

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY
August 19, 2003

Topic: The Gospel of John 2:2 - 3: 21 The signs as miracles

Perhaps, by the time you are ready to study this session, the chart of the Gospel of John will be available to you on the web site at trinity@triumc.org. As I am in Portland, Maine and e-mailing from the public library, my options for sending things to our web master are limited. The chart may be without lines. However, you'll have enough information to follow the rationale for our study of John's Gospel.

Today's study is the third study this series. It is in the chart's section titled "Illuminating the Work of God," and in a sub-section titled "Signs that the word is made flesh." Today's lesson is titled "The signs as miracles."

I. Read the assigned reading at one time.

Miracles! What to do about miracles? A head trip analysis understands them as supernatural events, something that proves Jesus' glory and authority. However, supernatural events stand in opposition to the worldview The Guarantor (God) gives us today: the scientific worldview. So, what to do? What is the gut trip analysis?

The gut trip question is when have you experienced the irrational? When was the last time something happened you could not explain? From the horrific point of view, why do pets get run over, or children die? There is no rational answer. This is just "The Way Life Is (TWLI). In The more delightful side, how does water get turned into wine? There is no answer. These things are unexplainable. They are irrational, and they are not supernatural.

This is not to say these things are without meaning. John, the gospel writer, reports these irrational occurrences to prove a point that is summarized in John 3: 16 - 18.

It is helpful to remember that this Gospel is written to prove THE LOGOS that John so eloquently states in the opening verses: "In the beginning was the LOGOS. . . ." This Greek word means "The Good News." A "Gut Trip Analysis" of the Good News is "You can live the life you have and decide to live it abundantly."

The offense of this "gospel" or Good News is the condemnation that we may not really be living our lives abundantly. This is what gets Jesus in a lot of trouble.

I found the verses in 3: 5-7 to be helpful in my review of this study. "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit." Consider the following from your level of experience: The "kingdom of God" is the place of Perfect At-One-Ment; The "Spirit" represents our decision (freedom) to practice our Free Will to choose; "Water" represents our decision to die to this world in baptism.

Now, in light of this discussion, study the assigned reading and ask yourself what is the purpose our writer John is out to prove?

In the first episode in which Jesus changes the water into wine, John reveals his purpose in 2:11. Don't let the word "glory" throw you into "head trip analysis." "Glory" is the experience of living in harmony or in tune with our intended purpose.

In the second episode in which "Jesus clears the temple," John reveals his purpose for this event in 2: 18, and 2:22. Don't let the word "believe" become a "Head trip analysis." Believe means to bet your life.

In the third episode where "Jesus teaches Nicodemus" about being born again, ask the question, to what do I die and to what am I born again?

Be careful in 3: 15 of the words "eternal life." This is not a "head trip analysis," but a "gut trip analysis." "Eternal life is the life that is lives with the Perfect At-One-Ment." No one must die before they can have "eternal life." This relationship to The Guarantor is available now!

Next week, we'll shift to four additional studies on "testimonies, demonstrations and affirmations" that further help us in "Illuminating the Work of God."