

The Signs of Christ

By Jeffrey Weitzel

Have you ever wondered why many of the miracles of Jesus are called “signs”? Strong’s concordance says of signs: 4592 “*semeion*...an indication, especially ceremonially or supernaturally: miracle, sign, token, wonder.” So these are a supernatural indication. This is the Greek version of the Hebrew “Oth” which is translated as “signs” in Genesis 1:14 referring to the lights in the firmament “let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years.” Oth is Strong’s 0226 “a signal (literally or figuratively), as a flag, beacon, monument, omen, prodigy, evidence, etc.: mark, miracle, (en-)sign, token.” It is quite clear with both words that they are intended to point to something else. Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary expands on the various nuances of the meanings of *semeion*, “...of tokens portending future events,...where ‘the sign of the Son of Man’ signifies, subjectively, that the Son of Man is Himself the ‘Sign’ of what He is about to do”. So if Jesus Himself is a sign, then we should expect the things He does to point to something. *Semeion* is then surely more than just a miracle that Christ did to prove his divinity in order to create believers, although that was an element in his miracles as well. It makes perfect sense that Jesus entire life was a sign, not only as a whole, but each small aspect of it as well – everything that He did.

It is amazing to me how much Jesus always seems to know about the future, about what will happen both immediately and in the distant future. As part of the Godhead that created the world this doesn’t amaze me quite as much, but when I think of Him as a man living in the world, it does. He never had to wait for a vision to come to Him to know these things. He would know immediately in the middle of a conversation. When someone told Him Lazarus was sick, there was an immediate reaction within His very being that knew what this meant and was able to respond, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” He had not known until that moment that Lazarus was sick, yet He

immediately knew what it meant and what He would do. What this tells me is that it is all wrapped up in His very nature. These things that would happen and who He was (or is) are intricately tied together, if not the very same thing. Jesus was very aware of His nature. I’m sure He spent the greater portion of His first 30 years of life figuring that out and coming to grips with what it meant to be the Son of God and the Son of Man at the same time, before starting His ministry. Once that ministry started, it meant that everything He did would show who He was, and that who He was would always show what was going to happen. This stuff could not be separated. That is why the deeper we look into His life now, the more we see it connected to everything.

There is much use of symbolism in each of these signs. Jesus used Parables to teach us the way to look at this symbolism. Luke 8 gives a very valuable lesson in parables. After speaking to the crowd the parable of the sower, He explains the reason for parables in the first place. Verse 10 “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest *it is given* in parables, that ‘Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand’” He then goes on to explain in detail every bit of symbolism given in that parable. It is not my focus to go into that parable right now, but we should at least learn that these symbols are given throughout the entire Bible, and it is up to us (those to whom it has been given to know the mysteries) to find and understand them, with the help of the Word of God, Jesus Christ, with whom we can dine one on one in the Bible. Luke 8 is a great jumping off point for learning how parables and symbolism work. God’s symbols are remarkably consistent, so we do not need to think that we have to somehow crack a secret code to do this. The explanation of these symbols are all readily available. Sometimes it is found in the definition of the Hebrew words used, or the name given to the people used in the symbol. Other times the symbol’s meaning is given by Jesus in another place in the Bible. There is very clear meaning to them, so that when we find the meaning, it should be obvious that it fits the pattern of what is happening – we are not doing any obtuse guesswork. This meaning will often convey a concept much more deeply than could be done with a direct explanation.

It is nothing new to most of us that the Bible is full of symbolism, but I think many do not realize just how deeply this symbolism goes. I strongly doubt that any of us have understood even a majority of the things there are to learn. It is one of those things that the more you look, the more you will find, and the more you will realize you still have left to learn. However it can only be beneficial to keep delving deeper. My intent in this study, personally, has been to have some one on one bonding with my creator, older brother, and bride. The rewards have exceeded my hopes, so I would like to share what I have found.

Note that not all of Jesus' miracles are called semeion. I will be focusing on the seven miracles in the book of John that are specifically called "Semeion." Other miracles may point to something as well, and it is likely that they do because cumulatively His miracles are referred to as signs, but there has not been an equal attempt made with each particular miracle to call it semeion.

I just mentioned that there were seven of these signs in the book of John. Something else in the book of John occurs seven times, too. Jesus says "I am..." in symbolic language, describing Himself in seven different ways. It also just so happens that these seven "I am" statements can be paired with the seven signs. Jesus, through John, is showing us who and what He is, why He came, and what He is about to do. Again, this stuff cannot be separated. Who Jesus is and what He does are the same thing.

So let's take a look at these signs and statements.

Water to Wine – "I am the true vine"

John 2:1-12. The first Sign that Jesus produced was that of turning the water to wine.

¹ On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. ³ And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

⁴ Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do *it*."

⁶ Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. ⁷ Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ And He said to them, "Draw *some* out now, and take *it* to the master of the feast." And they took *it*. ⁹ When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. ¹⁰ And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the *guests* have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!"

¹¹ This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

¹² After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.

There is much contained in this story that most of us have never seen. It is important that this was done at a wedding. It is very symbolic of His future marriage to Spiritual Israel, the New and Old Testament Church that has qualified to be His bride by surpassing all others (These qualifications are described in Proverbs 31). We are not told who is being married at this wedding, nor is the bride ever mentioned (maybe for the same reason we are also not told who the bride is in Mathew 22?), but it is obviously quite a large affair. We are told that they ran out of wine, and Jesus ordered them to fill up the 6 water pots that were there, each 2 or 3 measures (or Firkins – probably about 9 gallons) each. These were filled to the brim and turned into wine – about 135 gallons of wine! More than likely they had already consumed quite a large amount. Even if the original amount supplied was only half of that, by the end of this wedding feast there would have been over 200 gallons of wine consumed. So this was a large affair for important folks.

When the initial wine ran out, we read something quite confusing upon first look. First Mary suggests to Jesus that He should take this opportunity to perform a miracle. Then Jesus appears to rebuke her harshly. Verse 3 – "...the mother of Jesus said to Him, 'They have no wine.' 4. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.'" Why is Jesus sounding so harsh with his mother? And why, when it sounds as though He is refusing her request, does He then perform the miracle anyway? It is interesting to see here that Mary knows full well that her son is about to start doing what had been told to her by the angel Gabriel while He was still in the womb. She is very excited and anxious. She knows He was recently baptized by John and has likely talked to Jesus that the specific occasion of this wedding would kick start his ministry. She is a proud mother and cannot wait for what is about to happen. However, Jesus knows some things that she does not. For one, He is able to foresee that His mother will become an object of worship to later generations, and He wants to state very clearly that what He does and when He does something is not up to His blessed mother. She is not a deity to be worshipped, and He does not do anything at anyone else's whim, even His Mother. He says these things, not for His mother's sake, but for ours. To call His mother "woman" sounds overly harsh to us, but was actually not at all. His statement is made in the most respectful fashion, so as not to be a rebuke to her, but still to be a statement to us. In fact Vines says of the word Woman:

"gune"...used in addressing a 'woman,' it is a term not of reproof or severity, but of endearment or respect...; John 2:4, where the Lord's words to His mother at the wedding in Cana, are neither rebuff nor rebuke. The question is, lit. 'What to Me and to thee?' and the word 'woman,' the term of endearment, follows this. The meaning is "There is no obligation on Me or you, but love will supply the need." She confides in Him, He responds to her faith. There was lovingkindness in both hearts. His next words about 'His hour' suit this; they were not unfamiliar to her. Cana is on the

path to Calvary; Calvary was not yet, but it made the beginning of signs possible."

It should be noted that Jesus did not refuse to do anything. In fact, in his statement He actually gave indication that she should expect Him to do His miracle, but that it would not be done before its time – "my hour is not yet come". So Jesus has shown us He is in control of the situation and is about to start in on His course of Signs. Mary understood what He was about to do and *prepares His way* for Him by instructing the servants to do whatever He asks.

But what is the actual miracle supernaturally pointing to? I think we need to look at the substances that are in question – water and wine. Water is often used to symbolize God's Spirit. It is water that is used in baptism - the ceremony, with the laying on of hands, that imparts the Spirit to us. John baptized with water, but Jesus with the Holy Spirit.

What about wine? Wine is symbolic of blood – more specifically Christ's blood. During the Passover meal, Jesus said "This cup (*the wine*) is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." – Luke 22:20. Blood itself is life. We are told not to eat/drink blood in Leviticus 17:11 "for the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." So it is life and it is also used for atonement. It is the very life of the flesh that is an atonement, and we are not to eat of it. So why can we drink the wine, and are actually ordered to drink the wine that symbolizes this blood, if we are not to eat the blood? Because in the old covenant the blood sacrifices pointed towards the sacrifice of the Christ that was to come, but *that sacrifice hadn't happened yet*. This blood had no real power to take away sins on its own. Only the truly unspotted sacrifice of Jesus that it pointed to could do that. Not until Christ was being offered up on the new Covenant Passover would any blood actually take away our sins. Once that happened, *then* we could partake of His blood to forgive our sins, but still it is only *His* blood we are to partake of. We are still not

to eat animal blood – it still has no power to forgive anything. And it is still the life of the animal, which we do not need. We need Christ's life. The wine symbolizes Jesus blood, just as the animal sacrifices' blood symbolized Jesus blood. The difference being that now we do not need to sacrifice animals, as the real sacrifice has been made. And with no animals being sacrificed, wine is now used in its place as a more fitting symbol, one we are now allowed to partake of it.

Jesus took the water (His holy Spirit) and turned it into life (His blood-symbolized by wine), through its being shed as an atonement for our sins. Jesus dying on the cross for the forgiveness of sins was perfectly pictured by this miracle. His life, lived perfectly in the Holy Spirit, was used to atone for us, by the shedding of His life blood. Water (spirit) was turned to wine (blood), and that wine was served to *many* at this wedding (His blood was shed for *many*, not all) for the giving of *life*.

Also the wine that Jesus produced was far superior to the wine that had been served prior. Verse 10 "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!" Certainly Christ's sacrifice was far superior to animal sacrifice.

So was this miracle more than just an amazing feat? Yes! It was very much a "supernatural indication" of the very reason He had been put physically on the earth. This "beginning of signs" was truly showing the end from the beginning!

But there is more. Look what Jesus says later on in John 15:1-8.

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

⁵ "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

So it only makes sense that this wine represents His blood, because He is the vine itself from which the wine came! And this is where we come into the picture, too, as we are the branches which are expected to bear fruit. We are also the guests at the wedding which are partaking of the wine. We can bear fruit only because we are partaking of the wine, or put another way, abiding in Him. We cannot abide in Him without His spirit, which He turned into His blood through His sacrifice, abiding in us. Him in us, us in Him. This all starts to sound like circular logic, but that is what it is. The patterns all start to point back to one another, and that is how we recognize them as truth, for the patterns never change. If we find something does not fit the pattern, then we had better question it. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

The Nobleman's Son – "Before Abraham was, I AM"

John 4:46-54

⁴⁶ So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷ When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."

⁴⁹ The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!"

⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his

way. ⁵¹And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told *him*, saying, “Your son lives!”

⁵² Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” ⁵³So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives.” And he himself believed, and his whole household.

⁵⁴ This again *is* the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

Verse 54 just said that this is the second sign that Jesus did. Yet back in verses 1-26 of this same chapter Jesus had just told a woman He had never met all about her 5 husbands and current live-in boyfriend – as she later stated, He “told me all things that I ever did.” I would categorize this as a miracle if someone came up and did the same to me. However, this apparently was not counted among His “signs”, so certainly there is a designation being made between what is a sign and what is not.

When the nobleman came to Jesus to ask Him to heal his son, note Jesus’ response - “Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.” He understands the human ability to not believe anything without proof. Our attitudes have not changed. Fortunately, neither has Christ – He has given ample proof to anyone willing to look. Also note here that the terms ‘signs’ and ‘wonders’ are different terms. “Wonders” is Strong’s 5059 *teras*: a prodigy or omen.” Vines says of it “ ‘something strange,’ causing the beholder to marvel...generally follows *semeia*, ‘signs’;...A sign is intended to appeal to the understanding, a ‘wonder’ appeals to the imagination.” People will not believe unless they have been appealed to on both an intellectual and emotional level (understanding and imagination). A miracle that does only one of these is not enough for us! So what we are about to see is not only a supernatural indication (sign), but also a strange event to marvel at. Of course, this phrase about signs and wonders, being meant for our ears and not for his, goes completely over the nobleman’s head. We can also know that that statement was

not meant for the nobleman because he actually had great faith that Jesus could help him out, as we will see.

He implores Jesus again to come with him before the child dies. Jesus does not go with him. Why? Because He is lazy or has better things to do with His time than go a days journey for a single healing? No. He wants to test the man’s faith, which He saw was strong. The man believed and went his way. This is all very important to what this sign is pointing to.

So what *is* going on here? My initial thought, because of the use of a Father and son in the sign was that the Nobleman represented the Father and His son would be Jesus. But let’s see if that holds up or not. The word used here for “nobleman” is Strong’s 937 “*basilikos* – belonging to the sovereign, or preeminent.” Well, the Father *is* the sovereign, He does not belong to the sovereign one. The one who belongs to the sovereign is Jesus, so my initial thought is not holding water so far. But what if the nobleman, and not his son, represents Jesus here, as the definition of *basilikos* would seem to say? Let’s see what happens.

If the nobleman represents Jesus, then the only possibility for the nobleman’s son is that of Jesus’ future children, offspring of His marriage to the bride. That is *us*, at least the majority of us who do not qualify to be His bride. Then Jesus is left in this sign to represent the Father, whom all things happen by. It is interesting (strange?) and important that Jesus gets to play the part of His Father because, as Jesus states many times, we will know the Father by knowing the son. And we will see some amazing insights by following these roles through with biblical patterns.

So what happened after Jesus told the nobleman to go His way? He met his servants on the way down to see his son and was told that his son lives. The nobleman had complete faith this would be the case, just as Jesus knows that we will one day be His offspring, but he still wants to make sure that everything fits together, as it was told to him.

He is excited to see that the works that are being done are exactly as they were foretold. So he inquires of the hour that it came about. It was the seventh hour. The same hour that Jesus had told him to go his way.

Now let's look at the time here of the seventh hour. What could that represent? Two things related to time in the Bible that use the number seven are the seven days of the week, and also the seven thousand years that the earth will have existed in its current form (although this is inferred, not mentioned explicitly). Both of those are related, as the week lays out the plan for those seven thousand years, with the last thousand years being a Sabbath of rest. So what happens at the beginning of this last thousand years rest? Satan is bound up and cannot bother us. We could certainly say that "the fever" will leave us, couldn't we? After Satan is bound, I am certain that there will be many, many people suddenly looking very carefully into their Bibles to excitedly see how these foretold events actually came to fruition. Of course, Jesus, being the author of these words, will not have to read them to see the truth, but I am sure He will be very excited to see them all happening just as the Father told Him they would. Just because we have belief beforehand, does not mean we cannot be very excited when those things we believe actually happen.

Let's put these pieces together. In this sign we have a picture of Jesus (played by the nobleman) coming to the Father (played by Jesus) to ask Him to heal His children (played by the nobleman's son). And you'd better believe that after man's fall in the garden, Jesus prayed for our healing to His Father many, many times! God the Father (Jesus) listens, and because of the faith of His son Jesus (the nobleman), man (the nobleman's son) is healed. But He does not allow the healing to be seen yet, even though it was done when He spoke it. Remember, God lives outside of the realm of time. This is how all prophecy can be foretold. It has already happened; we just cannot see it until it unfolds. In this case, the healing is not seen until precisely the beginning of the seventh 1000 year period in the life of man on earth (the seventh hour), when Satan is bound (the fever leaves the nobleman's son).

So we have here a journey containing events from the fall of man (this would be when the nobleman's son became ill) all the way through to the last 1000 years in God's plan for our salvation (when the nobleman's son was healed). This is quite a journey. And that journey is the aspect of Jesus' nature that is being pointed to here. He is one and the same with Yehovah from the Old Testament. He is eternal, existing since before the foundations of the earth, and His reason for existing has been the same from the beginning to the end of this time – to have a healthy family, healing His children when they are sick. This is why so many of His miracles are healings. He attempts to explain His eternal nature to the Pharisees (to deaf ears) in John 8:48-58.

⁴⁸ Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

⁴⁹ Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. ⁵⁰ And I do not seek My *own* glory; there is One who seeks and judges. ⁵¹ Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."

⁵² Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.' ⁵³ Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?"

⁵⁴ Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. ⁵⁵ Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad."

⁵⁷ Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

Jesus and John both knew that His pre-incarnate existence was something that would not be accepted by the majority of those

proclaiming to believe in God, so they went to great lengths to explain this truth. It is so important that John actually opened his book with that very same thought. John 1:1-5.

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

How much clearer can it be? It will be valuable to look at the meaning of these simple words “I AM”. “I” is the Strong’s 1473 *ego* a pronoun of the first person meaning “I”, but the notable thing is that it is “only expressed when emphatic” – other cases use a different word. AM is Strong’s 1510 *imee* meaning “I exist (used only when emphatic):-am, have been, X it is I, was.” So the whole “I AM is meant to be emphatic. We also see that AM can be past tense, which is interesting, especially if we look back on the phrase “before Abraham was, I AM” because we start to get a sense of the true existence of Jesus. As part of the Godhead, He is timeless. He truly is and was at the same time. If you do a study on the meaning of the Hebrew name for the pre-incarnate Christ – YHWH (Yehovah) – you will see that this has the essential meaning of I AM, or the self-existent one, with each Hebrew character adding to the overall meaning – I was, I am, and I will be. It is even more interesting to note that the name Jesus, or Yeheshua, is directly derived from the name Yehovah.

It is also stated in John 6:20 “I AM. Do not fear!” (Interlinear translation). This is the same I AM without another thought attached to it, as the other six I AM statements have. I include it here with “Before Abraham was, I AM”, because it is exactly the same statement of His nature. Yet it adds another dimension to it in saying “Do not fear.” We certainly should not fear when we think of whom it is that is in charge of all things.

To those deceived who do not know Him, whether they claim to or not, these clear descriptions of His eternal nature still eludes them. I cannot wait until that day when the father of lies is bound up and the fever leaves us all.

Healing at the Bethesda Pool – “I am the door of the sheep”

John 5:1-9

¹ After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ² Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. ³ In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. ⁴ For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. ⁵ Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been *in that condition* a long time, He said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” ⁷ The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.” ⁸ Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” ⁹ And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.

Not so coincidentally we were just told that Bethesda (literally House of Kindness) is located by the Sheep Gate. No one (His sheep) can enter into His kindness to find pasture except through Him, the door, or gate, of the sheep. This sign has much to teach us about what our relationship with Christ, our good Shepherd, should be, and specifically how that relationship was to change with His coming death. One of Jesus’ I Am statements sheds a lot of light on this sign. John 10:7-10.

⁷ Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who *ever* came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ I am the door [*this is not a separate I am statement, just a part of “I am the door of the sheep” that he just mentioned earlier. He is breaking it down for them.*]. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

¹¹ “I am the good shepherd. [*this is the other half of “I am the door of the sheep” being broken down. The first part explained why He uses a door in His statement. Now He explains why He uses sheep.*] The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ¹² But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³ The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; and I know *My* sheep, and am known by *My* own. ¹⁵ As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down *My* life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear *My* voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd.

¹⁷ “Therefore *My* Father loves Me, because I lay down *My* life that I may take it again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of *Myself*. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from *My* Father.”

Very importantly, the Good Shepherd will lay down His life for the sheep. The hirelings, which are the leaders of the mainstream Christian and Jewish organizations, will not do this. They don't know the sheep, so when the money stops coming in, they're gone. Notice that no one can take His life from Him. It is His choice to lay it down. He has never sinned, so still qualifies for eternal life, therefore death only comes by His own choice. He only had to say the word and the Father would have saved Him from death. It is this death that will make

possible the changes in our relationship with Christ we will be talking about.

Now the attitude of the sick man and of all the other sick people who are “waiting for the moving of the water” at the Bethesda pool is typical of how we have a tendency to be. We want to wait around for things to be done for us and come up with very good excuses why we do not take action ourselves. When Jesus first approached the sick man, He asked a valid question, “Do you want to be made well?” It can be easy to get comfortable with our infirmities and shortcomings. We think that the work involved in overcoming them may be more painful than just living with them. This man surely had a bit of that after 38 years. He responds with an excuse he has surely used for years. “I have no man to put me into the pool...” He is looking for an intercessor, but can find none, so has all but given up. His excuse in this case is valid, as there was no one. The Levitical Priesthood had failed miserably (“all who *ever* came before me are thieves and robbers”), and Christ had not yet died. But Jesus wants to point out here how things will be changing shortly. Soon, this attitude will not be tolerated. It will be up to each individual to come to Him directly. Now, when Jesus died, a very remarkable thing happened. There was a great earthquake, which was the sound of the veil, or curtain of the temple being torn in two. There was no longer anything separating us from the Holy of Holies, where Yehovah (Jesus) dwelled. Man had previously required an intercessor to enter the Holy of Holies for us because we were not clean enough to enter on our own. Moses originally held the post of intercessor, then it was transferred to Aaron and down through the High Priest of the Levitical Priesthood until Jesus death. Then, with the curtain of the temple being torn, suddenly we no longer had anyone or anything in between us and God. We could ask things directly and develop a personal relationship with our creator. Of course, this is where the hirelings popped up, trying to fill that void for those who really wanted to keep an intercessor there. This sick man is about to get a tremendous lesson in how to go about receiving the help He needs without intercessors and hirelings.

Next Jesus said to the sick man, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” Three commands. Let’s talk about each of these individually.

1) Rise: Get off of your lazy butt. This is referring to the attitude I was just mentioning. We are to make no more excuses. We just have to get up and do it. If we think it is impossible for us to do the things asked of us, we need to change our attitude. Before we were given God’s spirit, yes, many things were impossible to us, but now all things are possible. That this man was able to get up and walk after 38 years of not being able to is the proof and the sign.

2) Take up your bed: Leave your place of comfort and get busy doing some work. This healing was done on a Sabbath and that fact was not lost on the Pharisees, who immediately accused Him of doing work on the Sabbath. Did He? He most certainly did. But the work we are prohibited from doing on the Sabbath is our regular worldly work, so that we can have at least one day in the week when we can concentrate on God’s work. God’s work is very different in nature from our worldly work, so it should not be too difficult to differentiate when we are doing one or the other. The reason that every detail of what we can and cannot do on the Sabbath is not spelled out in the Bible is that both types of work are very individualized. After all, we are all different members of the body of Christ with different jobs to do. There may even be some overlap – what may be regular worldly work for one person may be a necessity for another to do their Godly work. The spirit of the work must be looked at. This is why we are told it is up to us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling directly with our God. The Pharisees had no interest in looking at the spirit of the work. Lifting even a finger was, to them, against what Moses taught. So this is to be a lesson as to what is expected on the Sabbath by the Lord of the Sabbath. Yes, it is a day of rest from our worldly work, but it is also a day of work for God. Jesus reply to His accusers is, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.” Let us get to work, too.

3) Walk: Stay with Me without setting that bed back down to lie on again. In verse 14 we hear, “Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, ‘See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.’” After we have gotten up off of our butts and come to Him to start a personal relationship and have started doing His work, it is imperative that we *continue* walking with Him. The unforgivable sin is for an understanding baptized person to knowingly turn their back on God. If we do this, then surely a worse thing will come upon us. We will be in a much worse state than had we never been baptized at all, for we will be burned to non-existence in the lake of fire, whereas if we had simply never come to God we would still have a chance at salvation when we are raised on the last day.

To summarize this sign. We are told that the time is now here that we no longer have an intercessor between us and Christ. We are to enter directly to the Holy of Holies through the Sheep Gate instead of waiting around outside for a miracle to happen. We need to get up and do something productive instead of making excuses for why we can’t – Rise, take up our beds, and walk. Do you have impossible circumstances? We all do. That is why we rely on God and His spirit that has been put *in* us. No more waiting around for someone to do it for us. Christ is our Shepherd and if we listen for His voice He will lead us through all impossibility. For through God, all things are possible.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand – “I am the bread of life.”

John 6:1-14.

¹ After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is *the Sea* of Tiberias. ² Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. ³ And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

⁴ Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. ⁵ Then Jesus lifted up *His* eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread, that these may

eat?”⁶ But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

⁷ Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.”

⁸ One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, ⁹ “There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?”

¹⁰ Then Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. ¹¹ And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹² So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.” ¹³ Therefore they gathered *them* up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. ¹⁴ Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.”

First I would like to point out for anybody who has been wondering where the Bible refers to the Bethesda healing as a sign, that this is where, in verse 2. “After these things,” they followed Jesus over the Sea of Galilee because they saw “His signs He performed on those who were diseased.” This is the next event written in the book of John which takes place after the Bethesda healing. Therefore the signs just mentioned had to have been referring to the Bethesda healing.

Moving on to the feeding of the 5000. Verse 4 points out that this is happening close to the time of the Passover of the Jews. Now the reason that it is called “of the Jews” is because this is not the Passover of God. The Jews had already started using their own invented traditions to fix the date of the Passover, as well as to combine it with the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They were not following the clear instructions for how to calculate God’s appointed times that were given to them in the 5 books of Moses. Part of this sign is going to be

pointing towards the true Passover, which of course is Jesus Christ, who died on the true Passover, as calculated correctly. I am not going to go into detail on those calculations right now. In much of this study I am assuming a certain amount of knowledge of the Holy days and how they lay out God’s plan for mankind. These things have been gone over extensively by others in studies and articles I can point to for anyone new to these things.

But continuing in this same train of thought, let’s make a note about the bread that was supplied from the lad. Five barley loaves. Barley is the grain of the early harvest, used during the feast of Unleavened Bread as the wave sheaf offering. This was the offering of the firstfruits, of which the very first is Jesus Christ. Barley, in fact, is instrumental in calculating the very start of the year, and thus the Holy days. If it wasn’t going to be ripe enough to harvest for a wave sheaf offering, then a thirteenth month had to be added to the year so that it would be. This is one of the things that the Jews had done away with in calculating their own Passover dates. Even today, if we want to truly keep the appointed times that God has set for us, we must watch for the ripening of the wild barley around Israel, so we know when to start the year.

So it is fitting that Jesus had barley loaves here to point out the true Passover, which was Himself. If you turn to Leviticus 23:12 you can see another remarkable thing. The sacrifice that was to be offered with the wave sheaf (of barley) was a male lamb, without blemish. Yes, this all points to our Christ.

The next day, when the people found Him on the other side of the sea (we’ll get into the walking on water in the next section), they questioned Him about His arrival. Listen to His reply in vs. 26-27.

Jesus answered them and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷ Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which

the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”

Jesus is stating very clearly right here that there is more to this sign than a miracle. He warns that they should not be pursuing simple understanding of the physical aspects of the miracle, but to look towards what it represents, because the rewards are far greater - “Food that endures to everlasting life” instead of that which perishes. They don’t get it, not realizing at all that this was a great sign that was just revealed to them, and they ask Jesus,

“What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? [*He just did it and they had no idea!*]³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, *‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’*”^a

³² Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

It is not coincidence here that, in their blindness, they bring up the manna, or bread from heaven, that their forefathers ate in the desert. In response, Jesus tries to point out that the manna and the feeding of the 5000 they just saw are one and the same, and came from the same source! Moses did not give them bread so that they could eat and be hungry again. Jesus gave them bread so that they could believe and never hunger again. He then states explicitly that “the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

He finally gets a spark of interest here – “³⁴ Then they said to Him, ‘Lord, give us this bread always.’” - but still no understanding. So He spells it out for them as clearly as anyone could possible do.

³⁵ And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not

believe. ³⁷ All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰ And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

This really doesn’t even leave me with much explaining to do. Jesus is the bread that He broke when He fed the 5000.

Moving on. Along with the Five loaves, there were also a couple of small fish. What do these fish represent? I think we need to take a look at where else fish are talked about. A very nice feature that was worked into the Bible is that, if the answer to what you are looking for is not immediately clear, it is usually not too difficult to find it clearly stated elsewhere through a simple word search in your concordance. And by searching out these answers you are given a pathway that leads you through the patterns that are played out over and over again. In Luke 5:1-11 we see Jesus calling some of His disciples. After teaching the crowd from a boat, He asks Simon Peter to push Him out to the deep water, where He catches an incredible haul of fish. Simon and his partners had fished all night without catching a thing. Once the haul of fish had been brought to shore, they were all astonished, and a bit afraid, and followed Him. Jesus sensed their fear and said, “Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.” This same scene is written in Matthew and Mark with Jesus quote being, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Fish are very explicitly stated here to be representing men. Does that mean that fish always represents men? Let’s turn to one other example involving Jesus and fish. Matt 17:24-27.

²⁴ When they had come to Capernaum, those who received the *temple* tax came to Peter and said, “Does your Teacher not pay the *temple* tax?”

²⁵ He said, “Yes.”

And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?”

²⁶ Peter said to Him, “From strangers.”

Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free. ²⁷ Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you.”

Here is another sign that we could go deeply into. The temple is dedicated to Yehovah, whom we know is the pre-incarnate Christ. The Jews believe that Yehovah and the Father are one being. Jesus uses their understanding to make an analogy about the almost comical scene occurring here – Yehovah-in-the-flesh walking into the temple and being asked to pay taxes for it. Should the Sons of the King (the Father) pay taxes to their own family? Of course not. But Jesus plays along with them by saying they will pay it anyways, so as not to offend them. He understands the value of money. It is only valuable to men. This is why He uses such a seemingly far-fetched way of getting the money to pay the taxes with – out of a fish’s mouth, because money is of men. Yes, the fish represents men here, too.

So back to the two small fish feeding the 5000. If you use this analogy of fish meaning men, we get something remarkable showing up. We see ourselves becoming an integral part of God’s plan for us. We are not to be sitting around waiting for events to happen to us. We are to be involved in the spiritual feeding of the masses. Yet we are nothing by ourselves, and we know it. This is why the fish are small. They are humble and meek – just the kind of men that Jesus can use. What were two small fish and five loaves among so many? But if you pair the fish up with the bread, the body of Jesus, our abilities are amplified to unbelievable proportions. Feeding the spiritual masses can also be called bearing fruit. It is us, the men, that bear fruit, but not without the vine first feeding us. As was stated earlier, “I am the vine, you *are* the

branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” This is exactly the pattern that is used for distributing the food as well. “And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.” First Jesus, then the disciples, then to all men.

After everybody ate their fill, Jesus ordered the disciples to “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.” ²⁸Therefore they gathered *them* up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.” These gathered fragments are broken pieces of His body. During the Passover meal, Jesus also broke the bread into pieces and said, “This is My body which is given for you.” The broken fragments are then gathered together, that none may be lost, just as He goes out to gather His lost sheep, for the Good Shepherd is unwilling that any shall be lost. How much was gathered together? Twelve basketsful. I cannot help but think of the number of those sealed in Revelation 7 – twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes. These are the ones who have been fed with the bread of life and have become unique parts of His broken body. Where are the fish among all these leftovers? Verse 13 just said that the baskets only contained fragments of the barley loaves. The sealed of God dine one-on-one with Jesus Christ. They have moved beyond using men as teachers. The men (fish) are used in the initial distribution of the meal (to “catch” others, as in fishing), but once the meal is underway, the bread, the body of Christ, is the only nourishment necessary. So those twelve baskets of gathered and sealed sheep will contain only the body of Jesus, with nothing of men remaining.

We can arrive at twelve another way, too. If we start with 5 loaves, then add the Father to it, whose number of perfection is 7, we get 12, the number of God’s fullness. Five ordinary loaves, when added to God results in the fullness of those He will gather and seal to be His bride. $5+7=12$ is another pattern repeated in many things. The yearly cycle, for example, is 7 months of Holy days plus 5 months with no

Holy days = 12 months in the year. There are also seven major notes in a music scale (the white keys on a keyboard)— add into that the five pentatonic notes (the black keys) and you have the full 12 notes available in any given octave. The music scale is not a man-made construct, by the way. Without getting into a long explanation on the physics involved, it naturally falls out by the division of the wavelengths of sound. Men discovered this, but did not in any way invent it. God did, and music bears His mark in these numbers. Is it symbolic that a tune played purely on the seven notes of a major scale will have a happy sound and a tune played solely on the five notes of a pentatonic scale (black keys only, for instance) will sound sad?

There is so much going on in this one sign, it is hard to summarize it all concisely. Jesus is our true Passover, the Bread of life, which is broken for us, and which makes Him the first of the firstfruits to be offered. Fish are served with the bread, representing the job that men have in spreading the word of God and also showing the tremendous magnification of our abilities we obtain in abiding in Jesus. This magnification is so great that the total of our efforts is far, far greater than the sum of its parts. Five loaves and two fish equaling 12 basketsful gathered together *after* everybody had eaten their fill. And who is to get the glory for all of this? Jesus, the bread of life. After all, there were no fish among the leftovers that were gathered.

Walking on Water – “I am the way, the truth and the life.”

John 6: 15-21 (from the Interlinear Bible translation)

¹⁵ Then knowing that they were about to come and seize Him, that they might make Him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain alone *by* Himself.

¹⁶ And when it became evening, His disciples went down on the sea. ¹⁷ And entering into the boat, they were going across the sea to Capernaum. And darkness already occurred, and Jesus had not come to them. ¹⁸ And the sea was aroused by a great wind blowing.

¹⁹ Then having rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs, they saw Jesus walking on the sea. And *He* having come near the boat,

they were afraid. ²⁰ But He said to them, I AM! Do not fear. ²¹ Then they desired to take Him into the boat. And instantly the boat came to be at the land to which they were going.

To understand the sign given here, we have to look again at the symbol of water. Water is the symbol of the Spirit of God that is given to us at baptism. This is the water that upheld Jesus while He walked on it and while He did many other seemingly impossible things.

Yet we know it is not only Jesus who has this Spirit. All who have been properly baptized are also given this Godly spirit to live within them. The disciples are pictured in this scene as we were before our baptism - verse 17, “...and Jesus had not come to them.” We were in a boat in the dark, trying vainly to get somewhere. The wind was blowing us to and fro on a rocky sea. We rowed and rowed and were not getting where we needed to go. Then the Spirit started drawing us near. We realized there might be another way, yet the way presented by the Spirit seemed even more terrifying – verse 18 “Then having rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs [3 or 4 miles], they saw Jesus walking on the sea. And *He* having come near the boat, they were afraid.” But then in verse 20 Jesus says, “I AM! Do not fear.” This “I AM”, as explained back in the sign of the Nobleman’s son, points to the very self-existent nature of Jesus. He is stating His name by showing the truth about His nature here “I am He who always was, who is now and who always will be.” Then He tells us not to fear. This had a very calming effect on the disciples, as it should with us. We should realize that inviting Jesus into our boat with us is a desirable thing to do, as the disciples did.

Now listen to the most remarkable thing that happened. “And instantly the boat came to be at the land to which they were going.” This, I believe, is really the focus of this miracle and sign. As soon as Jesus entered the boat, they arrived at their destination. This is exactly what receiving the Spirit at baptism does for us. Once we have planted God’s seed in our hearts, we are given a new life and can be counted among His family, which is really our final destination. Of course, this

does not mean the work is over. But it is certainly “the land to which [we] were going.”

When the Israelites finally reached the promised land (the land to which they were going for forty years), their work was not done either, but they did finally get there. Had they listened to Yehovah forty years earlier by keeping the commands and letting Him fight their battles for them (let Him enter their boat), they would have arrived in the promised land instantly. Indeed they were not far from it when Yehovah punished them by not allowing that unfaithful generation to enter it. Jesus shows us here in John how much easier things are if we listen to and obey Him. He is the better way.

Let me summarize the things I’ve just talked about. We have just seen that Jesus, and His Spirit in us is the Way to get to our destination. We have seen Jesus state the Truth about His name and His nature. And we have seen that by accepting this Way and this Truth that there is a new Life that will grow in us. This is starting to sound an awful lot like John 14: 6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

It is worth backing up and starting from the beginning of chapter 14 to see what else Jesus was saying when He said this in order to see how these same patterns are repeated again and again. Verses 1-6:

“Let not your heart be troubled [*This sound a lot like, “do not fear,” which He told them before entering the boat.*]; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

The one thing we have to be very sure about before baptism is our belief. Our knowledge does not have to be great, but our belief does. In Acts 8:36-38 we see this. The Ethiopian eunuch had only just been introduced to the truth of the Gospel by Philip, but his belief was great.

³⁶ Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, *here is* water. What hinders me from being baptized?”

³⁷ Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”

And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

³⁸ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

Continuing in John:

² In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were not so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you [*this is what good parents do when they are expecting children, they prepare a place for them – remember that seed that has been planted in us? We will be in His family soon enough*]. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know [*He had shown them the way while walking on the water, as well as many other times, yet apparently some of them still didn’t get it. Remember, they still had yet to receive His Spirit*].

⁵ Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

This sign is all about receiving God’s spirit – receiving Him into our hearts, that we can grow into fruitful members of His family and one day live in one of those many mansions.

The Blind Man Receives Sight – “I am the light of the World

John 9:1-7

¹ Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

³ Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. ⁴ I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the night is coming* when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

⁶ When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. ⁷ And He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

Jesus has already spoken His “I am” for this semeion right in verse 5, just before performing the miracle. But it was also spoken once before in John 8:12, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” The meaning is the same

What do this *semeion* and this statement mean? Let’s start with the easiest things to see and go from there. We are going to see some great truths about this person, our Christ Jesus.

There is the obvious analogy of being literally blind and spiritually blind; that we cannot see, literally or figuratively without Jesus. This is but the very beginning. To better understand, though, I’m going to spend considerable time here trying to understand what this “light” is that Jesus uses to describe Himself. Light is from the Greek “Phos”, Strong’s 5457 “to shine or make manifest, especially by rays; luminousness (in the widest application, natural or artificial, abstract or concrete, literal or figurative): bright, full of light.” So our idea of light from the English is fairly accurate.

Next let’s read about it in some other places. Light appears many, many times, so we know that this is a very important concept.

Psalms 27:1, “The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear?”

Matthew 6:22-23, “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great *is* that darkness!”

Luke 11:33-36 is a different account of the same saying, “No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts *it* in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. ³⁴ The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when *your eye* is bad, your body also *is* full of darkness. ³⁵ Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. ³⁶ If then your whole body *is* full of light, having no part dark, *the whole body* will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light.”

The book of John is actually introduced with this concept. John 1:1-13 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John. ⁷ This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. ⁸ He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. ⁹ That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Again in John, chapter 12: 44-47.

⁴⁴ Then Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. ⁴⁵ And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. ⁴⁶ I have come *as* a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. ⁴⁷ And if

anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.

Revelation 21:22-24, speaking of the new Jerusalem.

But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light. ²⁴ And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.

Continuing the same new Jerusalem narrative to Revelation 22:5,
“There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.”

Compare these descriptions in Revelation to this Verse in Isaiah 60:19-20

The sun shall no longer be your light by day,
Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you;
But the LORD will be to you an everlasting light,
And your God your glory.
²⁰ Your sun shall no longer go down,
Nor shall your moon withdraw itself;
For the LORD will be your everlasting light,
And the days of your mourning shall be ended.

This is very exciting for me to read. Jesus is not being figurative at all when He talks about being the light! He quite literally *is* the light, to the point that when we are mature enough to be able to see Him face to face, we will no longer have need of the sun or moon. 1 Corinthians 13:11-12 says, “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.” The “then” mentioned here will be when we inhabit the New Jerusalem.

We could also look at the numerous other references to lamps and lamp stands in the temple and in Revelation; at Jesus being the fire (a light) over the tabernacle by night; at the exceeding brightness of Jesus during the transfiguration, and in any other mention of people looking directly upon the body or face of Jesus/Yehovah. Jesus is light. He is *the* light.

There is one more place that I believe is important to see; the very beginning of creation. Genesis 1:3-4 “Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.” The important thing to know here is that this is *before* God created the sun and moon down in verse 14 on *day four* of creation. Plants were even created before the sun. Certainly our scientists would have a problem with that one! But there was another source of light available back then. Light was available independently of the sun.

Most of us know that the “God” mentioned in Genesis 1 is the Hebrew “Elohiym” which is a plural meaning “Gods”. We understand that the pre-incarnate Christ is part of this Elohiym that did the creating. If Christ was always light, wouldn’t the light have been around even before God said “let there be light”? Can Christ’s light be turned off? If we look at the state of the earth before this creation sequence starts (and verse 1 tells us that the earth already exists before this creation week begins), it is in a bad state, empty and lifeless. “Darkness was on the face of the deep” at this point, not light. Why? There is biblical evidence it became that way after an incredible battle between God and Satan in which Satan was thrown to the earth (Isaiah 14:12-15). [Steven Collins has a very interesting study on this in his article “Is the Earth 6000 years old?” which can be found on his website – www.stevenmcollins.com] If Satan was thrown to earth, certainly darkness would be a fitting description for his presence. If Christ is light, then Satan is darkness. Any former life that may have existed at this point ceased to exist, and all that was left was darkness. This is not

because God's light went out. But there was nothing left to see it. There was nothing left that could comprehend it.

Let's look again at John 1 to start to put things together here. Verse 4 "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." Think about this for a minute. Jesus was life. His life was the light of men. But darkness did not comprehend it. How can something like darkness comprehend or not comprehend something? The darkness here is Satan. Where there is darkness, the light cannot be seen. This was the state we found the earth just before the Creation week. But God's plan was about to take shape, and the very first thing needed was light. This was the single most important ingredient for His creation, for nothing else could exist without it.

When Adam and Eve were created, they had both the light of Christ (Elohiym) and the light of the sun. They could see both forms of light well. But Satan came in to the picture and manipulated them into sinning. He blinded them to the light they had been seeing by, so that they could then only see by the sun. And remember, this light was also life. If they could no longer comprehend the light, they could no longer have life. They would have to die. The penalty of sin is death, and the reason for that is that we can no longer comprehend the life we are in without the light. It is an act of mercy that we do not have to live forever suffering blind in a world we cannot know or comprehend. This is why access to the tree of life was immediately taken away from Adam and Eve after their sin.

So it was a reasonable question when the disciples asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" They understood, to a certain extent, that sin took away the light. But Jesus replied that "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him." He had been born blind for the very purpose that Jesus could heal him. Is this not true of all of us? Are we not born blind simply so that we can have the opportunity to find our salvation in Jesus, born into darkness simply so we can

appreciate the light? Our literal births even speak to this - coming out of the dark womb into the brightness of the world.

Then Jesus says something confusing. "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the* night is coming when no one can work." What is this night He referring to? Revelation 6:12-17

¹² I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. ¹³ And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. ¹⁴ Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

These verses show the literal darkness that will occur when the sixth seal is opened at the fall of Babylon the Great. But the other thing that happens at the sixth seal is the sealing of the 144,000. The number is finally completed and they become the bride of Christ. These are the five wise virgins of Matthew 25 who had enough oil to keep their lamps lit. This oil is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the light that Jesus gives us at our baptism of which he talks about in Luke 11:36, "If then your whole body *is* full of light, having no part dark, *the* whole *body* will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light." These are the ones who are taken out of the earth here at the sixth seal. Those with the light have been removed, and Christ Himself has not returned yet to live on the earth. In fact, He is going to completely turn His face from the Earth, to let His angels and Satan's forces inflict much damage on the Earth. This leaves

darkness, the first time there will have been total darkness since the creation. Nobody is left to do His work until He turns His head back and gives power to the two witnesses at the sixth trumpet of the seventh seal. That is the great period of darkness on the earth that Jesus warns is coming. It is a time of plagues and disasters, of tribulation and death, and mankind is so full of darkness, we still will not repent or see our wrongs. The light will reappear with the two witnesses, who's witness will strengthen the light that had gone out in the 5 foolish virgins, but in the mean time this is a period of great darkness, "when no one can work."

The next thing Jesus says is, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." He will be in the world as long as His Spirit is in the world, which He has given to us to use and fill our bodies with. Let us use this light by putting it on a lamp stand and not under a basket!

After this, Jesus actually performs His sign.

⁶ When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. ⁷ And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

We need to look back at the creation again to find the parallels. Genesis 2:7 says "God formed man of the dust of the ground". One definition for the Hebrew word for dust is clay, which is what you get when you mix dust and water. Jesus is re-creating the original creation of men, back when men could see His light by putting this clay (mixed with His own water) on the man's eyes (the lamps of his body). But the man in this case had one more thing to do. He had to cleanse himself of his sins, so Jesus *sent* him to wash in the pool of Siloam (Siloam means sent). This was his baptism for the remission of his sins. Only after that washing could he see. The use of the word sent is also very meaningful here. The first use of the word sent in this story kind

of slips by us. But Jesus said, "I must work the works of Him who **sent** Me while it is day..." Jesus Himself was sent into the world. Then He sends us out into the world, just as He sent the blind man here in John 9.

Before I finish, there is one more thing I'd like to bring up. At the end of John 9, Jesus is again talking to the man He made to see and He asks him if he believes in the Son of God. After he replies "Lord, I believe!", Jesus says something else interesting.

"For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."

⁴⁰ Then *some* of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?"

⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains."

So He is also making those who see blind! Why on earth would he do such a thing as this? We certainly don't hear much about this side of things. Verse 41 makes it very clear why He would say this, though – "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains." If they "see" and their sin still remains, then where is their hope? Their hope is in being made blind! This is an act of mercy. Those who claim to know God but do not (they don't keep His commands) will be made blind as an act of mercy for their judgment. He will say to them "I do not know you", i.e. "you did not see." If they knew Him, their sin would not be forgiven because they would have intentionally lived an unrighteous life. But God, in His abundant mercy will make those who claim to see blind, so they can enter into forgiveness. I marvel at the mercy of our Lord Jesus, the Christ.

Lazarus Raised – I am the resurrection and the life

John 11:1-44

¹ Now a certain *man* was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. ² It was *that* Mary who anointed the

Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. ³ Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

⁴ When Jesus heard *that*, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. ⁷ Then after this He said to *the* disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

⁸ *The* disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?"

⁹ Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰ But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." ¹¹ These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."

¹² Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well." ¹³ However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

¹⁴ Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

¹⁶ Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

¹⁷ So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. ¹⁹ And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

²⁰ Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. ²¹ Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

²⁴ Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

²⁷ She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

²⁸ And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you." ²⁹ As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly and came to Him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. ³¹ Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."

³² Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

³³ Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. ³⁴ And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."

³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!"

³⁷ And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

³⁸ Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been *dead* four days."

⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" ⁴¹ Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. ⁴² And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the

people who are standing by I said *this*, that they may believe that You sent Me.”⁴³ Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!”⁴⁴ And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.”

We have been talking all along here about these semeion indicating both future prophetic events as well as Jesus own nature. A resurrection takes place here. Jesus Himself was resurrected, right? Well, yes He was, but that is not the resurrection that is being pointed to. He explains which resurrection this is in verses 23-27.

²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

²⁴ Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” [She understands her Holy Days doesn’t she? The Last Great Day is the day that pictures the second resurrection, when all who have died will be raised at the great white throne judgment.]

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. [He does not rebut her statement, for it is true, but He explains it to her, that it is through Him that it is possible for that resurrection to take place.]²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. [This is how they will be judged at that time] Do you believe this?”

²⁷ She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

This is very clearly not talking about Jesus own death and resurrection. There is another thing that points it out clearly, too. Lazarus had been in the grave for 4 days before Jesus raised him. If this was pointing to Jesus resurrection, he should have been in the grave for 3 days. It is talking about resurrection of mankind, when all the dead will finally be raised unto judgment, and the book of life is opened. The first resurrection, that of the Bride, is not specifically excluded here, but Martha’s statement, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at

the last day” refers more specifically to the second resurrection, as the Bride will be raised well before the last day, during the first resurrection, meeting Christ on the Sea of Glass at Pentecost..

Now Lazarus had been sick, and it was told to Jesus before he died, so that He could perform a healing. He then proceeds to wait a couple of days before journeying, then journeys at least two more days before reaching Bethany. Before this journey, He was staying on the other side of the Jordan river from Judea (where Bethany and Jerusalem were). Jesus had left Judea after the Jews attempts at stoning him had increased. But now He was going to go back, much to His disciples’ opposition. Why did Jesus wait so long before going, when he knew He had a multiple day journey while Lazarus is in critical condition? Was He afraid of beings stoned? No. He tells His disciples, after they question Him about how wise it is to go there, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰ But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” Remember the “light of the world” that we just finished talking about in the last sign. Jesus knows exactly what He is doing, as usual. He also knows that Lazarus is already dead. Hurrying will not help anything. He is going to take His time (“Are there not twelve hours in the day?) and make sure His light is shining and seen. Now let’s go back to when Jesus first got the message that Lazarus was sick. His reply was, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” He apparently knew that Lazarus *would* die, but that his death had a purpose - the glory of God.

So if this resurrection is pointing towards the resurrection of mankind, then Lazarus is symbolic of mankind. Lazarus was sick before he died. His death was no sudden accident. Mankind is also sick. We have been sick since Adam and Eve sinned. It is a sickness that will end in death. But perhaps a more fitting word than death would be sleep, since we will once again wake up. That is the word that Jesus used to describe it to His disciples. “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.” They didn’t get it, so Jesus explained bluntly that

Lazarus was dead. Then He adds, ⁴⁵ And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.” He knew that by waiting until Lazarus was dead for a length of time this sign would carry far more weight, and that, had He been present when Lazarus died, many would not have believed even when He was raised. As a result of His waiting, He was able to use Lazarus “for the Glory of God.”

The life referred to in “I am the resurrection and the life” is different than the life referred to in the statement “I am the way, the truth, and the life” that we talked about earlier. When Jesus walked on the water we talked about the life being instilled in us during baptism – that of the Holy Spirit. Now we are talking about the eternal life that all of humanity will be raised to in the second resurrection, after the millennium period is over and Satan has once again had a chance to deceive the nations. They do both have the same meaning in the end, which is eternal life, but they are referring to different time frames. The first one was the seed of eternal life we are given as Spirit during our human lives, and now this one is referring specifically to the eternal life anxiously awaited in the resurrection.

This effect this semeion had on both believers and the Jews was incredible. Let’s pick up the story after the resurrection takes place. John 11:45-53

⁴⁵ Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. ⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.”

⁴⁹ And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all,⁵⁰ nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.” ⁵¹ Now this he did not say

on his own *authority*; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, ⁵² and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

⁵³ Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.

What I find to be interesting here is that Caiaphas is prophesying about Jesus death and what it means. He says, “it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.” And it is also stated that, as a result “He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.” This, of course is an accurate prediction of the effects of Jesus death on all of Israel, and mankind. However Caiaphas does not understand the meaning of his prophecy, taking it to mean that it was his own responsibility to see to it that Jesus be killed in order to preserve the state and power of the Jews. The result of his error is that the truth of the prophecy was fulfilled! Jesus death then laid the groundwork for not only His own resurrection, but for the gathering together of the scattered, both the first and second resurrections of mankind.

Closing

I hope that you have been able to come to a new appreciation for the depth of our savior. This study has opened my eyes to a whole new way to look at everything I read in the Bible. I have never heard these things preached before and I am grateful to Jesus and the Father for opening my eyes to them.

There is another suspicion that I have. And that is that our own lives are modeled this way, too, after that pattern of our Creator, whose image we are made in. Our own lives may well be intricately linked with the things we do, the things we will become, the actions we take and the events that happen to us. It will be another study and article, I hope, to get into this side of it. But already, I have a running list of things that have happened in my own life that point to other things that have occurred and, I believe, point to who I am becoming and to things that have yet to happen. This in no way makes me a prophet,

and that is not where I am going with this. But if who Jesus was, and what He did were so intricately linked, then maybe the same is true for us. I do think it is a worthwhile exercise to look back at significant events in our own lives, and then pray for understanding about their meaning. I believe that we will, in some way, be able to draw closer to God by understanding our own unique circumstances better. If we are supposed to be becoming new members in the family of God, it would make sense that there should be a trail of evidence left behind of that happening. This evidence would be key events of our lives that act as semeion, signs, supernatural indications, of something else. Jesus led His life as an example for us. We should follow His example in every way we can.

Amen.