

# The Signs in John's Gospel

## Introduction

In John's Gospel the miracles are often referred to as signs, which is apt given that they function as pointers to Jesus' identity. John says the signs were written down so that the reader may find faith in Jesus (20.30-31). However, while some people believe because they see the signs (2.11, 2.23), others do not believe, despite the signs (12.37). I believe the signs are there to reveal God's glory to those who are ready to listen.

The use of the term *sign* is not unique to John's Gospel. For example, in the Exodus tradition it points to the role of Moses, whom God empowered to work signs before Pharaoh. In the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) the signs are either acts confirming what Jesus has said (Mark 8.11-12) or pointing to the end times (Mark 13.4,22).

It is generally accepted that John's gospel is divided into two main parts, the "Book of Signs" (1.19-12.50) and the "Book of Glory" (13.1-20.31), with a prologue (1.1-18) and an epilogue (21). Nevertheless, it is necessary to bear in mind that in the passage that describes the purpose of the book, 20.30–31, the whole work is viewed as a book of signs.

There will be seven sessions in this study series which will look at the seven generally accepted signs:

- Jesus turns water into wine;
- Jesus heals an official's son;
- Jesus heals a man at the pool of Bethesda;
- Jesus feeds the five thousand;
- Jesus walks on water;
- Jesus heals a man born blind;
- Jesus raises Lazarus from death.

Some scholars add other incidents including: Jesus cleanses the temple; the miraculous catch of fish; and Jesus' resurrection.



## **Week 1: Jesus turns water into wine**

### **WELCOME**

*Spend time relaxing and sharing together.*

Icebreaker. Do you have a story of something extraordinary that happened at a wedding you attended?

### **WORSHIP**

Read John 1.1-14. Take a few moments of silence to pick out verses that you have been drawn to. The leader can then encourage people to read their verse as an act of worship and perhaps elaborate on why they were drawn to this verse.

### **WORD**

Read John 2.1-11.

1. Why do you think Jesus and his disciples went to the wedding?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. John's gospel has yet to mention Jesus performing "a sign" (a miracle). Why do you think Mary involves Jesus in the "wine running out issue"?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How might the Jesus' response to his mother (v4) be related to the sign? (cf. 7.6; 7.8; 7.30; 8.20; 12.23;; 13.1; 17.1)



# **Growth Group Notes**

## **Spring 2021**



9. What does the sign tell us about Jesus (especially in respect to his glory in response to 1.14)?

### **WHAT NEXT?**

How might what we have studied help us to put our faith (or continue to put our faith) in Jesus?

The picture of the Kingdom of God as a wedding feast is seen on numerous occasions in the Bible (Mt. 5:6; 8:11–12; Mk. 2:19; Lk. 22:15–18, 29–30a; cf. Is. 25:6; 55:1–2). Jesus continues to invite us to celebrate with him, no matter what struggles we are facing in this world.

How might that shape how we live during the current pandemic?

**Final thought:** The 17th century poet, Richard Crashaw, wrote, “The conscious water saw its Master and blushed.” In one simple line, he captured the essence of Jesus’s first miracle. Creation itself recognized Jesus as the Creator. No mere carpenter could turn water to wine.