

BASIC BIBLE DOCTRINE LESSON 11: SIGNS OF JESUS CHRIST IN GOSPEL OF JOHN

1. GOSPEL

John 20:30-31 – These signs were recorded so that you would believe.

Many other signs – John 21:25

These have been written – John does not indicate that these were the most prominent signs or if they progress in some way. He does not enumerate them or tell the readers how many there are. This entire account of Jesus Christ is recorded signs of Jesus Christ.

The purpose of this recording is unique and is twofold: so that you would believe that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah) and so that believing in His name you would have life. This indicates that the letter was written to those who are unbelievers and possibly to those struggling with unbelief.

2. THE SIGNS OF THE MESSIAH

DEFINITION

σημεῖον *semeion* – a visual sign that provides a distinguishing mark. This is normally used in the language of logic to provide proof so that a claim can be regarded as certain.

The Septuagint uses this term primarily in the Pentateuch and the Prophets, mostly in Exodus and Isaiah. In the Hebrew Scriptures, significant signs accompany those who are prophets. Moses, Elijah, and Elisha are the biggest examples we have regarding signs. Prophetic actions are designed to give force and emphasis to the words when they are seen in the context of prophetic proclamation and activity (Exodus 4:21; 11:10; 4:34; Deuteronomy 13:1-3).

In the Greek Scriptures, the sign of the birth of the Messiah was a baby wrapped in cloths in a manger (Luke 2:12). The Jews demanded a sign from Jesus as His popularity grew (Matthew 12:38-42).

IDENTIFICATION

The word “sign” is used seventeen times in John with the final usage in 20:30. Many people debate about which signs John classifies as those used to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah. But some are identified by the text.

1. John 2:1-11 – This is the first sign. Jesus demonstrated control over time and composition. This sign was also done with a word, not a physical activity.
2. John 2:18-23 – This sign is prophetic, but it still has an impact. In verse 23, it is recorded that Jesus was performing many signs.
3. John 3:2 – Nicodemus admitted that Jesus was doing many signs.
4. John 4:48-54 – The second sign (verse 54)? John does not list the signs and the term third is not used. The word for *second* can also be translated “afterward, subsequently, secondarily, and again.”
5. John 6:2 – Jesus was performing signs in the sick.
6. John 6:3-14 – The sign of the feeding of the 5,000.

7. John 7:30-31 – No obvious sign is referred here. Is this speaking of the fact that He eluded capture? Perhaps this is referring to signs that are not recorded or to the signs that have been recorded or alluded to in this account. Regardless, many believed in Jesus because of the signs that Jesus performed.
8. John 9:1-16 – Jesus heals a man born blind. The conflict arises not because of the sign, but because of what day He performs it.
9. John 11:38-57 – After the raising of Lazarus, even the Pharisees were admitting to many signs.
10. John 12:17-19 – This reference refers back to the raising of Lazarus.
11. John 12:35-37 – The signs that are recorded and testified did not have any effect among many of the Jews and the leaders of Israel.

Typically, most evangelicals identify seven signs:

1. Turning water into wine (John 2:1-11)
2. Cleansing the temple (John 2:12-17)
3. Healing the nobleman's son (John 4:46-54)
4. Healing the lame man (John 5:1-15)
5. Feeding the multitude (John 6:1-15)
6. Healing the blind man (John 9)
7. Raising Lazarus (John 11)

However, as we have seen, John does not list all of the signs. Evangelicals love saying there are seven signs because the number seven is often understood as "the perfect number." Notice that the word *sign* is not used in the healing of the man in John 5. There are other miracles recorded that could also be listed as signs. These are not identified as signs in the text, but based on what is called a sign they would qualify.

1. The baptism of Jesus (1:29-34)
2. The declaration to Nathanael (1:47-51)
3. The testimony to the Samaritan woman (4:15-45)
4. Jesus walks on the water, arrived on the other shore (6:15-25)
5. Jesus knows that Judas will betray Him (13:21-30)
6. Jesus causes the cohort to fall to the ground with the words "I AM" (John 18:1-6)
7. The resurrection (John 20:1-10)
8. Post resurrection appearance (John 20:11-21:23)

3. THEOLOGICAL IMPACT

What is the significance of this study? When we understand the format and purpose of John, we can read it better and understand the content. Understanding the content of John will give the student information concerning the nature, actions, and promises of Jesus Christ.