

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE + STREAMING VIDEO

FIVE SESSIONS



# SIGNS AND SECRETS OF THE MESSIAH

A FRESH LOOK AT THE MIRACLES OF  
JESUS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN



## RABBI JASON SOBEL

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**RABBI JASON SOBEL**

WITH WAYNE HASTINGS

 HarperChristian  
Resources



*Signs and Secrets of the Messiah Bible Study Guide*

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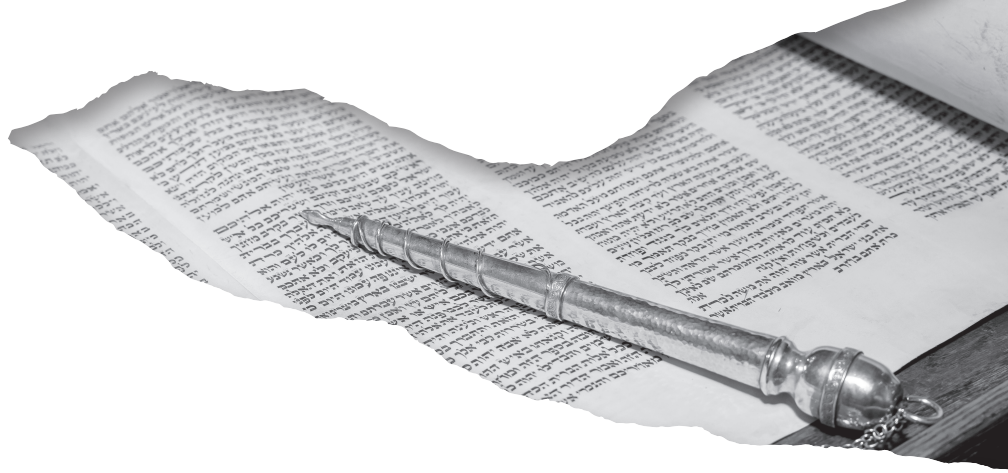


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**I never have any difficulty  
believing in miracles since  
I experienced the miracle of a  
change in my own heart.**

**AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO**





# A NOTE FROM RABBI JASON SOBEL

I'm always excited to be involved in miracles. Miracles show us that Jesus (His Hebrew name is Yeshua) is alive and working in this world. I've witnessed miracles in my own life and in the lives of others, and I've found that nothing will ignite one's faith like a miracle. If we are Christians, walking in the supernatural should be natural for us—a part of our day-to-day spiritual lives. God has been doing miracles from the beginning of time. He did them in the Old Testament, He did them in the New Testament, and He is still doing them today. It's just part of His character.

In this study, you will be exploring Yeshua's miracles in the Gospel of John in a way that I believe will increase your faith that you can have miracles in your own life. The Bible says that it is the “glory of God to conceal a matter and the glory of kings to search it out” (Proverbs 25:2). So, as a child of the King, you will be immersing yourself in the wonder and mystery of God's Word to uncover His truths. The Bible is like a multifaceted diamond—its many sides contribute to its brilliance. There are many ways to read Bible text that are complementary and never contradictory. It's not worthless but worthwhile to look at every word from many angles.

The Bible is also like the ocean—shallow enough for any child and deep enough that you cannot explore all of it. There are infinite layers to God's Word, which is what makes the Bible different from any other book written by a human author. There is always some new mystery or secret to be uncovered. So, while deeper spiritual truths are often not obvious on the surface, *they can be found*—and it's to the glory of your King to seek them out and meditate on them. The more you look at the languages of the Bible, make connections between the Old and New Testaments, and consider the numeric connections, the more secrets and mysteries (deeper meaning in the Scriptures) will be revealed to you.

As we take this journey, I pray that God will lead you to new insights and breakthroughs and that He will reveal Himself to you with a sense of His presence and shalom.

— Rabbi Jason Sobel



# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Welcome to this study on the *Signs and Secrets of the Messiah* as recorded in the Gospel of John. Before you begin, note that there are a few ways you can go through the material. You can experience this study with others in a group (such as a Bible study, Sunday school class, or any other small-group gathering), or you may choose to study the content on your own. Either way, the videos for each session are available for you to view at any time via streaming.

## GROUP STUDY

Each session is divided into two parts: (1) a group study section and (2) a personal study section. The group section is intended to provide a basic framework on how to open your time together, get the most out of the video content, and discuss the key ideas that were presented in the teaching. Each session includes the following:

- **Welcome:** A short note about the topic of the session for you to read on your own before you meet together as a group.
- **Connect:** A few icebreaker questions to get you and your group members thinking about the topic and interacting with one another.
- **Watch:** An outline of the key points that will be covered in each video teaching to help you follow along, stay engaged, and take notes.
- **Discuss:** Questions to help your group reflect on the teaching material presented and apply it to your lives.
- **Respond:** A short personal exercise to help reinforce the key ideas.
- **Pray:** A place for you to record prayer requests and praises for the week.

If you are doing this study in a group, make sure you have your own copy of this study guide so you can write down your thoughts, responses, and reflections and have access to the videos via streaming. You will also want to have a copy of the *Signs and Secrets of the Messiah* book, as reading it alongside the curriculum will provide you with deeper insights. (See the notes at the beginning of each group session and personal study section on which chapters of the book you should read before the next group session.) Finally, keep these points in mind:



- **Facilitation:** If you are doing this study in a group, you will want to appoint someone to serve as a facilitator. This person will be responsible for starting the video and keeping track of time during discussions and activities. If you have been chosen for this role, there are some resources in the back of this guide that can help you lead your group through the study.
- **Faithfulness:** Your small group is a place where tremendous growth can happen as you reflect on the Bible, ask questions, and learn what God is doing in other people's lives. For this reason, be fully committed and attend each session so you can build trust and rapport with the other members.
- **Friendship:** The goal of any small group is to serve as a place where people can share, learn about God, and build friendships. So seek to make your group a "safe place." Be honest about your thoughts and feelings . . . but also listen carefully to everyone else's thoughts, feelings, and opinions. Keep anything personal that your group members share in confidence so that you can create a community where people can heal, be challenged, and grow spiritually.

If you are studying *Signs and Secrets of the Messiah* on your own, read the opening Welcome section and reflect on the questions in the Connect section. Watch the video and use the outline provided to take notes. Personalize the questions and exercises in the Discuss and Respond sections. Close by recording any requests that you want to pray about during the week.

## PERSONAL STUDY

The personal study is for you to experience on your own during the week. Each exercise is designed to help you explore the key ideas you uncovered during your group time and delve into passages of Scripture that will help you apply those principles to your life. Go at your own pace, doing a little each day or all at once, and spend a few moments in silence to listen to what God might be saying to you. Each personal study includes:

- **Open:** A brief introduction to lead you into the personal study for the day.
- **Read:** A few passages on the topic of the day for you to read and review.
- **Reflect:** Questions for you to answer related to the passages you just read.

## How to Use This Guide

If you are doing this study as part of a group, and you are unable to finish (or even start) these studies for the week, you should still attend the group time. Be assured that you are still wanted and welcome even if you don't have your "homework" done. The group studies and personal studies are intended to help you hear what God wants you to hear and to apply what He is saying to your life. So be listening for Him to speak as you explore the miracles of Yeshua as recorded in the Gospel of John and how they apply to your life today.

# WEEK 1

<b>BEFORE GROUP MEETING</b>	Read chapters 1-2 in <i>Signs and Secrets of the Messiah</i> Read the Welcome section (page 3)
<b>GROUP MEETING</b>	Discuss the Connect questions Watch the video teaching for session 1 Discuss the questions that follow as a group Do the closing exercise and pray (pages 3-8)
<b>STUDY 1</b>	Complete the personal study (pages 10-12)
<b>STUDY 2</b>	Complete the personal study (pages 13-15)
<b>STUDY 3</b>	Complete the personal study (pages 16-17)
<b>CONNECT AND DISCUSS</b>	Connect with someone in your group (page 18)
<b>CATCH UP AND READ AHEAD</b> (before week 2 group meeting)	Read chapters 3-4 in <i>Signs and Secrets of the Messiah</i> Complete any unfinished personal studies





## SESSION ONE

# THE SIGNS AND SECRETS OF TRANSFORMATION

*As the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine,  
he calls the bridegroom and says to him, "Everyone brings out the  
good wine first, and whenever they are drunk, then the worse.  
But you've reserved the good wine until now!"*

JOHN 2:9-10



## WELCOME | READ ON YOUR OWN

Shalom, and welcome to the first session of *Signs and Secrets of the Messiah*. I'm excited to walk with you through the signs, mysteries, and miracles of Yeshua as recorded in John 2.

As the story opens in John's Gospel, we find Yeshua at a wedding. Jewish weddings are incredibly celebratory, and wine is essential to the post-ceremony party. Here, Yeshua performs His first miracle as He turns plain water into finely aged wine. His mother, Mary, plays a significant role in this miracle, as do the servants who fill six large urns with water.

Mary, as she watches the newly married couple, sees what could be an embarrassing situation develop. The couple has run out of wine! She sees the need and asks her Son, Yeshua, for help. Mary speaks boldly to the servants, telling them to "do whatever He tells you" (John 2:5). They respond without question. Mary's boldness, or *chutzpah* in Hebrew, is noteworthy.

Interestingly, in John's Gospel, the first event at which Yeshua reveals His identity is a *wedding*. Why? Because the final event in Revelation is the marriage of the Messiah to His people (see Revelation 19–22). Author Brant Pitre underscores this point: "In later Jewish tradition, it came to be believed that this feast of God would be a kind of return to Eden, in which the righteous would drink *miraculous* wine that had its origins at the very dawn of time."<sup>2</sup> Yeshua is the ultimate bridegroom. He is coming for His bride, serving not ordinary but miraculous wine. John 2 gives us a sneak preview of this ultimate wedding celebration.

## CONNECT | 15 MINUTES

If you or any of your group members don't know each other, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Then, to get things started, discuss one of these questions:

- What excites you about this study? What do you hope to learn from it?

— or —

- What comes to mind when you think about Yeshua's miracles? Why?



## **WATCH** | 20 MINUTES

Now watch the video for this session, which you can access by playing the DVD or through streaming (see the instructions provided with this guide). Below is an outline of the key points covered during the teaching. Record any thoughts or concepts that stand out to you.

### **OUTLINE**

- I. Messiah's first miracle occurred during a wedding in Cana (see John 2:1-11).
  - A. It is significant that Yeshua's changing the water into wine occurred at a Jewish wedding.
  - B. God's relationship with His people is often symbolized in Scripture as marriage (see Ezekiel 16:8).
  - C. The miracle is a prophetic sign of the coming messianic wedding that we will celebrate with Yeshua, Jesus, our bridegroom, in the messianic Kingdom.
- II. The miracle happened on the third day. Why is this significant?
  - A. The third day was the only day in Creation that God blessed twice.
  - B. The third day was the day that God revealed Himself on Mount Sinai.
  - C. The third day was the day of resurrection.
- III. Yeshua is the greater than Moses. Instead of turning water into blood, He turned water into wine.
  - A. Wine symbolizes the abundance, fruitfulness, and blessing of the messianic Kingdom. Yeshua came that we might have life and have it more abundantly (see John 10:10).
  - B. There's also significance in the six pots.
    1. 6 in Hebrew is the number of connection.
    2. Yeshua died on a Friday, the 6th day on the Hebrew calendar.
- IV. The miracle didn't occur until the wine ran out.
  - A. Oftentimes in our lives, God doesn't move until we've come to the end of a challenge or difficulty.
  - B. The eleventh hour should not be one of discouragement but of hope, expectation, and transformation.
  - C. God can take the ordinary and transform it into something extraordinary.
- V. Purification is an integral part of transformation (see John 2:12-17).
  - A. A purging needs to occur that removes the old to bring in the new.
  - B. Yeshua needed to purify the Temple before Passover.
  - C. The leaven (or sin) had to be removed from His Father's house.





## DISCUSS | 35 MINUTES

Take a few minutes to discuss what you just watched by answering these questions.

1. Read Isaiah 25:6; Amos 9:13-14; and John 2:11. Wine was a critical part of a Jewish wedding, as wine—in abundance—symbolized joy and blessed days. How do you think this miracle affected the disciples? How would it have affected you?
  
2. Scripture talks about God's relationship with His people, and it is often compared to a wedding. Describe how that relationship looks to you. If God is the groom and we are the bride, how should that principle affect our daily walk with Him?
  
3. What does this first miracle reveal about Yeshua's character, identity, and mission? What does this story reveal about Mary and the servants who fulfilled her instructions?
  
4. What did you learn about the third day and its double blessing? From where or whom does our double blessing come? How can we increase our relationship with Yeshua to experience the fruitfulness of the double blessing?
  
5. Ask someone in the group to read aloud John 2:3. Notice that Yeshua's miracle didn't happen until the wine *ran out*. When was a time in your life that you experienced God showing up just when you thought, *The wine has run out!*

## RESPOND | 10 MINUTES

Yeshua's first miracle happened in response to His mother's, Mary's, request, and she didn't take no for an answer! Running out of wine was a major social mistake and could have impacted the couple's standing in the community for a long time. But Mary fully *expected* her Son to do something. She had faith, trust, and *chutzpah*—holy boldness and audacity.

On the third day, there was a wedding at Cana in the Galilee. Yeshua's mother was there, and Yeshua and His disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran out, Yeshua's mother said to Him, "They don't have any wine!" Yeshua said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with you and Me? My hour hasn't come yet." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you."

John 2:1-5

*Chutzpah* is having the faith to stand firm or boldly when necessary, move forward, and take big risks for God when led. Mary stood boldly and wouldn't take no for an answer when she talked to Jesus at the wedding in Cana. She was willing to risk everything because of her faith. Faith, in many ways, is spelled R-I-S-K. Having faith will embolden us to take risks.

What is your understanding of "holy boldness" or *chutzpah* in your life?

How do you regain your holy boldness during those times your faith seems weak?

**PRAY** | 10 MINUTES

Spending time together in your small group is important. So set aside some time after each session for group prayer. You can set boundaries so your group remains focused on each other's needs and concerns, or set a time limit, as some people can be distracted by their need to pick up children or different personal needs. Remember, some people have never prayed aloud or in front of others, so help everyone feel accepted and warmly invite them to pray. Also, try to spend some time focused on the session's lesson. Some prayer times can stray from the lesson, so be aware and keep the time focused. Finally, write down the prayer requests so group members can pray for their brothers and sisters throughout the week.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Request</b>
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SESSION ONE

# PERSONAL STUDY

One of the most important ways to learn more about God and all He has for us is to study His Word and dig deeper into what He is telling us. These personal studies aim to help you reflect and grow spiritually by applying more of the truth of God's Word in your life. As you work through each day's study, write down your responses to the questions, as you will be given a few minutes to share your insights at the start of the next session (if you are doing this study with others). If you are reading *Signs and Secrets of the Messiah* while doing this study, first read the book's introduction and chapters 1 and 2.

## STUDY 1

# LIFE OVER DEATH

In this week's group time, we discussed Jesus' miracle of turning water into wine at a wedding in Cana. In many ways, Jesus transforming the water into wine is like the miracle of Moses turning the Nile River into blood during the ten plagues (see Exodus 7:20).

Moses' first miracle when he delivered Israel from Egypt was turning the Egyptians' most critical source of water and agriculture, the Nile, into blood. When you think about it, that's like stopping all our water supplies used for drinking and irrigating. Jewish sages offer many explanations as to why the first plague brought upon the Egyptians was *dam* (Hebrew for "blood"). The Nile made Egypt a very fertile and prosperous nation. Since the Nile was the source of their sustenance, the Egyptians worshiped it as a deity. They personified the Nile as the god *Hapi*, to whom they offered sacrifices. The Egyptians also believed that Pharaoh, the god incarnate, was responsible for controlling and maintaining nature's harmony.

Another reason for the plague of turning the Nile into blood was to punish the Egyptians, who had shed the blood of defenseless Jewish children (see Exodus 1:22). Thus, the blood of the innocent babies cried out for justice from the depths of the Nile and bore witness against Egypt. This plague was particularly fitting, for it follows the principle of *mida keneged mida* (measure for measure). Based on both explanations, we learn that the ten signs God brought upon Egypt were punitive and redemptive. By punishing Egypt for their transgression, God gave them the opportunity for transformation and purification or death. He gave a similar choice to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 30:19 as He, through Moses, asked them to choose between life and death.

In John 2, we find that Yeshua's first public miracle was to turn the water into wine—a miraculous transformation. But unlike Moses and the bloody Nile, the result was a fine wine. In fact, the wedding guests commented that the best was saved for the final toast, not served during the wedding celebration. Yeshua, as greater than Moses, did not come to bring death. Instead, He came "that they might have life, and have it abundantly!" (John 10:10).

**READ** | Exodus 7:14–25; Deuteronomy 30:19; John 2:8–11; and John 10:10



## REFLECT

1. In our study, we learned about biblical transformation. From what you learned, how would you define *transformation*?

This miracle of water into wine illustrates that God wants to show up in counterintuitive ways. We need to expect the unexpected. He transformed the water into wine partly because water is ordinary, and wine is extraordinary. Turning the water into wine reflects the promise that God takes the ordinary and turns it into something extraordinary. He's a God who wants to bless us. He wants us to live in abundance.<sup>3</sup>

2. Our culture may not worship rivers, but what are some of the false gods that you've encountered in our contemporary society? Like the Egyptian worship of the Nile, how does this false worship harm people's lives and keep them from Jesus' transformation?
3. This first miracle of the water into wine is taking something ordinary and transforming it into something extraordinary. In Messiah, we become a new creation. The old will pass away and the new will come if we have faith. Can you recall events in your life that have caused transformation? What were the circumstances that caused the change?



The miracle of turning water into wine . . . was a miracle of blessing, abundance, and transformation. . . . However, transformation is not a one-and-done thing but rather a lifetime process of becoming. Personally, I am being transformed daily from something ordinary into something extraordinary. The old is passing away, and the new is coming into my life. I'm excited as I witness the things God is doing in me.<sup>4</sup>

**4.** How do you think that transformation through Yeshua has moved you from ordinary to having an extraordinary and abundant life?

**5.** Only Yeshua could turn ordinary water into extraordinary wine. This miracle is a clear picture of the transformation that only He can bring. God wants transformation in your life! No matter what you've done in the past, He forgives and transforms. Do you worry too much? Ask God to transform you from worry to faith and trust. Do you want to control things too much? Ask God to give you greater patience and gentleness. God can transform. How can He help you move from gruesome to gladness?

## STUDY 2

# WHY 6 STONE POTS?

Every word and number in the Bible is significant. The Hebrew language is alphanumeric, which means numbers are represented by Hebrew letters. For example, *aleph* (א) is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and represents the number 1. *Beit* (ב) is the second letter and represents the number 2. The Hebrew letter *vav* (ו) is the 6th letter in the Hebrew alphabet and represents the number 6. In Jewish thinking, 6 is the number of connection.

So, what is significant about the number 6? In Jewish thought, 6 is the number of Creation. God worked for 6 days, then rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day. 6 is the number of man. God created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of Creation. Man fell on the 6th day; Adam and Eve ate from the tree on the 6th day. We also need to remember that Yeshua died on the 6th day (Friday).

As previously noted, the number 6 is represented by the 6<sup>th</sup> letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *vav* (ו). This 6<sup>th</sup> letter is frequently used as a conjunction. For example, “God created the heavens and [vav] the earth.” The Hebrew word *vav* means “connecting hook,” and it’s used as a connecting hook. For example, the curtains in the Tabernacle and Temple were attached by *vavim*—hooks—to the poles that supported them. It’s also understood as the connecting hook between God and His people. It binds heaven and earth. God sent Yeshua to restore the connection between heaven and earth. Yeshua died on the 6<sup>th</sup> day. He restores, and His death transforms. He changed water into wine using 6 (*vav*) pots. He came to reconnect us to God.

Yeshua hung on the cross for 6 hours and was pierced in 6 places: His head was pierced with a crown of thorns (see John 19:2); His side was pierced (see John 19:32–35); His two hands were pierced (fulfilling Psalm 22:16–17); and his two feet were pierced (also fulfilling Psalm 22:16–17). Truly, using 6 pots was an intentional way for God to demonstrate the restored connection between Himself and humanity and His gift of redemption and transformation.

**READ** | John 2:6–7 and 2 Corinthians 5:17

## REFLECT

1. The rabbis teach that it is “the wine that has been preserved in its grapes since the six days of creation.”<sup>5</sup> There’s good wine in the grapes that come from the garden of Eden and the 6 days of creation. The 6 stone pots point to the wine that has been preserved since those six days of Creation. How can this new wine lead you to new life and transformation? How does restoring the connection of the original fruitfulness and all that was lost at the Fall affect how we live today?

There’s yet another connection with the number 6 we should consider. This connection is not a restoration but a look forward. . . . Yeshua was giving the guests at the wedding at Cana a taste of the marriage supper of the Lamb, when the good wine would be served. It was a sneak preview of the abundant life to come.<sup>6</sup>

2. The wine was new but tasted old (which is good for quality wine). How can God take something old and supernaturally mature it? What are some ways you can become more supernaturally mature?

3. Combining something new with something old is also a sign of the coming Kingdom, when two different people groups, Jews and Gentiles, will unite. What would your community look like if the different people groups were able to unite?

If you rummage through your storage room or closet, you'll likely find that you have new and old items you treasure. What we often miss is the blessing when we bring both together. Maybe an old Bible with a new commentary. Or, more importantly, the truths of the Old Testament brought together with the truth of the New Testament.<sup>7</sup>

4. An everyday use for the stone pots was water storage, but God had a hidden treasure in mind. Sometimes, we forget the hidden treasures found in the Old Testament. What is the value of studying the Old Testament? What are you learning about how the truths of the Old Testament can be brought together with the truths of the New Testament?

5. Using water pots to create wine is certainly a counterintuitive method. It's not logical to think water can be turned into fine wine. But God often shows up in such counterintuitive ways. How has God shown up in your life and revealed a counterintuitive path to you? Reflect on 2 Corinthians 5:17 and God's extraordinary work to create a remarkable transformation you can personally experience.

## STUDY 3

# PURIFICATION BEFORE TRANSFORMATION

In this week's teaching, you learned that purification is an important element of transformation. Something happens when God begins His work in us. We have old baggage. Old sins. Old thoughts. These need to be purged from us so that God can transform us into the new creation that He can use for His work and glory. Often, purging, or brokenness, proceeds to blessings. Purification, as a part of transformation, leads to freedom.

God redeemed the Children of Israel from slavery in Egypt at Passover, and the miracle of water into wine took place around Passover. Passover is about redemption, but redemption is not complete without transformation and purification. God brought Israel out of Egypt, but He had to take Egypt out of Israel. This purging is what leads to true freedom. It is for this reason that we see Yeshua in John 2:14-16 purging the Temple in Jerusalem.

Jesus, like His mother, Mary, showed some *chutzpah*, holy boldness, at the wedding. As we discussed in the group time, *chutzpah* can refer to bold actions, audacious behavior, courageous initiative, or plain old pushy nerve. Though it often has negative implications, we learn from Jewish tradition that *chutzpah* is a special gift from God and can be used in holy ways. God requires a certain kind of *chutzpah* from those who live for Him.

Yeshua went to the Temple to purify it at Passover. Passover is known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and all the leaven must be removed from the house. It was the responsibility of the children to help clean the house and prepare it for the Passover. The Temple was Yeshua's Father's house. He had to remove the leaven (representing sin). At that moment, Yeshua wasn't concerned about the leaven found in bread but about spiritual leaven. The physical removal of the "leaven" and cleaning the house for Passover symbolize that we must also be open to purification. Then we can be free to experience transformation.

**READ** | John 2:13-16; Philippians 3:12-14; and Isaiah 43:1-2

## REFLECT

1. In this story, we find Yeshua offended and driving out the money changers as an act of purification. How would you describe God's purification?
  
2. By God's grace, He continues to purify and transform us. As you read Philippians 3:12-14, notice how Rabbi Paul attacked his transformation. How can his experience help you as God purifies you for transformation?
  
3. In Philippians 3:14, Paul uses the phrase "press on." He uses the Greek word *diōkō*, which metaphorically can mean "to seek after eagerly, earnestly endeavor to acquire."<sup>8</sup> What does this mean as it relates to how you should seek after God?
  
4. Another aspect of Paul's purification is forgetting what lies behind (see verse 13). How can we rid ourselves of continually thinking about mistakes from yesterday? How do guilt and condemnation steal our energy from reaching the goal of transformation?
  
5. There are several promises found in Isaiah 43:1-2. One is that anything God asks us to do, we can do it. He has our backs. How does this confidence in God help you on the journey of purification that leads to transformation?

# CONNECT AND DISCUSS

Sometimes we need other people to help us absorb and learn. So take time this week to connect with a group member and discuss some of this session's insights and teaching. The following prompts can help guide your discussion.

1. How did this session help you see the importance of purification that leads to transformation?
2. What are some of the areas God has shown you that need to be purified? How can your study partner help?
3. How would you describe the significance of the six stone pots? How do you think understanding biblical numbers will change how you study the Bible?



# CATCH UP AND READ AHEAD

Use this time to go back and complete any study and reflection questions from previous days this week that you weren't able to finish. Make a note below of any revelations you've had and reflect on any growth or personal insights you've gained.

Read chapters 3–4 in *Signs and Secrets of the Messiah* before the next group session. Make any notes below from your reading that stand out to you or encourage you.

# WEEK 2

<b>BEFORE GROUP MEETING</b>	Read chapters 3-4 in <i>Signs and Secrets of the Messiah</i> Read the Welcome section (page 23)
<b>GROUP MEETING</b>	Discuss the Connect questions Watch the video teaching for session 2 Discuss the questions that follow as a group Do the closing exercise and pray (pages 23-28)
<b>STUDY 1</b>	Complete the personal study (pages 30-32)
<b>STUDY 2</b>	Complete the personal study (pages 33-34)
<b>STUDY 3</b>	Complete the personal study (pages 35-37)
<b>CONNECT AND DISCUSS</b>	Connect with someone in your group (page 38)
<b>CATCH UP AND READ AHEAD</b> (before week 3 group meeting)	Read chapters 5-6 in <i>Signs and Secrets of the Messiah</i> Complete any unfinished personal studies



## SESSION TWO

# THE SIGNS AND SECRETS OF THE NEW BIRTH

*Yeshua answered him, "Amen, amen I tell you, unless one is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

JOHN 3:3





## WELCOME | READ ON YOUR OWN

In the first session of *Signs and Secrets of the Messiah*, we considered Yeshua’s first miracle of turning the water into wine and His cleansing of the Temple. These miracles and mysteries point to transformation and purification. Yeshua brought about a greater redemption than Moses, symbolized by turning the water into wine at the wedding in Cana. Yeshua takes something ordinary and makes it extraordinary—a new creation. That new creation transformation is available to us now, which is great news for all of us on our journey as Christians.

The cleansing of the Temple concerns itself with the miracle of purification and freedom. Yeshua was about His Father’s business to clean up His Father’s house. He did this during the Passover season as a reminder that Passover symbolizes Yeshua wanting to cleanse us and bring freedom and fullness to us as He washes away our past.

In this next session we will study John 3, where Yeshua encountered a Pharisee one-on-one. As you will discover, Nicodemus was one of the leading Pharisees of his day. He was in high standing and probably a wealthy man. The Pharisees derived their name from the Hebrew word *perushim*, or “separate,” and they separated themselves from ritually impure food and from eating with the “common” people—people who didn’t hold to rabbinic law and tithing.

It’s this *perushim* that Yeshua encountered in John 3, where we learn about the new birth and why such a concept should not have been foreign to Nicodemus.

## CONNECT | 15 MINUTES

Get the session started by choosing one of these questions to discuss as a group:

- What was something that spoke to your heart from last week’s personal study that you would like to share with the group?

— or —

- What immediately comes to mind when you think about the concept of being born again?

know when your time is up. Don't be concerned if the group members are quiet or slow to share. People are often quiet when they are pulling together their ideas, and this might be a new experience for them. Just ask a question and then let it hang in the air for a while until someone shares. You can then say, "Thank you. What about others? What came to you when you watched that portion of the teaching?"

## GROUP DYNAMICS

Leading a group through *Signs and Secrets of the Messiah* will prove to be highly rewarding both to you and your group members. But you still may encounter challenges along the way! Discussions can get off track. Group members may not be sensitive to the needs and ideas of others. Some might worry they will be expected to talk about matters that make them feel awkward. Others may express comments that result in disagreements. To help ease this strain on you and the group, consider the following ground rules:

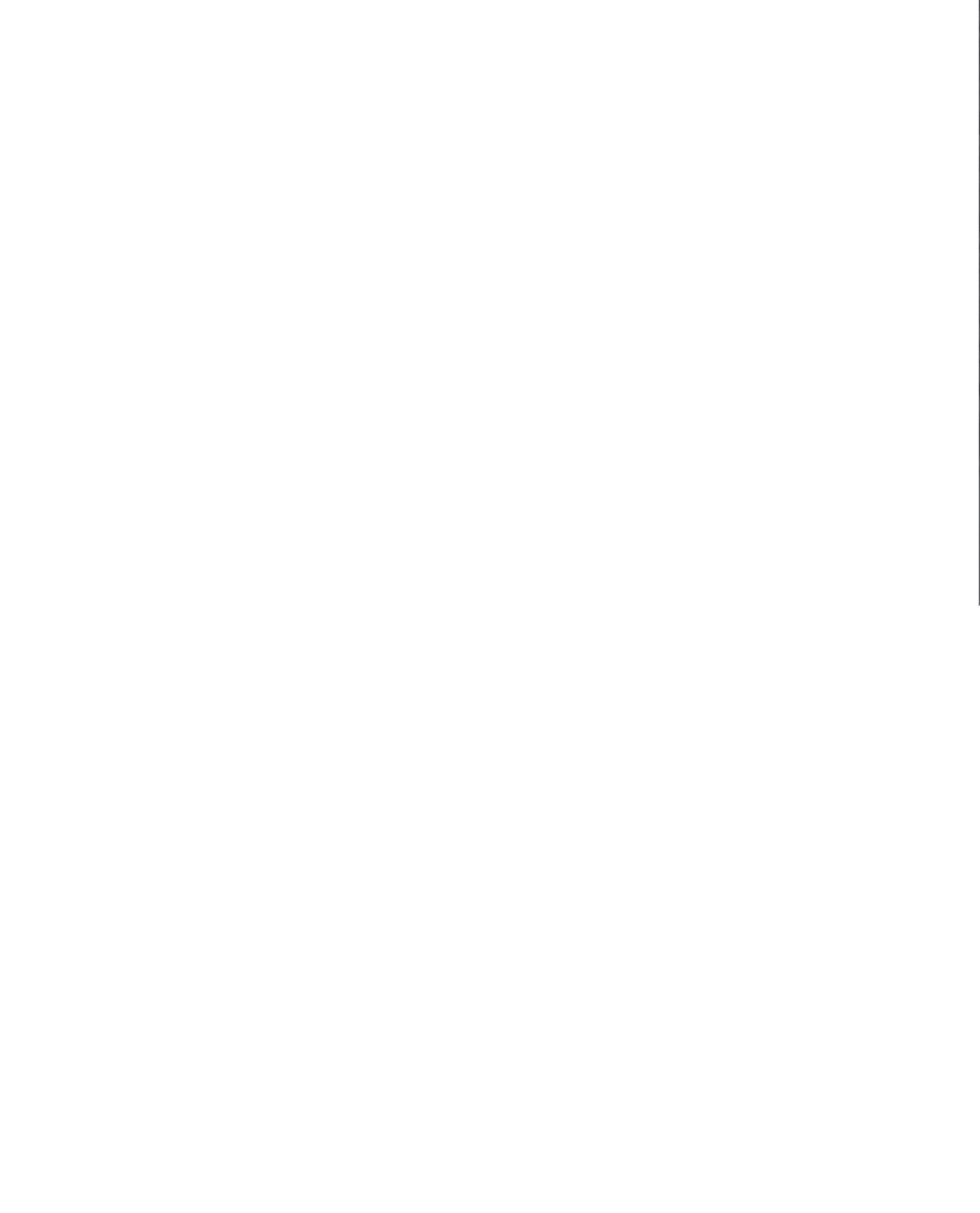
- When someone raises a question or comment that is off the main topic, suggest that you deal with it another time, or, if you feel led to go in that direction, let the group know you will be spending some time discussing it.
- If someone asks a question that you don't know how to answer, admit it and move on. At your discretion, feel free to invite group members to comment on questions that call for personal experience.
- If you find one or two people are dominating the discussion time, direct a few questions to others in the group. Outside the main group time, ask the more dominating members to help you draw out the quieter ones. Work to make them a part of the solution instead of part of the problem.
- When a disagreement occurs, encourage the group members to process the matter in love. Encourage those on opposite sides to restate what they heard the other side say about the matter, and then invite each side to evaluate if that perception is accurate. Lead the group in examining other scriptures related to the topic and look for common ground.

When any of these issues arise, encourage your group members to follow these words from Scripture: "Love one another" (John 13:34); "If possible, so far as it

depends on you, live in *shalom* with all people" (Romans 12:18); and "Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger" (James 1:19).

Thank you again for taking the time to lead your group. You are making a difference in your group members' lives and having an impact as they learn about the signs and secrets of the Messiah in the Gospel of John.







## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Rabbi Jason Sobel** is the founder of Fusion Global, a ministry that seeks to bring people into the full inheritance of the faith by connecting treasures of “the old and the new.” Rabbi Jason’s voice is authentic, being raised in a Jewish home, and qualified by years of diligent academic work. He received his rabbinic ordination from the UMJC (Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations) in 2005, has a BA in Jewish Studies (Moody), and has an MA in Intercultural Studies (Southeastern Seminary). He is a sought-after speaker and the author of *Breakthrough; Aligning with God’s Appointed Times; Mysteries of the Messiah*; and *Signs and Secrets of the Messiah*. He is also the coauthor, with Kathie Lee Gifford, of the *New York Times* bestseller *The Rock, the Road, and the Rabbi* and of *The God of the Way*.