

Session Two: An Overview of the Signs of John's Gospel

- [the book of signs: the largest section of the Gospel]
- Revolves around seven signs and all of the dialogue that connects to them

What are "signs" in John? How should we understand them?

- Signs are more than mere miracles or works of wonder: they are acts of self-revelation and they are pointers to the nature of God as a loving Father
- They are Jesus showing God to the world in calculated ways
- They are key interventions in the history of man that John raises up in order to show a pattern of intervention in history that will be ongoing in the age of the Messiah until the end of time.

A clue: "The Third Day" and Exodus

- John Chapter Two which presents the wedding at Cana and this first sign opens with "On the Third Day there was a wedding at Cana."
- "Third Day" for John is a link to the story of Exodus chapter 19 where Moses prepares to receive the Law on the mountain top in a dramatic act of divine revelation and intervention in history.
- That Exodus story is the origin of the Jewish Feast of Pentecost which celebrates the giving of the Law to the people; the Law is the source of life for them.
- For John, the coming of Jesus, his performing the seven signs, his words surrounding them, are a re-playing of the Moses event on the Mountain top, and a re-interpreting of the Jewish feast of Pentecost.
- One must read the signs as a new inbreaking of God into human life to show us who he is, to draw us into friendship with him, and thereby to give us life.
- The ultimate sign of revelation of God's nature and love (call it the 8th sign) will be Jesus' own death and resurrection.
- Each of the seven that lead up to his death and resurrection are mini versions of his own death and resurrection- pointers to it. They all point to his "hour."
- When the reader arrives at Holy Week, the signs now become the reality.

The Book of Genesis re-told?

- By raising up seven signs, scholars think John was attempting to re-tell the Genesis story of the creation of the world in seven days.
- Jesus' coming among us is a re-creation of the human race in the new life of grace.

Fulfillment and Replacement

- Many of the seven signs take place with connections to major Jewish festivals and liturgical rituals.
- In working these wonders during the major festivals, Jesus is shown to be bringing the old feasts to a new level of completion, and replacing them (and the Temple) with himself.

What are the Seven Signs?

- One: The Wedding at Cana, chapter 2
- Two: Curing the royal official's son at Cana, chapter 4
- Three: Curing the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda, chapter 5

- Four: The multiplying of the loaves, chapter 6
- Five: The walking on water, chapter 6
- Six: the curing of the man born blind, chapter 9
- Seven: the raising of Lazarus from the dead, chapter 11

With that, we now unpack “the Third Day” that are the Seven Signs of John, one at a time.

End of Session Two