

COMMENTARY ON JOHN

LESSON NUMBER 53

John 4:43 *“Now after two days He departed thence, and went into Galilee. ⁴⁴ For Jesus Himself testified, that a prophet hath no honor in His own country. ⁴⁵ Then when He was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received Him, having seen all the things that He did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.”*(John 4:43-45)

JESUS DEPARTS FROM SAMARIA

INTRODUCTION

Confirming that Jesus prefers to be around those who desire to hear what He is saying, He remained in Samaria for two days – a place that had been generally neglected since the days of the prophets, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, and Micah (Micah 1:1). He remained because they asked Him to abide with them. They were persuaded He was *“indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world”* (John 4:42). After He rose from the dead, Jesus displayed this same propensity, turning in to spend time with Cleophas and his companion (Luke 24:29). O, the benefits of desiring the Lord Jesus to be with us, teach us, and show us the things of the Kingdom! When Paul was threatened by hostility in Corinth, his heart was put at ease when Jesus appeared to him and said, *“Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city”* (Acts 18:9-10). Isaac was assured when God said to him, *“Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee”* (Gen 26:3). The Lord made the same pledge to Jacob: *“I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest”* (Gen 28:15). Sometimes it may require considerable effort and faith to believe this is the case – but those who refuse to live without His influence will find Him remaining with them. If you have not yet experienced the tenacity of Jacob, labor now to do so: *“I will not let thee go, except Thou bless me”* (Gen 32:26). The word of the Lord, and the receptivity of the brethren in Corinth, moved Paul to remain *“a year and six months”* in Corinth (Acts 18:11). There was such a high level of receptivity in Ephesus that Paul remained there for *“three years”* (Acts 20:31). He taught in the school of Tryannus for *“two years,”* during which *“all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks”* (Acts 19:10). When longevity of sound teaching, and a hunger and thirst for righteousness are wed together, the Lord will remain and do extraordinary things. I believe we have tasted of some of this, and if we will continue in the mode of receptivity, there is no telling what the Lord will do among us.

AND AFTER TWO DAYS

John 4:43 *“Now after two days He departed thence, and went into Galilee.”*

Remember the setting of this text. Jesus was wearied with His journey, and sat on the Jacob’s well near Samaria. There He confronted a woman who came to draw water, entered into a conversation with her, and persuaded her He had something to give that she

needed. She returned to the city, came back with a host of Samaritans, some of whom had believed on Him because of the saying of the woman, which people also asked Him to "tarry" with them. As a result "many more believed because of His own word." This was something God had purposed. It was something Jesus comprehended, and into which He entered. Because this was all done within the framework of the will and purpose of God, the woman believed, "many" who heard her testimony believed, and "many more believed" when they personally heard Jesus.

There we have demonstrated the truth that things within the framework of the will of God are duly influenced by the Almighty Himself. It is no wonder that Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10). It is why Paul admonished us, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but **understanding what the will of the Lord is**" (Eph 5:17). It is true that we are to "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col 4:12). It is why John wrote, "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, **if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.**" (1 John 5:14-15). Concerning Himself, Jesus said, "**My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work**" (John 4:34). And again, "For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but **the will of Him that sent Me**" (John 6:38). Can it really be any different for us? Is it really that difficult to know "the will of the Lord ,for my life?" The thing that causes confusion is when men are distracted into thinking about what they want to do, or think they can do. **The agenda belongs to God.**

AFTER TWO DAYS. Behold what was accomplished in two days! That was the smallest segment of time through which Israel was directed in the wilderness. When the directing cloud was taken up and began to move, they also moved "**whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed**" (Num 9:22). That is what took place in this text. The cloud of the Divine agenda moved after two days, and therefore Jesus left.

It is possible to stay in one place too long – or to maintain a certain spiritual posture too long. Once, after being soundly defeated by the Amorites, who "**chased them as bees do,**" destroying them because they had fought when the Lord told them not to (Deut 1:41-46), they "**compassed mount Seir many days.**" It was then that the Lord spoke to Moses, "**Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward**" (Deut 2:3).

There are some people who have been holding the same spiritual stance too long. It is time to move on, and become more deeply involved in the will of the Lord.

HE DEPARTED THENCE. To the flesh, it probably looked as though Jesus should have spent more time there – perhaps even go into the city of Samaria, and reap some more souls, so to speak. He was not, however, operating according to appearance, but according to the will of His Father. He who said, "**Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment**" (John 7:24), did not Himself judge according to appearance. What was ripe at that time had been reaped. He knew that some more work was required in that area before He would send laborers there to reap the coming harvest (Acts 1:8; 8:5).

AND WENT INTO GALILEE. Other versions read, "**went forth from there to Galilee,**" ^{NASB} "**He went on from there into Galilee,**" ^{BBE} "**left there to go to the land of Galilee.**" ^{IE} The language suggests a Divine itinerary. This commenced His ministry in Galilee. The other Gospels omit some of the earlier parts of Jesus' ministry – like the account we are

reviewing, as well as when, in Capernaum, He turned the water into wine (John 2:1-11). They did mention His entrance into Galilee: *"Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, He departed into Galilee . . . Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God . . . And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of Him through all the region round about"* (Matt 4:12; Mark 1:14; Luke 4:14). In fact, Jesus was en route to Galilee when He encountered the woman at the well (John 4:3).

Matthew says that Jesus went into this area to fulfill a prophecy of Isaiah (Isa 9:1,2): *"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."* (Isa 9:2). Matthew refers to *"Galilee of the Gentiles,"* affirming the people were sitting in darkness, and that in Christ *"light is sprung up"* (Matt 4:16-17). Galilee consisted of an upper and lower part, the lower part being occupied by Gentiles, which area was near to Samaria, the middle section of Canaan. The prophecy was one of the means of identifying Jesus was the Christ.

A PROPHET HATH NO HONOR IN HIS OWN COUNTRY

"⁴⁴ For Jesus Himself testified, that a prophet hath no honor in His own country." Other versions read, *"a prophet has no honor in the country of his birth,"* ^{BBE} *"A prophet is not respected in his own country"* ^{CJB} *"A prophet is not accepted in his own home town,"* ^{LIVING} and *"a prophet in his own fatherland value has no."* ^{ABP}

JESUS HIMSELF TESTIFIED. Jesus said these words in his hometown synagogue: *"And when He was come into His own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this Man this wisdom, and these mighty works?"* When the people *"were offended at Him,"* declaring *"Is not this the carpenter's son? is not His mother called Mary? and His brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this Man all these things?"* Jesus responded: *"And they were offended in Him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in His own country, and in His own house"* (Mat 13:54-57).

This is an inspired editorial remark by John, explaining why He departed, going to Galilee. The incident with the woman at the well, and many of the citizens of Samaria, occurred while He was on the way to Galilee. He was going there because He was not received in Nazareth, His home town. They were familiar with Him in the flesh, but could not perceive that He was the Son of God, and the Prophet promised by Moses. **Familiarity with Him in the flesh bred contempt for Him in the Spirit.**

The uncomely circumstance Jesus faced in Nazareth sheds some light on the attempt to know Jesus "after the flesh" – something the Lord does not permit (2 Cor 5:16). This would be attempting to know Jesus as a "Friend," only in association and within the context of one's personal life in the world. If Jesus is not known fundamentally and exclusively as *"Lord and Savior,"* there will be times when He is spurned in the interest of other things. Jesus is only profitable within the context of God's will – not ours.

A PROPHET. From Jesus' standpoint, He was *"The Prophet"* (Matt 21:11; John 7:40). From the standpoint of gifts given to the church, this is an insightful person, gifted by God, and given to the church (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11). From the standpoint of the church, it is a person who *"speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort"* (1 Cor 14:3).

HATH NO HONOR IN HIS OWN COUNTRY. Other versions read, *"has no honor in*

the country of his birth, " ^{BBE} "not respected in his own country," ^{CJB} and "not honored in his own hometown." ^{NLT}

Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt 5:16). He was "the Light of the world" who shined the brightest. Yet He, for thirty years, and when He commenced His ministry, received no honor where He was living. Among other things, this should cause us to revisit His saying concerning letting our light shine. Does "glorify your Father in heaven" mean the people deliberately praise God for your life? Or does it mean that when the people see genuine "light" in you, **they respond to you precisely as they do to God, thereby giving Him glory.** I am persuaded the latter is the case. The response confirms whether or not the true light was shining.

Exposure to Jesus on a common level breeds contempt for Him in His assigned capacities of "Lord and Savior" (2 Pet 1:11; 2:20; 3:2,18). The closer our thoughts of Jesus are to the world, the further they are from heaven. People who think of Jesus within the context of their own interests will not love and serve Him with all of their heart. This is because their interests are not what required Jesus to come into the world. They are not what compelled God to send Him here.

A carnal mind cannot recognize the truth – and a self-interested mind is a carnal mind. It is written, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, **neither indeed can be**" (Rom 8:7). This is precisely why the Jewish leaders, and eventually the people, rejected Christ, calling for His crucifixion. He simply did not fit into their plans and perceptions. The more self dominates, the more spiritual vision and perception decreases. When these are lost, recovery is not simplistic. In fact, it requires Divine power, the work of the Holy Spirit, and a strong faith to do so.

Earthly familiarity clouds spiritual discernment. When Jesus is viewed as the way to solve personal problems and difficulties, He will **not** be seen as the Savior from sin (Rom 6:7,18,22), and the appointed means of being made acceptable to God (Eph 1:6). The whole contemporary idea of "relevance" makes man the principle consideration. On the side of truth, true relevance always has to do with God, what He is doing, and what He has purposed. Anything that does not integrate with those is, in the most perfect sense, irrelevant.

The flesh discounts Divinely provided evidence. The flesh has its own definition of evidence – and it centers in pleasing self, realizing success in the world, etc. The real evidence, however, is faith itself (Heb 11:1), which perceives what God has done, and is doing exclusively through Jesus Christ. When the revealed objectives of God are seen taking place in us, that is our personal confirmation that Jesus Christ is everything God has declared Him to be.

THE GALILEANS RECEIVED HIM

"⁴⁵ Then when He was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received Him, having seen all the things that He did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast."

In Samaria, Jesus did not do anything that was of an outwardly miraculous nature. He only SAID things, shedding light on the situation. He revealed who He was (John 4:26), what He had to give (John 4:10), and the effect that gift would have upon the recipient (John 4:14). He made known what was vain (John 4:22), that salvation was "of the Jews" (John 4:22), and that an hour was coming when men would worship God "in Spirit and in truth" (John 4:23). There was a moral and spiritual power in those words that

moved the woman and certain citizens of Samaria to focus their attention on Jesus Himself.

WHEN HE WAS COME INTO GALILEE. This is where He was going when He had to pass through Samaria. Leaving Judaea, He *"departed **again** into Galilee"* (John 4:3). He did this when He heard *"how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John"* (John 4:1). He would not remain where divisions and hostility were growing. Those who love arguments and dissension do well to remember this Divine trait. His first stay in Galilee occasioned the finding of Philip (John 1:43), seeing Nathanael (John 1:47), and the miracle of turning water into wine (John 2:1-11). After this He went to Capernaum with His mother, brethren, and disciples (John 2:12). He then went up to Jerusalem, cleansing the Temple (John 2:13-17). While in Jerusalem during the Passover, *"many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did"* (John 2:23). However, *"Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because He knew all men"* (John 2:24). Those circumstances were not ideal, to say the least. His time in Samaria was quite different.

THE GALILEANS RECEIVED HIM. Other versions read, *"the Galileans welcomed Him,"* ^{NIV} *"took Him to their hearts,"* ^{BBE} *"received Him well,"* ^{NJB} *"welcomed Him with open arms,"* ^{LIVING} *"welcomed Him eagerly,"* ^{WEYMOUTH} and *"welcomed Him and took Him to their hearts eagerly."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The depth of this reception is not delineated in this text. Although it was certainly valid, and worthy of note, it appears to me to be more on the surface. The next clause provides some explanation.

HAVING SEEN ALL THINGS THAT HE DID. By way of comparison, the Samaritans believed because of what they heard. The Galileans received Him because of what they saw. It seems to me that this response is neutralized by the saying of Jesus: *"blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed"* (John 20:29).

There were others who believed because of what they saw Jesus do. His disciples *"believed on Him,"* when He manifested His glory by turning water into wine (John 2:11). When He was in Jerusalem, *"many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did"* (John 2:23). When He was in the Temple, *"many of the people believed on Him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this Man hath done?"* (John 7:31). Conversely, in Jerusalem, *"though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they **believed not** on Him"* (John 12:37).

FOR THEY ALSO WENT TO THE FEAST. Other versions read, *"for they themselves also went to the feast,"* ^{NASB} and *"For they had gone to the Festival."* ^{NRSV}

Notice, it does not say the people went to the Feast, and so did Jesus. It rather affirms that Jesus went to the feast, and so also did some of the people. It was His presence at the Feast that made it unique. The things that happened when He was there were not, and could not be, duplicated by anyone else.

Jesus was noted for being at the Feasts appointed by the Law. Therefore it is written, *"Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, Where is He?"* (John 7:11). Later it is also written, *"Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that He will not come to the feast?"* (John 11:56). Even in those days, the people knew there were some times and places where you could expect to see Jesus. For example, every Sabbath Day you would find Him in the synagogue, for that was His *"custom"* (Lk 4:16). We should expect to find Him wherever

there are two or three gathered together in His name (Matt 18:20). Wherever people come together to partake of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Him, we should expect to find Him (1 Cor 11:23-28). Wherever people are gathered together with the same mind and judgment (1 Cor 1:10), continuing steadfastly in the apostles doctrine, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayers (Acts 2:42), we should expect to find Him. Where there are people gathered preferring one another (Rom 12:10), admonishing one another (Rom 15:14), serving one another (Gal 5:13), forbearing one another (Eph 4:2), teaching and admonishing one another (Col 3:16), comforting one another (1 Thess 4:18), and edifying one another (1 Thess 5:11), THERE WE EXPECT TO FIND JESUS. He will work among such people, even more extensively than He did in the Temple and at the Feasts. O, that more were able to perceive this, and would be able to look for, and detect, the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ!