

John 2 v. 1-25. "Joy" and "Judgement"

¹ 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. ³ And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

⁴ Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come." ⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do *it*."

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. ⁷ 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*.

⁹ 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!" ¹¹ This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

¹² After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days. ¹³ Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

¹⁴ And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. ¹⁵ When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables.

¹⁶ And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" ¹⁷ Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."

¹⁸ So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?" ¹⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

²⁰ Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" ²¹ But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

²² Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said. ²³ Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did.

²⁴ But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men*, ²⁵ and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

Introduction

I would like to re-cap our progress so far, maybe this is your first visit to OIC and you missed the last two messages.

We are studying about the life of Jesus from John's Gospel.

The key verse in John's gospel is John 20: v. 30-31.

Everything that John writes makes a contribution to his purpose. We must keep focused on that.

Chapter 1: v. 1-18 is an introduction to John's Gospel. John uses the opening verses to introduce you to the things that he covers in his gospel. Each subject that John introduces has a parallel passage in another part of the gospel.

We will cover those subjects in full detail later in John's gospel.

The introduction in v. 1-18 is like a tourist guide standing at the entrance to the most beautiful building in the world. The guide describes all the things you are going to see inside the building. You get excited at the entrance, anticipating all you are going to see.

John uses words like Light and Darkness, Life, the Glory of God, Grace, etc. He also introduces us to the deity of Jesus Christ by identifying Him with the "Word" in the O/T.

In the O/T the "WORD" was the person of the deity who created everything and gave life to everybody and everything. We were also introduced to the gospel message of believing and receiving Jesus and becoming children of God, through being born again by God.

Then in Chapter 1 v. 19-34 John the Baptist identifies Jesus Christ to the world.

He does this by connecting Jesus with the O/T. prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. He informs his readers that Jesus is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

(John 1: v. 29)

John's readers would be familiar with the sacrificial system that God operated through the Tabernacle and then the Temple. An innocent life killed to cover the sins of a guilty person.

In v. 35-51 Jesus interacts with the first disciples who follow Him and in these verses Jesus reveals that He has the same attributes as God. All knowing, Everywhere Present and All Powerful. We leave chapter 1 with a promise by Jesus of greater things to come.

We now come to chapter 2. There are two main themes in this chapter.

In v. 1-12 the theme is "JOY" and in v. 13-25 the theme is "JUDGEMENT"

Before we look at the wedding and the miracle of Jesus changing water into wine we need to have some Old Testament background.

During Israel's exile in Babylon, God sent prophets both to challenge the nation and to encourage them that one day God would bring them back to Israel and God would dwell with them and they would live in "JOYFUL OBEDIENCE to GOD". The land would be filled with lots of good food and quality wine. In fact Amos said that there would be wine dripping from the mountains.

Amos 9: v. 13-15.

The time will come," says the LORD,
"when the grain and grapes will grow faster
than they can be harvested.

Then the terraced vineyards on the hills of Israel

will drip with sweet wine!
¹⁴ I will bring my exiled people of Israel
back from distant lands,
and they will rebuild their ruined cities
and live in them again.
They will plant vineyards and gardens;
they will eat their crops and drink their wine.
¹⁵ I will firmly plant them there
in their own land.
They will never again be uprooted
from the land I have given them,”

Says the LORD your God.

It is clear from Amos and other prophecies in Isaiah that the Messianic age has not yet come fully.

However Jesus gives us a taster by changing the water into quality wine, a definite foreshadow of future days.

The Jewish people at that time would have been aware of these prophecies.

With this in mind we now come to the wedding itself.

Jewish weddings in those days were a big occasion. They were very different from weddings today, even western weddings.

There were various stages to a marriage in Bible times. The legal contract came first and had to be signed by the bride's father, there were two other stages and then the final stage was the wedding feast. This was either held at the groom's home or the home of a relative.

Sometimes Wedding celebrations lasted as long as one week. Mary had a leading role in the catering. There was definitely a family connection between Mary and the groom.

It is clear that Joseph her husband was not around at the time but we don't know why? Perhaps he had died.

It would have been a very big embarrassment for Mary if she had run out of food or wine.

You couldn't just drive off to "Cost -Co" or your favourite Japanese supermarket to get more wine or food. Things were prepared well in advance so you had to be careful to calculate how much food and wine you needed for the wedding.

(Some historical commentators tell us that Law suits were not unknown if food or drink ran out at a wedding.)

It was quite a serious situation when the wine ran out. It would have been a big embarrassment for Mary.

Mary only had Jesus to turn to when the wine ran out. We know that Jesus was at least 30 years old and was considered as a full grown adult in Jewish culture.

Mary turned to Jesus with her wine problem. However Jesus said “Woman what does your concern have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.”

Firstly we need to stop and consider what Jesus says. He said “Woman”. Jesus doesn’t say “Mother” why? And secondly Jesus offers a mild rebuke to Mary, why?

Don Carson a famous American Bible teacher offers us a solution which makes sense, at least to me. This is what he says.....

“As a result of this incident Mary’s relationship with Jesus needs to be revised. When Mary accepts that Jesus is actually God and puts her faith and trust in Him as a believer, her faith is honoured and then Jesus responds by changing the water into wine.”

I think Don Carson is correct in his interpretation.

Jesus although appearing to be a little harsh and offensive, was paving the way for Mary to believe in Jesus as the Son of God and put her faith and trust in Him. We now see that the whole purpose of the gospel of John is starting to bear fruit. Mary becomes one of the first believers in Jesus as the Son of God.

Mary had a double blessing at the wedding, her sin problem was dealt with and then her wine problem also found a solution.

Mary was born with a sinful nature and she needed to trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of her sins.

Mary said to the servants “Whatever He says to you do it.” She had the faith that Jesus could do anything.

We need to also note that the water that Jesus changed into wine was not cheap wine. It was the best quality wine money could buy.

Jesus had one major purpose in performing this miracle. John tells us why in verse 11.

v. 11. “This is the beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.”

God’s Glory was manifested and His disciples believed in Him.

The disciples saw and believed. This links with the primary purpose of John’s Gospel.

Before we leave this section I would like you to notice in v. 11 that John tells us that this miracle is the beginning of signs.

What did John mean by this word signs?

Basically a sign was an outward miracle that pointed to a deep spiritual truth.

Jesus miracles are never simply displays of power. They were never done to impress people. They were displays of power that pointed beyond themselves to deeper spiritual things. These things could only be understood with the eyes of “FAITH”.

This was the first sign. Yes it was a miracle to turn the water into wine but the main purpose was to point people to the spiritual significance behind the miracle.

Some Bible Teachers have pointed out that there are 7 signs in John’s Gospel which end in the resurrection of Lazarus. The miracles were performed so that people would believe that Jesus was God in

human form and put their faith and trust in Him. They would then have new life in Him. Therefore accomplishing the purpose of writing the gospel.

What is the application for us today?

There is one application here for us which I need to divide into two parts.

- a) The first is the fact that Jesus by turning the water into wine, is saying that God's glory has now come in the person of Jesus. The Messianic age is here, let us rejoice. The wine is flowing let us praise God and be overflowed with JOY.

Believe in Jesus and have JOY in your heart. JOY is a condition that does not depend on outward happiness, it is the condition of your heart towards God.

If you are a Christian today you can have JOY in your heart, even if you are old, poor or sick or all three. The reason is that your sins are forgiven, you will have a new body in Heaven soon.

- b) The second application is concerning the future. If we know our Old Testament well, we will know that there are many prophecies concerning Jesus that are yet to be fulfilled.

God always honours His word and when Jesus returns for the second time these prophecies will be fulfilled. We should be excited about this. I don't have time today to teach about all these prophecies, but I will in the future. However the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus will return to this earth one day and there will be great JOY for believers in Jesus and great SADNESS for those who have rejected Him.

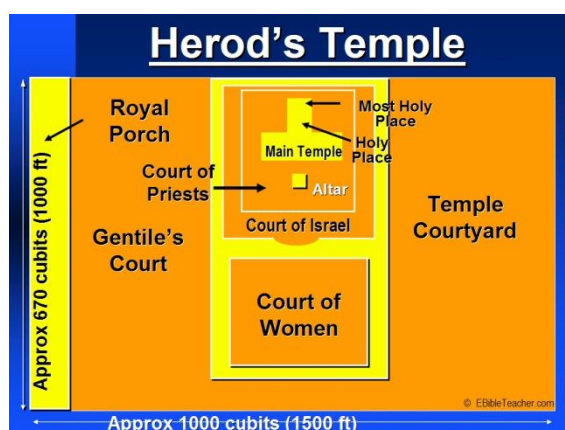
So we have a present JOY and a future JOY. What a privilege it is to be a disciple of JESUS.

The second half of the chapter is not so joyful. It is a solemn warning that Jesus will not tolerate corrupt worship. Nor will Jesus entertain followers who are not sincere in their hearts.

2. Judgement – v. 13-25.

Before we investigate what is happening in this passage we need to have an understanding of the Temple in the Old Testament. (Malachi 3: v. 1-5)

(Picture of temple)



The Temple was a large building about the size of a large Baseball or Soccer stadium.

I have walked all over the ground where the Temple was built in Jerusalem and it's a very large space.

It is approx. 1,500 feet wide by 1000 feet deep.

It was where God dwelt with His people. Originally the Tabernacle was erected in the desert. There were the outer courts where the blood sacrifices took place. Then there was an inner tent which was divided up into two areas. There was the Holy Place and then there was the Most Holy Place or the Holy of Holies.

In the holy Place was a 7 branched golden lampstand. (Hebrew = Menorah) It was about 1.5 meters high and about 1 meter wide. Then there was a solid gold oil fed lamp which was the only source of light, then there was an altar where incense was burnt and a low table, on which fresh loaves of bread were placed each Sabbath.

In the Holy of Holies, where the high priest was only allowed once a year, there was the ark of covenant, which was a small wooden box which held the ten commandments and a pot containing a sample of Manna bread that God was providing them with in the desert.

(picture of the temple, Japanese)

Finally there was an atonement cover, which was a sort of lid for the box. It was gold and comprised of 2 Angels with outstretched wings.

Quote Exodus 25:v. 22.

The Temple was a replica of the tabernacle, except it was not a tent, it was a building.

However it still had the same idea of God dwelling among his people. It was a sacred place.

Over the years the temple had been corrupted by the priests. The Prophets of God had been His mouth piece to warn the priests about their behaviour. One such prophet Malachi who spoke in the days of Jeremiah said these words.

(Malachi 3: v. 1-5)

“Behold, I send My messenger,
And he will prepare the way before Me.
And the Lord, whom you seek,
Will suddenly come to His temple,
Even the Messenger of the covenant,
In whom you delight.
Behold, He is coming,”
Says the Lord of hosts.

² “But who can endure the day of His coming?
And who can stand when He appears?
For He *is* like a refiner’s fire
And like launderers’ soap.

³ He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver;
He will purify the sons of Levi,
And purge them as gold and silver,
That they may offer to the Lord
An offering in righteousness.

⁴ “Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem
Will be pleasant to the Lord,
As in the days of old,
As in former years.
⁵ And I will come near you for judgment;
I will be a swift witness
Against sorcerers,
Against adulterers,
Against perjurers,
Against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans,
And against those who turn away an alien—
Because they do not fear Me,”
Says the Lord of hosts.

Malachi warned of judgement to come. So when Jesus arrived in the temple He was filled with righteous anger and made a whip of cords and drove the businesses out of the temple. They were the corrupt people trying to charge excessive fees for the sacrifices.

Here we have a picture of Jesus who at this time is not the Jesus that we want to see.

It is the Jesus of Judgement. The Bible is clear that one day we are all going to stand before the Judgement seat of Christ.

(2 Corinthians 5: v. 10)

The actions of Jesus brought Psalm 69: v. 9 into the minds of the disciples.

In v. 18 the Jews wanted a sign to prove the authenticity of Jesus.

The Jewish leaders were very disturbed by the actions of Jesus that they wanted to know on what authority He had driven these people out of the Temple.

In v. 19 He gave them one.

Jesus said “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

The Jewish leaders said “It has taken 46 years to build this temple, and you will raise it

In 3 days?”

The disciples didn’t understand what Jesus was saying at the time... but did later v. 22 we are told that after the resurrection of Jesus, then they understood what he meant.

In v. 23 we are told that when Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover many believed in His name when they saw the signs which Jesus did. However Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew the hearts of all people.

What are the application for us here today at OIC in Japan.?

1. Jesus didn't fulfil the promises of the O/T in a comfortable way that the Jews were expecting. His coming meant a challenge to the status quo. It was a judgement on the Jews corrupted worship.

Eventually Jesus would replace Temple Worship. However at the time Jesus judged that there were people who had corrupted His Temple.

How about us? We must discover who Jesus is and what He has come to do.

He is not just a personal god who has come to provide for our needs. He should be Saviour and LORD of our lives.

Jesus does not always fit comfortably into our expectations. Why is this?

He requires Discipleship. This is serving Jesus in the way that He requires. This is not always in the way in which we want to serve. We often have insincere motives for our worship of Jesus. Jesus will judge our motives when it comes to the worship of Him.

Challenge – will we continue to grow in faith as we learn from our uncomfortable Messiah Jesus Christ.? I hope so !! Jesus upset the minds of the religious people at that time. He also will upset our minds if we are focused on the wrong things. Jesus will take us through difficult times in order to bring us closer to Himself.

I close with an illustration from nature.

A Caterpillar spins itself into a silk cocoon. When it's ready to be a butterfly it forces its way through a small hole in the cocoon. This is a very difficult and painful task. If you watch the process, you will feel sorry for the butterfly trying to squeeze through the hole. You will be tempted to cut a bigger hole so that it is easy for the butterfly to get through. If you do this you will be making a big mistake. The reason that it is such a tight squeeze is that the painful process of the butterfly squeezing through a small hole adds strength to its wings so it can fly. If you make a bigger hole the butterfly will easily get through but after that it will not be able to fly. The pressure on its wings releases what is needed to enable the wings to fly.

I know a little boy who felt sorry for the butterfly trying to squeeze through the hole. He made the hole bigger and the butterfly easily got out, but it could not fly.

God gives us lessons from nature.

God takes us through difficult times, not to hurt us, but to strength us, so that we will be strong in the Lord and the power of His might. If God is taking you through difficult times, then He will strengthen you and use you in the future.

In closing remember that the JOY of the Lord is your strength.

Psalm 30: v. 5 says Weeping may endure for a night but JOY comes in the morning.

Let us all make sure that our worship of Jesus is sincere and that we are spiritually open to let God's Holy Spirit refine us, so that we can Glorify God's name.