

JESUS' AUTHORITY

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

Summary and Historical Background

Jesus began His public ministry in Cana of Galilee where He turned the water into wine at a marriage feast - Jn 2:1-12. Then Jesus clearly indicated that His earthly mission was divine when He cleansed the temple of those who used it as a marketplace - 2:13-25. The focus of this lesson is to show Jesus Christ's authority to perform miracles and to promote holiness.

I. Jesus' Authority at a Wedding in Cana — 2:1-11

A. The Occasion — 2:1-2

2:1 — A wedding was held in Cana of Galilee, the hometown of Nathanael – John 21:2.

2:2 — Jesus and His disciples were invited guests to this wedding.

B. The Problem — 2:3-5

2:3 — Mary may have been helping to serve at this wedding and, therefore, she was one of the first to learn of the embarrassing situation that they had run out of wine. There is no indication from the Scriptures that Jesus and His disciples had caused the shortage of wine; they were invited guests. But Mary had a plan and told Jesus that He use this occasion to openly declare that He was the King of Israel by solving this problem.

2:4 — "Woman" - This was not a disrespectful term, but just the opposite. It would be like our saying, "Lady" - cf. 19:26; 20:13.

"What have I to do with you?" — Jesus did not outright reject Mary's request, but it was a way of telling her that He was under the authority of His Father in Heaven, not her authority. He had to seek His approval before He could begin His miracle ministry in Israel and show them He was their King. His actions had to be in harmony with God's plan. Everything that He did and said had to reveal exactly what His Father would have Him say and do.

"Mine hour is not yet come" — As far as Jesus knew at the time of her request, this was not the time for Him to reveal Himself as their gracious King to provide for all their needs. Jesus knew that His hour of glory would follow His hour of suffering on the cross - cf. 7:30; 12:23, 27; 16:32; 17:1. However, it seems that His Father used Mary to make this request in order to reveal His will to Him, because Jesus did do what Mary requested of Him.

2:5 — Mary did not argue with Jesus, nor did she try to command Him. She simply told the servants to obey Him. Mary wisely accepted God's ways and did not force her way - Isa 55:8-9. It is best for us to be humble and simply let God have His way in solving our problems.

C. The Miracle — 2:6-10

2:6 — "Six water pots of stone" - These water pots were used by the Jewish people to cleanse themselves of some ceremonial uncleanness. Jesus used these pots which were available to perform His miracle. He does the same with us when He wants someone to hear the Gospel. He uses us, if we make ourselves available, to show some lost person how to be saved so He can perform His miracle of the new birth in that person.

"Two or three firkins" — A firkin is a measure that is equivalent to nine or ten U.S. gallons. That would mean each water pot held up to 20 or 30 gallons of water so six pots would be at least 100-160 gallons of water and possibly up to 180 gallons.

2:7 — "Fill the water pots" - Jesus told the servants to fill the pots with water. They filled the water pots to the brim with water, so that nothing but water was in the pots.

2:8 — "Draw out now" - Then Jesus told them to draw out from the pots and bring it to the

person in charge of the wedding. Since Jesus did not tell them to draw out water from the pots, it may be assumed that the water had already been changed into wine. However, the water may not have changed into wine until the servants drew the water from the pots.

At this point it is important to note that the Greek word for wine is *oinos*; it was the common word for the fruit of the vine as a beverage with or without alcohol, both fermented wine or fresh wine. Some say that Jesus used fermented wine to symbolize His blood in the Lord's Supper. However, it is interesting that "wine" is never mentioned in the Lord's Supper; it is simply referred to as the "cup" and Jesus said that He would not drink of the fruit of the vine until He would drink it in the Kingdom of God - Mt 26:27; Mk 14:23; Lk 22:17-18; 1 Cor 11:25-27. What was in the cup is unknown. Was it fresh wine or fermented wine? Since the bread Jesus used in the Lord's Supper had no yeast to represent the holiness of His body, it may be the fruit of the vine had no fermentation to represent the purity of His blood.

Now the servants did for Christ at the wedding is what every believer needs to do; they obeyed Jesus. First, they filled the water pots with water to the brim. Then they drew out what was in the pots and gave it to the person in charge of the feast. We need to obey each command that Christ gives to us to experience His blessings. The last command that Christ gave believers before He ascended to Heaven was to be His witnesses to all people wherever He sends us in the world, at home or abroad. We must do whatever Jesus tells us to do if we are going to see great things happen in our lives.

2:9-10 — "Water that was made wine" - Although fermented wine was used at meals, believers used it sparingly. Devoted believers in Bible times knew the dangers of fermented wine and warned others to abstain or be careful about its use - Prov 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4-5; Rom 14:21. Would Christ make alcoholic wine when His Scriptures gave warnings about its use? According to the statistics most wines have a 12-15 percent alcoholic content, a dangerously strong drink. Would He add alcoholic wine to the wine that they already had been drinking and potentially make some of them drunk? No! He would give them wine full of rich flavor and keep them sober.

Unbelievers treasure wine with alcohol to experience the euphoria of being drunk, while serious believers treasure wine with no alcohol to enjoy the ecstasy of its flavor, yet keep a sound mind. When the person in charge of this wedding feast tasted Christ's wine, he called the groom to ask him why he had kept the best wine until the last when the custom was to serve the best wine first. What was the best wine? Jesus made the best wine from water which had no time to ferment. He blessed the guests with wine that had stimulating flavor but kept them sober.

D. The Purpose — 2:11

2:11 — "Miracles" - The miracles (signs) that Jesus performed manifested His glory so that the disciples' faith in Him grew deeper. (Miracles never compel faith, but they strengthen faith).

II. Jesus' Authority at the Temple Jerusalem — 2:13-25

A. The Occasion — 2:13

2:13 — The Passover celebration at Jerusalem was being observed - cf. Ex 12:14. This was an annual celebration in the spring of the year commemorating Israel's deliverance from bondage in Egypt by an angel that passed over Egypt to destroy all the first born children and animals that did not have the blood of a pure lamb on the door posts and lintel of their houses. This was symbolic of Jesus' blood that would be spilled on the cross to deliver His people from the bondage of their sins. It was certain that He would be at this celebration.

B. The Cleansing — 2:14-17

2:14 — Jesus came to the Temple and found animals being sold on the temple grounds and money changers with a brisk business. The Sadducees were in charge of the Temple. They

allowed and probably initiated this business as a means of financial gain for themselves. Worshippers who brought their own sacrifices usually had them disapproved by the priest for some flaw that they found and they were told to buy one of the approved animals in the Temple courtyard. To buy any of these animals they had to have their money changed to that used in the Temple. Money changers took advantage of these people by charging them a high price for changing their money.

2:15-16 — Christ drove the animals and money changers from the temple because they had made His Father's house a place of business rather than a place of prayer - cf Mal 3:1, 3. He had every right to drive these corrupt people from this place of worship.

2:17 — The disciples realized the zeal of Jesus' cleansing of the temple was a reference to Messiah's activity when He would come - Ps 69:9. This confirmed the deity of Jesus Christ to the disciples.

C. The Unbelief — 2:18-22

2:18 — The Jewish leaders wanted to dispute the basis of Jesus' authority for cleansing the Temple and asked for a sign. Asking for a sign is evidence of unbelief.

2:19-21 — "Destroy this temple" - Jesus used this figure of speech to reveal their destruction of His body, but He would raise it in three days. Early in His ministry He spoke of His death and resurrection. How could He raise His own body in three days? He is part of the Godhead so He shared in raising His body. The Jews thought He was speaking of rebuilding the Temple in three days that it took Herod 46 years to build, so they scoffed at Him.

2:22 — After His resurrection His disciples saw the true meaning of this saying and it increased the faith in Him.

D. The Miracles — 2:23-25

2:23 — When Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Passover, He did many miracles and the people believed in Him. However, when the basis of a person's belief is in Jesus' miracles, and not His deity, it is a superficial belief and will not endure - cf. 3:1-3; Mt 7:21-23.

2:24 — "Commit" - Lit., "believe." Jesus did not believe in their faith, because He knew it was superficial.

2:25 — "Knew all men" - Jesus knew that the heart of every man was deceitful and desperately wicked - Jer 17:9. Only the new birth could correct and cure his crookedness - John 3:3, 7.