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~ **The Royal Official of Galilee** ~

You can learn much more about this story by doing these three things:

1. Read John 4:43-54.
2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.
3. Answer the reflective questions.

1. Read the text of the story from the New American Standard Bible and from the Easy Read Version

New American Standard Bible (NASB) Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation

New Living Translation (NLT) Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation.

John 4:46-54 - NASB	John 4:43-54 – New Living Translation
<p>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. 45 So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast.</p> <p>46 Therefore He came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. 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 <i>Him</i> to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. 48 So Jesus said to him, “Unless you <i>people</i> see signs and wonders, you <i>simply</i> will not believe.” 49 The royal official <i>said</i> to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” 50 Jesus <i>said</i> to him, “Go; your son lives.” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off.</p> <p>51 As he was now going down, <i>his</i> 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 <i>it was</i> 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.</p>	<p>43 At the end of the two days, Jesus went on to Galilee. 44 He himself had said that a prophet is not honored in his own hometown. 45 Yet the Galileans welcomed him, for they had been in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration and had seen everything he did there.</p> <p>46 As he traveled through Galilee, he came to Cana, where he had turned the water into wine. There was a government official in nearby Capernaum whose son was very sick. 47 When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged Jesus to come to Capernaum to heal his son, who was about to die.</p> <p>48 Jesus asked, “Will you never believe in me unless you see miraculous signs and wonders?”</p> <p>49 The official pleaded, “Lord, please come now before my little boy dies.”</p> <p>50 Then Jesus told him, “Go back home. Your son will live!” And the man believed what Jesus said and started home.</p> <p>51 While the man was on his way, some of his servants met him with the news that his son was alive and well. 52 He asked them when the boy had begun to get better, and they replied, “Yesterday afternoon at one o’clock his fever suddenly disappeared!” 53 Then the father realized that that was the very time Jesus had told him, “Your son will live.” And he and his entire household believed in Jesus. 54 This was the second miraculous sign Jesus did in Galilee after coming from Judea.</p>

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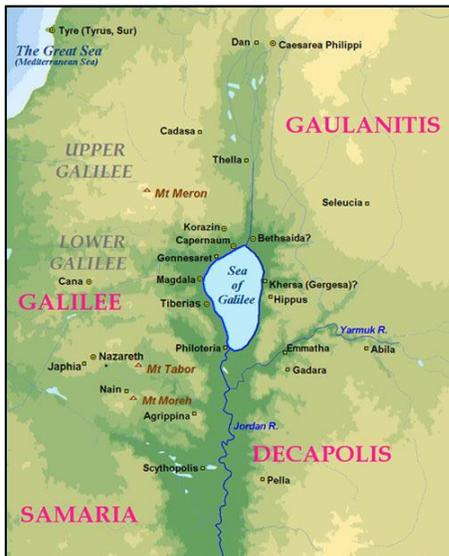
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2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.

- The Greek word for the official who visited Jesus is *basilikos* and may refer to his being employed at the court of Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee. Others who had this position were Chuza (Luke 8:3) and Manaen (Acts 13:1). From *The Gospel According to John* by R.V.G. Tasker
- In first century Palestine there were basically two groups – the rich and the poor. The rich were deeply resented by the poor and many were killed in Jerusalem AD 66 during the revolt against Rome.
 - the wealthy high-priestly class consisting of four extended families. They profited from the sacrifices and from the commerce associated with sacrifices and other temple activities.
 - The family of Herod who held political power in Galilee. Herod may have owned half the land in his dominion.
 - Remnants of the older Jewish aristocracy. They would most likely be landowners or could also have been rich through trade or farming.
 - Prosperous merchants
- The rich were split into two groups
 - Observant Jewish leaders
 - Wealthy persons associated with the Herodians and Romans. Their power gained them a certain acceptance but they were considered moral outcasts.

This information about rich and poor is taken from *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*.

- Locate Capernaum on the New side of the Sea of Galilee and Cana to the west of Galilee. This



distance was about 20 miles. This map provided by <http://gods-word-first.org/bible-maps/sea-of-galilee.html>

- Cana was situated five miles northeast of Zippori (Sepphoris) and nine miles north of Nazareth. It was nestled against one of the hills of Lower Galilee overlooking the fertile Bet Netofa Valley.
- Recent excavations at this site have provided evidence of a well-planned village with a number of cisterns that would ensure an adequate water supply. The town may have been located at the base of the hill because of the availability of water there.
- The site was occupied from the early Roman period (from 63 B.C.) to the Byzantine period A.D. 334 - 639). This could mean that its founders were of the same group as the

descendants of the Babylonian exiles who returned to Galilee during those years, including the families that established nearby Nazareth. Such a connection could account for Mary and her sons from Nazareth being present at a wedding in Cana and for Mary's personal concern for the lack of wine on that occasion. Source = <http://ancientsandals.com/overviews/cana.htm>

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- Capernaum – Archaeological evidence demonstrates that the town was established in the 2nd century BC during the Hasmonean period. The site had no defensive wall and extended along the shore of the nearby lake (from east to west). The cemetery zone is found 200 meters north of the synagogue, which places it beyond the inhabited area of the town. It extended 3 kilometers to [Tabgha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabgha), an area which appears to have been used for agricultural purposes, judging by the many oil and grain mills which were discovered in the excavation. Source = <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capernaum>

3. Answer these reflective questions.

What kind of faith do you think the royal official had before he met Jesus and the kind of faith he had after he left Jesus and returned home?

In the story, Jesus said people would not believe unless that saw signs and miracles. Is your faith based on signs and miracles or is it based on Jesus' word?

Why do you think it is important to trust Jesus' words?

How can you trust the words of Jesus for your life today? Write down areas where you need to grow in faith.
