

John 2: Miraculous Signs

What's going on here?

In chapter 1, John provided a poetic introduction to the Messiah, followed by an account of Jesus' baptism and the selection of some of the disciples.

Now we'll read about two familiar events and think about why John wrote about them next and what purpose they serve in his narrative.

The Wedding at Cana

Read John 2: 1-12. List the following.

1. The occasion described in this passage
2. The geographic location
3. Jesus's probable mood at the event
4. This event as evidence of Jesus' concern for common, ordinary people

Two phrases occur in this passage that are used other times in John's Gospel.

5. How does Jesus address his mother? Does this appear to be condescending?

Read John 19:26. How has the situation changed?

6. Jesus also says, "*My hour* has not yet come." Any thoughts about what Jesus meant by "*my hour*"?

Read John 7:30. Is the meaning the same in this verse?

7. Jesus made wine out of water that was contained in large jars used for purification rites. Why do you think that fact is mentioned by John?
8. **Read Mark 2:22.** How does this reference to "new wine" help to explain the deeper meaning of the reference made by the master of the feast about the "good wine"?

9. What was the result of this first of Jesus' miracles?

10. What happened at the end of the wedding celebration?

The Cleansing of the Temple

Read John 2: 12-22.

List the following.

11. The occasion described in this passage.

12. The geographic location

13. Jesus's probable mood during the event

14. This event as evidence of Jesus' conflict with church leaders

Though the temple was supposed to be a place of worship, it had become a marketplace. From stalls and shops erected within the temple grounds (with the high priest and other temple officials collecting rent for these spaces), merchants sold at a high profit the animals used for worship and exchanged at a high rate secular coins (which featured images, forbidden by the law) for acceptable Jewish coins.

15. Why did Jesus react so strongly against the buying and selling that was occurring in the temple?

16. How did the disciples react?

Read Psalm 69:9.

17. How did the Jews challenge Jesus?

18. How did Jesus answer them? Note that those who questioned Jesus did not understand what He meant.

Jesus Knows What Is in Man

Read John 2:23-25.

19. How did the people immediately react to Jesus actions?
20. How were Jesus' words later twisted by his opponents to convict Him and His disciples?

Read Mark 14:57-58, Mark 15:29-30 and Acts 6:14.

21. When did the disciples finally understand?

Some interesting observations:

John includes few miracles in his gospel. Of these, only one (the feeding of the five thousand) appears in the records of the synoptic gospels.

The three synoptic gospels do contain a shorter account of the cleansing of the temple, but, in these, the event happens during Holy Week.

John's purpose was not to give a historical account of the life of Jesus.

22. What might have been his purpose in beginning his account of Jesus' ministry with these two events?

Additional Bible References

John 19:26

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son!"

John 7:30

So they [people of Jerusalem] were seeking to arrest him [Jesus], but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.

Mark 2:22

And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins – and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins.

Psalm 69:9

For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.

Mark 14:57-58

And some stood up and bore false witness against him saying, 'We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.'"

Mark 15:29-30

And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!"

Acts 6:13-14

[T]hey set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us."