

Quarter Four: Themes in the Gospel of John

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Lesson 1—Signs that Point the Way

Sunday: The Wedding at Cana

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- **Last Quarter:** “The Book of Mark”
 - Who is Jesus?
 - The Messiah; the Son of God
 - Where is He Going?
 - To the Cross

- **This Quarter:** Themes from the Gospel of John
 - **Author:**
 - E Edward Zinke, former associate director for the BRI
 - Dr. Tom Shepherd, senior research professor of NT at the Andrews Theological Seminary

 - Last of the 4 Gospels
 - 3 synoptic gospels (“to see together”)
 - John is separate

 - **Differences between synoptic gospels & John**
 - Portrayal of Jesus
 - The Jesus of John is not the “meek & mild” Jesus of the synoptic gospels
 - This Jesus is assertive, seemingly combative & debates easily

 - Parables of Jesus
 - Common in synoptic gospels
 - Almost non-existent in John
 - Emphasis on long & thoughtful discourses
 - Good Shepherd (John 10) & True Vine (John 15) are allegories, not parables

 - Visits to Jerusalem
 - Synoptic gospels are focused on Galilean ministry (rarely goes to Jerusalem)
 - John – commonly goes to Jerusalem

 - Biographical material of Jesus
 - 40% less than Mark
 - 50% less than Matthew
 - 60% less than Luke
 - Despite being longer than Mark, & almost as long as Matt / Luke

 - John’s concern is not the story, but the significance for the life & faith of the church

- Focuses on personal interviews between Jesus & one or two people (**many** not in synoptic gospels)
 - Nathaniel – John 1
 - **Nicodemus** – John 3
 - **Woman at the well** – John 4
 - **Paralytic at Pool of Bethesda** – John 5
 - The woman caught in adultery – John 8 (eventually, just Jesus & her)
 - **Man born blind** – John 9
 - Lazarus & sisters – John 11
 - **Pilate** – John 18
 - Thomas (finger in His side) – John 20
 - **Peter** (breakfast by the sea) – John 21
 - **Focus on teaching**
 - Mark was action
 - Matthew is parables
 - John is teaching / theological discourses
 - Synoptics = theological biographies
 - John = biographical theology
 - His gospel is a masterpiece of early Christian theology
 - **Theology:**
 - Jesus Christ: John presents the divinity of Jesus more clearly & consistently than any other apostolic writing
 - Glory & exaltation of Jesus on the Cross
 - Holy Spirit: no other gospel or NT writing has individually contributed more to the Christian understanding on the nature of the Spirit than John
 - Especially in the Farewell Discourse (ch 14 – 17)
 - Eternal life
 - Sabbath
 - Sanctuary
 - God's people
 - End-time events: including resurrection & the judgment
- **Author:**
 - John, the beloved disciple & apostle
 - Son of Zebedee, brother of James
 - Youngest of disciples called by Jesus
 - Earliest manuscripts all carried title: “The Gospel according to John;” “According to John;” “The gospel according to John, which he wrote in Greek in Ephesus”
 - Written as last book of the NT – AD 90 – 100
 - Written in Ephesus, after John's return from Patmos

- This quarter = a chronological study; rather a thematic study
 - Doesn't address John 1 & the Prologue / preexistence of Christ until L3
 - The Word (*logos*), light, bread, water, the Holy Spirit
 - Oneness, signs, testimony, prophecy, "believe"
- **This Week:** "Signs that Point the Way"
 - John 2, 4, & 5
- **Purpose:** Why did John write his gospel?
 - (also **memory text**): John 20:30 – 31 – "And truly Jesus did many other **signs** in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; (31) but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."
 - Author's own statement for the purpose of the book
 - That we might **believe**
 - Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God
 - See concept of "believe" throughout John = those who are continuing to believe; implies constant action over time
 - That we may have life in His name
 - John is written for the 2nd generation of believers
 - Book written at transition point between those who knew Jesus -& the next generation
 - The lack of a living apostle was no barrier to a Christian experience
 - The work of the gospel would continue without John
 - Touch is evident in healings throughout synoptic gospels
 - Remarkably absent in John
 - Jesus' words are just as powerful as actually seeing & touching Jesus
 - This week, we study the signs = the miracles of Jesus
 - These miracles showcase that Jesus = the Messiah
 - John recounted 7 "signs" in his gospel (7 specific miracles)
 - Wedding at Cana (John 2)
 - Healing of the Noblemen's Son (John 4) - Ryan
 - Paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5) – Daniel
 - Feeding of the 5,000 (John 6) – Lesson #2
 - Walking on water (John 6)
 - Man born blind (John 9)
 - Raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11)
 - Also 7 "I Am" sayings in John
 - 7 signs / miracles
 - Revealed Jesus' glory
 - Made known His mission as Son of God & Israel's Messiah
 - Validated His divine claims
 - Generated faith in Him

Memory Text: “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written 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, NKJV)

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** The Wedding at Cana (Jill)
 - John 2:1 – 11 – 1st sign / miracle from Jesus = water turned into wine
- 2. **Monday:** The Second Sign in Galilee (Ryan)
 - John 4:46 – 54 – 2nd sign = healing of the nobleman’s son
- 3. **Tuesday:** The Miracle at the Pool of Bethesda (Daniel)
 - John 5:1 – 9 – 3rd sign = healing of the paralytic
- 4. **Wednesday:** Hard Hearts (SQ)
 - John 5:10 – 16 – religious leaders & their hard hearts
- 5. **Thursday:** Jesus’ Claims (James)
 - John 5:16 – 47 – Jesus’ witnesses for His divinity against the religious leaders bigotry

Sunday: The Wedding at Cana

John 2:1 – 11

- What sign did Jesus do at Cana?
 - First recorded miracle of Jesus in John = water turned to wine

Takeaways from the Wedding at Cana

- John 2:1 – “On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.”
 - This wedding took place about 50 days after the baptism of Jesus mentioned in chapt 1
 - Third day = 2 days after Philip & Nathaniel’s call (in John 1)
 - Grapes created on the third day of creation
 - Cana was a neighboring town to Nazareth
 - Town where Nathaniel lived
 - “Mother of Jesus there”
 - Likely a relative of Mary or Joseph since family was all invited
 - **Takeaway #1: God places people at the right time, in the right place**
 - No accident that Jesus’ mom was there
 - John is deliberate in referencing it
 - Don’t always understand what He’s doing
 - He knows; He understands
- Vs 2 – “Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.”
 - **Takeaway #2: God’s plans are much bigger than ours**
 - They invited as guests – not knowing they would perform a miracle & save face
 - *We think – I’ll plan for this
 - God’s plans are bigger & higher than our own

- Vs 3 – “And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, ‘They have no wine.’”
 - Wine – word in Gk used for both fresh & fermented grape juice
 - If wedding in late autumn, the “wine” would be fresh grape juice
 - DA, p. 149 – miracle Jesus performed was not alcoholic (regular grape juice)
 - **Takeaway #3: Faith makes the need known**
 - Jesus’ mom presented the need to Him – “they have no wine”
- Vs 4 & 5 – “Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.’ (5) His mother said to the servants, ‘Whatever He says to you, do it.’”
 - Woman = a respectful title for one’s mother in the ancient world
 - Still contained a polite reprimand
 - Jesus lived to do the will of God – not the thoughts / suggestions of others
 - Didn’t want to unnecessarily hasten His death
 - **Takeaway #4: Faith continues, against all odds**
 - His reprimand might’ve stopped her
 - Yet, she pressed forward by faith – “whatever He says, do it”
 - *Faith against obstacles & difficulty
 - Faith in the face of opposition
 - Faith against all odds
- Vs 6 – 10 –
 - **Story:**
 - 6 waterpots of stone (20 – 30 gallons each)
 - Filled with water, brought a taste to the master of the feast
 - Water turned to wine
 - Kept the best for last
 - **History:**
 - Moses, prophet who delivered Israel
 - Freed them from the Egyptians (became their “savior)
 - Deut 6:22 – brought Israel out by many “signs & wonders”
 - Turned water into blood
 - Jesus, Messiah who came to deliver Israel
 - Came to free us from bondage of sin (became our Savior)
 - Turned water into wine
 - In OT & Jewish traditions, the coming of Messiah was associated with outpouring of wine
 - Amos 9:11 – 15
 - Raising up David’s line – promise of Messiah through David
 - “the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it”
 - Gen 49:9 – 10 – blessing of Jacob on sons
 - Judah’s blessing = “he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes”
 - Waterpots of stone used for “cleansing rituals” – purification rituals are inferior to the blood of Jesus

- Jesus' first sign / miracle
 - Pointed back to the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt -
 - & pointed to Jesus as the Deliverer
- Vs 11 – “This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.”
 - **Takeaway #5: God gives us evidence, on which to rest our faith**
 - This miracle bolstered the disciples' faith
 - They had just decided to follow Jesus – this built their faith

Takeaways from the wedding at Cana

- #1: God places people at the right time, in the right place
- #2: God's plans are much bigger than ours
- #3: Faith makes the need known
- #4: Faith continues, against all odds
- #5: God gives us evidence on which to rest our faith

Lesson #2: Signs of Divinity