

**The
Eight
Signs
of
John's
Gospel**

In the gospels miracles are referred to with three different Greek words:

1. **dunamis = power**

This occurs 38 times in the three synoptic gospels and does not appear in John's gospel. This emphasizes the power of God behind the miracle.

2. **teras = a wonder**

This word emphasizes the effect produced on those who witnessed the miracle. This occurs only in Matthew, Mark and John a total of three times and not in Luke.

3. **semeion = a sign**

This word emphasizes the significance of the work. It occurs 48 times in the four gospels and in John it occurs 17 times.

All these words occur in one verse, Hebrews 2:4, "God also bearing them witness, both with signs (semeion) and wonders, (teras) and with divers miracles... (dunamis)."

In John's gospel eight signs are given by the Lord Jesus and they have great significance. They are at once seen to be arranged in the literary form of *introversion*. The first sign corresponds to the eighth, the second to the seventh, the third to the sixth and the fourth corresponds with the fifth. Thus they are in four pairs and the latter is always an advance on the former. The former deals with what is preliminary and partial and leads to that which is permanent and final. It will be seen from the following groupings that they are arranged in an order which is truly amazing.

As one studies the significance of these signs in John, which gives God's divine plan, may we bow our hearts to the perfection and beauty. God is a God of order! In creation we see the detail, beauty and order of God whether it is under the microscope or through the telescope. In the precious Word of God we see the same magnificent order giving also the detail, beauty and perfection. It shines out to us showing us that God emphasizes detail and we should be aware that he wants us too as well.

We should respond in reverential obedience to every detail that He has graciously given us whether it be in assembly order or in our own personal lives. May it be so for His glory and for our blessing as we shine as lights in this dark world.

The following signs in John's gospel are left to the reader to meditate on and as we do so we will be overcome in worship as we realize what God has wrought.

"Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

Ephesians 1: 9-11

A few brief thoughts on the **8 signs of John's gospel** which have beautiful dispensational meaning:

Signs 1 & 8: Out of the unbelieving nation A REMNANT WITH NO GUILF SHALL BE PURIFIED and made full of joy.

In these two signs we get emphasized the power with which Christ will work in the beginning of the millennium. Both occur on the third day in Galilee; the first at a marriage and Jesus is there; and the water of purification is changed into the wine of joy for the marriage-feast. Afterwards at Jerusalem He *cleanses the temple* of God with authority, *executing judgment* on all those who profaned it. In principle these are the two things that characterize Christ's millennial position. Two days of testimony had taken place and it is when He returns that the good wine will be for Israel's true blessing and joy at the end. Afterwards, in judging the Jews and judicially cleansing the temple, He presents Himself as the Son of God in the Father's house and is lifted up as the Son of Man displaying divine love and eternal life which springs into joy and sustenance for His people.

In the 8th sign we see the manifestation and coming fruits of Christ's connection with the earth and the power to bring it all about. In Luke 5 the ships began to sink and the nets broke. Not so here, and the Holy Ghost marks this circumstance as distinctive: Christ's millennial work is not marred. When the disciples bring the fish which they had caught, the Lord has some already there. So shall it be on earth at the end when before His manifestation He will have prepared a remnant for Himself on the earth; but after His manifestation He will gather a multitude also from the sea of nations. "Come," says He, "and dine." There is no question here of heavenly things, but of the renewing of His connection with His people in the kingdom. This appearance is spoken of as His third manifestation and it is here we have the public display of His power, when He shall already have gathered the remnant together and they will have their part over the nations.

Signs 2 & 7: Jesus once rejected REVIVES ISRAEL according to the will of God. See Romans 11

In sign two Jesus leaves the Jews, for no prophet is received in his own country, and goes into Galilee, among the despised of His people, the poor of the flock. In that sense, He did not forsake His people, perverse as they were. He comes again to the place where He had turned the water of purification into the wine of joy ("which cheereth God and man"). By that miracle He had, in figure, displayed the power which should deliver the people, and by which, being received, He would establish the fulness of joy in Israel, creating by that power the good wine of the nuptials of Israel with their God. He works this second miracle after two days in the midst of Israel, where He still labours wherever there is faith. The Lord fulfilled the desire of that faith, and restored the life of the ruler's son who was at the point of death and so shall it be for all Israel.

In sign seven we have the resurrection of Lazarus, no doubt a picture of Israel not only at the point of death as in sign two but here dead for four days. This again is the third day as he abode where he was for two days. With this wonderful giving of life many shall believe and the nation will again be one. (See Ezekiel 37 the resurrection of dry bones)

Signs 3 & 6: Jesus gives POWER TO WALK AND SEE which the law could not and brings Israel into their rest.

These two signs demonstrate the quickening power of Christ, the power and the right of giving life to the dead, with the powerlessness of legal ordinances. They required strength in the person that was to profit by them. Christ has the power to heal, and indeed to quicken. The poor man who had an infirmity for thirty-eight years was absolutely hindered, by the nature of his disease, from profiting by means that required strength to use them. That which the law could not do, being weak through the flesh, God has done through Jesus. The impotent man had desire, but not strength; to will was present with him, but no power to perform. The blind man is the same. See John 3:3, 5 which show that in order to "see" and "enter" the Kingdom of God there must be new birth which is the work of God through His Word and Spirit. Both of these signs emphasize the quickening power of the Son, the weakness of the law, the purification of the Water (pools) and the final rest for Israel as pictured in the Sabbath. Heb. 4:9

Signs 4 & 5: Jesus as PROPHET, PRIEST AND KING BLESSES BELIEVING ISRAEL feeding them and giving them power to rule the nations. He is seen on the mountain ruling His earthly Kingdom.

Jesus first blesses the people as promised (see Psalm 132:15) and the people acknowledge Him as prophet. They then desire to make Him their King by force but this is declined at this time but in this sign He is seen reigning as King feeding His people according to the will of the Father. He therefore is manifested as Prophet, Priest and King reigning in authority from the mountain. (See Daniel 2:35) Immediately following, in the sixth sign, Jesus is seen coming to the believing remnant in the night a scene of tribulation and suffering and as he joins them they have power to walk for Him in authority over the nations. In that millennial day Israel shall be the head and not the tail.

The Marriage in Cana John 2:1-11

- a. The background - Nathanael's faith (1:49-51)
- b. The "Place" - Galilee (2:1)
- c. "The third day" (2:1)
- d. Wine provided (2:8, 9)
- e. "Jesus was called with disciples" (2:2)
- f. Failure confessed - "They have no wine" (2:3)
- g. Numbers - (6 waterpots holding 2-3 firkins apiece) (2:6)
- h. Command - "Fill the waterpots with water" (2:7)
- i. Obedience "They filled them" (2:7)
- j. Waterpots filled - "up to the brim" (2:7)
- k. The servants bare (2:8)
- l. Glory manifested (2:11-)
- m. His disciples faith (2:-11)

The Ruler's Son John 4:46-50

- n. The background - Rejection (4:43-44)
- o. Time - "After two days" (4:43)
- p. His son "sick" (4:46)
- q. Parenthetic explanation re: the place (Cana) (4:46)
- r. "At the point of death" (4:47)
- s. "Ye will not believe" (4:48)
- t. "Ere my child die" (4:49)
- u. The Servants "met Him" (4:51)
- v. "Thy son liveth" (4:51)
- w. "The fever left him" (4:52)

The Impotent Man John 5:1-17

- a. The Place Jerusalem (5:1)
- b. The Pool - Bethesda (5:2)
- c. The longstanding case - thirty-eight years (5:5)
- d. Jesus saw him (5:6)
- e. The Lord takes the initiative (5:6)
- f. "The same day was the Sabbath" (5:9)
- g. "Afterwards Jesus findeth him" (5:14)
- h. "Sin no more" (5:14)
- i. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (5:17)
- j. A double reference to Moses (5:45, 46)

The Feeding of the Five Thousand John 6:1-11

- k. This sign is recorded in all the gospels (see "Walking on the sea" below)
- l. "Jesus went up into the mountain" (6:3)
- m. Followed by a discourse - Signification (6:26-65)
- n. "Many disciples went back" (6:66)
- o. The testimony of Peter (6:68, 69)

The Walking on the Sea John 6:15-21

- k. This sign is recorded in all the gospels (see "The feeding of five thousand" above)
- l. "Jesus departed again into the mountain" (6:15)
- m. Followed by a discourse - Signification (chapter 7)
- n. "Many of the people believed" (7:31)
- o. The testimony of Nicodemus (7:50)

The Man Born Blind John 9:1-41

- a. The Place - Jerusalem (8:59; 9:1)
- b. The Pool - Siloam (9:7, 11)
- c. The longstanding case "from birth" (9:1)
- d. "Jesus saw" him (9:11)
- e. The Lord takes the initiative (9:6)
- f. "It was the Sabbath day" (9:14)
- g. "When He had found him" (9:35)
- h. "Who did sin" (9:2)
- i. "I must work the work of Him that sent me" (9:4)
- j. A double reference to Moses (9:28, 29)

The Sisters' Brother John 11:1-14

- n. The background - Rejection (11:31, 39; 11:8)
- o. Time "Jesus abode two days where He was" (11:6)
- p. "Lazarus was sick" (11:2)
- q. Parenthetic explanation re: the person (Mary) (11:2)
- r. "Lazarus is dead" (11:14)
- s. "That ye may believe" (11:15)
- t. "Our brother had not died" (11:21, 32)
- u. Martha "met Him" (11:20, 30)
- v. "Lazarus come forth" (11:43)
- w. "Let him go" (11:44)

The Draught of Fishes John 21:1-14

- a. The background - Thomas's unbelief (21:24-29)
- b. The "Place" - Galilee (21:1)
- c. The third time (2:14)
- d. A meal provided (21:9)
- e. Jesus called His disciples (21:5, 12)
- f. Failure confessed - They had "caught nothing" (21:3)
- g. Numbers - (200 cubits - 153 fishes) (21:8, 11)
- h. Command - "Cast the net into the water" (21:6)
- i. Obedience "They cast therefore" (21:6)
- j. Net filled - "to the last fish" (21:8, 11)
- k. "Bring of the fish" (21:10)
- l. The Lord manifested (21:14)
- m. His disciples' love (21:15-17)