

Coming of the New

John 2:1-25



Wedding Works

- Read John 2:1-12. Jesus and his disciples were invited to a wedding celebration at Cana in Galilee.¹ Jesus' mother (Mary) was also there. The wine was running out, which would be shameful for the host. Mary said to Jesus, "They have no more wine" (2:3).²

1. How does Jesus respond (*in verse 4*)? Why does he respond in this way?³



2. Why do you think Jesus turns the water into wine?⁴

□ "What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him." (2:11, *NIV*)

- Jesus' "signs" (*sēmeia*) are "significant displays of power that point beyond themselves to the deeper realities that could be perceived with the eyes of faith."⁵ Verse 11 says Jesus' signs "revealed his glory." But many did not see it.⁶

3. From this story, what can we learn about Jesus? What can we learn about appropriate human attitudes toward Jesus?

¹ 'Cana' – Nathaniel's hometown (21:2), not far from Nazareth (Jesus' hometown). Since Jesus' mother was there, the wedding may have involved a relative or close family friend. Apparently, Jesus' brothers were also there (2:12).

² Mary is not necessarily expecting a miracle, but is relying on Jesus' resourcefulness.

³ Jesus' response is not rude or disrespectful, but is direct and corrective. Jesus makes it clear that he will do things according to his heavenly Father's plan and schedule. 'my hour (time)' points to his death and exaltation (7:30; 8:20). When the time of his death draws near, Jesus will say that the hour has arrived (12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1).

⁴ Of course, the miracle meets a practical need, but Jesus' purpose is greater. It is a 'sign' that reveals something about Jesus and his mission. The jars – 'the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing' – might symbolize the old order of Jewish religion. Jesus will replace the water with something better. The wine symbolizes the new creation that Jesus brings. Elsewhere Jesus uses the wedding feast to symbolize the future consummation of his kingdom (*Matthew 22:1-14; cp. Rev. 19:7-9*). (D.A. Carson, *John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991], 172-173).

⁵ Carson, 175. The New Living Translation (NLT) adds "miraculous" because the sign was a miracle. In the Gospel of John, Jesus himself usually calls his miracles 'works' (*erga*), which he ties to the Father (5:20-21, 36; 10:25, 38).

⁶ The 'glory' revealed in Jesus is 'the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father' (1:14). 'No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known' (1:18). Thus the glory seen in Jesus is the glory of God. The 'glory of God' may be defined as 'the splendor and magnificence of God's unique and perfect essence.' However, seeing Jesus' 'glory' does not necessarily involve seeing outward splendor. It's true that 'the miracles showed the glory of Christ (2:11; 11:4, 40). But in a deeper sense it is the cross of shame that manifests the true glory (12:23-24; 13:31)'" (Leon Morris, *John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 93.) Yet many do not see God's glory in either Jesus' miraculous signs or self-humbling service. Spiritual eyesight is needed to see Jesus as 'the Light.'

Temple Turnover

- ❑ Read John 2:13-25. “When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover,⁷ Jesus went up to Jerusalem” (2:13). “In the temple courts⁸ he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money” (2:14, *NIV*). Since Jewish people came from great distances, they would buy animals for sacrifice after arriving at the temple.

4. How does Jesus respond to these selling and money-changing activities? Why does he respond in this way?



- ❑ Jesus’ actions indicated authority. So the Jews asked him, “What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?” (2:18, *NIV*)

5. How does Jesus respond to their question?⁹ What does he mean by his answer?

- ❑ Jesus would provide a sign – his bodily resurrection (2:21).¹⁰ But Jesus’ answer has deeper meaning. It revealed the deep connection between the temple and his body. The temple was “God’s house” (2:16; *Matt. 12:4*). It was where people went to meet with God and worship him. But Jesus is “the Word” who makes God known (1:1, 14, 18). He is the new “meeting place” with God (4:19-24; 14:6). Jesus is the fulfillment of the temple.¹¹

- ❑ While Jesus was in Jerusalem, “many people saw the signs he was doing, and believed in his name. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people.” (2:23-24) Many people were impressed by Jesus’ miracles, and they believed *something* about Jesus. But the “belief” of many people was shallow and temporary. Jesus knows the hearts of people.¹²

6. From this story, what can we learn about Jesus? What can we learn about worship and faith? How does it apply to our lives?

The Light & You

- What do *you* believe about Jesus? Do you believe what the Bible teaches? Continue to seek answers to the question “Who is Jesus?”
- If you have “believed in Jesus,” what is the basis and content of your belief? Are your beliefs consistent with the Bible’s teaching? Have your beliefs resulted in a changed life?
- As a believer, is your worship sincere, focused and Christ-centered? Read Hebrews 10:1-22 and “draw near to God with a sincere heart” (*Hebrews 10:22*).

⁷ ‘Passover’ was the annual festival celebrating Israel’s deliverance from slavery to Egypt (*Exodus 12:29-15:1*).

⁸ ‘temple courts’ (lit. ‘temple’) – the outer courtyard; the court of the Gentiles.

⁹ Supposed witnesses referred to Jesus’ statement at his trial, but they distorted his words (*Matt. 26:60-61; Mark 14:57-59*). Jesus did not say *he* would destroy the temple.

¹⁰ This was not clear to the Jewish questioners or the disciples at the time, but the disciples realized it later (2:22).

¹¹ In Revelation 21:22, in describing his vision of the new Jerusalem, John said ‘I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.’

¹² Verses 23-24 contain a word-play: Many people ‘trusted (*episteusan*) in his name... But Jesus would not entrust (*episteuen*) himself to them.’ Jesus knew what was in [the heart of] each person (2:25). ‘To exercise faith on the grounds of having witnessed *miraculous signs* is precarious [not sure] (4:48; cf. Mk. 8:11-13). Although miracles cannot command faith (10:32), it is better to believe on the ground of miracles than not at all (cf. 10:38).’ (Carson, 184) Nonetheless, Jesus ‘looked for genuine conversion, not enthusiasm for the spectacular.’ (Morris, 182)