

# '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.

\*

## 6.

*".. 'I am the light of the world' .."*

John 9.1-41

This penultimate 'sign' is again very 'public', taking place during the celebratory Feast of Tabernacles (usually late Sept-mid Oct), a feature of which was the ritual lighting of four huge candelabra which illuminated the night sky spectacularly.

The miracle of a blind man being given his sight is a further pointer to who Jesus is and what He does: as light was where the work of creation began, so Jesus as the 'Light of the world' (Jn.9.5) is the One with whom the work of re-creation begins in our lives.

\*

1. **Read John 9.1-41.** It's worth reading the whole chapter - the longer it goes on, the more it becomes clear that the man's *physical* blindness provides a vivid picture of our *spiritual* blindness.

What did Jesus mean by saying to His disciples *"While I am in the world, I am the light of the world"*?

What does this chapter teach you about Jesus?

What difference might it make to how you live your life?

**2. Read John 9.1-7.** John describes both the background to the miracle and the way in which the man's 'eyes are opened'.

How does Jesus' answer to His disciples' question help us address issues of suffering and struggle in our own lives?

The method employed by Jesus in restoring the man's sight involved some striking features: why do you think He went the healing in this way?

Why does John highlight the fact that 'Siloam' means 'sent'?

**3. Read John 9.8-34.** This long section narrates the range of response that there is to Jesus in the aftermath of the healing.

How would you characterize the four different responses of the neighbours, the parents, the Pharisees, and the man?

What lies behind the response of each?

In what ways does that help you understand the 'blindness' of people to Jesus today?

**4. Read John 9.35-41.** As with the man at the pool of Bethesda, Jesus later found the man whose eyes had been opened.

What is distinctive about the man's response in contrast to the responses of others in the narrative?

When and how were your 'eyes opened' by the Lord?

What is the point Jesus is making in vv.39-41?