

# John Chapter 2

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## Introduction:

1. John has traced our Lord from the realms of heaven to earth. He was introduced to Israel by John the Baptist and some of John's disciples switched to following Jesus.
2. The disciples following Jesus at this point are: Andrew and Peter, James and John, Philip and Nathanael.

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## THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS PRIVATELY IN GALILEE

**(1) The next day there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,**

- **Cana** was a small village about three or four miles northeast of Nazareth. **Jesus' mother** was helping at the wedding for a relative or close friend. John the writer doesn't mention her name in his gospel. This shows us the intended supplemental nature of the Gospel of John.

**(2) and Jesus and His disciples were also invited to the celebration.**

- We are not told who **invited Jesus** and His **disciples** to the festivities. Perhaps it was Mary or the newlyweds or even the disciple Nathanael who had lived there.
- It was a private **wedding** that required an **invitation**. This is not the beginning of the public ministry of **Jesus**. That story begins in verse 13. It is certain that the disciples would not have attended a wedding **celebration** if they had still been disciples of John the Baptist.
- **R.C. Foster** writes:

These men had been disciples of John the Baptist until a few days before. From the desert and the stern manner of life of John, who subsisted on locusts and wild honey, Jesus led His disciples straight to a wedding feast. The contrast between the two leaders must have been vivid.

### **(3) The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told Him, "They have no more wine."**

- This failure of the **wine** supply was socially very embarrassing.
- Mary turned to **Jesus** for a solution. Bringing these extra six men to the wedding had caused the **wine** supply to fail earlier than it might have otherwise.
- **Jesus** was now head of the family (See verse 12) and Mary turned to Him for a solution. For years Mary had observed such things as the astounding miracles surrounding her Son's birth -- the prophecies of Simeon and Anna, Jesus interacting with the teachers in Jerusalem - and she "kept all these sayings in her heart" (Luke 2 :51). She had probably been informed of the miracles surrounding His baptism, too.

### **(4) "Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."**

- Mary took it as a positive statement, based on the next verse. **My time** was probably His public revealing to Israel that happened later in this same chapter.

### **(5) But His mother told the servants, "Do whatever He tells you."**

- **The servants** had been following orders from Mary. Now, she transfers her authority to Jesus. By extension, this is a successful view for all believers: **"Do whatever he tells you."**
- Although she didn't know how He would solve the embarrassing problem, she had faith that He could.

**(6) Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons.**

- **Paul Butler** writes:  
The Jews were very careful to wash before meals in case they had touched a Gentile, or rubbed against a publican or a harlot in the marketplace.
- At a minimum, the jars held 120 gallons of water.



**(7) Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled, (8) He said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed His instructions.**

- Obeying **Jesus** did not make any sense, but these **servants** obeyed anyway. **Jesus** used whatever was at hand to create the miracle rather than just speaking the wine into existence.
- **Richard Trench** says,  
He who each year prepares the wine in the grape, causing it to absorb, and swell with, the moisture of earth and heaven, to transmute this into nobler juices of its own, did now concentrate all those slower processes into a single moment, and accomplish in an instant what usually He takes many months to accomplish . . . He was working in the line of His more ordinary operations, the unnoticed miracles of everyday nature.
- The Lord of nature had simply compressed the natural working time to meet a current need.

(9) When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. (10) "A host always serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!"

- **The master of ceremonies** was immediately convinced of the quality of this new beverage. **"But you have kept the best until now."**
- The common question: was this **wine** an alcoholic beverage? We believe that it was not.
  - Our English word **wine** designates a beverage from fermented grapes that contains from 12½% alcohol to perhaps 20% or more. It can be fortified by adding alcohol to existing **wine**.
  - The word **wine** used in this Greek text is *oinos* and points to a product of the grapevine. It may be unfermented or fermented as learned from the context in which it is used.
    - ◆ It might be called **wine** even before the grape is picked from the vine.

**Thus says the LORD, "As the new wine is found in the cluster, ....** (Isaiah 65:8 NASB)



- ◆ The device or place where the grapes were squeezed or tramped out is called a *winepress*, not a *grape-juice press*. This shows the generic use of the word **wine** in Scripture.
- ◆ There is nothing in this story to point to an alcohol-bearing beverage.
- ◆ The Lord had inspired this passage also:

**Don't gaze at the wine, seeing how red it is, how it sparkles in the cup, how smoothly it goes down. For in the end it bites like a poisonous snake; it stings like a viper. You will see hallucinations, and you will say crazy things.** (Proverbs 23:31-33 NLT)

- ◆ The Egyptian king's cup-bearer had a dream:  
**The vine had three branches that began to bud and blossom, and soon it produced clusters of ripe grapes. I was holding Pharaoh's wine cup in my hand, so I took a cluster of grapes and squeezed the juice into the cup. Then I placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.** (Genesis 40:10-11 NLT)

The **wine** traveled from the cluster to the cup.

**(11) This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed His glory. And His disciples believed in Him.**

- When Moses began his ministry, he turned water into blood to try to convince Pharaoh. When **Jesus** began His ministry, He turned water into wine and succeeded in convincing His **disciples** who He was.
- This was the **first** sign from **Jesus**. He had received the power of the Spirit just recently so stories about miracles performed by **Jesus** as a lad are bogus.

This is the 1<sup>st</sup> of 7 signs presented by John.

It set forth the **glory** of the Lord; *first of seven* major **signs** in the main portion of the Gospel of John. The main point here was that these **disciples believed in Him**.

- Some have **believed** that Jesus performed miracles in His youth. The ancient book called *The Infancy Gospel of Thomas* says in chapter 2:

Jesus makes Makes Sparrows:

(1) The child Jesus was five years old. After it rained, he was playing at the ford of a flowing stream. And stirring up the dirty waters, he gathered them into pools, and he made them clean and excellent, ordering them by word alone – and not ordering them by a deed. (2) Then, having taken soft clay from the mud, he formed twelve sparrows from it. But it was the Sabbath when he did these things, and many children were with him. (3) But a certain Jew saw the child Jesus with the other children doing these things. He went to Joseph his father and slandered the child Jesus, saying that “he made clay on the Sabbath, which isn’t permissible, and formed twelve sparrows.” (4) And Joseph went and rebuked him (Jesus), saying, “Why are you doing these things on the Sabbath?” But Jesus clapped his hands, ordering the birds with a shout in front of all, and said, “Go, take flight like living beings!” And the sparrows, taking flight, went away squawking. (5) And having seen this, the Pharisee was amazed, and he reported it to all his friends.”

John says this **miracle** at **Cana** is His **first** one.

- **Paul Butler** writes:  
The miracle at Cana shows us that Jesus did not require His disciples to have perfect knowledge or perfect faith

in order to begin following Him. What the Lord wants is a disciple with a willing mind and an honest heart—willing to learn and honest enough to apply the lesson to his own life!

- Evidence of a miracle within the narration:
  - These were *water* jugs. They had no wine residue.
  - Since they were filled to the brim with water, nothing could have been added like something condensed.
  - The master of ceremonies was convinced this was the best wine. He did not know about the miracle.
  - The servants were convinced that a miracle had been performed.
  - The disciples, including John the writer, **believed**.

### **(12) After the wedding He went to Capernaum for a few days with His mother, His brothers, and His disciples.**

- This was a large group:
  - 1 **mother**
  - 4 **brothers**
  - 5 **disciples**
  - There were sisters, not mentioned here. Mark 6:3.
- Joseph was not mentioned. It is widely believed that he had died and that Jesus was now the family head because he was the firstborn son.
- They were considering moving the family to **Capernaum**. This was a scouting visit.

## **THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS PUBLICLY IN JUDEA**

### **(13) It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration, so Jesus went to Jerusalem.**

- This is the first of four **Passovers** in John that helps us to know in what year events took place. All able-bodied men were required by the Law of Moses to make the trip each year. Ladies could join them if they chose. While **Passover**

was a one-day festival, the word **Passover** was used also of the week following.

- **Jerusalem** was literally **up**. It was about a 3,000 foot climb from Galilee to **Jerusalem** for **Jesus** and His men.

**(14) In the Temple area He saw merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; He also saw dealers at tables exchanging foreign money.**

- **The Temple** was managed by the Sanhedrin made up of Pharisees and Sadducees. Money was important to them so they leased out spaces for



- money changers and animal sales for **sacrifice**.
- This leased space was in the Court of Gentiles, showing their disregard for the place of worship for **foreigners**.
- Money-changers were needed because the only coin acceptable for the offering boxes was the local coin. The worshipers came from other countries and had to exchange for the local money.
- While a worshiper could bring their own animal from home, most opted to buy one locally that was already approved by the priests.
- We wonder about how this place smelled. This was the House of God.
- **Farrar** describes the scene, “And this was the entrance court of the Most High! The court which was a witness that that house should be a House of Prayer for all nations had been degraded into a place which for foulness was more like shambles and for bustling commerce more like a densely crowded bazaar ; while the lowing of oxen, the bleating of sheep, the babel of many languages, the huckstering and



wrangling, the clinking of money and of balances (perhaps not always just) might be heard in the adjoining courts, disturbing the chant of the Levites and the prayers of the priests”

**(15) Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables.**

- The Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5) introduced His public ministry by driving these businesses out of the **Temple**. This was not the place to be doing business.
- The gentle **Jesus** was thoroughly disgusted with the way the **Temple** was being used and said so. He was a man of action and totally upset their businesses. These bankers were now on their knees trying to collect their coins.

**(16) Then, going over to the people who sold doves, He told them, "Get these things out of here. Stop turning My Father's house into a marketplace!"**

- **He** told those who **sold doves** to take their cages away. **He** didn't set the birds free. That would have created more confusion. **He** wanted the buying, selling and trading moved somewhere else. After all, Jesus had authority over this Temple. It was His **Father's house**.
- **R.C. Foster** says graphically:  
 The lowing and bleating of the animals mingle with the raucous cries of the drivers. The holy temple of God has been changed into a market-place! Into this scene a lone figure enters carrying a whip, the symbol of authority and of punishment. A little group of bewildered disciples follow at a distance. Suddenly He mounts to a place where all can see, and, with a single fearful gesture, commands the startled attention of the entire multitude. The divine wrath of the Prophet from Galilee electrifies

the multitude and drives them headlong from His presence as He hurls His thunderbolt of denunciation at their prostitution of God's house.

**(17) Then His disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: "Passion for God's house will consume Me."**

[From Psalm 69:9]

- The **disciples** were chosen because they knew their Scriptures and this one came to their mind. This was just another evidence that the Man they were following was the Messiah the Scriptures had predicted.

**(18) But the Jewish leaders demanded, "What are You doing? If God gave You authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it."**

- This cleansing action brought the landlords to the conversation. They demanded a **sign** from Jesus to prove His **authority**.

**(19) "All right," Jesus replied. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."**

- **Jesus** referred to His own body as **this temple**. He predicted that His body would **be raised in three days**. **Jesus** knew what was ahead, while these Jews were focused only on the **temple** that enabled their extra income. They were contaminating that **temple**.

**(20) "What!" they exclaimed. "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and You can rebuild it in three days?"**

- There was also second cleansing of the temple at the close of Jesus' ministry, also. Indeed, this **Temple** had been **forty-six years** in construction. They did not understand the answer of Jesus, and they would not have wanted to.
- Hear **Paul Butler**:

Would this Galilean rebuild it in three days?  
Preposterous! The reconstruction of the Temple was begun by Herod the Great in about B.C. 20. This is forty-six years later, and it is still unfinished.

**(21) But when Jesus said "this temple," He meant His own body.**

- John the writer gives the clue for understanding the response of **Jesus**.

**(22) After He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered He had said this, and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said.**

- Even these **disciples** didn't understand at the moment, but later they would **remember** and this would strengthen their faith. The disciples didn't understand the idea of being raised from the dead until it actually happened. Jesus had said that it was coming, but they could not grasp such an idea.

**(23) Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in Him.**

- **Jesus** was busy performing **signs**, but we are not told what they were. The nation was gathered and **Jesus** took advantage of the opportunity to do **miracles** that convinced people in the crowd that He was from God. We should always take advantage of times to meet friends to testify of what **Jesus** has done for us.
- John's point is that **many trusted in Him** (believed) **Jesus** because of the **signs**.

**(24) But Jesus didn't trust them, because He knew human nature. (25) No one needed to tell Him what mankind is really like.**

- When John wrote these words, he knew that Jesus knew **human nature**. After all, He had created us in the first place.

**God created everything through Him, and nothing was created except through Him.** (John 1:3 NLT)

- Many people saw His signs, and put their trust in **Jesus**. But He didn't trust them! **Burton Coffman** identifies the situation very clearly:

“Something more than belief has always been a prerequisite for becoming a true follower of the Lord; and that throng of "believers only" had nothing of that "something more" always required. That fatal lack was the thing Jesus discerned . . . . One additional thing, over and beyond faith required of all who would enter the kingdom of God is the new birth; and, appropriately, John next recorded Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus.”

- In the next chapter, we will see what **Jesus** required of a leading teacher in Israel and it was more than simple belief.