

## Sabbath School Lesson #1 – Signs That Point the Way – 28 September-4 October 2024

**C**hrist is the Son of God. The beloved Apostle wrote: “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name” (John 20:30-31). Why did John write his Gospel? Did he wish to emphasise Jesus’ miracles or some specific teachings of Jesus? What was the reason for writing what he did? Under the power and influence of God’s Spirit, John explains why. He says that though many more things could be written about the life of Christ (John 21:25), the stories he included were written in order “that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.”

**Sunday: The Wedding at Cana** – Read John 2:1–11. What sign did Jesus do at Cana, and how did this help His disciples in coming to believe in Him? The Saviour later said, “I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman” (John 15:1-5). The miracle of turning water into wine is an object lesson reality of this statement that He is the true Vine, and that we can bear fruit through being connected with Him, as branches. All life springs from God through Christ. “All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father’s life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all” {DA 21.2}. “It is only through the life which God Himself has imparted, that either plant or animal can live” {SC 67.2}. God created all things through Christ (Ephesians 3:9), and in Him all things are supported (Colossians 1:16-17). It was by virtue of this power that He turned the water into wine. In that miracle He simply hastened the process. Let us trace it. In the instance before us, Christ transformed the water instantly into wine. In the ordinary case, the moisture is absorbed by the roots, and is drawn up through the stalk, and dispersed to the various branches, where it is stored up in the little sacs which we call grapes. The sunshine has a large part to act in the process of transformation. No one can know how the change is affected; we only know that water, with the element which it holds in solution, is changed in a few months into delicious fruit. Men call this the working of nature and because the thing is so common they forget that is a miracle. In the miracle which Jesus wrought at the wedding in Cana, He showed that in the ordinary process the water is not changed into wine through any inherent power in the vine, but by His own power, which works in every living thing. This shows that it is not as a mere figure of speech that He calls Himself the Vine, but that it is a fact. Because He is the true Vine, He could in a minute change the water into wine. He did in a minute what He ordinarily does in several months through the grape vine. The vines which we see in the gardens and the vineyards are not independent agencies for the changing of water into wine. They are simply the visible forms through which works the life of Jesus, the true vine, and as He at Cana, dispensing with the usual visible forms of vegetable life, and disregarding time, “manifested forth His glory,” by changing the water into wine; so He would teach us that the same glory is manifested when the same change is wrought by Him in the way so familiar to us. And as “His disciples believed on Him,” when they saw that which He did in Cana of Galilee, so would He have us believe on Him, when we see what He is doing in every garden and vineyard. As this miracle was written in order that those who read it might by believing “have life through His name,” so viewing all the processes of growth and fruit-bearing in the light thrown upon them by this miracle, reading them as so interpreted, we may by believing “have life through His name.”

**Monday: The Second Sign in Galilee** – Read John 4:46–54. Why does the evangelist make a connection back to the miracle at the wedding feast? “So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth; and himself believed, and his whole house. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee” (John 4:53-54). The nobleman had known of the previous Cana miracle at the wedding feast and had faith in Jesus, that Jesus gives life. This life of Christ we eat and drink by feasting upon His Word, for He added, “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63). Christ dwells in His inspired Word, and through it we get His life. This life is

given freely to all who will receive it: “whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17). He says, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink” (John 7:37).

**Tuesday: The Miracle at the Pool of Bethesda** – Read John 5:1–9. Because anyone by the pool obviously wanted to get well, why did Jesus ask the paralytic if he wanted to be healed (John 5:6)? “Jesus saith unto him, Arise, take up thy bed and walk. And straightway the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.” This is what Jesus does for men. He comes to every one and says, “Wilt thou be made whole?” and He desires to do as much for us as He did for the impotent man on that occasion. We too may have been held by our infirmities thirty-eight years, or even more. Inherited tendencies to evil may have grown into fixed habits that are part of our lives, and that we cannot possibly overcome, but it is as easy for Christ to make us whole, and free from them, as though they were not a day old. When He calls the dead from the grave at the resurrection, it will be as easy for Him to raise Adam and Eve as those that have only lately turned to dust. Jesus sees us in bondage to the lusts of the flesh, led captive by Satan, and defiled with the leprosy of sin, and he wants to make us every white whole, but, like the man by the pool of Bethesda, we too often put Him off by saying that if we only had the help that others have, we would be all right. If only we were as free from trouble and temptation as others that we know, we would soon be whole. If some man would help us, or other men would cease to hinder us, all would be well.

**Wednesday: Hard Hearts** – Read John 5:10–16. What lessons can we take away from the amazing hardness of the religious leaders’ hearts in regard to Jesus and the miracle He had just performed? This miracle was performed on Sabbath, as many others. Although Jesus knew how the Pharisees felt about such things, He still continued to go about doing good, no less on the Sabbath days than on other days. He said, “I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day” (John 9:4). Of one thing, however, we may be sure, the design of Jesus was not to spite the Jews, or to show contempt for the rulers. It was not any defiance of danger, or desire to assert His rights, that led Him thus to act contrary to the cherished traditions of the elders. We know that He often went away to another part rather than stir up the animosity of the rulers, and that He did not court publicity. No; His one desire was to do good, and to show the people that the Sabbath was meant to be a blessing, and not a burden. His work was “to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18), not alone in body, but in soul and spirit. The physical blindness and bondage and infirmity which the people suffered was only evidence and a consequence of the spiritual blindness and bondage and infirmity that afflict mankind; and the power of Jesus over the one was simply the evidence of His power over the other. He came to represent the Father, and to declare His name, who is, “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin” (Exodus 34:6-7). The healing of the body was only a sign to show the reality of forgiving sins, cleansing from all unrighteousness (see Matthew 9:5-6).

**Thursday: Jesus’ Claims** – Read John 5:19–47. What was Jesus saying in order to help the leaders see Him for who He truly is, a claim so powerfully attested by the miracle He had just done? It was of Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus said: “They are they which testify of Me.” And He said that if the people really believed the writings of Moses, “they would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me.” Strange that when Christ came, they should persecute and crucify Him whom they had read about all their lives in Scriptures. Paul, who had Himself been one of the persecutors of Jesus, tells the reason why “they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers,” had condemned Jesus, for they know not “the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day” (Acts 13:27). Paul says they did not understand these “voices of the prophets,” – the Holy Scriptures which God had given to teach them of Jesus and prepare them for His coming, was because “their minds were blinded;” and he tells just what blinded them: “For even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts” (1 Corinthians 3:14-15). How much could you see of anything, if you tried to look at it with your eyes covered? Yet this is just how many, in the most, of the Jewish people, looked at the scriptures. Their sin and unbelief covered their minds and hearts with a thick veil, so that they could not see Jesus, whose glory was shining forth upon them from the sacred writings.