

I. Goal

The goal of this class is that we believe more intimately that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and believing this, that we have life in His name.

II. Overview

At the start of this course, we asked, “How well do we know the Son of God?” Last week we did an overview of the book of John, examining just the high-level points of chapter 1-21. We saw that the gospel of John was written so that we believe and be saved. From beginning to end of this gospel, the Holy Spirit speaks through John to reveal Jesus as the Son of God. This week we will study the seven signs which are a pivotal theme in John.

III. Comparison of the Four Gospels

Remember that the “gospel” means the good news, the good news of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. And yet the Greek word for gospel (euangelion) used in Matthew, Mark and Luke, does not appear in the gospel of John. Traditionally, Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the synoptic gospels because they are so similar in wording, content and structure. Hendriksen¹ notes that some critics believe “if the synoptics were written by (or based on the account of) eye-witnesses, then it is impossible to believe that the John or any other eye-witness wrote the Fourth Gospel, for the differences are too many and too great.” However, most commentators believe there is no contradiction in doctrine; and the general scheme of events is also the same for the synoptics and John’s gospel. Moreover, Jesus’ words as recorded in the synoptics are consistent with those recorded in John’s gospel.

A. Focus of the Gospels

The gospel of Matthew portrays Jesus as the King, who will sit on David’s throne. Mark’s gospel focuses on Jesus as the suffering Servant of God. Luke’s gospel shows Jesus as the Son of Man, a messianic title from the prophecy of Daniel (Dan. 7:13). The synoptic gospels have much to say about the kingdom of God and heaven. John’s gospel deals more with eternal life and the divine identity of Jesus. John portrays Jesus as the Son of God, the Word, literally God in the flesh.

IV. John’s Theme

John clearly stated his theme was that we might “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,” so that they may have life in His name (John 20:31). Chuck Swindoll puts this in easily understood words.² “To accomplish that goal, John presented a riveting and distinctive picture of Jesus Christ, one in complete unity with the portraits in the other three gospels, but one that also adds significantly to the Bible’s revelation of Jesus Christ, the God-man. Jesus’s identity as the divine Son of God sets Him apart from any other man who ever lived. He carries with Him the transcendence that comes only with God Himself. Therefore, Jesus’ work on our behalf makes our salvation sure. Because He is God, His sacrifice on the cross has eternal implications, unlike the limited effect of the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament. Jesus, the God-man, has atoned for our sins. We can place our

confidence in Him because of His divine nature. For us, the question is a simple, though significant one: Do you believe that Jesus is Lord? If you believe, you will receive eternal life, claiming the truth that you will one day live in the presence of God in a place with no more pain, no more tears, and no more death.”

Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;³ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. John 20:30-31

V. Selah³ (Pause and consider)

VI. The Seven Sign Miracles in the Gospel of John

John’s gospel has unique theological elements that come in sevens.⁴ One example is the seven “I Am” statements by Jesus, which we studied last week. Remember in that case that “I Am” for a Jewish person of that time period would immediately connote this phrase with God identifying Himself as the I Am in Exodus 3:

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” Exodus 3:14

A. This week we shall examine the “seven signs” of John’s gospel. These signs are also called attesting miracles; i.e., a sign which points to the supernatural power of God in redeeming grace:

- 1. Transforming water into wine (2:1-11)**
- 2. Healing the son at Cana (4:46-54)**
- 3. Healing the paralytic at Bethesda (5:1-15)**
- 4. Multiplying fish and loaves (6:1-15)**
- 5. Walking upon the sea of Galilee (6:16-21)**
- 6. Healing the blind man in Jerusalem (9:1-41)**
- 7. Raising Lazarus from the dead (11:1-53)**

B. Ben Witherington⁵ lists some of the key aspects of these signs in John and difference from the synoptic gospels. In the synoptic gospels, signs are usually the Greek word, *dunamis*, which are mighty works showing the coming of the kingdom. In John’s gospel, the Greek word translated signs is *sameion*, which is a sign pointing to something which is outside of itself like a traffic sign. All of these signs symbolically point to the coming of the king who is Christ.

C. The seven signs were intentionally chosen for a specific purpose – so that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Dr. Witherington observes that there is no exorcism included in the miracles of John’s gospel, in contrast with the earliest gospel, Mark, where exorcisms are quite frequent. One reason could be that John is primarily focused on miracles Jesus performed in Judea and Jerusalem, not in Galilee. Also, the signs seem to build in impact, starting with changing water into wine and building up to raising a man from death to life, foreshadowing Jesus’ death and resurrection.

VII. Transforming Water into Wine

Remember the gospel of John is full of symbolism including turning Jewish purification water into wine. The old and lifeless water that could only cleanse the outside of a person is turned into the new wine of the gospel, which can bring joy into the inside of a person and change their life.⁶

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; ²and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. ³When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." ⁶Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each. ⁷Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." So they filled them up to the brim. ⁸And He said to them, "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." ⁹...the headwaiter called the bridegroom, ¹⁰and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when the people have drunk freely, then he serves the poorer wine; but you have kept the good wine until now." ¹¹This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. John 2:1-3, 6-8, 9-11

VIII. Healing the Son at Cana

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. ⁴⁷When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and was imploring Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. ⁴⁸So Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe." ⁴⁹The royal official said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, "Go; your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off. ⁵¹As he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living. ⁵²So 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." ⁵³So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives"; and he himself believed and his whole household. ⁵⁴This is again a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee. John 4:46-54

IX. Healing the Paralytic at Bethesda

In this sign, Jesus heals a skeptical man on the Sabbath who had been a paralytic for 38 years. Jesus later warns the man to not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to him. The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. Note the contrast we will see between this man at Bethesda vs. the blind man healed at Siloam.

Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes. ³In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered... ⁵A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. ⁶When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He said to him, "Do you wish to get well?" ⁸Jesus said to him, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk." ⁹Immediately the man

became well, and picked up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day. ¹⁴Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you." ¹⁵The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. ¹⁶For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." John 5:2-3, 5-9, 14-17

X. Multiplying Fish and Loaves

Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?" ⁸One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, ⁹"There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?" ¹⁰Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. ¹¹Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted. ¹²When they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost." ¹³So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. John 6:1-15

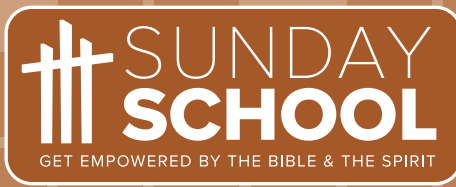
XI. Walking Upon the Sea of Galilee

Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea to Capernaum. It had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸The sea began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹Then, when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened. ²⁰But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." ²¹So they were willing to receive Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going. John 6:16-21

XII. Healing the Blind Man in Jerusalem

It's especially impressive as there are no Old Testament accounts of a man born blind being healed of his blindness. Only Jesus does this. This sign is in some ways a tragic story since the Jewish authorities become more blind and hard-hearted to who Jesus is, while the blind man gains sight and insight and finally confesses Jesus as the as Son of Man and worships Him.⁷ In contrast to the paralytic healed at Bethesda, this healing leads to faith in Jesus. We see this over and over in John – seeing doesn't necessarily lead to believing, it's believing that leads to seeing and understanding about Jesus.

As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. ²And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" ³Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." ⁶When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes,



BIBLE

⁷and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came back seeing. ¹⁴Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. ³⁵Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ³⁶He answered, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" ³⁷Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you." ³⁸And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him. John 9:1-7, 14, 35-38

XIII. Raising Lazarus from the Dead

Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²It was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. ³So the sisters sent word to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." ⁶So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days longer in the place where He was. ¹⁴So Jesus then said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him."

¹⁷So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. ²¹Martha then said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world."

³²Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled, ³⁴and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵Jesus wept.

³⁸So Jesus, again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days."

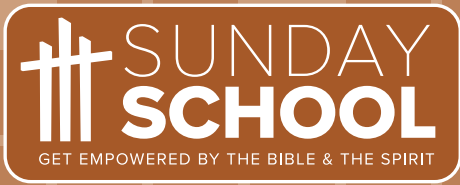
⁴⁰Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" ⁴¹So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.

⁴²I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me." ⁴³When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." ⁴⁴The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

John 11:1-3, 6, 14-15, 17, 21-27, 32-35, 38-44

XIV. Selah (Pause and consider)

- 1** William Hendriksen, The Gospel of John New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Book House, 1953), 12-13.
- 2** Chuck Swindoll, Overview of John, <https://insight.org/resources/bible/the-gospels/john>
- 3** Selah (ṣēlâh, to pause, a suspension of music, from a primitive root meaning to weigh or value), The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982), 934.
- 4** The number seven in Jewish theology is the perfect number, the number of completeness. Seven, the Biblical Number, <https://www.thetorah.com/article/seven-the-biblical-number>
- 5** Ben Witherington, The Seven Signs of the Gospel of John, <https://seedbed.com/the-key-to-understanding-the-gospel-of-john-the-seven-signs/>
- 6** Ibid.
- 7** Ibid.



BIBLE

A large area consisting of two vertical columns of horizontal lines, intended for students to write their answers or reflections.