

JESUS, ISRAEL & PROPHECY

Week 9 – Jesus’ First Miracle; Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11)

Chuck Swindoll - “Jesus didn’t come to earth to establish a new religion. He came to restore a broken relationship. He came to make the primary – primary again: to love God and enjoy Him forever.” Jesus came to offer salvation so that we could enter into a right relationship with God – for eternity! The Bible tells us Who the Messiah is. The Bible tells us exactly when the Messiah would come to Israel (Dan. 9:26). The Messiah is the PROMISED ONE OF ISRAEL.

Can you imagine what a believer in the early Church must have thought when he/she read through the first four chapters of the Gospel of John? The first readers of the Gospels were primarily Jewish. They would’ve said that it parallels the book of Genesis. The first believers in Jesus were Jewish. They knew the scroll of Genesis. They knew the Torah. Last week we discussed how many Jewish men “lived in the text”! They knew the word of God – the Tanakh, the Hebrew Scriptures, the first 39 books of the Bible!

How does the Gospel of John parallel the book of Genesis?

We have the “Creation” account in Genesis. In John 3 we have the “New Creation” explained by Jesus to Nicodemus – when Jesus told Nicodemus he must be born again to enter the kingdom of God.

- Genesis tells us that God walked in the garden – and Adam and Eve heard Him in the Garden. Gen. 3:8 – “*And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.*”
 - The Gospel of John tells us in the first chapter that the Word became flesh – once again God walked the earth (John 1:14).
- In Genesis, at the creation, God’s Spirit moved on the water and brought forth the Creation. Gen. 1:2b - “. . . *the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*”
 - In John 3, those who will enter the kingdom of God are those who are born of the water (being born into this world – a natural birth) AND the Spirit (John 3:5) – being born from ABOVE!!
 - In John 3 Jesus is speaking of God’s Spirit moving on man, in the flesh, having been born physically into this world. WHY? To bring forth a NEW CREATION.
- In Genesis, God spoke the Creation into existence. Psalm 33:6, “By the WORD of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.”
 - Who is the Word? John 1:1 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The “Word” is Jesus!
 - In John, we see that the WORD was made flesh (John 1:14). Who is this Word? The Word is Jesus.

- In Genesis we read that mankind sinned and man was separated from God – for all eternity. Eternal separation from God is the consequence of sin! BUT GOD provided the way to be reconciled - to be in a right relationship – with Him. God required the shedding of blood to cover sin. God promised the Messiah Who would take away sin – to remove sin. It is through the Messiah that we can be put into a right relationship with God. We must honor the Messiah and trust in Him – or we will perish. We’re told this in Psalm 2:12.
 - John 3 speaks of man being born again, of man being given a new birth through the Spirit of God – of man being reconciled to God – NOT alienated from God – NO LONGER SEPARATED from God. Why? Because when we trust in the Messiah for our salvation, we receive forgiveness of our sin through Jesus forever.

In continuing to compare the Genesis creation account with the Gospel of John, we see:

- On the third day of Creation in Genesis, God performed a miracle with water. Gen. 1:9-13 – “Then God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so. ¹⁰ And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth”; and it was so. ¹² And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ So the evening and the morning were the third day.”
 - In John 2:1, the wedding at Cana took place -- on the third day. Jesus changed water into wine.
- In Genesis 2:18-23, God began His plan for man with the marital union of Adam and Eve.
 - Jesus began His public ministry (following His baptism and temptation) by sanctioning marriage – by blessing marriage - at the wedding in Cana.

Jesus turned the water to wine at the wedding in Cana– essentially creating from nothing. Only God creates (Gen. 1:1).

It was so appropo that Jesus’ first miracle occurred at a wedding. In Jewish thought the bridal couple on marriage day symbolizes the union of God with Israel! And here, at this wedding, was Jesus, the GOD of Israel. Scripture teaches that GOD is the HUSBAND to Israel – Jer. 3:14; Jer. 31:31-32; Eze. 16:8. With miracle at the wedding, Jesus is sanctifying marriage. He blessed the celebration with his presence and with supplying the BEST wine when they had run out of wine! The marriage relationship in Scripture speaks to JOY. Jer. 33:11 – “The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.” Jesus is the Bridegroom!

AND, this miracle proved Jesus' Messiahship. The prophets wrote that the Messianic age, the time when the Messiah would rule and reign from Jerusalem (the Millennial Kingdom), would be a time when wine will flow liberally (Isa. 25:6; Jer. 31:12; Hosea 14:7).

Consider this as well: who did God use in OT times to deliver the children of Israel? Moses. What was Moses' first sign to Pharaoh and the Egyptians? He turned water into blood! Jesus, the Deliverer, changed water into wine.

How OF GOD that Jesus' first miracle occurred at a wedding. The Bible is written against the backdrop of marriage. Israel is seen as the wife of Jehovah as He entered into a covenant relationship with her – a marriage relationship (Jer. 31:32 – God reminded Israel that He was a husband to them! (Isa. 54:5 – “Your Maker IS your husband”))

Wedding etiquette in Jesus' day:

- A Jewish wedding feast was a huge event that lasted approximately one week, perhaps more if one was wealthy. It began on a Wednesday if the bride had never before been married. If the bride was a widow, the celebration began on a Thursday.
- If a guest did not bring an appropriate gift, he might, in certain situations, face legal action.
- If the groom did not properly entertain his guests, he could face strong disapproval from the community.
- At the wedding in Cana, the wine which was supposed to be enough for a week of celebrating, ran out!
 - This could've brought repercussions on the bridegroom's family, color the entire marriage, and disrupt the couple's standing in the community!

John 2:1-2 – *“On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.”*

“On the third day” refers to either three days since Jesus' dialogue with Nathaniel in John 1:43-51, or three days after John the Immerser introduced Jesus to the masses of Jewish people who surround him at the Jordan River (John 1:29-51).

There was a wedding in Cana of Galilee – north of Judea. Nazareth was in Galilee – about 8 to 9 miles from Cana.

“The mother of Jesus was there” – Mary – no Joseph.

Jesus and “His disciples” (Andrew, John [although not mentioned in this verse by name; throughout his Gospel, John rarely, if ever, mentions himself], Simon Peter, Philip, Nathaniel) were invited.

John 2:3 – *“And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.”*

Mary appears to be helping with the arrangements. Mary might’ve been a relative. Mary had authority over the servants; when she gave orders, they obeyed (John 2:5).

The wine that was supposed to be enough for a week of celebrating ran out! If the groom did not properly entertain his guests, he could face strong disapproval from the community. Mary brought the need to Jesus. We don’t know from the text whether or not Mary expected a miracle. Perhaps Mary believed that this was the time for Jesus to present Himself to the world as the Messiah. John had already broadcast Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus’ few disciples know Who He is. While Mary brings the need to Jesus, she is careful not to tell Jesus what to do.

John 2:4 – *“Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.”*

Jesus’ response appears rather harsh – “Woman, why are you saying this to me? His literal question is “What to me and to you?” NKJ – “What does your concern have to do with Me?” “Woman” – We see Jesus use this same term at the cross in giving over the care of His mother to John (John 19:26). Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance: “woman” is a form of address that can be used in indignation or admiration; in kindness and in favor or in respect. We need to remember that Jesus lived in submission to Mary and Joseph (Luke 2:51). However, now we see a change. Jesus, God the Son, must submit to God the Father and His timetable. Jesus has always been Mary’s Messiah – Luke 1:46-47 – *“And Mary said: ‘My soul magnifies the Lord,’⁴⁷ And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.”* As her sovereign Lord, Jesus has authority over her.

Within this dialogue between Mary and Jesus, we see a change – a distancing between them. Focus on Jesus’ question of Mary, “What does your concern have to do with me? BECAUSE – “My hour has not yet come.” Jesus doesn’t say “yes” or “no”. While this is a difficult phrase to understand, it doesn’t appear that He’s saying it’s NOT His concern – because He goes about to resolve the matter. His response primarily appears to indicate a change. “My hour has not yet come” – Jesus was on a divine schedule. His “hour” appears to indicate His death and exaltation (John 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1). And, He would take care of this as His heavenly Father would lead – so that He can move within His Father’s timeframe.

John 2:5 – *“His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.”*

Mary doesn’t appear to be put off. She understood what Jesus said and then tells the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it” (v. 5). She leaves it in Jesus’ hands.

John 2:6 – *“Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece.”*

These six waterpots were used for ceremonial cleansing, purification, which Jewish law required. OT law required various washings of hands and feet, of the body. A devout Jewish family would keep a substantial amount of water on hand for such purposes. Each held 20-30 gallons.

John 2:7-8 – “*Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim.* ⁸ *And He said to them, “Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.” And they took it.*”

Jesus instructs the servants to fill the waterpots with water (up to the brim – leaving no room for additional ingredients) and draw some out NOW and take it to the master of the feast. Jesus made 180 gallons of wine! Do we realize how difficult this would have been for the servants – to follow Jesus’ instructions? Firstly, the master was expecting more wine. And then if the master found out that he was drinking water for ceremonial washing. . . . The servants, however, immediately obeyed. We don’t know when the change took place. There was no dramatic announcement. Jesus simply and quietly exercised His divine prerogative and transformed an embarrassing situation into a social triumph for the groom’s family. The master then called for the bridegroom and praised him.

John 2:9-10 – “*When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom.* ¹⁰ *And he said to him, “Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!”*”

John 2:11 – “*This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.*”

The overall message of the Gospel of John is found in John 20:31 – “Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.” The book, therefore, centers on the person and work of Jesus. Three predominant words (“signs,” “believe,” and “life”) are consistently focused upon to enforce the theme of salvation in Him. John MacArthur states that “signs” are significant displays of power that pointed beyond themselves to the deeper divine realities that could be perceived by the eyes of faith. The miracles of Jesus went beyond the mere act themselves. Jesus’ miracles pointed to the entire story of Scripture and revealed God’s plan of redemption.

What of this miracle/sign?

- Again, this was a miracle of creation – Jesus made wine out of water. Only God creates. This supports what John had written in John 1:1. Jesus is the Word, He is God, He is the Creator.
- Moses was the delivered God had used to release the children of Israel from bondage to slavery in Egypt. Moses turned water into blood as a sign to Pharaoh that God had commissioned Moses with the task of deliverance.

- Jesus is the Deliverer Who would deliver Israel and the Gentile world from bondage to sin.
- Jesus' miracle of the provision of wine proved His Messiahship. The prophets had written in the Tanakh that during the Millennial Kingdom – when the Messiah would rule and reign – wine would flow liberally (Isa. 25:6; Jer. 31:12; Hosea 14:7).
- By this miracle, Jesus is sanctifying marriage which speaks to the union between God and Israel. Jesus is blessing the marriage celebration.
- The marriage relationship speaks to true JOY in the Scriptures. Jesus begins His public ministry at a wedding offering joy as the voice of the Bridegroom (Jer. 33:11).
 - This speaks to the wonderful relationship the Messiah will have with His bride – the redeemed – during the Millennial Kingdom.
 - For those of us who have a personal relationship with Jesus now, we who have received forgiveness of our sins by placing our trust in Jesus as our perfect Passover Lamb - that wonderful relationship – that JOY – has already begun!
- Jesus met the need of the time.
 - Have you ever noticed that the miracles of Jesus were, for the most part, simple? (Aside from raising the dead!) Jesus could've called down the heavenly host, or caused the earth's crust to shake and shift. You name it – He could do it.
 - Jesus didn't do anything for the sake of sensation.
 - He has always met mankind in their need.

There was another miracle that occurred at this first miracle. In John 2:11 we read that His disciples BELIEVED in Him. While they had already believed in Him enough to follow Him, this miracle/sign perhaps brought them from head knowledge to heart knowledge when Jesus manifested His glory. God's glory is the sum of Who He is. Are we seeing God's glory? How are we impacted when God reveals Himself to us?

Perhaps this miracle/sign also points to the marriage supper of the Lamb in the future and of our union with Him (Isa. 25:6; Matt. 8:11). HIM Who is our God – Who IS, Who was, and Who is to come.

Jesus told the disciples at the Last Supper which was a Passover Seder in John 14:1-3 – “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; ^[a] if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ^[b] ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

The disciples knew full well what Jesus was presenting to them. He spoke of the Jewish wedding feast! WHY? What preceded the Jewish wedding feast and what transpired during the feast?

JEWISH WEDDING FEAST:

- The Father of the bridegroom negotiates a price for the bride.
- The bridegroom travels to the bride's house.
- Betrothal symbol – drink from a cup of wine.
- From that moment the bride was declared sanctified or set apart
- Bridegroom would leave the bride's home and return to his father's home. The Bridegroom would speak these words to the bride before his departure: "Let not your heart be troubled. . . I go to prepare a place for you. . .and. . .I will come again". We note two comings on the part of the bridegroom.
- The bride did not know the exact day or hour the bridegroom would return. She needed to be prepared at all times.
- Bridegroom would add onto his father's home – bridal chamber.
- At the father's command, the Bridegroom and the groomsmen (Judges 14; John 3) would travel to the bride's home. The Bridegroom himself didn't know the exact time. Note Matt. 24:36.
- The bride would be beckoned from the street by a shout.
- The entire bridal party traveled to the father's home for a marriage feast (Mat. 25:1-6).
- The Bridegroom and bride went into the bridal chamber to consummate the marriage (Judges 14:12).
- When the marriage was consummated, there was a seven day marriage celebration during which time the bride remained hidden in the bridal chamber
- At the end of the seven days, the Bridegroom brought his bride out for all to see

Questions:

What was new to you re: Jesus' first miracle?

Do you see any additional significance?

What impacted you most?

Suggested Homework:

Prepare for our final lesson by reading John 1 through John 2.

Write down observations and questions concerning Jn. 2:13-22.

Write down passages in the OT that speak of the profile of the Messiah.