

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 8, Jesus' Signs, Part 2, Jesus' Time Sayings, Part 1

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This is Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on Johannine Theology. This is session 8, Jesus' Signs, Part 2, Jesus' Time Sayings, Part 1.

We continue our study of the theology of the Gospel of John or Johannine Theology.

We're studying Jesus's signs and his revelatory miracles in the fourth gospel, and we're up to the second sign, the healing of the official son in chapter four. This occurs after the episode of Jesus and the Samaritan woman and the Samaritan people. And so he again came to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine.

At Capernaum, there was an official whose son was ill. When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. So, Jesus said to him, unless you, it's plural, see signs and wonders, you will not believe unless you people.

The official said to him, sir, come down before my child dies. Jesus said to him, go, your son will live. The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way.

As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. So he asked them the hour when he began to get better. And when they said to him yesterday at the seventh hour, the fever left him.

The father knew that this was the hour when Jesus had said to him, your son will live. And he himself believed and all his household. This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.

I said that five of the seven I am saying speak of Jesus as the life-giver. Most of the signs do the same. And this is one of those.

Jesus gives life to the son who is near death, physical life. He was, he is, the life-giver. He also gives eternal life to the family who believes.

The faith of the official is in contrast to the general malaise and spiritual malaise of the Galileans. Concerning whom Jesus said, unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe. This man believed Jesus' word and headed for home.

He didn't say, oh, no, no, please, you've got to come. He believed in long-distance healing. He trusted Jesus, and his trust was well placed.

Indeed, healing the official son is remarkable. Actually, 98 times, John speaks of faith. But it's more complicated than that, as you might imagine.

Gospel of John is a river in which a child can wade, and an elephant can swim. If we study all those occurrences of faith, we find the doctrine of inadequate faith. We find it, first of all, in chapter 2, verse 23.

Now, when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in his name. When they saw the signs he was doing, that looked good.

That fits the purpose statement in 20, 30, and 31. These signs are written that you might believe. And this is the way we discern inadequate faith in the Gospel of John.

Of course, from the very near context. They believed in his name when they saw the signs he was doing. John 2, 24.

But Jesus, on his part, did not entrust himself to them because he knew all people. And no one needed to bear witness to the man. For he himself knew what was in a man.

I won't do this now, but the very next words say, now there was a man. Speaking of Nicodemus. We won't go there now, but there's a bridge right there.

This is inadequate faith. Apparently, it's just faith in Jesus as a miracle worker. Surely, if somebody really believes in Jesus, Jesus would commit himself to them.

And trust himself to them. So, this is inadequate faith. Astonishingly, in Samaria, Jesus finds lots of faith.

That is very unexpected. John does not reproduce the parable of the Good Samaritan. But he shows a Samaritan woman.

He portrays her as a female evangelist, if you will. Leading the city to the Lord. And the Samaritans are great believers.

Look at this. John 4, 41. And many more.

So, you have inadequate faith in 2:23, 24. You have, actually, Nicodemus not believing, not even understanding. In chapter 3, you have the Samaritan woman believing.

And not only so, verse 41. Jesus stays with them for a couple of days. 4:41.

Many more believe because of Jesus' word. They said to the woman, It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world. Then, we read these words.

After this, after the two days, he departed for Galilee. A parenthetical comment, an explanatory comment. For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his hometown.

That is not an encouraging word. That indicates that the very next words that follow do not show a genuine and full belief. An adequate belief.

So, when he came to Galilee, they welcomed him. It would be good by itself. I wouldn't think it was a bad thing, except for the words before it.

And these words can create a question, too. Having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast, for they too had gone there. That harkens back to 2:23, 24, where we have the first mention of inadequate faith.

Then Jesus came to Cana in Galilee, where he turned the water into wine. And that's when he says, Unless you people see signs and wonders, you won't believe. And in spite of that, the official shows great faith, believing Jesus can heal at a distance simply by speaking his word.

So, we're not surprised to find a summons to faith in Christ all over the fourth gospel. Very plain. It is as if Jesus is speaking right to me; he is.

But we also have this doctrine, and we'll see it in other places. It's in chapter 8, which perplexes commentators. Commentators oppose the straightforward things John says because it's so unlikely in their minds that these Jews, whom it says believe in him, claim to be, he says they're slaves of sin.

It must be a different group. I don't think so. I do not think so.

Then, in chapter 12, we'll see it in different places in John's gospel. Jesus heals a lame man in chapter 5. There was a pool near the sheep gate. There are lots of invalids there, lying, lame, and paralyzed.

One man had been an invalid. We don't know if he was born this way but for 38 years. Jesus said, Do you want to be healed? The man said, Yes, sir, yes. Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up.

There was a myth, at least I think it's a myth that an angel would visit the pool, and if you jumped in there right away, you could be healed. But while I'm trying to get there and be the first one, somebody else beats me to it. There's a textual variant that does not belong, which talks about the angel.

Jesus said to him, and he did. At once, the man was healed, took up his bed, and walked. And the Pharisees and leaders said, Praise the Lord.

This is the kingdom of God coming. As Isaiah, no, they didn't. They said He did this on Saturday. You know the law says, Thou shalt not heal lame men on Saturday.

My gosh. This is why John doesn't quote it, but he shows it again and again. This is, they strain out the gnat and swallow the camel.

They focus on the picayune stuff. The guy carried his mat. For Pete's sake, he had been miraculously healed.

Wouldn't you carry your mat? Oh, my goodness. And they're swallowing the camel. They're stumbling over what should give them a great cause of thanksgiving.

God has shown his glory. God has been merciful to the son of Abraham. It's a wonder how Jesus could endure this stuff.

You can't carry your bed on Saturday. The man said he sounds like the little guy. I didn't really know that he was little, but I see him as a little feisty guy in chapter nine.

Perhaps it's a sanctified imagination. At least, I hope it's sanctified. Here, this guy says, sounds like the blind man to me.

The man who healed me, that man said to me, take up your bed and walk. And if he said, walk 10 miles with a post stake behind your left ear, I'm on it. Whatever he says, I'm going to do it.

Oh, my word. Once again, the lame, in this case, healed, have better spiritual instincts than the fathers and brothers of Israel. Who is the man who asked you to break the Sabbath? He didn't know who Jesus was, or Jesus didn't stay around, hang around to get the credit.

Jesus finds him in the temple and says, sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you. Does that necessitate the conclusion that his infirmity was the result of direct, no. But could he become an alcoholic and ruin his liver? Sure.

Or maybe some think he's speaking of spiritual danger as well. The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. I don't think he gets high marks for gratitude for doing that.

Anyway, they were persecuting Jesus because of that because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. Ah.

But Jesus said to them that he is not one to back down from a fight when it is important. If he just looked the other way all the time, they would have died in their sins. He at least awakened some from their spiritual stupor by confronting and challenging them.

That's why he heals on Saturday. Acts 6, many, even priests and Levites, believed in him. If Jesus had played nice, if he had played softball, I don't know if that would have happened.

God used his son to confront the authorities for the sake of the people, first of all, to separate them from these leaders that they might believe. The Synoptics say Jesus was moved within. He was sad because the people were like sheep without a shepherd.

My father has been working till now, and I am working. Once again, I see Jesus healing the lame man to be part of his life-giving. He gave life.

He gave vigor. He gave strength and healing to a man whose legs had been inoperative for 38 years, and he immediately got up and got going. Oh, they're seeking all the more to kill him, John 5:18, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath in this terrible, flagrant manner, oh, I'm being facetious, but he was even calling God his own father, wouldn't they? Of course, they would, but not in this way.

He was calling God his own father, making himself equal with God. I'm not going to get into that, but I will speak to this matter. Of course, they would say God is their father.

Oh, Jesus revealed the fatherhood of God in his own relationship with the Father and then invited believers into that relationship under him with the Father. But it was an Old Testament truth. But Jesus claimed that his healing was the work of his father.

And they understood that was Jesus' way of talking about God. My father is working until now, and I am working. The Talmud is a later writing, but we think many of the ideas go back to the time of Jesus.

The writing is later, there's no question. And it is a mixture of wisdom and ridiculousness and a great mixture. Rabbis commenting on rabbis, but some real wisdom.

Anyway, the Jews, is it proper to say the Shema when you're in a tree? Rabbi Eliezer says yes because God made the heavens and the earth. Rabbi Yaakov says no, because you stand on your feet on the ground and raise your hand. Anyway, here was a real problem.

As the Jews thought about it deeply, God rested on the seventh day. Does God work on Saturday? This was a serious problem addressed in the Talmud. And as the Jews thought about it long and hard, they said God does at least three things on the Sabbath.

He brings babies into the world. Birth happens seven days a week. They were not prepared to say birth on Saturday had a different cause.

Elderly Jews died seven days a week. Once again, the Lord took them. And God, the creator, is also the God of providence.

And God keeps the world going seven days a week. We think it is something like this background that is behind verse 16. My father is working until now.

There are certain works that God does seven days a week. And I am working. I work the works of God.

And I take the place of God. He doesn't say it in John, but we cannot help but think of the synoptic saying, the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. It's just an outrageous thing to say unless you're God, a divine being.

They get it. And they're very unhappy. And they would stone him to death.

They want to kill him. They're seeking all the more to kill him. Not only because he was breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own father in such a way as to make himself equal with God.

Well, this is clear. I'm not going to repeat the feeding of the 5,000. When I dealt with them, I said I was the bread of life; I discussed that.

I will simply say the meaning of this sign is once again to show Jesus is the giver of life. The man has sustained the fathers in the wilderness. Jesus' multiplication of the loaves, especially the loaves, and the fish also enlivened the people and sustained them.

And more importantly, it is drinking his blood and eating his body that brings eternal life. He's the life-giver. Jesus rescues the disciples at sea, 6, 16 to 21.

When evening came, John 6, 16. I see this as another place. I see this as overlapping with the fact that I am the gate of the sheep.

Jesus is the way into the people of God on earth. And I am the way, the road to the Father's heavenly house. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Those two, I am saying, show he's a savior. This sign also shows the same. When evening came, John 6:16, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum.

It was now dark. And Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing.

Remember, these are sailors, at least four of these guys. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the water, coming near the boat. And just like we would be, they were frightened.

Are you kidding me? It's even worse. They're sailors. And then they were glad to take him into the boat.

And immediately, the boat was at the land to which they were going. There's debate, but it looks to me like it's a sign. And Jesus is shown to be the savior.

He rescues them from the storm. That much is plain. And was there a motorboat-type operation going on? It looks like something like that.

Some say, and the fog lifted, and they saw they were close to shore. Maybe. I want to be more like Doug Moo in his theology of Paul and his letters.

He actually says, maybe, probably too much for me. But talk about fairness. Oh, I love the guy.

Oh, there are three views here. And I really disagree with this one. But it's really hard to decide between these two.

But I slightly favor the third one because of, well, that's great scholarship. In my seminary days, we had a great scholar, and he always gave us five views, and these three are possible. We had the preachers on the faculty.

They were sometimes too dogmatic because preachers just can't say, oh, there are three views. You have to preach something. Anyway, Jesus saves them from the storm and maybe causes the boat to immediately get to the other side.

There is a difference of opinion. And I'll pull a Doug Moo and say I respect those who agree with me and those who don't. Rescues the disciples at sea.

I do see a rescue. I do see a sign. Heals the man born blind.

We've done this one already. I'm not going to repeat it. I'll simply say this goes with what I am saying.

I'm the light of the world, and that shows Jesus as the revealer. He raises Lazarus. I'm not going to repeat that one.

That shows Jesus as the life giver. I'm the resurrection and the life, and he proves it by raising his friend from the dead. I'm not going to repeat that one.

The miraculous catch of fish in chapter 21 is cool. I bet you never heard that before. It's a cool passage.

21 of John. After this, Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Galilee. And he revealed himself in this way.

Lots of disciples were there. Peter says, I'm going fishing. They got out and got in the boat all night, fished, and found Zippo.

No fish. Just as the day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore. Yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

He said to them, children. Now, that kind of perplexes me. Would somebody else call them children? Would that be a customary way for an older person to talk to them? I don't know.

I thought maybe that would have been good. Do you have any fish? No. Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you'll find some. I don't know.

I guess there are different kinds of fishermen in the world, but I can see some crusty old sailor saying, heck with you. I'm not doing that. I fished all night and got nothing.

But they immediately obey. Blows my mind. Luke 5. Doesn't Peter hesitate there? Don't they hesitate? I think they do.

The result is the same. And that's why John knows who it is. Yeah, Peter.

Luke 5. Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch. Peter's not nasty, but he says, Master, we toiled all night and caught nothing. But that's your word.

I'll let down the nets. Boom! They're breaking the nets. The timing, at least, is miraculous.

So, they cast a net. The net. The net.

The net is on the right side of the boat. I'm conflating these words. And now they were not able to haul it in because of the quantity of the fish.

The disciple whom Jesus loved, therefore, said to Peter; It is the Lord. They remember what happened in Luke 5. Peter wants a private audience. He has his underclothes on.

He goes in to see Jesus. And it's mano a mano. Jesus takes him through three steps of tough repentance.

I take it to mean to rectify the three denials. Jesus and Peter alone. The other disciples, John 21, 8, came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish.

For they were not far from the land but about 100 yards off. Jesus is cooking a little meal there. A little charcoal fire was going.

Bring some of the fish. Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore. He's a strong man.

Full of large fish. 153 of them. Saint Augustine and other fathers interpreted that symbolically.

John counts, but I don't think that's part of the, I forget, the world or whatever kind of deal they do with that. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. It sounds like it's unusual, but I'm not trying to multiply signs needlessly.

Come and have breakfast. Again, this is not my private interpretation, but in Luke 5, Jesus uses it as an occasion to teach, I will make you fishers of men. Customarily for John, he refers to a synoptic teaching, or in this case, even a synoptic event.

Am I saying this is the same catch? No, no. It is similar to two different great hauls of fish, okay? But they're to remember that one, and they are to remember the words, I will make you fishers of men. Hence, this sign also shows Jesus is the savior because he, through them, will save human beings.

Hence, seven signs plus Jesus' resurrection plus the eighth sign, the miraculous catch of fish. And let me label them. Water to wine is savior.

Jesus replaces the Jewish purification rites with the new wine of the kingdom of God. Heals the fish of the sun, life-giver. Heals lame, man, the same.

Feeds the 5,000, same. Rescues the disciples at sea, savior. Heals man born blind, revealer.

Raises Lazarus, life-giver. Raises himself as a life-giver. Miraculous catch of fish, savior.

Let me use John 14.6 then, not only for the seven I am's, but John 14:6, I am the way. No one comes to the Father except me. Jesus is the savior.

Water into wine seems to show that. Rescuing the disciples at sea seems to show that. A miraculous catch of fish is designed to make them, to show them, to encourage them to be fishers of men.

Three times savior. I'm the truth. Only one of the signs seems to me to be teaching that Jesus is the revealer.

All the rest show he is a life-giver. That is the major accent of the fourth gospel as far as Christology goes. Oh, he's the revealer of God.

No one has ever revealed God like he did. My goodness. But the major part of that revelation is he is the one who gives eternal life.

Oh yes, he's the savior. And John has atonement motifs. Maybe not the ones you were expecting.

I have learned not to expect. Oh, I'm so surprised to find that in the Bible. I'm not.

I don't expect to find stuff in the Bible. I find what's in the Bible. I try to find what's in the Bible.

I know I don't do it perfectly, but I try to find what is there. Time sayings. I've got five different categories.

The time of Jesus' public manifestation. I mentioned that before. The time of the father's protection of the son.

Twice at least. Times present and future. Already and not yet.

Time of Jesus' glorification specifically. The time of the father's protection, and in John's speech, that means he's being lifted up on the cross. He's being raised and is returning to his Father.

The cross is included in his glorification. The time of the disciples' persecution. Very importantly, in the Book of Glory, that is brought into the picture.

Jesus' time sayings. I'd like to at least begin there. We saw in chapter 2 they had run out of wine at a wedding.

Jesus takes the place of the bridegroom and provides wine. Oh my, do the big jars full of it by turning water into wine? He does the work of the he who was the father's agent in creation.

That's the work of recreation here if you will. My time has not yet come, Mother.

I take it to be the time of my triumphal entry. My public and grand disclosure in which he rides into Jerusalem as a king on a donkey, and the children yell Hosanna, and the leaders say tell him to stop it. Jesus says if they don't do it the stones will cry out.

He's not hiding it anymore. He's not saying now to look, go, and say to somebody he healed. Go make the proper sacrifice of the priest, and don't spread it around.

Half the time, they spread it around anyway. But he's not trying to make the public splash. He does change water to wine.

Doesn't seem to draw a lot of attention to himself. He doesn't want to. Chapter 7, we never actually read it.

His own brothers didn't believe in him.

No wonder he appears to James after his resurrection. Ah, but that was beautiful. I bet James had tears of repentance of remorse.

After this John 7:1 Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill him. Yes, he is God, and he is sovereign. He gives eternal life to whomever he wants.

Chapter 5 At his voice, the dead will be raised. Chapter 5:28, 29 He's God. The Father and I are one.

John 10:30 in our ability to keep the sheep saved over and over and over, he's God. My father's been working until now, and I'm working. John 5 puts his healing of the lame man on a par with the providential working of God every day.

Keeping the universe going. But he's also responsible. Can we perfectly put these things together? No, no more than we can fit divine sovereignty and human responsibility perfectly together in any case. But they're both true.

So, we better have them, we better acknowledge them both, and put them together the best that we can. Feast of Booths or Tabernacles was at hand. His brothers told him to leave here and go to Judea so that his disciples could also see the work he was doing.

I'm not reading it right because it's sarcastic, for no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.

It was with dripping sarcasm. John's explanatory comment editorial comment for not even his brothers believed in him. Go and show off your magic trips, magician tricks, magician, you want to be a public figure, a great man, go and do it.

Ah that must have been hard to take. His own family didn't even believe in him. Oh, Mary did.

I don't know when Joseph died, but he didn't. He surely wasn't around when Jesus died. Jesus wouldn't have needed to commit him to John the apostle John son of Zebedee. Ah Jesus said my time has not yet come.

There's the time saying. Oh, here comes a zinger. But your time is always here.

He even loves his brothers by pointing out their sins. My guess is that, at the time, they would have a different interpretation of this action. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that its works are evil.

In other words, brothers, you belong to the world. You go up to the feast. I'm not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come.

After saying this, he remained in Galilee. I guess I'm glad the ESV hasn't stuck the word in there now but that's the meaning obviously from the context. I'm not going up to this feast now because after his brothers had gone up to the feast he also went up, not publicly but in private.

That's where I get this interpretation, and it is an interpretation. Neither two nor seven of John say it, but my understanding is those two-time sayings two, four, seven, six, and eight speak of Jesus following the Father's timetable and not wanting

to make a public splash to use what eventually happened. He did not want the triumphal entry to happen too soon because he didn't want to be crucified too soon.

He had three and a half years of public ministry preaching, teaching, healing the sick, and casting out demons, although John doesn't record that. The Jews were looking for him at the feast. Oh, you bet they were. They're trying to accuse him of something. Where is he? Much muttering about him among the people, and guess what their responses were.

Some said he's a good man with a positive response. Others said no, he's leading the people astray with negative responses. How much do we find that? My goodness, over and over again ever since the prologue, chapters one, ten, through thirteen.

Yet, for fear of the Jews, no one openly spoke about him. The blind man's father's parents were cowed. The Jews had power over the people again. I'll say that's one of the reasons Jesus healed on Saturday.

That's one of the reasons we have Matthew 23: woe to you scribes and Pharisees hypocrites. Jesus had to break their stranglehold on the people who were like sheep without a shepherd. About the middle of the feast, Jesus went up and began teaching.

The Jews marveled, saying how this man learned when he had never studied. He wasn't the disciple of anybody. He's got disciples.

He has no rabbi. Oh, he's got a rabbi. He says my father is my rabbi.

Teaching is not mine but his who sent me—the father's my teacher. And I love this is a wonderful open verse that is as valid today as it was in Jesus' day.

If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. We should use that verse with people today. Oh, I don't know.

Have somebody read it, explain it to them, and say if you had an open mind in reading the gospel of John, I would pray and watch God work in your life. Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Woo.

He's getting serious Dutch now. Why do you seek to kill me? The crowd said he had a demon. Who's seeking to kill you? And Jesus goes on and beats them at their own game.

I did one work, and you all marveled at it. Moses gave you circumcision, not that it's from Moses but from the fathers, and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. You cut a little bit of flesh off on the Sabbath.

If on the Sabbath, a man receives circumcision, a minor surgery, if you will, a minor physical manipulation. If it's the eighth day of a baby's life, he is circumcised on the Sabbath. They're working on the Sabbath.

Oh no. If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well, not just as removed his foreign skin? Do not judge by appearances but judge with right judgment. In other words obey the law with the spirit of the law and not just the letter.

For Pete's sake, I'm not. Don't enforce the letter of the law to refuse your Messiah. And the people again are perplexed. I'm from the Father, he says.

I know him for I come from him and he sent me. They were seeking to arrest him, but no one had laid a hand on him. Do you know why? Because his hour had not yet come.

7:30, along with 8:20, shows the Father's protection of the Son. Oh, the Son avoids Judea 7:1 of John because they're going to they want to get him, and he's not going to tempt the Father. Oh, but when it's the Father's will, he's there, and he's trusting, and no one lays a hand on him because his appointed time to die rises and returns, which 13.1 actually defines for us in those terms has not yet come.

Many of the people believed in him because of his own messages that perplexed them. The leaders opposed him because their own friends said yeah, but this doesn't make sense, and that doesn't square with what we know about the Messiah. They said when the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done? No, he won't. That's when the Pharisees send people to arrest him, and they come back empty-handed because never has a man spoken the way this man has spoken.

We will take it up again in our next lecture, seeing another occasion when they wanted to stone him, but they were not successful. They did not even do it because God restrained them. His time had not yet come.

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