

Dr. Dave Turner, John, Session 6, From Judea through Samaria back to Cana of Galilee – John 4:1-54

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Turner, John, Session 6, John 4:1-54, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. David Turner's sixth session on the Gospel of John focuses on **chapter four**, titled "From Judea through Samaria, Back to Cana of Galilee." The lecture examines the narrative flow, highlighting **Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well** and his subsequent healing of the royal official's son in Cana. Turner discusses the **historical and cultural context** of the Samaritans and analyzes the literary techniques used to interweave these stories. Finally, he considers the complex relationship between **signs and faith** within John's Gospel, referencing the views of scholar Craig Koester.

**2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Turner, John, Session 6 – Double click icon to play in
Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL]
Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament →
Gospels → John).**



**Turner_John_Session
n6.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Turner, John, Session 6, John 4:1-54

Briefing Document: Gospel of John, Session 6 (John 4)

Overview: This briefing document summarizes Dr. Turner's sixth session on the Gospel of John, focusing specifically on John chapter 4. The chapter encompasses Jesus' journey "from Judea through Samaria back to Cana of Galilee," highlighting two significant events: his encounter and conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, and the subsequent healing of the royal official's son in Cana. Dr. Turner analyzes the narrative flow, delves into the historical and cultural context of the Samaritans, and explores the complex theme of signs and faith within the Gospel of John.

Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

1. Narrative Flow and Geographical Movement:

- John chapter 4 traces a circular journey for Jesus: from Jerusalem (where he likely was at the end of chapter 3), through Samaria, and back to Cana of Galilee, where he had performed his first miracle (John 2). The healing of the official's son in Cana marks his second miracle in that location, creating a "cycle or a circle" in the narrative.
- The central event of the chapter occurs in Samaria, near Sychar and Jacob's well, traditionally located near Mount Gerizim and Ebal.
- The narrative structure involving the Samaritan woman and the disciples is described as an "artful weaving together of two different plots." Jesus interacts with the woman while the disciples are away getting food, and then teaches the disciples while the woman returns to her village. These storylines intersect when the disciples return as the woman is leaving.
- The chapter concludes with Jesus' return to Cana and his encounter with the royal official from Capernaum seeking healing for his son.

2. The Encounter with the Samaritan Woman:

- Jesus' decision to travel through Samaria was unusual, as Jews often avoided contact with Samaritans. The woman's surprise is noted: *"how come you, being a Jew, are talking to me, a Samaritan?"* This ethnic divide was compounded by the fact that she was a woman and he was a man.
- Dr. Turner provides historical context on the Samaritans, tracing their origins back to the divided monarchy, the Assyrian conquest and deportation, and the

subsequent religious syncretism that led to their separation and animosity with the Jews. He references Old Testament passages like 1 Kings 16, Joshua 8, and Nehemiah 4 to illustrate this history.

- New Testament references in Luke (Luke 9:51-56, the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10, and the healing of the ten lepers in Luke 17) and Acts (Acts 8) are discussed to highlight the complex relationship between Jews and Samaritans and God's eventual inclusion of the Samaritans in the early church. *"Perhaps the principle of Genesis chapter 12 comes to the fore here, that God makes an apparently exclusive move in choosing Abraham, but God's ultimate desire is inclusive to bless all nations through Abraham's descendants."*
- The conversation between Jesus and the woman unfolds in six stages, focusing on "living water" and "true worship." Jesus subtly leads her to recognize his identity.
- The woman's midday visit to the well is often interpreted as a sign of her being a social outcast due to her multiple marriages. However, Dr. Turner cites Professor Lynn Koeck, suggesting that this interpretation might be overemphasized and that other factors like divorce or the death of husbands could be at play.
- Jesus declares to the woman, *"believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father, neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem...Salvation is from the Jews...the true worshipers will worship the Father in the spirit and in truth."* This signifies a shift in the locus of worship.
- Jesus explicitly reveals his Messianic identity to the woman: *"I'm the guy."*
- The woman's testimony leads to many Samaritans believing in Jesus: *"Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I ever did.'"* Their faith is further strengthened after hearing Jesus themselves: *"We now believe in him, not just because of what you said. Now we've heard for ourselves."*

3. Comparison with Nicodemus (John 3):

- Dr. Turner draws a contrast between the Samaritan woman and Nicodemus, highlighting differences in gender, ethnicity, social status, and initial openness to Jesus.
- The woman, despite potentially being a social outcast and relatively ignorant of Jewish religious tradition, is totally open to Jesus and becomes an evangelist.

Nicodemus, a respected Jewish leader and teacher, is "guardedly open" and struggles to grasp Jesus' teachings on being born again.

- This comparison illustrates that the gospel transcends social and religious boundaries. *"The bottom line is they both needed Jesus."*

4. Racial and Cultural Bias:

- The disciples' amazement at Jesus speaking with a Samaritan woman raises the issue of racial and cultural bias.
- Dr. Turner emphasizes that *"racial and cultural bias is incompatible with following Jesus"* and that the gospel is for everyone, regardless of their background.
- He challenges listeners to consider if God is leading them to take risks in relating to people who are different from them. *"In Christ, the gospel is for people of all ethnicities, and all places on the social ladder, and that gives us our ultimate identity."*

5. The Healing of the Royal Official's Son:

- This section is described as "rather simple and upfront." The official travels from Capernaum to Cana to seek Jesus' help for his dying son.
- Jesus' statement, *"a prophet has no honor in his own country,"* is interpreted differently than in the synoptic gospels. Dr. Turner suggests it refers to Jesus' mixed reception in Jerusalem, rather than Nazareth.
- Jesus responds to the official's plea with a seemingly harsh statement: *"Unless you people see signs and wonders, you'll never believe."* This is linked to the potential superficial faith seen in Jerusalem based on signs alone.
- The official persists in his request, demonstrating his urgent need.
- Jesus heals the boy from a distance by simply saying, *"Go your way, your son will live."* The man's belief in Jesus' word is evident.
- The healing leads to the belief of the official and his entire household.
- This event is identified as *"the second sign Jesus performed after coming from Judea back to Galilee,"* creating a connection back to the miracle in Cana in John 2.

6. The Relationship Between Signs and Faith:

- The chapter concludes by revisiting the complex issue of signs and faith in John's Gospel.
- Dr. Turner introduces Craig Koester's view: *"Characters in the gospel respond to the signs with genuine faith if they have already been brought to faith by what they have heard from or about Jesus."* Koester suggests that hearing and believing Jesus' message precedes and enables a proper understanding of his signs. *"For them, the sign is not the beginning of a relationship, but something that occurs within an existing relationship."* This is tentatively linked to the Protestant concept of *sola scriptura*.
- However, Dr. Turner raises a potential challenge to this view by referencing Jesus' words to Thomas in John 20:29: *"because you have seen me, have you believed? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."* This suggests that seeing (a form of sign) can lead to belief, though unseen belief is considered more blessed.
- Dr. Turner concludes by emphasizing the complexity of this issue and encourages listeners to continue thinking about it as they study the rest of John's Gospel.

Conclusion:

John chapter 4 is a pivotal chapter in the Gospel, showcasing Jesus' ministry extending beyond Jewish boundaries, challenging social and cultural norms, and highlighting the nature of true worship and the complex interplay between signs and faith. Dr. Turner's analysis provides valuable historical, cultural, and literary insights into this rich and multifaceted narrative.

4. Study Guide: Turner, John, Session 6, John 4:1-54

Study Guide: Gospel of John, Session 6 (John 4)

I. Narrative Flow and Geographical Context

- Describe the geographical movement of Jesus in John chapter 4. Where does he begin and end this section of his ministry?
- What three main events or scenes comprise the narrative flow of John chapter 4? Briefly outline each.
- Why was Jesus traveling through Samaria significant, considering the typical Jewish customs of the time? What does the text suggest about the reason for this route?

II. The Encounter with the Samaritan Woman

- Summarize the initial interaction between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. What was surprising about this encounter?
- Identify the key themes or topics that Jesus discusses with the woman. How does their conversation progress?
- What does Jesus teach the Samaritan woman about true worship? How does this relate to the physical locations of worship (Mount Gerizim and Jerusalem)?
- What impact did the woman's encounter with Jesus have on her and her community?

III. Teaching the Disciples and the "Harvest"

- Describe the interaction between Jesus and his disciples upon their return while he was speaking with the woman. What observation did Jesus make about "food"?
- Explain the metaphor of the harvest that Jesus uses in his teaching to the disciples in this context. How does it connect with the events that follow?
- What does this episode reveal about the unexpected recipients of Jesus' message and the work of the Holy Spirit?

IV. The Healing of the Royal Official's Son

- Describe the situation that brings the royal official from Capernaum to seek Jesus in Cana. What is the nature of his request?

- What is Jesus' initial response to the official's plea? How might this response be interpreted?
- How does Jesus ultimately heal the official's son? What is the significance of this healing in relation to the themes of signs and faith in John's Gospel?

V. Key Theological Themes

- Discuss the relationship between Jews and Samaritans as presented in the text and its historical context. How does Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman challenge these societal norms?
- Explore the theme of "necessity" in Jesus' actions, specifically his need to pass through Samaria. What does this suggest about God's plan?
- Analyze the presentation of Jesus' humanity in this chapter. Provide specific examples.
- Examine the complex relationship between signs and faith as it emerges in John chapter 4, particularly in the healing of the official's son. Consider Dr. Koester's perspective.
- Compare and contrast the encounters of Jesus with Nicodemus (John 3) and the Samaritan woman (John 4). What key differences and similarities are highlighted?

Quiz: John 4 (Short Answer)

1. Describe the geographical journey Jesus undertakes at the beginning of John chapter 4. What is the significance of his chosen route?
2. Explain why the Samaritan woman was surprised that Jesus, a Jew, would ask her for a drink. What historical and cultural context illuminates this surprise?
3. Summarize Jesus' teaching to the Samaritan woman regarding the location and nature of true worship. What shift does he declare is taking place?
4. What does Jesus mean when he tells his disciples that he has "food to eat that you know nothing about"? Explain the deeper meaning of his words.
5. Describe the impact of the Samaritan woman's testimony on her fellow villagers. What was their initial reaction, and how did it evolve?
6. Why does the Gospel writer emphasize that Jesus "had to pass through Samaria"? What theological implication might this suggest?

7. Explain Jesus' seemingly abrupt response to the royal official's request to heal his son. What might be the underlying reason for his statement?
8. How does the healing of the royal official's son reinforce or challenge the idea of faith based on seeing signs and wonders, as discussed by Dr. Koester?
9. Contrast the initial responses and characteristics of Nicodemus (John 3) and the Samaritan woman (John 4) in their encounters with Jesus.
10. According to the passage, what was the second sign Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee after returning from Judea? Why is this detail significant in the structure of John's Gospel?

Quiz Answer Key: John 4

1. Jesus travels from Judea (Jerusalem) north through Samaria to Cana of Galilee. This route through Samaria was unusual for Jews due to the historical and religious animosity between the two groups, suggesting a deliberate purpose for Jesus' presence there.
2. The surprise stemmed from the deep-seated animosity and lack of social interaction between Jews and Samaritans. Additionally, the fact that Jesus, a man, was speaking to her, a woman, in public was also unconventional for the time.
3. Jesus teaches that a time is coming when worship will not be confined to specific locations like Mount Gerizim or Jerusalem. True worship will be in "spirit and truth," focusing on the inner devotion of the worshiper rather than a particular place.
4. Jesus refers to doing the will of God and completing his work as his true "food." He emphasizes the spiritual nourishment he receives from fulfilling his divine purpose, which is more important than physical sustenance.
5. The woman's testimony initially sparked curiosity among her fellow villagers, leading them to come out and see Jesus for themselves. After hearing Jesus' teachings, many of them believed in him based on their own encounter, not just her words.
6. The phrase "had to pass through Samaria" suggests a divine imperative or appointment. It implies that God had a specific purpose for Jesus to be in Samaria, likely to minister to the Samaritans, highlighting God's inclusive love.

7. Jesus' response, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will never believe," seems to address a reliance on miraculous displays rather than genuine faith in his word. He may be expressing frustration with a superficial faith that only seeks tangible proof.
8. The healing occurs based on Jesus' word alone, and the official believes and acts on that word before witnessing the result. This could support Koester's idea that genuine faith often precedes and informs the understanding of signs, though the official's initial request was sign-based.
9. Nicodemus, a respected Jewish leader, approaches Jesus cautiously and with intellectual curiosity, struggling to grasp the concept of being "born again." The Samaritan woman, despite her social standing, is more openly receptive to Jesus and readily shares her experience with others.
10. The second sign was the healing of the royal official's son in Capernaum while Jesus was in Cana. This event completes a geographical and narrative loop back to the first sign performed in Cana (turning water into wine), framing this section of Jesus' ministry in Galilee.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the significance of Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman in John 4 within the broader context of Jewish-Samaritan relations in the first century. How does this encounter challenge prevailing social and religious boundaries, and what does it reveal about Jesus' mission?
2. Discuss the literary artistry of John chapter 4, focusing on the interwoven narratives of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman and his teaching of the disciples. How do these parallel scenes contribute to the chapter's overall message and themes?
3. Explore the theme of "signs and faith" as it is presented in John chapter 4, particularly in the context of the healing of the royal official's son. Drawing on Dr. Koester's perspective, analyze the complex relationship between seeing miraculous works and genuine belief in Jesus.
4. Compare and contrast the encounters of Jesus with Nicodemus in John 3 and the Samaritan woman in John 4. What distinct aspects of Jesus' identity and message are highlighted in each interaction, and what do these encounters reveal about the diverse nature of belief and unbelief?
5. Examine the geographical and theological significance of Jesus' journey "through Samaria" in John 4. How does this deliberate route and his subsequent ministry in Samaria contribute to the unfolding narrative of John's Gospel and the understanding of God's inclusive plan of salvation?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Samaria:** A region in ancient Israel located between Judea to the south and Galilee to the north. It was also the name of the capital city of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- **Samaritans:** A religious and ethnic group who resided in Samaria and claimed descent from the Israelite tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. They had their own version of the Pentateuch and a temple on Mount Gerizim, leading to significant religious differences and animosity with the Jews.
- **Jacob's Well:** A well traditionally believed to have been dug by the patriarch Jacob, located near the city of Sychar in Samaria. It serves as the setting for Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman.
- **Mount Gerizim:** A mountain in Samaria considered sacred by the Samaritans as the proper place for worship, in contrast to the Jewish temple in Jerusalem.
- **Judea:** The southern region of ancient Israel, where Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple were located.
- **Galilee:** The northern region of ancient Israel, where Jesus grew up and performed his first miracle in Cana.
- **Cana of Galilee:** The location where Jesus performed his first miracle (turning water into wine) and his second sign (healing the royal official's son).
- **Capernaum:** A town located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, which served as a significant center for Jesus' early ministry.
- **Syncretism:** The merging or blending of different religious beliefs and practices. The religion of the Samaritans was viewed by many Jews as syncretistic due to the intermingling of Israelite and foreign religious traditions.
- **Signs:** In the Gospel of John, Jesus' miracles are often referred to as "signs." They are not merely displays of power but are intended to point to Jesus' identity and divine nature, inviting belief.
- **Living Water:** A metaphorical term used by Jesus in his conversation with the Samaritan woman, referring to the spiritual life and eternal satisfaction that he offers.

5. FAQs on Turner, John, Session 6, John 4:1-54, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on John 4

1. What is the main geographical and narrative flow of John chapter 4? John chapter 4 begins with Jesus in Judea, then describes his travel north through Samaria, including his significant encounter at Jacob's well in Sychar, and finally his return to Cana of Galilee where he performs his second miracle. The narrative intertwines three main events: Jesus' journey, his conversation with the Samaritan woman and teaching of his disciples, and the healing of the royal official's son in Cana. This chapter forms a sort of loop, connecting back to Jesus' first miracle in Cana in John chapter 2.

2. Why was Jesus' decision to travel through Samaria significant, and how did it highlight the relationship between Jews and Samaritans? Typically, Jews would avoid traveling through Samaria, often taking a longer route through the Jordan Valley, due to deep-seated historical, ethnic, and religious animosity stemming from the divided monarchy, Assyrian conquest, and syncretistic religious practices of the Samaritans. Jesus' deliberate choice to go through Samaria, emphasized by the statement that he "had to" go through Samaria (implying a divine appointment), directly challenged these cultural norms and prejudices. His conversation with the Samaritan woman, a double taboo considering she was a Samaritan and a woman, further underscores Jesus' willingness to cross societal boundaries and engage with those considered outcasts.

3. What were the key points of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, and what theological themes were introduced? Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman unfolds in six stages, gradually revealing his identity and teachings. He offers her "living water," contrasting it with the well's physical water and symbolizing eternal life. This leads to a discussion about true worship, transcending geographical locations like Mount Gerizim (the Samaritan place of worship) and Jerusalem. Jesus declares that the time has come for worship "in spirit and in truth." He also reveals himself to her as the Messiah. This conversation highlights themes of spiritual thirst, the nature of true worship, and the universal scope of Jesus' mission.

4. How does the passage contrast the responses of the Samaritan woman and the Jewish leader Nicodemus to Jesus? The chapter implicitly contrasts the Samaritan woman's open and receptive response to Jesus with Nicodemus' more hesitant and intellectual approach in John chapter 3. The woman readily engages with Jesus, believes his words, and enthusiastically shares her encounter with her village, leading many to faith. Nicodemus, a respected Jewish teacher, struggles to understand Jesus' teachings on being "born again" and remains more guarded in his initial interaction. This contrast highlights that faith is not solely dependent on social status, religious background, or moral standing.

5. What is the significance of the Samaritan woman's testimony and the subsequent belief of her fellow villagers? The Samaritan woman's testimony, though initially based on Jesus telling her "everything I ever did," proves to be a catalyst for wider belief in her community. The villagers initially believe because of her word, but after hearing Jesus themselves, their belief deepens, and they acknowledge that they now believe not just because of her testimony but because they have heard and know for themselves that Jesus is the Savior of the world. This illustrates the power of personal encounter with Jesus and the role of individual testimony in spreading faith.

6. What is the account of the royal official in Cana seeking healing for his son, and how does Jesus' response relate to the theme of signs and faith in John's Gospel? The royal official travels from Capernaum to Cana to urgently request Jesus' healing for his dying son. Jesus initially responds with a statement about the need for signs and wonders to induce belief. Despite this seemingly harsh reply, the official persists in his plea. Jesus ultimately heals the son from a distance, and the official and his entire household believe when they confirm the timing of the healing with Jesus' words. This episode raises the complex question of the relationship between signs and faith in John's Gospel, suggesting that while signs can lead to belief, true faith often arises from hearing and trusting Jesus' word.

7. How does the statement "A prophet has no honor in his own country" (John 4:44) function in this context, and to what might it be referring? The statement "A prophet has no honor in his own country" appears after Jesus leaves Samaria for Galilee, which seems to contradict the synoptic tradition where this saying is linked to Jesus' rejection in his hometown of Nazareth. In John's context, Cana of Galilee is where Jesus performed his first miracle and his disciples believed. Therefore, the "country" likely refers to Judea, particularly Jerusalem, where Jesus had a mixed reception, performing signs but encountering misunderstanding and opposition from the religious authorities. This statement explains why Jesus might have found a more receptive audience in Galilee after his experience in Judea.

8. What does Dr. Turner highlight as a key interpretive question regarding signs and faith in John, and what perspectives are discussed? Dr. Turner emphasizes the ongoing and complex relationship between signs and faith as a crucial interpretive question in John's Gospel. He introduces Craig Koester's view that genuine faith precedes the proper understanding of signs, arising from hearing and trusting Jesus' message. Signs, in this view, affirm an existing faith rather than initiating it. However, Dr. Turner also points to the encounter with Thomas in John 20, where belief seems to follow directly from seeing Jesus (a sign), suggesting a more nuanced and perhaps less consistent relationship between signs and faith throughout the Gospel. He encourages listeners to continue considering this question as they study the rest of John's Gospel.