



7 Signs

If you stroll around Bathurst's CBD you'll come across lots of signs. Not just street signs and advertising, but also signs that have been thoughtfully designed to draw you in to take a closer look. They're strategically placed, and full of information that highlights the rich history of our city.

John's planned out his biography of Jesus in much the same way. Take a stroll through John's gospel and **you'll come across seven strategically placed signs**. Each of them is packed full of things to learn about Jesus. Each of them highlights the rich blessing of believing in Jesus.

John explains his reason for including the seven signs in chapter 20 verse 30. he says,

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 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.

John 20.30-31 (NIV)

John, being a disciple of Jesus, saw Jesus do lots of signs. But these seven he's written down, so as to convince *us* of what *he's* convinced of—that Jesus is the Christ! And by being convinced of this, **John's hope is that we'll have life in Jesus' name.**



John 2.1-11

Read John 2.1-11

1. What socially awkward situation do hosts of this wedding find themselves in? How do you think you would feel in a similar situation?
2. Check out Lamentations 2.11-12 and Joel 1.10-12. What feelings does running out of wine invoke in Israelite culture?
3. What impressive, surprising, or noteworthy thing does Jesus do?
4. How does John alert us to the fact that this is a sign?
5. According to John, what does this sign show us about Jesus (John 2.11)?
6. Check out Psalm 104.13-15 and Amos 9.13. What might an abundance of wine mean to an Israelite?
7. Why do you think John points out what the stone water jars were used for?
8. What is Jesus revealing about himself by doing this sign?

9. How does the master of the feast react to the sign?

10. How do the disciples react to the sign?

11. The master of the feast notices that the best wine has been saved for last. What does this reveal about Jesus' arrival?

Think it over

Why do you think this is the first sign Jesus does in John's gospel?

Are there things in your life that you are embarrassed about or ashamed of? Jesus's first sign hints at (and Jesus will make this clearer as John's gospel goes on) the fact that he can wash away our guilt and shame and sin. How can this comfort you?

Do you ever have moments where you think belonging to Jesus isn't all that special? How does Jesus shape our thinking about the rich blessing of belonging to him?

This first sign reminds us the best of God's blessing and goodness is found in Jesus. Where else in your life do you experience God's goodness and blessing? What makes Jesus even better?

Prayer ideas

Give thanks to God for his goodness and blessing expressed to us in Christ Jesus.



Read John 4.39-45

1. Where is Jesus? What reasons are given for the Samaritans believing in Jesus?

Read John 4.46-54

2. What desperate situation does the official find himself in? How do you think you might feel in a similar situation?

3. What impressive, surprising, or noteworthy thing does Jesus do?

4. How does John alert us to the fact that this is a sign?

5. How are the people of Galilee different to the people of Samaria (John 4.48¹)?

6. How is the official different to the rest of the Galileans (John 4.50)?

7. What do you think is the point of Jesus doing a sign that no one sees?

8. What is Jesus revealing about himself by doing this sign?

¹ The *you* in verse 48 is plural. Jesus is talking to the official, but addressing the crowds in Galilee.

9. What's so extraordinary about the official's trip home?

10. How do the official and his household react to the sign?

11. How does this sign highlight the authority of Jesus' words?

Think it over

What do we gain by believing Jesus' words?

When do you find it hard to take Jesus at his word?

What are the times in your life when Jesus has kept his word? How can remembering these times help you take Jesus at his word?

When do you find it hard to obey Jesus words?

How does this sign help you to take Jesus at his word?

Prayer ideas

Thank God for his word, and that his words contain kindness and blessing and the promise of life.

Ask God to help us take sin seriously, by going to Christ Jesus for forgiveness and rescue.

Ask God to help us take every opportunity to invite people to discover forgiveness in Jesus.



Read John 5.1-9

1. What desperate situation does the man in verse 5 find himself in? What two problems does he have? How do you think you might feel in a similar situation?

2. What impressive, surprising, or noteworthy thing does Jesus do?

Of the seven signs recorded in John's gospel, this one is the trickiest to identify as a sign. That's because it's only after all the long conversations sparked by this sign that John actually calls it a *sign*! (John 6.2, John 7.23, John 7.31.)

Read John 5.9-18

3. How do the Jewish leaders initially react to the sign? What does this show us about their mindset and priorities?

4. When Jesus meets the man in the temple, what good news does he share with him? What does this tell us about Jesus' power, authority, and purpose?

5. When Jesus meets the man in the temple, what warning does he share with him? What does this tell us about Jesus' power, authority, and purpose?

6. How does the healed man react to the sign as soon as he knows who it was who healed him?

7. How do the Jewish leaders react to the sign once they know who it was who healed the man?

Read John 5.19-29

8. Compare John 5.8, John 5.17, and John 5.21. How does this sign demonstrate what Jesus has come to do?

9. Compare John 5.14 and John 5.25-29. What is the good news of this sign? What is the warning of this sign?

10. What 'greater works than these' does this sign point to?

Think it over

What is Jesus' attitude to suffering in this life?

According to Jesus, what is worse than suffering in this life?

Are there areas of your life in which you are ignoring him and continuing to sin? What is Jesus warning you to do instead?

Like the invalid was hopeless and helpless, we are hopeless and helpless in our sin. What has Jesus done for us? What does he promise us in this chapter? Have our lives been changed more or less than the invalid's life was changed?

Prayer ideas

Ephesians 2 says, *"...because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus."* Give thanks to God for the incomparable riches of his grace in Christ.



Read John 6.1-14

1. What situation do Jesus, the disciples, and the crowd find themselves in? How do you think you might feel in a similar situation?

2. What impressive, surprising, or noteworthy thing does Jesus do? List all the details that emphasise how impressive this is.

3. How does John alert us to the fact that this is a sign?

Read John 6.15, & 6.22-40

4. What do the crowds try to do in verse 15?

5. According to Jesus, in what way have the crowds have misread the sign (John 6.26-27)?

6. What is surprising about the crowds asking Jesus for a sign?

7. What sort of leader are the crowd looking for? What sort of leader does Jesus say they need?

Read John 6.41-59

8. How do the Jewish leaders react to the sign? What do they not understand about what the sign is pointing to?

9. What illustration does Jesus use to explain the sign to the Jewish leaders?

Read John 6.60-66

10. How do 'many of the disciples' react to the sign?

11. What has changed since verse 15?

Read John 6.67-68

12. How do Peter's words profoundly point to Jesus being the leader worth following above all other leaders?

Think it over

The crowds who saw the sign wanted an impressive leader who could deliver wins and entertainment, and solve their short-term problems. When do we find ourselves looking to these kinds of leaders?

Jesus challenges the crowd for seeking "food that spoils" instead of "food that endures to eternal life". What are some examples of "food that spoils" that you find yourself working for or spending most of your energy on (e.g. career, possessions, popularity)? How can you reorient your life toward what truly lasts?

How does this sign help us think about success as a church at BPC?

Everyday Aussies love to talk (and complain!) about our leaders. How does this sign help us share the good news of Jesus in conversations about our leaders?

Prayer ideas

Ask God to help us value Jesus and his promise of eternal life, rather than those who promise only short-term satisfaction.



Read John 9.1-16

1. What question do the disciples ask Jesus, and what prompts them to ask the question?
2. What does Jesus say in answer to their question? What do we learn about Jesus?
3. What impressive, surprising, or noteworthy sign does Jesus *do* in answer to their question?
4. How does John alert us to the fact that this is a sign?

After the sign, Jesus disappears from the scene for a while. The focus shifts from the sign to how different people react to it. These reactions expose who is beginning to see and who remains stubbornly blind.

Read John 9.17-34

5. The Jewish leaders question the once-blind man and his parents about Jesus. What answers do they really want?
6. Why do the parents of the once-blind man answer the way they do?
7. What has the once-blind man come to understand about Jesus, that the Jewish leaders refuse to see (10.24-34)?

8. What makes the once-blind man spiritually sighted?

9. What makes the Jewish leaders spiritually blind?

Think it over

How do you see Jesus? As a liar or sinner? As an impressive figure? As the Lord to be worshipped?

What might make you afraid to speak up for Jesus being the Saviour of the world?

How does the darkness of sin and suffering in this world highlight the works of God?

If you are suffering or sick, there may be an obvious connection between your suffering and a particular sin in your life. Then again, there may not be any connection at all. Either way, how does confessing your sin and enjoying the forgiveness Jesus promises display the works of God through you?

Prayer ideas

Thank God for sending Jesus as the light of the world, and ask that we would see clearly who Jesus is.



Read John 11.1-44

1. What desperate situation do Mary and Martha find themselves in? How do you think you might feel in a similar situation?
2. What clues are there about why Jesus delayed in coming to see Lazarus (verse 4, 14-15, 21-26, 40-42)?
3. What is Jesus' emotional response to Lazarus' death? Why has Jesus allowed Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and even himself to go through such an awful ordeal, when he could have stopped Lazarus from dying?
4. According to Jesus, what future reality is this sign pointing us to?

Read John 11.45-57

5. How does John alert us to the fact that this is a sign (11.47, see also John 12.17-18)?
6. What worries the Jewish leaders about this sign?
7. What does Caiaphas *think* he is saying, and what is he *unknowingly* saying?

Think it over

"In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes." How does Jesus challenge this common saying? *Hint: it's got nothing to do with taxes!*

How does Jesus help us see that it's okay to be upset at death?

Are you afraid of death? What makes death scary? How does Jesus' sixth sign help us with our fear of death?

In those moments when we feel the deep grief and sorrow at the death of someone we love, how does Jesus provide comfort and hope, and even joy?

How does this sign compel us to long for the resurrection?

Prayer ideas

Thank God for Jesus, who is our hope in sadness, sickness, grief, and death, because he is the resurrection and the life.



Read John 20.1-10

1. What shocking situation do Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter, and John ('the one Jesus loved') discover early on the first day of the week?

2. What do they think has happened? What does John add to help us understand what they are going through?

Read John 20.11-23

3. What reality is slowly dawning on Mary?

4. What do the disciples need to see in order to be convinced Jesus is risen from the dead?

5. What message does Jesus send the disciples to proclaim?

Read John 20.24-29

6. Why doesn't Thomas believe that Jesus is risen from the dead?

7. What does Thomas need to see in order to believe?

Read John 20.30-31

8. How does John alert us to the fact that this is a sign (see also John 2.16-22)?

9. What does John say is the purpose of all of these signs?

10. How has John's recording of these signs helped us to believe?

11. What does John want us to believe about Jesus? Why?

Think it over

Do you believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God?

Does John want us to believe without evidence? Does he want us to pretend we never have doubts about Jesus? How does this chapter help us understand what it means to believe?

Why do you think it's a blessing to have believed even though we haven't seen what Mary, Peter, John, and Thomas saw?

What role do followers of Jesus have in helping others believe?

Of all the different things we have learnt about Jesus from these seven signs, what stands out to you the most?

Prayer ideas

Give thanks that Jesus is the risen Son of God, who has defeated death and promises life to all who believe in him.