

*John: The Gospel of Light and Life*

Adam Hamilton

*Chapter 2 Discussion*

*The Miraculous Signs of Jesus (pgs. 31-45)*

**Opening Prayer**

*Holy God of light and life, thank you for your son, Jesus Christ. Thank you for these stories written so long ago. Open our minds as we consider these stories so that we may grow in our understanding of who Jesus is and who you call us to be. Open our hearts that we may hear and receive your word and live faithfully as your children. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

**Bible and Book Study and Discussion**

**Opening Sentence:**

The first twelve chapters of John contain stories of seven miracles that Jesus performed during this ministry on earth. John calls these miracles “Miraculous Signs.”

**These “miraculous signs” may be read on two levels:**

1. A straightforward level that follows the actions of the story
2. A deeper level that reveals the nature of Christ invites us into a relationship with Christ.

Look at Hamilton’s description of “Starry Night”- Vincent Van Gogh (pg. 31-32)

Read John 2:1-12- (pg. 48-49) (Cultural Background Study Bible pg. 1806-1809)

- (Can be read dramatically or just as a parable.)

- Who are the characters in the story?
  
- What does each character do in the story?
  
- Why do you think it is significant that this story takes place at a wedding party?

- What is the significance of the instruction to “Do what ever he tells you?”
- Consider both the meaning in the story and in our lives today?
- Why might John have offered the detail that the water jars were made of “stone”?
- How does the reference to the “Jewish cleansing ritual” broaden the significance of this story?
- What does the “good wine” represent?
- How does the image of jugs filled “to the brim” describe your experience of the Christian faith?

**Information on Dionysus and Bacchus, the ancient Greek or Roman God of wine and mirth**

- How does the secular world tempt us away from Christ?
- How can we resist temptation and remain in Christ?
- What does Christ offer us that the world does not?

***Healing the Blind Beggar***

***Read John Chapter 9 (pg. 82-84) (Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible pg. 1829-1831)***

- Who are the characters in the story?
- What are the main events in the story?

- Why did the disciples ask: Who sinned?
- How is this “cause-and-effect” way of thinking still evident in our world today?

**Two Points on Suffering:**

- *Sometimes bad things happen to us as a consequence of our own actions.*
- *God does not punish us with hardship and suffering, Jesus suffered the punishment for our sin.*

**Read John 9:35-38- (pg. 83) (Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible Pg. 1831)**

**- REMEMBER that the healed blind man did not recognize Jesus at first because he had been blind when he left Jesus to go wash in the pool of Siloam. (Pool of Siloam Background- Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible pg. 1830)**

- How are people spiritually blind today?
- How can we as followers of Christ help heal people’s spiritual blindness?
- How does the blind beggar in this story represent each of us?

**Hymn Study and Discussion**

**“Amazing Grace”**

- What does the word *grace* mean to you?
- How is the meaning of the word affected, changed or deepened by its use in the hymn?

- Consider and share examples of dramatic changes in people's lives or your own life. What role, if any, did grace play in those changes?

*“Amazing Grace”*  
*John Newton*

**Verse 1**

Amazing Grace how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found;  
Was blind, but now I see.

**Verse 2**

‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed!

**Verse 3**

Through many dangers, toils and snares,  
I have already come;  
‘Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.

**Verse 4**

The Lord has promised good to me,  
His Word my hope secures;  
He will my Shield and Portion be,  
As long as life endures.

**Verse 5**

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,  
And mortal life shall cease,  
I shall possess, within the veil,  
A life of joy and peace.

**Verse 6**

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,  
The sun forbear to shine;

But God, who called me here below,  
Will be forever mine.

**Verse 7**

When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we'd first begun.

***Wrapping Up***

***Food for Thought (Optional Personal Journal)***

***Hamilton points out that John recorded these stories to show us that Christ offer us life.***

- In what areas of your life have you been offered “new wine?”
- In what areas of your life have you received healing from spiritual blindness?
- What does Christ call you to do to receive new life and healing?

***Closing Prayer***

*God of miracles and new life, make us aware of our blindness. Grant us courage to do what you call us to do. Let us be receptive to your healing presence so that we may truly experience life in you. Amen.*