

WEDDING FEAST AT CANA: REVELATION OF JESUS' CREATIVE POWER JOHN 02:01–11

Introduction

This was the first miraculous sign Jesus performed. It demonstrated His very purpose for coming to earth: to reveal the creative power of God. He had the power to create and produce what was needed to meet man's need.

- I. The setting: a wedding in Cana of Galilee (vv. 1-2).
- II. The concern of Jesus' creative power (vv. 3-5).
- III. The revelation of Jesus' creative power (vv. 6-8).
- IV. The results of Jesus' creative power (vv. 9-11).

I. *John 02:01–02 The Wedding at Cana*

There was a wedding in Cana of Galilee.

1. The wedding took place on the third day after Jesus came into Galilee, or two days after Nathanael's encounter with Jesus.
2. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was there. Note that Joseph is not mentioned. It is thought by most commentators that he was already dead. In fact, most commentators think he had been dead for years, and that Jesus had stayed home to take care of his mother.

Thought 1. Note the extreme sufferings of Christ. He had come to bear all the trials people face in the world. He suffered...

- the death of a parent
 - belonging to a single parent family
 - having to go to work at an early age to provide for His mother
3. Jesus and His disciples attended the wedding. Marriage was a joyful, happy time - a festive occasion; and it was one of the largest social events in a community. This tells us two things about Jesus.
 - a. Jesus was a sociable person: He liked people and people liked Him. He enjoyed the company of people; He was not anti-social; He was people centred. His ministry was focused upon people, being with and helping them all He could. Unlike John, Jesus lived and preached a gospel of liberty. He ate and associated with the people, sharing in their social affairs. He moved among all sorts of people, mixing and making Himself accessible to all no matter how terrible they were thought to be. Therefore, He was accused of being a sinner Himself: a glutton, a winebibber, and an immoral friend of sinners (See Mt. 11:19.) (It must be remembered that when Jesus moved about in the social functions of society it was for the purpose of witnessing to them, not to be a part of the worldly fellowship.)
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Thought 1. Man is a social being. Jesus was teaching us to be sociable and not to be too busy to shun others. However, He expects us to balance our lives between sociability and solitude. The truth about our times is that most persons are not sufficiently alone. Most persons are not working, producing and making their God-called contribution to the world, not as diligently as they should. Most have the problem of socializing too much, whether in recreation, partying or on the job.

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Rom 12:13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

1 Cor 10:27 If some unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience.

Titus 1:8 Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.

1 Pet 4:9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

Psa 119:63 I am a friend to all who fear you, to all who follow your precepts.

Luke 14:12-14 Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

- b. Jesus honoured marriage. He demonstrated His approval and honour in two ways: by attending the wedding feast and by meeting the urgent need of the bridegroom.

Thought 1. Jesus graced and blessed the marriage because He was "invited to the wedding". He has to be genuinely invited into a marriage before He can bless it.

Rev 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

John 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

Rom 10:13 For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

JOHN 02:01 WEDDING; MARRIAGE; JEWISH CEREMONY

A Jewish wedding ceremony included three major events.

1. There was a marriage feast and ceremony, which were held on the same evening.
2. There was the escort of the couple through the streets to their home. The procession usually took place at night. Flaming torches were used and the longest

route to the home was taken to attract more attention and to allow the community to share in the joyful event.

3. There was the open house which lasted for a week. A Jewish wedding ceremony involved a large and long celebration. There was a happy, festive spirit that swept through the community and surrounded the couple. All week long the couple wore their wedding garments (gown and robe) and entertained guests. The whole community was expected to participate and celebrate with the couple in their new found happiness. □

JOHN 02:01 CANA

A small, remote, obscure country village. It is thought to have been in the highlands of Galilee, for a person travelled from Cana down to Capernaum. It was close to Nazareth, and according to the early church father Jerome, the city could be seen from Nazareth. Little else is known about the village. Two miraculous signs took place in Cana: this event of creative power where the water was turned into wine (Jn. 2:1-11), and the healing of the royal official's son (Jn. 4:46-54). Cana is mentioned only one other time in Scripture (Jn. 21:2), three times altogether, and only by John in his gospel. □

II. *John 02:03–05 The Social Concern of Mary*

Everything points toward Mary as having a key part in the wedding. There was a steward overseeing the household affairs (v. 9), but Mary was apparently helping in some manner. Note three things.

1. Mary's social concern. The need that arose was extremely serious, for the wine was already gone and the celebration had just begun. There was a whole week of celebration yet to go. The couple was to have open house and to provide the wine and refreshments for the week. What were they to do? The importance of wine in the Middle East must always be remembered. Good, germ free water was scarce, and it was used only when necessary. Wine was used as a drinking substitute. There was a critical need, a predicament that was going to affect everyone involved.
 - ⇒ The joyful spirit of the guests was to be dampened.
 - ⇒ The couple was to be shamed and humiliated, becoming the object of jokes among some.
 - ⇒ Mary, the mother of Jesus, probably one of the hostesses, was to be embarrassed.

Mary, naturally, was concerned about the matter, but note the point. Mary's concern was a social concern, a concern for seeing that the needs of a social group were met. She did what any mother would do. She brought the problem to her Son: "They have no more wine."

2. Jesus' deeper concern: to meet man's spiritual need for regeneration. In Mary's concern, Jesus saw a unique opportunity to begin familiarizing His mother with the truth of who He was: the Son of God who had entered the world for a particular time (the cross). Neither Mary nor anyone else understood Jesus' Person, His true mission, or Messiahship — not yet (see Mk. 3:31-32). Therefore, at the very beginning of His ministry, Jesus began to teach everyone, and in particular the person who was so dear to His heart, His mother. He wanted to do all He could to prepare her and the others for the terrible pain that was to come during His hour (time). He was truly the Son of God; He had been born of God. He — His Person and mission — had to do with God and the things of the Spirit, not with Mary and her social and carnal needs. He had nothing in common with her and the sinful nature. He was of God and of the Spirit. She must begin to understand and see this. The more she could hear the truth, the more she would see and understand, especially after His hour [time] had come. Therefore, Jesus used every opportunity possible to familiarize all His loved ones with the phrase "My time." His hour [time] was to become a constant symbol of His death (see Jn. 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20; 12:23-24, 27, 33; 13:1; 17:1; Mt. 26:18, 45; Mk. 14:41).

The point Jesus made was that His hour [time] had not yet come...

- the time when He could really meet man's needs.
- the time when He must die for man's regeneration.

Thought 1. Jesus was always focused upon His purpose for coming to earth: to face His hour (time), to die for man's salvation.

John 12:23-24, 27, 32-33 *Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.*

John 13:1 *It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.*

Thought 2. Mary's concern pictures the social concern of man. Man has many social needs. Society — whether social workers or communities of individuals — is concerned with ...

- social health
- social housing
- social comfort
- social peace
- social plenty
- social justice

Note two things.

- 1) Christ met the social concern, the need, the predicament. He solved the problem.

2) However, Christ does not stop there. Meeting the physical and material needs of society is not enough. Christ met the deeper concern of man:

=> life => love => assurance => security
=> happiness => satisfaction => fulfilment => completeness

John 10:10 *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

John 15:11 *“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”*

3. Mary's confidence in her Son. It was night and wine could not be bought. It was unthinkable that Mary was asking Jesus to perform a miracle. So far as we know, He had performed no miraculous signs yet. What she was doing was seeking His help, asking Him to take care of the matter. Of course, He could attempt to get a merchant to reopen his shop and meet the need, or He could try to secure wine from some neighbours. Mary had utter confidence in Him. But, again, that is not the point. Jesus saw the opportunity to demonstrate His creative power, the kind of power needed to *meet man's need for regeneration*.

John 4:34 *“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”*

John 9:4 *“As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.”*

Rom 13:11 *And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.*

Rom 13:12 *The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light.*

1 Cor 7:29 *What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none.*

Eph 5:16 *Making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*

Col 4:5 *Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.*

III. John 02:06–08 The Creative Power of Jesus Christ

The revelation of Jesus' creative power. Note three things.

1. The six water jars were used both for drinking water and for the purifying and cleansing of the Jews, that is, the ceremonial and religious cleansing of the hands and utensils. When a Jew saw the water jars, he knew they were there both for satisfying his thirst and for his religious cleansing. Jesus used the water jars to show that He had the power...

- to purify, cleanse and satisfy men
- to create and produce whatever was necessary to cleanse and satisfy men

Rev 1:5 *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.*

Titus 3:5 *He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*

James 4:8 *Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double minded.*

1 Cor 6:9 *Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders.*

1 Cor 6:10 *Nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

1 Cor 6:11 *And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

2. Jesus had a deeper concern than just meeting the social need of the host. He had come to meet man's need for spiritual purification and inner cleansing, and He was to do it through His hour (time) (the cross). Therefore, He seized the opportunity to reveal His creative power. His power to create man anew. (See *New Birth*, Jn. 3:1-15.)

Thought 1. We either believe Christ is the Messiah or not. We either believe He has the power to create anew or not, that He demonstrated such power in this miracle or not.

John 20:31 *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

3. Note another significant point: Jesus simply instructed that preparations be made, and when He was obeyed, everyone experienced His creative power and was fully satisfied.

Thought 1. We have to obey Christ's instructions if we wish to be cleansed and created spiritually.

Mat 7:21 *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."*

John 5:24 *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."*

John 14:21 *Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.*

1 Pet 1:21 *Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.*

1 John 2:17 *The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.*

Mat 7:24-25 *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.”*

JOHN 03:01–15

NEW BIRTH; BORN AGAIN; NEW CREATION; REGENERATION

A spiritual birth, a rebirth of one's spirit, a new life, a renewed soul, a regenerated spirit. It is the regeneration and renewal of one's spirit and behaviour (2 Cor. 5:17).

It is the provision or infusion of a new life, of a godly nature (2 Pet. 1:4). The new birth is so radical a change in a person's life that it can be described only as being born again. Something so wonderful happens to the soul that it is just like a new birth. It is a spiritual birth, a birth beyond the grasp of man's hands and efforts. It is so radical, so life changing, and so wonderful that it can be wrought only by the love and power of God Himself.

The New Testament teaching on the new birth is rich and full.

1. The new birth is a necessity. A person will never see (Jn. 3:3) nor ever enter (Jn. 3:5) the Kingdom of God unless he is born again (Jn. 3:7).
2. The new birth is a spiritual birth, the birth of a new power and spirit in life. It is not reformation of the old nature (Rom. 6:6). It is the actual creation of a new birth within spiritually (Jn. 3:5-6; see Jn. 1:12-13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10; 4:24). (See *New Person*, Eph. 4:24.)

A person is spiritually born again:

- a. By water, even the Spirit (See *Water and Spirit*, Jn. 3:5).
 - b. By the choice (will) of God (Jas. 1:18).
 - c. By imperishable or incorruptible seed, even by the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23).
 - d. By God from above (1 Pet. 1:3). The word again (ana) in the phrase “born again” also means above, (Jn. 1:12-13.)
 - e. By Christ, who gives both the power and right to be born again (Jn. 1:12-13).
3. The new birth is a definite experience, a real experience. A person experiences the new birth:
 - a. By believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (1 Jn. 5:1; Jn. 3:14-15).
 - b. By the gospel as it is shared by believers (1 Cor. 4:15; Phile.10).

- c. By the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23) or by the Word of Truth (Jas. 1:18).
4. The new birth is a changed life, a totally new life. A person proves that he is born again:
 - a. By doing righteous acts (1 Jn. 2:29; see Eph. 2:10; 4:24).
 - b. By not practicing sin (1 Jn. 3:9; 5:18).
 - c. By loving other believers (1 Jn. 4:7).
 - d. By overcoming the world (1 Jn. 5:4).
 - e. By keeping himself without sin (1 Jn. 5:18).
 - f. By possessing the divine seed or nature (1 Jn. 3:9; 1 Pet. 1:23; 2 Pet. 1:4; Col. 1:27). □

EPHESIANS 04:24 NEW PERSON OR SELF

And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 04:24

A man regenerated, renewed, born again who has become spiritual minded. It is a new person or self created by Christ; he has been given a holy nature and an incorruptible life. It is opposed to the old person or self with a corrupt nature. It is a man who is...

- in fellowship with God
- obedient to God's will
- devoted to God's service

There are two Greek words translated by the English word new. There is the word neos which refers to something new that has just been made, but there are already many others existing just like it. There is the word kainos which refers to something new, something just made and there is nothing like it in existence. Kainos is the word used here. Jesus Christ makes a new man entirely — a creation unlike any other creation existing. The Gentile believer is not made into a Jew; neither is a Jewish believer made into a Gentile. Each, through the Lord Jesus Christ, is made into a new kind of person — a new person or self in God. Every person can begin life all over again; every person can have a new beginning, a new life by coming to Jesus Christ.

How is this possible? By the power of God. When a person believes in God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ — really believes and entrusts his life into the hands of Jesus Christ — God creates the spirit of the person in righteousness and true holiness. God takes the faith of the person and credits it as the righteousness of Jesus Christ. God actually credits the person's faith as the perfect righteousness and holiness of Jesus

Christ. Therefore, the person stands before God in the righteousness and holiness of Jesus Christ. But note: this is not all that God does. He does more marvellous things for the believer — all having to do with creating the believer into a new person.

1. God quickens or makes the spirit of the believer alive. Whereas the believer's spirit was dead to God, God creates it and makes it alive to God.
2. God causes the believer to be born again spiritually.
3. God actually places His divine nature into the heart of the believer.
4. God actually creates a new person or self out of the believer.
5. God renews the believer by the Holy Spirit. □

JOHN 03:05 WATER AND SPIRIT

*Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit." **John 03:05***

The word and (kai) can also be translated "even." The way it is translated here is left to the translator. In light of the rest of Scripture, it probably should be translated "even." This would mean that water with all of its cleansing power is a symbol of the Holy Spirit: "No one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit." A strong argument for this is in the very next verse. The new birth is spiritual, apart from any natural phenomenon. It has nothing to do with any physical substance, including water. It is not of the flesh, not of any material thing. It is of the Spirit (see Rom. 8:11; Eph. 2:1).

Is it possible that water means "baptism" here? When John was writing the gospel, he and the readers of his gospel would have known what was meant by Christian baptism. However, when Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus, there was no such thing as Christian baptism. It is unlikely that Jesus would say something that Nicodemus could not grasp and understand. Jesus was not out to confuse him, but to lead him to be born again. There was no way Nicodemus could be baptised in order to be born again — not then — for Christian baptism had not yet been instituted. (Regardless of our position on baptism, honesty demands that we note this.) □

IV. *John 02:09–11 The Results of Jesus' Creative Power*

The results were threefold.

1. The bridegroom's need was met. What he needed was provided.
2. Christ's glory was revealed. His power to create anew was demonstrated.
3. The faith of the disciples was strengthened. They "put their faith in Him" even more. He had given evidence that He was the Messiah.

John 3:2 *He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."*

John 7:31 *Still, many in the crowd put their faith in him. They said, "When the Christ comes, will he do more miraculous signs than this man?"*

John 10:25 *Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me."*

John 10:36 *"What about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'?"*

John 10:37 *"Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does."*

John 10:38 *"But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."*

John 20:30-31 *Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. ■*

JOHN 02:09–10 RESULTS OF JESUS' POWER

The master of ceremonies evidently nudged the host and jokingly teased him about holding out on the guests; that is, he had kept the best wine until last. □