

Significance of 8 Miraculous Signs in John

In the Gospel of John, miracles or signs are more than just supernatural works. There are only eight in the whole gospel and each have significance and meaning. Seven of them take place during the Lord's public ministry and the eighth takes place between His resurrection and ascension to the Father.

Here's a brief and simple overview of each sign and how they represent the ministry and work of Jesus the Messiah, Savior of the world.

John 2:1-11– 1st Sign– the water for ceremonial washing is turned into wine. The external righteousness of the Law is replaced by the internal righteousness of the Lord's redemption through His shed blood. Going from ritualism—ceremonial cleansing—to genuine spiritual cleansing by Christ's Blood—from the judgment of the Law into redemption by grace.

John 4:46-54– 2nd Sign– the healing of the nobleman's son. Here is an illustration of going from sickness to restored health. The son's condition represents Israel's spiritual condition—a condition only healed and restored through the power of God. It gives us a picture of the spiritual restoration for the remnant of Israel through the Lord's grace.

John 5:1-16– 3rd Sign– the healing of the paralytic (impotent) man on the sabbath. Here is an illustration of moving from Law into Grace. The Law—represented by the Sabbath—is weak and unable to bring redemption. The man represents Israel's spiritual condition and how the grace of God strengthens people in their weakness. The man's age of 38 years also represents Israel's time in the Wilderness before the 2nd generation of Israelites entered into Promised Land of Canaan.

John 6:1-13– 4th Sign– the feeding of 5,000 people. A simple illustration of going from emptiness to fullness. Jesus satisfies the people's physical hunger (6:25) with the 5 loaves and 2 fish. Jesus later explains the significance of this miracle as a metaphor of how abiding life in Jesus satisfies and fills our spirit or inner man (6:35), and how the Lord would fulfill the Passover Feast as the Lamb of God (John 1:29).

John 6:16-21– 5th Sign– Jesus walking on the water. This illustrates going from fear into the assurance of faith. Jesus' power over nature (omnipotence) and His presence (omnipresence) is transferred to believers through the Holy Spirit and the Lord's authority (Matt 28:18-20 ; Mark 16:17-18 Luke 24:45-49)

John 9:1-7– 6th Sign–a man born blind is healed on the sabbath. As Jesus explains later (9:35-41), this miracle illustrates moving from spiritual darkness into the light—from blindness into sight. The physical restoration of sight illustrates the spiritual restoration Jesus brings by grace (see John 1:5 also).

John 11:1-44– 7th Sign– the resurrection of Lazarus from the tomb. This sign is an obvious illustration of going from death into life. Our hope of resurrection is in Jesus who is the Resurrection and the Life (11:25-26). The truth of the Gospel extends the hope of eternal life to those who are dead in sin when they come into relationship with Jesus.

John 21:1-14– 8th Sign– the miraculous catch of fish. Jesus appears to the apostles after His resurrection to remind them of the call of God on their lives. He restores them from their sense of failure and hopelessness to fruitfulness. He called them to abandon their previous livelihood to be fishers of men (Matt 4:19). A reminder of the harvest of people through the Gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit.