

# The Seventh Sign

John 4:39-54

May 10, 2025

Peter Hiett

*Video and audio versions available online:*

<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/the-seventh-sign/>

*Transcript document prepared by: Heather Eades.*

*This document was prepared by Heather Eades using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please email us at [transcripts@thesanctuarydowntown.org](mailto:transcripts@thesanctuarydowntown.org). Thank you!*

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## Message

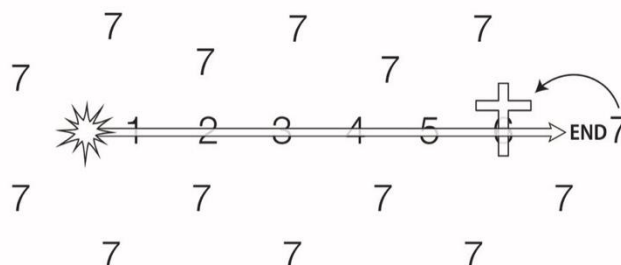
This is our 11<sup>th</sup> sermon in our series from the Gospel of John.<sup>i</sup> (The sermons build on one another so if you haven't been following along you can begin to follow along by watching previous messages on our [website](#) or [YouTube page](#).)

### **John 4:39-54:**

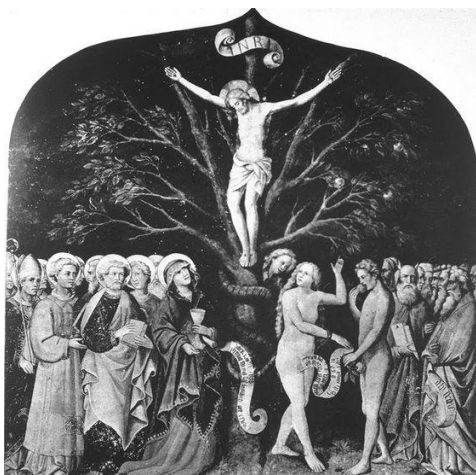
**Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony [logos: word], "He told me all that I ever did."<sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay [*meno*: abide] with them, and he stayed there two days.<sup>41</sup> And many more believed because of his word.<sup>42</sup> 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." [NOT "some of the world" just "the world"]<sup>43</sup> After the two days he departed for Galilee.<sup>44</sup> (For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor [value] in his own hometown [*patris*: fatherland].)<sup>45</sup> So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast. [John already told us that at the feast "many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing, but Jesus did not entrust himself to them"<sup>ii</sup>] <sup>46</sup> So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine [John already told us that this was "the first of his signs"<sup>iii</sup>]. And at Capernaum there was an official [*basilikos*: "of the king," nobleman] whose son was ill [*astheneo*: weastheneok, sick]<sup>iv</sup>. <sup>47</sup> 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. <sup>48</sup> So Jesus said to him, "Unless you [y'all] see signs and wonders you [y'all] will not believe." <sup>49</sup> The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." <sup>50</sup> Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. <sup>51</sup> As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. <sup>52</sup> So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour [John implies that this is the hour that Jesus turned water to wine; it's the hour that is coming and is now here; the hour that the Samaritan woman began to worship]**

**the fever left him.”<sup>53</sup> The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” And he himself believed, and all his household.<sup>54</sup> This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.**

John is counting signs, and it seems clear that he wants us to count with him. John is clear that Jesus did many signs, however he’s built his gospel around a series of public signs that Jesus performs and then comments upon. The first 12 chapters of John’s Gospel are often called “The Book of Signs.” In chapter 12, Jesus raises Lazarus (the 6<sup>th</sup> sign) and announces to Jerusalem that he has come to save the world which, ironically, is what the Samaritans happily confessed in Chapter 4. I count 7 public signs that Jesus performs and expounds in the Gospel of John.<sup>v</sup>

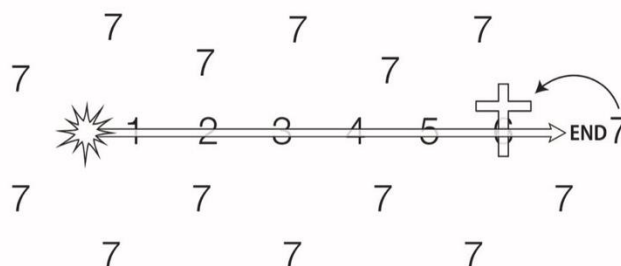


Hopefully that reminds you of this picture of all of space and time... which also reminds you of this picture: This tree...

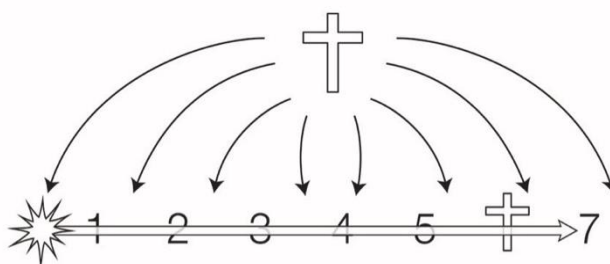


*"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena*

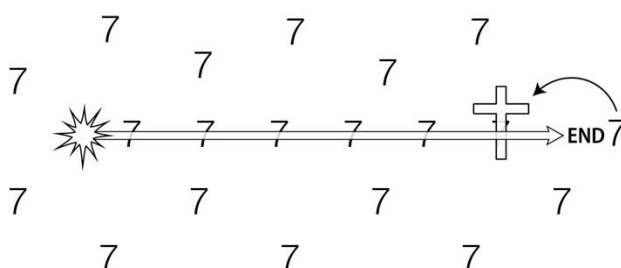
which is the door from the 6<sup>th</sup> day of creation (when man is made in the image of God) to the eternal 7<sup>th</sup> day (when it is finished and everything is good).



In The Revelation, there are 7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 thunders and 7 bowls of blood... These things are never called “signs” in the Revelation, but broken seals do reveal things. Trumpets do proclaim things. “Thunders” announce mysteries. And Bowls of Blood reveal that someone is bleeding.



And the 7<sup>th</sup> in each series is different from the previous 6 for the 7<sup>th</sup> is eternal; the 7<sup>th</sup> is the beginning and the end, and it fills all things with Reality.



John, who I believe received the Revelation, and then wrote his gospel. John wants us to ask, “What is the 7<sup>th</sup> sign and what does it mean?”



So, I googled “The 7<sup>th</sup> sign” and found this movie that I vaguely remember being advertised in the 80’s soon after the nation state of Israel celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and so everybody was talking “Apocalypse.” It’s classified as a horror film because in it the “apocalypse” is starting to happen—apocalypse means revelation; it’s the revelation of something. In the movie, this weird guy is walking around breaking seals on letters as fish die, and the moon turns blood red. His name is David, like King David. He rents a room from a pregnant woman and her husband Russell. Her name is “Abby” and she’s worried about her baby, for she finds one of these sealed letters in David’s room and he’s just Creepy. So, she reads some medieval Jewish mysticism about the tree of life making souls that are stored in the hall of souls—which is called “the Guf.”<sup>vi</sup> And she combines that with modern American end times stuff and suspects that David is Jesus having returned to earth as the judgment of God. And then, this happens:

Video clip: *The Seventh Sign*  
TriStar Pictures (1988)

*Abby Quinn (Demi Moore) is seated at a desk in a dimly lit room, surrounded by books. As she researches, she reads aloud from a book.*

Abby            In Judea-Christian mythology, the Guf is the Hall of Souls. Every time an infant is born, this is where its soul comes from because there are only a finite number of souls in the Guf. It is when the last soul is used and the Guf is empty that the world will end. The first infant born without a soul, born dead, as such a soulless child must be, heralds the death of the world and so is called the final sign.

*Abby returns home late at night (with a full moon in the sky). She enters and locks the door behind her.*

Abby	Russell? Russell, are you here?
Russell (Michael Biehn)	Abby! (ominous music plays as he steps toward her)
Abby	You’re not going to kill my baby.
Russell	Your baby is dying because it has no soul.

Abby	Don't say that.
Russell	Abby, the Guf is empty.
Abby	I know what you're trying to do and I won't let you kill my baby.
Russell	Don't you think I cry for man? I've tried to intercede, but God has judged! Man's sins are...
Abby	(grabs a nearby knife and points it at him) Stay away!
Russell	I can't die again Abby. I wish I could. I'm his messenger.
Abby	No...you're crazy.
Russell	I was here before (he starts moving toward her as she backs away)
Abby	Stay away.
Russell	It's time for you to know, Abby. I came as the lamb, and I return as the lion.
<i>Russell puts his hand on Abby's shoulder, and she stabs him in the chest. He backs up and a bright light shines from the wound, illuminating the room.</i>	
Russell	Now I am his wrath.

I thought that was a nice clip for Mother's Day. It is a wee bit confusing, isn't it? Is Jesus a Good Guy or a Bad Guy? Some things seem to be accurate: She tries to kill Jesus to save herself from the judgment of God—that sounds vaguely familiar. And Jesus is the Lion and the Lamb. Jesus does cry for man. Jesus is the light—so when she tries to kill him, light comes out. Light does burn the darkness. Some things seem right, but Jesus, the baby killer, whose “tried to intercede” but to no avail because God has judged and run out of souls, seems wrong. In the movie, Jesus wants to be nice, but he has no choice in the matter for we've made our choice, and now God is making him return as a lion.

In the Revelation, John hears a voice saying, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll.” John hears “The Lion of the tribe of Judah has conquered,” but when he turns to look, he sees “A lamb standing as if he'd just been slain...” And all creation starts worshipping in an unceasing symphony of praise. John just told us that Jesus is the lamb who takes away the sin of the world. And far from announcing that “There's nothing I can do,” At the end of the Revelation, Jesus announces, “Behold I make all things new.” Later in the movie Jesus explains that God's Grace is empty, he died once and it wasn't enough, and he can't die again and so, Jesus has lost hope. But Abby asks, “What if I changed the sign?” And Jesus tells her, “That would require something you don't have; that would require hope.” But the Bible tells us that Jesus is our hope; “Christ in you, the hope of Glory” writes Paul. We are to literally give birth to faith, hope and love. And Jesus did die once, but once and for all—all people for all of time. And he said whatever you do to the least of these you do to me—and that would certainly include killing them or their babies—so let me be clear, that clip contained some truth and a whole lot of lies.

- Jesus did not come to save us from God.
- Jesus is God having come to us to save us from ourselves.
- Jesus is God's judgment to save us from our own judgment—our sin.

So how did Hollywood succeed in turning the Gospel into a Horror Story?



Well, I don't think they did; I think they learned it from us: the church. This is a picture that Brett shared with me; he took at a used bookstore down the street from our church. You'll notice that all the Left Behind Books are in the horror section. And they are a horror story, not actually written by Jerry Jenkins and Tim Lahey; the Horror story was actually written by the institutional church over 1500 years as we sought to control the masses through fear. And the story was finalized about 150 years ago with the Dispensational End Times Theology of John Nelson Darby and the Schofield Reference Bible, which interpreted John's Revelation as a 7-year map of "the last days."

What could possibly be a more horrifying horror story, than the idea that God, whom we say is Love will one day endlessly torture the vast majority of his own children because they didn't choose correctly or because he simply chose to torture them just to prove that he can? And yet, we must admit: It is a Horror Story that works for selling maps. for if the story is true, we need more maps in order to read the signs and so save ourselves from God and His slaughtered lamb who turns into a devouring lion, although Scripture tells us that he is the same yesterday, today and forever.

I've read most of the Left Behind books but can't loan them out, because of my comments in the margins. I was preaching through the Revelation, and would publish a commentary on the Revelation, even as the Left Behind books were being published. It was the Revelation that convinced me that Jesus wins us, and Jesus makes all things new. The Book convinced me, but even more His presence. You know words on a page are "signs," but the living Word is the Substance. So, how do we crucify The Word and turn the Gospel into a Horror Story? Maybe it has something to do with signs, seeking signs, ignoring signs, trying to change the signs, but not reading the signs, which is what John was talking about right before he wrote, "This was the second sign."

In John 4:39, All these Samaritans in Samaria abide with Jesus, believe Jesus, and preach Jesus saying, "We know you're the Savior of the World." Then, in John 4:43, Jesus goes to his own country and in John 4:46 heals the son of a nobleman probably from King Herod's court and says, v.48, "Unless y'all see signs and wonders you will not believe." He doesn't seem to be overjoyed about that fact, does he? But then, Jesus heals the guy's son, and the guy goes on "his

way.” He believes, but you get the feeling that he doesn’t believe the way that the Samaritans believed... and certainly not the way Jesus would like him to believe and that was a really cool sign! Almost dead and the child didn’t die. I don’t know if you’ve ever seen a sign like that, but I have.

Once in college at a prayer meeting, my leg suddenly grew out. I know that people fake stuff like that all the time, but it totally freaked me out because I felt it—I felt it like hot plastic from my hip to my toes. And after it was over, I was angry—I thought, God you can do that, when I barely even believed and simply had a sore back. You can do that, and children are still dying of cancer? Why don’t you do that all of the time? In Scripture, He does it in places and He also doesn’t do that in even more places, and certainly not all the time. He seems to heal everybody in Ephesus through Paul and even his clothing, but he doesn’t heal Paul’s own eyes, his “thorn in the flesh”—even when Paul begs him to do so three times. Paul thought healing was a sign, and he thought not being healed was a sign—a sign that God’s power was made perfect in *aestheneo* – same word that John just used in our text. Power made perfect in weakness, in dust and ashes.

I’ve seen some truly wild stuff. Once God even pinned me to the floor, filled me with fire, and I saw Him everywhere loving me. I’ve begged him to do that again and I’ve begged him to do that here, and I totally do not know how to make that happen—And maybe that’s a sign. I’m really kind of ambivalent about signs. But pay attention: Jesus is also kind of ambivalent about signs. He says to the official, “Unless y’all see signs and wonders y’all won’t believe.”

This happened in Capernaum. And later, to Capernaum, he says “You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom it would have remained to this day.”<sup>vii</sup> To the Scribes and Pharisees, Jesus says twice, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah... “ The sign of Jonah which must be something like a prophet standing on a beach covered in whale vomit after three days, literally, in hell.<sup>viii</sup> When Jesus rises from the dead after three days in the heart of the earth, Thomas demands a sign in order to believe. And Jesus himself appears and tells Thomas to put his hands inside of his wounds and then, he says the weirdest thing. “Blessed are those who haven’t seen and yet believe.” So, if you’re a believer who hasn’t seen a miraculous sign, according to Jesus you are “blessed”—it means “favored, happy, exactly where your supposed to be and where God wants you to be.” So, why is Jesus so ambivalent about signs? Well, maybe it has something to do with what John wrote immediately before he started talking about signs. John 4:42 The Samaritans say, “We know that this is indeed the savior of the world.” Then John writes...

**John 4:43-45:**

**“After the two days he departed for Galilee. <sup>44</sup>(For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown [homeland].) <sup>45</sup>So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast. . . where he’d done all the signs.**

That’s a weird little paragraph, so weird that some commentators think it must be a mistake... or just ignore it all together. Jesus goes to Galilee—Cana of Galilee was close to Nazareth where he grew up, and close to Capernaum, where he lived for a time along with Peter, Andrew, James



and John. Jesus is their boy, he belongs to them, their hometown boy. Jesus goes to his homeland for he knows that he will be dishonored. And so, they welcomed him. Does that make any sense to you? Can you think of a situation in which a person is welcomed and dishonored? Have you ever been to a used car lot? Welcomed and dishonored? Ever been to a grocery store with a 6-year-old? “Oh Daddy, Daddy, I love you so much! Can I have gum?” I used to love buying stuff for my kids at the grocery store. And yet, I had to discipline myself to not buy them stuff, because I knew they could become addicted to stuff, and lose sight of me.

A spoiled child is a miserable child, for that child has all his father’s things, and has lost the ability to see his father’s heart. That child seeks signs of his father’s love but can no longer see the love that the signs point to and the love that makes the signs worth seeing at all. So, that child welcomes his father and dishonors his father all at once. God is an exceedingly wealthy Father. Do you suppose that he’s ever welcomed and yet, feels entirely dishonored? If we saw Him as he is, I bet Jesus is an exceedingly attractive Bridegroom. I wonder if he is ever welcomed and yet totally dishonored all at once. I bet beauty queens, supermodels, strippers, and prostitutes sometimes feel quite welcomed, yet totally dishonored.

I bet this Samaritan gal was pretty good-looking. She was on her 6<sup>th</sup> man. They had all welcomed her, and I doubt that any had truly seen her heart, at least not until the 7<sup>th</sup> man – Jesus. He honored her, and she honored him. Remember when Jesus came to His Bride (Jerusalem) and His Father’s House (the Temple)? It was Palm Sunday.

- No one had ever been so welcomed: “Hosanna in the highest! Save us!”
- No one has ever been so welcomed and so dishonored—At the end of the week, they stripped him and took his life on a tree.

Welcomed and dishonored, but in Samaria, he hadn’t been welcomed, and yet he was thoroughly honored. And he did no “mighty deeds or great signs.” He just met a woman at a well, talked to her in her own dust and ashes and there she began to believe in unconditional love. That’s Love for which she was not the condition, not the cause, but the effect. The Samaritans are happy as they adore the Savior of the world. The Jews are miserable as they crucify their king.

You know, if you seek signs in order to get to another destination, it means that you intend to read the sign and go to the place that you’re seeking. But if you seek the sign for itself, you can no longer read the sign because you don’t know that the sign is a sign pointing to something other than itself. Miracles and Wonders are wonderful, but it’s highly instructive that Jesus referred to them as “signs”—for you see they point to something other than themselves, something bigger and far better than just the sign. And it’s highly instructive that he said, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign.” Adulterers seek the signs of love and crucify Love.

In two chapters Jesus multiplies bread. But when the crowd follows him, he tells them, “You’re seeking me because you want bread, not because you read the sign.” And then, they ask for more signs. So, Jesus tells them about the seventh sign, But because they can’t read the signs, they leave him—if you seek signs for the sake of the signs you lose the ability to read the signs that you seek.

Video clip: *Bruce Almighty*  
20<sup>th</sup> Television Animation (1991)



*Bart Simpson (Nancy Cartwright) sips a drink on the couch. Seeing his home on the news, he gets up, walks to the door and opens it to find a mass flurry of press and a crowd with signs. One of the sign holders is wearing a clown wig and holding up a "John 3:16" sign.*

Bart            Ay Caramba!

That's the best theological treatise on signs that I know of. Bruce thinks that nothing is working for him, including God, and so he asks for signs, but he can't read them for they all point to Grace. Grace is a gift, Grace is something you can't control, and Grace is also a girl who actually loves him, even as he ignores her heart. God let's Bruce pretend to be God until Bruce finds himself utterly alone in his own dust and ashes, but in that place, he sees Grace broken by him but still praying for him. He stops worrying about himself; he loses his life and finds it in Grace. He has faith in Grace—Grace the very thing that all the signs were pointing to, and the one who was with him all the time.

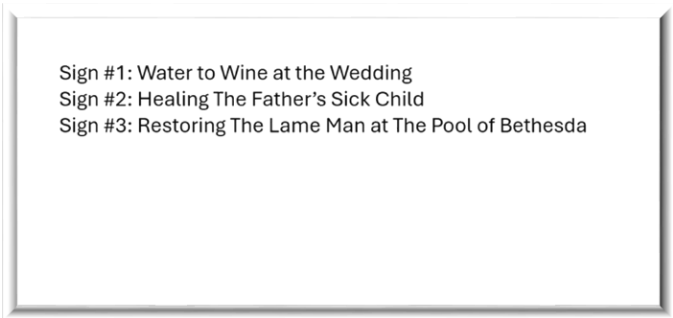
In Samaria, they don't seek signs, and they're ready for the Revelation of Grace; they want Grace—"Jesus Christ, the savior of the world." In Judea, they seek signs that they can use to build their own kingdom; they want nothing but their own personal Jesus—"King of the Jews," at best. So, Jesus says to the government official who wants Jesus to save his own son, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." And then, Jesus performs a sign, the second sign.

Sign #1: Water to Wine at the Wedding

The First sign was turning water to wine at a marriage feast. Wouldn't you love to have that power—if I had that power, we'd never have budget problems again. And yet, we might utterly miss the meaning of the sign: Jesus turns Law into Grace, and not just for us, 1 John 2:2 "He is the propitiation for the entire world."

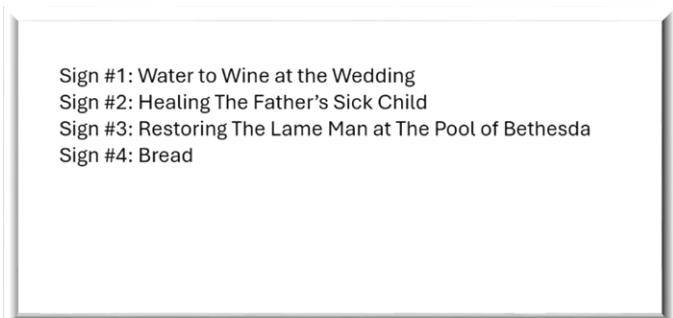
Sign #1: Water to Wine at the Wedding  
Sign #2: Healing The Father's Sick Child

Sign #2 is healing a father's sick child, and we should all pray for sick children, not so we can see a sign, but because we already delight in the substance. Love is the strength revealed in every weakness—love doesn't just bear somethings; love bears all things, and every person is our Father's child.



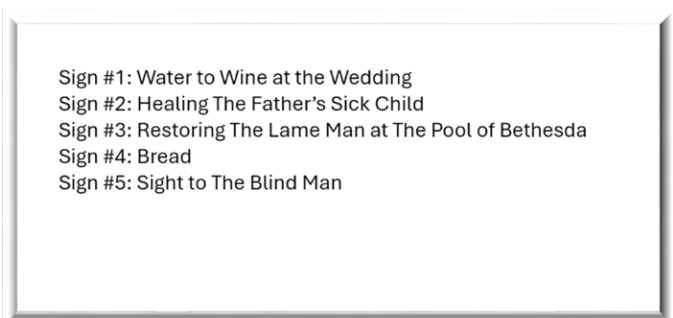
Sign #1: Water to Wine at the Wedding  
Sign #2: Healing The Father's Sick Child  
Sign #3: Restoring The Lame Man at The Pool of Bethesda

Sign #3 is restoring the lame man, but that man has long since died, and there was more than one lame man at the pool of Bethesda that day. And God is interested in far more than healing the body of one lame man. It turns out that we are all his body, and until each member wants all members to be healed—the Body of Christ is lame.



Sign #1: Water to Wine at the Wedding  
Sign #2: Healing The Father's Sick Child  
Sign #3: Restoring The Lame Man at The Pool of Bethesda  
Sign #4: Bread

Sign #4 is bread, and Satan has already tempted Jesus with this sign. If we simply seek this sign of love, we literally break the Body of Love. Jesus knows this, and still performs the sign, saying "I am the bread of life... and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."<sup>ix</sup>



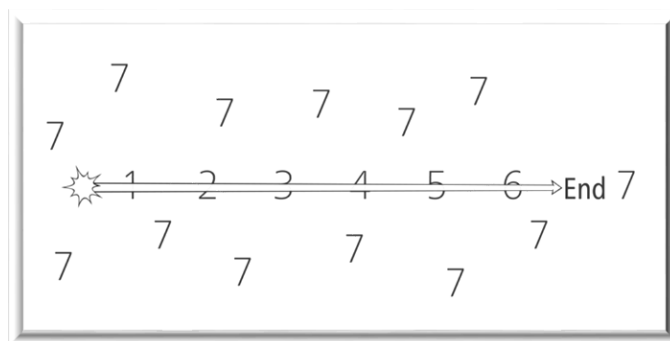
Sign #1: Water to Wine at the Wedding  
Sign #2: Healing The Father's Sick Child  
Sign #3: Restoring The Lame Man at The Pool of Bethesda  
Sign #4: Bread  
Sign #5: Sight to The Blind Man

Sign #5 is Sight to the blind. And it reveals that the self-righteous are so blind that they would crucify the Righteous One trying to make themselves righteous—which is the very definition of sin, and outer darkness.

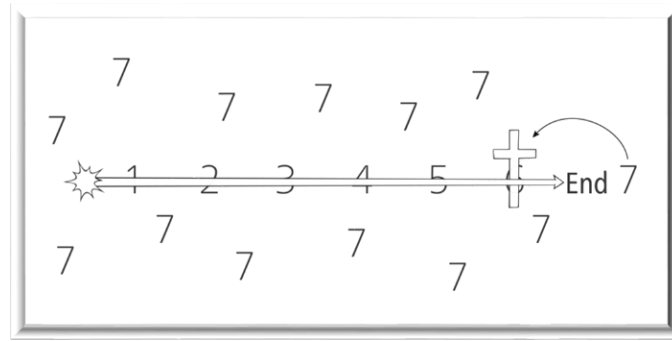


*"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena*

Now some of you may be thinking, “Peter, I’ve read the revelation and it’s horrifying.” Yes, it is. But did you notice that all the horrors are happening right now, wars, earthquakes, famines, now and then—Mt. Vesuvius, Nero #666. And the sun went dark as Jesus hung on the tree, the moon rose blood red that evening, and in Acts 2, Peter says “These are the last days spoken of by the prophet Joel—sun blackened, moon blood red.”



The Revelation begins with the End: John hears every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth praising God and the lamb on the throne. As the lamb breaks the 7 seals, the days of creation happen, but at the opening of the 7<sup>th</sup> seal, sounding of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet, and destruction that comes from the 7<sup>th</sup> bowl, something entirely different happens.



And it's happening now; it's at hand right now; it's coming down right now. And it's holy; it's not business as usual. It's not Horror but Ecstasy: *ek-stasis*.

- Sign #1: Water to Wine at the Wedding  
Sign #2: Healing The Father's Sick Child  
Sign #3: Restoring The Lame Man at The Pool of Bethesda  
Sign #4: Bread  
Sign #5: Sight to The Blind Man  
Sign #6: Raising Lazarus

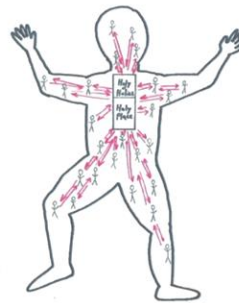
Sign #6 in the Gospel of John is the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. And yet Lazarus would still die, for Lazarus was still trapped in what Paul called this body of sin and death, the flesh, the *psychikos* body, the psyche of an individual man always trying to save himself—Save himself for more horror in this age, when Jesus came to save us from this age and ourselves. “He who seeks to save his life (his psyche) will lose it, but he who loses his psyche for my sake and the Kingdom, will keep it for eternal Zoe—eternal life...” the life of the age to come.

So, what's the 7<sup>th</sup> sign? You know the 6 signs in John reveal that God has all power, and Jesus, his Word, literally is that Power, He is the Lion. He is the Word of God that turns water to wine, weak to strong, lame to healthy, stones to bread, dark to light, and death to life. And each one of us would like to control that power and so we seek signs. But the seventh sign is the revelation, that He freely chooses to lay power down, the revelation that the lion chooses to be the slaughtered lamb, the revelation of Love not some of the time, but all of the time. The slaughtered lamb, who gives meaning to everything that's anything. And so, the 7<sup>th</sup> sign is not simply a sign, it's also the substance.

So, when you read the 7th sign it reveals the substance here and now, and it gives you the ability to read the other signs and no longer seek signs, but rest in the substance that's been revealed. The 7th sign is the edge of the Substance or the presence of the substance in space and time; it's the door to the 7th Day, the Sabbath rest of God. So, the sign reads "In this is Love: right here and right now." John has already revealed the 7th sign in the second chapter for it's the very thing that the first sign and all the signs are pointing to. After the wedding feast, he cleanses the temple and the Jews cry out "What sign do you show us for doing these things," and Jesus answers...

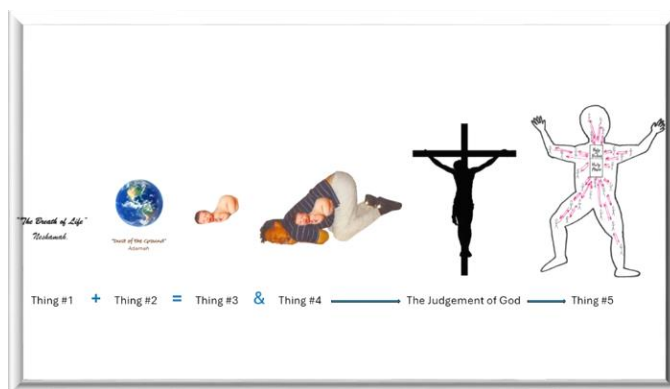
Sign #1: Water to Wine at the Wedding  
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 Sign #3: Restoring The Lame Man at The Pool of Bethesda  
 Sign #4: Bread  
 Sign #5: Sight to The Blind Man  
 Sign #6: Raising Lazarus  
 Sign #7: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."

"Destroy this temple (the one made of stones, the one made of man, this body of sin and death, this earthen vessel). Destroy this temple and in three days, I will raise it up."

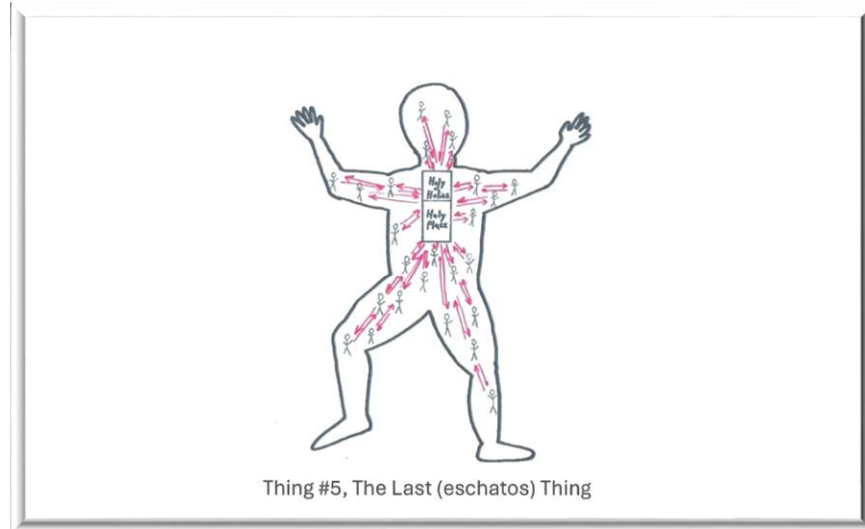


Thing #5, The Last (eschatos) Thing

So, this is the 7<sup>th</sup> sign; it's that thing that we called thing #5 in our Easter sermon, not the temple of one man's flesh, but the temple of living stones.

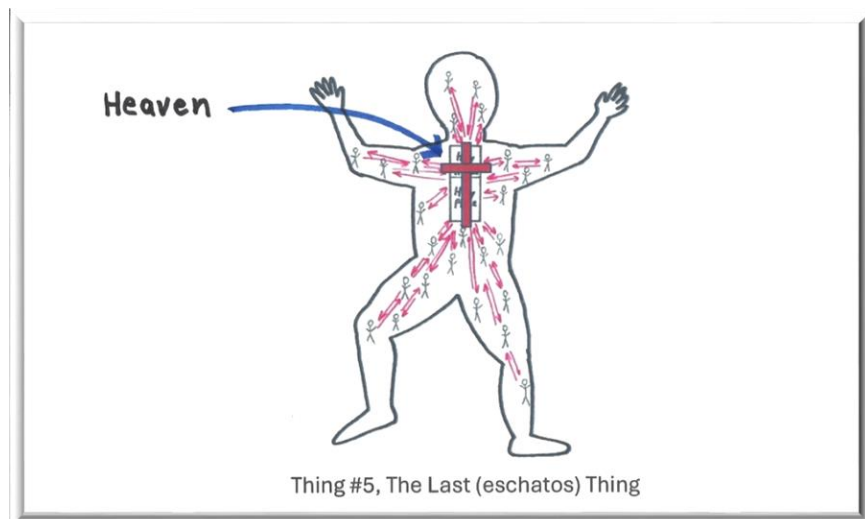


And this is how you get there "You lose your psyche and find it. You lose your psyche and find it in the psyche of God."

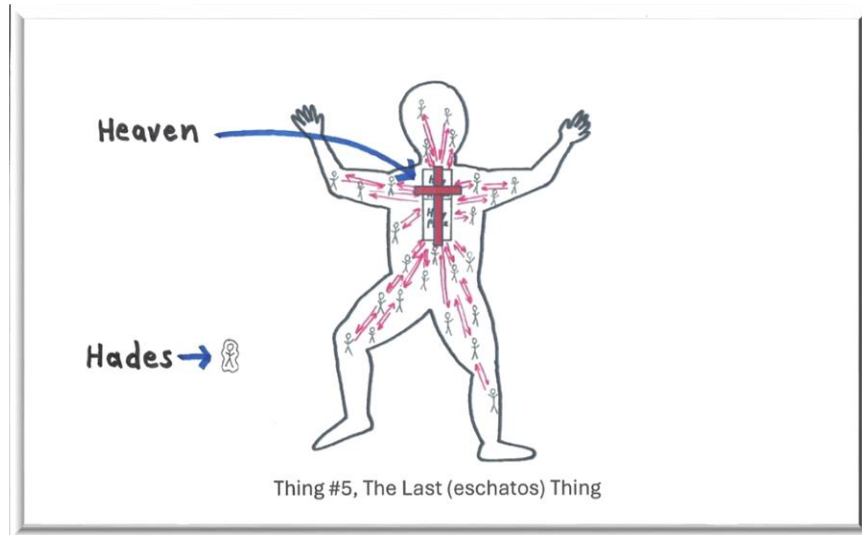


- This is the psyche of God, This is the body of Christ, This is when and where everyone loses their life and everyone finds it and each other in Jesus.
- This is where everyone bleeds, and none are wounded.
- This is where everyone drinks, and none are thirsty.
- This is where everyone is humbled and exalted all at once.
- This is where everyone loves, and none are lonely for none are alone.
- This is where everyone's Judgment is also the Judgment of God.
- This is the New Jerusalem coming down.

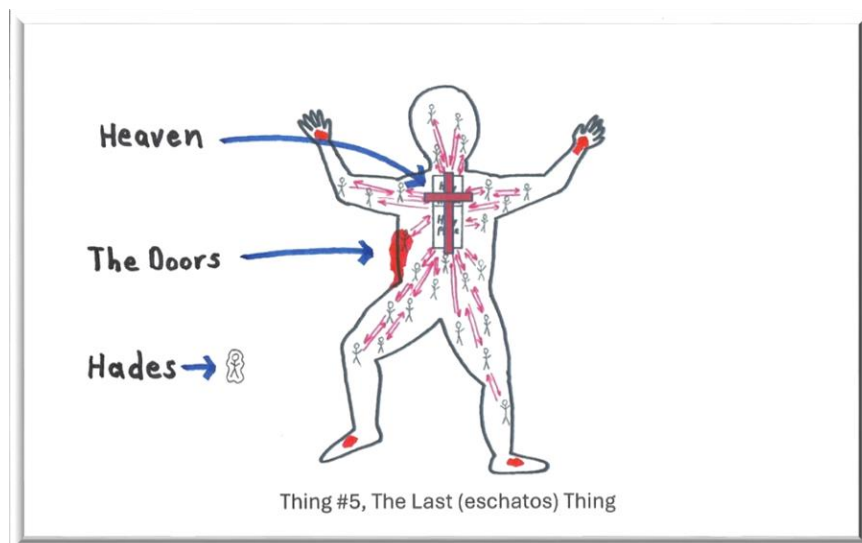
The End of The Book of the Revelation is the Revelation of Jesus right now.



“The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,” and Life is abiding in him.

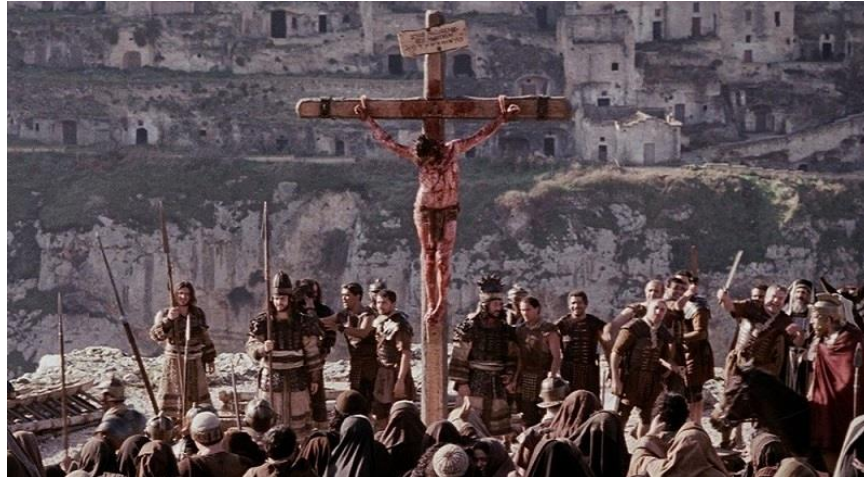


But Hades is also at hand, it's outside of him, where all are alone.



But The Doors are always open, although in the darkness those doors seem to be closed for, we are terrified of the Light. John already told us “This is the Judgment, the light has come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light...” for ‘their works were evil.’ And that’s the rub the New Jerusalem is not the work of man, it’s absolute Grace.



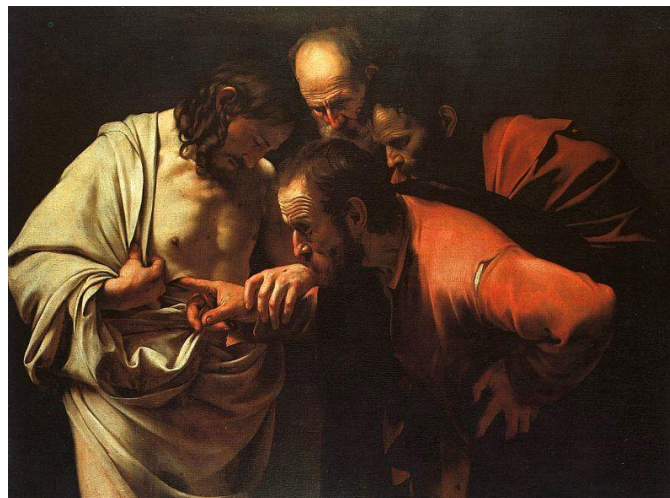


*Gibson, Mel (Director). (2004). The Passion of the Christ [Motion picture]. USA: Icon Productions.*

And so, this is the door. This is the sign that is also the substance.

- When one person loves in a world that doesn't love it looks like a man hanging on a cross.
- When two people love in a world that doesn't love it looks like a good marriage.
- When all people love, you've arrived at home and know the place for the first time.

The seventh sign is the revelation of Love, and God is Love, and Jesus is His Life—eternal life is a communion of Love. The seventh sign is Love.



To Thomas, Jesus said, “Blessed are those who haven’t seen, and yet believe.” Does that make some sense to you now? Maybe Jesus is saying to Thomas, Thomas, it hurts me to prove my love; it hurts me, but even more, it hurts you—it hurts us. But happy are we, when you believe my love, for then you need no more signs directing you toward home for you have already arrived at home. Thomas, you came from me, and you will return to me; the wounds on my body are the door; but happy are we when we no longer need to be wounded, because we already believe.

Don't seek signs, but don't ignore signs, and never try to change the signs, but always read the signs. It turns out that everything is a sign. Jesus is the Truth in every statement, the beauty in every sunrise, the light in every moment, the way in every journey, the Life in every creature, and the faith, hope and love in you whispering from behind the curtain in your soul. Everything is a sign, and they all mean "I love you." Blessed are those who haven't seen—seen what? Miraculous Signs! Signs that just can't be ignored. Blessed are those who haven't seen and yet believe. I don't think Jesus wants you to have to believe because you've seen a sign that you can't deny and so must confess that he exists. I think Jesus wants you to believe because you hope that he exists, in other words you hope that God is Love... and would just die to meet him.

So, I watched that movie, *The 7<sup>th</sup> Sign*, utterly amazed at how the Institutional Church, seeking signs and control, could turn the Gospel into a horror story. But then, I was utterly amazed at how people in Hollywood, just trying to tell a story, couldn't help but preach the Gospel. The Theological explanations in the movie are completely ridiculous, but this is how the movie ends; It ends with the 7<sup>th</sup> sign:

Video clip: *The Seventh Sign*  
TriStar Pictures (1988)

*Abby Quinn (Demi Moore) is giving birth. The hospital delivery room is shaking like an earthquake and the lights are flickering.*

Nurse        We've lost the baby's heartbeat!  
Abby        Nooo! No!

*Abby has a vision of herself, dressed as Mary Magdalen, surrounded by people. She sees Father Lucci (Peter Friedman), appearing as Roman Centurian Cartaphilus.*

Cartaphilus    Will you die for him? Will you die for him?!  
Abby        Yes, I will. I will die for him. I will die for him.

*Abby struggles to lean up on the delivery table, reaching her hand toward her recently born baby being held by the nurse. He is not crying. Her hand reaches his and he begins to cry as she holds it. She lets go and collapses into the arms of a doctor (Fredrick Arnold) who carefully lowers her back to the bed. As he lowers her, he looks at the monitoring equipment and sees she has flatlined. The scene cuts to her husband holding the baby next to her after she has passed.*

Russell        It was you, Abby. Just one person with hope enough for the whole world.

Now that's a little messed up, because Abby saves the whole world, by giving birth to hope during the Apocalypse. But it's not as messed up as you think because, according to Scripture, Jesus is the Son of Man, and Christ in you is the Hope of Glory, and he is hope enough for the entire world. Faith, Hope and Love in you is The Judgment—final judgment—of God in you. Abby realizes that Jesus died for her, and she wants to die for Him. And then, in this weird and wild way she finds herself giving birth to Him—and an entire new world with Him. A Mother knows her child in a way that no one else can. And this is how you will know Jesus and all things with him and in him. In the movie, Abby dies but in the Kingdom of God nothing can stay dead, for we all constantly lose our lives and find them in this constant communion of Sacrificial Love that is Eternal Life and ecstatic Joy. Blessed are you Abby, who hasn't seen, and yet believes in

Love, for God is Love and Love in you is God in flesh—your flesh. You are His Bride, His Body and His Mom. Blessed are you, Abby. And even more blessed would you have been, if one of us would've told you:

- God has not run out of souls; He's giving you his own soul.
- God is not empty of Grace; He is the Grace that fills all things.
- God is not withholding anything; He's giving you everything, and you will know it once you've seen that He's already given you himself.

In fear, we seek signs to save ourselves from the judgment of God. And the Judgment of God is to save us from ourselves. Read the signs and although they may begin with fear, perfect Love will cast out fear. This is the 7<sup>th</sup> sign and the edge of the Kingdom of God.

## Communion

On the night he was betrayed by all of us, he took bread and broke it saying “This is my body given to you. Take and eat and do it in remembrance of me. And he took the cup saying this is the covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it all of you, in remembrance of me.”

This (communion) is the 7<sup>th</sup> sign: THE SIGN and THE SUBSTANCE that is filling all things.

Tear off a piece of bread, dip it in the cup, then place it inside of you, for it is a SEED. Happy Mother's Day, Bride of Christ.

## Benediction

“What did he say?” The 7<sup>th</sup> Sign means that God is Good. God is Life. God is creating you in His own image and will not fail. Once you have read the 7<sup>th</sup> Sign, you will know the meaning of all the signs, and you will embrace the journey for they all mean “I love you.” And you will become the 7<sup>th</sup> Sign.

We Love because He first loved us. God is Love – 1 John 4:19, 16. That's not a horror story; That's the Gospel. Believe the Gospel

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> I usually preach expository sermons through books, because it forces us to deal with ideas and texts that we wouldn't otherwise deal with.

Some commentators think that this text is so confusing that it must be a mistake . . . but maybe it's not the text but the readers that are confused?

<sup>ii</sup> John 2:23-24

<sup>iii</sup> John 2:11

<sup>iv</sup> This one word "*astheneo*" (v.) and "*astheneia*" (n.) is translated a variety of ways, and so we often miss what the text is saying. Sometimes God heals all the sick, sometimes, for a time, he does not heal the sick including Timothy, Epaphroditus, Trophimus, Paul and even, Jesus. The underlined words below are all this one word in Greek.

- Matthew 8:17 This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases."
- Matthew 10: 8 "Heal the sick"
- Mathew 25: 35 "I (Jesus) was sick, and you visited me."
- Acts 19:11-12 "And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them."
- 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. <sup>10</sup> For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
- Galatians 4:13 "You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first..."
- Philippians 2:25-27 "I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow."
- 1 Timothy 5:23 "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments."
- 2 Timothy 4:20 "Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus."
- James 5:14-15 "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven."
- Hebrews 4:15, 5:2 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin... He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness.

<sup>v</sup> Some count eight, which is also great for, as you remember, in Hebrew thought 8 is an eternal 7<sup>th</sup> (the unending 7<sup>th</sup>). The sign that these commentators include is Jesus' walking on the water in chapter 6, but Jesus only does this for his disciples, and it is written in such a way that it is included within the miracle of the loaves and fishes and the explanation that follows concerning the bread of life.

<sup>vi</sup> According to Jewish mythology, in the Garden of Eden there is a Tree of life, or the "Tree of Souls", that blossoms and produces new souls, which fall into the Guf, the "Treasury of Souls". Gabriel reaches into the treasury and takes out the first soul that comes into his hand. Then Lailah, the Angel of Conception, watches over the embryo until it is born.

- Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guf>

<sup>vii</sup> Matthew 11:23

<sup>viii</sup> Matthew 12:39, 16:4

Jonah 2:1-2, "Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish, saying, "I called out to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol [KJV: "Hell"] I cried, and you heard my voice."

<sup>ix</sup> John 6:48-51