



CALLED TO BE THE SIGNS AND WONDERS OF GOD!!

Almost every local or state government has a place where they make and store signs. When you visit that shop or warehouse you're likely to find that most of what they produce are street and high-way signs. Many of them will have posted speed limits or indications of crosswalks and school zones. You'll find signs that say "No Parking" and others that identify bike routes or bus stops. Some identify areas of road construction with images of men or women working or tell us to turn off our cell phones for blasting zones. Perhaps the most recognizable sign is the red octagon that says simply, "**Stop.**"

Over the years, humans have developed many signs to communicate important messages. Some signs welcome us or offer comfort. Others indicate restrictions and warnings. Today our lives are filled with signs on streets, on buildings and vehicles, even roadside benches. Identifying and reading signs is one of the basic skills we all learn from the earliest months of our lives.

Jesus came to show us the way to God through the way he lived and died. During his earthly ministry he pointed us to his Father through his teachings, the example of how he treated others and through actions that his followers identified as "signs and wonders."

The apostles carried on the work that Jesus started. They worked many signs and wonders in the name of Jesus. The disciples continued to gather in places where Jesus had taught, such as Solomon's portico at the temple of Jerusalem. The community of believers began to grow steadily. People began to revere the community's leaders, even bringing the sick to places where Peter's shadow could fall on them. Crowds began to come to Jerusalem so they could be healed of whatever was troubling them.

The glorified Jesus appeared to believers. The author of the Book of Revelation was one of the early preachers of the gospel. This "John" was on the Greek island of Patmos, possibly in exile, because of his role in spreading the faith. John experienced the presence of Jesus in a powerful way. The Book of Revelation is a dramatic account of the author's experience of the risen Lord.

Jesus made his presence known to those who believe in him. Following the death of Jesus, the disciples were afraid and locked themselves away. Jesus appeared in the midst of the disciples to calm their fear. The risen Lord twice gave the disciples a greeting of "Peace." Jesus commissioned the disciples to carry on his work of forgiving sins. Thomas was not present during Jesus' first appearance and expressed a need to see some proof of what had happened. At a later date, while the disciples were together with Thomas, Jesus appeared again. Thomas immediately recognized Jesus as his Lord and God.

Jesus continues to reveal himself today. He was physically present to those who followed him and heard him preach. Those who followed Jesus saw him provide signs and wonders. Following the resurrection, the disciples and other followers of Jesus were reassured by his numerous appearances. Those who want to see Jesus can still know his presence today. We can experience the loving and healing presence of Jesus through our daily interactions with others. We can help show God's presence to others by the way we live.

