

Jesus and Signs

What did Jesus think of miraculous signs?

John 20.30–31

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Prelude:

I. Many people want signs to persuade them to believe.

A. However, did you know that Jesus was not eager to do signs?

II. Yes, He did miraculous signs, but He also refused to do them on the spot.

III. Yes, He did miraculous signs, but

A. He only seemed to do them in limited contexts.

B. He did not want to be known merely

1. as a miracle-worker,

2. entertainer, or

3. as someone who took away their personal responsibility.

IV. A sign of any kind,

A. momentarily attracts attention to itself, but then

B. points to something else.

1. Even as we view the non-miraculous wonders of the Earth today,

2. which all came from a miracle in the beginning,

a) we want the Earth, or the Lord wants the Earth

b) to point us to Him.

(1) He wants us to have a relationship with Him,

(2) not with the Earth.

C. We cannot let our vision get stuck on the wonders, but

1. remember that anything the Lord has done,

2. He wants it to drive us to Him,

- a) even as when you give a gift to someone,
- b) you want them to enjoy the gift, but
 - (1) you do not want them to forsake you.
 - (2) You want them to cherish you
 - (a) as much as you cherished them,
 - (b) which led you to give the gift in the first place.

V. Observe the confrontation between Jesus and the business men

- A. in the temple selling animals for sacrifices and
- B. the moneychangers.

- 1. He turned over their tables,
- 2. poured out their money, and
- 3. drove them and their animals out of the temple,
- 4. using a whip to do so,

16 And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" 17 Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up." 18 So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?" 19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2.16–19).

- a) He destroyed their businesses.
- b) He spoke of God as His own Father.
 - (1) He gave them a sign that they could not understand.
 - (2) They even disagreed with it.
 - (a) My point is that He did not do a sign right there on the spot.
 - (b) He had not come to impress man with His skills.

VI. People think that if they could just see signs,

- A. they would believe.

B. How many conversions came from the ten plagues on Egypt?

1. Some of the Egyptians eventually believed, but only to let Israel go.
2. The Lord complained often that the generation
 - a) that saw His miracles on Egypt and in the wilderness did not believe.
 - b) They even turned to idolatry!

C. After three and a half years of miracles,

1. the enemies of Jesus still said to Him
2. while He hung on the cross,

42 “He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him” (Matt 27.42).

- a) They even brought up His prophecy of
- b) tearing down the building and rebuilding it in three days,

**39 And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads
40 and saying, “You who destroy the temple and build it in three days,
save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross”
(Matt 27.39–40).**

- (1) Yet, He performed no sign while on the cross.
- (2) Signs have a place, but
 - (a) we must not overdo their purposes.
 - (b) Imagine a sign directing people to Grants Pass.
 - i) It gives the direction and how many miles.
 - ii) What if it had all kinds of things added to it...

Persuasion:

I. John 2.1–12 – 1st Sign: Turning Water into Wine

A. The guests did not even know a miracle had been done.

B. What does that tell you about the willingness of Jesus to show off signs?

II. **John 4.46–53 – 2nd Sign: Healing in Absentia**

A. A man travels 20 miles to ask Jesus to heal his son,

48 Then Jesus said to him, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe” (John 4.48).

1. Jesus rebuked the people.
2. What does that tell you about the willingness of Jesus to show off signs?

B. The father of the fatally ill son did not care about signs,

1. he wanted his boy healed,

49 The nobleman said to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies!” (John 4.49).

2. To the man it was only about his son, and
 - a) not the identity of Jesus.
 - b) The man only knew that Jesus could help.

C. Watch the man believe before he sees the sign,

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 (John 4.50).

1. The man believed because of the word Jesus spoke, but
2. that belief was rooted in what the man had heard Jesus do in other places.

D. The man’s belief goes deeper and his family joins in believing,

51 And 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.” 53 So 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 (John 4.51–53).

III. John 5.1–18 – 3rd Sign: Healing a Paralytic

- A. Jesus saw a man who had been unable to walk or move for 38 years.
- B. Jesus did not immediately heal the man, but asked first,

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?” (John 5.6).

- 1. Jesus has no interest in forcing Himself or His benefits upon people.
- 2. They have to want it.
 - a) This man had gotten used to his condition.
 - b) Suddenly, he would be responsible for himself.
- C. When the man explained that no one would put him into the water, for
 - 1. an angel would come and stir up the water, and
 - 2. whoever got in first found healing.
- D. Jesus then told the man to rise, take up his bed, and walk.
 - 1. Then Jesus disappeared into the crowd!
 - 2. What does that tell you about the willingness of Jesus to show off signs?
 - a) However, Jesus did this on the Sabbath.
 - b) That did not cause the authorities to believe, but
 - (1) brought their hostility, and
 - (2) they even planned to kill Him!

IV. John 6.1–15 – 4th Sign: Multiplying Bread and Fish

- A. Jesus took five loaves of barely bread and two fish, and fed 5,000 men!
 - 1. He made so much bread
 - 2. that they filled twelve baskets with the leftovers.
- B. The people already followed Him, because
 - 1. He had performed signs on the diseased (v. 2), and

2. then this miracle happened,

a) leading them to remember the promise/prophecy of Moses,

15 “The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear...” (Deu 18.15).

b) Now look at John 6.14,

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” (John 6.14).

C. His miracles so overwhelmed them,

1. that they decided they would make Him their king,

15 Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone (John 6.15).

2. What a great opportunity to do more signs,

a) if that was all that He was about.

b) However, Jesus was the reluctant miracle-worker.

3. He got away from them, because

a) we cannot make Him do what we think He should do.

b) If He truly is King, we submit to Him, not Him to us.

D. The next day, they found Him again.

1. Then watch what happened next,

2. as He told them what really impressed them,

25 And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, “Rabbi, when did You come here?” 26 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” (John 6.25–27).

- a) He continued to tell them
 - (1) not to work for the food that perishes, but
 - (2) to work for the food that endures to everlasting life.
- b) They still did not get it.
 - (1) They wanted to know what to do
 - (2) that they may work for that food.
 - (a) He told them to believe in the One whom God had sent.
 - (b) They understood properly that He meant Himself.
- c) After they had already seen
 - (1) the signs He did on the diseased, and
 - (2) the multiplication of the bread and fish, they said,

30 Therefore they said to Him, “What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat’” (John 6.30–31).

- (a) Since He must be the prophet like Moses, and
 - (b) their fathers ate bread from the sky under the leadership of Moses,
 - i) they not only asked Him to do yet another sign, but
 - ii) they specified what kind they wanted!
- E. He talked more about the Bread of Life,
- 1. declaring that He is the Bread of Life, and
 - 2. that offended all of them,
 - a) so much so that of the 5,000,
 - b) only 12 remained with Him!

F. What does that tell you about the willingness of Jesus to show off signs?

V. John 6.16–21 – 5th Sign: Walking on Water and Getting to a Destination Instantaneously

A. Jesus had just gotten away from the people,

1. who wanted to force Him into being their king, and
2. His disciples got into a boat to cross over the Sea of Galilee.

B. It soon became dark,

1. a storm picked up, and
2. they were 3 to 4 miles out.

C. Then watched what happened,

19 So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid. 20 But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid" (John 6.19–20).

1. The 5,000 wanted to force Him into being king, but
2. then He demonstrated to His disciples,
 - a) that He already has, and still has, sovereignty over creation,
 - b) defying gravity and walking on the uneven surface of the water.

D. Then the next verse shows how this miracle ended,

21 Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going (John 6.21).

1. The disciples accepted Jesus and His signs.
2. They never demanded that He do signs to prove Himself.
 - a) He did help them to get
 - b) where they could not get themselves.

VI. John 9 – 6th Sign: Giving Sight to a Man Born Blind

A. A man had never seen a leaf falling from a tree.

B. Jesus spits on the ground,

1. makes a little bit of clay,
2. puts it on the man's eyes, and
3. tells him to go wash in a certain pool.

C. He comes back with his sight.

1. Verse 9 says that some people did not believe it was the same man.
2. The rest of the chapter shows that the Jewish authorities did not believe.
 - a) When the Pharisees questioned the man's parents,
 - b) listen to what they said,

20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." 22 His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him" (John 9.20–23).

- (1) Even this man's parents could not accept what had happened, or
- (2) at least their fear of the Pharisees outranked their joy.

VII. John 11 – 7th Sign: Raising the Dead

A. This miracle had a profound, but different effect on several people.

B. Verse 16 shows that Thomas thought Jesus would die, and that the disciples should join Jesus.

C. Verses 33–38 show Jesus visibly and audibly moved.

D. Verse 21 shows Martha disappointed that Jesus was not present before Lazarus died, and she seems to give Jesus a little rebuke.

E. Verse 32 shows Mary thinking the same way.

F. What do you think the chief priests and Pharisees thought about this?

1. Verses 46–57 show them acknowledging the signs of Jesus, but

2. they also conspired to kill, not only Jesus, but also Lazarus!

Exhortation:

I. Man has preconceived ideas about how God should operate, and

- A. even if He comes down here and
- B. does wonderful things,
 1. suspending the laws of nature,
 2. if He does not conform to their preconceived ideas,
 - a) they reject the signs, and
 - b) they reject Him!

II. John gave us a commentary on the reaction of the population,

37 But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, 38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:

**“Lord, who has believed our report?
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”
(John 12.37–38)**

- A. Still, even today, people want signs,
- B. saying they will then believe.

III. Truly, if you look, you will see signs all around,

**“Earth’s crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God:
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes,
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries,
And daub their natural faces unaware.”
– Elizabeth Barrett Browning**

IV. Jesus gave one more sign in The Gospel According to John, His resurrection.