

Signs of Christ's Glory

SCOTT HOEZEE

In one of her sermons some years ago, the preacher Debbie Blue noted that the word *glory* feels like an overused word. These days, a hotel might invite you to swim in the glory of our outdoor pool; or a basketball player sinks a 40-foot jump shot at the buzzer to win the game for his team, and reporters say that the player was covered in glory; or Nescafe invites you to take a cup of their coffee onto a veranda to enjoy a glorious sunrise; but what is glory? The Gospel of John talks about it a lot, but how and when the word crops up might surprise you. Today on *Groundwork*, we will continue to explore John's gospel. Stay tuned.

DAVE BAST

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Dave Bast.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and Dave, this now is the second program out of a seven-part series, in which we are almost doing the impossible. We are going to try to cover the entire 21 chapters of the Gospel of John in these seven programs. In the first program, we saw John's majestic prologue in John Chapter 1, as well as the unique way by which John the Baptist identified Jesus, and through John's witness, the first disciples, Andrew and Simon, and then eventually Nathaniel and a few others will...before Chapter 1 is done...will join Jesus.

Now we are going to move to Chapter 2 in this program, which, as we said, begins the first major section of John. Chapters 2 through 12 are known as the book of signs.

DAVE BAST

Right; we are going to think also about one of the major themes of John as we are covering this ground. We have to kind of pick out some of the themes, and one of them is glory. So, we saw it already in the prologue in Chapter 1, where John the Evangelist says: We beheld his glory; and now the signs, as we see, will point to his glory; and the first of them comes in John Chapter 2:

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ²and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." ⁴"Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." ⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

So, as the story goes on, Jesus tells the servants to fill the jars with water, which they do, and now take some out, and they bring it to the host and he discovers: Oh, wow! This is terrific wine. This is unusual. You have saved the best wine till last.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, that is the story...the first sign. First of all, we should note that nobody is quite sure what to make of Chapter 2 verse 1 when it says: On the third day. The third day after what? Nobody knows. It doesn't fit with the chronology in John 1. There were a few different days in John 1, but now they have traveled to Cana, which must be a little bit of a journey. So, we don't know this third-day thing, except one thing we do know is that in Jewish literature, including in the Old Testament, anything that happens on "the third day" is momentous; and of course, ultimately...

DAVE BAST

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

On the third day he rose again is part of the Apostles' Creed.

DAVE BAST

Yes, guess what?!

SCOTT HOEZEE

The third day is...so, this, I think, was John's way of saying: Something momentous is happening in this chapter. It is a third day, you see, so pay attention. The problem is, this sure doesn't look momentous. It is a wedding...

DAVE BAST

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

It is a wedding where somebody made a goof with the catering order and didn't order quite enough wine for the multiday celebrations that they had for weddings back then. So, eh, it's a mistake...it's a social faux pas...it is a little embarrassing; but it doesn't look terribly momentous or something that requires the Word made flesh to intervene in.

DAVE BAST

Yes, right; Mary, Jesus' mother, is there, and she tells him to do something: Come on; solve this problem; and Jesus replies oddly to her, almost...it sounds almost rude, like, woman, he calls her...not: okay, Mom; but: Woman, why do you bother me with this? And then he turns around...she tells the servants, just follow his orders; and Jesus creates out of water, what, one hundred twenty or one hundred eighty gallons of wine...somewhere in between there. I mean, you would need a truck to take all this wine in. What is the deal with that?

SCOTT HOEZEE

I think this is a very funny scene. Mary says to Jesus: They have no wine. Jesus says: So what? I am not a caterer; do I look like a caterer, Mother? And then I think she just gives him one of those motherly looks, and kind of glares at him. She doesn't say anything; then she goes over to the servants and says, loud enough for Jesus to hear: You do whatever *he* tells you. I kind of picture Jesus sighing and saying: Oh, okay, Mother. This isn't my time, but boom! So, he makes water into wine, which I think it may have been G. K. Chesterton or C. S. Lewis, or C. S. Lewis quoting Chesterton saying: This is a miracle, for sure; although God turns water into wine every year, right? I mean, it rains on the vineyards of Napa Valley, and out comes wine. Jesus just did it quicker here...

DAVE BAST

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

But again, it is just solving a little social embarrassment for this wedding host. How in the world is this worthy of the Son of God—the Word of God made flesh—and yet, here is how the last verse, which we didn't read, verse 11:

What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his *glory*; and his disciples believed in him.

DAVE BAST

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

This was *glory*?

DAVE BAST

And this was as sign? So, we mentioned the fact in the first program that John has this special word for the miracles of Jesus. He calls them signs; and as you pointed out, Scott, that is like an arrow pointing to some truth about Jesus. So, the first question is: What is the truth about Jesus that this sign is indicating...is pointing to? It has got to be something to do with the newness of the kingdom coming in Jesus. He is the bridegroom. The wedding celebration ultimately is going to involve the marriage supper of the Lamb. He is the new wine that overflows the old ceremonial jars of the old covenant...something to do with newness, certainly.

SCOTT HOEZEE

It is also...and we will talk about this a little bit at the end of this program. There is something wonderful to be observed in the fact that Jesus' glory shined through at this ordinary event. It is just a wedding reception. They have one every day, practically, right? But if Jesus' glory can shine there, then maybe it can shine in your life and in my life, on the average Tuesday afternoon or Friday morning...the skies don't have to split apart...the earth doesn't need to quake for us to be in the presence of glory. It can emerge even at a little wedding reception; and it was enough for the disciples to put their faith in him; they believed in him. So, glory, it turns out, can crop up almost anywhere, and that, I think, is good news for all of us, but we will think about that at the end of the program; but in John Chapter 2, something much more outwardly dramatic happens, and we will look at that in just a moment.

Segment 2

DAVE BAST

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we are digging into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Dave Bast.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and Dave, on a recent *Groundwork* series that we did on the public ministry of Jesus, and we looked at different components of it, we mentioned that if you just looked at Matthew, Mark, and Luke, you might have the impression that Jesus' ministry only lasted...his public ministry only lasted one year; but John's gospel makes it clear that it was at least three years, and the reason we know that is because John pays a lot of attention to the Jewish festivals, the biggest of which, of course, is Passover; and there are three Passovers in John's gospel, which indicates Jesus' ministry must have lasted at least three years; and the first Passover comes here in John Chapter 2.

DAVE BAST

Right; so, Jesus goes up to Jerusalem for the Passover, John says. The first thing he does when he gets there is to go to the Temple, and he is outraged by all the moneychangers and all the stuff that is going on, and the selling animals and sort of crowding out the Gentiles from the outer court; and so he cleanses the Temple, and John says he does it even violently. He makes a whip out of cords and drove them all out, and ¹⁷His disciples remembered [that it is written:] (John writes) Zeal for your House will consume me; and then ¹⁸the Jews responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" And ¹⁹Jesus answered them, "Destroy this Temple and I will raise it again in three days." ²⁰They replied, (What?!) "It has taken forty-six years to build it and you are going to raise it in three days?" ²¹But the temple... (John writes) the temple he had spoken of was his body. ²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

SCOTT HOEZEE

By the way, this is a little hallmark of John's writing. Frequently he will say, almost like...there are no parentheses in the Greek language...but in English we often put these in parentheses. Oh, at the time we didn't know what he was talking about, but later we figured it out. He is very honest about that, and he does it here, too. They didn't know what he meant either, but then after he was raised from the dead, oh, remember he said that; and then they connect the dots. But the main thing we want to flag here, Dave, is that John presents us with a bit of a problem. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus cleanses the Temple. This is in all four gospels; but he does it right after the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, which was four or five days before he was crucified; but here we are, we are only in Chapter 2. Jesus has just started, and here is the Temple cleansing. Most scholars believe this did happen in the final week of Jesus' life, which means John moved this up chronologically; and then the question becomes why?

DAVE BAST

I guess you could say, well, maybe he did it more than once. He did it the first Passover, and then he did it three years later; but, as you said, Scott, most people think that John is exercising his right as a gospel writer to kind of rearrange things, and he is bringing what will be the last and ultimate sign of Jesus' ministry, namely his own resurrection from the dead...he is bringing it back to the very beginning...the outset of the gospel...just to make clear the point about who Jesus is and what his body actually represents; because, says John, *he* is the Temple...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DAVE BAST

In his own person...in his own flesh. He is the intersection between heaven and earth, as Tom Wright has often said, that that is what the Temple stands for. It is the point at which heaven and earth are linked; and actually, that harkens back to a very interesting detail, which we didn't have time for in our last program. At the end of John 1, Jesus depicts himself as the ladder, like Jacob's ladder...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DAVE BAST

That the angels are going up and down, he is the connector between earth and heaven.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And as the commentator, Marianne Meye Thompson, points out, Dave. This was really important, because by the time John wrote this gospel later in the 1st Century...John seems to have survived longer than most of the other disciples before being martyred...the Temple...the physical Temple was gone. In 70 AD the Romans sacked Jerusalem and the Temple was gone; and so, by the time John wrote this gospel, a lot of Jews, including ones who had come to embrace Jesus as their Messiah, and those who were considering, the burning question was: Where is the Temple? So many of God's promises in the Bible are tied to the Temple, and now there is no temple. The Temple was gone. This was Herod's Temple, right? Not Solomon's. That had been destroyed long before. No Temple; and so, John comes right at the beginning...and this is why he moves up the cleansing of the Temple to the beginning to say: Don't worry; there is still a Temple. It is Jesus...

Dave Bast: Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And he is not going anywhere. He is the resurrected one. So, don't worry that there is no temple. There is.

DAVE BAST

And he is the place where God truly dwelt on earth, as was symbolized in the Holy of Holies. Yes; so, this temple imagery is going to be really important for not only John's gospel, but for the whole New Testament, and for the Christian faith; and there is also, I think, an indication here. We said earlier as we opened this series that it is very probable that John knew the other three gospels...Matthew, Mark, and Luke...and in those gospels, when Jesus cleanses the Temple, he also quotes a verse from the Old Testament. In John, it is the disciples who quote from the Old Testament: Zeal for your House has consumed me. He is zealous, he is full of... But in the synoptics, the verse that is quoted is: My House shall be a House of prayer for the nations. And here, we see the fact that it was the Gentiles who were being crowded out from the only place they could congregate near the Temple, by all the moneychangers.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; we often turn this into a little moralism, like oh, you know, don't let the church youth group sell brownies after church because that is what Jesus... No, it wasn't that per se. I mean, that was a long tradition. People had to be able to buy things to sacrifice. It was the crowding out, as you say, of the people God wanted to draw in. Jesus is going to say in the next chapter, which we are actually not going to look at. We are going to skip John 3 and the Nicodemus story, but he says to Nicodemus: I am going to be raised up, and I will draw all people to myself. Not just all Israel...not just all the Jews...he says: I am going to draw all people. Well, then; we are going to need more room in the Temple, aren't we? So, Jesus is creating room...he is making space for all these others he is going to draw to himself as the living Temple. That is so very, very important in terms of the ministry of Jesus and what he is ultimately going to do.

DAVE BAST

Well, there is another sign that we want to look at in this book of signs, and it has to do with water; and that is where we will turn next.

Segment 3

SCOTT HOEZEE

I am Scott Hoezee, along with Dave Bast, and you are listening to *Groundwork*; and we are going to wrap up now this program two of seven programs dedicated to the Gospel of John, the wonderful fourth gospel; and we are going to move into John Chapter 4. We said we are going to skip Chapter 3 and Nicodemus, which means, ironically, we are skipping the most famous verse of John 3:16. That is okay. John loved to tell long stories, in fact, some of the longest stories in the whole Bible, and definitely the longest stories in the New Testament are all in John's gospel. John 4, which we are looking at now...the woman at the well...John 9, the man born blind...we are going to look at that in a future program...John 11, the raising of Lazarus...these are super long stories. They are all inside the book of signs, which is John 2-12; and now we come to John Chapter 4.

DAVE BAST

Right; the story of the Samaritan woman at the well, and though it doesn't contain a miracle, so it is not technically one of the seven signs or miracles pointing to Jesus' identity, it does have symbolic language that functions as a sign of Jesus as the water of life. So, here is how the story begins. Now, he had to go through Samaria. Evidently, Jesus and the disciples are traveling between Jerusalem and Galilee...Galilee their home base...Jerusalem, they had been there for the Passover.

⁴[Now] he had to go through Samaria. ⁵So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey... (there is his human nature) sat down by the well. It was about noon. ⁷When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸(His disciples had gone into town to buy food.) ⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) ¹⁰Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

SCOTT HOEZEE

Wonderful beginning to this story...again, a long story...40-some verses before we are done. We won't be able to read most of it, but *he had to go through Samaria*. Well, he didn't *have* to; in fact, a lot of Jews in Jesus' day would take the long way around to avoid those terrible Samaritans. There was great animosity between the Jews of Jerusalem, the Jews of most of Israel, and the Samaritans. There is a long history there that we cannot go into, but we are told Jesus *had* to go through Samaria. Interestingly, Dave, in the Greek it is just a short little phrase, but it is the same phrase used elsewhere that he *had* to die.

DAVE BAST

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

It was necessary for our salvation. So, that maybe signals something familiar; but the other thing that for most readers of John's gospel, this is what is called a type scene. A type scene is a classic setup in the Bible, and in the Bible, when a man and a woman meet at a well, there is going to be an engagement...they are going to get married. We saw it, you know, in the Old Testament already in the book of Genesis, right, with Isaac and Rebecca, and then again with Jacob and Rachel...this is even Jacob's well. There is going to be some sort of an engagement. Now, it is not a literal engagement here, and yet a kind of marriage does take place here.

DAVE BAST

And between such unlikely candidates, you know; on the one hand, here is Jesus, the sinless Son of God made human—made flesh for us—for our salvation; on the other hand, a Samaritan woman with, as we will learn later in the story, a rather dubious back-story to her life. So, there are multiple barriers between these two, and John shows Jesus as the barrier breaker. He opens a conversation with this woman. I mean, there was a social barrier. For a man to speak to a strange woman, not part of his family, that just was not done. That was taboo!

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; men weren't even supposed to speak to their wives in public in strict Jewish circles...

DAVE BAST

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, this was really unusual.

DAVE BAST

And then there was the racial and religious thing between the Jews and the Samaritans; and even the moral issue of what kind of person this woman was.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; most people, you know...there was a reason that Jesus was alone at the well. It was noon...it was high noon. It was hot; nobody...water weighs eight* pounds per gallon. You didn't haul it in the noontime sun; you did it in the morning...in the cool of the morning...in the cool of the evening; and guess what else happened in villages like this in the cool of the morning and the cool of the evening? The whole village gathered. It was a social time, and she didn't want to go there then because she was an outcast, she was looked down upon. She was the object of rumor and scandal in the village. She had multiple divorces; she was living with a man that she wasn't married to. She didn't dare go to the well when other people were there; that is how lonely she is, that is how broken she is, and Jesus knows this about her; and so he reaches out to her in love, and offers her, indeed, living water...

DAVE BAST

Living water...bubbling up, as it will say in a bit. It is the life that the Spirit of Jesus brings. It bubbles up within you like a spring and brings refreshment. And so, Jesus carries on the conversation, and there is an important moment where she says: Well, yeah; give me some of this water. I am tired of schlepping this jug back and forth, thinking he is talking about literal water; and then he says, well go call your husband, and then she has to kind of own up to what her life is, when Jesus points it out to her; and then the conversation continues.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; in fact, after Jesus says that about, you know, the man you are living with now is not your husband, she kind of blushes and changes the subject...Sir...

DAVE BAST

Yes, I perceive you are a prophet.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, let's talk about worship, you know; and then she says: You Jews think you can only worship God in Jerusalem, we think you can do it here in Samaria. What do you think? And Jesus says:

²¹“Woman, believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²²You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²²Yet a time is coming when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth... (and then the woman says in verse 25) “I know that the Messiah called Christ is coming, and when he comes, he will explain everything to us. ²⁶Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.” ²⁷Just then, the disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman, but no one asked, “What are you doing?” or “Why are you talking with her?” ²⁸Then leaving her water jar, the woman went back to town and said to the people, ²⁹“Come see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” ³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

And tucked into here, Dave, is what is actually the first I AM saying in the gospels. We only think about I am the bread of life, or I am the good shepherd, but when the woman says here: The Messiah is coming, in the Greek Jesus just says: *ego eimi*—I am; and she is converted in a heartbeat. Why not? He just revealed to her he is the Messiah.

DAVE BAST

Yes; and more than that, he is the great I AM...

SCOTT HOEZEE

The great I AM of the Old Testament.

DAVE BAST

Which will occur later in John Chapter 8 in the same way. Jesus simply says: I am. What a wonderful story this is, really. There is so much that is here, it is so rich; but just notice this: Jesus is full of grace and truth, and here they both are. He speaks the truth to her. He says about salvation: You know, you are worshipping what you don't know. You are worshipping in ignorance. You may be sincere, but you don't know what you are doing; and salvation is of the Jews, and specifically one particular Jew, namely I—I am; but also the grace of inviting her. Just come to me and you will have living water; and she does, and immediately goes back and brings back the village.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; the people she had been avoiding she now goes and witnesses to them. She becomes an evangelist. And so, there you have it. In John 2 and 4, that we have looked at in this program, in the most ordinary of circumstances, the glory of God...the glory of God's one and only bursts forth; and as we said earlier in this program, that is good news for all of us. The glory of God can engulf us almost any day. You don't have to

see grand miracles. Jesus is with us every day, full of grace and truth; thanks be to God.

DAVE BAST

Well, thank you for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork* today. We are your hosts, Dave Bast and Scott Hoezee, and we hope you will join us again next time as we continue studying the signs of Jesus as they are recorded in the Gospel of John, Chapters 5-11.

Connect with us at groundworkonline.com to share what *Groundwork* means to you, or tell us what you would like to hear next on *Groundwork*.

***Correction:** The audio of this program misstates the weight of water as six pounds per gallon. In actuality, the weight of a gallon of water is approximately eight pounds.

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/signs-of-christs-glory>

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