

The First Sign: The Wedding Feast at Cana

John 2:1-11

June 5, 2022

Introduction:

Day 1: John Announces Jesus' Arrival (19-28)

Day 2: John Introduces Jesus to Israel (29-34)

Day 3: John Introduces Jesus to His Disciples (35-42)

Day 4: Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael (43-51)

Day 6: Jesus Performs His First Sign (2:1-11)

- In presenting the first 6 days of Jesus' ministry, John is showing the parallel to the first 6 days of creation (Gen 1).
- Just as God created man on the 6th day as the pinnacle of creation, John shows that Jesus' incarnation is the true pinnacle of creation (1:14).
- This Gospel presents Jesus as the Second Adam, Who is actively redeeming His creation; the 7th day of rest is still future when Jesus will reign over His creation having completely dispelled sin and the curse for all eternity.

1. Invitation to a Wedding in Cana (1-3)

- a. The Time of the Sign – “The third day” (1a) – This indicates the 6th day of Jesus' ministry; just as the 6th day of creation was the climax of God's creation, the 6th day of Christ's first week of ministry introduces the true climax of God's creative work, the incarnation, the Second Adam.
- b. The Occasion – “There was a marriage” (1b) – The families involved are not named; instead it is the occasion that is important to the narrator.
- c. The Characters Introduced (1c-2)
 - i. “The mother of Jesus” (1c) – throughout the Gospel of John, the name of Jesus' mother never appears; this is important, because Jesus' relationship between God the Father and God the Son is the primary focus of the book; Jesus' relationship with His mother is being intentionally deemphasized.
 - ii. “And both Jesus was called, and his disciples” (2) – the disciples are also unnamed, though they are likely the 5 previously mentioned (Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, Nathanael, and John, the anonymous disciple); Jesus is the only one named, because it is Jesus Who is the focus of this story, not His mother, his disciples, or the wedding party.
- d. The Conflict (3)
 - i. “They wanted wine” – It was common for a wedding celebration to last 7 days, and depending on the wealth of the wedding party, the whole town could be invited. Unfortunately for the hosts, they had run out of wine.
 - ii. “The mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine” – Again, Jesus' mother remains unnamed. The narrator is intentionally deemphasizing Jesus' relationship with his earthly mother to emphasize His relationship with His heavenly Father. In bringing the matter to Jesus, she makes no demands, but she knows He is the One to provide the solution.

2. Jesus, His Mother, and a Shortage of Wine (4)

- a. Jesus distances Himself from His mother – “Woman, what have I to do with thee?” (4a).
 - i. Jesus' use of this term in reference to His mother is not a sign of disrespect; instead, it was commonly used as we would use the word “ma'am.” Interestingly, in all Greek and Jewish literature, there is no other use of a son addressing his mother as “woman.”
 - ii. Jesus is intentionally distancing Himself from His mother. He's deemphasizing His relationship with His human mother so that He can emphasize His relationship as the Unique Son of God the Father.
 - iii. While distancing Himself, His question and His actions also show His care and concern for her and for mankind in general (cf. 3:16).
- b. Jesus references His Divine purpose – “Mine hour is not yet come” (4b).
 - i. The term “hour” in John refers to Jesus' crucifixion (cf. 4:21, 23, 5:25, 28; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:2, 4, 21, 25, 32; 17:1).

- ii. Though His “hour” begins with His death, it has a broader meaning extending to His resurrection, ascension, and glorification.
- iii. “Although his mother wanted the wedding to reach its end without embarrassment, Jesus, thinking of a much grander wedding feast, knew that embarrassment (the cross) is required for [his hour] to reach its ultimate conclusion” (Edward Klink III).
- iv. In a very real sense, Jesus’ hour is still not fully come; we are awaiting the day when Jesus comes back for us as the True Bridegroom and we enjoy Him at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

3. From Purification Water to Celebratory Wine (5-8)

- a. His mother’s response – “His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it” (5).
 - i. Her response shows her assurance of Jesus’ love for her and those surrounding Him.
 - ii. Her response shows her faith in Jesus’ ability to provide a solution.
- b. The Old Testament symbol of purification – “And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece” (6).
 - i. These stone waterpots were used for purification, because stone could not become unclean, unlike clay which could become unclean (Leviticus 11:33) and would have to be destroyed.
 - ii. Jewish tradition required that the Jews were not to eat unless they washed their hands (Mark 7:3-4), so these six 20–30-gallon stone pots were provided so the wedding guests could ceremonially wash their hands before they ate.
- c. Jesus’ transformation (7-8)
 - i. Jesus commands that the waterpots be filled to the brim (7). Between the time the water is poured into the jars, and the time that it is drawn out, Jesus transformed the purification water into celebratory wine. Jesus is the complete fulfillment “to the brim” of the purification that God requires. In the presence of Jesus, the jars and their water become useless to obtain purification.
 - ii. Jesus commands that it be drawn out and served (8). The external purification water had been transformed into a wine that was to be ingested internally (cf. 6:51-58). There is no purification outside of partaking in the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ.

4. The First Sign of Jesus’ Glory (9-11)

- a. Jesus’ place as the true Bridegroom (9-10) – The ruler of the feast and the bridegroom remain unnamed, and Jesus, the true bridegroom, remains the central character (cf. Revelation 19:7-9).
- b. Just as the best wine was served last, Jesus is the fulfillment of all that came before. Jesus is the true bridegroom (cf. 3:29).
- c. Jesus identified Himself as the Bridegroom in Mark 2:19-20.
- d. The purpose of this sign was to reveal His true identity so that His disciples would believe on Him (11; cf. 1:12; 20:31).
- e. The church are like the servants who know the identity of the true bridegroom and are tasked with serving guests who are still ignorant of His identity.

Conclusion:

1. Are you still trying to purify yourself from your sin?
2. Are you celebrating the life you have in Christ?
3. Are you honoring Jesus as the honored Guest and Bridegroom of your life?
4. Are you seeking to introduce Him to those around you who are still unaware of Who He is?