

IN THE
BEGINNING
WAS THE...

WORD

A STUDY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

LESSON 10 – The Word is...A MIRACLE WORKER

FACILITATOR'S Note

MAIN POINT THIS WEEK: Jesus performs signs and wonders that demonstrate that He is the promised Messiah (2:1–11, 13–22; 4:46–54; 5:1–15; 6:1–15; 9:1–41; 11:1–44).

In this lesson, we will take a deeper look at the signs and wonders that John records. John is very specific about the signs and wonders he shares (as there were many others he could have mentioned). However, John chooses the signs and wonders he believes demonstrate his purpose: to help others believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, and God Himself. He even states in 20:30-31 that there are many other signs and wonders that Jesus did. Yet, he focuses only on seven. So, this helps us realize that these he shares are specific and important. As you look at these passages, realize that many people struggle with whether or not Jesus actually performed miracles (even many Christians). This is a travesty. To believe in Jesus without the miracles is to believe in an impotent God. Help your class participants understand that the signs and wonders performed were in fulfillment of the promises made long ago that the coming of the Messiah would be accompanied with miracles. If there were no miracles, there was no Messiah. That is a very important note to make.

Remember, this semester we hope to provide material that will provide knowledge (HEAD); then ask questions that will bring us understanding (HEART); and then motivate participants to go and live the Word in the world and demonstrate Godly wisdom (HANDS). Help them with that today.

HEAD → HEART → HANDS

As always, we would encourage you to begin preparing for each lesson by digging into the Word and specifically the text for each of the weeks. **This week the texts are: 2:1–11, 13–22; 4:46–54; 5:1–15; 6:1–15; 9:1–41; 11:1–44.** As you move through the Word, jot down any thoughts that come to you and particular passages that stand out and speak to you. We assure you that these will come into play as you facilitate this discussion. It is then that you should approach this lesson plan and use it (and others) only as a guide for the weeks to come. Your group is different than all the rest and so your lessons should be adapted accordingly.

PRAYER

Begin your time with a prayer asking God for the guidance of His Holy Spirit as you and your class seek to encounter Him through His Holy Word.

FOCUS

- Understand that signs and wonders were foretold to accompany the coming of the Messiah.
- Understand that Jesus' miracles attest that He is the Messiah.
- Understand that signs and wonders are not proof. They are what they claim to be, signs and wonders that lead people to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, and God Himself.
- Understand that it is essential we believe that Jesus did indeed perform signs and wonders to demonstrate His power and authority as the Messiah. To discount the miracles is to discount Jesus' deity.

DISCUSSION STARTERS (OPTIONAL)

- Do you (or others you know) struggle with believing that Jesus really did perform miracles? Why or why not?
- Is it necessary to believe in the miracles, or can we just believe in Jesus without the miracles? Explain.

From the Gospel of John

- 2:1-11 (see also 13-22)
 - Key Points
 - This is the first of Jesus' miracles as is stated in v. 11.
 - **Ask:** What stands out to you in this miracle?
 - It is important to remember that each miracle in John was meant to help people believe that Jesus was the Messiah. What's so important about this one?
 - Here, Jesus finds Himself attending a wedding. A very common thing to do. In the midst of it, His mother discovers that they have run out of wine and intervenes. She asks Jesus to take care of it.
 - Jesus' response to her is, "Woman (an expression of polite distance during this time), what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come."
 - Here, Jesus is speaking of His hour on the cross. His point here is that it is not time to proclaim that He is the Messiah. He did not want to allow the messianic misconceptions to get in the way of His ministry leading to His death, burial and resurrection.
 - Instead of responding to Jesus, Mary directs the servants to do as Jesus says. Very presumptuous, but remember, she is his mother. For Jews, honoring father and mother was very important. Mary knew Jesus would obey her. The real questions are: Did she know what He would do? Was God using her to begin the process of implementing the promised messianic signs and wonders?
 - Jesus, being both obedient to His earthly mother and His heavenly Father, performs the miracle: Turning water to wine. But the wine was no ordinary wine, but the best. Wine served at celebrations during this time would start with the best and as people got drunk they would bring out the worst wine as they wouldn't know the difference.
 - Some thoughts have been given about a deeper theological understanding of this miracle. Some have proposed that the running out of wine represented the spiritual barrenness of first-century Judaism (OT background viewed wine as a symbol of joy and God's blessing – see Ps. 104:15; Prov. 3:10). Therefore, Jesus providing the best wine symbolizes His role as Messiah to come and restore Israel's joy and blessing from God.
 - V. 11 is the crux of the miracle for a few reasons:
 1. This the first sign and wonder that Jesus' performs in order to help others believe He is the promised Messiah.
 - a. This is important. Why? Some of the pseudepigraphal (false) gospels/writings claim that Jesus performed miracles as a child or during early manhood. This would not be so if this were Jesus' first sign. Remember, His signs began after God proclaims Him as His

Son in whom He is well pleased and the Spirit rests on Him at Jesus' baptism. This is important as it attests to the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry that ultimately culminated at His death, burial, and resurrection.

2. This miracle "manifested His glory", which means...

- a. That it showed that Jesus was the sovereign Creator and ruler of the material universe. The material of the world was at His command and He can create and manipulate it at will.
- b. That He is the merciful God that provides abundantly for His people (as describes in the OT).

3. After this miracle, Jesus' disciples believed in Him. VERY IMPORTANT!

- Vv. 13-22 do not hold a sign or wonder. However, it is interesting to note that when Jesus was asked what sign accompanies His messianic actions in the temple, He tells them what His greatest (and most definitive) messianic sign would be: Death, Burial, and Resurrection. Only God knows the future!

○ Contemporary Application

- How does this miracles have any significance for us today?
- What does this miracle teach us about the character of Jesus/God?

• **4:46-54**

○ Key Points

- Returning to Cana, Jesus is now approached by an official requesting the healing of his son. Jesus responds to him in v. 48 by saying the he (the official) and the Gentiles (as the "you" is plural) need signs.
 - People during this time were entranced by people who performed signs and wonders (Jesus wasn't the only one who performed signs). This desire for signs was keeping them from seeing why Jesus performed them.
 - The signs are intended to point to Jesus as the Messiah and therefore bring them to belief in Him. Yet, they were more enamored with the signs than believing in Jesus.
 - John doesn't view the miracles negatively because of this, but instead is trying to point his readers to the purpose of them. Jesus uses miracles as one of His primary means to bring people to belief in Him.
- Something very unique about this miracle is how it is performed. Instead of being present at where the miracle happens, Jesus does so from afar. Distance and space do not limit the power of Jesus.
- V. 53 is important as it demonstrates why the miracle is needed. Through the miracle, the official recognizes that it was at the exact hour that Jesus said the man's son was healed that the miracle took place. The official then believes in Jesus, as did the rest of his family (the purpose of miracles).

○ Contemporary Application

- Do we believe that Jesus can still heal people from afar today? Have you ever prayed for healing and that prayer was answered? Is that a miracle or just coincidence?

- **5:1-15**

- Key Points

- This miracle has Jesus walking in an area where the blind, lame, and paralyzed were. Note that Jesus intentionally placed Himself among those who were weak and in need. In this instance, Jesus chooses one of them. Why only one?
 - This is a part of the “already...but not yet” for the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is here and present with us. We live in it as it lives in us. Yet, we do not fully realize it yet until Jesus returns. Jesus doesn’t heal everyone because that is what will take place when He returns. As Revelation 21:4 tells us, in the end (when He returns) He will wipe away every tear, death will be no more, pain and sorrow will disappear. But while we are in the “already”, those things are still present. Jesus is here demonstrating what will happen in full in the “not yet”.
 - Jesus also demonstrates His ability to know what God the Father knows. In v. 6 is states that Jesus knew that the man had already been there a long time.
 - He goes on to ask a very obvious question, “Do you want to be healed?” Of course he does. He’s been this way for 38 years and he sits by this pool to get a chance at healing.
 - But Jesus asks us the same question, “Do you WANT to be healed?”
 - Do we? Wanting to be healed and then living a “healed life” are two different things. We have to want all that goes with making the choice to allow Jesus to heal us.
 - The man is healed and then follows Jesus instructions to take up his mat and walk. The man does so and is questioned by the Jews. It was strictly forbidden to do work of any kind on the Sabbath. But the man knew that he needed to obey the one who healed him.
 - A little later, the man sees Jesus again and recognizes him. Jesus makes reference to his physical healing and then turns it to spiritual healing. Now that he is physically healed he is to go and live a life worthy of that healing. Shouldn’t we?

- Contemporary Application

- Does receiving spiritual healing from Jesus assure an obedient life? Explain.
 - How can we live a life worthy of the healing that Jesus has given us?

- **6:5-13, 16-21**

- Key Points

- In chapter 6, two signs are performed: 1) Feeding the 5,000, and 2) Walking on Water.
 - The first is performed in front of a large crowd. This crowd is following Jesus for what reason? They saw Him performing signs and they want to see more. Are we any different? When we see something amazing, don’t we want to see more? Do we really care much about the person who is doing it?
 - V. 6 is interesting. Why did Jesus ask Philip the question in v. 5? He wants to test His disciple to see if what Philip has seen has led him to deeper faith in Jesus. He already knew (foreknowledge) what He would do for these people. He wanted to see if Philip would put his faith in Him to

provide for these people. This test wasn't just for Philip though. It was for all His disciples.

- After He feeds the crowd, they recognize Him as the Prophet that was to come into the world. This is the Prophet that Moses refers to in Deuteronomy 18:15, 18. Prophet is not a common designation for Jesus. It was a term used by those who did not know Him well and didn't see Him as more than a prophet.
 - This is demonstrated by their response. They want to make Him king. While Jesus is a king, He is not the king they expect and so He withdraws. He is not the Messiah or king they expect and want, but He is the Messiah and King they NEED.
- The second sign is performed in front of a much smaller crowd: His disciples. The purpose of this one is to further prove to them He truly is the Messiah, the Son of God, God Himself. Jesus didn't walk on water to amaze His disciples, but to help them realize He is sovereign over the world that He created in the beginning. Only God can rule over the waters (Ps. 29:10-11; 89:9; 107:28-30).
 - In this instance, He use the opportunity to once again let them know He is the "I AM" ("it is I" – Greek: *egō eimi*) that further corroborates His deity.
 - Knowing He is the "I Am" should dispel their fears and bring about trust and faith.
 - Not only does He walk on water, but He also calms the storm and transports them to land safely. He is not just a man; He is God!
- Contemporary Application
 - Does having the knowledge that Jesus is the Son of God dispel all our fears and worries? Explain. Should it? Discuss.
- **9:1-7**
 - Key Points
 - Jesus now finds a man blind from birth. His disciples ask if he was blind due to his sin or his parents.
 - This was a common belief in ancient Judaism that suffering was due to sin. The reason this belief was held was that the Jews could not bring themselves to charge God with causing bad and evil things to innocent people (while their thoughts were with good intentions, they were misguided).
 - But Jesus teaches them that suffering is not always a direct result of sin, but often an opportunity for God to demonstrate who He is.
 - In this instance, Jesus demonstrates that He is the Messiah and that He is the "I AM" (Greek: *egō eimi*) who can restore sight to the blind as He bring light to a world of darkness. This is both physical and (even more so) spiritual.
 - Jesus uses "spit-mud" to anoint the man and restore his sight. Though no one knows just why He uses this method, many have believed that it symbolizes the creative work of God in man in Genesis 2:7. Therefore, Jesus is using His creative ability (as the

Creator) to now re-create the sight of this man as a further demonstration of who He is.

- Contemporary Application
 - How does it make you feel to know that God will often use suffering as a means to show others who He is?
 - Have you seen this demonstrated in your life or someone else's? Share a story.
 - How has Jesus used His creative ability in your life and "re-created" (or restored) you in a way that brings Him glory? Did it involved some suffering?
- **11:1-44**
 - Key Points
 - Read through these verses key in on the following:
 - V. 4 – For the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.
 - V. 6 – Jesus stayed 2 days longer. Why?
 - V. 11 – Jesus knew Lazarus had died before He was told.
 - V. 14-15 – Jesus explains why He waited 2 days. So they may believe!
 - V. 21-22 – Martha displays her belief in Jesus, but fails to see Him as God.
 - Vv. 25-27 – Jesus is the "I AM" and Martha confesses Him as the Messiah, the Son of God.
 - Vv. 33-35 – Jesus wept. Why? Knowing that someone will die and then be raised again does not take away the sorrow. Jesus, though God, was human. Jesus has the heart of God and feels our every pain and sorrow as He felt His own.
 - V. 40 – Jesus to display the glory of God.
 - Vv. 41-42 – Jesus prays and shares the purpose of His miracles.
 - Contemporary Application
 - How do you feel knowing Jesus felt emotions just like you?
 - What does this miracle teach us about Jesus and God?
 - What does it teach us about faith?

UNDERSTANDING HEART

- What is the purpose of the miracles?
- Is it possible to separate the miracles from Jesus and still claim Him as Lord and Savior?
- What do the miracles have to do with our faith today? Do miracles still happen today?

WISDOM HANDS

- Share with someone this week how you believe Jesus performed miracles and why it is important to our faith in Him.

PRAYER

End your time together with a prayer. Thank Him for displaying His power through His Son!

CLASS OUTLINE

"...but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:31) The Gospel of John was written so that those who read its message may believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of God, THE CHRIST. The following outline holds the major themes expounded on in the Gospel of John in order that its readers may believe in Jesus and have eternal life. (Adapted from the "Key Themes" outline in the ESV Study Bible):

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (January 4)
2. THE WORD IS...
GOD (January 11)
 - a. Jesus is GOD
 - b. 1:1–2, 18; 5:17–18; 8:58–59; 10:30–33; 20:28
3. THE WORD IS...
BEFORE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD (January 18)
 - a. Jesus existed before the creation of all there is.
 - b. 1:1–2; 8:58; 17:5, 24
4. THE WORD IS...
OMNISCIENT (ALL KNOWING) (January 25)
 - a. Jesus has supernatural knowledge that only God can possess.
 - b. 1:48; 2:4, 19, 23–25; 3:14; 4:17–18; 6:51, 70; 8:28; 9:3; 10:15, 17–18; 11:4, 14; 12:24, 32; 13:10–11, 38; 21:18–19
5. THE WORD IS...
THE MESSIAH AND SON OF GOD (February 1)
 - a. Jesus is the promised Messiah and Son of God prophesied in Old Testament.
 - b. 1:36, 41, 49; 3:18; 4:25, 29; 5:25; 7:26, 27, 31, 41, 42; 9:22; 10:24, 36; 11:4, 27; 12:34; 19:7; 20:30–31
6. THE WORD IS...
THE "I AM" (February 8)
 - a. Jesus is the "I AM" from the Old Testament. He is Yahweh/Jehovah.
 - b. 4:26; 6:20, 35, 48, 51; 8:12, 18, 24, 28, 58; 9:5; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 13:19; 14:6; 15:1; 18:5–6 (cf. Ex. 3:14–15; Isa. 41:4; 43:10–13, 25; 45:18; 51:12; 52:6)
7. THE WORD IS...
THE SON WHO WAS SENT BY AND REFLECTS THE FATHER (February 15)
 - a. Jesus was sent by God and reflects the very essence of the Father.
 - b. 3:17, 35–36; 5:19–26; 6:40; 8:35–36; 14:13; 17:1
8. THE WORD IS...
THE FULFILLMENT OF JEWISH FESTIVALS/INSTITUTIONS (February 22)
 - a. Jesus fulfills the Jewish festivals and institutions found in the Law (even the temple itself).
 - b. 1:29, 36; 2:14–22, esp. v. 21; 4:23–24; 8:12; 9:5; 19:14
9. THE WORD IS...
THE GIVER OF ETERNAL LIFE (March 1)
 - a. Jesus gives eternal life to those who believe in Him.
 - b. 1:4; 3:15–16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 26, 39–40; 6:27, 33, 35, 40, 47–48, 51, 53–54, 68; 8:12; 10:10, 25, 28; 11:25; 12:25, 50; 14:6; 17:2–3; 20:31

10. THE WORD IS...

A MIRACLE WORKER (March 8)

- a. Jesus performs signs and wonders that demonstrate that He is the promised Messiah.
- b. 2:1–11, 13–22; 4:46–54; 5:1–15; 6:1–15; 9:1–41; 11:1–44

11. THE WORD IS...

TESTIFIED BY OTHERS TO BE THE MESSIAH (March 15)

- a. Witnesses testify that Jesus is the Messiah.
- b. 1:7–8, 15, 19, 32, 34; 3:11, 32–33; 4:39; 5:31–39; 8:14, 18; 10:25; 15:26–27; 18:37; 19:35; 21:24

12. THE WORD IS...

UNIFIED WITH FATHER AND SPIRIT IN THEIR WORK OF REVELATION AND REDEMPTION (March 22)

- a. Father, Son, and Spirit are united in their work.
- b. 14:17–18, 23, 26; 15:26; 20:21–22

13. THE WORD IS...

THE BASIS OF SALVATION (March 29)

- a. It is by Jesus' death that God brings His people salvation.
 - i. 1:29; 3:14–15; 6:51–58; 10:15; 11:50–52; 12:24; 15:13
- b. God is sovereign in salvation.
 - i. 3:21; 5:21; 6:37–45, 64–65; 10:16, 26–30; 15:16; 17:2, 6, 9

14. BELIEVERS MUST...

CONFESS AND BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH (April 12)

- a. Salvation is obtained by believing in Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God.
 - i. 1:12; 3:15, 16; 5:24; 6:29, 35; 8:24; 11:25–27, 42; 12:44; 17:8, 21; 20:31
- b. The benefits of salvation can be experienced here and now (in this evil age), but will be fully known when He returns.
 - i. 3:18, 36; 4:23; 5:24; 6:39–40; 10:10, 26–29; 11:25–26

15. BELIEVERS MUST...

CONTINUE JESUS' WORK AND MISSION (April 19)

- a. Believers are called upon to continue the work of the Savior in order that all men may know and be saved.
- b. 4:38; 15:16; 17:18; 20:21–22

16. CONCLUSION TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (April 26)