

“A JOURNEY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN” SERIES

#4: “A Wedding, a House Cleaning, Signs, and Rejected Converts”

SCRIPTURE: 2:1-25

INTRO:

Three days after the calling of Phillip, Jesus was in Cana, which wasn't far from Nazareth. Cana was in Galilee, and Nazareth was in Judea.

JESUS' FIRST MIRACLE WAS DONE AT A WEDDING.

Look with me at verses 1 through 11 in John, chapter 2:

¹On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ²Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. ³When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” ⁴And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” ⁵His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

⁶Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” So, they took it. ⁹When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.” ¹¹This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

So, what was the miracle? He turned water into wine. Was it real wine? I mean, was it the kind one could get drunk on? Absolutely. How do we know? We know because the master of the banquet declared that the wine of the miracle of Jesus was better than the wine that had run out. It was customary to serve the best wine first so that by the time the cheap stuff was served, the guests wouldn't know the difference.

Consider what Jesus did here. Those six waterpots were there so that all the guests could ceremonially wash their hands and their eating utensils according to Jewish tradition – not according to the Law, but according to tradition. Each jar contained about 20 gallons, so we're talking about 120 gallons of water turned into 120 gallons of wine! Jesus did in seconds what usually took many months!

Now, why did Jesus do this? Why was this His first miracle? People who believe it's wrong to drink any alcoholic beverage have difficulty with this. They usually try to explain it by saying that He simply turned water into grape juice, but I don't think that will fly. The truth is, He turned water into fine wine.

So, why did He do it? I can suggest two reasons:

1. His mother wanted Him to do it. Seeing how embarrassing it was to the master of the banquet, she told Jesus about the problem. Evidently, she knew He could do something. And she was right.
2. Apparently, God wanted Him to do it. Look at John 5:19-21: ***“So Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him so that you may marvel. For the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.’”*** Perhaps He turned the water into wine because His Father told Him to.
3. The opportunity was there. Apparently, this was a very large wedding party – possibly over a hundred guests. Good wine for that many people was a notable thing.

Of course, you can decide for yourself. The fact is, He turned enough water into wine to supply a very large wedding party.

In verse 12 John tells us that ***“After this (after the wedding) he went down (down in the sense of altitude, not down in the sense of south) to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days.”*** The Roman Catholic Church teaches that Mary was immaculate both before and after Jesus was born. They call this *the doctrine of perpetual virginity*, which is not the only contrived doctrine about Mary. In other words, she never had sexual relations with Joseph or any other man. But John refers here to Jesus' ***“brothers.”*** Evidently, Mary and Joseph had sons together (Can you imagine them not having sexual relations?), and Jesus had half-brothers. The New Testament Scriptures list James, Joseph (Joses), Jude (Judas), and Simon as brothers to Jesus. The New Testament letter of James was written by a brother of the Lord Jesus.

Then in verse 13 he tells us: ***“The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up (again, in the sense of altitude, not direction) to Jerusalem.”*** Jerusalem was 2,600 feet above sea level, about the same as the highest point in Arkansas, which is Mount Magazine. Jerusalem is where the next event takes place, which is...

...THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.

Look with me at verses 14-17...

¹⁴ In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the moneychangers sitting there. ¹⁵ And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the moneychangers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

At Passover time, when the Jews commemorated the passing over of the death angel prior to their release from slavery in Egypt, every male who had become a *bar Mitzvah* or "son of the commandment" at around 13 years of age, was obligated to keep the feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Booths or Tents.

The animals that were being sold on the temple grounds were for sacrifice. Locating in the temple area was a convenience for the worshipers and a lucrative business for the priests and sellers. The court area of the temple measured something over 13 acres and was divided into four smaller areas: the court of the Gentiles, the court of women, the court of Israel for men, and the court of the priests.

The temple itself, which was called the sanctuary, consisted of two parts: the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. Contrary to answers you'll get from online searches, it is the body of Christ, the church, that is our sanctuary. Our sanctuary is not a building, nor is it a room in a building. Quite frankly, the Catholic Church is responsible for making buildings sanctuaries. Furthermore, it's also responsible for cathedrals and such areas called the "altar," the "apse," and the "knave." These are all man-made designated parts of church buildings and cathedrals. God never authorized such. But even today, Catholic church buildings are considered "sanctuaries" for illegal aliens and other criminals.

In Jesus' day, the temple was, literally, God's house, so what was going on in the temple courts was desecrating God's house, so Jesus chased the sellers and their animals out. He didn't harm any animals, and He didn't confiscate any money, but he ran the sellers off.

Some have taken this incident as precedent for not allowing anything to be sold in the church building, but this is a misapplication of the words of Jesus. What applied to the temple doesn't apply to today's church buildings. Today's church buildings aren't "holy" as the temple was "holy." The modern counterpart to the temple is our bodies, which are God's dwelling place. It is our bodies that are "holy," not the buildings we meet in.

After this event,

THE JEWS WANTED TO SEE SOME SIGN OF AUTHORITY.

They wanted to know something like, “Just who do you think you are, coming in here and throwing such a tantrum?” They wanted a “sign” that would explain His actions. I can’t fault them for that.

Beginning in verse 19, Jesus answers them...

“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

The Jews missed His meaning and said...

“It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you will raise it up in three days?”

John explains, in verses 21 and 22...

“But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Then John adds:

MANY IN JERUSALEM BELIEVED IN HIS NAME WHEN THEY SAW THE SIGNS HE WAS DOING, BUT HE KNEW THAT THEY WERE NOT TRUE DISCIPLES.

Evidently, Jesus performed some amazing things while in Jerusalem. He was there several days, since the feast of Passover lasted seven days. We don’t know what all He did, but a lot of people, even a Jewish ruler that we’ll soon read about, ***“believed in his name.”***

Most of those who claimed to believe in Him were poor, oppressed Jews who saw in this miracle-worker the answer to their oppression by the Romans. They were looking for a Messiah who would lead an overthrow of the Roman government in Judea – a military leader. They were thinking strictly carnally, and there was no way Jesus could entrust them with the spiritual truth He brought. Butler points out that Jesus had very little success in Judea, among His own people, during His ministry.

Do we have people today who view Christianity rather carnally? Who constantly look for signs and wonders? Whose faith is based on what prosperity they think Jesus can bring them? I think so. People get enamored with the gifts of the Spirit. I believe those gifts were for the infant church, not for us today.

CONCLUSION:

I will close today’s study with two questions:

1. Is what you believe really based on the teachings of Scripture, or on what you *thought* the Scriptures teach?

2. Is your faith based in who you know Jesus to be, or in what you think Jesus can do for you?