



# Cultivate

A Christ-Centered Way of Life

*... as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted, and built up in him and established in the faith... Colossians 2:6-7*

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## GETTING TO KNOW JESUS THROUGH THE 4 GOSPELS – PART 6

By Marius Gradwell

### The Seven Miracles in the Gospel of John

In this study, we will focus on the unique character of John's Gospel.

Due to his extensive use of symbolism John's Gospel, written to the church, can be the most intriguing. Everything he recorded in his gospel happened, but he arranged and described them to convey additional truths. Sometimes he even rearranged the order of events to underscore emphasize this additional truth. John 2 is an excellent example of this. He placed the cleansing of the Temple right after the wedding at Cana to show that the Lord came to create an intimate personal relationship with His church (as in a marriage), not to fix a broken religion.

The focus of John's gospel is the Lord's Judean ministry and only the last part of that. He devoted most of nine chapters (**John 12-20**) to the Lord's last week and used one-third of the 879 verses to describe His last 24 hours. The first 11 chapters define the Lord's ministry through John's selective use of 7 miracles, and we will use them to show how John's Gospel contains more than meets the eye.

#### Miracle 1: Water into Wine (John 2:1-11)

This one is misunderstood by most and yet results in the disciples putting their faith in the Lord. (*This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He thus revealed His Glory and the disciples put their faith in Him, John 2:11*). It seems so insignificant when compared to the opening miracles in the other gospels, which involved either casting out demons or curing leprosy.

This miracle took place because an embarrassing discovery had been made. A wedding banquet Jesus was attending was in full swing when the servants suddenly realized they were out of wine. His mother, who was also there, asked Him to help. The Lord had six empty jars of stone filled with water which He then turned into wine. The master of the banquet proclaimed the wine Jesus had made to be superior to the wine they had served earlier, saying they had saved the best for last.

Look at the symbolism: These six stone jars normally held water used for ceremonial cleansing, an important part of Old Covenant life. Now they contained wine, which is often associated with the New Covenant due to the Lord's Supper.

What is more, the wine these jars now contained was superior to the wine the wedding guests had been drinking before, just as the New Covenant is superior to the Old Covenant (Hebrews 8:6). This miracle symbolized nothing less than the Mission of the Messiah; changing the empty way of man's religion into a living, joyful, relationship with the Lord, as demonstrated by the wedding celebration.

### **Miracle 2: Healing the Official's Son (John 4:43-54)**

Here is an act of God's Grace, pure and simple. There is no indication of the official's nationality or background, his religious conviction, or his worthiness—only his faith. He had heard of Jesus, and His miraculous power, and begged Him to come and heal his dying son. Jesus did not go with him but simply told the man his son would live. The man took Jesus at His word and departed for home. The next day, while he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his son had recovered. From their discussion, he learned that his son had been made well from the very time he had spoken with Jesus. Because of this He and all his household became believers, saved by grace through faith.

### **Miracle 3: The Healing at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-9)**

Tradition holds that an angel periodically stirred the waters at the Pool of Bethesda. The first one into the water when that happened was healed. Many people who were sick or disabled waited there by the pool day after day for a chance to be healed. But a cripple cannot get himself to the pool in time. This man had been crippled for 38 years and had repeatedly tried and failed. Then Jesus came along and healed him.

I believe this man's predicament demonstrates the poverty of the Law, which was never intended to heal us of our infirmities (physical and spiritual) but to show us our need for a Saviour. It demonstrates that we are hopeless and helpless without Him.

He was at the very edge of healing, but all his unsuccessful efforts to get into the pool had only made it obvious that his infirmity was preventing him from being healed. In the same way, the Law leaves us at the very edge of salvation, but our unsuccessful efforts to keep it only make it obvious that our sinfulness will prevent us from being saved. Just like the cripple needed someone to heal him, we need someone to save us.

### **Miracle 4: The Feeding of the 5000 (John 6:1-5)**

This is perhaps the best known of all the Lord's miracles and the only one before the resurrection that is recorded in all four gospels. A large crowd had followed Jesus into a remote location, and Jesus could see they would need to be fed. But the men alone numbered 5,000 and adding the women and children could have more than doubled that number. Andrew found a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, and Jesus multiplied it into a satisfying meal for everyone with enough left over to fill 12 baskets.

This is the practical demonstration of the Lord's promise that if we seek His kingdom and His righteousness, all our other needs will be met as well (Matt. 6:31-33). But there is more in view here than just our physical needs. We who believe in Jesus will never again feel that emptiness that tells us there is more to life than just having our physical needs met. This is what Jesus meant when He said:

*I AM the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty (John 6:35).*

### **Miracle 5: Walking on the Water (John 6:16-25)**

The 5th miracle is also well known to everyone familiar with the Lord's ministry. The disciples had laboured all night long to row only about halfway across the Sea of Galilee (about 3 miles) when the Lord passed by them—walking on the water! When they realized it was Jesus, they let him into the boat and immediately reached their destination. Without Him, they were struggling just to make headway, but with Him in their midst, the struggle was over.

### **Miracle 6: Healing the Man Born Blind (John 9:1-41)**

A man had been blind from birth. Jesus made some mud, put it on the man's eyes and told him to go wash it off. When the man did as Jesus instructed, he could see.

While Jesus performed this miracle early in Chapter 9, the balance of the narrative clearly (and sometimes comically) shows how much more spiritual discernment this blind beggar had than the learned officials of the religion, who had studied all their lives. In their experience, no one had ever opened the eyes of a man born blind, and they were determined to discredit the lowly beggar, especially since this event took place on the Sabbath. A lengthy interrogation followed, where the beggar put the religious experts to shame, and they ended up throwing him out. Afterward, Jesus found him and introduced Himself. The man became a believer and worshiped him.

Jesus said He came so the blind would see and those who see would become blind. When the Pharisees asked if He thought they were blind, He said, *"If you were blind you would not be guilty of sin, but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains"* (John 9:39-41).

As it concerns your eternity, it does not matter what you claim to know about Jesus. What matters is whether you know Jesus.

### **Miracle 7: Raising Lazarus From the Dead (John 11:1-44)**

The last miracle John recorded before the resurrection shows the fulfilment of our Lord's promise to all who believe in His name, as He called Lazarus out of the grave and restored him from death to life. The text shows that even though Jesus knew Lazarus was sick, He waited until Lazarus was dead and buried before He responded to the sisters' call for help. He did this so He could bring Lazarus back to life. It was an unmistakable model of the resurrection of the believing dead.

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"* (John 11:25-26).

What is the Point?

Near the end of his gospel account, John said, *"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 Christ, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name"* (John 20:30-31).

This tells us he selected these seven miracles specifically for their ability to help us believe that Jesus is who He claimed to be and that by believing we might have eternal life. So, what do these particular miracles show us that would help us believe?

- Miracle 1 shows He came to take us from the stone cold and empty way of man's religion into a living and joyful relationship with Him.
- Miracle 2 shows we are saved by grace through faith.
- Miracle 3 shows our own futile works are insufficient to save ourselves. We need Him to save us.
- Miracle 4 is a demonstration of His supernatural care and provision for those who seek Him.
- Miracle 5 shows that because of His miraculous power, we can easily accomplish things through Him that would be all but impossible on our own.
- Miracle 6 reveals that if we will allow it, He can cause even the lowliest person born spiritually blind to see and believe, and
- Miracle 7 is a promise that all who believe in Him will live even though they die, and those who live and believe will never die.