

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John 1:14

The Person of Jesus Christ was introduced in chapter one. Several witnesses were referred to by John:

1. John, himself.
2. John, the baptizer.
3. The prophets.
4. Andrew, Peter's brother.
5. Philip.
6. Nathaniel.
7. The Godhead.

There were other witnesses but we will wait until chapter 5 to go into detail. We now enter the account of the initiation of Jesus' ministry where His glory must of necessity be demonstrated. The basic outline is taken from The Gospel of JOHN BELIEVE AND LIVE, by Elmer Towne but not directly quoted:

1. The Power of Christ demonstrated - vs' 1 - 12.
2. The Authority of Christ demonstrated - vs' 13 - 22.
3. The Knowledge of Christ demonstrated - vs' 23 - 25.

The Power of Christ Demonstrated.

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: [2] And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. John 2:1-2.

The "third day" reference to a running narrative by John that started back in 1:28 - probably the three day refers to the time it took Jesus and His disciples to journey from the Jerusalem / Bethany area to Cana of Galilee. From the narrative it looks like Jesus traveled with His disciples. My biblical map shows Jesus going through Nazareth where He may have joined with his mother and then traveled northward - or more likely, that his mother was already in Cana. More on that in a moment.

Let us remember this is Jesus' first few days of His ministry that would finally culminate in His death on the cross and resurrection - a rather ordinary event that would be changed into an extraordinary event - much in keeping with the effect that Jesus has on any event.

It seems that Jesus and his disciples were invited¹ to this wedding which probably was already in progress. I think Mary was somehow involved with the wedding's operation which celebration was already well in progress for the wine had already



¹ Gk kaleō

gotten low in supply. This was probably a family celebration and was attended by many people. Mary was greatly relieved when Jesus arrived:

And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. John 2:3.

We are now introduced to a snapshot of the tender and close relationship that mother and Son had with each other. This results in a rather puzzling dialogue - we will see this in a moment but is perfectly understandable if we pull from a previous exchange with Jesus and Mary as Son and mother. I don't think Mary was expecting what was to follow but rather that Jesus as a highly intelligent (indeed!) and resourceful man and, being her son was brought into her difficulty - a natural response by her with her beloved son. "Son, we have no wine and the wedding celebration is far from finished! What shall we do?" Is more the force of this dialogue. What was to follow by way of Jesus' response has bothered many bible students for centuries. The NIV does the best job of translating this verse although the Amplified sheds some light too:

"Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." John 2:4. NIV.

"Jesus said to her, [[1] Dear] woman, what is that to you and to Me? [What do we have in common? Leave it to Me.] My time (hour to act) has not yet come." AMP.

This is a highly idiomatic comment and most likely leaves out communication that typically went on between Jesus and His mother.² We must assuredly know that Jesus was not "brushing her off" nor being disrespectful - that is shown from her response.³ No. It's just that we, in today's context consider the term "woman" as one of disrespect, whereas in Jesus time it was a term of high respect. Jesus' comment certainly was a reference to, I'm sure, some unspoken communication including "body language" that went on between the two, for Mary's response was:

His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. John 2:5.

We just will not know until heaven what went on between mother and son but be sure that this was a glimpse into a very close and intimate relationship and that Mary had full confidence in the outcome.

And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. [7] Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. [8] And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. [9] When

² Read Luke 2:48, 49 also Luke 2:19. Mary had a special maternal connection with her extraordinary Son. Jesus as a child in His development far exceeded His parent's thought and Mary as mother knew this - the relationship was nothing like that of any other mother / son relationship. We must allow for this.

³ See also 19:26 the tenderest of moments between Jesus and His mother. The same term is used there.

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, [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. [11] This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him. John 2:6-11.

Remarkable - one commentary has it that as the servants took the waterpots out to the feast the water was turned to very fine wine - perhaps a testimony either to Mary's social stature in this family's or friend's wedding party or that the servants themselves unquestioningly obeyed Jesus and Mary's instructions. They certainly had a vested interest in the outcome for they would at least have been severely punished for what would have followed should the water have remained in its original state. No. This was a miracle and everyone knew it was. The safe suggestion was that the miraculous wine was tasted before it was taken out - as was the custom of the day. No one would in their right mind have taken spoiled or sour wine out to a wedding feast without first tasting it and disposing it if it was bad.

A frivolous act by Jesus? No. This has implications for us today. No matter how mundane we may think our problems might be, Jesus is certainly interested in every detail and we should, as Mary did, take our difficulties to Him. He will oversee the outcome of whatever comes our way. The important point is that we should be obedient to Him and be open to Him as this narrative depicts.

This was no less than the creative Power of the Lord in action - a fitting act by Him to demonstrate His Power at the beginning of His Messianic ministry.⁴

The Authority of Christ Demonstrated.

And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, [14] And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: [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; [16] And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. [17] And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. John 2:13-17.

This is a reference to Psalm 69:8, 9. A double reference to David and to the coming Messiah. In Psalm 119:139 David makes another veiled reference to Jesus and the environment in the Temple where those who should have welcomed Him as coming Messiah as did Simeon the prophet⁵ but tragically, here those temple leaders

⁴ This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him. John 2:11.

⁵ Luke 2:25 - 35.

are called His enemies. But I want to take us to another passage in Malachi where this act of Christ is predicted:

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. [2] But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: [3] And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. Malachi 3:1-3.

Here the raw authority of the Lord Jesus Christ is demonstrated - not His uncontrolled rage, for that would been a sin - rather - let us remember that there were other times when His Authority was revealed and the natural reaction of sinful man was to retreat in fear.

The money changers were necessary for the collection of a tax from every male who was of age.⁶ The problem was that greed was the operative word among the money changers. A considerable profit was to be made as the worshipers arrived at the temple, especially those from foreign lands.

The keepers of the animals were necessary in Jesus time as many came from afar and it would have been nearly impossible to present a healthy animal for sacrifice. These animals could be conveniently purchased from these keepers. The problem was that the animals offered to these worshipers were not without blemish as had become the practice even in Malachi's day.⁷ In this act of greed they too had become liars and thieves by selling the imperfect animals to the worshipers.

So, we have Jesus entering the temple in Holy Authority - not uncontrolled rage tipping over the bankers' tables and commanding the animal keepers to remove the imperfect animals from His House. Thus the prophesy of Malachi was fulfilled and Jesus' authority was unquestioned and, again, His Glory was demonstrated. We must make application to our own lives. We are, after all the temple of the Lord.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? [17] If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.
1 Cor. 3:16-17.

I fear that we take our relationship with the Lord too lightly. We have seen the zeal with which the Lord considers His House to be sanctified and holy unto Himself. May we examine ourselves and see if there are money changers or keepers of imperfect offerings within.

⁶ Exod. 30:11 - 16. The Sanctuary shekel was to be used. Therefore, there had to be bankers at the temple.

⁷ Mal. 1:8.

The Knowledge of Christ Demonstrated

Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? [19] Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. [20] Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? [21] But he spake of the temple of his body. [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. [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. [24] But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, [25] And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man. John 2:18-25.

The problem of superficial faith is that there is a misdirection of the object of one's faith. Blind faith or non-saving faith is a system of believing things to be true even though there is no real proof to substantiate the premise of fact. Accepting evolution as a reality is a good example of this. There is no real substantiation for replacing the creation of the universe by the Lord with an accidental series of events where we have order out of complete chaos. Yet the origin of the universe from chaos is believed to be true. We have no substantiation for replacing the creation of life by our Creator with evolution and yet, it is believed to be true by many. This is faith but not the kind of faith that leads to salvation. Saving faith, on the other hand, is a non-meritorious thought process. That is, man alone cannot "have faith" in Christ. It is the culmination of the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit where sinful man - who has no capacity to understand the Gospel⁸ is brought to the place where he can decide for Christ or not. The secret to understanding this passage is to carefully read verses 18 - 21 in our passage. The Jews were seeking signs after their own imposed system of requiring a sign to validate the sayings of rabbis. Here's a quote from one of my previous lessons:⁹

"John 2:23-25 records that many believed in Jesus as the coming Messiah after seeing the miracles that He did. But it was a superficial belief based on the apostate Jewish view of the Bath Qal where the authenticity of a Rabbi's teaching was based on the "voice from Heaven" - truly a mythical rabbinical teaching - up to now, there had been no bonafide miracle from these apostate religious leaders or their fathers. But all that changed. Jesus had performed some miracles - called "signs" by the Jews - and thus was the basis of the superficial belief of many Jews. The basis for legitimate faith in Christ was not to be based on the corrupt system of belief of the Apostate Jews, but in the preaching of the Gospel and in faith in Jesus Christ as savior - as we will soon

⁸ There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. [12] They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Romans 3:11-12

⁹ <http://www.w1vtp.com/nicodemus.htm>

see."

As previously mentioned, the Jews by in large had bought into this apostate system of accepting the sayings of rabbis on the mythical Bath Qal, the voice of God. It is no surprise that many had followed Jesus after His miracles (signs in the Jews minds). The faithlessness of the Jews were revealed when they didn't "get it" when Jesus referred to His body as the temple that the Jews were going to destroy but that was going to be raised in three days. In all fairness, it is interesting to note that even the disciples didn't get it at this point but that afterwards, under the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, they did recall the implication of Jesus' statement.¹⁰

Towns says that these Jews faith were incomplete. I'm not sure that I agree with that assessment. It was not so much that Jesus had been the object of their faith and that they didn't follow though to a saving or committed faith. It was flat misdirected as previously mentioned in this lesson. The disciples' faith was another matter. Their willingness to follow Jesus after this incident and the great falling away is testimony that the object of their faith was Jesus Christ, Himself.

Saving faith has as it's object Jesus Christ and is the result of sinful man's response to the ministry of the Holy Spirit:

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. [64] Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. [65] He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him." [66] From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. [67] "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. [68] Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. [69] We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." John 6:63 - 69. NIV.

We have no claim as "good" people to saving faith. No. Jesus reveals here that the Gospel, itself are Words of Life - the fact that Jesus speaks them gives them Life. The Holy Spirit in His ministry of convicting sinful man brings him along in a special enlightening ministry so that the sinner can understand just enough to grasp the issues of salvation. The Father is involved also. The Father enables the sinner - rather, He *grants* the sinner or bids the sinner to come to Christ. The original for this permission (*our word "enabled"*) is *ditōmai* - to be granted or given. The Complete Biblical Library has some good comments on this usage:

A number of other occurrences of ditōmai, some of them unusual or significant, may be noted. Matthew 20:28 indicates that Jesus gave His life as a ransom. Jesus promised to give His followers a mouth (words to speak) when apprehended by the authorities (Luke 21:15). According to Acts 2:4 it was the Spirit who gave the early disciples the power to speak with tongues at Pentecost. Acts 11:18 says that God

¹⁰ But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. John 14:26

*granted (gave) repentance to Gentiles as well as Jews. Both Acts 2:27 and Acts 13:35 refer to Psalm 16 indicating that God would not allow (give His Holy One to see corruption..."*¹¹ The fact is we have no claim of being especially good or insightful in spiritual matters - rather, we are sinners completely devoid of understanding but that the Father grants to us the privilege hearing and understanding the Gospel in order that we might decide whether or not to accept the gracious call of the Father to become His children. When Peter made his *other* confession here he was merely stating the Words of Life that he had been taught by Jesus Christ *after* he had responded to the illumination of the Holy Spirit and the call of the Father.¹² Sobering thoughts to the sinner who would put off his decision for Christ. Remember what Jehovah said of the pre-flood sinners of Noah's time - that His Spirit would not always contend with unbelievers. As a result these Jews who had misdirected their so-called faith in the signs of Jesus were cut off from the commitment of Jesus to contend with them with the objective of their eventual saving faith - essentially the call of the Gospel was over for them.¹³

Comments on verses 24, 25. Finally, we gain insight to the thinking of Jesus regarding these unbelieving Jews. The original gives us this insight. KJV misses the mark as does NASB. NIV almost has it right: (John 2:25) "**He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.**" NIV is probably the best we can do and still use good English. The original has man in the singular, articular use. That is, we could say that "**He did not need man's testimony about [each] man, for He knew what was in [each] man.**" Another point that could be raised is that the word "knew" in this passage is the same word that is used for the conjugal relationship between a man and a woman in marriage. So the sinner's heart is laid bare before the Lord's mind - there is no fooling Him. All the same, He loves all sinners and desires to become their Lord and Savior.

A final warning to the sinner who would refuse the call of Jesus' Gospel (we cover that in the next lesson).

And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. Rev. 2:23

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. [13] And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man

¹¹ Page 126, Delta - Epsilon volume.

¹² See also Matt.. 16: 16, 17.

¹³ Contrast this non-committal with Jesus' attending a social function of tax collectors (considered "sinners" by the Jews). Matthew and some of his friends had responded to Jesus' call and so He associated Himself with them. Matt. 9:9 - 13.

according to their works. Rev. 20:12-13

This is a very sobering thought. Our first passage is actually written to the church of Thyatira - the lessons is clear - we cannot fool Christ. The lesson should be equally clear to the sinner that Jesus Christ searches both the hearts and the hearts' motivation (reins - an OT reference to the emotions / motivations of a person) and will give (our old friend *didomai*) according to their works (judgment).

The second passage shows that every sinner will be raised from the dead to face judgment. Two books will be opened up - the book of the works of the sinner and the book of Life - the registry of those who had received Christ as Lord and Savior. There will be no thought hidden in that day - there will be no evil deed nor inadequate good work left uncovered in that day. The Lord knows what is in each and every man. Next time, we look at that call the Jesus gives to all men.