

Studies in the Gospel of John

Topic: Seeking A Sign from Jesus

Scripture: John 2

Memory Verse: John 2:19

Lesson 3

John 2

INTRODUCTION: From the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, it appears that Jesus went straight from His baptism into the wilderness to be tempted. (Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1) However, the Gospel of John records at least three days of events which took place after Jesus' baptism and before His temptation: 1) *the salvation of Andrew, John, and Peter took place "the next day" after His baptism (John 1:35-42)*, 2) *the salvation of Philip and Nathanael took place "the day following" (John 1:43-51)*, and 3) *the wedding in Cana of Galilee took place on "the third day." (John 2:1)* The Gospel of John does not record the story of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness due to the fact that John's Gospel presents Christ as God, and as God, He cannot be tempted. (James 1:13)

Only John's Gospel records the events which take place in chapter two. The wedding in Cana of Galilee and the first cleansing of the Temple at Jerusalem are not recorded in the other three Gospel accounts. At both of these events, there is a common desire for Jesus to perform a sign or miracle to prove that He is the Messiah. In both instances, Jesus indicates that it is not the right time to show such a sign. This chapter records two stories of people **SEEKING A SIGN FROM JESUS**.

I SEEKING A SIGN FROM JESUS AT A WEDDING v 1-11

- A. Mary sought for a sign from Jesus v 1-4
 CANA (v 1) - a small town of Galilee located about six miles northeast of Nazareth
 GALILEE (v 1) - "*circle or harp-shaped*" - the northern-most province of Palestine
 Nothing could be more embarrassing for the groom than to run out of food or drink on one of the most important occasions of his life. It may have been that Mary was there because she was related to one of the individuals getting married. Many had accused Mary of being an adulterer due to the fact that she had conceived Jesus out of wedlock. No one seemed to believe her story concerning the virgin birth. But now, Mary must have thought this wedding would have been a good time for Jesus to prove He was the Messiah and clear her reputation by performing some "*sign*." Jesus answered Mary by

calling her “*woman*” (v 4) putting her in a new relationship to himself. He refused to perform a *sign* at this moment stating “*mine hour is not yet come.*” (v 4) He would one day prove He was the Messiah by His resurrection from the dead. (Matthew 12:39-40)

- B. Jesus turned the water into wine v 6-11
FIRKIN (v 6) - “*a liquid measurement equal to about nine gallons*”
Mary gave the servants at the wedding the best advice anyone can give to another human being. She said, “*Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.*” (v 5) Each of the six water pots could have held from 18 to 27 gallons of liquid. That means that the total amount of water made into wine was from 108 to 162 gallons. The “*wine*” (v 9) which Jesus made was **NOT** alcoholic wine. In the Bible, the word “*wine*” may refer to alcohol (Proverbs 20:1; 23:31), to grape juice (Isaiah 16:10) and even to a cluster of grapes still hanging on the vine. (Isaiah 65:8) Drinking alcoholic wine as a beverage has always been wrong and has brought about bad results even from the time it was first mentioned in the Bible. (Genesis 9:21) The only time alcoholic wine should be consumed is for medicinal purposes. (Proverbs 31:6-7; I Timothy 5:23) The turning of water into wine at this wedding was the first miracle Jesus performed in His public ministry. (v 11)
Moses’ first miracle was turning water into blood. (Exodus 7:19-25)
Jesus’ first miracle was turning water into wine. (John 2:1-11)

- NOTE: Christ’s first miracle was important for many reasons:
- 1) it showed that Mary, His mother, had no authority over His ministry (John 2:3-4)
 - 2) it showed that Jesus believed in the marriage union between a man and his wife (John 2:1-2)
 - 3) it met a particular need (John 2:3)
 - 4) it proved Christ’s divine unselfishness (John 2:7-8) - Jesus refused to turn stones into bread at His temptation for Himself, but changed water into wine for others.
 - 5) it “*manifested forth his glory*” as the Son of God (John 2:11)
 - 6) it confirmed the faith of His disciples (John 2:11)

II SEEKING A SIGN FROM JESUS AT A FEAST v 12-25

- A. Jesus and His small group of disciples “*went down to Capernaum*” v 12
CAPERNAUM (v 12) - “*city of compassion*” - a city located along the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee
After preaching His first recorded message in the synagogue at Nazareth, the Jews there became so angry at His preaching that they “*thrust him out of the city.*” (Luke 4:28-31) It was probably at this time that Jesus moved the headquarters for His public ministry

to Capernaum, and it became called "*his own city.*" (Matthew 9:1) Jesus' "*brethren*" (v 12) are the sons of Joseph and Mary who were born to them after the virgin birth of Christ. (Matthew 13:55-58)

B. Jesus drove the moneychangers out of the temple at Jerusalem
v 13-17

The annual "*Passover*" (v 13) Feast celebrated the time in history when the nation of Israel came out of Egyptian bondage. (Exodus 12 40-42) This was supposed to be "*The Lord's Passover*" (Leviticus 23:5), but the spiritual condition of the Jewish religion had become so corrupt that John refers to this feast as simply "*the Jew's Passover.*" (v 13; John 6:4; 11:55) Jewish men came from around the world to observe this special feast. While they were at Jerusalem, they would pay the annual "*half-shekel*" temple tax that was used for the upkeep of the Temple. (Exodus 30:13-14) No coins bearing the image of the emperor or any other heathen symbol would be accepted. All offerings of money would have to be paid in Jewish coins. The moneychangers would gladly change this foreign money into Jewish money, but at a hefty exchange rate. The temple courtyard was composed of four outer courts. As a visitor came toward the sanctuary, he would pass through the *Court of the Gentiles* first, then the *Court of the Women* followed by the *Court of Israel* and finally the *Court of the Priests*. Since the Jews hated the Gentiles so badly, they designated the Gentile court as the place to transact business. Oxen, sheep and doves were the animals normally used in giving a sacrifice to the Lord. These animals were housed and sold right there at the Court of the Gentiles. The place that was supposed to be a place of prayer for all nations instead sounded like a cattle market and smelled like a barnyard. Each offering was sold for enormous prices in order to make money for the greedy merchants that gathered there. It was to this unholy scene that the Lord Jesus came "*suddenly*" just as Malachi had predicted (Malachi 3:1) and in wrath drove out the moneychangers. (Psalm 69:9)

C. The Jews immediately demanded that Jesus give them a "*sign*" to prove He was the Messiah v 18-22

Jesus answers the Jews by telling them that if they destroy "*this temple,*" (v 19) He would raise it back up in three days. Of course, Jesus was referring to the Temple of His body which would be crucified, buried and risen again after three days. The Jews only understood the physical meaning of Jesus' words and thought He was referring to the Temple at Jerusalem. Herod the Great had started rebuilding this Temple in 20 B.C. which means that it had been under construction for "*forty and six years.*" (v 20) What Jesus was saying was that the one sign which would prove that He was

truly the Messiah was His resurrection from the dead.
(Matthew 12:39-40; 16:1-4)

- D. Many at Jerusalem believed in Jesus because of His miracles
v 23-25
Jesus knew that their faith was based only upon His ability to perform miracles, not upon the fact that He was the very Son of God. Such shallow faith is not lasting and must continually be supported by even more miracles. These believed in Jesus but He did not believe in them. He knew that many of these same people would soon go back and walk no more with Him. (John 6:66)

**TEACHERS' TIP: DON'T BE AFRAID TO GO OUT ON A LIMB FOR GOD –
THAT'S WHERE THE FRUIT IS!**

NEXT MEMORY VERSE: John 3:36