

## Signs in John

What would life be like without signs? How many signs do you think you see daily? Regardless of the type of signs we see (warning, directional, regulatory, etc.), they serve an important purpose: the conveyance of information and pointing beyond themselves to a destination.

Signs also play an important part in Scripture. Like signs we encounter, the signs in the Bible are meant to impart information and point to something larger than themselves.

The Gospel of John leans heavily into the Old Testament, and it's important that to understand that signs were common there as well. The purpose of signs in the Old Testament was to authenticate the messengers of God and their message of God's desire to provide salvation to His people. John seems to carry over this purpose into the signs included in his writings to witness to who Jesus is.

Scholars identify seven signs in John:

- Turning water into wine (2:1-11)
- The cleansing of the temple (2:13-22)
- Healing of the royal officials' son ((4:46-54)
- Healing of the lame man (5:1-15)
- Feeding of the 5,000+ (6:1-15)
- Healing of the blind man (John 9)
- Raising of Lazarus (John 11)

Each of these signs were done in a public manner for people to witness, and are selected to authenticate the ministry, message and identity of Jesus. They are building blocks (from the water to wine, to the raising of Lazarus) that increasingly show His power but give a powerful message beyond themselves. Jesus repeatedly encourages the witnesses of the signs not to focus on the sign itself but the message it signified. Each one speaks uniquely to the identity and mission of Jesus.

Sign	Meaning
Water to wine (2:1-11)	Jesus inaugurates a new covenant based on joy.
Cleansing the temple (2:12-17)	Jesus is the suffering Savior who will build the new temple of His people by His death and resurrection.
Healing of royal officials' son (4:46-54)	Jesus grants life by the power of His word.
Healing the lame man (5:1-15)	Jesus make people spiritually whole.
Feeding the 5,000+ (6:1-15)	Jesus is LORD over the gift of eternal life.
Healing the blind man (John 9)	Jesus is The LORD who gives sight to the spiritually blind.
Raising of Lazarus (John 11)	Jesus is The LORD who rules over life and gives life to the spiritually dead.

While these signs are centuries old, they still serve their original purpose: authenticating the identity and mission of Jesus and challenging us as modern-day readers/listeners to believe and find life in His name. Water is still turned into wine, thousands are fed with the bread of life, and those dead in sins are raised to walk new lives.