

LESSON 5: JOHN 2:1-22
FEBRUARY 21, 2018

OVERVIEW

- . The first sign – water turned to wine – John 2:1-12
- . The witness (sign) of Jesus cleansing the temple – John 2:12-22

THE FIRST SIGN – WATER TURNED TO WINE – JOHN 2:1-12

- . Background
 - . Jesus and the five disciples leave southern Palestine and begin the sixty mile walk north to Cana, a village high in the hills above Nazareth
 - . Journey took three days
 - . They were heading for a wedding that Jesus had been invited to
 - . It was probably a wedding of an extended family member
 - . Based on the interaction the wedding master had with Mary, she probably held a special status within the family
 - . Mary somehow felt responsible when the wine ran out
 - . The fact that there is no mention of Joseph means he had probably died by now
 - . Jewish wedding festivals were a very important part of the culture
 - . Weddings took place midweek
 - . Festivals lasted longer than a day
 - . The wedding was held later in the evening after the wedding feast
 - . After the ceremony the couple would lead a procession to their new home where the house would be kept open for several days of celebration
 - . The bride and groom would often wear crowns and were treated like a king and queen throughout the celebration
 - . It was an honor for the family to be able to provide plenty of food and drink and entertain all their guests
 - . To run out of wine before the festivities really get started would have been a huge embarrassment to the family
- . This first miracle (sign) points to the importance of the relationship of Jesus with all individuals
 - . Jesus and His relationship with His mother – John 2:3-4
 - . Mary's request infers that she was well aware of Jesus' ability to perform these kinds of miracles
 - . Although there is little known about his childhood, it's possible she

- had witnessed other miracles in the home
- . It's also possible they had talked about the ability to do these things
- . It's also possible, based on Jesus' response, that she was encouraging Jesus to use this moment to make his public declaration as the Messiah
- . Knowing who He was, she had probably been waiting patiently for this moment and was anxious to have it happen
- . There are three points to notice in Jesus' reply
 - . "Dear woman" not only demonstrated tenderness but also a form of respect used in greetings back in that day
 - . "Why do you involve me" was also a courteous expression used back in the day, familiar to "let me take care of this" used today
 - . This moment also marked a clear change in the mother son relationship
 - . Up until the beginning of His public ministry, Mary was probably able to have influence on his day to day decisions
 - . His answer to this request is inferring that Mary will know longer influence His decisions
 - . Mary must have felt a sense of pain as she begins to realize the separation that needs to take place
 - . "My time has not yet come" provides more insight in to what Mary must have been hoping for and Jesus' ability to understand this
 - . Having just launched His public ministry Mary must have been encouraging Jesus to now demonstrate His authority
 - . Jesus is eager to help, thus demonstrating his compassion and interest in relationship, but doesn't want his actions to be advertised
 - . He used this opportunity to provide clear sign to His disciples
 - . His response demonstrates to Mary and the disciples that Jesus was yielding to a higher authority and a Will other than His own
- . Jesus and the servants – John 2:5-8
 - . First, Mary instructs the servants to listen to Jesus and do what he says to do
 - . Another example of her status within this family
 - . Jesus instructs the servants to fill the large jars with water and they obey
 - . The servants have faith that Jesus will turn this water to wine
 - . The servants put this faith to the test when they carry these jugs of water in to the wedding master
 - . These servants are an eyewitness to the miracle
- . The master's comments – John 2:9-11
 - . The wedding master is probably not aware that Jesus has performed this miracle and directs his comments to the bridegroom
 - . Not only has Jesus turned this water to wine but it is better wine than what they were previously drinking

- . The spiritual significance of the Sign
 - . The water in these jugs was used for cleaning and cleansing
 - . The mere presence of these water jugs is a reminder of the outward efforts Jews would make to be cleansed or clean
 - . At the heart of Jewish belief was the need to be outwardly cleansed in order to be in communion with God
 - . The wine symbolizes new Life available through Christ
 - . Jesus spoke of His teaching as "new wine" – Luke 5:38
 - . The water symbolized the old order of things
 - . The new wine was produced by a creative action that only Christ can perform

THE WITNESS (SIGN) OF JESUS CLEANSING THE TEMPLE – JOHN 2:12-22

- . The religious system of sacrifice in the Jewish faith was laid down by God and very specific in nature – Exodus 12:1-20, Numbers 28:16-25, Leviticus 1-5; 23:4-8
 - . Over the years the priests took on a greater role in determining whether the animal was "unblemished" and worthy of the sacrifice
 - . Priests abused their power, corrupting the system and turning it in to a profitable opportunity
 - . They would set up booths in the temple where they would sell unblemished animals to the Jewish men at highly inflated prices
 - . The Jewish men also had to pay a yearly temple tax
 - . Jewish law required that this tax be paid with "half a shekel"
 - . Foreign currency had to be exchanged and was done so inside the temple, again at inflated values
 - . Not only were the corrupt priests and moneychangers fleecing the poor pilgrims, but they were doing it within God's temple, the very place where Jews were to come to atone for their sins
- . The Lord's Holy anger and authoritative action – John 2:14-17
 - . Jesus makes a whip of cords and drives out the money changers and corrupt priests without any resistance
 - . Most of the people in the temple, engaged in this commerce, didn't know who Jesus was but still didn't resist Him
 - . This act demonstrated to the disciples Christ's absolute authority
 - . This act also demonstrated Christ's zeal to do the Will of God
 - . "Zeal for your house will consume me" – Psalm 69:9
- . The Lord's reply to Jews' request for a sign – John 2:18-22
 - . Instead of the acknowledgment of their wrong actions they ask Him for a sign to show His authority
 - . Christ's answer – "Destroy this temple, and I will rebuild it in three days"
 - . The true meaning imbedded in this answer was not yet understood by those listening

- . The priests were thinking of the earthly temple that took forty-six years to build
- . They felt it impossible that anyone could claim to rebuild a destroyed temple in three days
- . What Christ was doing here was foreshadowing His own death and resurrection
- . Here was the perfect sacrifice, the “perfect Lamb of God”, standing before the corrupt priests and money changers foreshadowing the day, when the old system of sacrifice would be forever changed by the new covenant
- . The old, earthly temple would be replaced with the new bodily temple where the Spirit of Christ would reside
- . In just a short time, Christ would demonstrate through His resurrection that the old was truly destroyed and the new Temple would in fact be raised in three days

NEXT LESSON: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 2018 - JOHN 3