

He Loved Me . . .

He Loves Me Lots

The Gospel of John

Text

John 4:43-54

Topic

Jesus has strong words for people
who seek after signs

Title

"Sign-tology"

Super rare 100% original Texaco one-piece globe with vented top. Found in the attic of an old building in New Jersey that used to be a Texaco station. It was lying on its side on the floor. There are NO cracks.

If that [eBay](#) description got you excited, you are a collector of vintage signs. The rare Texaco gas pump sign sold for just under \$17,000.00.

In Provo, Utah, "Sparky" Sparks boasts a collection of porcelain signs on posts that he believes is the largest of its kind in the world. "We're at 217 and have another four to put up," Sparks said.

Our verses in the Gospel of John describe a different kind of sign collectors.

Whenever Jesus did signs and wonders, the people wanted to see more of them. It prompted Jesus to say, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe" (v48).

Signs and wonders did not inspire saving faith in Him. It got so bad that at one point Jesus said to the Pharisees and Sadducees, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign" (Matthew 16:4).

Seeking signs is a 'sign' of unbelief.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 You Don't Need To See Signs & Wonders**, and **#2 You Don't Need To Seek Signs & Wonders**.

#1 - You Don't Need To See Signs & Wonders (v43-48)

Signs and wonders have not ceased in the Church Age.

We are *not* cessationists. Believers continue to be used by God to perform signs and wonders. Miracles happen. Prophecy and tongues edify the church when appropriately exercised. There are gifts of healing.

These phenomena, however, have a different priority than they did when Jesus was on Earth.

We'll see what that means as we work our way through the verses.

Joh 4:43 Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee.

Jesus had spent two days in the Samaritan town of Sychar.

He received a word of knowledge while talking with the immoral woman at Jacob's Well. Stunned by His supernatural knowledge, she was saved.

There were no further signs, wonders, or miracles. Nevertheless, we read, "Many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I *ever* did." And many more believed

because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world" (4:39-42).

The word of knowledge Jesus shared was significant. But the Samaritans said it was from hearing Jesus' words that they believed.

Joh 4:44 For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.

Chapter four began with Jesus wanting to avoid attracting attention from the religious leaders.

He retreated to the obscurity of His hometown.

You'd think that Jesus would be a hometown hero. He wasn't. We read in the Gospel of Matthew,

Mat 13:54 When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this *Man* get this wisdom and *these* mighty works?

Mat 13:55 Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?

Mat 13:56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this *Man* get all these things?"

Mat 13:57 So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."

It's strange that Jesus' neighbors admitted His "wisdom" and "works" but were nonetheless "offended" that He could be more than a carpenter's son. It was familiarity breeding contempt.

- Your family and friends see the radical changes in you after you are born again. Rather than applaud you, they're offended.
- The same can be true of your workplace or school.

Joh 4:45 So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.

Didn't we just read that the Galileans dishonored Jesus? The word "country," in verse forty-four, means *hometown*. The majority in Galilee received Jesus, but *not* in His hometown region of Nazareth.

Galileans had witnessed Jesus overturning tables and performing signs at the recent Feast of Passover. They "received Him" means that they *welcomed* Jesus. The word isn't used in the sense we say someone who gets saved "receives" Jesus.

Skip to... Joh 4:48 Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."

Albert Barnes writes, "This was spoken not to the nobleman only, but to the Galileans generally. The Samaritans had believed without any miracle... Though He had performed miracles enough to convince them, yet, unless they continually saw them, [the Galileans] would not believe."

John Gill writes, "[The] Jews everywhere... required signs and miracles to be wrought, in confirmation of Christ's being the Messiah, and which indeed was but right; and Christ did perform them for that purpose: but their sin of unbelief lay in this, that they wanted still more and more signs; they could not be contented with what they had seen, but required more."

Adam Clarke writes, "The words are not addressed to the nobleman alone, but to all the Galilean Jews in general; for our Lord uses the plural number, which he never does when addressing an individual. These people differed widely from the people of Sychar: they had neither a love of the truth, nor simplicity of heart; and would not believe anything from Heaven, unless forced on their minds by the most striking miracles."

The Old Testament predicted that the Messiah would perform signs and wonders. That's the context in which John the Baptist will send his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

Jesus will answer, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: *The* blind see and *the* lame walk; *the* lepers are cleansed and *the* deaf hear; *the* dead are raised up and *the* poor have the Gospel preached to them" (Matthew 4:4-5).

Signs *sign-ify*. The first-century signs and wonders and miracles were the signage that Jesus is Who He said He was, the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

Every so many years, a movement comes along scolding the church for failing because there are not enough signs and wonders and miracles breaking out all over the place.

There *is* a place for proper encouragement to expect the supernatural. Seeing them, however, isn't necessary. If you were saved as an adult, was it because you saw a sign, or a wonder, or a miracle? Your salvation experience was probably more like that of the Samaritans. You heard the Word of God and you believed.

#2 - You Don't Need To Seek Signs & Wonders (v46-54)

A nobleman came seeking a miracle and the Lord used it to show that we don't need to seek miracles.

Back to... Joh 4:46 So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum.

The word "nobleman" describes a position in the civil government. His colleagues would have known his son was sick, then miraculously healed. Thus God would cause the Gospel to infiltrate the government.

Our civil government in California has fallen to an all-time moral low. Gavin Newsom's 2021-2022 state budget is offering an incentive program for medical students **who decide to become abortionists**. The \$20 million program will either pay off existing student loans for practicing abortionists or be offered as scholarship money for medical students **who pledge to become abortionists**.

He and many in our state government agree (quote),"California should be a 'sanctuary,' helping out-of-state patients seeking abortion." No longer the Golden State, we will be the Abortion State.

Odds are some elected State official has needs similar to the nobleman. Perhaps it will cause them to reach up to Jesus, and then reach out to their colleagues.

A change in government failed. A change of hearts will not. Pray that the Gospel will infiltrate Sacramento.

Joh 4:47 When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

The nobleman is both *asking* for something and *telling* Jesus what to do:

- His ask: "Heal my son."
- His tell: "Come with me."

I may not realize it, but I sometimes ask and tell.

I have my way that I think God should answer me. It's better to lay out the perceived need and submit it to the Lord.

I say "perceived need" because I don't know what I need. Not when it comes to bringing glory to God through my life. Or when it involves growing in the Lord to produce fruit.

In late 2018, I was pretty confident I did not need a degenerative neurological disease. *It wasn't something I was praying for.* Apparently, I do need it.

Skip to... Joh 4:49 The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!"

He assumed Jesus needed to be in the proximity of the sick. He didn't comprehend that Jesus could as easily raise the dead as He could heal the sick. He acted on what he knew.

It's nothing for Jesus to heal you. Ah, but you'll never know His sufficient grace if He always does.

There is a depth of knowing God that can only come through suffering.

- A.W. Tozer writes, "It is necessary for God to use the hammer, the file, and the furnace in His holy work of preparing a saint for true sainthood. It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply."
- Elizabeth Elliot writes, "The deepest things I have learned in my own life have come from the deepest suffering. And out of the deepest waters and the hottest fires have come the deepest things I know about God."
- Job writes, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You" (42:5).

King Nebuchadnezzar threw Daniel's three friends into the fiery furnace. Jesus was there with them. *They were in no rush to exit.*

Joh 4:50 Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.

He was the last person you would think would believe Jesus *without* a sign. He most likely was not a Jew, and he had no previous contact with Jesus.

Nevertheless, his behavior left no doubt he believed. He accepted what Jesus said as truth and headed home at a leisurely pace.

He believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness. **He was saved.**

Joh 4:51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told *him*, saying, "Your son lives!"

No one expected long distance healing.

Joh 4:52 Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him."

Joh 4:53 So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives." And he himself believed, and his whole household.

I can imagine the nobleman preaching a sermon to his household. The title: *It's 7 o'clock and I was with the Rock.*"

Precious family and servants. Yesterday, at the seventh hour, Jesus spoke, "Your son lives."

At precisely that moment, my son lived; and now my soul lives, too. Who is a god like Him, Who heals from afar? Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. Will you not believe Him? Will you not receive Him? Choose you this day whom you will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!



It's all speculation on my part, but it is consistent with what happens when Jesus saves.

Joh 4:54 This again *is* the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

Jesus had performed many signs, and two were in Cana:

1. Jesus' first sign in Cana was turning water into wine at a *wedding*.
2. This second one would avoid a *wake*.

Were it not for his son's illness this nobleman would not have come to Jesus Christ in Cana. He may not have come to Jesus ever. He and his household would have lived comfortably, only to die in their sins eternally.

In *Back to the Future*, Marty's improv guitar  solo as he was playing Johnny Be Goode doesn't exactly "McFly."  It was out of context and for a different time.

Believers need to know the time in which they live to interpret the Word of God correctly.

God never changes, and the Gospel is the same from Genesis through the Revelation, but how believers glorify God does change during different eras of human history.

The first coming of Jesus was a unique time. The God-man promised four-thousand years earlier in the third chapter of the Book of Genesis was on Earth. He was offering Israel the prophesied Kingdom of God on Earth.

We pointed out that the Messiah would be recognized by the signs and wonders He performed.

Signs and wonders, healings and exorcisms, were so abundant during Jesus' three and one-half year ministry that the last words in this Gospel are, "And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (21:25).

When Israel's leaders officially rejected Jesus, the Kingdom of God on Earth was put on hold. The mystery of the church was revealed, and the Church Age began. It is the time from the coming of God the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost until the resurrection and rapture of the church.

The Church Age is another unique era in God's dealings with the human race.

Let's talk about healing in the Church Age. There are gifts of healing. However, our experience in the Church Age is that *very few we pray for are healed*.

Some burden you by saying you lack faith or offer some other such criticism. We need to consult a biblical expert.

The apostle Paul was blessed with gifts of healing. In one strange episode, "handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them" (Acts 19:12).

Not the norm, however. Paul taught us what is normal in the Church Age when he said to the church in Philippi, "For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, **but also to suffer for His sake**" (Philippians 1:29).

- From his inspired pen we read, "Trophimus I have left in Miletus **sick**" (Second Timothy 4:20).
- Paul described Epaphroditus being "**sick** almost to death" (Philippians 2:27).

Paul asked the Lord for his own healing and was not healed.

The Lord answered, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul responded, "Therefore most gladly I will rather **boast** in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I **take pleasure** in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (Second Corinthians 12:9-10).

In the Church Age, God is magnified and glorified in our weaknesses and infirmities *more* - and *more often* - than He is in gifts of healing.

In chapter eight of the Book of Romans, Paul gives a partial list of the suffering Christians can expect in the Church Age: Tribulation, distress, persecution,

famine, nakedness, peril, sword, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, and any other created thing.”

He exclaimed, “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (8:37). We conquer through patient endurance.

What does the apostle Peter have to say? “Rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified” (First Peter 4:13-14).

We are characters in *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*, not *Foxe’s Book of Miracle Workers*.

Pray for healing. Ask for a miracle. Believe that God permits signs and wonders. Desire spiritual gifts, including prophecy and speaking in tongues.

But don’t be a collector of vintage ‘signs’ as if we were living when Jesus was on Earth.