

The Gospel of John

Believe and Live!

Lesson 3

John 2:1–25

The Beginning of Miracles

There are two public events recorded in John 2 that further serve to illustrate Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The first takes place at the marriage festival in Cana of Galilee where His power is miraculously revealed; the second occurs at Passover when He cleanses the temple in demonstration of His authority. Both events will leave a lasting impact on the witnesses present.

At a glance ~ **Read John 2:1–25.**

Chapter two reveals two completely different stories that have one theme in common: both reveal the power and authority of the living God. In your initial reading of these accounts, what do you observe about His power at first glance?

The sequence of events began when Jesus was in Bethany beyond the Jordan. Allowing for the three references in chapters 1 and 2 to “the next day” and the fact that it is a two day walk to Galilee, Jesus arrived in Cana a day after the Sabbath, completing an entire week of events. The day Jesus and His followers arrived at the wedding would have fallen on a Sunday. This was not necessarily the first day of the wedding, since traditional wedding celebrations were known to last up to a week.

A miracle is about to take place! But it isn’t shouted from the rooftops or hilltops, it is rather quiet and dignified and begins with whatever is on hand for the Lord to use.

1. Who was already at this wedding celebration? Who else was invited? vv. 1–2

2. Something happened during the celebration that caused Mary to become involved—what was it? vv. 3–5

a. What step did Mary take to solve the problem? Why do *you* think she did this?

b. What was Jesus' response to her and what did He mean by this?

c. How did Mary, feeling a sense of responsibility, take further action?

Running out of wine was considered an insult in the Jewish culture for a celebration of this magnitude. We're not told the details as to why Mary became directly involved in solving the problem, but it was an embarrassing situation for the host and a potential tragedy for the bride and groom's big day!

Selah ~

Was Mary a relative or close friend of one of the family's? Perhaps she was responsible for assisting with the wedding preparations, or maybe she, being a proud mother herself, simply wanted to show publicly what Jesus was capable of doing. After all, the angel Gabriel announced His birth too, declaring Him to be the Holy One—the Son of God (Luke 1:35). Consider for a moment how Jesus' polite, gentle rebuke of Mary served as a turning point in their relationship. Please share your thoughts.

With the words "dear woman," Jesus was conveying to Mary that she did not understand that it was not yet His time to act, but that when He did, it would be in a way that she did not anticipate. Miracles would indeed be in God's plan for the Son, but they would not convince the Jews that He was the Messiah. Up to this point in time, Jesus had acted as the son of Mary, obeying her; but from now on He would act as the Son of God, obeying the Father. She accepted His words without question, regarding them in her heart of hearts as she did so on many other occasions.

3. What ordinary items of everyday use stood nearby for Jesus to use? vv. 6–8
What instruction did He give for them?

The servants filled them to the brim, each one holding from twenty to thirty gallons, totaling one hundred and twenty to one hundred and eighty gallons for all the jars combined!

4. How did the host of the celebration respond to this astounding feat? vv. 9–10

With a simple command and a dutiful response, the water became the best wine anyone had tasted! Jesus had demonstrated His power over the normal processes of nature that it takes to produce good wine: the time to grow the grapes in the sun, pick them, crush them and let them ferment for a long period. We can almost see those servants smiling at what they had just witnessed—ordinary pots filled with ordinary drinking water instantly being turned into the best vintage of wine ever served on the planet!

5. What was the result of Jesus revealing His glory in this way? vv. 11–12

The disciples had placed their faith in Jesus before this event, but now they were ready to follow Him anywhere. Perhaps when they held the cup of wine in their hands at the Last Supper and Jesus said, *“This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you”* (Luke 22:20), they remembered the wedding in Cana when they witnessed a miracle and tasted themselves for the first time that God is good!

Take a closer look ~ John 2:11

(Memorize and meditate on the memory verse each time you open your lesson.)

“This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.”

What does this verse reveal to you about Jesus? How did Jesus manifest His glory so *you* would believe in Him?

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Outlook ~ Read John 2:12–25.

Jesus and His followers—consisting of His mother, brothers, and disciples—relocated from the hill country of Cana about a day’s walk to Capernaum, directly adjacent to the Sea of Galilee. There He spent some time with His disciples before moving on to Jerusalem where He would celebrate His first Passover in His role as the Messiah.

As a youth, Jesus had visited Jerusalem and the temple there on many occasions. He obviously would have noticed the money changing hands and the corruption taking place. It had evolved to the point of becoming what He would refer to as a “den of thieves.” But this trip would be different—this time He would do something about it!

Picture it ~

Malachi 3:1–3 sets the scene for what is about to take place in John’s gospel. It depicts a Jesus that is different, making some feel uneasy; but what we will witness is righteous indignation on display. How does this Bible prophecy graphically portray Jesus Christ and what He is about to do? Put it in your own words.

1. Describe what Jesus saw as He entered the temple courts. vv. 14–16
 - a. Describe what He did next.

 - b. With what angry words did Jesus command those who were selling doves?

It is worth noting that God’s original instruction for temple sacrifices involved each family bringing the best from their own flock; but traveling great distances to Jerusalem for Passover made this difficult. As a result, what began as a type of farmer’s market to supply animals for sacrifice, turned into inflated costs and very high exchange rates on currency. Worship was being replaced by retail marketing extortion. Of course Jesus became angry at those who were making a mockery of God’s house!

Look closer ~

There is something today we might refer to as the *market place of religion* where people mix worldly business with godly worship much like they did in Jesus' day. We as believers should support the church with our regular tithes and offerings—for God loves a cheerful giver! But if you feel the pressure from any ministry to send in your donation in order to receive your physical healing or God's blessings of prosperity, then beware. It is our responsibility to give toward the work of God's kingdom, but it is also our duty to be wise and conscientious about where we send our monetary gifts.

- ❖ What kind of worship does God seek from His children? See John 4:23. How would you apply this principle to your monetary giving?

This action by Jesus in the court of the temple caused His disciples to recall the messianic prophecy in verse 17: "*Zeal for Thy house will consume me*" (Psalm 69:9).

2. The Jews present asked Jesus for a sign; what did He say to them? vv. 18–22
 - a. The Jews thought He was referring to the literal temple but He wasn't. To what was He referring?
 - b. When did the disciples fully understand what Jesus meant? Why did they not understand it until then?

Selah ~

As the disciples watched the cleansing of the temple, they saw an object lesson they would never forget. What are a few of the things they would have learned about the Lord?

Review this week's memory verse.

In focus ~ (Key words) **Miracle**

The purpose of the miracles Jesus performed was so that people would believe in Him.

Write a definition for **miracle**: _____

If you consider the love Jesus had for those who came to Him from all walks of life, can you think of another reason He would display His power (omnipotence)? _____

The emphasis in John's gospel is on Jesus' *message* rather than on His *miracles*. Believing in a miracle or a sign, as we see in verses 23–25, does not necessarily mean belief in Jesus. He clearly knew that His purpose on earth was to bring glory to the Father, and He also knew what was in the heart of every man. The Lord looks into our hearts to see if we really do believe in Him! He doesn't trust in outward appearances and is not fooled by insincere professions of faith. He has a penetrating understanding of who we are and where we stand with Him.

Personal ~

Is there anything in you that is standing between you and the Lord today? Take a moment to reflect on 1 Corinthians 6:19–20. How does this verse encourage you to keep your temple clean? Remember, if you confess your sin, He is faithful and just to forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Open your heart today and talk to Him. Please record your thoughts. (You needn't share personal matters with your group.)

More like Jesus ~

Are *you* becoming more like Jesus? Absolutely! Every time you open the Word and spend time getting to know Him more intimately, you partake in the life-long process of drawing near—going deeper—bearing fruit—becoming more like Him. As you close your lesson today, determine to put into practice what you've learned by noting it below.

- Recite your memory verse _____
 - Reflect on a lesson you received _____
 - Respond with prayer and praise to God _____
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Notes