

Lesson 37: The Gospel of John

"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."-- John 4:23-24 (NIV)

Key Terms

- "Prophet"
- Sign & Response
- Water
- Light v. Darkness
- Good Shepherd

Lecture Objectives

- Analyze several examples of Jesus' miraculous signs and the response(s).
- Explain from memory the meaning of the signs described in "Overview of Signs" in this lesson.

To Think About Before You Go On

What does it mean to be "the Good Shepherd?" Are we called to be "Good Shepherds" as Jesus was? Why or why not?

IV. First Discourse, John 3 To Call Jesus "Teacher" is Not Enough

Conversation with Nicodemus becomes clearer at the end - all who believe have eternal life. 3:16 probably not Jesus' words. He always called himself "Son of Man." Jn 3:16-18 is John's explanation to us of meaning.

By the end of the gospel, Nicodemus was a believer, but he had to realize that he was not a believer before he could come to belief.

V. Discourse 2: John 4 & Samaritan woman: To call Jesus "Prophet" is not enough

A. Contrasting encounters:

Nicodemus: Male, Jewish, ruler → respected, powerful, trained

Woman: Female, Samaritan, outcast → despised, powerless, untrained; victim?

B. Events

1. Setting: Occasion and location at Jacob's well
2. "Give me a drink." Woman is startled at request: She is a woman and a Samaritan

- a) Samaritan women despised, "menstruants from their cradle." (Mishnah, Niddah 4:1)
 - b) Disciples surprised that he talks to a **woman** (4:27). "Better that the law should be burned, than that they should be given to a woman." Men should "talk not much with women."
 - c) Unlike many Jesus believed the unclean would be transformed by contact with him.
3. 4:10-14 "Living water" alludes to day of salvation (Is 55:1, 58:11) and promise of new heart Jer 31, Ezek 36, Joel 2.
 4. Contra Jewish teachers Jesus say origin of **life is his supply from within**.
 5. Jesus brushes aside petty disputes (4:15-26). Issue is not **where** but who. Jesus is true temple (2:19) and Messiah.

VI. Another Sign

In 4:43ff Jesus is in Cana, and a man asks for healing. Jesus rebukes - You just want a sign. Jesus told him that his son would live, and the man took Jesus at his word. His faith was not dependent on the sign.

John 5-11 More Signs and Rising Opposition

I. Introduction: John 5-11 Moves to Greater Tension with Jews

A. Sign #3 Lame man healed later in Jerusalem, during a feast.

1. The lame man: Should we empathize or see sin and opposition? (5:14-15)
2. Controversy due to Sabbath healing. "The healer made me do it." Naive or hostile?

B. Overview of Signs

1st sign - Shows that Messianic Age has arrived.

2nd sign - Shows the correct way to take a sign.

3rd sign - Shows incorrect way to take a sign.

4th sign - Feeding of 5,000 - Jesus is the true bread from heaven.

II. Feeding the Multitude (Inaugurating Themes of John 6-10)

A. **The sign itself** - Only miracle, except resurrection, in all four gospels. A turning point

1. Setting: Passover near. Exodus typology. Large crowds follow like sheep w/o shepherd.
2. Late in day, Jesus says, "You give them something to eat."
3. Only 5 loaves and 2 fish. Possibly their personal supply. Materials are poor and few.
4. Jesus breaks the bread. (Wording in Greek suggests food multiplies in his hands.)
5. John 6 shows crowds misconstrued completely.

B. Response to the sign

1. Jesus is "The Prophet who is to come into the world," Messiah.
2. The people pursue food (6:24-8)
3. Jesus commands faith (6:29). They ask, "What sign will you give?" (cf. manna 6:30-31)
4. Double correction (6:32). God gives true bread from heaven; Jesus
5. meets true hunger.
6. Hard sayings (6:55-56) divide followers. Signs **alone** will never engender faith.
7. To the 12, "You do not want to leave too, do you? (μη, expecting negative reply).

III. John 7-8: Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles

A. In John 6 Jesus claims to fulfill Passover. In John 7-8, he claims to fulfill Feast of Tabernacles. (Note: 7:53 to 8:11 interrupt flow of passage and textual evidence against it is strong)

B. At the Feast of Tabernacles

1. Setting: Feast of Tabernacles celebrate Israel's passage thru wilderness into promised land.
2. Jesus claims to fulfill Israel's hope for water, and light. See water from rock, pillar of fire.
3. The feast's customs. Popular celebration of God's provision and prayer for coming year. **Water** procession symbolized thanksgiving for the water for past year, and petition next. **Light:** Four huge lamps. Music and singing
4. On last day as celebratory rituals end, Jesus makes a water claim, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, streams of living water will flow from him."
5. How? Spirit gives a self-replenishing stream. This is ground of Christian life. See other views of Christian life.

6. Possible OT allusions
7. Ensuing discussion full of tension, yet some put their faith in him (8:30).

IV. Light and Darkness: Jesus' Second Light Claim (John 9, sign 5)

A. Structure: John 9 continues light motif, from 8; Bad shepherds leads to 10, on good shepherd

B. Healing the man born blind

1. Claim to be the light of life (8:12, 9:5) precedes healing that gives light.
2. Jesus healed on Sabbath, so sign divides the Jews: Sinner or prophet (9:16)
3. Jews seek to resolve split by seeing if the report of a miracle is correct (9:18-23).
4. They interrogate blind man next. For telling truth he is reviled (9:24-34).
5. Jesus heals the man physically, then spiritually when he confesses faith.

C. John 10: The good shepherd

1. Jews have just beaten a wounded sheep as he started to rise (cf. Ezek 34, Jer 23, Zech 11.)
2. Jesus is the door (guardian) of the sheep. He keeps evildoers out and lets the sheep in.
3. 10:11-18 Jesus is morally **beautiful**. "Our vocation is so to practice virtue that men are won to it; it is possible to be morally upright repulsively." Wm Temple, *John's Gospel*, 166.
4. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (10:17-18).