

# 'Signs of life'

The seven 'signs' in the public ministry of Jesus

*"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 20.30f]

John records seven incidents during the public ministry of Jesus which he describes as 'signs'. 'Signs', as John presents them, both *authenticate* (see Acts 2.22 for a similar perspective) and *illustrate*: that's to say they point clearly to who Jesus is and the significance of what He has come to do.

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## 5.

*".. when they had all had enough to eat .."*

### John 6.1-15

This next 'sign' took place when the 'Passover festival was near' (v.4): in this way John was perhaps suggesting a connection between this incident and the aftermath of the Exodus from Egypt.

This miracle is the only event in the ministry of Jesus, prior to His death and resurrection, which is recorded by all four gospel writers.

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**1. Read John 6.1-15.** As in the last chapter, this 'sign' is followed by a long discussion in which Jesus spells out the significance of what He has done in feeding the multitude. Read the whole chapter if you can!

The narrative here will probably be familiar: what are the details of John's account here which you find striking?

What practical lessons do you take away from this passage?

2. **Read John 6.1-4.** The background to this 'sign' (in terms of where, and when and why) is given by John in these opening verses of the chapter.

A great crowd followed Him because of the 'signs' they'd seen Him perform: **read Jn.2.23-24** again and consider what might be inadequate about this sort of 'following'?

How did you start following Jesus?

Should 'power evangelism' (displays of supernatural power by the Holy Spirit) be encouraged as a way of seeing people brought to faith?

3. **Read John 6.5-11.** Two very different questions are asked here, one by Jesus and one by Andrew, both addressing the impossibility of the situation from a merely human perspective.

Why did Jesus ask Philip this question (vv.5, 6)?

Have you ever faced an 'impossible' situation? How did you respond to it, and what did Jesus do?

4. **Read John 6.12-15.** What Jesus did in feeding the huge crowd was clearly something which left a big impression on them all: they started to come to certain conclusions about Him.

Read **John 6.26-33** & **Deut.18.15**: what did the people mean by saying Jesus was the 'Prophet..'?

The woman of Samaria began by concluding that Jesus was a prophet (John 4.19): Muslims, too, see Jesus as a great prophet: how can a person be helped to see that Jesus is more than just a prophet?

Why did Jesus withdraw when He saw that they intended to make Him king?