as predicted in the Lamb of God, then the Law would have been null and void). The darkness (the Old Testament without the revelation of the Light) is the condemnation of mankind. Yet men loved living under the condemnation (self-justification) since they were evil (opposed to the revelation).

³³ Here "evil" is parallel to Genesis 3 "good and evil". Good was all that was revealed about God, His Character. Evil was all that was against the revelation of God. Thus those who follow the serpent are evil, since they reject the revelation of God. Here

everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.³⁴ 21 "But he who practices (lit.: "does") the truth³⁵ comes to the Light, so that his deeds³⁶ may be manifested³⁷ as having been wrought in God."³⁸

g. John the Baptist testifies that Jesus is the fullness of the Old Testament and he as an O.T. prophet must pass into the background (3:22-36).

Now that the author has completed the beginning of His premise that Jesus is the fullness of the O.T. he ends it as he began it, with John the Baptist's witness. Essentially John is not in competition with Jesus, but acknowledges that as a prophet, he, like the O.T. must fade into the background in the face of the fullness in Christ. As the friend of the bridegroom awaits the appearance (the voice) of the bridegroom and then steps into the background, so

the Pharisees reject the revelation of the Light and prefer to live in the darkness (O.T. with only partial mercy, in their errant understanding of the O.T. as self-justifying.).

³⁴ The revelation of life through Christ was a match with the Old Testament condemnation, which justified no one. Thus those who lived in the darkness of self-justification would not like the preaching of Jesus that He was coming to give them mercy. Since they did not think they sinned they did not think they needed mercy. The Light thus condemned them as being wrong, that is, rejecting the revelation of the O.T. as God condemned them.

³⁵ The "truth" was always the revelation of God. The one who does the "truth" is the Old Testament person (or N.T.) who responds to the revelation of God (i.e., "does the truth"). When "the light" came, then the one who does the truth recognizes Him as the Christ.

³⁶ Literal: "works". Cf. John 6:28 where the works of God are defined as "believing in Him who He has sent."

³⁷ It was Jesus appearance that revealed that the O.T. belief in the Messiah as the bringer of life was valid.

³⁸ His deeds here are the "works" which God desires. These "works" are to believe in His Son, which is to have anticipated Him from the Old Testament. Thus the O.T. person would know that his belief was well placed when He saw Jesus as the fulfillment. Had Jesus not come, then the O.T. saint's perspective would have been wrong.

also the O.T. will provide only background for the fullness of God in man is here.

22 After these things³⁹ Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He was spending time with them and baptizing. 23 John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and people were coming and were being baptized -- 24 for John had not yet been thrown into prison. 25 Therefore there arose a discussion on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purification.⁴⁰ 26 And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified, behold, He is baptizing and all are coming to Him."⁴¹ 27 John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven.⁴² 28 "You yourselves are my witnesses⁴³ that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him.'⁴⁴ 29 "He who has the bride⁴⁵ is the bridegroom; but

³⁹ John will be bringing now O.T. saints to Jesus who are anticipating the full, real purification, instead of the Old Testament purification anticipated in the O.T.

⁴⁰ The purification issue here is related to John's baptism (cf. 3:26). The purification rituals were taking place at the temple. Yet John was baptizing in the wilderness. This was clearly a different baptism than the O.T. rituals. On the other hand, it was still symbolic and partial. Thus, the question would arise as to what this had to do in relationship with the Jerusalem purification. The answer was that John's was not the O.T. ritual purification, and was not intended to replace it. It was intended to symbolize the imminent purification that was available in the heart in Jesus. In addition, it also said the same thing Jesus will speak of in Chapter 4, that the worship center is being moved from Jerusalem to Him.

⁴¹ Now the proposal is that while both Jesus' disciples and John's are baptizing, yet the flow is from John to Jesus. Thus the question is of the competition. John will answer.

⁴² John's point is that of a contrast. The Pharisees in Jerusalem had received their honors from men. John's point was that both he and Jesus had received their positions and responsibilities from heaven.

⁴³ John is not changing from what he had said before.

⁴⁴ John, like the O.T. was sent ahead of Jesus to point to Him from the O.T.

⁴⁵ It is not stated who is the bride here, but it should be said that the Son has come for the bride. At this point, the church is not revealed. Thus, it might be proposed that the bride is the one who has the new life (1:12), which has come through the Son.

the friend⁴⁶ of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice.⁴⁷ So this joy of mine has been made full.⁴⁸ 30 "He must increase, but I must decrease."⁴⁹ 31 "He who comes from above is above all,⁵⁰ he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth."⁵¹ He who comes from heaven is above all. 32 "What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies;⁵² and no one receives His testimony."⁵³ 33 "He who has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true."⁵⁴ 34 "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure."⁵⁵ 35 "The

⁴⁶ Here the word is *philos*.

⁴⁷ John as the O.T. prophet is excited because the bridegroom has come and he hears His voice (sees His presence). Thus the friends of the bride would likely be the O.T. prophets (and perhaps saints) who prepared the way and expected the bridegroom.

⁴⁸ John's joy would be his hope (O.T.) which now has become realized at the fullness of the revelation of Jesus.

⁴⁹ The O.T. as the standard must now fade away, since it is seen in its full realization in Jesus.

⁵⁰ This is Jesus, cf. 1:1, 14.

⁵¹ This is John the Baptist. The O.T. prophecies were the earthly things. These were things that were centered in the human prophet and in signs, symbols, and demonstrations in the physical realm. Now Jesus comes to do the fullness. Give the life from God.

⁵² This is the Word of the Father. Jesus now represents thus the actual fullness, which was with the Father, the life. Note that Jesus is the witness of the Father, which is He reveals Who He is, His Character.

⁵³ See John 1:10-11. The world rejected Him. Israel rejected Him. They should have known Him from the Old Testament, but they did not.

⁵⁴ The point of John's statement is this is that the revelation of God is in Jesus.

⁵⁵ The question here is 'who is this speaking of?' It appears that Jesus is given the Spirit without measure. Jesus is the centrality of the Father's revelation and the O.T prophecies. The Spirit was to be given to Israel, yet the Spirit is now on Jesus without limit. Thus, it appears to say that the fullness of the Spirit (and thus life) is in Christ. The next verse seems to confirm this. In addition, the function here of the Spirit is to demonstrate the presence of the Spirit on the Son. The Spirit was the Third Person of the Trinity who ensured that the prophets spoke the Word of God. Thus, the Spirit could be functioning with the Son in that capacity. On the other hand, the Apostles will get the

Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand.⁵⁶ 36 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."⁵⁷

2. Jesus gives life to the Samaritans, extending His ministry to unify these half-Jews under His shepherding (4:1-42).

Following the examination of a Jewish ruler, as a sample of the Phariseical belief, the author now moves to a half-breed, Samaritan woman. As such she was typical of those who were dispersed, but worse in the eyes of a Jew since these northern tribes had intermarried with the Assyrians.

- a. The Setting: Jesus asks a Samaritan woman (half-breed outcast from the Jews) for a drink of water (4:1-8).

A Samaritan woman is benefiting from Jacob's well, and Jesus asks her to benefit Him from it also.

4:1 Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), 3 He left Judea and went away again into Galilee.⁵⁸ 4 And He had to pass through Samaria.⁵⁹ 5

Spirit so as to speak the Words of the Son, which are the Words of God. The difficulty with that is that it appears that the Spirit comes from the Father (14:26, 15:26) and thus this would seem to be the Son. In addition there is little context for bringing the apostolic function in as yet. The Spirit descended on the Son in 1:31. Thus it would seem that the Spirit's function in the O.T. to come on a Prophet and authorize him to speak for God, is now in parallel function here, but now on the Prophet of Deut. 18:15. The *gar* here seems to be explanatory and may not be ignored.

⁵⁶ All of God's representation with man is now in Christ. This will include judgment, but in the present will demonstrate the mercy (salvation) of God.

⁵⁷ In other words, all of God's representation is in the Son. If one believes the Son, then they have the life that God wants to give them. It is now in Christ.

⁵⁸ The antagonism toward John had already been mentioned in 3:24, and now that antagonism is mounting, yet toward the One John speaks of.

⁵⁹ There is some question here as to whether the "had to" is due to the direction of God, or simply because Samaria was between Judea and Galilee. It seems best in the context to take the former, since Jesus is clearly on the path and timing of God the Father.

So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph;⁶⁰ 6 and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.⁶¹ 7 There came a woman of Samaria⁶² to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."⁶³ 8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.⁶⁴

- b. The tension: Jesus, being a Jew, normally would not have a conversation with a Samaritan woman (1:9).

The woman of Samaria is puzzled since Jews were normally considered to bless the world, yet He is reversing the order and asking her, a Samaritan to bless a Jew.

9 Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a

Also in light of the fact that Samaritans have no dealings with Jews, the path through Samaria would have been somewhat unusual.

⁶⁰ Jacob's well does not seem to appear in the O.T. This must have been passed on by tradition, since the area where Joseph inherited is also not listed in the O.T. However, the twelve sons had been allocated land in the O.T. and this might be the reference. However, the mention of Joseph is interesting, since the story of Joseph was the unjust judgment on the obedient one who ended up delivering Israel and Egypt from famine.

⁶¹ It was about noon, the heat of the day.

⁶² Literarily this is a contrast to Nicodemus, a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews. Now there is a Samaritan (half-breed) woman.

⁶³ In 1 Kings 17:10 Elijah had asked the widow of Zarephath "Please get me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." Jesus request would have triggered an Old Testament reader to realize that this was the greater Elijah who would not just give her unending oil, but would give her living water. In both cases the woman was a Gentile (or a non-Jew). In addition, the widow was giving Elijah sustenance and Elijah then ministered to the remnant, providing her sustenance. Now Jesus asks for sustenance, yet differently than the widow the woman does not demonstrate her belief since she does not know Jesus. Apparently Jesus never gets the drink, but He does demonstrate that He is the greater Elijah as He will sustain her with living water.

⁶⁴ The point is here that the disciples were gone, and thus Jesus requested the woman give Him what the disciples might have done on His behalf.

Samaritan woman⁶⁵?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.⁶⁶)

- c. The Explanation: She was giving him a drink from Jacob's well (the Abrahamic father) and Jesus tells her that it is He who will give her the fullness of the Abrahamic Covenant provided through Jacob (4:10-15).

Jesus then explains that she is really correct, that is the Jews are to bless the world according to the Abrahamic Covenant. And then He adds that if she understood that He was the provider of the Abrahamic Covenant that she would ask for the fullness of life promised through Abraham.

10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."⁶⁷ 11 She said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water?"⁶⁸ 12 "You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You,⁶⁹ who gave us the well, and drank of it

⁶⁵ This seems to be a double issue. First she was a Samaritan, which was the most important issue, and also she was a woman.

⁶⁶ During the captivity of the Northern tribes when Assyria took them off, they left some of the Assyrians with any of the Northern tribes that were left, and intermarried with them, thus making them half-breeds. However, by contrast the Jews had been in Babylon for 70 years and had returned pure in race (Of course, Nehemiah and Ezra record that they really weren't all that enthusiastic regarding purity as they intermarried with the neighboring Gentiles.)

⁶⁷ This is a twist on the words of Jesus. She has questioned His asking her for a drink. Jesus has heightened this by saying that had she realized who He was, she would have asked Him for a drink of living water.

⁶⁸ This is an exact parallel to Nicodemus in 3:4. He also misunderstands Jesus meaning as being able to be accomplished in the physical sense.

⁶⁹ While the theme so far has been Jesus as The Prophet (Deut. 18:15), i.e., a greater than Moses, now it is a greater than Jacob. Jacob, of course, has been the microcosm of the nation, Israel. And, according to the next verse, Jacob blessed His sons (Israel) and the cattle (probably the nations). Thus, Jesus is the Greater Jacob, or the King of Israel, the provider for the nation Israel, and ultimately for the nations. However, further than this it parallels Jesus conversation with Nathaniel. He recognizes that Jesus is the Son of God, the King of Israel. But Jesus adds that He is the Ladder, the provider

himself and his sons and his cattle?" 13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."⁷⁰

- d. The Miracle: Jesus shows Himself as a prophet in that He reveals her secret life (4:15-20).

The woman then misunderstands thinking that Jesus is greater than Jacob, but in giving more physical water. So Jesus reveals to her the secrets that she keeps (like Nathaniel) and thus proves Himself as a prophet.

15 The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw."⁷¹ 16 He said to her, "Go, call your husband and come here."⁷² 17 The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have correctly said, 'I have no husband'; 18 for you have had five husbands⁷³, and the one

of blessing to Israel. Thus also He is greater than Jacob, He is the Ladder. Note also a similar statement regarding Abraham in 8:53.

⁷⁰ The water that was used in the Nicodemus episode was water of purification. By contrast, Jesus introduces water for drinking. Jesus will provide eternal life beyond Israel to the Gentiles, through Him. This is based on the Genesis hope of chapter 12, "all nations will be blessed in you". This same drinking water will be used in chapter 7 to refer to the water Moses brought from the rock as a parallel to the Spirit bringing new life to Israel. Isaiah 49:10 "They will not hunger or **thirst**, Neither will the scorching heat or sun strike them down; For He who has compassion on them will lead them, And will guide them to springs of water."

⁷¹ She has taken the lack of need to drink forever as the meaning of life ultimate.

⁷² The point of Jesus' response here is that she has not perceived who He was. As He said before, if she realized who He was she would ask Him for water. She still does not realize who He is. Thus, by demonstrating that He knows about her, she will realize that He is from God. This is parallel to the Nathaniel episode. He also saw that Jesus could perceive beyond the physical.

⁷³ There might be here some allusion to the domination of Israel by their captors, in essence Israel's unfaithfulness to YHWH, exemplified by the Samaritans who had intermarried. Whether the number five is significant is interesting also, since the Israelites had submitted to the Assyrians and then the four nations of Daniel, thus making five. And of course, their husband was not the Gentiles but God.

whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly."⁷⁴ 19 *The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.*"⁷⁵ 20 *"Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."*

- e. Jesus explains that the symbolic worship at Jerusalem will be replaced with a full spiritual relationship with the Father (4:21-24).

The Glory of God had resided symbolically in the temple at Jerusalem where the symbolic sacrifices had taken place and the O.T. symbols of worship were found. Now these symbols would be fulfilled in Jesus and people would worship the Father by worshiping Jesus through the revelation of the Spirit.

21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming"⁷⁶ when neither in this mountain⁷⁷ nor in Jerusalem

⁷⁴ It should be noted here that John does not record Jesus' response to this woman's obvious immorality as being one in which she needed to change her ways (although that is the case). He continues with the issue of belief. In fact, there never seems to be, in this story, any recognition of the depravity of this woman by herself, only recognition of Jesus as the provider of life.

⁷⁵ Jesus as the Word.

⁷⁶ This normally means that this is something that is not imminent. It will happen at the Second Coming or later. Thus it would appear that Jesus is speaking of the full revelation of Himself as the Glory at the Second Coming, and ultimately there will be no temple (Rev. 21). The difficulty with this is that the City of Jerusalem is the place where the Son will be worshiped (Rev. 22). Thus, it would appear that Jesus is talking about something that would not be fulfilled during His presence on earth. So while He was the One who was to be worshiped, nevertheless the temple worship in Jerusalem had not been removed and would not be removed until late in the Gospels or early in Acts. However this is somewhat difficult.

⁷⁷ The major issue, however, is the extent to which Samaritan religious traditions are reflected in the Gospel. J. Bowman pointed out that the Samaritans early developed a creed with five points: belief in God, in Moses, in the Scriptures, in Mount Gerizim, and in the Day of Vengeance. Apart from the fourth item these are basic beliefs shared with the Jews. The Samaritan tenth commandment includes a statement that Mount Gerizim is the place where God is to be worshiped and an appendix on the coming of one like Moses, the *Taheb* (the Coming One). Precisely these two items figure in the conversation of the woman at the well with Jesus, reflecting their link in the mind of a Samaritan. The picture of the Samaritans in their adherence to their faith and response to the fuller

will you worship the Father. 22 " You worship what you do not know;⁷⁸ we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 "But an hour is coming, and now is⁷⁹, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth;⁸⁰ for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.⁸¹ 24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."⁸²

- f. Jesus reveals to her that He is the One who will bring all into full knowledge of the Father (4:25-26).

The woman recognizes that the Messiah will be the revealer of all things from God. Jesus announces that He is the One.

25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare⁸³ all things to us."⁸⁴ 26 Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am⁸⁵ He."

revelation in Christ compares well with that of the Jews in John 5:34–47 (see Bowman, "Samaritan Studies," 310–14). But it is the Samaritan belief in Moses that is of special importance for the student of John's Gospel.

⁷⁸ The Samaritans did not have direct access to the Father. The Jews did through the revelation. The Samaritans had to come through the Jews, and Jesus was their King.

⁷⁹ This is the formula for a prophecy that is fulfilled now in Jesus.

⁸⁰ Refer to 2:21 where Jesus said that the temple was His body. Thus here Spirit reflects the new life created in man, and truth is the revelation of Jesus Christ. Thus the worshiper will participate through the leading of the Spirit to worship Jesus.

⁸¹ This is a reference to the issue in 1:11-12, that Israel (the children of God; Deut. 14:1) would reject Jesus and thus those who believed would be the children of God.

⁸² Through the revelation of life in the Spirit, they will worship Jesus (the Truth). The woman recognizes this in the next verse.

⁸³ Perhaps Isaiah 9:1 is the reference. It contains references to the "light" which comes in the Messiah.

⁸⁴ She recognizes the Prophetic function of Jesus.

⁸⁵ This is the first occurrence of "I AM" in the gospel. Literally, it reads, "I am, the One speaking to you."

- g. The disciples arrive and Jesus explains that they must carry on the ministry of revealing the fullness of the O.T. in Him to the world (4:27-39).

The scene is interrupted by the appearance of the disciples. After their questions, Jesus explains their function in what He is doing. The questions of the disciples regard the process of Abrahamic Covenant (God through Israel to the nations) and thus they believe the woman to be seeking something from Jesus (Jew) or Jesus (Jew) to be lowering Himself to speak to her.

Jesus explains that the 12 must be prepared to take the revelation of the appearance of the Christ to the nations. Jesus uses the illustration of the wheat field being ready for harvest as a parallel to the Old Testament (the seed and the prophets as the sowers) and revelation of the Messiah as the fulness (the harvest is ready).

*27 At this point His disciples came⁸⁶, and they were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman, yet no one said, "What do You seek?"⁸⁷ or, "Why do You speak with her?"⁸⁸
28 So the woman left her waterpot,⁸⁹ and went into the city and said to the men, 29 "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done;⁹⁰ this is not the Christ, is it?"⁹¹
30 They went out of the city, and were coming to Him.⁹² 31*

⁸⁶ Now the scene changes, as the disciples enter the scene. Their questioning will further identify the relationship of Jesus to Gentiles.

⁸⁷ This would have been their question to the woman, since that would explain the conversation. She had sought something from a Jew (certainly not the other way around).

⁸⁸ This is the question they would have asked Jesus, since they also would be surprised if He spoke with her.

⁸⁹ The only other mention of a water pot is in 2:6,7 where the water pots were those for purification. Now the woman leaves her water pot, which was for earthly water, for the heavenly water.

⁹⁰ It is the combination of revelation and whom Jesus was (a Prophet, yet the Messiah) which made her realize her plight. It was all in a man.

⁹¹ She, like Andrew and Philip, are testifying to Jesus' words.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."⁹³ 32 But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." 33 So the disciples were saying to one another, "No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?"⁹⁴ 34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."⁹⁵ 35 "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'?"⁹⁶ Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white⁹⁷ for harvest.⁹⁸ 36 "Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for⁹⁹ life eternal;¹⁰⁰ so that he who sows and he who

⁹² This is similar to 1:19 where the people were going from Jerusalem to see John the Baptist. Yet those were Jews, and now these are Gentiles. Yet they are going out from the city to isolate themselves to Jesus as apart from their pagan roots.

⁹³ The woman was to have given Him a drink. Now the disciples are going to have Him eat. In both cases He will reply that it is they (her) who need the food (water).

⁹⁴ Like the woman and Nicodemus and the Jews at the temple cleansing, they misunderstand His full meaning.

⁹⁵ While the disciples are trying to feed Him, He states that food is really to do the desires of the Father.

⁹⁶ Again, He tells them not to simply look for food in a physical harvest.

⁹⁷ The Samaritans who were coming across the field were likely wearing white, which was the customary dress for a man in Israel. Commenting on the authenticity of a certain media production regarding the times of Jesus, Dr. James Strange of the University of South Florida, specializing in New Testament, states, "I will be interested to see if he knows that in those times men wore either white or off-white, and women wore clothes with color." (The Tampa Tribune, Wednesday, February 25, 2004, "Metro Section", p. 1, Steve Otto Column.)

⁹⁸ But to see that the harvest is the people of the world who are ready to see the Messiah, the fullness of the Old Testament.

⁹⁹ The use of "for" here seems to denote a work for earning salvation (or proving it.). However the 'eis' here is more likely "to" or "into" a primary meaning. In other words the fruit are the people who are being harvested into the kingdom (eternal life) in the present tense.

¹⁰⁰ The one who is ministering the fullness of Jesus Christ is reaping the benefits of the Old Testament (the seed). The fruit here is the souls who are brought into the Kingdom by the Messianic salvation prophesied in the Old Testament.

reaps may rejoice together.¹⁰¹ 37 "For in this case the saying is true, 'One sows and another reaps.'¹⁰² 38 "I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor."¹⁰³

- h. Like the Samaritan woman the disciples will tell the world of the fullness of the O.T. in Jesus Christ and bring men to Him to be saved (4:39-42).

As the disciples watch following Jesus' explanation of their function of carrying the revelation of Jesus in the coming age, the Samaritan men believe because of the woman's testimony. This testimony brings them individually to Jesus. The apostles will do this same thing (cf. chs. 14—17) as they carry forth the word of Jesus to the world, and bring the world into a personal relationship with the Savior of the World.

39 From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified,¹⁰⁴ "He told me all the things that I have done."¹⁰⁵ 40 So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed¹⁰⁶ there two days. 41 Many more

¹⁰¹ An indication that the O.T. saint and the N.T. saint would rejoice together having played their different parts of "preparer" and "fulfiller".

¹⁰² The Old Testament was not inferior to the New Testament, nor the saints of the O.T. to the saints of the N.T. He is simply saying that they both played different, but necessary parts.

¹⁰³ In other words, the disciples were sent out to speak of eternal life based on the Old Testament.

¹⁰⁴ The woman here is reaping the fruit of her friends as she introduces them to the Messiah.

¹⁰⁵ Since this is such a parallel to the story of John the Baptist and his disciples that are turned to Jesus, the question is as to why is this a parallel. It appears to be an illustration. The woman is convicted by the Law of Moses (O.T.) who meets Jesus (like John the Baptist), and then turns to testify and bring others to Jesus word. This is the pattern by John the Baptist, by the woman, and by application of Jesus' illustration to the apostles.

¹⁰⁶ Recall 1:39 where the disciples of John the Baptist stayed with Jesus. There is an emphasis in this book on abiding with Jesus, and the desire to do that.

believed because of His word;¹⁰⁷ 42 and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said¹⁰⁸ that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know¹⁰⁹ that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."¹¹⁰

3. Jesus heals simply through His Word without His Presence (4:43-54).

Following the example of Nicodemus and the Woman at the Well, Jesus now demonstrates that His presence is not required, but simply His Word is powerful enough to heal. Thus He completes a sign at a distance and there is belief in Him and His word prior to the miracle. This demonstrates that while the ability is in Jesus, His Word will carry on apart from Him (through the apostles although this is explained clearly in 13—17).

43 After the two days He went forth from there into Galilee. 44 For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.¹¹¹ 45 So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast;¹¹² for they themselves also went to the feast. 46 Therefore He

¹⁰⁷ There is a big emphasis here on why people believe. Many believe due to signs, which were supposed to reflect the Old Testament fulfillment in Jesus. Many believe based on His word. The emphasis of this book and of Deut. 13:1 is that a prophet is known by His word, not by miraculous deeds (unless they were signs that would fulfill the O.T. word, which Jesus' signs did).

¹⁰⁸ This is similar to the disciples of John the Baptist who left John the Baptist for Jesus. She is similar to John the Baptist who sees Jesus as the fulfillment of the Messianic promises and then points her fellow man to Jesus.

¹⁰⁹ They went back to Jesus and verified Him by His word, no longer based on the sign that He had given to the woman. This is according to Deut. 13:1ff.

¹¹⁰ The woman testified of Jesus, then the people individually came to Jesus. It appears that this is the pattern, which will follow after Jesus' ascension. The apostles will testify of Jesus, and this will bring people individually back to the Savior.

Note also that they acknowledge that He is the Savior of the *world*, which is a reference earlier to the "world" knew Him not. The message had gone out to non-Jews.

¹¹¹ Was Galilee where Nazareth was? Thus He would be saying that He was going where He was not accepted?

¹¹² This probably is referring to 2:23 where many believed in the signs He was doing.

came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine.¹¹³ And there was a royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47 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. 48 So Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders¹¹⁴, you simply will not believe." 49 The royal official said to Him, "Sir, come down¹¹⁵ before my child dies." 50 Jesus said to him, "Go; your son lives." The man believed the word¹¹⁶ that Jesus spoke to him and started off. 51 As he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living. 52 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." 53 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. 54 This is again a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ This and the previous verse are a reverse *inclusio* with chapter 2. There was the wedding at Cana and the believing in the signs. Now is the mention of the signs and the mention of the wedding. Sandwiched in between was the story of Nicodemus (the ruler of the Jews, a Pharisee, and the Samaritan woman).

¹¹⁴ Signs were intended to convince the audience that Jesus was the Christ by doing some part of an Old Testament expectation. Thus, the signs were for them to believe in Him. The question was, would they die for Him? The Samaritans had believed in the woman's word. She had seen Him and He had told her everything she had done. Nicodemus had seen the signs and it had caused him to wonder. The word "simply" is added. It appears that Jesus is saying that they only want the product of the signs; here the healing of his son, and do not want to see the indications of Him as the One with whom they should align. For instance, in chapter 6 He states that they do not believe in Him for deliverance, but they do come to Him for the food he multiplied.

¹¹⁵ The royal official desires Jesus' presence to heal.

¹¹⁶ The man believes the word without a sign.

¹¹⁷ John is counting the signs, and both of these were done in Cana of Galilee, the wine and the son.