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**EXPLAIN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF 'SIGNS' IN JOHN'S GOSPEL AND WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTANDING HIS GOSPEL?****INTRODUCTION:**

The Gospel according to St. John, written by John the apostle as it is evidenced in M. C. Tenney's book, explicit the purpose and the significance of his selective seven signs out of many miracles Jesus performed. John one of the closest to Jesus within the inner circle to whom describing himself as the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 21: 20). The question is why did John select some of the seven miracles as a signs for people to believe according to his statement in John 20: 30-31? The theme of his writing was to "believe". I suggest that the period of his quietness before he wrote the book had given him enough ideas of what people think geographically, knowledge of the environment, history, and he was familiar with Jewish customs. These might give him passion to expound the reason why people need to believe in Christ as the Eternal purpose of God for their salvation as the Holy Spirit gave him grace to write the epistle. Probably people are confused and many heresies are arising against the preaching of the gospel of Christ that led many people to scepticism. These can be the reasons why he needed to proof and identifies himself as eyewitness to the miracles selected in his epistle.

In his internal and external evidence, there are four major proofs to support the significance of signs and there importance to understanding the gospel and to believe which is going to explicate the theme of the essay.

**THE BODY**

1. John was a Palestinian Jew. He had excellent knowledge of Palestinian especially of Jerusalem and its surrounding. He knows what it is happened geographically. He is aware of the head knowledge of the Judaizers and their work concerning the new covenant which Jesus laid down before His resurrection.
2. Eyewitness to the miracles that happened. His personality as one of the closest disciples of Jesus Christ is another factor to be able to evaluate what people feel about Jesus Christ and how are they reasoning with the good news, believing or unbelieving. His personal contact with great numbers of people, including their names (John 1: 14). His testimony that people might believe his witness concerning Christ crucifixion (John 19: 35).
3. John the apostle. His apostleship is another proof of his writing with proof of signs to acknowledge people about who Christ IS and his Eternal purpose that is, He is the way, the truth and the life, that whosoever shall believe in him shall receive eternal life (John 14: 6)
4. His personal relationship with Jesus Christ. As he identifies himself with Jesus Christ, " the disciple whom Jesus loves". This may give him passion to reveal the revelation and the power in Jesus Christ and his deity who is the only saviour of the world.

These four proves the importance that supports the apologetic of spiritual truth as revealed in certain events in the life of Jesus according to John witnesses with proofs of signs.

As the epistle of John stated, “ the Gospel of Believe” that already signified the importance of his revelation with proofs of some strategic signs to back up his theme of declaring Christ as the Son of God and the saviour of life. These selections of the signs coordinates clauses, that is Jesus did many others, and but these are written, “ That ye may believe”. The seven signs recorded in the Gospel of John reveal some very significant characterises of the power of Jesus, and they confirm His deity. They also have very definite purpose to stir up a response of acceptance or rejection, belief or unbelief. But what precisely is this life that subject from our belief in Jesus name? John revealed the importance of knowing God and His Son, Jesus Christ as He is the giver of the eternal life (John 17 : 3). Tenney describes the four elements that connected us to the concept of eternal life with explanations. They are:

1. Consciousness; entail no knowledge without cognisant life. Through awareness you put your mind to work and wisdom expounded.
2. Contact; for one cannot apprehend those things with which one has neither direct nor indirect contact. Physical relationship distinguishes appreciation.
3. Continuity or duration; knowledge of God presupposes coexistence with him.
4. Development; signifies the knowledge of God must be growing, not static thing. This portrait the destiny of man which is eternal life the purpose of the teaching of the Gospel of Christ.

These four statements are very core in the goal of John thought and presentation of the Gospel.

Also Puskas and Crump in his book describes the importance of the seven signs that John selected out many miracles Jesus performed. He said these signs serve as enacted parables, an observation that may help to explain John's neglect of the Synoptic parables. He further explained that each sign is communicating a specific significance to the eyewitnesses or the original hearers of the oral tradition which is the historical level, and the literary level, constructing a symbolic significance available only to readers of the Gospel

These seven signs moreover highlight the role of John's literary devices considered in his writings. I will be listed the seven signs which John recorded in his epistle in orderly form. All of these signs revealed some significant characteristic of Jesus' power and person. His transcended control over the issues of life with which man unable to comprehend. These are:

The changing of water into wine (John 2: 1-11). This demonstrated power and master over quality by carrying out result of vine produces over a period of months instantly. When the disciple saw Jesus miracle they believed. The miracle showed his power over nature and revealed the way He would go about His ministry helping other, speaking with authority, and being in personal touch with people. The significance of the miracle shows in the effect that it produced. This is the first miracle Jesus did at Cana of Galilee and manifested his glory. This signs promoted there believe and it was advance step beyond the reason to believe. The individuals had seen the wonders with their physical eyes and they were able to portray the person of Jesus and draw a conclusion that a superior being was among them who has proof his claims by His deed of compassion and supremacy.

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The healing of the Nobleman's son (John 4: 46-54). This is incredible power demonstrated by healing the Nobleman's son who was at great distance. Jesus proves himself the master of space and distance. This was a sign to all people that Jesus is not just a mere man but divine. This miracle enables the faith of the noble man and his family to grow. The kind of faith that prompted the nobleman to demonstrate such action was the knowledge of information gathered from people gave him hope to believe that Jesus is capable of handling such crisis. The ability and faith the nobleman put to work and the confidence of his words to Jesus it shows the boldness of his trust that Jesus is the only answer to such case; " Sir, come down ere my child die". This is a notable request without any authentic inquiry regarding his personality, and whatsoever that is running in his mind must be a positive expectation. When Jesus gave him a simple reply; " Go thy way; thy son liveth", his response shows as he thought in his mind received his expectation. And the purpose of John gospel is for people to believe in Christ divinity. The scriptures prove that the nobleman increased in faith that led him committed himself and his household wholeheartedly to Jesus. This is very important to the gospel of believe as Tenney's describe the contrast of believe and obey in (John 3: 36) in defining the former term. Belief is obedience to the utterance of God; disobedience is unbelief. Just exactly what the nobleman did. Believe is thus defined as commitment to authority rather than a passive opinion.

The healing of impotent Man (John 5: 1-9). Jesus instantly cures a man afflicted with disease of thirty-eight years. This demonstrated power over time. The condition of the impotent man was already overwhelmed with

depression of sickness and from physical standing point. His psychological reasoning was already affected and resigned to his fate and had accepted the inevitable. Apostle John regards this sickness as outstanding event which Jesus did to open the spiritual eyes and inner man of the people to believe Jesus Christ had arrived the saviour of life, the freedom giver no matter kinds of disaster or calamity, his present is the instant solution to the matter. This is significant to John gospel. Thirty-eight years of sickness was challenge by Jesus asking him question, " Do you want to get well?" I believe the question might appear foolish to the impotent man. But who is he or she would like to remain sick? But the expectation of the impotent man was somebody needed to help him into the pool when the water bubbled in other to achieve the miraculous powers. From Jesus close examination, His assessment shows that the impotent man was bound by his circumstances and could not rise higher than pointless complaint. But Christ shows compassion on those who are helpless and been reduced both in body, hope, faith, and in spirit. The authority of Jesus and the command over the sickness bring an instant turning around over his helplessness in body, hope, faith and spirit. Jesus said, " Rise take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole and walked. This is unusual miracles that brought a new faces into the gospel of believe.

The feeding of the Five thousand (John 6: 1-4). Jesus proves himself to be the master of quantity by multiplying the five loaves and two small fishes of one boy's lunch to feed five thousand men besides women and children. This is incredible circumstance beyond human expectation, even though the disciples who have being with him who had witnesses several miracles

cannot still confidently succumbed to the situation even though the master is within them with the way they reasoning and their imagination. But Jesus Christ who is the master of quantity proofs beyond the reactions of the disciples. The superiority of Jesus overrules the kinds of educational knowledge which apply in the context of their calculation by Philip as statistical pessimist and Andrew who was ingenious optimist. These could still not help the situation. The miraculous multiplications by the hand of Jesus in breaking the bread and fish into edible fragments is call the work of a sign and the prophetic of Jesus` sufficiency in the midst of deficiency, and of His ability to make sacred meagreness gratify the need of the starving. The amazing things the audience reaction is to make Jesus their king, the messiah which is the main theme and the significance of John gospel.

The walking on the water (John 6: 16-21). Jesus shows power over nature. This is incredible event that created fear to Jesus Christ disciples. The event has a significant meaning to the disciples why they have the ideas of the weather, this made them to sail before Jesus came, and they could not afford to take risk. I could not imagine how they expected Jesus to join them if they finally cross over. I believe Jesus allowed this to happen to them so that they can understand his deity and power over nature. Also Jesus expected them to act in their faith as they saw him approaching them instead they were afraid. Faith is a mindset that expects God to act when we act upon this expectation, we can overcome our fears. John saw this miracle as a incredible event that proof Christ authority over nature, that is why himself included it in his gospel of believe.



The healing of the Man Born Blind (John 9: 1-12). Jesus anointing a blind man since his birth with clay and he received his sight by obedient. This is power over disaster or misfortune. In some of the miracles Jesus did as recorded in John`s gospel, sickness were influenced by the operation of evil forces in the world. Sin and evil caused disease was seen as part of the total fallenness of God`s creation. John declares in his gospel of believe that people could be set free from the domination of sin over lives not only in terms of any wrong doing that individual might committed. If the healing miracles show Jesus releasing individual people from the power of sin, the nature miracles show Jesus doing the same for the whole of creation. This is to prove that Jesus has power over the power of sin that lead to sickness that is He is the life giver, the giver of eternal life to them that believe in him.

The Raising of Lazarus (John 11: 1-46). This miracle shows Jesus was the master of death. His transcended control over dead is unquestionably. It was the last enormous miracle Jesus did and recorded in John gospel. Jesus proof of his claim to be the resurrection and the life. Since sign and miracles are symbolic meaning to the gospel of believe, John draw out this last event as the close up mastery among the sign recorded in his written. The dissection of belief and unbelief which had already become obvious in the crowd became predetermined after the miracle. Jesus gave a new interpretation of the event that cause, if John the Baptist did prophesy what Jesus is going to do and people witness that: “ but all things whatsoever John spoke of this man were true” (John 10: 14). The chance for sign on John`s prophecies and Jesus deeds was a powerful factor in creating belief.

The signs were arranged chronologically as well as the effects of each sign in Tenney's diagram. These signs were important to understand Christ's superiority over the factors of life with which human is unable to handle. The event of signs revealed the proof of his deity and key to understand the purpose of eternal life as Christ is both eternal and human. However, the purposes of these signs are for the person to believe in God as well as Jesus is the son of God that they may have life in his name (Zoë Grk) as it is carefully defined by Jesus in (John 17: 3).

The significance of the signs was also addressed in James Montgomery Boice's book. He said the purpose of the signs is to bring Christians to the absolute assurance of their salvation. Moreover, his purpose is to lead these to faith which proves that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, that by believing they may have life in his name.

Another strategic purpose why the signs are important to understand John's gospel was explicit in John Drane's book. He explained the miracles Jesus did by Jesus was not for his personal gain, rather for the glory of God which He shared as God's Son (John 1: 14). The same subject happens in other miracles where Jesus requires praise to be given to God and not to himself (John 11: 4). Furthermore, he illuminates the demonstration of God's power by miracles to make known those who witnessed them would realize that the kingdom had arrived with the coming of Jesus. In his further explanation, he said the miracles not only proclaim the appearance of the kingdom but also explained some factual facts which are grouped into three sections; each of these expresses a different aspect of Jesus' event. They declare the meaning

of the kingdom for individuals, for the world as a whole, and its future consequences and consummation.

Wenham & Walton also expressed the purpose of believe and the significant to understand John Gospel in the view of signs. John depict the primary evidence of selected miracles revealed who Jesus is and reason to believe in him. Thus, revealed His glory and his disciples believed in him. The glory is the divine glory of the only son of God; the miracles are the works of God which should lead to faith (John 2: 11; 1: 14; 10: 25). The essence of miracles is to see Jesus as God over all and not just to admitted him as Just Man but the very invisible God in the flesh who have the capacity to save the whole creation as John who is the eyes witness had presenting him in his gospel of believe.

John Macarthur made profound statements in his book regarding the manipulation of the fulfilling of the scriptures where an author is trying to prove Jesus made up the fulfilment of the scriptures, He said, “ a mere man trying to mislead people could not have had the kind of sovereign control over events Jesus repeatedly displayed”. The seven signs which depict the sovereignty of Jesus over the creation establish the importance and the reason why John Gospel should be understood.

## **CONCLUSION**

Many other signs consequently did Jesus which is not written according to John gospel, but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God; and believe that ye may have life in his name. In the signs appears the revelation of God; in belief, the reaction that they ought to

evoke; in life, the result that belief brings. This statement incorporates the application of the whole gospel.

The text John used in (John 20: 30-32) explicate more clues to an understanding of the content of the gospel. The purpose of John gospel and selected signs is to revealed who Jesus is, His sovereignty over all creation and messiah of humanity.