

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

JOHN 2.1-12



T. M. Moore

A Scriptorium Study

And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,

He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Gospel of John: John 2.1-12
Copyright 2017 T. M. Moore
Susie Moore, Editing and Finishing
The Fellowship of Ailbe
www.ailbe.org

Except as indicated, Scripture taken from the New King James Version. © Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. All psalms for singing adapted from The Ailbe Psalter. All quotations from Church Fathers from Ancient Christian Commentary Series IV a and b: John, edited by Joel C. Elowsky, General Editor Thomas C. Oden (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006. Verse translation of John by T. M. Moore.

Introduction to *John 2.1-12*

It is appropriate, I think, that Jesus' coming out occurred at a wedding feast, since His coming again will inaugurate an eternal wedding feast, as John records in Revelation 19.

In Cana of Galilee Jesus manifested His glory, but not in a spectacular and public way. The glory of God is not always recognized for what it is. Yet we who follow Jesus aspire to manifest His glory in all things, even in matters of eating and drinking (1 Cor. 10.31).

We're pleased to provide *Scriptorium* studies in PDF format at no charge. We hope you will find them helpful and encouraging as you press on in your journey toward spiritual maturity with the Lord.

Please visit our website, www.ailbe.org, to discover the many other resources available to serve your needs. The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Visit our website also to subscribe to our worldview study *ReVision*, our devotional newsletter *Crosfigell*, and our worldview newsletter *The Week*.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

T. M. Moore, Principal
tmmoore@ailbe.org

1 A Wedding in Galilee

Read and meditate on John 2.1, 2.

Like the other gospel writers, John selects the material he wants to report to suit the larger purposes he wants his work to serve. None of the other gospels records this story. But then, much of what the other gospels tell us, John simply chooses to ignore. He is focused on one primary theme, and everything he reports is intended to emphasize that idea.

¹In Galilee, in Cana, on the third day after this, a wedding was observed, with Jesus' mother present. ²Jesus and His followers were invited to attend as well.

- John 2.1, 2

Reflect

1. Review John 1.14. What stood out to John as *most* important about the coming of the Word-made-flesh? What is the glory of God? Complete this prayer: *Lord, when I come to Your Word, I expect to meet You in Your glory (2 Cor. 3.16-18). Show me Your glory today, so I can...*

2. Yes, it's the glory of the Word that John will emphasize in his gospel. But he wants to be very sure we don't misunderstand what he *means* by the glory of the Word, or *what* of that glory he wants us to see above all else. More on that as we go along. First: The next day, the tenth hour, on the third day...Does it seem to you that John is *remembering actual events*? Do you think this lends credibility to his account? Explain. *Your Word is the true report, Lord, of...*

3. My sense is that some things John was remembering struck him as ironic. For example, can you see in John's mention of "three days" anything like *foreshadowing*? And what about *Jesus* being present (and thus blessing) a wedding in Cana of Galilee *of the Gentiles*? Any irony in that? *Lord, give me patience as I read, and help me to see...*

4. John mentions that Mary was at the wedding, as well as Jesus' siblings (v. 12). But he does not mention Joseph. It's possible Joseph may have died by this time. What does it suggest about Mary's family – including Jesus – that they were all invited to this wedding? Were they *known* in this little village? In what sense? *Lord, many people "know" You – know Your Name, at least, or something about You. But how can they come to know You truly? What do you want me...*

5. It is interesting to compare this story with the one that occurs at the end of chapter 2. In each case, Jesus enters into a social and cultural setting, where He takes action to accomplish His glory. What does it suggest about weddings – and marriage – as this was understood in Jesus' day, that He attended this wedding and added His blessing to it? Bring together into one the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

"The Son of God went to the wedding so that marriage, which had been instituted by his own

authority, might be sanctified by his blessed presence. He went to a wedding of the old order when he was about to take a new bride for himself through the conversion of the Gentiles, a bride who would forever remain a virgin. He went to a wedding even though he himself was not born of human wedlock. He went to the wedding not, certainly, to enjoy a banquet but rather to make himself known by miracles. He went to the wedding not to drink wine but to give it.” *Maximus of Turin (d. 408/423 AD)*

John begins his story of Jesus’ public ministry with the Lord attending and blessing a wedding – a ceremony of covenant love, according to the good and perfect will of God for human beings. As Jesus came to Cana of Galilee to honor the good purposes of God and bless those who submit to those purposes, so He came to earth, to seek His own Bride and begin reconciling the world to His Father. Does it matter how *we* view the institution of marriage, or how *we* understand its purposes? Explain.

Closing Prayer

Your throne, O God, *is* forever and ever;
A scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your kingdom.
You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You
With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.
All Your garments are scented with myrrh and aloes *and* cassia,
Out of the ivory palaces, by which they have made You glad.
Kings’ daughters *are* among Your honorable women;
At Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir.

Psalm 45.6-9

Psalm 45.6-9 (*Manoah: When All Your Mercies, O My God*)

Your throne, O God, is evermore, and upright is Your reign;
Though wicked men Your Name abhor, Your righteousness must gain.

Your God has thus anointed You with oil of gladness great.
Your robes are rich with sweet perfume; sweet music gilds Your gate.

In gold the queen at Your right hand, with princesses around,
Resplendent with You takes her stand while glories great abound.

2 Not this Glory

Read and meditate on John 2.3, 4.

This passage is sometimes misunderstood, as though Mary had overstepped her bounds, and Jesus had to rebuke her. But we get a better sense of the true nature and importance of this exchange if we keep John's larger purpose – the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth – in mind.

³*And when the wine ran out, before the feast was ended, Jesus' mother turned to Him and said, "They have no wine."
⁴He answered, "What concern is this of mine? Or why should you consider this to be a matter that might interest or move Me to act? Good woman, listen carefully: the hour which is appointed unto Me, the glory that awaits Me, is not yet arrived."*

- John 2.3, 4

Reflect

1. I find something terribly symbolic in the fact that the wine ran out prematurely. Cana was a small village, and a wedding would have provided a time of joyous celebrating, forgetting daily struggles and trials, for people who lived simple but probably hard lives. They came to the wedding, no doubt at least in part, for the wine. And now the wine – the refreshment, the social glue, the fleeting joy – was gone. Can you see that, in some ways, this situation spoke of the state of Israel under Roman occupation? Does it speak to the situation of people today? Complete this prayer: *Lord, for how many people in my Personal Mission Field does the wine run out all too soon? O Lord, send me like Jesus to them, to...*

2. Mary doesn't ask anything of Jesus. She simply apprised Him of the troubling fact that the wine had run out. Do you think she had more in mind than just to inform Him? Such as? *Sometimes, Lord, I don't know what to ask of You, all I can do is...*

3. Calvin explained that Jesus' addressing Mary as "Woman" was not reproachful, but respectful – like saying, "Ma'am." I think he's right (though Maximus of Turin and others disagree). Jesus' response to His mother is not to rebuke her, but to get her thinking. What is He trying to get her thinking about? How does this relate to John's overarching purpose in writing this gospel? What is John, in recalling this exchange, trying to get us to think about? *Lord, every day I'm involved in situations where Your glory might break through. Today, for instance...*

4. To what does the phrase "My hour" point? Even though *this* situation was not *that* one, nevertheless, this situation would manifest the glory of Jesus (cf. v. 11). If *this* is *not* the glory of Jesus' "hour," it at least points forward to it (since it is *glory*). What does *this* glory suggest about the glory that will be revealed in Jesus' "hour"? *All glory is Your glory, Lord, and all glory reminds us that...*

5. John had written, “we have seen His glory...” But he was pointing far beyond the event in Cana of Galilee. He doesn’t want us to think of glory primarily in ways such as we see manifested here. But he does want us to see this as showing the glory of Jesus. Not *this* glory, John seems to be saying, but...? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote from questions 1-4.

Summary

“With [Jesus], nothing is incomplete or done at the wrong time, just as with the Father there is nothing haphazard. The Lord checked Mary’s untimely haste when she was urging him to perform the wonderful miracle of the wine and wanting him to partake of the cup, which would have so much emblematic significance later on. This is why he said, ‘Woman, what have I to do with you? My hour is not yet come’ – waiting for the hour that was foreknown by the Father.” *Irenaeus (ca 153-202 AD)*

John wants to *show* the glory of Christ in this miracle, but he also wants to *downplay* this manifestation of his glory, so that we don’t get confused about the glory we should be seeking, and miss it, much later on, when he spreads it out gloriously before us. When you think of the glory of Jesus, what comes to mind?

Closing Prayer

You are fairer than the sons of men;
Grace is poured upon Your lips;
Therefore God has blessed You forever.
Gird Your sword upon *Your* thigh, O Mighty One,
With Your glory and Your majesty.
And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, *and* righteousness;
And Your right hand shall teach You awesome things.
Your arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the King's enemies;
The peoples fall under You.
Your throne, O God, *is* forever and ever;
A scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your kingdom.
You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You
With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.

Psalm 45.2-7

Psalm 45.2-5 (*Manoah: When All Your Mercies, O My God*)

You of all men are the fairest, Lord, and Your lips are flush with grace;
Thus God has blessed You evermore before His holy face.

Your sword gird on Your thigh, O Lord, in splendid majesty;
Ride out, resplendent in Your Word, to glorious victory.

For meekness and for righteousness Your right hand shall prevail.
Your foes shall come to deep distress when You their souls assail.

3 Whatever

Read and meditate on John 2.5-7.

Now try to think of Mary not *rebuked*, but perhaps *invited to share* in whatever Jesus might do. Does she have a bit of a twinkle in her eye as she turns to those servants? And how like Mary it is tell them to do whatever the Lord says (cf. Lk. 1.38)! Mary cannot know what's about to happen – just as we can't know how the Lord might show His glory through us – but she seems excited to get on with it. How about us?

⁵*She, turning to the servants, said, "Whatever He instructs you, do."* ⁶*Nearby, six large stone vessels, used to purify with water, as the rite required, were found. Now each of these, when filled, could hold around two dozen gallons. Jesus said unto the servants, "Fill these six stone vessels to their brims with water." So they did.*

- John 2.5-7

Reflect

1. If you only memorize one verse out of the Gospel of John, memorize John 2.5. Why? Complete this prayer: *Lord, today, whatever You say to me...*

2. We note that the water pots which were used for purification were either empty or only partly full. How much water would they hold all together? How many half-gallons of milk is that? Mmm (hands rubbing together)...this celebration is just getting started! *You are the Lord of abundance, Jesus! Abound in me today by...*

3. OK, now Jesus is about to manifest His glory. Got it. Only *Jesus* can do that. However, He engages nameless servants for the *set-up*. Meditate on 1 Corinthians 10.31. Relate this, and you, to Jesus' determination to glorify Himself *today*. *Lord, use me as Your servant today to...*

4. Why "to the brim"? Did Jesus want to make sure that everyone could see that all that was in those stone jars was *water*? Or did He have something else in mind? *Fill me to the brim, Lord, with Your Spirit, and I...*

5. Do you get the feeling something really *fun* is about to happen? John can be very dramatic, and he knows how to engage not just our minds but our *affections* as well. WE JUST CAN'T WAIT for what we know Jesus is about to do! What role do affections (like anticipation, joy, delight) play in following Jesus? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

Summary

"There was a reason why the Evangelist says, 'After the manner of the purifying of the Jews.' [He said this] so that none of the unbelievers might suspect that lees had been left in the vessel and then water was poured upon them and mixed with them in order to make a very weak wine. Therefore he

says, ‘After the manner of the purifying of the Jews,’ to show that those vessels were never receptacles for wine. Palestine is an arid country with few fountains or wells. They used to fill water pots with water so that they would not always have to go to the rivers if they became defiled, but rather could have the means of purification readily at hand.” *John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

God manifests His glory in various ways, but most pointedly in our Lord Jesus Christ. Whenever we serve Jesus according to His command, we are in a position to be docents of the glory of God, earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4.7) through whom God can bring the glory of Jesus to light in even the most ordinary of situations. How does the prospect of this *affect* you?

Closing Prayer

Listen, O daughter,
Consider and incline your ear;
Forget your own people also, and your father’s house;
So the King will greatly desire your beauty;
Because He is your Lord, worship Him.
And the daughter of Tyre *will come* with a gift;
The rich among the people will seek your favor.
The royal daughter *is* all glorious within *the palace*;
Her clothing *is* woven with gold.
She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors;
The virgins, her companions who follow her, shall be brought to You.
With gladness and rejoicing they shall be brought;
They shall enter the King's palace.
Instead of Your fathers shall be Your sons,
Whom You shall make princes in all the earth.
I will make Your name to be remembered in all generations;
Therefore the people shall praise You forever and ever.

Psalm 45.10-17

Psalm 45.10-15 (*Manoah: When All Your Mercies, O My God*)

Let none keep us from hearing You; desire our beauty, Lord!
We bow, submitting humbly to Your ever-faithful Word.

The Church in robes of woven gold assembles to the King.
With joy complete and gladness bold, His praise she e’er shall sing.

4 Their Little Secret

Read and meditate on John 2.8, 9.

It pleases the Lord Jesus to reveal Kingdom secrets and mysteries to the humble and obedient (cf. Matt. 13.11), and He does so here, in this first manifestation of His glory.

⁸*And then*
He said, “Draw out some water now, and when you have, go quickly and convey it to the wedding host.” Which they were quick to do. ⁹The host then tasted of the water (now made wine), but knew not either where or how such wine had come to be (the servants, who had drawn the water from the vessels knew, however).

- John 2.8, 9

Reflect

1. In all His other miracles, Jesus either *touches* someone or *speaks to* or *about* someone. How did He accomplish this miracle? Complete this prayer: *Lord, when You think about me...*
2. The chemical symbol for water is, as everyone knows, H₂O. While there is no chemical symbol for *wine*, a molecule of wine contains a lot more than just hydrogen and oxygen, including ethanol, glycerol, acids, tannins and phenolics (whatever those are). Meditate on John 1.1-3 and Hebrews 1.3. Where did all those other molecules come from? *You are sovereign, Lord Jesus, over all creation, and over all my...*
3. Meditate on 1 Corinthians 2.16 and Ephesians 3.20. We may not be able to think molecules into existence, but should we expect *more* of the mind of Christ in us than what we typically experience? Explain. *Lord, help me to see my life with Your mind, to think like You think, plan like You would plan, and today...*
4. Let's go back to those servants for a minute. They *knew* the secret here. Do you think they wanted to *tell* anyone what they knew? Why? *Lord, I get so excited about what You're doing in my life that...*
5. We note that Jesus was glorified here, and the result was that the joy of many people was extended and enhanced – even though they had *no clue how*. The celebrating continued with gusto, and no one credited Jesus for anything. Is there a lesson here about living for God's glory? Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

Summary

“Addressing the expectant servants, he said, ‘Fill the jars with water.’ The servants promptly obeyed, and suddenly in a marvelous way the water began to acquire potency, take on color, emit fragrance and gain flavor—all at once it changed its nature completely! Now this transformation of the water

from its own substance into another testified to the powerful presence of the Creator. Only he who had made it out of nothing could change water into something whose use was quite different.”

Maximus of Turin (d. 408/423 AD)

Jesus can make something out of nothing, and, in the bargain, bless and bring joy to all kinds of people. What *nothing* in your life will Jesus turn to *something* for blessing others today? How can you prepare for this even now?

Closing Prayer

He turns rivers into a wilderness,
And the watersprings into dry ground;
A fruitful land into barrenness,
For the wickedness of those who dwell in it.
He turns a wilderness into pools of water,
And dry land into watersprings.
There He makes the hungry dwell,
That they may establish a city for a dwelling place,
And sow fields and plant vineyards,
That they may yield a fruitful harvest.
He also blesses them, and they multiply greatly;
And He does not let their cattle decrease.
When they are diminished and brought low
Through oppression, affliction and sorrow,
He pours contempt on princes,
And causes them to wander in the wilderness *where there is no way*;
Yet He sets the poor on high, far from affliction,
And makes *their* families like a flock.
The righteous see *it* and rejoice,
And all iniquity stops its mouth.
Whoever *is* wise will observe these *things*,
And they will understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.

Psalm 107.33-43

Psalm 107.33-38, and 1-3 (*Faithfulness: Great is Thy Faithfulness*)

You make the desert a river o'erflowing;
You make a wasted life fruitful and strong!
You bless the hungry with fields for the sowing;
Bless and increase us who to You belong!
Lord, for Your wondrous works, and for Your steadfast love,
We give You thanks, we exalt Your great Name!
We who from east and west, north and south gather,
Boldly redemption in Christ we proclaim!

5 The Best for Last

Read and meditate on John 2.10.

The best for last – for these *last days* of the cosmos, God has, indeed, reserved His Best. And our Best, too. Let's not miss *any* opportunity to *enjoy* God's Best and to praise and extol His Best to others.

So he called the bridegroom,¹⁰ and he said to him, "I do not understand: Each man, at the beginning of the feast, serves good wine to his guests, and leaves the least preferred 'til all the guests have drunk their fill. But you the best wine have reserved until this moment!"

- John 2.10

Reflect

1. Now let's be honest: There's a comic quality to this little vignette. Here's the master of the feast, blathering away in praise of the groom, who doesn't have a clue what he's talking about, but is willing to receive the compliment, as the servants smile at one another knowingly and go about their business. The Gospel is serious business, of course. But the Lord has a sense of humor. He intends for us to enjoy our lives in Him. Right? How do you enjoy the Lord? Complete this prayer: *Lord Jesus, thank You for the joy I know in...*
2. John does not recount the parable of the new wine in old wineskins, which comes a bit later than this story, and which is told in conjunction with a parable about a bridegroom (cf. Matt. 9.15-17; Mk. 2.19-22; Lk. 5.36, 37). But you can bet he was aware of that parable, as well as of the fact that the other gospel writers told it. Was John helping us to understand that parable by recounting this story? Explain. What does this suggest about how the Spirit helps us understand difficult portions of His Word (cf. 1 Cor. 2.12, 13)? *Lord, teach me how to let Your Word be its own best commentary. As I'm reading anywhere in Scripture, help me...*
3. I'm sure John sensed the irony of that master's comment: "the good wine until now" – the best for last. John knew that the story he was telling signaled the beginning of the last days (cf. Acts 2.14-17). What does he want us to understand by this master's comment? *These are the last days, Lord. Help me also to make them the best days by...*
4. We note that Jesus did not feel the necessity for explaining what had happened. Does glorifying God by blessing other always require words? Explain. *Even if I have no opportunities to talk about You today, Lord, help me to glorify You by...*
5. In John's gospel, the connection between wine and Jesus' blood is not explained, as it is in the other gospels. John seems to have been content for his friends to tell that part of the story, even though he undoubtedly had the Last Supper in mind as he wrote his gospel. In what sense is the

“new wine” of Jesus’ blood “better” than the “old wine” of the blood of animal sacrifices (cf. Heb. 10.1-10)? Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

Summary

“On the wedding day in Galilee, water was made wine. Do we have appropriate words or senses to ascertain what methods produced the change by which the tastelessness of water disappeared and was replaced by the full flavor of wine? It was not a mixing; it was a creation, and a creation that was not a beginning but a transformation. A weaker liquid was not obtained by admixture of a stronger element; an existing entity perished, and a new entity came into being. The bridegroom was anxious, the household in confusion, the harmony of the marriage feast imperiled. Jesus is asked for help. He does not get up or busy himself. He does the work without any effort. Water is poured into the vessels, wine drawn out in the cups.” *Hilary of Poitiers (ca. 315-367 AD)*

This story is delightful and significant for so many reasons: its humanity, cultural importance, eschatological significance, mystery, comedy, simplicity, and subtlety. The stories of Jesus are *real* stories, not fantasies, not super-hero stories, not myths. The Word-become-flesh brings the blessings of God’s goodness to the flesh of the world. And He’s doing this still through people like you and me. Who will know the touch of Jesus’ goodness through you today?

Closing Prayer

Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD, O my soul!
While I live I will praise the LORD;
I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.
Do not put your trust in princes,
Nor in a son of man, in whom *there* is no help.
His spirit departs, he returns to his earth;
In that very day his plans perish.
Happy is *he* who *has* the God of Jacob for his help,
Whose hope is in the LORD his God,
Who made heaven and earth,
The sea, and all that *is* in them;
Who keeps truth forever,
Who executes justice for the oppressed,
Who gives food to the hungry.
The LORD gives freedom to the prisoners.
The LORD opens *the eyes of* the blind;
The LORD raises those who are bowed down;
The LORD loves the righteous.
The LORD watches over the strangers;
He relieves the fatherless and widow;
But the way of the wicked He turns upside down.
The LORD shall reign forever—
Your God, O Zion, to all generations.
Praise the LORD!

Psalm 146

Psalm 146.5-8, 10 (*Hallelujah! What a Savior!: Man of Sorrows*)

Blest are they whose hope resides in the Lord, Christ at His side.

By Him heav'n and earth abide –

God forever reigns in Zion!

He is faithful evermore; He gives justice to the poor,

Feeds the hungry from His store –

God forever reigns in Zion!

Jesus sets the pris'ner free, heals blind eyes that they may see,

Lifts those burdened painfully –

God forever reigns in Zion!

6 First Glory

Read and meditate on John 2.11, 12.

The purpose of Jesus showing His glory was not to impress people or merely provide a good time for unwitting beneficiaries. He showed His glory so that His disciples would believe in Him. Ultimately, the glory of God has its intended impact when this is the result.

*¹¹Jesus thus the first of all
His many signs performed there in that small
town, manifesting first in Galilee
His glory, and His followers believed
in Him.*

*¹²And after this He went down to
Capernaum, His mother with Him, too,
and His disciples and His brothers. And
they tarried for a few days in that land.*

- John 2.11, 12

Reflect

1. There is something so lackadaisical in John's comment, as he bridges out of Jesus first miracle into an entirely different kind of story. It's like, "Yeah, this is just the first; stay with me, there's more to come." Imagine you're reading this for the first time, and then you read, "This beginning of His signs..." As a reader, what does that make *you* want to do? Is there any advice here for sharing the Gospel with others? Complete the following brief prayer: *Lord, give me grace, and let all my words draw others forward to...*

2. Jesus manifested His glory in this "sign." A sign is something which points to something else, or clarifies something we may be seeking ("Where's my exit!"). What did this incident "sign"? Meditate on Psalm 19.1-4 and Colossians 1.27. Does Jesus still "sign" Himself in the world today? How? *Lord, make me a sign today, showing others that...*

3. Jesus glorified Himself in this sign. OK, but how? Complete the following: The water being turned into wine manifested the glory of Jesus by... *And will You manifest Your glory in me today, Lord? Believing that You can (1 Cor. 10.31), I'm getting ready to be Your set-up person by...*

4. The disciples believed in Jesus as a result of this. But wait: Didn't they *already* believe in Him? Isn't that what we mean by saying they were *disciples*? Are there gradations or stages of believing in Jesus? *Lord, I believe in You; help my...*

5. We note again the mention of Jesus' mother and siblings ("brothers" NKJV, probably means brothers and sisters, cf. Mk. 6.1-3). This will not be the last we hear of His siblings or His mother. The mention of them here is curious, but significant, in that it helps lend historicity to John's account. Jesus did not stay many days in Capernaum, and this signals that His public ministry has begun. We will find Him next in Jerusalem. Why didn't Jesus stay in Capernaum, set up a church, and let the world find its way to Him? Isn't this the way we try to bring the news of Jesus to our

neighbors? Have we missed something? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed from questions 1-4.

Summary

“By this sign he made manifest that he was the King of glory, and so the church’s bridegroom. He came to the marriage as a common human being, but as Lord of heaven and earth he could convert the elements as he wished. How beautifully appropriate it is that when he began the signs that he would show to mortals while he was still mortal he turned water into wine. [But] when he had become immortal through his resurrection, he began the signs that he would show only to those who were pursuing the goal of immortal life.... Therefore, let us love with our whole mind, dearly beloved, the marriage of Christ and the church, which was prefigured then in one city and is now celebrated over the whole earth.” *The Venerable Bede (ca. 672-735 AD)*

Jesus ministry on earth began with a miracle bringing joy to multitudes and faith to a few. There’s a pattern here that we will see repeated throughout the course of history. Christ has come, bringing joy to the world, but only those who believe in Him see and enter His glory, and join in His mission with Him. How does this pattern speak to your life as a follower of Jesus?

Closing Prayer

Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth!
Sing out the honor of His name;
Make His praise glorious.
Say to God,
“How awesome are Your works!
Through the greatness of Your power
Your enemies shall submit themselves to You.
All the earth shall worship You
And sing praises to You;
They shall sing praises *to* Your name.”
Selah
Come and see the works of God;
He is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men.

Psalm 66.1-5

Psalm 66.1-9 (*Regent Square: Angels from the Realms of Glory*)

Shout for joy to God, all people, sing the glory of His Name!
Give Him glorious praise and say, “How great Your pow’r and great Your fame!
All the earth shall worship gladly as they praise Your glorious Name!”

Great and awesome is our Savior in the works which He has done.
He the sea and river dried to let His people pass as one.
Then our joy was great to worship Him our mighty, sovereign One.

He the nations watches ever – all you rebels, humbled be;
Bless our God, all men and nations, praise His Name eternally!
He preserves our souls, and He will keep His paths beneath our feet

7 Just the Beginning

Read and meditate on John 2.1-12.

John is careful to point out that this first glimpse of Jesus' glory is just the beginning. More glory will follow – wave upon wave of glory – culminating in the most surprising, horrifying, tragic, and beautifully glorious manifestation of God's love that we could ever imagine.

¹In Galilee, in Cana, on the third day after this, a wedding was observed, with Jesus' mother present. ²Jesus and His followers were invited to attend as well. ³And when the wine ran out, before the feast was ended, Jesus' mother turned to Him and said, "They have no wine." ⁴He answered, "What concern is this of mine? Or why should you consider this to be a matter that might interest or move Me to act? Good woman, listen carefully: the hour which is appointed unto Me, the glory that awaits Me, is not yet arrived." ⁵She, turning to the servants, said, "Whatever He instructs you, do." ⁶Nearby, six large stone vessels, used to purify with water, as the rite required, were found. Now each of these, when filled, could hold around two dozen gallons. Jesus said unto the servants, "Fill these six stone vessels to their brims with water." So they did. ⁸And then He said, "Draw out some water now, and when you have, go quickly and convey it to the wedding host." Which they were quick to do. ⁹The host then tasted of the water (now made wine), but knew not either where or how such wine had come to be (the servants, who had drawn the water from the vessels knew, however). So he called the bridegroom, ¹⁰and he said to him, "I do not understand: Each man, at the beginning of the feast, serves good wine to his guests, and leaves the least preferred 'til all the guests have drunk their fill. But you the best wine have reserved until this moment!" ¹¹Jesus thus the first of all His many signs performed there in that small town, manifesting first in Galilee His glory, and His followers believed in Him.

¹²And after this He went down to

*Capernaum, His mother with Him, too,
and His disciples and His brothers. And
they tarried for a few days in that land.*

- John 2.1-12

Reflect

1. One of the major differences between John's gospel and the other three gospels is that, whereas Matthew, Mark, and Luke tend to focus on what Jesus did and said, John wants more to impress us with Who Jesus *is*. How can you see that in these early chapters? Complete this prayer: *Lord, show me Your glory, and let me see You as...*

2. "Believing" in Jesus will be a major focus of John's gospel, as we see here, and as we saw in chapter 1 (cf. 1.12, 50). What does it mean to *believe* in Jesus? What does John want us to understand by that idea? What would you say to someone to clarify your calling him to *believe* in Jesus? *Lord, I believe in You, and I want to believe more. So help me today to...*

3. The Good News of Jesus comes into human experience amid cultures, societies, and relationships of all kinds. Is the Gospel in the first instance focused on *changing culture* or *bringing God's blessing to people* in the midst of their culture? Which is prior? Why? *Help me, Lord, to bring You into all the culture and people of my life, including...*

4. We get the feeling from John's approach to telling about Jesus, that coming to believe in Jesus can be a gradual process. Not everyone comes with the preparation of a Nathanael. For some – such as Jesus' brothers – coming to believe in Him can take a long time. What are we learning from John – and Jesus – about showing Jesus to others and trying to draw them to Him? *I want to be a faithful witness, Lord. Help to learn better how to...*

5. The glory of God is a central theme in this gospel. What is the glory of God? How do people *see* or otherwise *experience* the glory of God? How do they respond? What should we expect as we strive to *live for God's glory* every day? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

"When Christ, as a sign of His power, clearly changed the water into wine
All the crowd rejoiced, for they considered the taste marvelous.
Now we all partake at the banquet in the church
For Christ's blood is changed into wine
And we drink it with holy joy,
Praising the great bridegroom,
For he is the true bridegroom, the Son of Mary,
The Word before all time who took the form of a servant,
He who has in wisdom created all things." *Romanus Melodus (fl. ca. 536-556 AD)*

The story of a wedding feast to come (Rev. 19) begins with a wedding in the backwater town of Cana, in Galilee of the Gentiles. Jesus is there, and that setting provides abundant action and meaning for John to continue developing his narrative of the glory of God in Jesus Christ. What are you learning about Jesus, that makes you want to follow Him more diligently?

Closing Prayer

We have thought, O God, on Your lovingkindness,
In the midst of Your temple.
According to Your name, O God,
So is Your praise to the ends of the earth;
Your right hand is full of righteousness.
Let Mount Zion rejoice,
Let the daughters of Judah be glad,
Because of Your judgments.

Psalm 48.9-11

Psalm 48.9-11 ([*Cwm Rhondda: Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*](#))

The Gospel of John: John 2.1-12

For Your grace and lovingkindness, we proclaim Your matchless worth!
As Your Name is, great and boundless, let Your praise fill all the earth.
Let Your people sing rejoicing for the judgment of Your truth;
For the judgment of Your truth.

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. How would you describe Jesus' approach to *ministry*, as we see it in this story?
2. What does John want us to conclude concerning Jesus from this situation in Cana of Galilee? What does it mean to be a *follower* of Jesus?
3. How does Jesus use us to manifest His glory to the world? How should this affect the way we carry out our daily relationships, roles, and responsibilities?
4. Why did Jesus do "signs"? Are signs of any use if they point anywhere else besides to Jesus? Explain.
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from John 2.1-12? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

Items for prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at www.ailbe.org to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.