

Jesus—Jesus really did come from heaven to earth as a human baby. Jesus really did the miracles recorded in the Bible and many more. Jesus really did teach the way to eternal life and relationship with God. Jesus really did lay down His life. Jesus really did die a death of horrible crucifixion. Jesus really did rise again. Jesus lives today.

John, in writing gospel that he wrote, ends the last two chapters with these verses:

Chapter 20³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Chapter 21²⁵ Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

I love both Luke and John because they each wrote with a stated purpose in mind. Luke wrote to give a thorough—accurate account so that we might know that these things are true.

John wrote so that we might believe. In fact, if you were to go through John and highlight the word believe or its equivalent, John used the Greek word “believe” 98 times in the 21 chapters.

With that in mind, you would have thought that John would have included all of the 35 other miracles that are recorded in the Bible that Jesus performed. If He wanted

us to believe wouldn't he have included them all? But he didn't. He only tells us of 8 and yet his purpose is so that we might believe. John doesn't even refer to them as miracles but miraculous signs. Signs that help us to believe.

The first sign that John gives us is at the wedding of Cana in Chapter two.

Jesus' mother was there and Jesus and His disciples had also been invited to this wedding. In the middle of the wedding they ran out of wine. In that day, that would have been more than a minor social embarrassment for this family. This feast would have been very important and Mary seeing this crisis tells Jesus and when Jesus tells her, "my time hasn't come," she simply turns to the servants and says, "Do whatever He says" and so Jesus turns and sees six water pots each one holding 20-30 gallons and tells the servants to fill them with water and draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet. No one else knows but these servants and Mary, Jesus and the disciples. When the master of the banquet tastes this "water" he calls the bridegroom and asked, "why did you save the best wine till now." Jesus had turned mere water into the best wine. And verse 11 says: "This is the first of his miraculous signs and...He thus revealed His glory, and His disciples put their faith in Him."

The second sign John tell us about is in chapter 4. He starts this out by saying that because people had seen and heard all that Jesus had been doing they welcomed him and he was again in Cana and a royal

Official...probably privy to any doctor he could have wanted had a son who was sick...almost dead and when he heard that Jesus was there, he goes to Him and begs Him to come and heal his son who was so close to death. And Jesus says, "Go, your son will live." The man took Jesus at His word and while he is still on his way home his servants meet him and report that his son is alive and well and he asked what time did this happen and it was the exact time Jesus had spoken the word. And this official and all his household-- Believed.

The third sign is in chapter 5 and was when Jesus was by this pool where all kinds of disabled people were because they believed that there would be certain times that an angel would stir the waters and whoever got in the water first was cured. Jesus goes up to a man who has been an invalid for 38 years and asked him if he wants to get well. He didn't ask Jesus...probably didn't even know about Jesus. But Jesus knew him. And this cripple said, "I don't have anyone to help me get into the pool and Jesus just says, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." And he does! The crazy thing is that this was on the Sabbath and when the Jews saw him they rebuked him and said you are forbidden to carry your mat on the Sabbath and he said, "The man who made me well told me to do this" and it tells us they asked him who it was and he had no idea who Jesus was because Jesus had simply slipped away. Later he found him and found out it was Jesus but at the time he didn't know. And yet Jesus had healed him.

Chapter six tells us of when Jesus feeds the 5000 with a little boy's lunch of five small barley loaves and two small fish. And with that meager lunch He blessed it, broke it and fed over 5000 men not including the women and children. And then because the belief at the time was that bread was a gift from God, after they the crowd had enough to eat, Jesus asked the disciples to pick up all that was left over so that nothing was wasted and the disciples filled 12 baskets with the left over barley loaves. When the people saw they began to say surely this is the prophet who is to come into the world. But Jesus again slips away by himself because His time had not yet come.

The 5th sign is found in that same chapter when the disciples got into the boat to cross the lake and a fierce storm arose and began to toss them about. And when they had labored about 3 ½ miles out—about the middle of the lake--, Jesus approaches the boat walking on the water and they are terrified but Jesus said, "It is I, do not be afraid" and when He stepped into the boat, immediately they were on the shore where they were headed.

The 6th sign is found in chapter 9. Jesus is walking along and they see a man who is blind and the disciples ask who sinned this man or his parents and Jesus tells them that neither, this was just so that the work of God might be displayed. And then He does something strange. He spits on the ground and makes mud and then puts this on the man's eyes and tells him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. And it tells us the man went and washed and came home seeing. Jesus had only spoken the word

before...there was no healing property in the spit or the mud other than it came from the mouth of God. Maybe it's symbolic of the water of life that flows from God and comes to these earthly vessels made of dust. I don't know....I only know that God can use anything....including us.

Next we come to chapter 11 and we read of Lazarus. Lazarus is a close friend of Jesus and word is sent to Jesus that Lazarus is sick and dying and in spite of the urgency, Jesus stays where He is two more days and by the time He gets to where Lazarus is, he has been dead 4 days which meant he probably died before or the same day Jesus was told about his sickness, because it was a day's journey for the messenger to get to Jesus—Jesus stayed two more days and then the day's journey to get to Bethany. Martha meets Jesus and tells Him that if He had only been there Lazarus would not have died. And Jesus tells her that her brother will live again and she is resigned to the fact that she believes in a resurrection to which Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." And then he asked her, "Do you believe this?" she doesn't really grasp this but she says. "I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God."

And then Jesus goes to the tomb and tells them to take away the stone and despite protest of the smell and what He will find, they do so and Jesus calls this dead man to come out and it says, The dead man came out...I don't think he was dead any longer even though he was still

wrapped in grave clothes. The next verse tells us that many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in Him.

The last sign is found in the last chapter after Jesus has died and risen from the dead... and has shown himself to the disciples. The guys are out fishing—don't catch anything-- and they see a man on the shore who calls out to them, "Friends haven't you any fish?" No, no fish. "throw your net on the 'right' side and you will find some." They did and they were unable to haul in the net because of the large number of fish.

Do yourself a favor and read what happens next in that chapter. I again wept as I read of Peter not waiting to row to shore but jumps into the water to get to Jesus—even knowing he had failed this Jesus. And the beautiful story that is hope for restoration for all of us who have failed God.

8 signs...why did John only give us 8 signs. Matthew and Luke give us 20 each. Mark gives us 18. And John just gives us 8. Six of which are entirely new to us and unique to John's gospel alone.

- *The Wedding of Cana

- * The Official's ailing son

- *The invalid at the pool

- * The man born blind

- *Lazarus and

- *The catch of fish.

Those aren't even included in the other gospels.

John tells his purpose **that you might believe.** And he does it in only 21 chapters and 8 signs.

But interspersed between these signs was what Jesus taught and what He did—**That you might believe.** If you are having trouble believing today, do yourself a favor and reread the gospel of John

Without that belief, like those without wine, we have no joy—finding ourselves empty--lacking and without cause for celebration.

Like the official's son we are without hope and dying of a sickness incurable by anything the world offers.

Like the cripple or the blind man, we are incapacitated by our inability to walk or see. Our spiritual eyes are blind and so we stumble through life.

We are starving and thirsty but earthly food doesn't satisfy...how many times have you found yourself eating even though you've been munching and are full but nothing satisfies?

We face storms that rock us and things that terrify us and like Lazarus we are spiritually dead. And sometimes even though we cry out to God it seems like He doesn't come.

But John tells us He does come. In each of these situations Jesus came.

Do you believe? Do you know that in most of these situations there were those who walked away not

believing? Do you believe? Do you want Him to do what He did for each of these? Where's your joy? What is your spiritual condition? Is He a God of more than enough? Are you really living?

I care about Don's heart. I do... I ask God for healing...I don't want him to die. But I also know something else. Don loves Jesus and trusts Him. Maybe this is just so the work of God might be displayed through a life that trusts in spite of circumstances. He is very alive spiritually. This life-- what we live here is just a blip compared to eternity. And when Don believed in Jesus, his eternity started then... so what if he doesn't have health here --so what if we don't have earthly wealth or status. Heaven's glory that will be ours forever will far exceed the wealth we run after in this life. We chase after such meaningless stuff!

Spiritually, Jesus will do for you what he did for these in the physical realm. If you believe.

Remember these words, "Behold I bring you good news of great Joy" "in all these things we are more than conquerors" "he has given us everything we need for life and Godliness" "though he die, yet shall he live" "I am come that they might have life and that more abundantly"

If you believe.

John saved one last sign for the last chapter. Because it is very important. That catch of fish!

Follow me and I will make you fishers of men. What impact does your life have on those around you? Every part of your life should be a page in the book of our salvation. Are they reading Jesus? Is what is written that which will lead others to a God who heals—gives life—who feeds—who gives joy?!! Have you told them about Jesus...It's the only thing that matters...Have you given them the astounding news that He came to give His life and pay the penalty for their sin so that they may live? How solid is your net and how many fish have you caught?

Do you really believe? I think it's time to honestly address that question. Because what you believe, you will live.