

JOHN 2 | Wedding at Cana

The Wine Runs Out

1 On the third day¹ there was a wedding² at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. 3 When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, They have no wine. 4 And Jesus said to her, Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour (ᾠρα)³ has not yet come. 5 His mother said to the servants, Do whatever he tells you.⁴

Jesus' First Sign: Water to Wine

6 Now there were six stone water jars (λίθινοι ὑδρίαί) there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to the servants, Fill the jars with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he said to them, Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast. So they took it. 9 When 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 10 and 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.⁵

11 This, the first of his signs (σημεῖον),⁶ Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed into him (ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτόν).⁷

Capernaum Interlude

12 After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days.

¹ Jn 1:19-2:11 describes seven days. The wedding occurs on the seventh day. This was an unforgettable week for John.

² See *Church as the Bride of Messiah*.

³ “[A] point of time as an occasion for an event, *time*” (BDAG, 1103).

⁴ Mary had seen her son provide necessities for the family. She knows he has the ability to perform miracles.

⁵ See *Marriage Supper of the Lamb*.

⁶ “[A] sign or distinguishing mark whereby someth. is known, *sign, token, indication*...an event that is an indication or confirmation of intervention by transcendent powers, miracle, portent” (BDAG, 920). The σημεῖον word group is used 17 times in *John*.

⁷ Jesus' signs manifest his glory. Faith in him is the expected response.

Jesus' Zeal for the Temple

13 The Passover⁸ of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.⁹ 14 In the temple he found those who were selling oxen, sheep, and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there.¹⁰ 15 And making a whip of cords,¹¹ he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. 16 And he told those who sold the pigeons, Take these things away. Do not make my¹² Father's house¹³ a house of trade. 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, Zeal for your house will consume me.¹⁴

Jesus' Resurrection: The Ultimate Sign

18 So the Jews said to him, What sign (σημεῖον) do you show us for doing these things?¹⁵ 19 Jesus answered them, Destroy (λύω, aor. act, imper.)¹⁶ this temple (ναός), and in three days I will raise it up. 20 The Jews then said, It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?¹⁷ 21 But he was speaking about the temple of his body.¹⁸ 22 When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this,¹⁹ and they believed the Scripture (γραφή)²⁰ and the word (λόγος) that Jesus had spoken.²¹

⁸ See *Passover*. There are three, maybe four, Passovers mentioned in *John* (Jn 2:13, 5:1?; 6:4; 12:1). Jesus gave the Jewish leaders exactly three years to make up their minds about him, from the first Passover to the fourth. Does Jesus' parable of the fig tree in Lk 13:6-9 have something to do with this three year period? Matthew connects the final cleansing of the temple (Mt 21:12-13) with the barren fig tree (Mt 21:18-19), after which the Jewish leaders question Jesus' authority (Mt 21:23).

⁹ Jesus had gone to Jerusalem for the Passover every year since he was a child (Lk 2:41). This year was different.

¹⁰ Jesus cleansed the temple on the first Passover and the fourth Passover (Mt 21:12-13). These entrepreneurs were making an enormous profit off God's requirement that every Jewish male offer sacrifices before him at Jerusalem on Passover every year (Dt 16:1-8).

¹¹ Jesus' cleansing of the temple was premeditated, not just an irrational outburst of anger.

¹² See *Jesus as the Son of God*.

¹³ Jesus had called the temple "my Father's house" when he was only 12 years old (Lk 2:49). He does not say "our Father's house."

¹⁴ **Ps 69:9** 9 ...Zeal for your house has consumed me [David], and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.

¹⁵ It was a characteristic of the Jewish people in the first century to ask for miraculous signs (1 Co 1:22).

¹⁶ "[T]o reduce someth. by violence into its components, *destroy*" (*BDAG*, 607). Jesus' use of the imperative mood is interesting. He knows what the Jewish leaders will do and almost commands them to do it.

¹⁷ The concept of three days continues to be repeated.

¹⁸ Paul describes the body of believers also as a temple (1 Co 6:19).

¹⁹ Jesus knew he would be killed and rise from the dead three days later at the very beginning of his ministry.

²⁰ What Scripture is John referring to?

²¹ This is exactly what John is inviting his readers to do (Jn 20:31).

Many Believe, but Jesus Doesn't Entrust Himself

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed into (ἐπίστευσαν εἰς) his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.²² 24 But Jesus on his part was not entrusting (πιστεύω, imperf.) himself to them, because he knew (γινώσκω, pres.) all people 25 and needed no one to testify²³ about man,²⁴ for he himself knew (γινώσκω, imperf.)²⁵ what was in man.

²² This is exactly what the Father wanted them to do. These are true believers.

²³ We often must function on the basis of testimony from others. By contrast, Jesus knows everything firsthand.

²⁴ Jesus knows very well man's fallen nature.

²⁵ See *Jesus' Omniscience*.

Discussion Questions

1. Review.

- a. What are the steps of a chapter study?
- b. What is the purpose of *John*?
- c. What did John establish in John 1?

2. John 2:1-5.

- a. Paragraph theme?
- b. How does the timing of the wedding relate to the previous chapter?
- c. Why does Jesus say, “My hour has not yet come?”
- d. Why does Mary ignore Jesus and tell the servants to do what Jesus says?

3. John 2:6-11.

- a. Paragraph theme?
- b. How many litres are we talking about?
- c. How did Jesus do it?
- d. Why is this the first sign that John records?
- e. Is there a greater significance to this sign?
- f. Is it okay to drink wine?

4. John 2:12.

- a. Paragraph theme?
- b. Where are Bethany, Cana, Capernaum, and Jerusalem in relation to one another?
- c. Where does Jesus’ Galilean ministry described in the other gospels fit in?
- d. Why does John include this verse?

5. John 2:13-17.

- a. Paragraph theme?
- b. Why is Jesus so upset?
- c. Has Jesus been to Jerusalem during Passover before? Why does he choose this time to cleans the temple?
- d. Is Mt 21:12-13 discussing the same incident?
- e. Has Jesus called the temple his Father’s house before?
- f. Where does the quote about zeal come from? Who wrote it?
- g. Why does John include this episode?
- h. Is this a sign?

6. John 2:18-22.

- a. Paragraph theme?
- b. Explain Jesus’ response to the Jews in v. 19.
- c. What two temples are at issue?
- d. What Scripture did the disciples believe (v. 22)?

7. John 2:23-25.

- a. Paragraph theme?

- b. Are the believers in v. 23 true believers?
- c. Why doesn't Jesus entrust himself to these believers?
- d. What do vv. 24-25 say about Jesus' knowledge?

8. Reflection and Application

- a. What are some things God wants you to reflect upon from this chapter?
- b. How does this chapter relate to us?
- c. How does God want you to apply this chapter?

Biblical Worldview

1. The Wedding Wine Runs Out (Jn 1:1-5).

- a. Jesus knows as soon as he performs his first sign, the hour of his death and resurrection will approach (v. 4; Jn 12:23).
- b. Mary is very aware of Jesus' omnipotence (vv. 3, 5). This shows Jesus didn't start being omnipotent at his baptism. He was and always is omnipotent.

2. Jesus First Sign: Water to Wine (Jn 1:6-11).

- a. The six stone water jars for purification (v. 6) are symbolic of man's religious good works or attempts to cleanse oneself. The number six is symbolic of man (Re 13:13). Jesus' is making a statement that his bloody substitutionary death will make the Jewish rites of purification obsolete.
- b. The amount of water Jesus turned to wine is unbelievable (v. 6). It likely would have taken the servants quite a bit of time to fill the jars with water.
- c. The servants fill the jars up to the brim (v. 7), symbolising the complete sufficiency of Jesus' substitutionary death on man's behalf and also the superabundance of joy believers will experience in the Messianic kingdom and beyond. From Jesus' fullness we have all received (Jn 1:16).
- d. This sign (v. 11) is very likely also a prophecy. Jesus, the bridegroom (Jn 3:29), will provide very good wine to the wedding guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Re 19:9), when he marries his bride, the Church (Re 19:7-8). John is to be the best man at this wedding (Jn 3:29). As difficult as this life can be for disciples, joy is coming (Jn 16:20-22). Jesus will rejoice over his bride, the Church (Eph 5:27), and the Father will rejoice over his wife, Israel (Is 62:5).
- e. That Jesus performs his first sign in Cana of Galilee (vv. 1, 11), far away from Jerusalem, hints that Jerusalem will reject him.
- f. The proper response to Jesus' signs and the manifestation of his glory is to believe into him, just as the disciples do here (v. 11).
- g. Jesus is showing that he is the Prophet, the ultimate Moses.
 - (1) Moses turned water to blood (Ex 7:19-20), a message of judgment. Jesus turns water to wine (v. 9), a message of abundance and joy.
 - (2) Moses did signs by which Israel could confirm he was sent by God (Ex 4:8-9). Jesus does signs for the same reason (v. 11).
 - (3) At Moses' signs, Israel, particularly its leaders, believed (Ex 4:30-31). At Jesus' signs, Israel, particularly its leaders, do not believe (Jn 1:11).
 - (4) See *Jesus as Prophet*.

3. Capernaum Interlude (Jn 2:11).

- a. During this visit to Capernaum, Jesus' probably did not perform any miracles. His major Galilean ministry began once John was imprisoned (Mt 4:12-13; Mk 1:14; Lk 3:19-20; 4:14). At the time of John 2, John was still free and baptising (Jn 3:22-24).

4. Jesus' Zeal for the Temple (Jn 2:13-17).

- a. There are most probably four Passovers recorded in *John* (Jn 2:13, 5:1?; 6:4; 12:1). This would mean Jesus gave the Jewish leaders exactly three years to make up their minds about him, from the first Passover to the fourth.
 - (1) Does Jesus' parable of the fig tree in Lk 13:6-9 have something to do with this three year period?
- b. Jesus had been going to Jerusalem for Passover every year since he was a child (Lk 2:41). This year was different, though. Now he would cleanse the temple.
- c. Oxen, sheep, and pigeons (v. 14) were necessary for the Passover sacrifices (Le 1:3, 10, 14; Dt 16:2). The money-changers (v. 14) were there because the Jewish priests would not accept sacrificial animals paid for with Roman coinage. So a Jewish male first had to exchange his Roman coinage for Jewish coinage. Then he had to purchase the animals. Jewish males had to go to Jerusalem and do this every year (Dt 16:2). The temple merchants were making a killing.
- d. It would have been interesting to see Jesus making this whip of cords (v. 15). This shows his cleansing of the temple was premeditated, not just an irrational outburst of anger. Additionally, the emotional contrast between the wedding at Cana and the cleansing of the Jerusalem temple is striking. There are two sides to Jesus. He is the Lord of love, joy, and celebration, but also the Lord of holiness, justice, and when necessary, wrath.
- e. As the Son of David and rightful King of Israel (Jn 1:49), not to mention the Son of God (v. 16; Jn 1:49), Jesus certainly has authority to cleanse the temple (Mal 3:1-4). One day, Jesus will cleanse all of creation ([]).
- f. Jesus had called the temple "my Father's house" when he was only 12 years old (Lk 2:49). He does it again here (v. 16). He does not say "our Father's house" but "my Father's house," which is very significant.
- g. The disciples connected this incident with Psalm 69, written by David. Like Jesus:
 - (1) Many hated David without cause (Ps 69:4).
 - (2) David was attacked with lies (Ps 69:4).
 - (3) David became a stranger to his brothers (Ps 69:8).
 - (4) Zeal for God's house consumed David (Ps 69:8).
 - (5) David experienced reproach, shame, and dishonour (Ps 69:19).
 - (6) David was given sour wine to drink for his thirst (Ps 69:21).
 - (7) David asked that his enemies not be able to see (Ps 69:23).
 - (8) David asked God to pour out his indignation on his enemies (Ps 69:24).
 - (9) David asked God to blot out his enemies from the book of the living (Ps 69:28).
 - (10) David was afflicted and in pain, but he asked God to set him on high (Ps 69:29).
 - (11) David ends by praising God (Ps 69:30-36).

5. Jesus' Resurrection: The Ultimate Sign (Jn 2:18-22).

- a. This is the first contentious encounter between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. Many more will follow. The primary question the Jewish leaders have for Jesus is does he have authority to cleanse the temple? They consider themselves to be the authority, and Jesus has immediately become a threat to it, though he is merely a carpenter from Galilee. How amazing for a Jewish carpenter from Nazareth to suddenly show up, at

Passover, and drive out the animal merchants and moneychangers. Truly the Jewish leaders didn't see this coming.

- b. The Jewish leaders may understand the statement Jesus is making. That explains their challenge for Jesus to show a sign (v. 18). If Jesus is some sort of prophet, he must produce a sign to prove it (Dt 13:1-2). It was a characteristic of the Jewish people in the first century to ask for miraculous signs (1 Co 1:22).
- c. There are actually eight signs in *John*, not seven. This chapter reveals the first and eighth. Jesus' transforming water to wine is the first sign (v. 11). Jesus' resurrection from the dead will be the eighth sign (v. 18). This sign will take place exactly three years later on Passover (v. 13; Jn 13:1). The eighth sign is the ultimate sign. See *Jesus' Resurrection*.
- d. Jesus, exactly three years before his death, practically commands the Jewish leaders to destroy (λύω, aor. act, imper.) the temple of his body. He knows they eventually will, even at the beginning of his ministry. Still, the Jewish leaders, and all Israel, must be allowed to decide. Jesus will give them three years to make up their mind. It is necessary that Jesus' offer to Israel be a bona fide offer, just as it was necessary for God's offer to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden be a bona fide offer.
- e. Many New Testament passages assert it was the Father who raised Jesus from the dead (Ac 2:24; 5:30; Ro 6:4, 8:11; Ga 1:1). But there are other passages, like here, that assert Jesus raised himself from the dead (v. 19; Jn 10:18). Even the Spirit is said to have raised Jesus (Ro 8:11). Jesus' resurrection, therefore, was a cooperative work of all three persons of the Trinity. See *Jesus' Resurrection*.
- f. The disciples didn't understand what Jesus was saying until he rose from the dead (v. 22; Jn 20:29). Jesus was referring to his body as a temple (v. 21), the place where God dwells. Paul describes our bodies also as a temple (1 Co 6:19).
- g. What Old Testament Scripture did the disciples believe? Ones like these:
 - (1) **Ps 16:10** 10 ... You [Yahweh] will not abandon my [David's] soul to Sheol nor let your holy one [Jesus] see corruption.
 - (a) **Ac 2:27** 27 ... You will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.
 - (2) **Is 53:10-12** 10 ... It was the desire of Yahweh to crush [Jesus]. He has put him to grief. When his soul makes an offering for guilt, he [Jesus] shall see his seed. He shall prolong his days. The desire of Yahweh shall prosper in his hand. 11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied. By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors.
 - (a) **Ac 8:35** 35 ... Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture [Isaiah 53] he told [the eunuch] the good news about Jesus.
 - (3) **Jon 1:17** 17 ... Yahweh appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.
 - (a) **Jon 2:10** 10 ... Yahweh spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.

(b) **Mt 12:40** 40 ...Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

6. Many Believe, but Jesus Doesn't Entrust Himself (Jn 2:23-25).

- a. During that first Passover Feast, exactly three years before he would be crucified, Jesus gave a clear signs that he was someone very, very special—the Messiah. As Malachi had predicted, the Lord had suddenly come to his temple (Mal 3:2).
- b. Many Jews did in fact believe into Jesus' name. The preposition εἰς indicates this was a real belief, not some sort of half-hearted belief. These Jews did exactly what was required to be born of God (Jn 1:13) and to become children of God (Jn 1:12). These particular Jews are saved (Jn 3:18, 36)!
- c. There is nothing wrong with believing into Jesus based on his signs. For example, the disciples believed into Jesus at his first sign in Cana (Jn 2:11). The whole purpose of *John* is that its readers may believe into Jesus because of the signs presented (Jn 20:31). Jesus tells Philip to believe in him based either his testimony or his works (Jn 14:11). It may be better to believe based on testimony (Jn 20:29), but this does not mean one may believe in Jesus based on the signs.
- d. If these are believers, why then does Jesus not entrust himself to them (v. 24)? It is because even as believers they are not yet worthy of his trust. Jesus is not obligated to entrust himself to every believer. Many believers are not fully committed to him. They are half-hearted. They choose not to follow Jesus as a disciple. It is disciples to whom Jesus entrusts himself. Accordingly, every believer must choose how devoted he or she will be to Jesus. In the sanctification phase of our Christian life (phase two), if we entrust ourselves to Jesus, he will entrust himself to us. Not every believer gets to be Jesus' "friend" (Jn 15:14-15). Jesus is looking for believers to whom he can entrust himself. Are you one of them? "It is those who have learned to serve the Lord who are privy to the secrets of the kingdom" (W. Spradley). See *Discipleship*.
- e. The point of vv. 24-25 is that Jesus knows the heart of every believer. He knows how devoted each of us are to him. He knows each one of us intimately (v. 24). He doesn't need anyone to testify about us (v. 25). He knows what is in us (v. 25). He knows which ones of us he can entrust himself to (v. 25). See *Jesus' Omniscience*.
- f. In the next chapter, Nicodemus is an example of a secret believer to whom Jesus does not entrust himself. He does, by contrast, entrust himself to the twelve disciples (Judas Iscariot is a special case). Perhaps Nicodemus missed out on being one of the twelve disciples because he hesitated about Jesus early on.