

The Ministry of Christ, Part 2

After leaving John at Bethany beyond the Jordan, Jesus traveled north to Galilee. In Galilee, He appointed His first five disciples. Then Jesus and the five were invited to a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. Cana of Galilee, which is hometown of Philip and Nathanael (John 21:2), was located about nine miles northeast of Nazareth. A Jewish marriage and betrothal lasted about a year with the wedding banquet lasting up to a week. Jesus later taught a parable about the wedding feast and God's invitation into His kingdom. The wedding banquet was an Old Testament symbol of the Messiah's arrival that Jesus used, (Matthew 22:1-14; Mark 2:19-20). Mary, the mother of Jesus, was present and probably was helping a friend of the family. It is significant the Jesus' disciples were present to witness this first miracle.

Water into wine (John 2:1-10)

When they ran out of wine, Mary told Jesus, *"They have no wine."*

John 2:4-5 NKJV Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

"Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

This verse leads up to the Lord's first miracle. There are several conjectures about what Mary's concern about the wine at the marriage feast had to do with Jesus performing a miracle. Jesus was on a divine mission to act fully in obedience to the heavenly Father. His presence at a wedding feast shows the human side of the life of Christ. Supplying wine for a marriage feast must have some deeper meaning that serves as an illustration of what Jesus came to do. It is apparent that Mary knew that Jesus had the power and ability to turn water into wine, so she said, "Whatever He says to you, do it." This is a tremendous message to anyone who is in need.

The six water pots of stone that were set there, were used for the purification of the Jews' before their meals, (Mark 7:3; Luke 11:39).

The water was prepared as part of the ceremonial washings for purification which certain groups of the Jews observed. The Jews had two sorts of washing for religious purification: one was the immersion of the whole body. The *tabál* was used by the priests at their consecration and by religious converts at their initiation. The second washing was for daily cleansing of the hand and feet, cups, and other vessels at their meals, (Mark 7:3-4). Each pot contained twenty to thirty gallons of water for cleansing.

Why did Jesus tell His mother, "My hour has not yet come?"

This miracle signifies the transformation of the old order of cleansing by the washing of water – (stone water jars for ceremonial washing, v.6) into the new order of grace and mercy through Jesus Christ. The water for purification was replaced with wine which would come to symbolize the

blood of Christ. The blood of Christ replaced the old Jewish ceremonial system that could only cleanse the outside of the vessel.

The term “My hour has not come” is repeated several times by Jesus.

It indicates the hour when the Lord would be offered as a sacrifice for man’s sins. His blood would become the price paid for cleansing and for the sinner’s redemption, joy and relief from sins.

John 2:7–8 NKJV Jesus said to them, *“Fill the waterpots with water.”* And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, *“Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.”* And they took it.

It is obvious from the text that the guests of the wedding feast had been drinking much wine, for all their supply was gone. The coming of the Messiah is depicted with an abundance of new wine, (Jeremiah 31:12; Hosea 14:7; and Amos 9:13-14). Amos said, “the mountains shall drip with new wine.” The master of the banquet said, *“Everyone else serves the best wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then he serves that which is not so good; but you have kept back the good wine until now!”*

The wedding feast extended for several days when Jesus introduced something that was superior to anything they had consumed. What Jesus offers is always superior to what the old things provide. Much has been speculated about the wine that Jesus created, but nothing implies fermentation. *Jesus would not have introduced an intoxicating drink that would possibly entice people to sin or err.*

Isaiah 28:7 NKJV But they also have erred through wine, And through intoxicating drink are out of the way; The priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, They are swallowed up by wine, They are out of the way through intoxicating drink; They err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

Proverbs 20:1 NKJV Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

Drunkenness was common for Greek banquets, but was not an approved practice for Jewish feasts. (See also: Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Peter 4:3-4.) It is clear from the writings of the Apostles that intoxication, drinking parties, and revelries were not an acceptable practice. The miracle of turning water into new wine is an amazing thing. Jesus turned a common substance into something completely different and superior to the old. In John 2:8-10, the master of the feast was surprised that the good wine was kept until the end of the feast. According to ancient sources, good wine was characterized by its harmless nature. What Jesus brings is always superior to everything that has come before. The oral traditions (Mishnah) provided stone jars with water for ritual washing and purification, but Jesus transformed their contents. Old jars of clay can be filled with new wine.

John 2:11 NKJV This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

The manifestation of His glory demonstrated His greatness and power.

First Passover (John 2:12-25)

After the miracle of turning water into wine, Jesus went down to Capernaum.

John 2:12-13 NKJV After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days. Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

His first Passover is a significant mark of time in the life and ministry of the Lord. Pilgrimage to Jerusalem to worship was a significant part of the life of every Jewish family. It was a time to walk up the holy mountain of God into God's presence for worship. Going from Capernaum to Jerusalem is traveling to the south about 85 miles, but up to a higher elevation. The elevation of Jerusalem is 2,474 feet and the elevation of Capernaum is 600 to 700 feet below sea level. While in Jerusalem for the Passover, Jesus went into the Temple. The pilgrimage festival was set aside for entrance into God's presence and worship.

Cleanses the Temple

#10

John 2:14 NKJV And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business.

Why were they selling oxen, sheep, and doves and the money changers doing business in the temple? The Law of Moses required an unblemished animal be offered in sacrifice and every Jewish male that was over nineteen had to pay a temple tax, (Leviticus 1:3; Deuteronomy 17:1).

These things were being sold and offered to the people for expediency to accommodate guests to the temple. The officials and temple tax collectors were taking advantage of those who travelled from great distances and had turned the Father's house into a place of merchandise and sales shops. They took the money of foreign countries and exchanged it into the currency of Jerusalem so that pilgrims could pay the temple tax. When Jesus arrived at the Temple, He found those who sold oxen, sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. The five disciples went with Jesus to Jerusalem and personally witnessed the zeal that the Lord had for the Father's house.

John 2:15 NKJ 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.

John 2:16 NKJ And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"

When Jesus did this, the disciples remembered the word of the Psalmist (69:9) where it was written, "*Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.*"

John 2:18 NKJV So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?"

The Jews wanted to know why He did these things and who gave Him the authority to act this way. Jesus answered their quest for a sign by giving His first prophecy.

First Prophecy

John 2:19 NKJV Jesus answered and said to them, “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*”

Jesus gave this first prophecy about His death at the Temple in Jerusalem. The Jews did not understand what Jesus was saying. They looked at the temple that had taken forty-six years to build, but Jesus was talking about His death, resurrection and the temple of His body, (vs 21). John 2:22 tells us that after Jesus was raised from the dead, they remembered this event and what Jesus said.

Listen closely to this.

John 2:23 NKJV 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.

John does not go into detail about the “signs which He did.” Obviously, Jesus did some things that would be seen as signs, wonders and miracles that testified of who He was, (Acts 2:22).

In John 5:36, Jesus said, “The works which the Father has given Me to finish – the very works that I do – bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.”

John 2:24 NKJV But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men,

What does it mean “Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men?”

These people came to believe and trust in Jesus, but He did not entrust Himself to them because He fully understood their heart. He did not commit or entrust His fate or future into their hands. If they perceived that He was the Messiah, their goal would have been to inaugurate Him as the king or ruler of Israel at that time.

Nicodemus – New Birth

John 3:1 NKJV There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

John 3:2 NKJV This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

John 3:3 NKJV Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

No doubt Jesus had spoken much to His disciples and the crowds; however, this is His first recorded discourse. When Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus about the new birth, this is the first mention of this possibility.

What does it mean to be “born again?”

According to Jesus, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.

John 3:5 NKJV Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

According to the Hebrews, the term “born of “water” refers to natural

birth. Several have taken this verse to mean baptism in water unto salvation. It seems clear that Jesus was saying a person had to be born naturally and then they had to be born of the Spirit. If we accept that meaning, the remaining text becomes much clearer.

John 3:6–7 NKJV That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’

John 3:8 NKJV The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Nicodemus was perplexed about this “NEW BIRTH,” so he asked “How can these things be?” (John 3:9) Then, Jesus gave a detailed answer. First, Jesus asked him, “Are you a teacher in Israel, and you do not know these things?”

John 3:12-13 NKJV If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

Jesus is validating His divine status and begins telling of the price that He will pay for the salvation of mankind.

John 3:14–15 NKJV And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16 NKJV For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

John 3:17 NKJV For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

John 3:18 NKJV He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Jesus was surprised that Nicodemus, a teacher of Israel, did not know these things. Why was Jesus surprised at his lack of understanding? If Nicodemus had understood the words of the Law and Prophets, he would have known this. Within this message, Jesus revealed some wonderful and prophetic truths, John 3:5-21.

1. Jesus came down from heaven.
2. He spoke what He knew and saw.
3. No one has ascended to heaven but Jesus.
4. Jesus would be crucified.
5. God so loved that He gave His Son.
6. Jesus did not come to condemn the world, but to save it.

Within this message, Jesus is revealing His true identity, His true purpose, and goal.