

# John 02 - Wedding at Cana; Jesus' First Visit to Jerusalem; 1st Passover; Cleansing of the Temple

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(2) Water to Wine in Cana (2:1-11)

(A) Occasion (2:1-3)

(a) The ceremony (2:1-2)

1 On the **third day** there was a **wedding** in **Cana of Galilee**, and the **mother of Jesus** was there;

1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there;

1 On the third day of that week there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,

1 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

- "...third day" - John gives a precise chronology of these events, even though he is writing ~60 years after these events took place (Cf. 14:26)

— John's chronology of the events of John 1-2 parallels Gen 1-2...

— John laid out a four-day chronology in John 1...

- Day 1: John the Baptist gave veiled witness to Jesus (1:19-28)
- Day 2: John the Baptist gave open witness to Jesus (1:29-34)
- Day 3: John's two disciples followed Jesus (1:35-42)
- Day 4: Philip and Nathanael met Jesus (1:43-51)
- Day 7: (3rd day) Jesus performs miracle at Cana (2:1-12)

- "...wedding" - typically took place over a number of days, maybe as long as a week.

Even more than most cultures, 1st century Jews weddings were special occasions.

— In days of Roman oppression, hard work and poverty, wedding festivities brought good food, fellowship and joy to the whole community

- "...Cana of Galilee" - 9 miles north of Nazareth, where Jesus grew up; also the hometown of Nathaniel (21:2)

- "...mother of Jesus" - this is the second of four public encounters Mary had with Jesus (Luke 2:41-52; Mark 3:31-35; John 19:26-27)

2 and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.

2 and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.

2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.

2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

- Jesus was not an anti-social loner...He participated in normal societal events

- This first of His miracles favored the institution of marriage

(b) The crisis (2:3)

- 3 When the **wine** ran out, the mother of Jesus \*said to Him, "They have no wine."
- 3 When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus \*said to Him, "They have no wine."
- 3 When the wine ran out, Jesus' mother told him, "They don't have any more wine."
- 3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.
- "...wine" - in the OT, wine is a symbol of joy, abundance, and the messianic age (Cf. Is 25:6; Amos 9:13-14).
- Running out of wine at a party, not adequately providing for the guests at the party, would be utter social disgrace for the host. Such a tragedy would never be forgotten, and would haunt the couple for the rest of their lives.
- This was a very serious crisis for this newlywed couple...no matter how poor, hospitality for the full week of wedding festivities was the bridegroom's duty.
- Few things humiliated a family more than to have too little food or wine for guests. Though drunkenness was a disgrace, wine was essential at weddings. The rabbis in that day said, "Without wine there is no joy."
- Mary obviously understood, at least, that Jesus was a very special child
- He showed up in her womb before she had any sexual contact with a man, so that would be her first clue
- She understood enough about Jesus to understand that He was the solution to her problem, so she comes to Christ, not as a last resort, but a first resort
- It is unlikely that Mary was requesting Jesus to perform a miracle. Despite unbiblical tales of whimsical childhood miracles, v11 distinctly states that Jesus had not yet performed any miracle.

#### (B) Observation (2:4)

- 4 And Jesus \*said to her, "**What *business* do you have with Me, woman? My hour has not yet come.**"
- 4 And Jesus \*said to her, "**Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come.**"
- 4 "**How does that concern us, dear lady?**" Jesus asked her. "**My time hasn't come yet.**"
- 4 Jesus saith unto her, **Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.**
- "...What business do you have with Me" - better translated "Why do you involve Me? You and I have different concerns."
- For Mary, the painful education foretold by Simeon when Jesus was an infant now became unavoidable reality. The "sword" that ultimately separated her from the Son to whom she gave birth began to pierce her own heart (Luke 2:25-35).
- "...woman" - *gynē*, a respectful address, used by Jesus to address His mother many times (Cf. 19:26; 20:15)

- The choice of *gynē* over *mētēr* (the Greek word for "mother") indicated to Mary that she could not exercise maternal authority over His Messianic work
- Jesus was training Mary to see Him no longer as the Son of her flesh, but as the Son of God. She needed to know Jesus as her Lord and yield obedience to Him just like everyone else.
- Jesus used the same word (*gynē*) to address Mary while on the cross (19:26)
- "...My hour has not yet come" - used 8x in this Gospel, every time it refers to the time of Jesus' death. In the first three, the emphasis is on the hour *not having yet come* (2:4; 7:30; 8:20). There will be a time when His hour has come! (12:23,27; 13:1; 16:32; 17:1).
- Every time Jesus spoke of His "hour," He was referring to the cross. His "hour" did not come until after Jesus entered into Jerusalem as King and Messiah, riding a donkey (12:23). A few days later, He prayed (17:1). The next day, He was crucified.
- Everything Jesus did was on a divine time table, including His schedule (7:6).
- Throughout this Gospel, Jesus is always asked to do this or that, but He always makes it clear that His life was not His own, and that He was living in perfect submission to the will of the Father. It was not Jesus schedule, it was the Father's schedule.
- What Jesus is saying here is that His upcoming death and resurrection (about three years from this time) would meet the deepest need of the human race. Rather than meeting an immediate need, even one requested by His own mother, He is focused on what He would ultimately do, which would be an event of far greater magnitude than rescuing a wedding celebration, because it would deal with the sin problem once and for all.
- Jesus put the will of His heavenly Father over that of His earthly mother (Matt 10:37). Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ involves putting His will over the will of our earthly mothers and fathers.
- Jesus never asks us to do something that He has never done. If you find yourself in conflict with parents or children based on your walk with Jesus Christ, take heart because He has experienced the same thing, and now as our sympathetic High Priest, He can identify and encourage us in our struggle.
- Six disciples were present—those mentioned in the previous two days: two brothers, Andrew, and Peter; two brothers, John and James; Philip and Nathanael

### (C) Orders (2:5-7a)

#### (a) From the mother (2:5)

- 5 His mother \*said to the servants, "Whatever He tells you, do it."
- 5 His mother \*said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."
- 5 His mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."
- 5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

- Mary did not know how Jesus was going to bail out this couple from this problem of lack of wine at their wedding, but she trusted in His character and His power
- Mary here is a model about how to handle problems that arise in our lives...someone came to Mary with a problem and she immediately directed them to Jesus Christ

(b) From the Messiah (2:6-7a)

6 Now there were **six stone waterpots** standing there for the **Jewish custom of purification**, containing **two or three measures** each.

6 Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each.

6 Now standing there were six stone water jars used for the Jewish rites of purification, each one holding from two to three measures.

**6** And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

- "...six" - another analogy to the creation days; the same miracle-working power that Jesus exhibited in the six days of creation is about to be unleashed again at a wedding in Cana.

- "...stone waterpots" - used for ritual washing/purification under the Mosaic Law.

Notice the Jesus does not create new jars, He transforms what was already there for the old covenant into something new.

- This is the entire Gospel in one image: the Law doesn't disappear; it is fulfilled, transcended.

- "...Jewish custom of purification" - these pots would be at the front door of the home, filled with water. They were essential to the special ceremonial cleansing of feet, hands and household objects that Jewish tradition required (Mark 7:3-4).

- The OT made no mention of these additional rituals (Lev 11:31-35,40; 13:34;54,58; 14:8-9; 15:5-22), but if these traditions were neglected, the people or objects were considered ceremonially unclean.

- These waterpots had not previously held the wine that ran out...they were waterpots used for washing their hands

- "...two or three measures" - 20-30 gallons

(D) Obedience (2:7b-8)

7 Jesus \*said to them, **"Fill the waterpots with water."** So they filled them up to the brim.

7 Jesus \*said to them, **"Fill the waterpots with water."** So they filled them up to the brim.

7 Jesus told the servants, **"Fill the jars with water."** So they filled them up to the brim.

7 Jesus saith unto them, **Fill the waterpots with water.** And they filled them up to the brim.

- It's puzzling that Jesus told Mary (v4) that His time had not yet come, but in v7 He goes ahead and instructs them to fill the water pots. Jesus was a Man of compassion (Matt 9:36).

— If there was something that moved Jesus, it was compassion for others. Yes, the time would come where He would deal with mankind's ultimate problem (sin), but He also had compassion for those who had other problems.

— Jesus lived His life on a divine time schedule, but He never overlooked or forsook those who needed His compassion

- Do you hold to your daily schedule so tight that you have no room for divine appointments? Do you view others, upon whom you may have compassion or provide assistance, as interruptions to what you have planned to do?

- Jesus instructions were simple...just fill the water pots with water. He didn't lay out for them what He was going to do. God gives us information on a "need to know" basis.

— If they would've refused to fill up the water pots at Jesus' command, God's work would've still gotten done. Some way, some how, Jesus would've done the work He set out to do, but the servants would not have experienced the blessing of being used by God.

— Simple commands are given to us by the Holy Spirit multiple times per day...many of them we choose to ignore

8 And He \*said to them, **"Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter."** And they took *it to him*.

8 And He \*said to them, **"Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter."** So they took *it to him*.

8 Then he told them, **"Now draw some out and take it to the man in charge of the banquet."** So they did.

8 And he saith unto them, **Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast.** And they bare it.

- They followed Jesus' instructions...they filled the water pots (v7b) and they took some out for the headwaiter

— Sometimes the commands of God to us are so simple that they offend our pride (2 Kings 5:9-14; John 21:6)

— When we don't follow these simple commands from God, we cheat ourselves out of blessings that God wants to give to us

— The simplest thing that God calls us to do is to believe on His Son for salvation. It is so simple, yet it causes so much confusion and consternation among the many

worldviews and religions of this world.

— And once we believe and are walking with God, oftentimes He'll ask us to do very simple things and we will not cooperate because of pride. Because of this, we forfeit many blessings.

— What is the path to blessing in this life? First, do the simplest thing God has told you to do, which is trust in His Son for the salvation of your soul. Second, as you grow as a Christian and are walking with the Lord, obey the simple promptings of the Holy Spirit.

— To the extent that we do not obey these promptings is the extent that we cheat ourselves out of blessing. God's work is going to be done whether or not we cooperate...God doesn't need me to do His work. The question is whether or not we are going to receive the blessing for participating in His work.

- "...headwaiter" - *architriklinoi*, the chief of the banquet hall

- Jesus transformed the simple act of obedience of the servants into an experience of His almighty power

— As believers mature in their process of sanctification, they will learn that obedience is the only way to move from a mere intellectual belief in Jesus to the actual experience of His strength at work in us (Phil 2:12-13; 4:13)

— Experiencing Christ's power in daily life gives confidence that all His promises are true, for this life and for eternity (2 Cor 1:20-22)

#### (E) Opinion (2:9-10)

9 Now when the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter \*called the groom,

9 When the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter \*called the bridegroom,

9 When the man in charge of the banquet tasted the water that had become wine (without knowing where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew), he called for the bridegroom

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

- The miracle was done...the six water pots became six wine pots

— A miracle is the transcendence of a normal process, where God sets aside the way things normally work and He super-imposes something into reality that is abnormal.

- Notice that the headwaiter (master of the feast) did not know where the wine came from. Only the servants who drew the water knew. This is a recurring theme in John's

gospel: the world does not recognize who Jesus is, but those who serve Him closest see the miracle firsthand. Proximity to Jesus determines revelation.

10 and \*said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when *the guests* are drunk, *then he serves* the poorer *wine*; but you have kept the good wine until now."

10 and \*said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when *the people* have drunk freely, *then he serves* the poorer *wine*; but you have kept the good wine until now."

10 and told him, "Everyone serves the best wine first, and the cheap kind when people are drunk. But you have kept the best wine until now!"

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

- Commentators struggle with this...did Jesus enable drunkenness and carousing? Did Jesus have to supply so much wine?

— Jesus did none of these things: Jesus always gives humanity something that can be used for good, and wine is one of those things (1 Tim 5:23). Man is the one who takes something that God intended for good and uses it inappropriately to commit evil: wine, sex, etc.

- God creates with the appearance of age...the wine here tasted aged, but was created in a split-second, with no fermentation process.

— Likewise, God created Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden...neither one of them from birth. They were created as if they were already in their late teens to early 20s.

## Wine

In the OT, wine often pointed to the joys of the Messiah's reign (Jer 31:12; Joel 3:18) and God's restoration of His people. The prophet Amos spoke about this topic as well (Amos 9:13-14) to describe the joy surrounding God's regeneration of Israel. Wine was also a picture of intense heart satisfaction in God (Is 55:1; Joel 2:24-26; Zech 10:7) as well as a sign of the blessings He lavishes on His undeserving people (Ps 104:15; Prov 3:9-10; Joel 2:19). The greatest joy and blessing is the "new wine" of the gospel (Luke 5:38). Paul advised Timothy, who apparently did not drink wine, to drink a little for his stomach's sake (1 Tim 5:23). Though the Mosaic Law commanded priests and Nazirites to abstain from alcohol when serving God (Lev 10:8-11; Num 6:3-4; Judges 13:7), Scripture otherwise does not prohibit drinking alcohol in moderation (Deut 14:22-25; Luke 7:33-34; 1 Tim 3:8). Instead, the Bible speaks of wine as a gift from God (Deut 11:13-14), as Jesus demonstrated to this newlywed couple. The Lord's example teaches

us to affirm that Christians are free to choose to drink wine in moderation, while at the same time not working to convince others to drink.

Though Jesus' enemies slandered Him as "a glutton and a drunkard" (Matt 11:19), it is impossible to connect the Lord with any lack of sobriety. Both the Old and New Testaments strongly condemn drunkenness (Prov 23:20-21; Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:21). Proverbs recommends that rulers not drink so they do not forget what has been decreed and deprive the oppressed of their rights (Prov 31:4-5). The NT applies this principle to the choices Christians make...we are free to drink alcohol, but are called to consider the effect our behavior has on ourselves and others (Rom 14:13-23; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 8:9-13). Because excessive drinking harms others, many believers choose to give up or restrict this Christian liberty for the good of their children, friends, churches and society in general. We also must consider the affect even moderate drinking may have on those around us (Rom 14:19,21).

#### (F) Outcome (2:11)

11 This **beginning of *His* signs** Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and revealed His glory; and **His disciples believed in Him**.

11 This beginning of *His* signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

11 Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

- "...beginning of *His* signs" - this is the first miracle Jesus performed and the first of seven signs John the Apostle includes in his Gospel in order to convince his readers to believe in Jesus Christ

- "...His disciples believed in Him" - the disciples were already saved, but the more they walked with Jesus and saw His miracles, the more their faith grew (Cf. 4:53)

— The same is true for us today...with every deliverance from trial and every problem that is overcome, the faith that we already have is brought to a greater place of maturity and conviction

— This is what is happening in the lives of the disciples and this is what is happening in our lives every day

— God brought you to initial faith in Him and since that time He has been orchestrating your circumstances to such a degree that He says to get out of this one, you're going to have to trust Me

— And God comes through...we don't know how and when, but we trust His character and we trust His power

## Seven Signs in John's Gospel

1. Changing water to wine (2:11)
2. Healing official's son (4:46-54)
3. Healing an invalid at the Pool of Bethesda (5:1-18)
4. Feeding the 5000 (6:5-14)
5. Walking on water (6:16-21)
6. Healing a blind man (9:1-7)
7. Raising of Lazarus (11:1-45)

Jesus is the expert in taking something old and making it new...old water becomes new wine (John 2); dirty temple becomes a clean temple (John 2); the old birth becomes new birth (John 3); well water becomes living water (John 4); old worship becomes new worship (John 5). One of the things that God wants to do in your life is clean out the old and bring in the new.

## Miracles, Wonders, Works, Signs

The gospel writers used four different Greek words to describe Jesus' miracles, each emphasizing a different aspect of their purpose:

1. *dunamis*, meaning "powerful," emphasizing the mighty power His miracles displayed (Cf. Matt 11:20,21,23; Mark 6:2,5,14; 9:39; Acts 19:11; et al)
2. *teras*, meaning "wonder," which underscores the extraordinary character of His miracles (Cf. 24:24; Mark 13:22; John 4:48)
3. *ergon*, meaning "works," which describes both His miracles and His ordinary deeds of mercy (Cf. 5:20,36; 7:3; 10:25)
4. *semeion*, meaning "sign," which indicates that His miracles were to teach spiritual truth (Cf. 2:11; 4:54; 6:2; 11:47)

## Symbolism

These six stone jars normally held water used for ceremonial cleansing, an important part of Old Covenant life. Now they contained wine, which is often associated with the New Covenant due to the Lord's Supper. What's more, the wine these jars now contained what was superior to the wine the wedding guests had been drinking before, just as the New Covenant is superior to the Old Covenant (Heb 8:6). This miracle symbolized nothing less than the mission of the Messiah; changing the empty way of

man's religion into a living, joyful, relationship with the Lord, as demonstrated by the wedding celebration.

(3) Temple Cleansing (2:12-25)

(A) Purging the Father's temple (2:12-17)

(a) Cleansing of the temple (2:12-14)

(i) The wickedness (2:12-14)

**12 After this He went down to Capernaum,** He and His mother, and *His* brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days.

**12 After this He went down to Capernaum,** He and His mother and *His* brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days.

**12 After this,** Jesus went down to Capernaum—he, his mother, his brothers, and his disciples—and they remained there for a few days.

**12 After this he went down to Capernaum,** he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

- "After this" - after His miracle of changing water to wine at the wedding

- "...went down" - geographically; Cana was at a higher elevation than Capernaum

- "...Capernaum" - 13 miles NE of Cana; this ended up becoming Jesus' base of ministry as most of His ministry activities were launched from here (Cf. Matt 4:13)

- "...His brothers" - this blows up the Roman Catholic doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary (Cf. Matt 13:55)

**13 The Passover of the Jews was near,** and Jesus **went up to** Jerusalem.

**13 The Passover of the Jews was near,** and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

**13 The Jewish Passover was near,** and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

**13 And the Jews' passover was at hand,** and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

- Passover was one of three feasts compulsory for male Jews (Deut 16:16):

1. The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover, Feast of Firstfruits, & Feast of Unleavened Bread were collectively called "Passover")

2. The Feast of Weeks

3. The Feast of Tabernacles

— Tradition excused those who did not live within 20 miles of Jerusalem, but like Jesus, many God-fearing men and women who lived further away journeyed to Jerusalem to participate in the feasts (2 Chr 30:1-14; Luke 2:41; John 7:2,10; Acts 2:1-11; 8:27).

- "...Passover" - first of four Passovers—not to be confused with another cleansing of the temple just before His death (Matt 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46). Only

John records this visit to Jerusalem and temple cleansing. This is His first visit as the Messiah.

- "...went up to" - a geographical statement; Jerusalem is at a higher elevation than the surrounding area

- When you tour Jerusalem, the bus driver has a special gear they use to climb in elevation in order to get to the city

- There are also various psalms named the Psalms of Ascent that the Jews chanted as they migrated to Jerusalem to celebrate one of the feast days or to worship

14 And within the **temple grounds** He found those who were selling oxen, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated *at their tables*.

14 And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated *at their tables*.

14 In the Temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, as well as moneychangers sitting at their tables.

14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

- "...temple" - *hieron*, refers to the entire temple complex, including the outer courts

- What Jesus found happening in the outer court, which is where the Gentiles were allowed to go, was of great concern to Him

- Gentiles, those who did not know God, were allowed to enter the outer court. The design of God for the outer court was that Gentiles would enter and get a glimpse of God, what is God like, who is God, what are His priorities, what does God value, what is His character like, what is His nature (Cf. Acts 8:27).

- Because up to 3M people would visit Jerusalem during a Jewish feast, many coming from long distances, it was not always possible for them to bring along their own animal to sacrifice. So for convenience sake, they would wait and purchase an animal in Jerusalem once they arrived.

- Since there were specifications for the type of lamb to be sacrificed (unblemished), the priests had a monopoly going on. Even if someone brought their own animal, the priests would look at the animal brought, declare it not to be unblemished, and sell them an animal.

- The priests only accepted coins for payment that had a high silver content, so if you wanted to buy their animal, you had to pay for it with the coin that they had mandated. Since most people did not have this coin, the priests would "exchange" it for them, but the exchange rate was not fair.

- So the priests had used their own laws to take advantage of worshippers, turning feast days and the temple into their own financial racket. Those who had come to

worship God had no choice but to indulge in this financial mess that the priests had created. They had taken a ministry and turned it into a racket.

— This situation is about as far as you can get from the mind of God when He designed the temple and the feast days (Gen 12:3; Is 42:6; 49:6). God chose and set aside Israel so that Israel could be a blessing to the world. Israel's purpose was to be God's vehicle through which He blessed the entire world, and through which the Gentiles could learn about the character of God.

— The temple worship system was designed to teach spiritual truth to those who did not know God or understand His character. They were to come to the temple, in the outer court, and learn what God was like.

— But because the priests in Jesus' day turned the temple into a racketeering operation, they were misrepresenting the character of God to the public. What would a Gentile think if he were to come into the temple at this time? He would think God is a cheater, only interested in money, unfair, unjust, uncaring and greedy.

#### (ii) The whip (2:15)

15 And He made a whip of cords, and drove *them* all out of the temple *area*, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables;

15 And He made a scourge of cords, and drove *them* all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables;

15 After making a whip out of cords, he drove all of them out of the Temple, including the sheep and the cattle. He scattered the coins of the moneychangers and knocked over their tables.

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

- Jesus, seeing what was happening and understanding what was taking place, compared it with God's original design for the temple and His original design for the nation of Israel, and was none too happy. He began dealing with the situation very aggressively...

— The synoptic Gospels place this event toward the end of Jesus' ministry, after His Triumphal Entry (Matt 21; Mark 11; Luke 19), but John places it at the beginning of Jesus' ministry

— The liberals and others who search in vain for ways to discredit the Bible have a field day with this, however most conservative theologians see two separate temple

cleansing incidents, the one described here at the beginning of Jesus' ministry (only mentioned by John), and the one described in the synoptics late in Jesus' ministry.  
— The fact is, the two temple cleansings bracket Jesus' earthly ministry, one at the beginning and one at the end, symbolizing the unbelief of Israel and demonstrating that this is a nation that God can no longer use in the present because it is characterized by unbelief.

(b) Condemnation of the thieves (2:16-17)

(i) The scoundrels (2:16)

16 and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away from here; stop making My Father's house a place of business!"

16 and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business."

16 Then he told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!"

16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

- Christ was very bothered by the commercialization of the temple
- The problem with a focus on money in any ministry is that it is a stumbling block to the unsaved, and it gives the enemies of God a reason for blasphemy

(ii) The Scripture (2:17)

17 His disciples remembered that it was written: "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME."

17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house will consume me."

17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

- Quoted from Ps 69:9...

— The psalmist predicted that when the Messiah arrived, He would be consumed with His Father's things, things that glorified His Father

— His Father's "things" would occupy His mind so much that the psalmist characterizes them as "consuming Him." Jesus was not self-interested or interested in self-preservation, but He was interested in what would glorify the Father. Every great man or woman in the Bible is characterized by this very thing.

— We're always zealous for things that feed our own self interest, but are we really zealous for the things of God? David was offended at the musings of Goliath because

Goliath offended the glory of God (1 Sam 17:26). We are always zealous about attacks on our personal character, but are we as zealous when the character of God is attacked? Are you offended when someone attacks the character of God?

- Are you bothered by the fact that after God played such a huge role in the founding and prosperity of this nation, that the common person today knows nothing about it and gives God no glory for it whatsoever? You can read any unbiased history book and learn about how God single-handedly performed miracle after miracle at the founding of this nation, and even most Christians are not aware of this. Does this bother you?

— You can go through the public school system and learn less than nothing about God's role in the founding of this nation, in the writing of our laws, in the structure of our government. We should be irritated and bothered by this because it goes directly to the glory of God and His key role in the founding of this country.

— The 1.5M abortions that happen in this country every year is an atrocity...we've out-murdered Hitler many times over for the sake of convenience

— Are you bothered by the lack of biblical literacy in the church today, and at how difficult it is to find a church that teaches the whole counsel of God, verse by verse?

The Hebrew language does not have past, present, and future tenses as English does. It has a perfect tense, indicating complete action, and an imperfect tense indicating incomplete action. In Ps 69:9, the tense of the Hebrew verb is perfect. One can translate a Hebrew perfect tense with an English past, present, or future tense, depending on the context. Here an English past tense was appropriate for David's statement about himself, but the Hebrew also permits an English future tense that is appropriate for Messiah: the so-called "prophetic perfect tense."

#### (B) Prediction of His fleshly temple (2:18-25)

##### (a) Ignorance of the Jewish leaders (2:18-22)

##### (i) Sign demanded (2:18)

18 The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?"

18 The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?"

18 Then the Jewish leaders asked him, "What sign can you show us as authority for doing these things?"

18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

- Jesus had just declared war on the Jewish religious leadership...and this war will come to a head just before He is turned over to the Romans to be murdered, in Matt 23

— Notice that they didn't answer Jesus' accusation that they had turned the temple into a financial racket. They wanted a sign of His authority (1 Cor 1:22). They weren't interested in remedying the problem, they just wanted another sign to vindicate His authority.

— At the root of men's request for a sign was an attitude that said, "We do not care what Scripture says. Show us some wonder to prove Your credentials for doing what You did."

(ii) Sign described (2:19)

19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will rebuild it."

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

- The sign Jesus gave them for His authority was His future death and resurrection from the dead

— Jesus is saying is that the miracle that will vindicate His authority will take place after His death, when He rises from the dead

— Why didn't Jesus just give them a sign right then and there? Because His time had not yet come (v4). Jesus did not come into the world to appease man's curiosity. He came into the world to validate who He was and to fulfill His ultimate mission, which was to pay the sin debt of the world.

— Jesus detected the insincerity of these priests: they were not interested in a sign so they could submit to His authority, they were interested in doing anything they could to discredit Him.

— Many people today want to see a miracle in order to validate who Jesus is...and Jesus says, No, I want you to respond to the truth you already have. People need to respond to the light they have already been given.

- Why was Jesus so coy in His response? Why didn't He just say His body rather than "this temple"?

— Because Jesus knows who He is dealing with. Jesus will often conceal truth from people while revealing it to others. This is what Jesus is doing when He teaches in parables, concealing truth from those who will refuse to believe even if truth smacked them upside the head, and revealing truth to those who are open to it.

— When people stubbornly refuse to respond to the light of God's truth, God's judgment is often blindness to more light (Matt 13:10-15)

— The Sanhedrin would ultimately use Jesus' statement here against him during his trial (Matt 26:61) by misquoting it and taking it out of context. They did the same thing with

Stephen (Acts 6:13) and Paul (Acts 21:29).

(iii) Sign distorted (2:20-21)

20 The Jews then said, "It took **forty-six years** to build this temple, and yet You will raise it up in three days?"

20 The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

20 The Jewish leaders said, "This sanctuary has been under construction for 46 years, and you're going to rebuild it in three days?"

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

- "...forty-six years" - Herod's temple was actually a massive renovation of Zerubbabel's temple built during the days of Nehemiah; the remodeling continued until 64 AD, then it was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD

21 But He was speaking about the temple of His body.

21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

21 But the sanctuary he was speaking about was his own body.

21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

- Jesus refers to His body as a temple because in the temple, there were sacrifices and in Christ's body would be the ultimate sacrifice

— In the temple is where God dwelt, but Christ's body is the ultimate temple because while His body veils His glory, He is the ultimate God-Man

(iv) Sign discerned (2:22)

22 So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples **remembered** that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

22 So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

22 After he had been raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this. So they believed the Scripture and the statement that Jesus had made.

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

- One of the problems that Christ had was that He was always speaking on a different plane than many of His listeners...

— Here, He is talking about His body using the temple as a symbol, and the unbelievers thought He was talking about the temple structure

— In John 3, He will talk about spiritual birth to Israel's religious leader (Nicodemus), but he will misinterpret Jesus by thinking He's not talking about spiritual birth but physical birth

— In John 4, Jesus will be talking to the woman at the well about living water, and she'll think He's talking about physical water in the well

— By these misunderstandings, Jesus is highlighting the need for the Holy Spirit, because it's only by the power of the Holy Spirit that we can rightfully and accurately understand the spiritual things of God (1 Cor 2:14)

- "...remembered" - suddenly after Jesus' death and resurrection, the disciple's spiritual intelligence got a lot higher, their spiritual IQ soared to new heights because they had the Holy Spirit (Cf. 7:39)

— Once the Holy Spirit entered the disciples, suddenly many of the things that Jesus talked about and taught over three-and-a-half years made sense

The following three verses are some of the most hotly contested verses in the entire Bible.

(b) Insincerity of the Jewish leaders (2:23-25)

**23** Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many **believed in His name as they observed His signs** which He was doing.

**23** Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing.

**23** While Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Passover Festival, many people believed in him because they saw the signs that he was doing.

**23** Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

- "...believed in His name" - if you track how this phrase is used throughout John's Gospel (1:12; 3:18; 20:30-31), it always refers to personal salvation

— If these other instances are widely agreed to be referring to saved people, they must also refer to saved people in 2:23

— "believed in" - *pisteuō eis*, these people fulfilled the one condition of salvation: belief in Christ. This shorter phrase *pisteuō eis* is used 30x in John's Gospel (Cf. 6:40) and in every single instance it means saving faith.

— To interpret this passage that these people were not believers is to take *pisteuō eis* and interpret it differently here than how it is used everywhere else in John's Gospel

— In John's mind, there is no such thing as a person who has seen Jesus Christ and believed in Him, but does not have eternal life

- "...they observed His signs" - this verse perfectly mirrors John's purpose statement in 20:30-31, where John says that Jesus performed many signs to prove who He was, so that people could believe in Him for salvation. This is exactly what these people did: they believed in Him because they saw the miracles He was doing.

— The progression is: you see the signs, you recognize who Jesus is, you believe on Him for salvation. That is exactly what these people did.

- Many interpreters argue that this does not mean that they placed saving faith in Him as the Son of God, however. Often those who saw His miracles concluded that He was a Prophet, but they were not always willing to acknowledge Him as God.

— For example, after feeding the 5000, the people who saw the sign said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world" (6:14). But it never says that they expressed any belief in Christ. They called Him "the Prophet" which was essentially calling Him the Messiah, but John never said that they took the next step of belief.

24 But Jesus, on His part, **was not entrusting Himself to them**, because **He knew all people**,

24 But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,

24 Jesus, however, did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people

24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,

- "...was not entrusting Himself to them" - they were believers but they had not yet become "friends" of Christ, meaning they were not yet walking with Him in obedience and were not yet ready for further disclosure/illumination (15:14-15)

— The statement is a not about their salvation, but rather the fact that they were not yet mature enough to learn obedience and thus receive additional illumination

— This is not a negative statement by Christ in any way, shape or form, as it is often interpreted. It's just a simple reality that these were believers, but they were not yet "friends" because they had not yet matured enough to begin walking in obedience.

— To understand this passage properly, we need to interpret it in light of what Jesus tells His disciples in 15:13-15

- "...He knew all people" - one of the attributes of Jesus Christ was omniscience

— Jesus had the ability to look right into the heart and motives of people. In 1:47-48 Jesus told Nathanael that before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you. He will tell the woman at the well (4:29) everything that she had ever done.

25 and because He did not need anyone to testify about mankind, for He Himself knew what was in mankind.

25 and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.

25 and didn't need anyone to tell him what people were like, because he himself knew what was in every person.

25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

- What a commentator says about this passage (v23-25) will tell you a lot about their view of grace...

— What 99% of commentators will say is that Jesus didn't entrust Himself to them, so these people weren't really saved (even though it says they "believed in" Him).

Reformed Theology says that they had "miracle faith" instead of "saving faith."

— John 20:30 says that Jesus performed "signs" (miracles) so that people would believe in Him. These signs/miracles were a confirmation of His deity. Jesus performed miracles to prove who He was, so that people would believe upon Him for salvation.

- The reason why John the Apostle covers this topic here is that he's about to write about a discussion between Jesus and the leading teacher/Pharisee of Israel, Nicodemus

— This man would come to faith in Christ early, yet he is afraid to be too aggressive or forward about Jesus Christ (Cf. 12:42)

John 20:30-31:

**30** Therefore many other **signs** Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;

**31** but these have been written so that you may **believe** [*pisteuō eis*] that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever **believes** [*pisteuō eis*] in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Every single salvation passage in John's Gospel uses *pisteuō eis* to define the requirements for salvation.

**Were the people who "believed in His name" saved or not saved?**

(i) Saved arguments

- "believed in His name"
  - If you track how this phrase is used throughout John's Gospel (1:12; 3:18; 20:30-31). If these other instances are widely agreed to be referring to saved people, they must also refer to saved people in 2:23.
- "believed in" - *pisteuo eis*
  - This shorter phrase *pisteuo eis* is used 30x in John's Gospel (Cf. 6:40) and in every single instance it means saving faith

- In John's mind, there is no such thing as a person who has seen Jesus Christ and believed in Him, but does not have eternal life

(ii) Unsavd arguments

The most common interpretation today is that these people were not saved. Their faith was "spurious" or not genuine saving faith. Their faith existed for a moment then it disappeared. They were just believing in Jesus because of His signs, just because they saw a "magic show."

This doctrine is something like the "Twilight Zone" faith...you have on one end saving faith and on the other end unbelief. In between these two faiths is the "Twilight Zone." There's another kind of faith that is not saving faith, but some other type of faith called a "spurious" faith, a faith that is not sincere.

You present the arguments above to someone who doesn't think "believed in His name" refers to saving faith and ask them for evidence, they don't go to how John the apostle uses these phrases in his Gospel or even his other books, but they go directly to James. This is terrible Bible interpretation because you are forsaking the 30 references in John's Gospel to go to another book by another author, who has a completely different purpose for writing.

- James 2:19: You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.
- The audience for John's Gospel and the audience for James epistle are completely different...John wrote to the unsaved Gentiles, to convince the unsaved to believe in Jesus Christ. James wrote to saved Jews. James presumes throughout his book that his audience is saved ("Brethren" is used 13x). Everything James wrote understands and displays very clearly that he was writing to Christians (Cf. James 1:2-4). James is not interested in people acquiring faith through belief in Christ, he's interested in that faith being brought to a level of testing and maturity.
- James is referring to demons. You can't compare what is going on in the demonic realm with what is going on in the human realm. The plan of salvation is not open to demons. No demon will ever be saved as salvation is not an option for them. Every demon is going to hell. So to take that scenario and bring it into human experience, where the plan of salvation is open to us, is to mix apples and oranges.

## Harmony Between John/Paul and James

|                      | <b>John/Paul</b>                    | <b>James</b>                                       |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Issue</b>         | Self righteous Judaism              | Dead orthodoxy                                     |
| <b>Justification</b> | Declaration of innocence before God | Evidence of the believer's useful faith before man |
| <b>Genesis</b>       | Gen 15:6                            | Gen 22                                             |
| <b>Faith</b>         | Justification                       | Sanctification                                     |
| <b>Works</b>         | Favor with God                      | Believer's moral deeds                             |

- Believed on the signs only (v23)
  - The second argument is that these people just believed because of Christ's miracles/signs. How superficial is that? So the argument is that their faith, because they only believed in the signs Jesus did, was a "twilight zone" faith, a "spurious" faith, a faith that disappeared rapidly.
  - The entire purpose of John's Gospel is for people to read about the signs Jesus performed in order to bring them to saving faith in Christ. If John's purpose statement is to convince people who He is based on His signs, and to evoke faith in people because of their true understanding of who Jesus is, why is it a surprise to us that people believed based on His signs?
  - Just believing in Christ's signs is not the noblest kind of faith, that is conceded. In 20:28-29 Jesus rebuked Thomas for needing to see His wounds to authenticate that He was Jesus. Jesus pronounces a special blessing on those who believe without signs, but that doesn't mean that those who do believe based on signs, according to John's purpose statement and the *pisteuo eis* construction used 30x in John's Gospel, they have legitimate saving faith.

- Did not entrust Himself to them (v24a)
  - The most difficult of the unsaved arguments...if these people had legitimate saving faith in Christ, why does it say that Jesus did not entrust Himself to them? People take this phrase as evidence that the people of v23 were never saved.
  - We need to look at the Upper Room Discourse (John 13-17). When Jesus gave the Upper Room Discourse to His disciples, He was talking to 11 saved individuals. Judas, who was never saved, left in 13:30.
  - Those remaining in the Upper Room were 11 believers, so Jesus is not trying to get any of them saved because they were already saved. He did not deal with justification issues, He was dealing with sanctification issues. He is not giving conditions that an unbeliever must fulfill to receive eternal life, He is giving conditions for fellowship and friendship that a believer must fulfill to receive greater light and illumination from God (key verses are 15:14-15).

John 15:14-15:

14 You are My friends if you do what I command you.

15 No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, because all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

- The condition for becoming a Christian is faith, but how does someone who is already in faith become a "friend" of Jesus Christ? The condition that must be fulfilled to become a "friend" of Christ is: obedience.
- Verse 14 is the *condition* for friendship, v15 is the *benefit* of friendship. The benefits include further light, spiritual insight, or additional illumination of what God is doing.
  - If a person is a Christian but they are perpetually walking in disobedience, the understanding that they will have of spiritual things is short-circuited (Cf. 1 Cor 3:1-2; Heb 5:11-14).

The reason why John the Apostle covers this topic here is that he's about to write about a discussion between Jesus and the leading Teacher of Israel, Nicodemus. This man would come to faith in Christ early, yet he is afraid to be too aggressive or forward about Jesus Christ (Cf. 12:42). Nicodemus is a passive Christian at first, who begins to grow into friendship with Christ while Christ's ministry unfolds. Nicodemus pops up in 7:50-51, then goes silent again until 19:38-42 when he is wrapping Jesus' dead body, preparing it for burial.

The passage in 2:23-25 becomes a springboard for introducing Nicodemus. Read v25 then read 3:1...it's as if the chapter division is not in the correct spot (chapters and

verses are not inspired by the Holy Spirit). The chapter division divides the thought, but if you remove the chapter division here, you can see that John has connected the two verses as one narrative. In addition, the end of v23 is connected with 3:2 (talking about signs).

|                    | Salvation     | Friendship     |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Condition          | Faith         | Obedience      |
| Scripture          | John 3:16     | John 15:14     |
| Phase of Salvation | Justification | Sanctification |

(iii) Application

- Assurance of salvation
  - If you buy into the "twilight zone" faith...that there is a faith that saves, then there's "spurious" faith that doesn't save or could evaporate, you are going to struggle with your assurance of salvation your entire life.
  - However, God is clear in His Word that He doesn't want us to walk around worried whether or not we're saved.

## Article XI—Assurance



☉ We believe it is the privilege, not only of some, but of all by the Spirit through faith who are born again in Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, to be assured of their salvation from the very day they take Him to be their Savior and that this assurance is not founded upon any fancied discovery of their own worthiness or fitness, but wholly upon the testimony of God in His written Word, exciting within His children filial love...

### DTS Doctrinal Statement

- Are you ready for Friendship?
  - The church is the world's largest nursery...we have a bunch of saved people who have never gotten out of diapers, still sucking their thumb
  - There's a big difference between growing old and growing up. We're all growing old, but growing up is a different story. How do you grow up? You begin to obey in every area of your life...you look into God's Word and He tells you to stop doing something, you stop doing it. You listen and are in tune with the promptings of the Holy Spirit in your life and you do what He prompts you to do.
    - When that happens, you move out of immaturity and carnality and you begin to receive the full light of God. In other words, Christ sees your obedience and says I can trust that person with greater illumination, greater light, because they are faithful in obedience to what I have already given them.