



Turning Lost Students into Christ-Centered Laborers

## A PRIVATE REVELATION • Miracles

### What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

John 2:1-12

#### The Book of Signs

The book of John naturally falls into two parts. The first part is called The Book of Signs and it covers three years of Jesus' life. The second part is called The Book of the Hour and it covers one week. We have no way of knowing how many miracles John saw Jesus do, but we know which ones he recorded for us:

#### The Book of Signs

Turning water into wine (John 2)  
 Healing an official's son (John 4)  
 Healing a lame man (John 5)  
 Feeding 5000 people (John 6)  
 Walking on water (John 6)  
 Healing a blind man (John 9)  
 Raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11)

**Three years**

#### The Book of the Hour

The last week of Jesus' life on Earth  
 culminates in his resurrection (John 12-21)

**One Week**

#### Background

During the first few days of Jesus' ministry, he began to choose key disciples from among John the Baptist's followers. Jesus' first disciples included Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, Nathaniel, and John. Today we find them at a wedding.

#### Weddings in the Ancient Near East

In Jesus' day, weddings were an even bigger deal than they are today. Nowadays couples often fall in love on their own, but back then it was a family decision. Everyone was involved, and everyone needed to be satisfied. Parents had to agree with the courtship, and the ceremony was quite elaborate. When the special day came, the bride would get ready in her house and her attendants would position themselves outside the home to await the coming of the groom. The groom would come from an unknown place at an unknown time. At some point someone would see him and yell, "Behold, the bridegroom comes!" And everyone would rush out to join him as he came to pick up his bride. As the procession neared door of the house, someone yelled "Behold, the bridegroom is here!" The wedding party entered the house and literally picked up the bride and carried her to the groom's house, celebrating all the way. Once they got to the groom's house, the doors were shut and the couple went into a back room to consummate the marriage. When they came out, the party began, and it often lasted seven days.

### What's the Big Idea?

On the seventh day after beginning his ministry, Jesus revealed himself as the Creator.

### What's the Problem?

We need God to deliver us from our inadequacy, scandals, and shame.



If you want to understand this passage, it's important to note that marriages at this time were very public ceremonies that had two key components. What happened in the back room affirmed the bride's purity, and the grandeur of the party affirmed the grooms fidelity and ability to provide for her. Everything had to go well. The groom and his family were responsible to demonstrate their ability to provide and care for the girl who had just consummated her marriage to this man. To fail to host a good party wasn't just embarrassing, it was illegal.

#### John 2:1-5

This passage tells us that not only was Jesus' mother invited to this wedding, Jesus and his disciples were invited as well. Scholars have pointed out that Jesus' mother was probably a member of the wedding party. In this passage she (1) told the servants what to do, (2) knew about the crisis of the wine before the master of the feast, and (3) had concern for how the event was going.

Because of the nature of the culture in the Ancient Near East, running out of wine was a big deal at a wedding. The bride's family could sue for damages in such a situation, and the new marriage would start off on rocky ground.

#### Mary and Jesus

What would it like to be the mother of Jesus? Scholars generally agree that Jesus hadn't grown up doing miracles. But he wasn't an average kid either. An angel announced his birth. Mary was a virgin when he was born. God promised Mary that her son would sit on the throne of David. King Herod tried to kill him, etc. She's seen some stuff. And when there's potential for this party to get disrupted, she turned to her son.

Jesus' response was not rude. If you read verse 4 in several translations, you'll see that it's difficult to translate. Jesus was polite, but he distanced himself from his mom's request. Notice how she responded to the servants, "Do exactly what Jesus tells you to do." And don't miss that little phrase, "my hour has not yet come." For the next 8 chapters, John will repeat that phrase over and over again. Then, after a confrontation with Jewish leaders in chapter 12 Jesus will say "the hour has come," and he'll march straight into Jerusalem to be crucified. Jesus knows that what he's about to do will start the clock ticking on his crucifixion. And he is so smooth. This, his first miracle, is a private miracle, initially just for his disciples.

#### John 2:6-12

The six water jars that John mentions in verse 6 held 20-30 gallons each. This water was for washing the feet and hands of the guests as they arrived. If you were to re-tell this story in today's terms, you'd see how bizarre it is. Imagine Jesus removing himself from the party and going through the house poking around until he found the hot water heater. It's covered with dust but he knows it's sanitary inside. He rips it off the pipes, "they won't need it later anyway," and tells the servants to fill it with water then take some to the master of the banquet.

The master's response is clearer in the original language than it is in English. He grabbed the groom and basically said, "This is the best wine ever! You're the best groom in history!" The only people who initially knew what had happened were Jesus, his disciples, and some servants. The value of that wine in today's standards is easily \$20,000 to \$60,000. That's a pretty nice wedding gift.

Scholars have noted that this wedding occurred 7 days after Jesus began his ministry. Remember what happened on the seventh day of Creation? God gave Eve to Adam, before the curse. And here we have God again, at a wedding, and he's bringing redemption to our inadequacy and shame.

### What's Our Response?

In this study you will want to help your group understand that Jesus' abundant grace frees us from our scandals and shame.

## What Are the Questions?

John 2:1-12; 1st John 1:1-4

### LAUNCH

Can you name any of Jesus' miracles from the Bible? If you could be there to see one, which would you choose?

### EXPLORE

Read 2:1-5.

1. Why do you think Jesus and his disciples were invited to this wedding in Cana? From these verses, do you think Mary was playing a role in organizing the wedding feast?
2. Why would running out of wine be such a big deal?
3. When Mary asked Jesus to help, what do you think she was expecting him to do?
4. Was Jesus being rude by calling his mother, "Woman" in verse 4? Why do you think he addressed her that way?
5. What did Jesus mean by "My hour has not yet come" in verse 4?
8. Look at verses 5, 7, and 8. How did Mary and the servants respond to Jesus? What do you think those servants were thinking as they approached the master of the banquet?
9. Who knew what Jesus had done? At what point do we find out the water had become wine?
10. What did the banquet master immediately do after he tasted the wine? Why? Who did he give credit to? How do you think the groom reacted?
11. If you were one of the disciples and you saw this happen, how do you think you would have reacted?
12. John described this as "the first of Jesus' signs." What was it a sign of?

Read 2:6-12.

6. What were the water jars normally used for?
7. Obviously, Jesus could have created wine any way he chose. In your opinion, why did Jesus command those servants to fill those pots with water?
13. Years after this event, the Apostle John wrote the letter we call 1st John. According to these verses, why did he write this letter?
14. At some point later, the groom and everyone else realized what had happened at that party. How do you think the groom felt then?

### APPLY

15. This wine in Canaan wasn't Jesus' most recent act of creation. According to 2 Corinthians 5:17, what is he still creating today?
16. The groom in this story had a "near miss." If Jesus hadn't showed up in time, he was in a bad situation. Has God ever showed up just in time for you?
17. Jesus saved this groom from embarrassment and gave him a great blessing. Has Jesus done something similar for you? Do you believe he can?
18. The groom was utterly clueless at first. Has God been at work in your life "behind the scenes?" Name some ways that God has blessed you.
19. Have you ever struggled to trust Jesus? How does this story challenge you to trust him more?

## What Are the Answers?

1. Mary appears to be one of the members of the wedding party because she tells servants what to do and knows about the wine before the master of the feast.
2. See the "What do I need to know about this passage" section.
3. It's doubtful that Mary was asking Jesus for a miracle. He hadn't performed miracles before this point. But she knew the prophecies about him.
4. Jesus was not being rude. But he did distance himself from her request. Another translation says, "Dear woman, why do you involve me?"
5. See also John 7:30, 8:20, and 12:23. Jesus' hour is the last week of his life- his journey to the cross.
6. It's significant that the water was used for purification. This cleansing was required by the OT Law. Jesus was about to fulfill the Law for us.
7. By using these water jars, Jesus was able to perform a secret miracle.
8. Maybe the servants were thinking, "What's he going to say when he tastes washing water instead of wine?" Notice how this miracle slowly unfolds. It took no effort whatsoever for Jesus to bless a party privately – and privately demonstrate his power as Creator.
9. It appears that only Jesus knew what he had done at first. We don't even find out until halfway through verse 9.
10. He interrupted the feast to congratulate the groom. This was likely the best wine he'd ever tasted. And the groom probably had no idea what was going on. It was his wedding day. He was just glad things were going well.
11. Discuss
12. Jesus revealed himself as the Creator through this miracle.
13. Years after he walked with Jesus, the Apostle John penned this letter. It's fun to read the Gospel of John and the Letter of John at the same time. John wrote both to lead us to Christ.
14. The groom must have experienced a lot of emotions! At first he probably felt like he dodged a bullet. Then he realized he had \$40,000 in wine on hand. Then he realized a miracle had happened at his wedding...
15. Every time someone trusts Christ, He makes them into a new creation (see the memory verse).
16. Encourage the group to share
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18. Some people have defined Christian maturity as "conscious awareness of God's presence everywhere and all the time."
19. Encourage the group to share

## Memorize

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Cru.Comm is the small group material for Campus Crusade for Christ's Campus Ministry. It was created by Centerfield Productions, the field based division of CruPress. We'd love to hear your feedback on this study. Please write us at [centerfield@uscm.org](mailto:centerfield@uscm.org)