A Request-Rebuke-Response Dialogue (4:43–54)

Setting of the Dialogue

The setting of the dialogue shifts from Sycar in Samaria to Cana in Galilee (cf. Strange, 1992: 827).1 Jesus as an itinerant messenger of God addresses diverse walks of people and persuades them to believe in him. Stibbe (1993: 70; cf. Borchert, 1996: 217–8) states that, "The rationale for the celerity of Jesus' movements is provided in the narrator's aside in 4:44: 'Now Jesus himself had pointed out (ἐμαρτύρησεν) that a prophet has no honour in his own country.' Here there is a distant analepsis of the Prologue, where the narrator says that Jesus came to his own (τὰ ἴδια) but his own did not receive him."2 Obviously the presentation of Jesus and his movements in John is entirely different from that of the Synoptics. Whereas in the Synoptics Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee and ends in Judea, in John Jesus has already stepped into all the three provinces before chap. 4 ends (i.e., Judea, Samaria, and Galilee).3 Jesus is now known in all the three provinces while John the Baptist's ministry is restricted to the Judean provinces. Another time Jesus visits Cana and this results in another sign (cf. Nicol, 1972: 28–9; Wallace, 1996: 187, 242).4 The two dialogue sections in chap. 4 (i.e., 4:1–42, 43–54) display the way dramatic discourses are developed in John.

The episode in 4:43–54 begins and ends at two different geographical settings, i.e., Cana and Capernaum (cf. Resseguie, 2005: 87). It is framed primarily

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1 Carson (1991: 234) states that, "After two days in Samaria, Jesus left for Galilee, resuming the trip he began in v. 3."

2 Refer to Robertson, 1932: 73–4; Kanagaraj, 2005: 160.

3 Keener (2003: 628; cf. Robertson, 1932: 73) says that, "Untrustworthy disciples (2:23–39) and hints of hostility (4:3) characterized Jesus' reception in Judea; by contrast, Samaria (4:4–42) and Galilee (4:43–54) received his ministry."

4 Köstenberger (2004: 169; cf. Moloney, 1998: 153; Dodd, 1960: 319) also notes that, "Jesus was approached by 'a certain royal official.' If this man was a Gentile, then this marks a progression from Jews (John 3) to Samaritan to Gentile (John 4) in Jesus' ministry, in keeping with the pattern followed also in the Book of Acts (cf. 1:8)." Brown (1966: 142; cf. Talbert, 1992: 119–20) comments that, "Since the time of Irenaeus (Adv. Haer II 22:3; PG 7:783), scholars have suggested that John's account of the official's son is a third variant of the story of the centurian's boy or servant of which forms with minor variants appear in Matthew 8:5–13 and Luke 7:1–10."
within the general setting and then within a specific setting, as follows.\(^5\) The general setting is outlined in vv. 43–45: \textit{first}, Jesus travels from Judea to Galilee via Samaria (vv. 3, 43); \textit{second}, he stays two days in Samaria and then proceeds to Galilee (v. 43; cf. Blum, 1983/2004: 288); and \textit{third}, he comes to Galilee and the people welcomed him because of his doings in Jerusalem during the festival (v. 45; cf. Nicol, 1972: 28–9).\(^6\) The specific setting of the narrative is built within the framework of the general setting. The following things are important to note within the specific setting: \textit{first}, \textit{the specific place}: whereas Jesus comes from Sychar in Samaria to Cana in Galilee (i.e., the place where he had changed the water into wine; cf. Strange, 1992: 1:827), the Royal official (\(βασιλικὸς\)) comes from Capernaum to Cana in order to invite Jesus to his home (cf. Neyrey, 2007: 100); and second, \textit{the reason}: the Royal official’s son lay ill in Capernaum (cf. Corbo, 1992: 1:866–9; Borchert, 1996: 221–2).\(^7\) The narrative in vv. 47–53 develops through different contexts: \textit{first}, in Cana, Jesus is having a dialogue with the Royal man (vv. 47–50a; cf. Lampe, 1978–80/1990: 1:208); \textit{second}, on the way, the Royal man is involved in a dialogue with the slaves (vv. 51–53a; cf. Blum, 1983/2004: 288); and \textit{third}, in Capernaum, the whole family of the Royal man comes to believe (v. 53b; cf. Okure, 1998: 1543). This development of the setting contributes to the dramatic movement of the episode.

**Micro-Analysis**

The narrative unit in 4:46–54 is marked with two dialogue exchanges: one between Jesus and the royal man (vv. 46–50) and the other between royal man and his slaves (vv. 51–53; cf. Brodie, 1993: 228). But the story develops through three settings (vv. 46–50, 51–53a, 53b–54).\(^8\) The content of the first exchange (vv. 46–50) begins with the royal man’s request (\(ηρῴα\)) to Jesus reported

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\(^{5}\) It works both as a conclusion to the Samaritan woman narrative and as an introduction to the forthcoming dialogue.


\(^{8}\) Brant (2004: 38) states, “The \textit{οὖν} appears at points of temporal or local setting (4:46; 123; 2019), when new participants are introduced (3:25; 13:4–6), and before a leading question, statement, or action (4:9; 4:47–49; 6:5; 6:66–68; 7:3–6; 21:5, 15).”