

# The Beginning of the Ministry of Christ

## *John 2:1-25*

### I. THE FIRST MIRACLE (John 2:1-12)

#### A. The Setting for the Miracle (John 2:1-5)

1. The day of the miracle: a dispensational picture (John 2:1)
  - a. A thousand years as a day (Psalm 90:4; 2Peter 3:8)
  - b. The first four days (John 1:19, 29, 35, 43)
  - c. The last three days (John 2:1; Hosea 6:1-3)
  - d. The events of the seventh day (matching the thousand year reign – Revelation 20:4-6)
    - (1) Jesus attends a marriage feast (John 2:1-2; Revelation 19:1-9).
    - (2) Dead religion runs dry (John 2:3-6; Hebrews 9:14).
    - (3) Jesus provides new wine (John 2:7-10; Isaiah 55:1-3; Revelation 21:3-7).
    - (4) Jesus manifests His glory (John 2:11; Isaiah 40:5; Matthew 24:29-30).
2. The definition of a marriage
  - a. The attendance of Jesus at this marriage feast brings up the question of what constitutes a marriage. In recent years, some have taught on the basis of Genesis 2:23-24, Matthew 19:5-6, and 1Corinthians 6:15-16 that the sexual joining of flesh is the point at which a marriage takes place. But there is much more to this in the teaching of scripture. First, look at the custom of marriage in the Bible.
    - (1) Differences in the Old Testament
      - a) Polygamy allowed (Deuteronomy 21:15; 1Samuel 1:1-6)
      - b) Divorce allowed (Deuteronomy 24:1-4)
      - c) The teaching of Christ (Matthew 19:3-9)
    - (2) Choice of a wife made by the parents (Genesis 24:1-4); though sometimes the children might be consulted (Genesis 24:58)
    - (3) The husband and the wife were expected to love one another because God, through their parents, had selected them for each other; not because they were romantically attracted to one another.

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- (4) Love before marriage, though rare considering the lack of opportunity, was possible (Genesis 29:10-18; Judges 14:2; 1Samuel 18:20).
  - (5) The marriage dowry
    - a) The dowry was a gift from the young man to the young woman's family as compensation for the loss of her services. NOTE: Whereas the men remained a part of their immediate clan when they married, the women left to join the clan of their husband.
    - b) The dowry was settled by negotiation between the parents of the girl and the representative of the young man and his parents ("the friend of the bridegroom" – John 3:29).
    - c) Sometimes a dowry could be rendered in service (Genesis 29:18; 1Samuel 18:25).
    - d) Some of the dowry was usually given to the bride as a safety net in case the marriage failed (Luke 15:8-9).
    - e) Sometimes the father of the bride would give a special wedding gift, or dowry, to his daughter (Genesis 24:59,61; Judges 1:15).
  - (6) The betrothal
    - a) A promise of marriage was sometimes given. This promise was much like a modern engagement and could be broken.
    - b) In the betrothal, the two parties entered into a covenant (Ezekiel 16:8); one that required the equivalent of a divorce to disannul.
    - c) The betrothal, though binding, did not allow physical union (Matthew 1:18-25).
    - d) The betrothal included the signing of a written document and the giving of a ring or some other sign from the groom to the bride as a promise of future marriage.
    - e) A year or so elapsed from the time of the betrothal to the actual wedding (Deuteronomy 20:7).
  - (7) Wedding ceremony
    - a) Both the groom and the bride were dressed as elaborately as the family could afford or borrow (Jeremiah 2:32; Revelation 21:2); the groom was dressed as much like a king as possible (Isaiah 61:10).
    - b) The bridegroom would go to the house of the bride in order to bring her to his house for the wedding (Matthew 25:1-10 – the ten virgins); he would bring her in a grand procession to his house (Jeremiah 7:34).
    - c) At the house, the bride and groom would stand under a canopy as words of blessing on their marriage were given (John 2:1-11; Ruth 4:11).

- d) The ceremony was followed by a great wedding feast (John 2:8-9; Judges 14:12-18).
- b. Reasons a physical union is not identical to marriage in the Bible
  - (1) The Bible calls a wedding ceremony a marriage (John 2:1-2).
  - (2) The Samaritan woman had a man who was not her husband (John 4:16-18); though she had had five husbands.
  - (3) Marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled (Hebrews 13:4). This would not be possible if all physical unions were marriage.
  - (4) The reason fornication (and adultery) is such a great sin comes from the fact that it commits an act that is to be reserved for husband and wife (1Corinthians 6:15-20). However, this does not make the act identical to marriage.
- c. Three biblical aspects of marriage
  - (1) The spiritual aspect (Malachi 2:14; Matthew 19:6)
  - (2) The civil aspect (John 2:1-2)
  - (3) The physical aspect (1Corinthians 6:16-20)
- d. Biblical teaching concerning divorce
  - (1) God opposes the practice of divorce (Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 19:3-8; Matthew 22:23-30).
  - (2) God recognizes the fact of divorce even when it is unscriptural (John 4:16-18); Note: There is no biblical teaching supporting the idea of “living in adultery.” Like murder, adultery is a sin that is committed. It has consequences and requires God’s forgiveness for a right relationship with Him. But divorce and remarriage does not constitute any sort of continual state of sinning.
  - (3) God allows for divorce when the marriage union has already been broken.
    - a) Death (Romans 7:1-3)
    - b) Adultery/fornication (Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:9)
    - c) Desertion (1Corinthians 7:10-15)
    - d) Danger of life (as in an abusive situation) is not mentioned in scripture but would probably come under the principle of self-defense (Exodus 22:2-3).
  - (4) Unscriptural divorce and remarriage is adultery (Matthew 19:9; 1Corinthians 7:10-11).
  - (5) God seems to allow for remarriage in the case of the victims in an allowed divorce. Certainly, this is the case with death (Romans 7:1-3) and it probably applies to desertion (1Corinthians 7:15) and adultery (Matthew 5:32).

3. The relationship of Jesus to His mother (John 2:3-5)
  - a. Mary is called the mother of Jesus.
    - (1) Before His birth (Luke 1:43)
    - (2) While He is a child (Matthew 2:11; Luke 2:33, 43)
    - (3) During His adult ministry (Luke 8:19; John 2:1, 3, 5, 12)
    - (4) After His ascension into heaven (Acts 1:14)
  - b. Jesus submitted to Mary while He was a child (Luke 2:51).
  - c. Jesus separated Himself from Mary's rule when He began His earthly ministry.
    - (1) He refused to let her lead (John 2:3-4).
    - (2) He called her by the title, Woman (John 2:4).
      - a) We have no record of Jesus calling Mary, Mother.
      - b) Though "Woman" was not a demeaning name, it was used to put distance between them. It is the same title that Jesus used in reference to the Samaritan woman (John 4:21) and the woman taken in adultery (John 8:10).
      - c) Jesus used it again when He made provision for Mary after His death (John 19:26-27).
    - (3) He identified His mother and brethren as those who are faithful followers of the Father (Matthew 12:46-50).
  - d. After Jesus made His point about not following Mary, He was free to do something anyway, possibly out of love or from the fact that the time for acting was right.
  - e. Mary gave a righteous command to the servants: "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it" (John 2:5; Deuteronomy 18:15; Luke 5:5-6).
4. The hour of Jesus (John 2:4)
  - a. The hour of Jesus is the hour of His suffering (John 12:27; Matthew 26:45).
  - b. Jesus mentions this hour seven times in John.
    - (1) As not yet come (John 2:4; John 7:30; John 8:20)
    - (2) As having come (John 12:23, 27; John 16:32; John 17:1)

#### B. The Performing of the Miracle (John 2:6-10)

1. The definition of wine in the Bible
  - a. The biblical word wine refers to the liquid that comes from grapes. It can be used to refer to fermented wine or to unfermented grape juice. Meaning must be determined from biblical context.
  - b. Despite the teaching that grape juice could not be preserved in an unfermented form in Bible times, this view has been proven false by William Patton in his book called *Bible Wines: or, The Laws of Fermentation and Wine of the Ancients*. The following methods were used either separately or in combination by ancient peoples to

retard or to halt fermentation by removing the air or the yeast required for the process.

- (1) Boiling it to a syrup to kill the yeast
  - (2) Sealing out air in an airtight vessel to prevent the fermentation process
  - (3) Straining out the yeast
- c. Kinds of wine identified in the Bible
- (1) New wine
    - a) Refers to grape juice
    - b) Found in the cluster of the vine (Isaiah 65:8)
    - c) Called the “pure blood of the grape” – (Deuteronomy 32:14)
    - d) Called the “fruit of the vine” (Matthew 26:29)
    - e) A rich and tasty beverage
  - (2) Old wine (Luke 5:39)
    - a) In order to preserve wine, it was often boiled to a thick paste and stored in wax-sealed pottery. When time came to use it, it was mixed with water and served. Even that which had some alcohol (because the process was not always perfect) would be watered down to the point of low content (Isaiah 1:22).
    - b) This was probably the condition of the wine used at the marriage feast in John 2.
    - c) The wine that Jesus made was tasty and refreshing. It was evidently like the fresh juice from the vine.
  - (3) Active wine
    - a) This was fermented wine (Proverbs 23:31-32) and was to be avoided.
    - b) This wine was a mocker (Proverbs 20:1).
    - c) To make wine strongly alcoholic like what we have today (10%-15%) requires the addition of much sugar and yeast. Natural grape juice does not have enough of these elements to make strong fermented wine.
    - d) Wine does not naturally ferment to alcohol. Fermentation requires the right proportions of sugar, yeast, and water with an air temperature between 50 and 75 degrees. In the conditions found in the Middle East, grape juice naturally turns to vinegar, not alcoholic wine.
2. The typology of wine; we will just consider the positive typology of wine since this is what would be applicable in our passage where the wine is obviously good.
- a. Blessing (Genesis 27:28; Deuteronomy 7:13; Proverbs 3:10; Isaiah 65:8; Amos 9:13)

- b. Joy (Psalm 4:7; Psalm 104:15; Ecclesiastes 9:7; Jeremiah 48:33; Zechariah 9:17; Zechariah 10:7)
  - c. Wisdom (Proverbs 9:1-6)
3. The typology of the miracle: a picture of dead Judaism, or any other form of dead religion
- a. The wine; it ran out (John 2:3); they lost their joy and blessing.
  - b. The woman. Note: Mary tried to take the lead (John 2:3). This reminds us of the emphasis of Catholicism on Mary.
  - c. The waterpots
    - (1) They were to provide for the purification of the Jews (John 2:6); this is a picture of religious ceremony.
    - (2) They were empty (John 2:7); as are the empty ceremonies of man.
    - (3) There were six of them (John 2:6); the number of man.
    - (4) They were made of stone (John 2:6); like their stony hearts (Ezekiel 36:26).
  - d. The water
    - (1) The waterpots were to be filled with water (John 2:7). Water is a picture of the word of God (Ephesians 5:26) and of the Spirit of God (John 7:38-39). This is the starting place for any revival.
    - (2) They were filled to the brim (John 2:7).
      - a) A firkin was about 9 gallons. That made the total about 120 gallons or so.
      - b) By filling the waterpots to the brim, they were emptied of everything else.
  - e. The work
    - (1) The water was drawn out and taken to the guests (John 2:8). We must take the truth of God to others.
    - (2) Only the servants knew the full extent of the miracle (John 2:9). Those who do the will of the Father know the doctrine (John 7:16-17).

### C. The Aftermath of the Miracle (John 2:11-12)

- 1. The purpose of the miracle (John 2:11)
  - a. It proved the deity of Christ (John 1:14).
  - b. It strengthened the faith of the disciples (John 2:11).
- 2. The short stay in Capernaum (John 2:12)
  - a. On the shore of the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 4:13)
  - b. Called "his own city" (cp. Matthew 9:1 with Mark 2:1)
    - a. The place of much teaching and numerous miracles
    - b. A place especially condemned by Christ (Matthew 11:23-24)

## II. THE PASSOVER IN JERUSALEM (John 2:13-25)

## A. Jesus Cleansed the Temple (John 2:13-17).

1. The first cleansing
  - a. At the beginning of the ministry of Christ
  - b. The second cleansing is similar but not identical and it occurs at the close of His earthly ministry (Matthew 21:12-13).
2. The act of cleansing the temple (John 2:14-16)
  - a. He made a scourge of small cords (John 2:15).
  - b. He drove out the sheep and oxen and their owners (John 2:15).
  - c. He poured out the changers' money and overthrew their tables (John 2:15).
  - d. He commanded those who sold doves to leave (John 2:16).
3. The purpose of the cleansing (John 2:16-17)
  - a. To show Himself the keeper of the temple – “my Father’s house” (John 2:16)
  - b. To oppose the greed connected with religion – “an house of merchandise” (John 2:16)
    - (1) As the shepherds that feed themselves (Ezekiel 34:1-10) or who serve as hirelings (John 10:11-13)
    - (2) As those who suppose that gain is godliness (1 Timothy 6:5,10)
  - c. To demonstrate His zeal for the house of the Lord (John 2:17; Psalm 69:9)
  - d. Christ foreshadowed His later work as judge (John 5:22; Acts 17:31).

## B. Jesus Gave the Sign of the Temple (John 2:18-22).

1. The Jews ask for a sign (John 2:18).
  - a. This is the practice of the Jews (1 Corinthians 1:22).
  - b. On another occasion Christ gives them the sign of Jonah (Matthew 12:38-39), which is the same sign He gives in this passage. Christ also states here that it is an adulterous and evil generation that seeks after a sign.
  - c. As demonstration of this last point, the Jews seek for a sign from Jesus (John 6:30) immediately after they saw Him feed the five thousand (John 6:1-13).

2. Jesus gives the sign of the temple (John 2:19-22).
  - a. He had just cleansed the temple and now He presents Himself as the temple (John 2:19-20).
    - (1) Destroy this temple
    - (2) In three days I will raise it up. Notice that He raises up this temple Himself (John 10:17).
  - b. The Jews understood Him to refer to Herod's temple (John 2:20-21).
    - (1) In building for 46 years
    - (2) Still not completed
    - (3) But He spoke of His body.
    - (4) Note: If this is at the beginning of His ministry, Herod's temple would be 49 years in building at His death three years later. Forty-nine is seven times seven. At this point, the temple of His body was destroyed and raised again in three days while Herod's temple had its veil rent in twain from top to bottom and was made superfluous.
  - c. The disciples remembered the words of Jesus after His resurrection (John 2:22).
  
3. The typology of the temple
  - a. Various types
    - (1) Jesus Christ (John 2:19-21)
      - a) The tabernacle is a picture of the earthly Christ. Note: Peter referred to his earthly body as a tabernacle that he was preparing to put off—emphasizing its temporary nature (2Peter 1:13-14; see also 2Corinthians 5:1, 4).
      - b) The temple is a picture of the glorified Christ.
    - (2) The New Testament body of believers (Ephesians 2:19-22; 2Corinthians 6:16; compare 1Timothy 3:15)
    - (3) The individual New Testament believer (1Corinthians 6:19-20)
    - (4) The individual local church (1Corinthians 3:16-17); Note: many believe that this refers only to the individual believer.
  - b. Resources
    - (1) *Solomon's Temple Spiritualized* by John Bunyan (1688)
    - (2) *The Temple and Its Teaching* by Arthur E. Smith (1956) by Moody Press
    - (3) *The Temple of Solomon* by Kevin J. Conner (1988) by City Bible Publishing
    - (4) Note: much benefit can be found in a study of Solomon's temple as it is a picture of Christ and of the New Testament believers. This is a much neglected study today.

- C. Jesus Responded to the Results (John 2:23-25).
  - 1. The many (John 2:23)
    - a. They saw the miracles.
    - b. They believed in His name.
  - 2. The man Jesus (John 2:24-25)
    - a. His knowledge
      - (1) He knew all men (John 2:24; John 5:42; John 6:64).
      - (2) He knew what was in man (John 2:25; Psalm 44:21; Psalm 90:8; Jeremiah 17:9-10; John 21:17).
    - b. His response
      - (1) He did not commit Himself to men John 2:24).
      - (2) He needed not that any should testify of man (John 2:25).