

# John 2 Commentary

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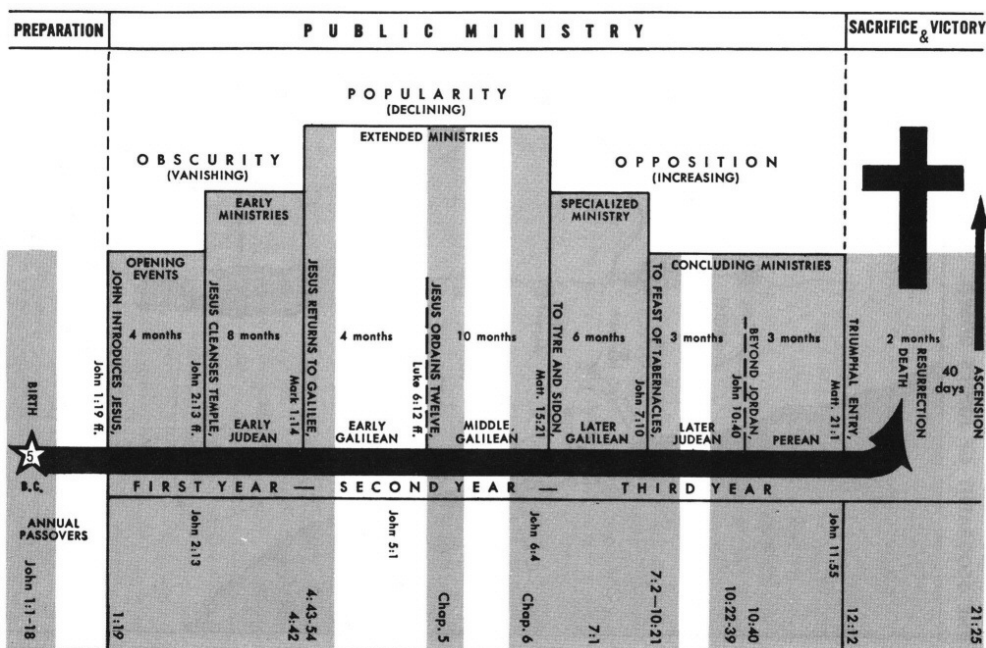
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Click chart to enlarge  
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
Another Chart from Charles Swindoll

Click to enlarge

THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED  
BY GOSPEL OF JOHN (shaded area)



Click chart to enlarge

**John 2:1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there;**

NET John 2:1 Now on the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,

GNT John 2:1 Κα τ μ ρ τ τ ρ τ γ μ ο ς γ ν ε τ ο ν Κ α ν τ ς Γ α λ ι λ α ς , κ α ν μ η τ ρ τ ο η ρ ο κ ε .

NLT John 2:1 The next day there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,

KJV John 2:1 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

ESV John 2:1 On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.

NIV John 2:1 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,

ASV John 2:1 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

CSB John 2:1 On the third day a wedding took place in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and

NKJ John 2:1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.

NRS John 2:1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.

YLT John 2:1 And the third day a marriage happened in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there,

NAB John 2:1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.

NJB John 2:1 On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there,

GWN John 2:1 Three days later a wedding took place in the city of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there.

BBE John 2:1 On the third day two people were going to be married at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there:

- **the third:** Joh 1:43
- a marriage: Ge 1:27,28 2:18-25 Ps 128:1-4 Pr 18:22 Pr 19:14 Pr 31:10-12 Eph 5:30-33 1Ti 4:1-3 Heb 13:4
- Cana: Joh 4:46 21:2 Jos 19:28, Kanah
- Mother - Jn 19:25
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

John 2:1-11. First sign - At a marriage in Cana, Jesus turns water into wine,

John 2:12 Jesus goes to Capernaum,

John 2:13-17 Jesus goes to Jerusalem, where He drives the buyers and sellers out of the temple, .

John 2:18-22. Jesus predicts His own death and resurrection as the proof of His authority,

John 2:23-25 Many believe in Him because of His miracles, but Jesus does not commit himself to them, as "knowing what was in man"

POSSIBLE LOCATION OF CANA  
NOTE NAZARETH JUST TO SOUTH

## JESUS ATTENDS A WEDDING AT CANA IN GALILEE

Note the map gives an approximate location of Cana, for the exact location of the one where the wedding was held no one knows, although most favor a spot situated about 8-9 miles north of Nazareth.

Note that Jesus' public ministry extends from John 2:1 to John 12:50. D A Carson notes that "These eleven chapters are often called the 'book of signs'; in them, Jesus reveals his glory (cf. 1:14). The remaining chapters of this Gospel are often labelled 'the book of glory'. Here Jesus is glorified by God—i.e. he receives glory." (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

**Guzik** - This is the first of many stories suggesting that Jesus was always welcome among those having a good time. Jesus didn't spoil the good time. ([John 2 Commentary](#))

**Rod Mattoon** - In this chapter we find the record of the first of 35 recorded miracles performed by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the miracle of the turning of the water into wine. It is the day the water blushed! (Treasures from John)

**Hindson** has an interesting preface noting that "In this chapter there are two events detailed which illustrate the emptiness and deficiency of Judaism. The empty water jars at the wedding feast describe the condition of Judaism in meeting the spiritual needs of the Jewish people. This emptiness is further described in the cleansing of the Temple, and Judaism is described as corrupt." (Online [KJV Bible Commentary](#))

After noting that many commentaries become very speculative on Jesus' miracle of water to wine **Carson** writes "Some control over the exegesis can be gained by observing three factors. First, this is the first of the signs John relates, and John himself insists that his purpose in recording these signs was to convince people that the Christ, the Son of God, is Jesus (cf. notes on 20:30–31). We shall not go far wrong in our understanding of these verses if we seek to discover how they breed faith in Jesus. Second, the fact that various theological themes are richly present should have little or no bearing on the value of the narrative as history (despite Brown, 1. 101). We have long eclipsed the day when we may allow ourselves to think that the only account that has any pretension of being of historical value is the one where the writer is theologically disinterested in what he or she is writing. More generally, cf. the Introduction, § III; and on the historical value of this story, cf. Stephen T. Davis (GP 6, pp. 419–442). Third, the obvious background is the Old Testament itself, mediated through first-century Judaism, if we may judge by the multiplication of relevant allusions in chs. 2–4." (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

**Thomas Constable** makes the observation that "John's account of the beginning of Jesus' public ministry highlights the fact that Jesus replaced what was old with something new (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17). New wine replaced old water. Later a clean temple replaced a dirty one, a new birth replaced an old birth, living (flowing) water replaced well water, and new worship replaced old worship. The larger underlying theme continues to be the revelation of Jesus' identity. ([Notes on the Bible](#))

**On the third day** - There is likely no symbolic meaning in the **third day**, although there have been a variety of suggestions. "Day" is mentioned in John 1:29 (the second day in John's story of Jesus coming on the scene), Jn 1:35 (the third day), Jn 1:49 (the fourth day).

**Toussaint** - "It is obvious John is emphasizing the first week of Christ's ministry. Just as the last days were crucial, so also the initial hours of the Lord's earthly work were important. The first day is referred to in John 1:35+; the second is mentioned in Jn 1:43+; and the third day is seen in Jn 2:1." ([The Significance of the First Sign in John's Gospel](#))

**Steven Cole** thinks "'The third day' (Jn 2:1) probably refers to the third day after Jesus' encounter with Nathanael (Jn 1:43)."

**MacArthur on the third day** "The phrase the third day refers back to the call of Philip and Nathanael in the previous passage (1:43–51) is the last in a series of time indicators (cf. Jn 1:29, 35, 43) that suggest the events from John the Baptist's interview with the Jewish authorities (Jn 1:19–28) to the wedding in Cana took place within the span of one week." (See [John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) - scroll up and down for more text)

**Wiersbe** - "**The third day**" means three days after the call of Nathanael (John 1:45–51). Since that was the fourth day of the week recorded in John (John 1:19, 29, 35, 43), the wedding took place on "the seventh day" of this "new creation week." Throughout his

Gospel, John makes it clear that Jesus was on a divine schedule, obeying the will of the Father. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - New Testament](#))

**Barclay** - The third day' is probably to be counted from the event last mentioned, the call of Nathanael. The reckoning is, as usual, inclusive; we should say 'two days later'. ([John 2 Commentary](#))

**Third day** is obviously significant as the time when Jesus would rise from the dead (Mt. 16:21; Mt. 17:23; Mt. 20:19; Mt. 27:64; Lk. 9:22; Lk. 13:32; Lk. 18:33; Lk. 24:7; Lk. 24:46; Acts 10:40; 1 Co. 15:4). There could be an association for on the third day in Cana there was a celebration the disciples (5 of them) attended and on the third day in Jerusalem there was a celebration by the disciples (a celebration that resounds through the ages in the lives and from the lips of all His disciples that "He is Risen!")

**Robertson** - "On the day the third" (locative case), from the start to Galilee when Philip was found (John 1:43), seven days since John 1:19." ([John 2 Word Pictures in the NT](#))

**There was a wedding** - Village weddings were major social events. They often involved the entire community and a Jewish wedding celebration often lasted a week. The wedding was usually paid for by the bride's family and the celebration was covered by the groom.

**THOUGHT** - First miracle is in a home. Jesus brings joy to a home. It is a very dry (sad) wedding without Jesus! Recall also that wine represents joy in the OT. My Jewish partner's daughter got married and it was the saddest, most secular wedding I have attended in my entire life! Not only was Messiah not present (except in those few there who were believers like myself), but there was not mention of either God or the Holy Word of God. Even the music was secular! The Jewish father is the man I have been praying for to come to Christ for over 20 years but he continues to resist and clearly has raised his daughter to disavow anything that has to do with God! So yes a wedding without God and Jesus in attendance is a joyless occasion!

**MacArthur** - The wedding marked the culmination of the betrothal period. During that period, which often lasted for several months, the couple was considered legally man and wife (Matt. 1:18–19 refers to Joseph as Mary's husband during their betrothal period), and only a divorce could terminate the betrothal (cf. Matt. 1:19). They did not, however, live together or consummate the marriage during that period (cf. Matt. 1:18). On the night of the ceremony (usually a Wednesday), the groom and his friends would go to the bride's house. They would then escort her and her attendants to the groom's house, where the ceremony and banquet would be held (cf. Matt. 25:1–10). The whole celebration ended with the actual wedding. (See [John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) - scroll up and down for more text)

**In Cana of Galilee** ([see another map](#)) - Only about 9 miles from Nazareth (an estimate because we are not 100% sure of where Cana was located), the home of Jesus as a boy (Jn 21:2). It seems that He returned to Cana from His baptism in the Jordan and from the temptation in the wilderness and at the wedding He performed His first miracle. Cana was also home of **Nathanael** (Jn 21:2). Note that **Cana of Galilee** was later the site of Jesus' third sign ("the second sign" performed in Cana; Jn 4:54). The only other mention of Cana is in John 4:46 "Therefore He came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum."

Recall that earlier John recorded "The next day He purposed to go into **Galilee**, and He found Philip. And Jesus \*said to him, "Follow Me." (Jn 1:43+)

**ESV Study Bible** on location of **Cana** - Archaeological attention has focused on the excavation site of **Khirbet Kana**, 8.3 miles (13 km) north of Nazareth, as the most likely locale for the Roman town of Cana. Excavation of this site has revealed substantial quantities of Roman potsherds, thus confirming Roman-era occupation; it also features a prime location on the Roman road from Ptolemais to Magdala. (Borrow [ESV Study Bible](#))

**NET Note** - Cana in Galilee was not a very well-known place. It is mentioned only here, in Jn 4:46, and Jn 21:2, and nowhere else in the NT. Josephus (Life 16 [86]) says he once had his quarters there. The probable location is present day Khirbet Cana, 8 mi (14 km) north of Nazareth, or Khirbet Kenna, 4 mi (7 km) northeast of Nazareth.

**And the mother of Jesus was there** - John never mentions Mary by name, even as he tends to leave himself anonymous (cf " the disciple whom He loved" = Jn 19:26,27). Neither is Joseph mentioned so many think he had passed on by now. While this is likely, it is notable that there is also no mention of Jesus' brothers and sisters although we know they are alive (Mt 12:46-47+). "It is probable that Mary was not an invited guest but rather an assistant at the wedding. This might explain how it was that she knew about the wine giving out." (Hendriksen)

**Bob Utley** - Apparently Mary was helping with the arrangements for the wedding. This can be seen in (1) her ordering the servants

(cf. v. 5) and (2) her concern over the refreshments (cf. v. 3). These probably were relatives or family friends.

## John 2:2 and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.

NET John 2:2 and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding.

GNT John 2:2 κλ θη δ κα ησο ςκα ο μαθητα α το ε ς τ ν γ μ ο ν.

NLT John 2:2 and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration.

KJV John 2:2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

ESV John 2:2 Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples.

NIV John 2:2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.

ASV John 2:2 and Jesus also was bidden, and his disciples, to the marriage.

CSB John 2:2 Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding as well.

NKJ John 2:2 Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.

NRS John 2:2 Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.

YLT John 2:2 and also Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage;

NAB John 2:2 Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding.

NJB John 2:2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited.

GWN John 2:2 Jesus and his disciples had been invited too.

BBE John 2:2 And Jesus with his disciples came as guests.

- **both:** Mt 12:19 Lu 7:34-38 1Co 7:39 10:31 Col 3:17 Rev 3:20
- **his:** Mt 10:40-42 25:40,45
- **the wedding:** Heb 13:4
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### JESUS AT THE WEDDING IN CANA

**And both Jesus and His disciples ([mathetes](#)) were invited ([kaleo](#)) to the wedding** - At this time the disciples probably were the five mentioned in John's account - Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, Nathanael, and the unnamed disciple (Jn 1:35+) who was surely John himself. (Jn 1:35-51+) And Jesus accepted the invitation for He was not an [ascetic](#). As an aside this must have been quite a change for the former disciples of John and his relatively ascetic lifestyle. Later He describes how His opponents attempted to slander Him "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds." (Mt. 11:19+).

**THOUGHT-** Note the high honour our Lord places upon marriage. By his presence at the marriage feast, the Son of God said, 'This is an honourable thing' (Genesis 1:28; 2:18-25; Hebrews 13:4). One of the first steps toward moral decadence in any society is a low esteem for this ordinance of God. Where there is no sanctity of marriage, there is no regard for God or his law, no regard for moral decency, and no regard for human life. These things stand and fall together! (Don Fortner)

**NET Note** - There is no clue to the identity of the bride and groom, but in all probability either relatives or friends of Jesus' family were involved, since Jesus' mother and both Jesus and his disciples were invited to the celebration. The attitude of Mary in approaching Jesus and asking him to do something when the wine ran out also suggests that familial obligations were involved.

**MacArthur** - By attending a wedding and performing His first miracle there, Jesus sanctified both the institution of marriage and the ceremony itself. Marriage is the sacred union of a man and a woman whereby they become one in the sight of God. The ceremony is an essential element of that union, because in it the couple publicly vow to remain faithful to each other. Both the Old Testament (e.g., Gen. 29:20-23; Jdg. 14:10; Ruth 4:10-13; Song of Sol. 3:11) and the New Testament (e.g., Matt. 22:2; 25:10; Luke 12:36; 14:8) view the public ceremony as a necessary part of marriage. (See [John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) - scroll up and down for more text)

"Wise is that couple who invite Jesus to their wedding!"

- Warren Wiersbe

The fact that this is the Lord's first "official" ministry function, clearly shows that Jesus valued marriage and family life. And this has been passed on as a component of the marriage ceremony in the Book of Common Prayer...

DEARLY beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this company, to join together this Man and this Woman in holy Matrimony; which is an honourable estate, instituted of God, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church: **which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence and first miracle that he wrought in Cana of Galilee**, and is commended of Saint Paul to be honourable among all men: and therefore is not by any to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God. Into this holy estate these two persons present come now to be joined. If any man can show just cause, why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace. ([The Book of Common Prayer - 1928](#))

**Hindson** on **His disciples** ([mathetes](#)) - Since the **disciples** had joined Christ so recently, there is the problem in resolving how they were all invited to the wedding feast. There are two possible answers: Jesus could have stopped in Nazareth on His way to Cana and accepted the invitation for His disciples; or second, Nathanael could have made the arrangements since he was from Cana. (Online [KJV Bible Commentary](#))

[Adrian Rogers](#) - Now, the Bible does not tell us the names of the bride and groom. That's significant to me. Because had the Bible told us the names of the brides and grooms, that would have meant that they were significant people. But evidently, these were very common people whose names were not well known. Now, what does that tell us? That tells us that Jesus loves people like we are. Jesus loves ordinary people, and Jesus is involved in everyday issues. Here's the Lord of glory taking care of the refreshments at a party. That tells me that Jesus Christ wants to be with you on Thursday morning in the office just as well as He wants to be with you Sunday morning at church. That tells me that Jesus is interested in everyone, every day, and every circumstance. And yet, Jesus present there at that wedding turned what could have been a disaster into something delightful. And Jesus has a way of turning the monotonous to the momentous. And I see Jesus taking care of little things, small things. One of the most beautiful pictures of the Bible is not only Jesus turning water into wine, but Jesus preparing breakfast for the disciples. He is the Lord that cares about those things that concern you. So, that's the setting of the miracle—at a wedding. And here's the Lord of glory taking care of the mundane and yet bringing joy and happiness, because Jesus is indeed a joyful, joyful person.

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**Disciples** ([3101](#))([mathetes](#) from from [manthano](#) = to learn which **Vine** says is "from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor". English = "*mathematics*"; cognate = [matheteuo](#)) describes a person who learns from another by instruction, whether formal or informal. Another sources says **mathetes** is from from **math-** which speaks of "mental effort that thinks something through" and thus describes is a learner; a follower who learns the doctrines and the lifestyle of the one they follow. Discipleship includes the idea of one who intentionally learns by inquiry and observation (cf [inductive Bible study](#)) and thus **mathetes** is more than a mere pupil.

A **mathetes** describes an [adherent](#) of a teacher, a follower in the footsteps of the master (see Paul's encouragement to Timothy in 2 Ti 3:10+; see the charge to all believers in 1 Peter 2:21+) See [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)

**THOUGHT-** It is interesting to see the context of **disciple** in Jn 1:35-38 as it is found with the key word **followed/following** (Jn 1:37-38). It would be fair to say that a descriptive definition of **disciple** is one who follows another, in this case one they called Rabbi (Teacher), exactly who a learner would want to be following! In Jn 8:31+ we see Jesus' descriptive definition of disciple as one who abides or continues in His Word, which is what every "learner" should strive to do. It follows that if you are seldom reading the Word of God, you might need to question whether you are truly His disciple or, assuming you are truly His disciple, you might understand why your experience as His disciple is not one of "abundant life!" Are you in the Word daily, so the Word can get in you?

**Disciples** is repeated in John 2:11, 12, 17, 22.

**Ralph Earle** - As **followers** of Jesus we are to be, first of all, **learners**. We are to learn from Him by listening to Him, learn the truth that will set us free (John 8:32+) and keep us from error. But we are also to learn from Him by looking at Him- learn how to live a life of beauty and blessing. (Word Meanings in the New Testament)

**Barclay** writes that "All his life a Christian should be learning more and more about Jesus. The shut mind is the end of discipleship!" ([Matthew 5 Commentary](#))

**Bridgeway Bible Dictionary** - During the lifetime of Jesus there were many who considered themselves his



disciples. That is, they followed him and listened to his words, as pupils might listen to a teacher. Although these people may have thought Jesus to be the Messiah, many of them had a wrong understanding of the sort of person the Messiah would be. They expected him to be a political leader who would free the Jews from Roman domination and bring in the golden age (John 6:14-15; John 6:60-64). When they found that Jesus was not this kind of leader, they withdrew from him (John 6:66-68). Yet there were many, probably hundreds, who were true believers, true disciples (Luke 6:17; Luke 6:20). From these, Jesus chose twelve whom he appointed apostles (Luke 6:13). These twelve were Jesus' disciples in a special sense, and became known as the twelve disciples or simply the disciples (Matthew 16:13; Matthew 20:17; Matthew 24:3; Matthew 26:17). After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, all the followers of Jesus became known as disciples (Acts 1:15; Acts 6:1; Acts 9:1), and later as Christians (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16; see CHRISTIAN). ([Disciple](#))

## Related Resources

- [matheteuo - make disciples](#)
- [Test of True Discipleship](#)
- [What is Christian discipleship?](#)
- [What is the difference between a Christian and a disciple?](#)
- Discussion of [False vs True Disciples-The Test of a True Disciple of Jesus](#)
- [Disciple in Bible Dictionaries](#)

**Invited** (2564) ([kaleo](#) from root **kal-**, whence English "call" and "clamour") literally means to speak to another in order to attract their attention or to them bring nearer, either physically or in a personal relationship. Kaleo is a major verb in the NT and its specific meaning depends on the the **context** in which it is used. In this **context** it means to issue an invitation or request one's presence at a gathering - Mt 22:3, 4, 8, 9, Lk 7:39, 14:7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 14:24.

**THOUGHT** - In John's last use of kaleo believers are issued a "wedding invitation" to the greatest wedding in eternity! "Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are **invited** to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he \*said to me, "These are true words of God." (Rev 19:9<sup>±</sup>) This greatest wedding celebration in eternity begs the question whether you have heard and heeded the first invitation which will guarantee an invitation to the wedding? You will not be allowed to attend without the proper wedding clothes - Read Mt 22:2-14

## ALL VERBS BELOW IN RED ARE **COMMANDS**

**Come** to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 **Take** My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Mt 11:28-30<sup>±</sup>)

Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city (AND ARE ALLOWED TO ATTEND THE WEDDING). (Rev 22:14<sup>±</sup>)

And the Spirit and the bride say, "**Come** ." And let the one who hears say, "**Come** ." And let the one who is thirsty **come** ; let the one who wishes **take** the water of life without cost. (Rev 22:17<sup>±</sup>)

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**G Campbell Morgan** in his helpful little book **Discipleship** writes that...

**Disciples** is the term consistently used in the four Gospels to mark the relationship existing between Christ and His **followers** (**Ed**: In fact "**followers of Christ**" is a synonym for disciples of Christ.). Jesus used it Himself in speaking of them, and they in speaking of each other. Neither did it pass out of use in the new days of Pentecostal power. It runs right through the Acts of the Apostles (**Ed**: **Disciples** is the most common term for the believers in Acts!). It is interesting also to remember that it was in this way that the angels thought and spoke of these men -- the use of the word (disciple) in the days of the Incarnation is linked to the use of the word in the apostolic age by the angelic message to the women, "*Go, tell His Disciples and Peter*" (Mark 16:7).

It is somewhat remarkable that the word is not to be found in the Epistles. This is to be accounted for by the fact that the Epistles were addressed to Christians in their corporate capacity as churches, and so spoke of them as members of such, and as the "**saints**" or separated ones of God. The term **disciple** marks an individual **relationship** (which is a state of being related by kindred, association by blood or marriage - believers are both His both by blood of the New Covenant and by virtue of being His Bride!), and though it has largely fallen out of use, it is of the utmost value still in marking that **relationship** existing between Christ and each individual soul, and suggesting our consequent position in **all** the varied circumstances of everyday living...

The word **mathetes** signifies a taught or trained one, and gives us the ideal of **relationship**. Jesus is the Teacher. He has all knowledge of the ultimate purposes of God for man, of the will of God concerning man, of the laws of God that mark for man the path of his progress and final crowning. **Disciples** are those who gather around this Teacher and are trained by Him. Seekers after truth, not merely in the abstract, but as a life force, come to Him and join the circle of those to whom He reveals these great secrets of all true life. Sitting at His feet, they learn from the unfolding of His lessons the will and ways of God for them; and obeying (**Ed**: Now enabled by His indwelling Spirit) each successive word, they realize within themselves, the renewing force and uplifting power thereof. The true and perpetual condition of discipleship, and its ultimate issue, were clearly declared by the Lord Himself to those Jews which believed on Him. "If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples ; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free " (John 8:31). ([Discipleship - a worthy read](#))

Jesus, I my cross have taken,  
All to leave and follow Thee;  
Destitute, despised, forsaken,  
Thou, from hence, my all shalt be:  
I will follow Thee, my Saviour  
Thou didst shed Thy blood for me,  
And though all the world forsake Thee,  
By Thy grace I'll follow Thee.  
-H. F. Lyte

### John 2:3 When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

NET John 2:3 When the wine ran out, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no wine left."

GNT John 2:3 κα στερ σαντος ο νου λ γει μ τηρ το ησο πρ ς α τ ν, Ο νον ο κ χουσιν.

NLT John 2:3 The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine."

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

ESV John 2:3 When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."

NIV John 2:3 When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

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

CSB John 2:3 When the wine ran out, Jesus' mother told Him, "They don't have any wine."

NKJ John 2:3 And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

NRS John 2:3 When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."

YLT John 2:3 and wine having failed, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, 'Wine they have not;'

NAB John 2:3 When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."

NJB John 2:3 And they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the feast had all been used, and the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.'

GWN John 2:3 When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They're out of wine."

BBE John 2:3 When they had not enough wine, the mother of Jesus said to him, They have no wine.

- **When the wine ran out:** Ps 104:15 Ec 10:19 Isa 24:11 Mt 26:28
- **the mother.** Mt 12:48
- **They have no wine:** Joh 11:3 Php 4:6
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**NO WINE:  
A GREAT GAFFE!**



Running out of wine at an oriental wedding is what we would call today a major [gaffe](#), a socially awkward or tactless act!

**Merrill Tenney** says that "To fail to provide adequately for the guests would involve social disgrace. In the closely knit communities of Jesus' day, such an error would never be forgotten and would haunt the newly married couple all their lives."

*It is good to run short that we may be driven to Christ with our necessity.*

--D L Moody

**When the wine ([oinos](#)) ran out ([hustereo](#)), the mother of Jesus said to Him** - Oriental wedding feasts often lasted seven days, so it would be easy to see how the wine might run out! Wine in the OT was a sign of joy and the blessing of Jehovah, so running out would have been a social catastrophe! This time of feasting was followed by the groom's taking his bride to his home or his father's house, and consummating the marriage ([See note](#))

**Bob Utley** - This wine is obviously fermented, as seen in (1) comment of master of ceremonies, Jn 2:9–10; (2) the Jewish customs in Jesus' day; and (3) the lack of hygienic processes or chemical additives.

Mary knew Oriental hospitality would consider a shortage of wine a disgraceful calamity so she spoke to her Son. Why did she speak to Jesus regarding the deficit? Because she knew Who He really was! (see Lk 1:26-38+) As alluded to earlier, the running out of wine is an ironic reminder that first-century Judaism was spiritually empty. Empty religious works that would never satisfy in time or eternity.

**THOUGHT** - How about you dear reader? Are you like the wine pots? Empty. Are you spiritually barren and need to do what Mary did and go to Jesus and ask Him to (miraculously) fill your emptiness with His sufficiency which He will do if you come to Him by grace through faith and repent and believe on Him and His fully atoning sacrificial death in your place, as your substitute! Then you can experience life and experience it abundantly (Jn 10:10b+).

**Thomas Constable** adds an interesting historical note that regarding running out of wine - The loss would not only have been social disgrace, however, but also financial since grooms had a legal responsibility in that culture to provide a suitable feast for their guests. "Our bridegroom stood to lose financially-say, up to about half the value of the presents Jesus and his party ought to have brought." ([Notes on the Bible](#))

Mary **the mother of Jesus** appears only twice in the fourth Gospel -- here and at the cross (Jn 19:25ff.). Jesus' response to Mary's request was not disrespectful or a refusal. Christ uses this same term to address other women (Jn 4:21; 20:13; Matt. 15:28; Luke 13:12). His question seeks to lead one to see the connection between the revelation of His glory and the sign-miracle He was about to do.

**Nelson's NKJV Study Bible**. - Hospitality in the east was a sacred duty. A wedding feast often lasted for a week. To run out of wine at such an important event would have been humiliating for the bride and groom. The family of Jesus was not wealthy, and it is likely their relatives and acquaintances were not either. This may have been a "low-budget" wedding feast. (BORROW [NKJV Study Bible](#))

**Wine** was important for celebrating and being merry as one should be at a wedding

Ps 104:15 And **wine which makes man's heart glad**, So that he may make his face glisten with oil, And food which sustains man's heart.

Ecclesiastes 10:19 Men prepare a meal for enjoyment, and **wine makes life merry**, and money is the answer to everything.

**John MacArthur** - Wine was the staple drink in the ancient Near East. Due to the warm climate and the lack of any means of refrigeration or purification, fruit juice tended to ferment. The result was an alcoholic beverage with the capability of inducing drunkenness. To help avoid the risk of inebriation, wine was commonly diluted with water to one-third to one-tenth of its strength. (See [John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) - scroll up and down for more text)

**THOUGHT** - Note the propriety of feasting and laughter. In this passage of scripture the Son of God gives his approval both to the party and to the moderate use of wine. 'A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry' (Ecclesiastes 7:19). Christianity was never meant to make people miserable. On the contrary, true Christianity increases real joy among men and makes people happy in this world, as well as in the world to come. (Don Fortner)

**They have no wine** - Notice Mary does not tell Jesus what to do but only that it had run out. "She merely mentioned the need, but the hint was clear enough. That Mary expected a miracle seems certain." (Hendriksen) But also that Mary believed Jesus was able

to perform a miracle is also certain.

**Ramsey** - Her pronouncement sounds almost like a parody of Jesus' own comment in the synoptic tradition just before the feeding of the four thousand: "They do not have anything to eat" (Mk 8:2; Mt 15:32). There it was a matter of possible starvation; here it is a possible social disaster! (NINCT-Jn)

**THOUGHT** - Mary cannot perform a miracle, but knows Jesus is able. Of all those present no one knew better than Mary who Jesus actually was and what task had been assigned to him. (cf. Lk 1:26–38+) And so she gives us an excellent pattern to follow for we know Who Jesus is. When we cannot solve the problem ourselves, it is always a good idea to take the problem to Jesus! Brian Bell adds "*I believe we should be followers of Mary! Protestants, never put Mary down, she is Jesus mother!!! Instead, point our Catholic friends to follow what she says!*"

**David Guzik** - Why did Mary ask Jesus to do something? Mary was no doubt earnestly anticipating Jesus' day of demonstration, for it would be a day of vindication for her. Yet she would not force the issue, leaving the matter with Jesus. ([John 2 Commentary](#))

**Leon Morris** - This meant more than the disruption of the festivities. It did mean this. The rabbis could say, "*there is no rejoicing save with wine*" (Pes. 109a). This does not point to carousing, for drunkenness was severely reprobated, and wine was normally well watered, the usual dilution being one part wine to three parts water (Soncino Talmud, Pes. p. 561, n. 7). But wine was a symbol. Its absence would mar so joyous an occasion as a wedding feast. There was something of a slur on the hosts, for they had not fully discharged the duties of hospitality. (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

**Tenney** - To fail in providing adequately for the guests would involve social disgrace. In the closely knit communities of Jesus' day such an error would never be forgotten, and would haunt the newly married couple all their lives.

**Boice** - Additionally, wine was a rabbinical symbol of joy. Therefore "to run out of wine would almost have been the equivalent of admitting that neither the guests nor the bride and groom were happy.

**NET Note - They have no wine left** On the backgrounds of this miracle J. D. M. Derrett pointed out among other things the strong element of reciprocity about weddings in the Ancient Near East. It was possible in certain circumstances to take legal action against the man who failed to provide an appropriate wedding gift. The bridegroom and family here might have been involved in a financial liability for failing to provide adequately for their guests ("Water into Wine," BZ 7 [1963]: 80-97). **Was Mary asking for a miracle?** There is no evidence that Jesus had worked any miracles prior to this (although this is an argument from silence). Some think Mary was only reporting the situation, or (as Calvin thought) asking Jesus to give some godly exhortations to the guests and thus relieve the bridegroom's embarrassment. But the words, and the reply of Jesus in Jn 2:4, seem to imply more. It is not inconceivable that Mary, who had probably been witness to the events of the preceding days, or at least was aware of them, knew that her son's public career was beginning. She also knew the supernatural events surrounding his birth, and the prophetic words of the angel, and of Simeon and Anna in the temple at Jesus' dedication. **In short, she had good reason to believe Jesus to be the Messiah, and now his public ministry had begun. In this kind of context, her request does seem more significant.**

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**Wine** (3631)(oinos refers to a beverage (1) **literally**, of the juice of grapes, usually fermented (Lk 1.15); (2) **figuratively**, in apocalyptic symbolism; (a) as indicating the wrath of God outpoured in judgment (Rev 14.10); (b) as an enticement to immorality, like a love potion (Rev 17.2) (Friberg)

**Ran out** (5302)(hustereo from hústeros = last, latter, terminal, hindmost) has the basic meaning of come to late (in time) or to come after (in terms of space) and thus it means to fail in something, come short of, miss, not to reach. **Hustereo** has the basic meaning of being last or inferior. It means to be left behind in the race and so fail to reach the goal, to fall short of the end, to lack, to be in short supply. In Lxx in Isa 51:14 God promises the exile "nor will his bread **be lacking**." In Mk 10:21 the young man was told "one thing you **lack**."

15x in NT - Matt. 19:20; Mk. 10:21; Lk. 15:14; Lk. 22:35; Jn. 2:3; Rom. 3:23; 1 Co. 1:7; 1 Co. 8:8; 1 Co. 12:24; 2 Co. 11:5; 2 Co. 11:9; 2 Co. 12:11; Phil. 4:12; Heb. 4:1; Heb. 11:37; Heb. 12:15

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#### Related Resources:

- [Wine and Strong Drink](#) - [Bob Utley](#) (interesting)
- American Church Dictionary [Wine](#)
- American Tract Society [Wine](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Wine](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Wine](#)

- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Wine](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Wine](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Wine](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Wine and Strong Drink](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Wine](#) [Wine](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Wine](#) [New wine](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Wine](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Wine](#)
- Wilson's Bible Types [Wine](#)
- Webster Dictionary [Wine](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Wine](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Wine](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Wine; Wine Press](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Wine](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Sweet Wine](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Wine](#)
- Nave Topical Bible [Wine](#)
- Thompson Chain Reference [Wine](#)
- Torrey Topical Textbook [Wine](#)
- [Did Jesus change the water into wine or grape juice?](#)
- [Did Jesus drink wine/alcohol?](#)
- [Should wine or grape juice be used for communion?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about drinking alcohol / wine? Is it a sin for a Christian to drink alcohol / wine?](#)
- [What is consubstantiation?](#)
- [Why did Jesus choose the wedding at Cana for His first miracle?](#)
- [Why is the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper such a controversial issue?](#)
- [Is intinction the correct way to do communion?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about underage drinking?](#)
- [What is transubstantiation?](#)

**Brian Bell** - Rarest bottle of wine ever sold purchased by Christopher Forbes for \$160,000. It was an unmarked green glass bottle w/the inscription of 1787 Lafitte Th. J. (thought to be owned by Thomas Jefferson), found behind a wall in Paris. Yet, the world's finest wine was not made in the vineyard's of France, nor was it served in the finest international restaurants. It was made and served at an unpretentious wedding in Cana of Galilee, 2000 years ago. And that wine is valued to this day, not for its rarity, but for what it reveals about its Maker...Jesus Christ! a) Last week, Jesus the Jeweler, able to see diamonds in the rough (5 disciples). This week, Jesus the Vintner/Winemaker, able to turn water into wine.

**Rod Mattoon** - Here is an important truth. The couple that invites Jesus to their wedding and makes the Lord first in their home, is wise. Make sure your wedding glorifies Christ. Put some clothes on the bride's maids and the bride. Sensuality and immodesty may be stylish with the world, but it is not stylish with God. Don't dishonor the Lord by serving a bunch of liquor at the reception. Before you get married, make sure you marry a believer. Don't marry a Christian that is backslidden and will drag you down spiritually and get you out of church. There is an important note we want to make here. This is not the wedding of Jesus. Mormons have taught for years (NOTE: THIS IS NOT THEIR OFFICIAL DOCTRINE BUT SOME MORMONS DO BELIEVE JESUS WAS MARRIED) that Jesus was married to Martha and Mary. If it was Jesus' wedding, it would be also strange for the bridegroom to be invited to his own wedding.

**Related Resources:**

- [Was Jesus Christ married? Did Jesus have a wife?](#)
- [Why didn't Jesus marry](#)

## The Hebrew Wedding Sequence

**Andy Woods** gives us an excellent review of the customs and sequence of steps associated with the typical Hebrew wedding:

Christ's relationship to His church is analogous to that of a groom to his bride (Eph. 5:22-33; 2 Cor. 11:2). Thus, the New Testament uses the Jewish marriage custom to depict the relationship between Christ and the church. Although this analogy may be obscure to a twenty-first century audience, given the Jewish background of the Scriptures (Ro 3:1-2)—as well as Christ, the Apostles, and the early church—it is fitting that the New Testament would liken the relationship between Christ and His church to the Hebrew wedding sequence. In other words, because the Bible was written predominantly by Jews who were culturally familiar with these various phases in the wedding sequence and because Christ's relationship to His church is analogized in Scripture to the relationship between a bride and groom (Eph. 5:22-32), each of these distinct Hebrew marriage phases can also be seen in Christ's dealings with His church. There are at least ten distinct phases or aspects to this relationship.<sup>[1]</sup>

**First**, the groom traveled to the home of the bride's father and paid the betrothal contract price for the hand of the bride. This step is the equivalent of Christ's death that paid the price necessary for the church to enter into a relationship with Him (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Here, the groom was the initiator. Such initiation speaks of the fact that Christ has elected unto salvation members of His church (John 15:16a). During this step the bride and the groom drank from the same cup as a commemoration of the new betrothal contract. Such commemoration is symbolized in the ordinance of Communion that the church is to regularly practice until Christ returns (1 Cor. 11:25).

**Second**, the bride was set apart exclusively for the groom. Namely, she was a woman no longer available to be pursued by other suitors, but rather was a woman already spoken for. Such setting apart of the bride is represented in how the church has been positionally sanctified or set apart from the world unto Christ (1 Cor. 1:2; 6:9-11).

**Third**, the groom separated from the bride and returned to his father's house to prepare bridal chamber. In that case, these dwellings would eventually be occupied by the groom and his new bride. This step represents Christ's Ascension (Acts 1:9-11) and the beginning of the Church Age. Here, Christ is separated bodily from His church while He is preparing dwelling places for His bride in His Father's house (John 14:2). This time of separation represents the last two-thousand years of church history.

**Fourth**, this time of separation is known as the **betrothal period**. During this time of separation, the fidelity of the groom and the bride was tested. The test, of course, involved whether the bride and the groom would be loyal to each other despite the vast distance between them. If either failed the test during this time of separation, the betrothal contract would be dissolved. This ancient Jewish ritual explains Joseph's dismay and desire to end the engagement upon discovering Mary's pregnancy. The severity of this situation also explains why an angel had to be dispatched from heaven to assure Joseph that Mary's pregnancy had in fact been wrought by the Holy Spirit rather than caused by Mary's unfaithfulness to Joseph during the betrothal period (Matt. 1:18-25). Just as the fidelity of the groom and bride are tested during this time of separation, the church's loyalty to Christ is currently being tested as the church is tempted to succumb to false teaching and worldly conduct (Jas 4:4; 2 Cor. 11:2) during Christ's physical absence. The church demonstrates her loyalty to Christ during this time by maintaining both correct beliefs (orthodoxy) and correct practice (orthopraxy). Apparently, the church will be either given or denied rewards at the Bema Seat Judgment based upon her faithfulness to Christ during this time of separation in the intervening Church Age.<sup>[2]</sup>

**Fifth**, the groom retrieved the bride. At an unknown time, the groom returned to the bride's home, accompanied by escorts and preceded by a shout, to collect his bride and take her to his father's house. This step is the equivalent of the rapture of the church. At the rapture, Christ will be accompanied by deceased Church-Age saints and preceded by the shout of an archangel (1 Thess. 4:16-17). He will come at an unknown time to take the church to His father's house in heaven to the temporary dwellings He has prepared for her (John 14:3).

**Sixth**, the bridal party returns to the groom's father's home in order to meet wedding guests who have already assembled. A private wedding ceremony then took place. This step correlates to the raptured church being taken to heaven in order to greet Old Testament saints who are already in the presence of the Lord.

**Seventh**, the bride and the groom were then hidden in the Father's house for a period of seven days while other events (described in steps eight and nine) transpired. In the same way, the church will be veiled or hidden from world during Daniel's Seventieth Week. Thus, this step is the equivalent of the church after the rapture being hidden with Christ in heaven for seven years (Dan. 9:27), while the events of the Tribulation come to pass on the earth below.

**Eighth**, the bride then underwent ritual cleansing. This step involved the bride experiencing a ritual cleansing prior to the wedding ceremony. This ritual cleansing equates to the Bema Seat Judgment of rewards to be experienced by the church in heaven following the rapture (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10). Here, members of Christ's church will have the work that they have accomplished following conversion tested in order to ascertain their quality. All fleshly motivated activity will be consumed by the refiner's fire. Conversely, works that were done through spiritual motives and power will survive the fire's trying work. Whatever remains after the consuming fire will be part of the Church-Age believer's reward above and beyond salvation (1 Cor. 3:10-15).

**Ninth**, during the consummation of the marriage stage the wedding party waited outside the marital chamber while the new couple enters into this chamber in order to physically consummate their new union. The groom emerged from the marital chamber announcing to the wedding party the reality of this new physical union. He then returned to the marital chamber to be with his bride for seven days while the wedding guests continued to celebrate outside the marital chamber. This step pictures the church's marriage to Christ (Eph. 5:27). Thus, at this point, the church is no longer merely the bride of Christ but now has formally been married to Him.

**Tenth**, the groom and the bride emerged from the marital chamber unveiled and in full view of the wedding party. Thus far, the bride had been veiled to the wedding party. At the conclusion of these seven days, the newly married couple were then officially presented to the world as the new "Mr. and Mrs." This step is the equivalent of Christ and the church returning to the earth at the conclusion of the seven-year Tribulation period, both unveiled (Col 3:4) and visible to the entire world (Rev 1:7; Rev 19:7-9). ([Article by Andy Woods](#))

#### John 2:4 And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come."

NET John 2:4 Jesus replied, "Woman, why are you saying this to me? My time has not yet come."

GNT John 2:4 [κα] λ γει α τ ησο ς, Τ μο κα σο , γ ναι; ο πω κει ρα μου.

NLT John 2:4 "Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

KJV John 2:4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

ESV John 2:4 And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come."

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

ASV John 2:4 And Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

CSB John 2:4 "What has this concern of yours to do with Me, woman?" Jesus asked. "My hour has not yet come."

NKJ John 2:4 Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

NRS John 2:4 And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come."

YLT John 2:4 Jesus saith to her, 'What -- to me and to thee, woman? not yet is mine hour come.'

NAB John 2:4 (And) Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come."

NJB John 2:4 Jesus said, 'Woman, what do you want from me? My hour has not come yet.'

GWN John 2:4 Jesus said to her, "Why did you come to me? My time has not yet come."

BBE John 2:4 Jesus said to her, Woman, this is not your business; my time is still to come.

- **Woman:** John 19:26,27 20:13,15 Mt 15:28
- **what:** Dt 33:9 2Sa 16:10 19:22 Lu 2:49 2Co 5:16 Ga 2:5,6
- **My hour has not yet come:** John 7:6,30 8:20 12:23 13:1 Ec 3:1
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**GOD'S TIMING:**

## NEVER EARLY, NEVER LATE!

**And Jesus said to her, "Woman** - This is not disrespect by Jesus but is akin to our modern word "Lady." (cf Jn 19:26 as Jesus spoke from the Cross) He does not call her "mother." Jesus wanted to emphasize that there was a different relationship with her now. ESV Study note says it was "an expression of polite distance."

**MacArthur** explains that "that what they had in common in their relationship was no longer to be what it had been while He was growing up in Nazareth. His public ministry had begun, and earthly relationships would not determine His actions. Mary was to relate to Him no longer as her son, but as her Messiah, the Son of God, and her Savior (cf. Matt. 12:47–50; Mark 3:31–35; Luke 11:27–28)." (See [John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) - scroll up and down for more text)

**Leon Morris** adds the comment "That Jesus calls Mary 'Woman' and not 'Mother' probably indicates that there is a new relationship between them as he enters his public ministry." (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

**NET Note** - The term **Woman** is Jesus' normal, polite way of addressing women (Matt 15:28, Luke 13:12; John 4:21; 8:10; 19:26; 20:15). But it is unusual for a son to address his mother with this term. The custom in both Hebrew (or Aramaic) and Greek would be for a son to use a qualifying adjective or title. **Is there significance in Jesus' use here?** It probably indicates that a new relationship existed between Jesus and his mother once he had embarked on his public ministry. He was no longer or primarily only her son, but the "**Son of Man**." This is also suggested by the use of the same term in Jn 19:26 in the scene at the cross, where the beloved disciple is "given" to Mary as her "new" son.

**What does that have to do with us?** - More literally it was a Hebraic idiom that read "*What to me and to you?*" and means in essence "What do we have in common?" (cf. Jdg. 11:12; 2 Sa 16:10; 19:22; 1 Ki 17:18; 2 Ki 3:13; 2 Chr. 35:21; Mt. 8:29; Mk 1:24; 5:7; Lk 4:34; 8:28;). Jesus' point is that Mary was no longer to think of Him as her son, for now He was consumed with the consummation of His commission and mission, to die for the sins of the world that He might be the Redeemer of all who believe in Him. It is interesting that the demons spoke similar words when confronted by Christ ("*What business do we have with each other?*" in Mk 1:24+, Mk 5:7+)

**COMMENT** - It is notable that the expression **what does that have to do with us** is repeatedly spoken by the demons when Jesus approached. "Our Lord has nothing in common with Satan at all. Christ had nothing in common with Mary because He was the God-man and she was a sinner just like everyone else. Christ was saying, "What authority do you have over me?" There was only one voice that had authority for His ears and that was the voice of God the Father. Jesus could not consent to her authority. He could only consent to His Heavenly Father's authority." (Mattoon)

- Mt. 8:29 = "What business do we have with each other, Son of God?";
- Mk 1:24 = "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth?";
- Mk 5:7 = "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?"
- Lk 4:34 = "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth?"
- Lk 8:28 = "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?"

**John MacArthur** explains "The expression (**What does that have to do with us?**) common in Semitic idiom (Jdg 11:12; 2Sa 16:10), always **distances the two parties** (ED: cf the painful lesson Mary would have to learn as alluded to in Lk 2:35+), the speaker's tone conveying some degree of reproach. Jesus' tone was not rude, but abrupt. The phrase asks what is shared in common between the parties. The thrust of Jesus' comment was that He had entered into the purpose for His mission on earth, so that He subordinated all activities to the fulfillment of that mission. Mary had to recognize Him not so much as a son whom she raised but as the promised Messiah and Son of God. Cf. Mk 3:31-35." (Bolding added) (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**NET Note** - "**Woman, what to me and to you?**" (an idiom). The phrase (ti emoi kai soi, gunai) is Semitic in origin. The equivalent Hebrew expression in the Old Testament had two basic meanings: (1) When one person was unjustly bothering another, the injured party could say "**What to me and to you?**" meaning, "**What have I done to you that you should do this to me?**" (Jdg 11:12, 2 Chr 35:21, 1Kgs 17:18). (2) When someone was asked to get involved in a matter he felt was no business of his, he could say to the one asking him, "**What to me and to you?**" meaning, "That is your business, how am I involved?" (2 Kgs 3:13, Hos 14:8). Option (1) implies hostility, while option (2) implies merely disengagement. Mere disengagement is almost certainly to be understood here as better fitting the [context](#) (although some of the Greek Fathers took the remark as a rebuke to Mary, such a rebuke is unlikely).

**Stanley Toussaint** adds "The Lord is very positively saying they are no longer on common ground. Up to this time their relationship had been purely domestic; now He is entering into public ministry." ([The Significance of the First Sign in John's Gospel](#))



**My hour** always refers to His death -

- John 7:30 So they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His **hour** had not yet come.
- John 8:20 These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His **hour** had not yet come.
- John 12:23 And Jesus \*answered them, saying, "The **hour** has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.
- John 12:27-28 Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this **hour**'? But for this purpose I came to this **hour**. "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."
- John 13:1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His **hour** had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.
- John 17:1 Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the **hour** has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You,

## **THE HOUR OF JESUS' DEATH AND GLORIFICATION**

**My hour has not yet come** - Jesus had no doubt about His mission and was not hesitant to accomplish it, but now was not the correct time. As Jesus stated in Mark 10:45+ "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (cf Lk 19:10+) **My hour**, the One He had possessed since before the foundation of the world, was **the time of His crucifixion**, the time He would accomplish His rescue mission of redemption for planet earth and all Adam's sinful offspring (Ro 5:12+). Jesus would meet the need for wine, but when His **hour** finally came He would meet man's greatest need for salvation! Jesus is continually conscious that He is to do the will of His Father (Jn 4:34, Jn 5:19, 30, Jn 6:40, Jn 8:28, 49, Jn 14:10 ) and that each act or action He carried out was to be done in the timing determined by His Father (Jn 7:6, Jn 7:30; Jn 8:20). In the latter part of His ministry Jesus shifts from **My hour has not yet come** to the declaration that **the hour has come** (Jn 12:23; Jn 17:1, cf Jn 13:1 = "Jesus knowing that His hour had come")

**Rod Mattoon** - This **hour** of suffering would be the time when Jesus would be subject to man's will. He would be delivered into the hands of sinners. Until that "**hour**," He was not to be ordered by men. He was to be about doing His Father's business, seeking only to do His Father's will, not Mary's or man's.

**THOUGHT** - As aged Solomon came to understand "There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven." Ec 3:1) It was true in Jesus' life and it is true in our lives also beloved. Am I willing to wait on the Father's perfect timing just as my Master was willing to wait?

**NET Note** - Greek "**my hour**" referring to **the time of Jesus' crucifixion and return to the Father**. The Greek word translated time ( hora) occurs in John 2:4; 4:21, 23; 5:25, 28, 29; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:25; and 17:1. It is a reference to the special period in Jesus' life when he was to leave this world and return to the Father (Jn 13:1); the hour when the Son of man is glorified (Jn 17:1). This is accomplished through his suffering, death, resurrection (and ascension - though this last is not emphasized by John). John 7:30 and Jn 8:20 imply that Jesus' arrest and death are included. John 12:23 and 17:1, referring to the glorification of the Son, imply that the resurrection and ascension are included as part of the "hour." In John 2:4 Jesus' remark to his mother indicates that **the time for this self-manifestation has not yet arrived; his identity as Messiah is not yet to be publicly revealed**.

**Ultey** - John uses this term "**hour**" in several ways: (1) for time (cf. Jn 1:39; 4:6, 52, 53; 11:9; 16:21; 19:14; 19:27); (2) for the end time (cf. Jn 4:21, 23; 5:25, 28); (3) for His last days (arrest, trials, death, cf. Jn 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:32; 17:1).

**John MacArthur** on **My hour has not yet come** - The phrase **constantly refers to Jesus' death and exaltation** (Jn 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1). He was on a divine schedule decreed by God before the foundation of the world. Since the prophets characterized the messianic age as a time when wine would flow liberally (Jer 31:12; Hos 14:7; Am 9:13, 14), Jesus was likely referring to the fact that the necessity of the Cross must come before the blessings of the **Millennial Age**. (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#)) (Bolding added)

Whether this sign of water to wine can be seen as pointing to the age to come is not agreed upon by all commentators. (see [Borchert](#) below). Certainly the Old Testament prophets made several allusions to wine in their descriptions of the blessings of the glorious [Millennial Kingdom of the Messiah](#).

Jeremiah 31:12+ "They will come and shout for joy on the height of Zion, And they will be radiant over the

bounty of the LORD— Over the grain and the **new wine** and the oil, And over the young of the flock and the herd; And their life will be like a watered garden, And they will never languish again.

Hosea 14:7 Those who live in his shadow Will again raise grain, And they will blossom like the **vine**. His renown will be like the **wine** of Lebanon.

Amos 9:13-14+ “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “When the plowman will overtake the reaper And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; When the **mountains will drip sweet wine** And all the hills will be dissolved. Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, And they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them; They will also **plant vineyards and drink their wine**, And make gardens and eat their fruit. (Am 9:13, 14)

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## A W Pink My Hour Has Not Yet Come

“Mine hour is not yet come” (John 2:4) became the most solemn watchword of His life, marking the stages by which He drew nigh to His death. Seven references are made in this Gospel to that awful “hour.”

1. The first is in our present passage in John 2:4.
2. The second is found in John 7:30—“Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.”
3. The third time is found in John 8:20—“And no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.”
4. The fourth is in John 12:23—“And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.”
5. The fifth is in John 12:27—“Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.”
6. The sixth is in John 16:32—“Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.”
7. The seventh is in John 17:1—“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy son, that thy son also may glorify thee.” This “hour” was the hour of His humiliation. It was the “hour” of His suffering. But why should Christ refer to this “hour” when Mary was seeking to dictate to Him? Ah, surely the answer is not far to seek. That awful “hour” to which he looked forward, was the time when He would be subject to man’s will, for then He would be delivered up into the hands of sinners. But until then, He was not to be ordered by man; instead, He was about His Father’s business, seeking only to do His will. ([Christ's First Miracle John 2:1-11](#))

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## John 2:5 His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, **do it.**"

NET John 2:5 His mother told the servants, "Whatever he tells you, do it."

GNT John 2:5 λ γει μ τηρ α το ς διακ νοις, τι ν λ γ μ ν ποι σατε.

NLT John 2:5 But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

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

ESV John 2:5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

NIV John 2:5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

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

CSB John 2:5 "Do whatever He tells you," His mother told the servants.

NKJ John 2:5 His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

NRS John 2:5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

YLT John 2:5 His mother saith to the ministrants, 'Whatever he may say to you -- do.'

NAB John 2:5 His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you."

NJB John 2:5 His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'

GWN John 2:5 His mother told the servers, "Do whatever he tells you."

BBE John 2:5 His mother said to the servants, Whatever he says to you, do it.

- **Whatever:** Joh 15:14 Ge 6:22 Jdg 13:14 Lu 5:5,6 6:46-49 Ac 9:6 Heb 5:9 11:8
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MARY'S ORDER TO THE SERVANTS

**His mother said to the servants** ([diakonos](#)), "Whatever He says to you, **do it.**" - **Do** is the verb [poieo](#) in the [aorist imperative](#), a command to "Just do it! Do not hesitate!" Mary is calling for instant obedience, immediate execution. And so Mary immediately turned to the servants, anticipating that Jesus would respond and speaks her last recorded words in the New Testament. Somewhat rebuked by Jesus' response to her desire for Him to get more wine for the guests, Jesus' mother is never shown again in Scripture as requesting or demanding anything from Jesus. Instead, the only command the record shows on her part, anywhere in Scripture, is this one "Just do it!" Simply "Do whatever Jesus says!" In other

Note that Mary's request reflects her faith and confidence in her Son. Note also the fact that Mary apparently had authority to command the servants which shows her special place at the wedding. Notice also that Mary does not point to herself, but points the servants to Jesus. O to be like that in all our ways, ever pointing men and women to precious Jesus, not to our puny selves!

**THOUGHT** - Mary's words to the servants are good words to all bondservants of Jesus today to "Just do it!" Do whatever the Son says! Obey and be blessed! Disobey and be disciplined (Heb 12:5-11).

**THOUGHT** - Note the blessedness of obedience to Christ. 'Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it' (v. 5). The Son of God could have supplied all the wine that was needed without employing these servants. He did not need them! (**ED: AND BELOVED HE DOES NOT NEED US BUT HAS GIVEN US THE PRIVILEGE TO SERVE HIM AND PROCLAIM HIS GOSPEL! O WHAT A SAVIOR!**) But they would have missed the blessed benefit of being instruments by whom the Son of God brought his miraculous boon of mercy to the wedding guests. (Don Fortner) (**COROLLARY** - Don't miss the blessing because of disobedience! I *wonder* how many blessings I have missed because my heart was prone to *wander*?)

**THOUGHT**- There is an important and much neglected lesson here for each of us. How prone we are to dictate to God! How often we are disposed to tell Him what to do! This is only another evidence of that detestable self-will which still operates in the believer, unless Divine grace subdues it. Our plain duty is to commit our way unto the Lord and then leave Him to supply our need in His own good time and manner. (A W Pink)

**A T Robertson** - Mary took comfort in the "not yet" (οπω [oupō]) and recognized the right of Jesus as Messiah to independence of her, but evidently expected him to carry out her suggestion ultimately as he did. This mother knew her Son. ([John 2 Word Pictures in the NT](#))

**D A Carson** says that "in Jn 2:3 Mary approaches Jesus as his mother, and is reproached; in Jn 2:5, she responds as a believer, and her faith is honoured. She still does not know what he would do; but she has committed the matter to him, and trusts him. These two verses (Jn 2:4–5), as difficult as they are, help to shape this account of Jesus' first miracle, and ensure that the focus is on Jesus' glory (Jn 2:11), not Mary's, and on the disciples' faith (Jn 2:11), including Mary's (Jn 2:5)." (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

**David Guzik** - The recorded words of Mary are few. However, it is good to pay attention to her words that are recorded, because they consistently glorify Jesus, not Mary herself. If only we would obey Mary's direction, whatever He says to you, do it....Some traditions say that this was John's wedding, and he left his bride at the altar after seeing this miracle. It's a pleasant, but an unlikely story. Mormons take this idea an absurd step further declaring this is Jesus' wedding. Of course, this is against the plain meaning of this passage and all of the gospel records of the life of Jesus. ([John 2 Commentary](#))

**Barnhouse** - To deliberately go through Mary to get to Jesus is to regard Jesus as hardhearted, and Mary as tenderhearted. This concept "is totally alien from the Bible. It comes from mother-son ideas prevalent in pagan religions."

**Stanley Toussaint** - It is quite clear Mary was expecting a miracle. It is true the Lord had not as yet performed any miracles, but she certainly had many evidences of His Supernatural character—His conception, the events surrounding His birth and presentation in the Temple (cf. Luke 2:8–38), and the incident in the Temple area when He was only twelve years old. Now His appearance with the disciples whom He had called would point to the beginning of His public ministry. Mary informed the Lord of the problem so He could supernaturally solve it. ([The Significance of the First Sign in John's Gospel](#))

**Thomas Constable** - She did not understand what He would do or when, but she had confidence in His compassion and ability. She demonstrated admirable submission and faith toward Jesus. She allowed Jesus to take charge and solve the problem, and she

pointed others to Jesus, not to herself. Previously she had approached Jesus as His mother and had received a mild rebuke. Now she approached Him as her Lord and shortly received satisfaction (cf. Matt. 15:21-28). In this she provides an excellent example for us." ([Notes on the Bible](#))

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**Servants** (1249) ([diakonos](#)) refers generally of a person who renders helpful service, one who gets something done. Here the word means something like a waiter. Note it is not the word *doulos* indicating these were not slaves.

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### **Brian Bell - Whatever He says to you, do it! -**

1. Moms, what a great life-motto for your children.
2. But it really is a great life-motto for ALL of us!
  - a) Our obedience is to be Entire - Whatever He says, speaks of scope & range.
  - b) Our obedience is to be Exclusive - Whatever He says, to the exclusion of all others, if they differ from Him.
  - c) Our obedience is to be Specific - Whatever He says to you, do it. Not just something like it, or something part-way, or something supposedly equivalent... but IT! 1 3.

Let whatever He says to you, do it be our governing-motto for: your choice in your career; love; dating; marriage. [Enology](#)

## **Mary's Words in the Bible**

John 2:3 "They have no wine left."

John 2:5 His mother \*said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

Luke 1:34+ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

Luke 1:38+ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"... And Mary said, "Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:46-55+ And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord, 47And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. 48"For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondslave; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed. 49"For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name. 50"AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM. 51"He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. 52"He has brought down rulers from their thrones, And has exalted those who were humble. 53"HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS; And sent away the rich empty-handed. 54"He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy, 55As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his descendants forever."

Luke 2:48+ When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You."

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### **F B Meyer - THE WATER OF LIFE TURNED TO WINE!**

**"Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim."-- Jn 2:5, 6, 7.**

DO NOT forget the necessity of obeying the inner voice of Christ, which may be recognised by these three signs--it never asks questions, but is decisive and imperative; it is not unreasonable nor impossible; it calls for an obedience which costs us some sacrifice of our own way and will. "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it!"

Do as you are told. It was a severe test to obedient faith to fill up those big jars, which stood in the vestibule of the house. Each would contain about twenty gallons, and as they were probably nearly empty, it would be a long and tedious business to fill them, especially at a time when guests required other attention... "They filled them up to the brim!"

In your obedience, always give Christ brimful measure. It may be a very small thing He asks you to do--to teach a class of children,

to pay a visit to some sick man or woman, to write a letter, to speak a word of comfort, to hold out the helping hand, to give the glass of cold water, but see to it that your response is hearty and brimful! The jar is your opportunity! A very common and ordinary one! An act that may seem needless or inconvenient; but out of it may come the greatest achievement of your life! When the Lord calls you into co-partnership, be sure not to say: "Please do not ask me!" Nay, serve Him to the brim! He never asks you to do one small act for Him, without being prepared to add His Almighty grace to your weakness, thereby perfecting the act. It is an amazing thing that He should want our help. Let us give Him to the brim, and, as we do so, we shall see a wonderful and beautiful thing, which is "hidden from wise and prudent, but revealed to babes". "The servants who drew the water knew." Many of us realise that this miracle is constantly taking place. We fill our waterpots to the brim with water; but at the end of days of careful preparation we sadly review the result, and say to ourselves: "After all, it is very poor stuff, only water at the best!" But as we pour it out in service to others, we know that the Master has been collaborating with us, and has turned the water into wine! There are secrets between the Lord and those who obey Him! It is blessed when we are workers together with Christ. He knows, and you know. A smile passes between you and Him, and it is enough! The best wine is always kept in reserve!

**PRAYER** Enable me to do not only what I like to do, but what I ought. Cause me to be faithful in a little, and in common tasks to learn Thy deep lessons of obedience, patience, and conscientiousness. AMEN.

**John 2:6 Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each.**

NET John 2:6 Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washing, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.

GNT John 2:6 σαν ὄ κε λ θιναι ὄρ αι ξ κατ τ ν καθαρισμ ν τ ν ουδα ων κε μεναι, χωρο σαι ν μετριητ ς ὄ ο τρε ς.

NLT John 2:6 Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons.

KJV John 2:6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

ESV John 2:6 Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.

NIV John 2:6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

ASV John 2:6 Now there were six waterpots of stone set there after the Jews' manner of purifying, containing two or three firkins apiece.

CSB John 2:6 Now six stone water jars had been set there for Jewish purification. Each contained 20 or 30 gallons.

NKJ John 2:6 Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece.

NRS John 2:6 Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.

YLT John 2:6 And there were there six water-jugs of stone, placed according to the purifying of the Jews, holding each two or three measures.

NAB John 2:6 Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons.

NJB John 2:6 There were six stone water jars standing there, meant for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews: each could hold twenty or thirty gallons.

GWN John 2:6 Six stone water jars were there. They were used for Jewish purification rituals. Each jar held 18 to 27 gallons.

BBE John 2:6 Now six pots of stone, every one taking two or three firkins of water, were placed there for the purpose of washing, as is the way of the Jews.

- **for the Jewish custom of purification:** Joh 3:25 Mk 7:2-5 Eph 5:26 Heb 6:2 9:10,19 10:22
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ROMAN WATERPOTS

## SIX SIMPLE STONE WATERPOTS

**Now there were six stone waterpots set there** - Each would hold about 20-30 gallons. "The waterpots are connected with the system of Law, because they were used in ceremonial purification." (Guzik)

**ESV Study note on stone waterpots** - Archaeologists have found large goblet-shaped stone storage jars from this period in Jerusalem and elsewhere. The examples were lathe-cut from sizable single blocks of stone. (Borrow [ESV Study Bible](#))

**D A Carson** notes that "The six water jars were made of stone, because stone, being more impervious than earthenware, did not itself contract uncleanness. They were therefore the more suitable for ceremonial washing." (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

**Thomas Constable** adds that "Stone pots did not absorb moisture and uncleanness as earthenware vessels did, so they were better containers for water used in ceremonial washings." ([Notes on the Bible](#))

**Blum** comments that "The contrast between the old order and the new way is evident (cf. John 4:13+; Jn 7:38-39+). (See [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#) scroll up and down for more pages)

**John MacArthur** - The Jews used stone waterpots to hold the water used for ritual purification because they believed that, unlike earthenware pots (Lev. 11:33), they did not become unclean. (See [John MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Leon Morris** - Clay pots could become unclean, and if this happened they must be destroyed (Lev. 11:33). But stone vessels did not become unclean (Kel. 10:1; Par. 3:2). K. E. Bailey says that the average household would have had one such jar, and the rest would have been borrowed (Poet and Peasant [Grand Rapids, 1976], [p. 123, n. 24]). (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

**For the Jewish custom of purification (katharismos)** - Ceremonial washings were an integral part of first-century Judaism and purification rites associated with eating and "The half dozen represented a good store of water for carrying out the kind of purification of which we read in Mark 7:1-4+. Before the meal servants would have poured water over the hands of every guest. If there was a large number of guests a good deal of water would have been needed." (Morris BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

Mark 7:3-4+ writes

"(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat **unless they carefully wash their hands**, thus observing the traditions of the elders; and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the **washing** of cups and pitchers and copper pots.)"

Matthew 15:1-2+ adds...

"Then some Pharisees and scribes \*came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they **do not wash their hands when they eat bread**"

**Nelson's NKJV Study Bible** on the **Jewish custom of purification** - Jewish tradition required several kinds of ceremonial washings. Strict Jews washed their hands before a meal, between courses, and after the meal. This "purifying" extended not only to washing hands, but also to washing cups and vessels (see Mark 7:3, 4). Because the roads were not paved and people wore sandals, water was needed for foot washing. At a large Jewish wedding, a large amount of water would have been required. (BORROW [NKJV Study Bible](#))

**Thomas Constable** - The Jews washed before eating to cleanse themselves from the defilement of contact with Gentiles and other ritually defiling things more than from germs. (ED: The Jews were not so much "germophobic" as they were "Gentile-phobic.") ([Notes on the Bible](#))

**Rod Mattoon** - Water was used to cleanse dirty, dusty, or muddy feet and hands before meals and between each course of the meals. Even today, in every Moslem mosque, the worshiper, before his devotions, is expected to inhale water through his nostril into his throat and spit the water out of his mouth three times. The hands and feet are washed three times in a washroom. (Ibid)



**Containing twenty or thirty gallons (metretes) each** - "holding two or three metretes" (about 75 to 115 liters). This would produce a large amount of wine (120 to 180 gallons) was more than enough to last for the rest of the celebration.

It is interesting that Jesus used something that the Jews used for their ritual practice and transformed it into a miracle. With the caveat that one has to be cautious in invoking symbolism, Jesus' act of using the waterpots to make the best wine might suggest out with the old and in with new covenant.

**John MacArthur** quips "Jesus not only rescued the bride and groom from an embarrassing situation, but the leftover wine also provided them with a generous wedding present." (See [John MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**NET Note** - Each of the pots held 2 or 3 metretai). **Ametretes** was about 9 gallons (40 liters); thus each jar held 18–27 gallons (80–120 liters) and the total volume of liquid involved was 108–162 gallons (480–720 liters). Significantly, these jars held water for Jewish ceremonial washing (purification rituals). The water of Jewish ritual purification has become the wine of the new messianic age. The wine may also be, after the fashion of Johannine double meanings, a reference to the wine of the Lord's Supper. A number have suggested this, but there does not seem to be anything in the immediate [context](#) which compels this; it seems more related to how frequently a given interpreter sees references to the sacraments in John's Gospel as a whole.

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**Purification** (2512) ([katharismos](#) from from [katharizo](#) = to cleanse English **catharsis** = purification or purgation that brings about spiritual renewal or release from tension) describes the process of making clean, cleansing, purifying, freeing from filth. Although the cleansing could refer to literal cleansing from physical stain or contamination, all NT uses refer to cleansing either from the "stain" of sin, an "inward contamination" ( Jesus' sacrifice accomplishing "purification of sins" = Heb 1:3+, a believer's "purification from his former sins" = 2Pe 1:9+) or ritual cleansing as prescribed in the law of Moses (Mk 1:44+, Lk 2:22+, Lk 5:14+) or by Jewish customs (Jn 2:6+). **Katharismos** is used in the Septuagint of the ritual cleansing of lepers (Lev 14:2; Ex 29:36), and of the ritual cleansing of sins by means of blood (Ex 30:10; Nu 14:18). Used 7x in NT - Mk. 1:44; Lk. 2:22; Lk. 5:14; Jn. 2:6; Jn. 3:25; Heb. 1:3; 2 Pet. 1:9

**Gallons**(3355) (**metretes** from [metreo](#) = to measure) is strictly, a utensil for measuring liquids "equivalent to one and a half Roman amphorae, or about nine gallons" (Vine) The Attic [amphora](#) was equivalent to about thirty-three and one-half quarts or eight and three-eighths gallons. The Roman amphora was smaller, being equal to two-thirds of the **metrētēs**. The KJV translates it as [firkins](#). Jn 2:6 is only NT use (thus it is a [hapax legomenon](#)) and there are 3 uses in the Septuagint - 1 Ki. 18:30; 2 Chr. 4:5; Hag. 2:16

**Gilbrant** - The noun **metrētēs** is related to the verb form *metreō* (3224). *Metrētēs* occurs three times in the canonical portions of the Septuagint (1 Kings 18:32 [LXX 3 Kings 18:32]; 2 Chronicles 4:5; Haggai 2:16) but only one time in the New Testament, in John 2:6 where it is translated "firkins" by the KJV. The word *metrētēs* refers to a utensil used for measuring liquids and contains about the same volume as the Hebrew bath: 72 sextarii, approximately 39 liters or 9 gallons (according to the writings of Josephus; cf. Bauer). Other archaeological research suggests a bath contained 22 liters, roughly half the size of the bath described by Josephus. Perhaps this supports the idea that originally the bath represented the capacity of water an Israelite "daughter" (Hebrew, bath also) could carry from the well to the house (Cook, "Weights and Measures," International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 4:1050f.). In the papyri *metrētēs* came to mean a general word for measure, thus including more than the specific 72 sextarii technically assigned to it. The papyri indicate that two *metrētēs* of oil constitute an "ass' load." Using this system of measurement, tax officials could calculate duty tax by simply counting animals (cf. Moulton-Milligan). (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

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**Rod Mattoon** says this large amount of water to wine recalls Paul's great passage in Ephesians...

Ephesians 3:20+—Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

**COMMENT** - When the Bible was translated for the Culina Indians of eastern Peru, this passage was translated in an unusual way. The Culinas have no number system, so in translating this miracle, the translators said there was as much drink as many canoes could hold. They would understand this because the Culinas prepare community drink in their canoes.

**THOUGHT** - If Jesus could do this "far more abundantly" miracle with water, what can He do with our lives if we wholly yield to His Lordship and His Spirit's filling? Just asking! (This question is [Rhetorical of course!](#))

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While I am not absolutely convinced of the following interpretation, it does raise some interesting thoughts. As always the reader is called to a Berean (Acts 17:11+) as he or she reads [Bob Utley's](#) note on John 2:6-7

As so often in John, this seems to be a sign with dual purposes: (1) to help the wedding couple; but (2) it was ultimately a sign pointing toward Jesus as the fulfillment of Judaism. The reasons behind this last statement maybe: (a) the number "6" is symbolic of human effort; (b) Jesus' request to fill them up to the brim seems to have symbolic meaning, not just to provide more wine; (c) the huge amount of wine which was far too much for a local wedding feast; and (d) wine was a symbol of the abundance of the new age (cf. Jer. 31:12; Hos. 2:22; 14:7; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:12–14).

### John 2:7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." So they filled them up to the brim

NET John 2:7 Jesus told the servants, "Fill the water jars with water." So they filled them up to the very top.

GNT John 2:7 λ γει α το ς η σο ς, Γεμ σατε τ ς δρ ας δατος, κα γ μισαν α τ ς ως νω.

NLT John 2:7 Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled,

KJV John 2:7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

ESV John 2:7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim.

NIV John 2:7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

ASV John 2:7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

CSB John 2:7 "Fill the jars with water," Jesus told them. So they filled them to the brim.

NKJ John 2:7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim.

NRS John 2:7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim.

YLT John 2:7 Jesus saith to them, 'Fill the water-jugs with water;' and they filled them -- unto the brim;

NAB John 2:7 Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim.

NJB John 2:7 Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water,' and they filled them to the brim.

GWN John 2:7 Jesus told the servers, "Fill the jars with water." The servers filled the jars to the brim.

BBE John 2:7 Jesus said to the servants, Make the pots full of water. And they made them full to the top.

- **Fill:** John 2:3,5 Nu 21:6-9 Jos 6:3-5 1Ki 17:13 2Ki 4:2-6 5:10-14 Mk 11:2-6 Mk 14:12-17 Acts 8:26-40
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Jesus Orders Water for the Pots

### FILL 'EM UP!

Jesus said to them, "Fill ([gemizo](#)) the waterpots with water." - Fill is in the [aorist imperative](#) which means "Do this now! Don't delay!" Six waterpots would make a lot of wine. One writer estimates "six water pots at 20/30 gallons a piece would be about 150 gallons. And if servings were about 1 cup each, this would provide 2,400 servings."

**THOUGHT** - Jesus was not stingy, but generous. This temporal lesson surely spills over into our spiritual experiences when Jesus provides for us. He always does so generously.

**THOUGHT** - our Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour turned the water into wine, not by his touch, or even by his word, but by his will. This is the omnipotence of God. No prophet or apostle ever did such a thing. He who can turn ordinary water into extraordinary wine, by a mere act of his will, is the omnipotent God. If he wills my salvation, none can prevent it. If he wills my safety, none can harm me. If he wills my everlasting inheritance in heavenly glory—and he does, John 17:24—I cannot fail to attain it. (Don Fortner)

**A W Pink** observes that Jesus' "act of turning the water into wine would alter the whole course of His life. Hitherto He had lived in quiet seclusion in Nazareth, but from this time on He would become a public and marked character. From henceforth He would scarcely have leisure to eat, and His opportunity for retired communion with the Father would be only when others slept. If He performed this miracle, and manifested forth His glory, He would become the gazing stock of every eye, and the common talk of every tongue. He would be followed about from place to place, thronged and jostled by vulgar crowds. This would provoke the jealousy of religious leaders, and He would be spied upon and regarded as a public menace. Later, this would eventuate in His

being seized as a notorious criminal, falsely accused, and sentenced to be crucified. All of this stood out before Him as He was requested to supply the needed wine. But He did not shrink. He had come to do the will of God, no matter what the cost. May we not say it reverently, that as He stood there by Mary's side and listened to her words, that the Cross challenged Him. Certainly it was here anticipated, and hence His solemn reference to His "hour" yet to come." ([Christ's First Miracle](#))

**So they filled ([gemizo](#)) them up to the brim** - They gave 100% effort (*Do we when God gives us a command?*) Obedience would lead to blessing for these servants, who would come to have insight into what Jesus had done (Jn 2:9). This principle of obedience and increased spiritual understanding is timeless. Here are some other passages in John which allude to the blessing of obedience...

John 7:17+ If anyone is willing to do His will (OBEDIENCE), he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.

John 14:21+ He who has My commandments and keeps them (OBEDIENCE) is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

**THOUGHT** - Do you want to know Jesus better? Does Jesus seem far from you? Jesus' words in this passage are a simple answer to how to experience greater intimacy with our Lord. How? Obey what you know! And remember we should obey not legalistically but in continual dependence on the Holy Spirit Who gives us the supernatural power to obey! [See discussion of the Need for the Holy Spirit to obey NT commands](#) (or "How to Keep All 1642 Commandments in the New Testament!")

**THOUGHT- Filled to the brim** makes me think of what believers should continually desire -- the filling of the Holy Spirit! Paul did not suggest but command "do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but **be filled** ([present imperative](#) = calls for a lifestyle, our daily practice) with the Spirit." (Eph 5:18+). We have all of the Spirit we will ever receive (cf Col 2:10+) but the problem is that the Spirit does not have all of us. As we grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pe 3:18+), we are experiencing progressive sanctification or increasing Christ-likeness, and as we do, I would submit that we are able to be more and more filled to the brim with the "new wine" of the Spirit's supernatural power. Of course unconfessed sin always keeps us from being filled to the brim, so we need to keep short accounts (1 Jn 1:9+, Pr 28:13+, cf stop grieving the Spirit in Eph 4:30+ and stop quenching the Spirit in 1 Th 5:19+).

**THOUGHT** - Filling the pots would be hard work. God's commands are not easy to do sometimes, but they yield blessings when they are obeyed. Obedience leads to blessing. If you are lacking God's blessings in your life, maybe you are lacking in the area of obeying Him and His Word. It was to be a 100% effort. This is the kind of commitment that is required in serving Jesus Christ. These servants did not do as little as they could as many do today, they did as much as they could. If there is no "brim" dedication and obedience in our lives, there will be no "brim" blessings. (Rod Mattoon - Treasures from John)

#### **Related Resources:**

- [Spirit-Filled Believers Are Like Artesian Wells](#)
- [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)
- [Our Anointing - The Holy Spirit](#)

Notice that there are 3 aspects of the obedience of the servants:

1. They obeyed Immediately - and they filled them up.
2. They obeyed Completely - They filled them, to the brim. (nothing added; changed!)
3. They obeyed Successively each new instruction as it came: fill, draw, take it. ([Brian Bell](#))

**MacArthur** - This seemingly insignificant detail, that the water was up to the very top, shows that nothing was added to the water, and that what followed was indeed a transformation miracle. By ordering the jars to be completely filled before He transformed the water in them into wine, Jesus also displayed His magnanimous grace (cf. "grace upon grace" John 1:14, 16-17+). Such a large amount of wine (120 to 180 gallons) was more than enough to last for the rest of the celebration. Jesus not only rescued the bride and groom from an embarrassing situation, but the leftover wine also provided them with a generous wedding present. (See [John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) - scroll up and down for more text)

**Guzik** - The servants under the direction of Jesus were in a unique place of blessing for this miracle. Jesus wanted the cooperation

of men in this miracle. He could have filled the pots Himself, or just as easily created the liquid in the pots. But He knew that if the servants shared in the work, then they also shared in the blessing. The servants did not do the miracle. Their efforts alone were completely insufficient. But because of their obedience to Jesus, they shared in the joy of the miracle. The servants were especially blessed because they obeyed without question, and to the fullest (they filled them up to the brim). This means that the miracle would be fulfilled in the greatest measure possible. If they were lazy and only filled the waterpots half full, there would have only been half as much wine. ([John 2 Commentary](#))

**Toussaint** points out the significance of the phrase **filled them up to the brim** - "This was important because it left no room for the addition of any solutions. Furthermore, these waterpots had been used for water so there would not have been any residue of grapes in them. There was no way, humanly speaking, in which the water could have been made to taste like wine." ([The Significance of the First Sign in John's Gospel](#))

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**Fill** (1072)([gemizo](#)) means filling a vessel with a solid object. To "put something into an object to the extent of its capacity (the procedure of filling)" (BDAG). To fill an object with something (Jn 2.7). Passive voice, be filled, become full (Mk 4.37). Mk 4:37; Mk 15:36; Lk 14:23; Lk 15:16; Jn 2:7; Jn 6:13; Rev 8:5; Rev 15:8

### John 2:8 And He said to them, "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it to him

NET John 2:8 Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the head steward," and they did.

GNT John 2:8 κα λ χει α το ς, ντλ σατε ν ν κα φ ρετε τ ρχιτρικλ ν · ο δ νεγκαν.

NLT John 2:8 he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed his instructions.

KJV John 2:8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

ESV John 2:8 And he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it.

NIV John 2:8 Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so,

ASV John 2:8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the ruler of the feast. And they bare it.

CSB John 2:8 Then He said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the chief servant." And they did.

NKJ John 2:8 And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast." And they took it.

NRS John 2:8 He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it.

YLT John 2:8 and he saith to them, 'Draw out, now, and bear to the director of the apartment;' and they bare.

NAB John 2:8 Then he told them, "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it.

NJB John 2:8 Then he said to them, 'Draw some out now and take it to the president of the feast.'

GWN John 2:8 Jesus said to them, "Pour some, and take it to the person in charge." The servers did as they were told.

BBE John 2:8 Then he said to them, Now take some, and give it to the master of the feast. So they took it to him.

- **Draw some:** John 2:9 Pr 3:5,6 Ec 9:6
- **take it to the headwaiter:** Ro 13:7
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE FAITH OF THE SERVANTS

And He said to them, "**Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter**" - Jesus issued two commands, first **draw** in the [aorist imperative](#) and then **take** in the [present imperative](#). The **headwaiter** functioned as the superintendent of a banquet, like

a [toastmaster](#), master of the feast, or master of ceremonies. He was a steward responsible for managing the feast.

**Guzik** - This took faith on behalf of the servants. Imagine how angry the master of the feast would be if they brought him water to taste! Yet in faith, they obeyed the word of Jesus. ([John 2 Commentary](#))

**Headwaiter** (755)(**architriklinos** from **archi-** = rank or degree + **triklinos** = three couches - **tres** = three + **klinos** = couch) means literally “ruler of a room with three couches.” The ruler of the feast who had oversight of entertainment, guests, food, etc.

**Zodhiates** - The **architriklinos**, (so named because among the Romans, three couches were usually set around one square table in the dining room, the remaining fourth side of the table being left free for access by the servants - click picture below to enlarge) was required to remain strictly sober at all times as he directed the affairs of the feast, tasted the wine first lest the drunken guests thought they were drinking wine while they were drinking water. The Greeks called such a ruler *sumposíarchos* (the ruler of a *sumpósion* (4849), a drinking party or symposium) or *trapezopoiós* (the one who makes or arranges a *trápeza* (5132), a table or tables for eating). (Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament)

[Click for further explanation](#)

**So they took it to him** - Again note the unhesitating obedience of the servants. When we hesitate to obey, we are only one step away for overt disobedience.

**THOUGHT** - Their obedience led to further service and opportunities. The same truth holds true for us. Faithfulness and obedience to Christ lead to future opportunities to demonstrate our faithfulness and love for Christ. It may also lead to greater responsibilities too. On the other hand, God can't use you if your water pots are empty. God uses people who work hard, are faithful, and obedient. Many preachers today have nothing to share with their people because they have not taken the time to fill their water pots. They have not taken the time to study God's Word. You can't give out what you don't have. Get into the Word and study it! (Rod Mattoon)

**John 2:9 When the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom**

NET John 2:9 When the head steward tasted the water that had been turned to wine, not knowing where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), he called the bridegroom

GNT John 2:9 ς δ γε σατο ρχιτρ κλινος τ δωρ ο von γεγεννημ von κα ο κ δει π θεν στ ν, ο δ δι κοινοι δεισαν ο ντληκ τες τ δωρ, φωνε τ ν νυμφ ον ρχιτρ κλινος

NLT John 2:9 When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over.

KJV John 2:9 When 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,

ESV John 2:9 When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom

NIV John 2:9 and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside

ASV John 2:9 And when the ruler of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants that had drawn the water knew), the ruler of the feast calleth the bridegroom,

CSB John 2:9 When the chief servant tasted the water (after it had become wine), he did not know where it came from-- though the servants who had drawn the water knew. He called the groom

NKJ John 2:9 When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom.

NRS John 2:9 When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came

from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom

YLT John 2:9 And as the director of the apartment tasted the water become wine, and knew not whence it is, (but the ministrants knew, who have drawn the water,) the director of the feast doth call the bridegroom,

NAB John 2:9 And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servers who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom

NJB John 2:9 They did this; the president tasted the water, and it had turned into wine. Having no idea where it came from -- though the servants who had drawn the water knew -- the president of the feast called the bridegroom

GWN John 2:9 The person in charge tasted the water that had become wine. He didn't know where it had come from, although the servers who had poured the water knew. The person in charge called the groom

BBE John 2:9 After tasting the water which had now become wine, the master of the feast (having no idea where it came from, though it was clear to the servants who took the water out) sent for the newly-married man,

- **tasted the water which had become wine:** Joh 4:46
- **but the servants who had drawn the water knew:** Joh 7:17 Ps 119:100
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **OBEYING JESUS LEADS TO GREATER SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING**

**When the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from-** The "toastmaster" was astounded at the quality of the wine, which, unknown to him, had just been made from water by Jesus.

**THOUGHT** - Christ was the One to work the miracle, yet the "servants" were the ones who seemed to do everything. They filled the waterpots, they drew off the wine, they bore it to the governor of the feast. There was no visible exhibition of putting forth of Divine power. Christ pronounced no magical formula: He did not even command the water to become wine. What was witnessed by the spectators was men at work, not God creating out of nothing. And all this speaks loudly to us. It was a parable in action. The means used were human, the result was seen to be Divine. This was Christ's first miracle, and in it He shows us that God is pleased to use human instrumentality in performing the wonders of His grace. **(EDITORIAL COMMENT: IN PERFORMANCE OF AN EVEN MORE AMAZING MIRACLE GOD IS PLEASED TO USED A SAVED SINNER TO SPEAK THE SAVING GOSPEL TO ANOTHER SINNER WHO IS SAVED AND THIS IS A FAR GREATER MIRACLE THAN EVEN THE ONE EXPERIENCED BY THESE WEDDING SERVANTS! WHAT A PRIVILEGE WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN. NO WONDER PAUL REPEATEDLY REFERRED TO HIMSELF A "THE BONDSERVANT OF CHRIST!" (Ro 1:1<sup>±</sup>, et al) (A W Pink)**

**Rod Mattoon** comments that "The governor was ignorant of the source of the wine. I'd rather be a servant and know the source of blessing, than a governor and not know the source. The Christian has more insight what will happen over the next thirty years than an unsaved congressman or United Nations member. We know that Christ is coming again and look forward to the fulfillment of Bible prophecy." These verses remind us of the pattern of this world. The world will offer its best first in order to hook us into its lifestyle, but later, we must taste the bitter dregs of a sinful lifestyle. The path of this world leads downhill. It leads to darkness. A sinful life goes from bad to worse. (Pr 4:19) On the other hand, what the Lord offers us gets better and better. The obedient Christian finds one blessing after another. Even in suffering, Christ comforts, encourages, and strengthens the believer by His Spirit and His grace. For the Christian, the best is yet to come. We have so much to look forward too. (Pr 4:18) (Ibid)

**But the servants who had drawn the water knew** - There is a very important principle in this phrase. Obeying God is important so that we might have true understanding of God's Word. In John 7:17 Jesus said "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself." If you want to be on the inside of what Jesus is doing, you need to come as a servant.

**Wiersbe** - It is significant that the **servants** knew the source of this special wine (John 2:9). When Jesus healed the nobleman's son (John 4:46-54), it was the **servants** who were in on the secret. We are not just His **servants**; we are also His friends, and we know what He is doing (John 15:15). ([Bible Exposition Commentary - New Testament](#))

Surely the Lord GOD does nothing

Unless He reveals His secret counsel To His servants the prophets.



-- Amos 3:7 (cf Ps 25:14)

We see a similar spiritual dynamic in Psalm 103:7

He (GOD) made known His **ways** to Moses, His **acts** to the sons of Israel.

**Henry Blackaby has some devotional thoughts on Psalm 103:7**- Are you satisfied with merely knowing the **acts** of God, or do you also want to know **His ways**? There is a difference. This difference is illustrated in the lives of the children of Israel as compared to Moses. The Israelites witnessed the miracles God performed; they walked across the dry Red Sea just as Moses did. They ate the manna and quail from heaven even as Moses did. **They were content to receive God's provision without ever knowing God Himself. Yet Moses saw beyond the provision of God to the person of God** Others, such as the Egyptian magicians, might perform miraculous acts, but no one else did things the way God did (Ex 7:11, 12). The way God acted provided a window into His nature. If Moses had been content with only God's power, he could have accepted the presence of an angel and been victorious in his efforts (Ex 33:15). But Moses wanted to experience more. He wanted to experience God Himself, not just God's activity. Some today, like the Israelites, are content to experience God's activity without ever coming to know God. They are the recipients of answered prayer, yet they never come to know the Provider. They are blessed by God's providential care over their families, their homes, and their jobs, yet they are satisfied not knowing the One from whom the blessings come. They benefit from God's protection, yet they never become acquainted with the Protector. Have you come to know God more personally as a result of your experiences with Him? As you observe the acts of God, look beyond them to the revelation of His character (Gen. 22:14; John 6:35). (Experiencing God Day by Day)

**THOUGHT** - Do we dare pray the prayer Moses prayed? **'I pray You, show me Your glory!'** (Ex 33:18). As John Newton wrote ([play this beautiful hymn](#) and then pray Ex 33:18!)

Thou art coming to a King,  
Large petitions with thee bring;  
For His grace and power are such,  
None can ever ask too much;  
None can ever ask too much.

Listen to Dr Steve Lawson's hour long message [Show Me Your Glory](#). You will be blessed, edified, convicted and challenged!

**A W Pink** - It was the servants—not the “disciples,” nor yet Mary—who were nearest to the Lord on this occasion, and who possessed the knowledge of His mind. What puzzled the “ruler of the feast” was no secret to these “servants.”

**Servants** (1249)([diakonos](#)) refers generally of a person who renders helpful service, one who gets something done. Here the word means something like a waiter. Note it is not the word *doulos* indicating these were not slaves.

**THOUGHT** - Sometimes believers think that because their spiritual gift is not one of the more "glamorous" gifts or their service in the church is not noticed by most of the folks, that they are less important or even expendable. Neither could be further from the truth in the economy of the grace of God, the omniscient God Who sees all service done with a Spirit filled obedient attitude. These servants were less important than the headwaiter, but guess who receives the blessing of seeing the miracle of the water to wine! And the same principle applies to us, if we would only have eyes to see the eternal rather than the temporal (2 Cor 4:18+). We might or might not have the blessing of seeing a miracle in this short (temporal) life but we will receive a greater and more lasting blessing in the (eternal) life to come, for Jesus Himself promises "'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.' (Mt 25:21,23, Lk 19:17+).

**The headwaiter called the bridegroom** - Time for the "taste test" by the host of the party.

**Bridegroom** (3566)([numphios](#)) is distinct from "the sons of the bride-chamber" and here is the actual spouse, the one newly married. In classical Greek *numphios* carries the meaning of “bridegroom,” “betrothed,” and “young husband.” In Homer’s *Iliad* it refers to “one lately married” (cf. Liddell-Scott). In addition to the singular form the plural *numphiois* is used to signify the “bridal pair” (e.g., Euripides [Fifth Century B.C.]). Also, *numphios* is used adjectivally with the meaning “bridal.” *Numphios* - 12x - Matt. 9:15; Matt. 25:1; Matt. 25:5; Matt. 25:6; Matt. 25:10; Mk. 2:19; Mk. 2:20; Lk. 5:34; Lk. 5:35; Jn. 2:9; Jn. 3:29; Rev. 18:23

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**Constable** - Most commentators assumed that when the servants had filled the pots to the brim the water in them became wine. The servants then drew the wine out of the pots and served it to the headwaiter. A few writers noted that the verb “draw” (Gr. antleo, Jn 2:8) usually describes drawing water from a well. This led some of them to conclude a different scenario. Perhaps the servants filled the pots from a well and then continued drawing water out of the well that they served to the headwaiter. This explanation seems unnatural to me.

Most commentators saw the significance of what they understood to have happened as follows. Jesus’ **disciples** as well as the **servants**, and presumably Mary, knew that water had gone into the pots but that wine had come out. The only thing that accounted for the change was Jesus’ instructions. They realized that Jesus had the supernatural power to change water into wine. This miracle thus fortified their faith in Him (Jn 2:11).

Advocates of the view that the water the servants presented to the headwaiter came from the well see the same significance and more.

“Up to this time the servants had drawn water to fill the vessels used for ceremonial washing; now they are to draw for the feast that symbolizes the messianic banquet. Filling jars with such large capacity to the brim then indicates that the time for ceremonial purification is completely fulfilled; the new order, symbolized by the wine, could not be drawn from jars so intimately connected with merely ceremonial purification.” (ED: SOUNDS LIKE [SPIRITUALIZING](#) TO ME! NOT ACCURATE INTERPRETATION!)

I believe it is somewhat tenuous to build this interpretation on the usual meaning of antleo. Its essential meaning is “to draw” even though this word usually refers to drawing water from a well or spring (Gen. 24:13, 20; Exod. 2:16, 19; Isa. 12:3; John 4:7, 15). In classical Greek it describes drawing water out of a ship’s bilge. Furthermore the symbolic interpretation that accompanies this view is questionable. There is nothing in the text that indicates that John intended his readers to see this miracle as teaching the termination of the old Mosaic order and the commencement of a new order. Jesus’ ministry certainly accomplished that, but there is no other evidence that this was a lesson that John was communicating to his readers here. Perhaps Jesus ordered the pots filled to the brim simply so there would be enough wine for everyone. ([Notes on the Bible](#))

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## The Servants Knew

[Jesus’] mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.” —John 2:5

Today’s Scripture: John 2:1-11

Few weddings are matters of life and death, but they often feel that way to the people involved. After giving three daughters in marriage, I can appreciate the concern parents have over proper arrangements for their guests. So whenever I read about the wedding in Cana in John 2:1-11, I find myself smiling at every turn.

Although the events strike me as lighthearted, Jesus’ miracle of turning water into wine had the serious purpose of revealing Himself as the Son of God to His disciples.

Many people may have seen the large stone jars being filled with water. But it was the servants, who had poured every gallon, to whom the Lord said, “Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast” (v.8). The Bible says simply, “And they took it.” Their unhesitating obedience is a model for us in our daily God-given tasks.

The master praised the bridegroom, saying, “You have kept the good wine until now!” He didn’t know its origin (v.10), “but the servants who had drawn the water knew” (v.9).

Like them, we recognize that whenever God uses our meager efforts to help others, it’s a miracle of His power. The servants at Cana who drew the water knew that the praise belonged to Jesus. And so do we. By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

I can always count on God, my heavenly Father,  
For He changes not; He always is the same—  
Yesterday, today, forever, He is faithful,  
And I know He loves me, praise His holy name.  
—Felten

God’s great power deserves our grateful praise.

**John 2:10 and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when the people have drunk freely, then he serves the poorer wine; but you have kept the good wine until now.**

NET John 2:10 and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the cheaper wine when the guests are drunk. You have kept the good wine until now!"

GNT John 2:10 κα λγει ατ, Πς νθρωπος πρ τον τν καλ ν ο νον τθσιν κα ταν μεθυσθ σιν τν λσσω· σ τετρηκας τν καλ ν ο νον ως ρτι.

NLT John 2:10 "A host always serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!"

KJV John 2:10 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.

ESV John 2:10 and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now."

NIV John 2:10 and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

ASV John 2:10 and saith unto him, Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when men have drunk freely, then that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine until now.

CSB John 2:10 and told him, "Everyone sets out the fine wine first, then, after people have drunk freely, the inferior. But you have kept the fine wine until now."

NKJ John 2:10 And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!"

NRS John 2:10 and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now."

YLT John 2:10 and saith to him, 'Every man, at first, the good wine doth set forth; and when they may have drunk freely, then the inferior; thou didst keep the good wine till now.'

NAB John 2:10 and said to him, "Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now."

NJB John 2:10 and said, 'Everyone serves good wine first and the worse wine when the guests are well wined; but you have kept the best wine till now.'

GWN John 2:10 and said to him, "Everyone serves the best wine first. When people are drunk, the host serves cheap wine. But you have saved the best wine for now."

BBE John 2:10 And said to him, Every man first puts out his best wine and when all have had enough he puts out what is not so good; but you have kept the good wine till now.

- **when the people have drunk freely:** Ge 43:34 Song 5:1
- **but you have kept the good wine until now:** Ps 104:15 Pr 9:1-6,16-18 Lu 16:25 Rev 7:16,17
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## KEEPING THE BEST FOR LAST

As Ryrie says "Similarly, God's **best**, His Son, had now come!" At last! (BORROW [Ryrie Study Bible](#))

**And said to him, "Every man serves the good ([kalos](#)) wine first, and when the people have drunk freely**(methuo) - Diluted wine was a common beverage with meals in the culture of that day. It had to be diluted because in the hot climate even newly made wine would quickly ferment and imbibing it would quickly produce a drunken state (cf comments of the Spirit filled believers in Acts 2:4,13+). So the practice was common to dilute wine with water (from 1/3 to 1/10 wine to water). Not only that, but wine mixed with water was a way to assure purer water (there were no water purification plants in first century Palestine!)

Our Lord's first miracle in John speaks of the new blessings which come as a result of His presence. Wine typically speaks of the

joy of spiritual life. With the coming of Jesus, God's best had arrived at last, and in contrast to Moses, who turned water into blood in judgment (cf. Ex. 7:14-24), Jesus turns water into wine in joyful celebration of a new age.

"Lord, less water and more wine in my life."

**Then he serves the poorer wine** - Clearly if the guests were a bit inebriated, they would be less discerning regarding the quality of the wine, but would simply be wanting more wine.

*Jesus as the Creator produced the best,  
as He always does whenever He creates.*

-- Thomas Constable

**But you have kept the good wine until now** - Usually the host would serve the **good** (best) **wine** first, but here the best was being served last!

**THOUGHT** - [Bob Utley](#) suggests that "This seems to be a contrast between the old covenant in Judaism and the new covenant in Jesus (cf. the book of Hebrews. Ed: Esp Heb 8:13+). Jesus' cleansing of the Temple (cf. John 2:13-25) may symbolize this truth." **Hindson** (Online [KJV Bible Commentary](#)) agrees that "The symbolism is clear. The power of Christ filled the emptiness of the waterpots and that same power is able to fill the emptiness of Judaistic religion." (**ED: WHILE THERE IS TRUTH, THIS INTERPRETATION CLEARLY TAKES SOME LIBERTY AND [SPIRITUALIZES](#) THE LITERAL TEXT, SO I WOULD TAKE IT WITH A "GRAIN OF SALT."**)

**Guzik** - When Jesus made wine, it was **good wine**. It doesn't mean that it had a particularly high alcohol content, but that it was well-made wine. Some go to great lengths to show that what Jesus made here was really grape juice. While some find that line of thinking convincing, it is not the opinion of the author. Good wine is good wine, not good grape juice. It is true that wine in that day, as commonly served, had a much lower content of alcohol than modern wine. But it was still wine. ([John 2 Commentary](#))

**Constable** - Is there a deeper meaning to this story? Many students of this passage have identified the wine as symbolic of the joy that Messiah brings. This harmonizes with the metaphorical use of wine throughout Scripture. Some have seen it as typical of Christianity as contrasted with Judaism (the water). These parallels lack Scriptural support. Perhaps there is some validity to seeing this banquet as a preview of the messianic banquet since Jesus' provision of joy is common to them both. However, Jesus may not have been the host at this banquet, but He will be the host at the messianic banquet. ([Notes on the Bible](#))

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**Good** (2570)([kalos](#)) describes that which is inherently excellent or intrinsically good, providing some special or superior benefit.

**Drunk freely** (3184)([methuo](#)) means to drink wine or strong drink more freely than usual without any reference to whether one gets drunk or not. To cause to become intoxicated; only passive in the NT be drunk, get drunk, become intoxicated (Lk 12:45; Eph 5:18; 1 Th 5:7; Rev 17:2). Used 7x in NT - Matt. 24:49; Jn. 2:10; Acts 2:15+; 1 Co. 11:21; 1 Th. 5:7+; Rev. 17:2+; Rev. 17:6+. [cognates](#) -[methe](#), [methusko](#)

**Constable** adds that [methusko](#) "refers to inebriation. The fact that Jesus created something that people could abuse should not surprise us. Humans have consistently abused God's good gifts. Fortunately that does not keep God from giving them. ([Notes on the Bible](#))

**Gilbrant** - In classical Greek the [methuō](#) word group ([methuskomai](#), [methē](#), [methusos](#)) is used literally of "drunkenness" or "intoxication." Equally significant is the figurative sense. To be drunk is to be so full of something as to lose focus and rationality. It signals the excess of something and its debilitating effect. The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) also uses [methuō](#) and its [cognates](#) for literal drunkenness (e.g., Ge 9:21; Pr 20:1; Isa 19:14; Ezek 23:33; Joel 1:5). Figuratively the verb [methuskō](#) describes the sword of the Lord which is "drunk" from the blood of those slain by His wrath (Isa 34:5-7). In Ps 65:9,10 [methuō](#) depicts the heavy, soaking, refreshing rain of God which sustains the earth. Here we see the idea of saturation emerge with a positive connotation. The New Testament witnesses to six instances of [methuō](#). Figuratively it refers to the intoxication of the cohorts of the great prostitute. These have been seduced by lust for power, influence, and money. Their desires, like strong drink, have affected their ability to see clearly or to reason rationally (Revelation 17:2). The prostitute herself is drunk from the blood of the saints. This speaks of the excessive slaughter of God's people (Revelation 17:6). Ordinarily, however, a literal use of the verb appears. A negative connotation underlies most instances (e.g., Matthew 24:49; 1 Thessalonians 5:7; cf. John 2:10; see also the vice lists of Romans 13, Galatians 5). ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

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**J C Ryle** has some interesting thoughts even if they have a hint of [spiritualizing](#) of the text - "A good practical remark has often been raised from these words of the ruler of the feast. The world gives its best things, like the best wine, first (SEE MOODY

BELOW), and its worst things last. The longer we serve the world, the more disappointing, unsatisfactory, and unsavoury will its gifts prove. Christ, on the other hand, gives His servants their best things last. They have first the cross, the race, and the battle, and then the rest, the glory, and the crown. Specially will it be found true at his second advent. Then will believers say emphatically, "Thou hast kept the good wine until now." These are pious and useful thoughts. But it may be doubted whether they are more than accommodations."

This is perhaps the proper place to remark, that it seems utterly impossible, on any fair and honest interpretation, to reconcile the passage before us with the leading principles of what is commonly called "Teetotalism." If our Lord Jesus Christ actually worked a miracle in order to supply wine at a marriage feast, it seems to me impossible, by any ingenuity, to prove that drinking wine is sinful. Temperance in all things is one of the fruits of the Spirit. An intemperate man is an unconverted man. Total abstinence from fermented liquors is in many cases most useful and desirable. But to say, as many do say, that to drink any fermented liquor at all is "a sin," is taking up ground that cannot be maintained in the face of the passage before us, without wresting the plain meaning of Scripture, and charging Christ with abetting sin. ([John 2 Commentary](#))

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**Master of the feast** - Among the Greeks, at all formal feasts, there was a *symposiarch* who was one of the guests, and was selected to take charge of the feast (Compare [architriklinos](#)). It was his duty to preserve order, to maintain liveliness among the guests, to assign each one his proper place, to decide which proportion of water should be mixed with the wine, how much each of the company was to drink...and the tasting of the wine before it was offered to the guests.

**When Jesus is left out of a wedding, sooner or later, in a spiritual sense, the wine fails** but when He is the guest of honor, He turns the water into wine, raises our poor human love into a joy which is a very foretaste of heaven. With a touch, Jesus can take the murky water of our lives (so in need of purification) & transformation it into fine wine! [Better than a \$160,000 bottle of 1787 Lafitte/La-FEET!] **Be sure to invite Jesus! - And be sure to obey what He says!** ([Brian Bell](#))

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**D L Moody - John 2:10.** Sin gives its best first—pleasures and honors. Its worst follows—sorrow, poverty, disgrace, ruin. First harlots and riotous living, then swine. First Goshen, then Egypt.

Christ gives first the cross, the race, the battle; then the crown, rest, and glory.

John 2:11. Beginning of signs. Miracles are signs:—

- (1.) Of His divinity.
- (2.) Of His mission as from God.
- (3.) Of His good will toward men.
- (4.) Of the truth He taught.

Miracles did not manifest the glory of prophets or disciples.

(ED: I WOULD ADD AN ADDITIONAL THOUGHT -- THE MIRACLES OF THE PROPHETS POINTED TO THE GOD OF THE PROPHETS, LIKE THE RED SEA BEING OPENED, SO THEY FUNCTIONED MUCH LIKE BELIEVERS DO TODAY - OUR GOOD WORKS ARE TO **GLORIFY** OUR FATHER - Mt 5:16+).

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**F B Meyer - Thou hast kept the good wine until now.**

The world gives its best first. As youth and beauty are ushered into the banqueting-room of life, the world spreads the table with its best. The zest of enjoyment is keen in those young days, but it is soon satiated; the delicacies with which the table is spread pall, and the appetite, unduly stimulated at the first, demands coarser and more passionate delights to stimulate. At last the table is served with provision, from which, in the first days, the banqueters would have turned away disgusted.

But if you let the King lead you into his banqueting house, beneath his banner of love you will find yourself feeding on dainties which never satiate nor pall — which whet the appetite and give the taste a more delicate appreciation of the vintages of heaven.

**You may say this of the Word of God.** — At the beginning of Christian life it is full of meaning and inspiration; but as the years pass, and we realize ever more of its helpfulness, we repeat the refrain, "Thou hast kept the best until now!"

**You may say this of Christian love.** — Let two love in Christ, and instead of their affection waning, as so often happens in the world, they will discover that the fellowship, which began in comradeship, will end in a sacramental meal; truest, purest, deepest enjoyment being kept for Paradise.

**You may say it of heaven.** — Neither hath eye seen nor heart conceived the things, even now and here, that God has prepared for those that love Him. But so soon as the redeemed spirit shall awaken in the untreated glory of God's presence, it will exclaim, "The half was never told; Thou hast kept the best until now." At every moment and always God is giving his best.

## John 2:11 This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him

NET John 2:11 Jesus did this as the first of his miraculous signs, in Cana of Galilee. In this way he revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

GNT John 2:11 Τα την πο ησεν ρχ ν τ ν σημε ων ησο ς ν Καν τ ς Γαλιλα ας κα φαν ρωσεν τ ν δ ξαν α το , κα π στευσαν ε ς α τ ν ο μαθητα α το .

NLT John 2:11 This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

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

ESV John 2:11 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

NIV John 2:11 This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

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

CSB John 2:11 Jesus performed this first sign in Cana of Galilee. He displayed His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

NKJ John 2:11 This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

NRS John 2:11 Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

YLT John 2:11 This beginning of the signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him;

NAB John 2:11 Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

NJB John 2:11 This was the first of Jesus' signs: it was at Cana in Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

GWN John 2:11 Cana in Galilee was the place where Jesus began to perform miracles. He made his glory public there, and his disciples believed in him.

BBE John 2:11 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee and let his glory be seen openly; and his disciples put their faith in him.

- **beginning of His signs** Joh 1:17 Ex 4:9 7:19-21 Ec 9:7 Mal 2:2 2Co 4:17 Ga 3:10-13
- **did** Joh 1:50 3:2 4:46
- **manifested** Joh 1:14 5:23 12:41 14:9-11,13 De 5:24 Ps 72:19 96:3 Isa 40:5 2Co 3:18 4:6
- **and His disciples believed:** Joh 11:15 20:30,31 1Jn 5:13
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### JESUS' FIRST SIGN - DEITY ON DISPLAY SHOWED HIS GLORY AND STIMULATED FAITH

This sign ([semeion](#)) had two primary purposes - (1) Display Jesus' glory and (2) convince His disciples He was Who He claimed to be.

**J Ramsey Michaels** - The Gospel writer now stands back from the story to provide a summary of its significance. Such editorial summaries in this Gospel frequently begin, as here, with the demonstrative pronoun "this" (Jn 4:54; 21:14), or "these" (for example, Jn 1:28; 6:59; 8:20; 12:16; 13:21; 17:1; 18:1; 20:31) (Ibid)



**This beginning ([arche](#)) of His signs ([semeion](#))** - The function of any **sign** is to point to something, and these "great" signs were to point to the Greatest Man in eternity! Sadly the people more often focused on the great sign than on the great Man! The former could be seen with their physical eyes, but the latter could only be seen with spiritual eyes of one's heart! Israel's epidemic eye problem was really a heart problem!

**Wiersbe** - His first miracle was a quiet event at a wedding in contrast to His last miracle recorded by John (John 11+), a public event after a funeral....there is certainly more to this miracle than simply meeting a human need and saving a family from social embarrassment. The Gospel of John, unlike the other three Gospels, seeks to share the inner meaning—the spiritual significance—of our Lord's works, so that each miracle is a "sermon in action." We must be careful not to "[spiritualize](#)" these events so that they lose their historical moorings; but, at the same time, we must not be so shackled to history that we are blind to (as A.T. Pierson used to say) "His story."...Interestingly Moses' first miracle was a plague—turning water into blood (Ex. 7:19ff), which speaks of judgment. Our Lord's first miracle spoke of grace. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - New Testament](#))

**Borchert** - The point of this story is brought together in v. 11. The words are simple, but the meaning is profound. The evangelist identified the action in the story as a "**sign**" (not "miracle" as in the KJV). In John a sign is more than just a wonder; it is a powerful act for the one who has eyes to see because it points to the reality of who Jesus is. (See [John 1-11: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#) scroll up and down for more text)

**MacArthur**- Jesus' **signs** ([semeion](#)) were not simply powerful displays of compassion, but were designed to reveal who He really was, since they unmistakably manifest God at work (cf. Jn 2:23; 3:2; 4:54; 6:2, 14; 7:31; 9:16; 20:30; Acts 2:22). **Signs**, miracles, and wonders nevertheless do not necessarily convince people to believe in the Lord and the gospel (Jn 2:23–25; 12:37; 15:24; Matt. 11:20–24; 13:58; Luke 16:31). **There is no record that any of the servants who witnessed Jesus' turning the water into wine followed Him** (cf. Jn 2:12). Amazingly, Jesus seems to have left Cana with only the disciples who came there with Him, despite having performed a miracle, the likes of which had not happened since God created flour and oil in the days of Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 17:8–16; 2 Kings 4:1–7). The obvious deduction that He was the Messiah escaped them; they saw the sign, but missed what it pointed to (**ED: I WOULD ARGUE THAT NOT ALL SAW THE SIGN AND/OR THEY DID NOT HAVE SPIRITUAL EYES TO SEE OR UNDERSTAND**). As he does with all unbelievers, Satan "blinded [their] minds ... so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4). This incident was another tragic illustration of the truth of Jesus' saying, "A prophet has no honor in his own country" (Jn 4:44; cf. Matt. 13:58). (See [John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) - scroll up and down for more text) (**BOLDING ADDED**)

Notice that this passage clearly refutes the false teaching that Jesus performed miracles as a child as propagated by works such as the so-called [Infancy Gospel of Thomas](#). He did not because John refers to this as the **beginning**.

**Hendriksen** says a **sign** ([semeion](#)) "indicates a miracle viewed as a proof of divine authority and majesty. Hence, it leads the attention of the spectator away from the deed itself to the divine Doer....the sign points away from itself to the One who performed it."

Why does John use the term **signs** and not miracle? They are closely related. "Signs served as authentication for Jesus' nature & mission. A **sign** is a **miracle** that points beyond itself to a major truth about God, made known through Jesus Christ." (Bell)

**Jesus did in Cana of Galilee** - It is notable that this event was understood as a miracle only by Jesus' disciples, the servants present, and Jesus' mother. We see the response of the disciples, but there is no record of how the servants responded! Will we see some of them in Heaven???

**Believer's Study Bible** - John speaks of Christ's "miracles" as signs ([semeion](#), Gk.). The word stresses the spiritual significance of the miracle and points away from itself to Christ who performed it. John chooses seven major signs to relate in his Gospel, each characteristically pointing the way to Christ and, hence, to some aspect of the meaning of salvation (cf. Jn 2:1-11; 4:46-54; 5:1-16; 6:1-14; 6:15-21; 9:1-41; 11:1-46). John's entire Gospel is designed to convince its readers that Jesus is the Son of God through whom one may truly live, in this life and in eternity (Jn 20:30, 31). ([The Believer's Study Bible](#))

**Charles Ryrie** - The miracles of Jesus are called signs by John in order to emphasize the significance of the miracles rather than the miracles themselves. They revealed various aspects of the person or work of Christ (here His glory), and their purpose was to encourage faith in His followers. For the specific signs in this book, see Introduction under "Contents" (John 1:1+) (**BORROW** [Ryrie Study Bible](#))

**Henry Morris** - This is the first of the seven great "miracles," or "signs" (same Greek word) which John describes in order to persuade his readers to believe in Jesus Christ (John 20:30,31). Like the other six (John 4:49-54; 5:5-9; 6:5-14; 6:16-21; 9:1-7; 11:41-44), this first miracle was a miracle of creation (as distinct from miracles of providence, which only control rates and timing of natural processes). It required the direct creative power of the Creator, superseding the law of entropy to cause an instantaneous increase of complexity, transmuting the simple molecular structure of water into the much more complex structure of new wine.

**Stanley Toussaint** writes that "This miracle is commonly viewed as a sign which reveals the Lord Jesus as the Creator. In this miracle He "created" wine—the whole process of growth, bearing fruit, harvest, and production of wine is compressed into a minuscule fragment of time." ([The Significance of the First Sign in John's Gospel](#))

**David Guzik** - This beginning of signs in the Gospel of John is a miracle of conversion, from the old ways of law, ceremony and purification to the new life of Jesus. How did Jesus actually do miracles? He did them in many different ways. Here, Jesus did not say a word or blink an eye. He merely exercised His will and the miracle was done. Moses turned water into blood, showing that the Law results in death (Exodus 7:17–21). But Jesus' first miracle turned water into wine, showing the gladness and joy of His new work. This acts out what John said in John 1:17: For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. We could say that the water is like a relationship with God under the Old Covenant, and the wine is like a relationship with God under the New Covenant. ([John 2 Commentary](#))

- The wine was after the water, and the New Covenant is after the Old Covenant.
- The wine was from the water, and the New Covenant is from the Old Covenant
- The wine was and better than the water; and the New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant.

*Essentially the purpose of the first sign-miracle is the same for all the sign-miracles, namely, to reveal the person of Jesus.*

-- Stephen Kim, Bibliotheca Sacra, 2010

## THE EPIPHANY OF JESUS' GLORY

**And manifested** ([phaneroo](#)) **His glory** ([doxa](#)) - The verb is ephanerosen which gives us our word "[epiphany](#)." **Lenski** says the **glory** or "doxa is the sum of the divine attributes or any one of these, shining forth to the eyes and the hearts of men." (BORROW [The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel](#))

As discussed below only some present at the wedding saw His glory. Notice that this passage says the purpose of the sign was to manifest Jesus' **glory**. In other words this miracle of creation would have been clear evidence of Jesus' power and authority (water in pots becoming wine in pots). The idea of **glory** is majesty, etc, but it is also that which **gives a proper opinion of someone**, in this [context](#) giving those who witnessed the miracle, a **sign** that Jesus was not a mere man, but that He was **God incarnate, God in the flesh**.

**Charles Ryrie** says that the **glory of God** "is the manifestation of any or all of His attributes. In other words, it is the displaying of God to the world. Thus, things which glorify God are things which show the characteristics of His being to the world." And so this miracle gave a proper opinion of His attributes including His power and authority over Creation. What is interesting is that most of the people at the wedding were ignorant of Jesus' miracle and so they would not have seen His **glory**. On the other hand, everyone who reads this story today knows exactly Who performed the sign (miracle) and so in that sense we have seen His **glory** (see Ramsey's comment below). (BORROW [Ryrie Study Bible](#))

**Ramsey** adds "No one else is said to have seen Jesus' glory and believed—not the banquet master or the bridegroom, not Jesus' mother who seemed to know what was coming, nor even the servants who knew where the wine came from (Jn 2:9)—only a handful of disciples watching from the sidelines. They are outsiders to the miracle, yet the revelation it brings is for them and them alone, not for those who actually participated in the miracle. Similarly we the readers of the Gospel are outsiders even to the telling of the miracle, **yet the story invites us to see Jesus' glory through the disciples' eyes** (compare Jn 1:14) and with them believe (see Jn 20:30–31)." (Ibid)

**Kostenberger** - It surely is significant that this revelation of God's glory in Jesus consists not in a spectacular display of power, but in a quiet, behind-the-scenes work that remained largely unnoticed and impacted only a select few. (BECNT-Jn)

**Leon Morris** on **manifested** ([phaneroo](#)) **His glory** ([doxa](#)) - John tells us further that Jesus "revealed his glory" (for "glory" see Jn 1:14). This is very important for the Evangelist. His declared intention in writing his Gospel is to show that "Jesus is the Christ" (Jn 20:31). This involves the clear recognition that he is fully man, it is true, but it also involves bringing out the truth that he is more. Throughout the first chapter he has shown us both aspects. Jesus is the Logos who was with God and was God. He is also the "Teacher" to whom Andrew and his friend came (Jn 1:38). Neither aspect should be overlooked. So now he tells us that the "sign" he has described displayed the glory of Jesus. This might be hidden from the casual observer. Indeed, John says nothing at all of the effect of the "sign" on the master of the banquet or on the guests generally or on the servants who certainly knew what had

happened. But his disciples saw “his glory” and they “put their faith in him” (Rieu: “his disciples’ faith in him was fixed”). The glory of the Messiah was revealed to some and hidden from others. (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

**Thomas Constable** - In conclusion, John mentioned that this miracle was a sign. It was a miracle that had significance. Its significance appears to be that it showed that Jesus had the same power to create that God demonstrated in the Creation. Thus it pointed to Jesus being the Creator God who could transform things from one condition into another (cf. 2 Cor 5:17). This demonstration of His power glorified Jesus in the eyes of those who witnessed and heard about it. Moses had turned water into blood destructively (Ex 7:14–24), but Jesus turned water into wine for the blessing and benefit of others (cf. Jn 1:17). This miracle also resulted in these disciples believing in Him (cf. Jn 1:50), not for the first time but in a deeper way than they had believed previously (cf. Jn 20:30–31). John’s concluding references to the time and place establish the historicity of this event and reduce the possibility of reading it as an allegory or a legend. ([John 2 Commentary](#))

**D A Carson** - By this first sign, Jesus revealed his glory, ‘the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth’ (1:14). His glory would be revealed in greatest measure in his cross, resurrection and exaltation, but every step along the course of his ministry was an adumbration of that glory. The glory was not visible to all who had seen the miracle; the glory cannot be identified with the miraculous display (cf. notes on 1:14). The servants saw the sign, but not the glory; the disciples by faith perceived Jesus’ glory behind the sign, and they put their faith in him (episteusan eis auton: cf. notes on 2:23–25). (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

**Borchert** - The theme of **glory** (*doxa*) introduced in Jn 1:14+ does not merely include ideas of bright lights and mythical halos, which is a common way for people to describe glory. But **glory** in John is derived from the Old Testament idea of God’s *kābōd*, which implies the mighty power of God evidenced in epiphanies or perceived manifestations of that power (e.g., Ex 16:6–10; 24:15–17; 33:18–23; 40:34). In John the mighty God is to be perceived as acting in Jesus. The signs therefore point the reader to the reality that the God of the Old Testament has acted anew in Christ Jesus. (See [John 1-11: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#) scroll up and down for more text)

**Barton** -The miracles recorded in John’s Gospel (and indeed all the miracles recorded by the other Gospel writers) demonstrated God’s great love for people and his concern for their individual needs. But on a deeper level, they also revealed Jesus’ glory—Jesus’ unique, divine nature portrayed in such a way as to claim our loyalty and reverence. The sign of turning water into wine was a partial unveiling of Jesus’ full identity. His power over nature, death, sin, and evil revealed him to be the promised Messiah. As Nicodemus said, “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” (Jn 3:2 NIV). (BORROW [Life application New Testament commentary](#))

**G Campbell Morgan** - John tells us that the value as to Himself was that “He manifested His glory.” That does not mean that there was a full and final and complete manifestation; but that He manifested His glory, that is, that He made His glory shine forth. In chapter twenty-one by and by we read, “He manifested Himself again “to the disciples.” (Jn 21:1, 14). Here the same verb ([phaneroo](#)) is employed, with the same idea; something done resolutely of His own will and intention. He manifested His glory. In his summing up John had written, “We beheld His glory, glory as of the only-begotten Son of a Father, full of grace and truth.” (Jn 1:14+) Here then was the value of what He did. “He manifested His glory.” The glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, shone through that wonder.

**Guzik** has an interesting thought (albeit a bit speculative) - According to John 2:1, this miracle happened on the third day. John is hinting at the idea that Jesus shows forth His glory on the third day, and that His disciples believe in Him when they see His glory. ([John 2 Commentary](#))

**And His disciples believed ([pisteuo](#)) in Him** - Notice the focus of the story shifts to the **disciples**, who were apparently the only ones who truly perceived the significance of this **sign**. Even the servants who knew water had been turned to wine did not fully comprehend the significance of the sign as pointing to Jesus as the Messiah. “Not everyone in the Gospel of John “saw” or understood who Jesus really was. Only those with special insight were able to perceive the manifestations of Jesus’ true self. When the Word became flesh and tented among humanity, not everyone perceived the glory (Jn 1:14) Those who perceived Jesus’ glory in this text (2:11) were “his disciples.”” (Borchert See [John 1-11: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#) scroll up and down for more text)

This sign was faith strengthening, for John mentions that they had believed (at least [Nathanael](#) but presumably all 5 or they would not have given up everything and followed Him). Jesus had told Nathanael earlier “Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you **believe**? You will see greater things than these.” (Jn 1:50+) Indeed John alludes to the significance of the signs of Jesus writing “Therefore **many other signs** Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so **that you may believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.” (Jn 20:30-31)

**John MacArthur** - Having heard John the Baptist's testimony that Jesus was the Messiah (Jn 1:34), having heard Jesus' own words (Jn 1:39) and believed in Him (Jn 1:41), they now saw firsthand miraculous confirmation of that faith. Many others, reading this gospel of John, would come to believe, as they did. And that was John's purpose in writing not only his account of this miracle, but also his entire gospel...

Therefore many other **signs** Jesus also performed **in the presence of the disciples**, which are not written in this book; but these have been written **so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.** (Jn 20:30-31)

**Lenski** - The aorist (believed) states the fact: they rested their confidence in him as the Messiah and did this in consequence of the sign here wrought. Following their original acceptance and faith, as recounted in the previous chapter, πιστευσαν here implies an increase of faith. It was, indeed, faith in the true sense of the word and yet it was only initial, needing more revelation and strength for its full development. (BORROW [The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel](#))

**Vincent on believed (pisteuo) in** - "Lit., *believed into (eis)*. Westcott most aptly says that it conveys the idea of "the absolute transference of trust from one's self to another....To **believe in**, or on, is more than mere acceptance of a statement. It is so to accept a statement or a person as to rest upon them, to trust them practically; to draw upon and avail one's self of all that is offered to him in them. Hence to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is not merely to believe the facts of His historic life or of His saving energy as facts, but to accept Him as Saviour, Teacher, Sympathizer, Judge; to rest the soul upon Him for present and future salvation, and to accept and adopt His precepts and example as binding upon the life." ([John 2 Greek Word Studies](#))

**Kostenberger on His disciples believed (pisteuo) in Him** - Jesus' first followers (THE 6 DISCIPLES WITH HIM AT THE WEDDING) continue to show early signs of receptivity to Jesus' self-revelation (see Jn 1:35–51), in contrast to the following responses of the Jewish leaders (Jn 2:18, 20) and the people of Jerusalem (Jn 2:23–25), including Nicodemus (see Jn 3:1–15). Perhaps significantly, there is no mention of the impact that the sign had on the master of the banquet, the servants, and the bridegroom, or even Jesus' mother. **Though benefiting from Jesus' physical provision, the wedding guests were untouched by Jesus' messianic self-revelation (HIS GLORY) (BECNT-Jn)**

**John Phillips on believed (pisteuo) in** - The phrase, "believe on," (pisteuo eis) is characteristic of John and is found only once in the synoptic gospels (Matthew 18:6 and its parallel, Mark 9:42) and only occasionally in Paul's writings (Ro 10:14; Galatians 2:16; Philippians 1:29). The essential thought behind the phrase is that of unreserved transfer of trust from oneself to someone else." (BORROW [Exploring the Gospels. John](#))

**Robertson** - These six disciples (learners) had already believed in Jesus as the Messiah (Jn 1:35–51). Now their faith was greatly strengthened. So it will be all through this Gospel. Jesus will increasingly reveal himself while the disciples will grow in knowledge and trust and the Jews will become increasingly hostile till the culmination. ([John 2 Word Pictures in the NT](#))

**THOUGHT** - The purpose of a sign is to point to a destination. Belief in the sign does not get you to the destination. You still need to go to the destination. Signs point to Jesus but one must "go" to Him, receiving Him, believing in Him for salvation. The signs served to add substance to ministry of Jesus as the Messiah. Of course the disciples believed before, but now their belief was deepened and yet it was not to the extent that Jesus would have desired as would be shown by their future "faith failures." (cf Lk 8:25+. addressing His disciples = Lk 12:22, 28+, ) This is typical in our Christian lives. We are to grow in our faith [Step by Step](#). Progressive sanctification (present tense salvation - see the [Three Tenses of Salvation](#)) is not an arrival in this lifetime (that will be glory!), but is a daily, yea, even moment by moment, process, stepping out in obedience, walking by faith not by sight.

#### Related Resources:

- [Why did Jesus choose the wedding at Cana for His first miracle?](#)
- [Did Jesus change the water into wine or grape juice?](#)

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**Beginning (746)(arche)** refers to the commencement of something as an action, process, or state of being. Here **arché** refers to first in relation to **time** (priority in time, the beginning of anything, the origin and by far the most common use in the NT)

**Signs (4592)(semeion - in depth discussion** from **sema** = sign) a sign is something that serves as a pointer to aid perception or insight. It is something that points beyond itself to something greater. "**Sign** in the New Testament is used of **miracles** taken as evidence of divine authority." (Holman Bible Dictionary) **Semeion** looks at a **miracle** as proof of a point or as a means of teaching something. The crucial thing is not the **miracle**, as genuine and important as it is, but the lesson to be learned from the miracle. Thus in the NT a **sign** speaks of a token which has behind it a particular message to be conveyed. In other words, in John's

Gospel (where **semeion** is most concentrated) the apostle recorded certain miracles not for the wonder they produced, but because of the message they taught (Jn 20:31). A sign directs attention away from its unusual nature to the meaning and the significance it points to. It speaks of outward compelling proof of divine authority. In John a sign is generally a "miraculous sign" that points to some deeper spiritual significance in connection with the event (Jn 2:11, 18). Semeion describes a miracle whose purpose is that of attesting the claims of the one performing the miracle to be true. John's uses of **semeion** - Jn. 2:11; Jn. 2:18; Jn. 2:23; Jn. 3:2; Jn. 4:48; Jn. 4:54; Jn. 6:2; Jn. 6:14; Jn. 6:26; Jn. 6:30; Jn. 7:31; Jn. 9:16; Jn. 10:41; Jn. 11:47; Jn. 12:18; Jn. 12:37; Jn. 20:30

Note that while the other Gospel writers use [dunamis](#) for miracles, miraculous works and power, John does not use this word in the Gospel but only in the Revelation (Rev. 1:16; Rev. 3:8; Rev. 4:11; Rev. 5:12; Rev. 7:12; Rev. 11:17; Rev. 12:10; Rev. 13:2; Rev. 15:8; Rev. 17:13; Rev. 18:3; Rev. 19:1) In fact John does not even use the word **miracle**. John prefers the word "**sign**."

Riga says ""Perhaps no single word can give such a profound insight into the whole theology of the Fourth Gospel as the word semeion."

Sign "has three meanings: (a) a sign or distinguishing mark by which something is known; (b) a sign consisting of a wonder or miracle, an event that is contrary to the usual course of nature, either of divine or demonic nature; (c) a sign or portent of the last days." (Kim)

**Vincent** - The supernatural works of Christ and his apostles are denoted by six different words in the New Testament, exhibiting these works under different aspects and from different points of view. These will be considered in detail as they occur. Generally, a **miracle** may be regarded: 1. As a portent or prodigy (τέρας); as Acts 7:36, of the wonders shown by Moses in Egypt. 2. As a sign (σημεῖον), pointing to something beyond itself, a mark of the power or grace of the doer or of his connection with the supernatural world. So Matt. 12:38. 3. As an exhibition of God's glory (νδοξον), Luke 13:17; glorious things. 4. As a strange thing (παράδοξον), Luke 5:26. 5. As a wonderful thing (θαυμάσιον), Matt. 21:15. 6. As a power (δύναμις); so here: a mighty work. ([John 2 Greek Word Studies](#))

"**The other signs recorded in this Gospel** are, the Healing of the ruler's son (John 4:46-54); and of the impotent man at Bethesda (John 5:1-9); the Feeding of the five thousand (John 6:5-59); the Walking on the sea (John 6:15-21); the Giving of sight to the man born blind (John 9:1-7); the Raising of Lazarus (John 11); the Draught of Fishes (John 21:1-8)" (Ellicott)

**Manifested** (disclosed, revealed) (5319) ([phaneroo](#) from [phanerós](#) = manifest, visible, conspicuous in turn from [phaino](#) = give light; become visible in turn from [phos](#) = light) is literally "to bring to light" and primarily means "to make visible" or to cause to become visible. The basic meaning of **phaneroo** is to make known, to clearly reveal, to manifest, to cause to be seen or to make something clear. The idea of **phaneroo** is that there has been an external manifestation to the senses which is open to all primarily referring to what is visible to sensory perception. Approximately 50% of the NT uses of **phaneroo** refer in some way to a manifestation of Jesus Christ, most referring to His first coming, at least 4 uses referring to His second appearing and several uses referring to His manifestation to others in and through the lives of believers. John's uses - Jn. 1:31; Jn. 2:11; Jn. 3:21; Jn. 7:4; Jn. 9:3; Jn. 17:6; Jn. 21:1; Jn. 21:14

**Glory** (1391) ([doxa](#) from [dokeo](#) = to think) speaks of a display of God's true nature, presence, or likeness. It speaks of that which gives a proper opinion or estimate of Who God is. The glory of God is what He is essentially. Glory, therefore, is the true apprehension of God or things. The **glory** of God expresses all that He is in His Being and in His nature, character, power and acts. He is glorified when He is allowed to be seen as He really is. To be where God is will be glory. To be what God intended will be glory. To do what God purposed will be glory. **Thomas Watson** described God's glory - "Glory is the sparkling of the Deity... We may see God's glory blazing in the sun and twinkling in the stars (Ps 19:1)... A sight of God's glory humbles. The stars vanish when the sun appears."

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the glory of God?](#)
- [What does it mean that God is the King of glory?](#)
- [What is a glory cloud? Is a glory cloud biblical?](#)
- [What does it mean to glorify God?](#)
- [What does it mean that Christ in us is the hope of glory?](#)
- [How can I glorify God in everything I do?](#)
- Torrey Topical Textbook [Cloud of Glory Glory Glory of God, the](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Glory](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Glory](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Glory](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Glory](#)



- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Glory](#)
  - Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Glory \(2\)](#) [Glory](#)
  - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Glory](#)
  - McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Glory](#) [Glory of God](#).
  - The Jewish Encyclopedia [Glory of God](#)
- 

**GLORY!** What was this glory of Jesus that people glimpsed in the miracles? It was as if, for a moment, the miracles drew back the curtain and allowed people to see a fuller view of Jesus, including his divine power and authority. Jesus' divine nature became apparent to those willing to see. The sight was dazzling, compelling, and overwhelming. The Gospel writer summarizes what those who were with Jesus came to understand: "We have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth" (1:14 NRSV). John's invitation to us is to look through the eyes of the disciples and allow ourselves to be convinced, as they were, by the glory of Jesus. (Bruce Barton BORROW [Life application New Testament commentary](#))

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**Gerald Borchert** gives us some wise perspective on interpretation of this Water to Wine sign - This pericope with its Jewish ritual jars points to a perspective of replacement or newness that becomes a familiar theme as one proceeds through the Gospel. The patterns of the Old Covenant gradually give way in the presence of the one about whom the Scriptures bear witness (e.g., Jn 5:39 and "grace beyond [or against, anti] grace" of Jn 1:16). The Gospel is filled with symbolism that provides an extremely fertile field for the sanctified imagination. Some facets of that symbolism appear fairly certain; other aspects are less certain. To sense the balance is sometimes difficult. But sanctified restraint in interpretation is an important part of sanctified imagination. With this pair of perspectives in mind attention is directed to a few suggestions interpreters have thought they have seen in this text.

Some have thought that the jars represented for the evangelist the Jewish religion and that John was signaling by this story a transition, the abandoning of Jewish rituals. Some have viewed the wedding celebration as a prediction of the marriage feast of the Lamb. Some have seen in the abundance of the wine an indication of the overflowing abundance expected in the messianic Year of Jubilee and the lack of wine before the act of Jesus as a commentary on the empty state of Jewish worship. Some have seen in the linking of this Cana story and the sign of bread in John 6 a symbol of the Eucharist or Lord's Supper. But all of these seem to press the symbolism beyond the clear meaning of the text and the principle of sanctified restraint. As will become clear, Jesus in this Gospel confronted the Jewish restrictive religious practices of his day. That faith in him would replace the old ways should become equally clear. Whether or not the story of the wine is here intended to picture Jesus and the people of God in the eschatological age as in the eschatological kingdom of David expected by Amos (Amos 9:13-14+), it does seem clear that Jesus was providing an illustration that God's resources are exceedingly abundant. The old ways of course would be challenged by the coming of Jesus, and that is the subject of the next pericope.

Although the present story portrays Jesus as clearly able to meet people's needs, the focus of the story is not on those needs but on Jesus as an extraordinary person who clearly recognized his mission and who would not let human pressures obscure that mission. Followers of Jesus could do well to emulate that model. (See [John 1-11: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#) scroll up and down for more text)

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### **Stanley Toussaint - THE SIGNIFICANCE (of the first sign)**

John designates this miracle as the Lord's first sign. The fact that this is said to be the first does away with the apocryphal miracles recorded in the apocryphal Gospels. That it is a sign indicates there is a truth behind the miracle, a truth greater than the miracle itself. The first message by way of a miracle in John's Gospel and the Lord's ministry is this sign.

### **THE SIGNIFICANCE FOR ISRAEL**

There is significance in the miracle first for Israel, especially the Israel of Christ's day. The wedding feast with its new wine portrays the coming of the kingdom. By this sign the Lord declares He is the Messiah of Israel who is capable of bringing the predicted kingdom into its glorious existence. There are a number of factors that show this is the point of the miracle:

(1) The kingdom is often portrayed in terms of a banquet, especially a wedding feast (Matt. 8:11; 22:1-14; Luke 13:29; Lk 14:15-24; Rev. 19:7-9). The presence of the Lord at these marriage festivities at Cana graphically pictures the coming of the kingdom.

(2) A number of references in the Old Testament picture the kingdom age in terms of wine. For instance, Isaiah 25:6 joins the figures of a banquet and wine together to illustrate the joys of the future kingdom age. In Isaiah 27:2-6 the prophet describes Israel as God's vineyard in the millennium. An abundance of wine was a description often used in the Old Testament of the time when Abraham's promises would be fulfilled (Gen. 49:11-12; Jer. 31:12; Hos. 2:22; 14:7; Joel 2:19, 24; 3:18; Amos 9:13-14; Zech. 9:15-17; 10:7).



This gives significance to the lapse of wine. Not only was this a gross social error; it was also a picture of the obsolescence of Judaism. The old wine had run out and Christ the Messiah was here to bring the new. As Paul put it, “the fullness of time” had come (Gal. 4:4). The Lord used the same kind of a figure in the parable of the wineskins (Matt. 9:17; Luke 5:37–38). The Apostle John beautifully prepared for this miracle in John 1:17: “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ” (NASB). The miracle shows the old order had run its course; now was the time for a new one.

### THE SIGNIFICANCE FOR CHRISTIANS

**The significance of this miracle is not for Jews only; it is obviously for the church as well.** The basic truth for Christians is found in the joy of salvation. Wine and joy are also associated together. The psalmist praises God for His generous providence in giving man “wine which makes man’s heart glad” (Ps. 104:15). In a classic case of personification the vine of Judges 9:13 objects, “Shall I leave my new wine, which cheers God and men, and go to wave over the trees?” Although Westcott fails to see this miracle as an illustration of God’s provision of joy for the Christian he does remark, “There is a Jewish saying, ‘Without wine there is no joy’. ...”

**This miracle portrays not only the joy Christ brings into a person’s life but also the abundance of joy.** The Lord made between 120 and 150 gallons of wine! Not only do believers have access to a peace that passes understanding (Phil. 4:7) and grace unbounding (Rom. 5:20), but also joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Pet. 1:8). Surely the vast supply of wine portrays both the abundance of the kingdom age and the fullness of joy in the individual Christian’s experience. Hymn writers have caught this aspect of the spiritual life in various phrases and clauses—“Come we that love the Lord, and let our joys be known ...”; “He brings a poor lost sinner into His house of wine ...”; “Rejoice, give thanks, and sing ...”; and a myriad more.

**Finally, for the Christian there is a new life in Christ. The old is passed away and there is a whole new life and perspective in Christ** (2 Cor. 5:17+).

This miracle, then, was a sign, a sign to prompt faith in Jesus as the Messiah and to provide new life through Him, just as John states in the declaration of the purpose of his Gospel (John 20:31). (from "[The Significance of the First Sign in John’s Gospel -- By: Stanley D. Toussaint, Bibliotheca Sacra 134:533 Jan 1977](#)")

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**Barton - WHY JESUS PERFORMED MIRACLES** - Miracles are not merely superhuman events, but events that demonstrate God’s power. **Almost every miracle Jesus did was a renewal of fallen creation**—restoring sight, making the lame walk, even restoring life to the dead. We are to believe in Christ, not because He is a superman, but because He is the God Who continues His creation, even in those of us who are poor, weak, crippled, orphaned, blind, deaf, or with some other desperate need for re-creation. (BOLDING ADDED) (BORROW [Life application New Testament commentary](#))

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**Here as Seven Signs that Jesus was God in the Flesh (THERE WERE 35 RECORDED MIRACLES IN THE GOSPELS)**

JOHN'S SEVEN SIGNS THAT POINT TO JESUS AS THE MESSIAH	
Changing Water to Wine	Jn 2:1-11
Healing Royal Official's Son	Jn 4:46-54
Healing the Lame Man	Jn 5:1-15
Feeding the 5,000	Jn 6:5-14
Walking on Water (not called a sign)	Jn 6:16-21
Healing the Man Born Blind	Jn 9:1-7
Raising Lazarus from the Dead	Jn 11:1-44

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Here is **Stanley Toussaint’s** summary of the "[The Significance of the First Sign in John’s Gospel](#)"

### The Significance

John designates this miracle as the Lord’s first sign. The fact that this is said to be the first does away with the apocryphal miracles recorded in the apocryphal Gospels. That it is a sign indicates there is a truth behind the miracle, a truth greater than the miracle itself. The first message by way of a miracle in John’s Gospel and the Lord’s ministry is this sign.

### The Significance for Israel

There is significance in the miracle first for Israel, especially the Israel of Christ's day. The wedding feast with its new wine portrays the coming of the kingdom. By this sign the Lord declares He is the Messiah of Israel who is capable of bringing the predicted kingdom into its glorious existence. There are a number of factors that show this is the point of the miracle: (1) The kingdom is often portrayed in terms of a banquet, especially a wedding feast (Matt 8:11; 22:1–14; Luke 13:29; 14:15–24; Rev 19:7–9). The presence of the Lord at these marriage festivities at Cana graphically pictures the coming of the kingdom. (2) A number of references in the Old Testament picture the kingdom age in terms of wine. For instance, Isaiah 25:6 joins the figures of a banquet and wine together to illustrate the joys of the future kingdom age. In Isaiah 27:2–6 the prophet describes Israel as God's vineyard in the millennium. An abundance of wine was a description often used in the Old Testament of the time when Abraham's promises would be fulfilled (Gen 49:11–12; Jer 31:12; Hos 2:22; 14:7; Joel 2:19, 24; 3:18; Amos 9:13–14; Zech 9:15–17; 10:7).

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This miracle portrays not only the joy Christ brings into a person's life but also the abundance of joy. The Lord made between 120 and 150 gallons of wine! Not only do believers have access to a peace that passes understanding (Phil 4:7) and grace unbounding (Rom 5:20), but also joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Pet 1:8). Surely the vast supply of wine portrays both the abundance of the kingdom age and the fullness of joy in the individual Christian's experience. Hymn writers have caught this aspect of the spiritual life in various phrases and clauses—"Come we that love the Lord, and let our joys be known..."; "He brings a poor lost sinner into His house of wine..."; "Rejoice, give thanks, and sing..."; and a myriad more.

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**Brian Bell** - Signs - So if a sign is a miracle that points beyond itself to a major truth about God, made known through Jesus Christ. What is being represented here?

#### 1. It Represents How Israel Failed!

- a) Israel's wine had run out, the people's supply was emptied, yet their Messiah stood there to help them.
- b) The 6 waterpots were used for ceremonial cleansing but the Jewish ceremonies could not help the spiritually bankrupt nation. It was w/o Joy & w/o Hope.
- c) The people had external ceremonies, but they had nothing to satisfy them within.

#### 2. It Represents How a Sinner is Saved!

- a) Thirsty Crowd - a good picture of the world today. They're tasting the world's pleasures, but eventually their temporary fulfillment runs out.<sup>2</sup>
- b) Empty Waterpots - Representing the human heart, which is hard & empty. Paul calls us vessels. The sinner's life may look good on the outside but God sees it empty & useless unless He is able to work a divine miracle.
- c) Filled w/Water - It's not our job to save souls, but it is our job to give people the Word(water) & let Christ

perform the miracle of salvation.

d) Water to Wine - When the sinner's heart has been filled w/the Word, then Christ can perform the miracle & bring joy.

(1) The Law came thru Moses; in OT water was turned into blood [Judgment]

(2) Grace & Truth came through Jesus; in NT water turned into wine. [Joy]

e) The 3rd Day - Miracle was performed on 3rd day; Christ rose on the 3rd day; Also 3rd day is Tuesday, considered to be a day of blessing because 3rd day in creation account, only day it says, "It is Good!" Twice!

f) The Beginning of Miracles - Salvation is the beginning of miracles.

3. It Represents How to Serve Christ! a) As servants, they knew where the wine came from(9), but the "important people" didn't. When you serve Christ you learn His secrets. You move beyond servant status, "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you." Jn.15:15

4. It Represents How God saved sinners by sending His Son! a) God saved the best for last,...His Son! - Like the parable of the Vinedresser in Mark 12. Vinedresser wanted to receive fruit from His field; sent a servant (was rejected) sent another; & many more (beating some, killing some), finally it says, Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

5. It Represents the Blood of Christ!

a) The water, used for purification, is replaced with wine, which would come to symbolize the blood of Christ! {when He took the cup/wine, He said this is My blood}

b) The real issue at the wedding was not the wine running out, but who replenished it

6. It Represents How Jesus is the Creator! a) Water to Wine was a live demonstration that all things were made through Him(1:3a)

7. It Represents How Jesus is the Lord over time! a) Since the wine, which normally needs time to age, was fermented in only a fraction of a second. b) Thus His Glory was revealed...His earthly veil raised ever so briefly, ever so slightly, to let shine the Shekinah that resided within. ([Brian Bell](#))

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**J C Ryle** - The manner in which the miracle was worked deserves especial notice. We are not told of any outward visible action which preceded or accompanied it. It is not said that He touched the waterpots containing the water that was made wine. It is not said that He commanded the water to change its qualities, or that He prayed to His Father in Heaven. He simply willed the change, and it took place. We read of no prophet or apostle in the Bible who ever worked a miracle after this fashion. He who could do such a mighty work, in such a manner, was nothing less than very God.

It is a comfortable thought that the same almighty power of will which our Lord here displayed is still exercised on behalf of His believing people. They have no need of His bodily presence to maintain their cause. They have no reason to be cast down because they cannot see Him with their eyes interceding for them, or touch Him with their hands, that they may cling to Him for safety. If He "wills" their salvation and the daily supply of all their spiritual need, they are as safe and well provided for as if they saw Him standing by them. Christ's will is as mighty and effectual as Christ's deed. The will of Him who could say to the Father, "I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am," is a will that has all power in heaven and earth, and must prevail. (John 17:24.)

Happy are those who, like the disciples, believe on Him by whom this miracle was wrought. A greater marriage feast than that of Cana will one day be held, when Christ Himself will be the bridegroom and believers will be the bride. A greater glory will one day be manifested, when Jesus shall take to Himself His great power and reign. Blessed will they be in that day who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb! (Rev. 19:9.) ([John 2 Commentary](#))

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## MIRACLES TODAY

Sincere believers wonder whether or not God works miracles today. Certainly God knows what each person requires in order to believe in him. The New Testament accounts record a basic human characteristic that is still true today: people who insisted on a miracle in order to believe remained unconvinced after witnessing the miracle, or were told by Jesus that miracles would not help them. The person who requires God to prove himself may be hiding his or her unwillingness to believe.

In coming to a personal conviction about miracles today, we can make several affirmations:

- God can perform miracles. We must not confuse two questions: Does God perform miracles today? and

Can God perform miracles today? The first is a reasonable question; the second implies a loss of power on God's part and questions his ability. We cannot, by definition, impose limitations on God. God can and will do miracles anywhere and anytime he wishes.

- Miracles tend to be more obvious where the gospel makes new impact. This is because miracles primarily confront ignorance rather than unbelief. Most reports of miracles today come from missionaries on the "outposts" of God's work. It is entirely possible, as Western society sinks into a morass of religious ignorance, that God will, in fact, increase the frequency of miracles in this part of the world.

- God uses people to do his miraculous work. In the past, there were many basic acts of healing and helping that required God's direct intervention, for there were no other options. Advances in medicine, mental health, and science (which themselves strike us as miraculous at times) now allow us to carry out what previously required God's intervention.

- We must expect counterfeits in a fallen world. All the miracles recorded in the Bible were not given a divine stamp of approval (for instance, Pharaoh's magicians' snakes—see Exodus 7:8–13). Trusting in God's ability and willingness to do miracles today may make believers seem gullible. But denying God's willingness to do miracles may place believers in the even more precarious position of doubting God's power. (LAC)

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the difference between miracles and magic?](#)
- [What were the miracles of Jesus? What miracles did Jesus perform?](#)
- [Does God still perform miracles?](#)
- [Are the miracles in the Bible to be taken literally?](#)
- [How can we discern counterfeit miracles?](#)
- [What are the greatest miracles in the Bible?](#)
- [What does it mean that God is a God of miracles?](#)
- [What is the spiritual gift of miracles?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about demonic/satanic miracles?](#)
- [How were Pharaoh's magicians able to perform miracles?](#)

#### John 2:12 After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother and His brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days

NET John 2:12 After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples, and they stayed there a few days.

GNT John 2:12 Μετ το το κατ βη ε ς Καφαρναο μ α τ ς κα μ τηρ α το κα ο δελφο [α το ] κα ο μαθητα α το κα κε μειναν ο πολλ ς μ ρα ς.

NLT John 2:12 After the wedding he went to Capernaum for a few days with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples.

KJV John 2:12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

ESV John 2:12 After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days.

NIV John 2:12 After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.

ASV John 2:12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples; and there they abode not many days.

CSB John 2:12 After this, He went down to Capernaum, together with His mother, His brothers, and His disciples, and they stayed there only a few days.

NKJ John 2:12 After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.

NRS John 2:12 After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there a few days.

YLT John 2:12 after this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples; and there they remained not many days.

NAB John 2:12 After this, he and his mother, (his) brothers, and his disciples went down to Capernaum and stayed there only a few days.

NJB John 2:12 After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and his brothers and his disciples, but they stayed there only a few days.

GWN John 2:12 After this, Jesus, his mother, brothers, and disciples went to the city of Capernaum and stayed there for a few days.

BBE John 2:12 After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples, and they were there not more than two or three days.

- **Capernaum:** Joh 6:17 Mt 4:13 11:23
- **and His brothers and His disciples:** Joh 7:3-5 Mt 12:46 13:55,56 Mk 6:3 Ac 1:13,14 1Co 9:5 Ga 1:19
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SHORT STAY IN CAPERNAUM

**After this** - This time phrase is used by John in Jn 11:7 and Jn 19:28. The similar phrase **after these things** is more common (Jn 3:22, Jn 5:1, Jn 6:1, Jn 7:1, Jn 19:38, Jn 21:1) and both frequently served to begin a new narrative section. In the present passage the after this draws our attention to the fact that Jesus is now transitioning from Cana in Galilee to Capernaum (approximately 16 miles NW of Cana) and eventually to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

**He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother and His brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days-**  
This ministry was not discussed in the Synoptic Gospel. As discussed more below note that between Luke 4:13,14+ there is a time gap of 12-14 months. This was the time of Jesus' early Judean ministry which John alone describes during Jesus' first year of ministry. The synoptic gospels are largely silent about Jesus' ministry between His baptism and His return to Galilee, but John recorded a fairly extensive ministry in Jerusalem and Judea (Jn 2:12-4:42) and because of this, news about Jesus quickly spread throughout Judea.

**Robertson** - This brief stay (not many days, [ou pollas hēmeras]) in this important city (Tell Hum) on the north shore of Galilee was with Christ's mother, brothers (apparently friendly at first) and the six disciples, all in the fresh glow of the glory manifested at Cana. Surely Mary's heart was full. ([John 2 Word Pictures in the NT](#))

This passage is once again evidence that Mary did not remain a virgin after Jesus' birth but had other children. See [Is the perpetual virginity of Mary biblical?](#)

You may read in some commentaries that this period was referred to as **THE YEAR OF OBSCURITY**. (See study by S Lewis Johnson - [The Messiah's Year of Obscurity](#)) Jesus may have been "obscure" but He was not inactive! We see this period described by John from about John 1:19+ through John 4:44, 45+. It is also known as the **Early Judean ministry** for most of the events occurred in Judea the province in which Jerusalem is located ([See map](#)). Note however that some of the events in John 1:19-4:54 took place in Samaria and even Galilee.

**MacArthur** adds that "It might appear from reading Luke's account, as well as the parallel histories of Matthew (Mt 4:12) and Mark (Mk 1:14+), that the Lord's ministry in Galilee began immediately after His baptism. That was not the case, however. There was an interval of about a year between Jesus' baptism and the beginning of His Galilean ministry. While the Synoptic Gospels are silent about that year, which Jesus spent ministering in Judea, the gospel of John describes it in detail (chapters 1-4) (Luke Commentary)

And so we see this **TIME GAP** in Luke's Gospel between Jesus Baptism and Temptation and the beginning of His ministry in Galilee. Thus just as Mark has the **TIME GAP** between Mk 1:13+ and Mark 1:14+, Luke has a similar TIME GAP between Luke 4:13 and Luke 4:14

Luke 4:13+ When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.

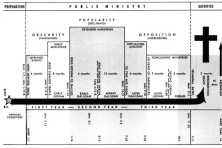
### TIME GAP OF 12-14 MONTHS

Luke 4:14+ And Jesus returned to Galilee in the **power** of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all

the surrounding district.

**Comment - Power** is [dunamis](#) which is simply (but profoundly) the inherent power or ability to accomplish supernaturally that which cannot be accomplished naturally. Beloved, we have access to the same power for the same Spirit indwells us! See [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#) and [Spirit-Filled Believers Are Like Artesian Wells!](#)

**Click Irving Jensen's diagram below to enlarge** - Note that the **SHADED** areas refer to Jesus' Ministry in the Gospel of Mark. Note on the left side of the diagram the **UNSHADED** area which depicts a period of Jesus' ministry lasting about 12 months and described only in the Gospel of John.



## John 2:13 The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem

NET John 2:13 Now the Jewish feast of Passover was near, so Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

GNT John 2:13 Κα γγ ς ν τ π σχα τ ν ουδα ων, κα ν βη ε ς εροσ λυμα ησο ς.

NLT John 2:13 It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration, so Jesus went to Jerusalem.

KJV John 2:13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

ESV John 2:13 The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

NIV John 2:13 When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

ASV John 2:13 And the passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

CSB John 2:13 The Jewish Passover was near, so Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

NKJ John 2:13 Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

NRS John 2:13 The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

YLT John 2:13 And the passover of the Jews was nigh, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

NAB John 2:13 Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

NJB John 2:13 When the time of the Jewish Passover was near Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

GWN John 2:13 The Jewish Passover was near, so Jesus went to Jerusalem.

BBE John 2:13 The time of the Passover of the Jews was near and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

- **Passover:** John 2:23 5:1 6:4 11:55 Ex 12:6-14 Nu 28:16-25 De 16:1-8,16 Lu 2:41
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## BEGINNING OF JESUS' EARLY JUDEAN MINISTRY

[See Jensen's diagram above](#) for his placement of Jesus' Early Judean Ministry. Even the first sign at Cana was restricted to a small group of people, but now Jesus' public ministry begins to gather momentum beginning "first The Cleansing of the Temple with its Further Effect, Jn 2:12–25; secondly, The Conversation with Nicodemus, Jn 3:1–21; thirdly, Jesus in Judea and the Last Testimony of the Baptist, Jn 3:22–36; fourthly, Jesus in Samaria, Jn 4:1–42; fifthly, Jesus in Galilee, Jn 4:43–54." (Lenski BORROW [The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel](#))

**John MacArthur** summarizes this last section of John chapter 2 observing that John "highlighted 3 attributes of Jesus that confirm His deity: (1) His passion for reverence (Jn 2:13-17); (2) His power of resurrection (Jn 2:18-22); and (3) His perception of reality (Jn 3:23-25). (Study Bible)

**John Phillips** has an interesting comment that "It is fitting that the Lord's public ministry should commence in Judea, in Jerusalem,



and in the temple. The Lord went straight for the heart. He now offered himself as messiah in the nation's capital and, being rejected, left and offered himself as prophet in Galilee. He would not offer himself openly as messiah in Jerusalem again until his final entry." (BORROW [Exploring the Gospels. John](#))

**J C Ryle** - Our Lord's regular attendance on the feasts and ordinances of the law of Moses, deserves notice. So long as the dispensation of the Old Testament lasted, He gave it all due honour, however unworthy the hands which administered it. The unworthiness of ministers will not justify us in neglecting God's ordinances. The exact number of Passovers which our Lord kept, and consequently the exact length of His ministry from His baptism to His crucifixion, are points on which there is much difference of opinion. For myself I can see no better view than the old one, that our Lord's ministry lasted three years. It evidently began shortly before a Passover, and ended with a Passover....Three Passovers are distinctly named by John, viz., the one before us, the one in the sixth chapter, (John 6:3,) and the one at which our Lord was crucified. If the "feast" mentioned in the fifth chapter (John 5:1,) was the Passover, our Lord kept four Passovers, But this last point cannot be settled....To attend a marriage feast, and cleanse the temple from profanation were among the first acts of our Lord's ministry at His first coming. To purify the whole visible Church, and hold a marriage supper, will be amongst His first acts, when He comes again. ([John 2 Commentary](#))

**The Passover ([pascha](#)) of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem**- Note the phrase **up to Jerusalem** is always used to signify the elevation of the city (about 754 meters or 2,474 ft) compared to the surrounding land. This is the first of 3 Passovers mentioned by John (Jn 2:13, Jn 6:4, Jn 11:55), and was not mentioned in the synoptic Gospels. The **Passover** alluded to by Luke was during Jesus' boyhood (Lk 2:41-42+) Notice the name is not Passover of the Lord but Passover of the Jews, **Morris** commenting that "John called it "the Jews' Passover" rather than "the Lord's passover" (Ex 12:27), probably because he was writing for Gentiles but perhaps also because the Jewish leaders had so corrupted its observance." (DSB) **Robertson** adds "The Synoptics do not give "of the Jews," but John is writing after the destruction of the temple and for Gentile readers."

**Criswell** (Jn 2:13-17) Because John's account of the cleansing of the temple occurs at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, while in the Synoptics it is at the end, many feel that the event is evaluated differently and that John places it where it best fits his scheme. However, in view of the important differences in the accounts, many conclude that the matter is best resolved by suggesting two cleansings (some suggest that the temple is not cleansed but rejected by Christ). The reference to "temple" refers to that outer area known as the Court of the Gentiles where merchandising took place. ([The Believer's Study Bible](#))

**MacArthur** points out that "As John recorded this cleansing of the temple at the outset of Jesus' ministry, the Synoptic Gospels record a temple cleansing at the end of Jesus' ministry during His passion week (Matt. 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45, 46+). The historical circumstances and literary contexts of the **two temple cleansings** differ so widely that attempts to equate the two are unsuccessful. Furthermore, that two cleansings occurred is entirely consistent with the overall context of Jesus' ministry, for the Jewish nation as a whole never recognized Jesus' authority as Messiah (Matt. 23:37-39). Instead, they rejected His message as well as His person, making such repeated cleansing of the temple highly probable (as well as necessary)." (One Perfect Life)

**Bob Utley** has an interesting comment - This feast is the only means we have of dating Jesus' ministry. The other Gospels imply that Jesus ministered for only one year. But John mentions three Passovers: (1) Jn 2:13, 23; (2) Jn 6:4 and (3) Jn 11:55; 12:1; 13:1; 18:28, 39; 19:14. There is also a possibility of a fourth in Jn 5:1. We do not know how long Jesus' active public ministry lasted, but John's Gospel suggests that it was at least three years.

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**Passover** (3957) ([pascha](#) is the transliteration of the Hebrew word [pesach/pesah](#) (06453) which is a masculine noun thought by some writers (Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon) to have its origin from **pacach/pasah** which apparently means to pass over; to spare (Ex 12:13, 23, 27 - "Jehovah will pass"). Depending on the [context](#), **pascha** refers to the **Passover lamb** (Lk 22:7), the **Passover meal** (Lk 22:8), or the **festival of Passover** (Lk 22:1). The whole feast, including the paschal eve, is called the **festival of Unleavened Bread** (Ex 23:15; Lv 23:6; Ezra 6:22; Lu 22:1, 7; Acts 12:3; 20:6); but the simple name "**Passover**" (when they celebrate the "Passover Seder") is the one commonly used by the Jews to the present day for the festival of Unleavened Bread (2Chr 30:15; 35:1, 11; Mk 14:1) All NT uses of **pascha** - Matt. 26:2; Matt. 26:17; Matt. 26:18; Matt. 26:19; Mk. 14:1; Mk. 14:12; Mk. 14:14; Mk. 14:16; Lk. 2:41; Lk. 22:1; Lk. 22:7; Lk. 22:8; Lk. 22:11; Lk. 22:13; Lk. 22:15; Jn. 2:13; Jn. 2:23; Jn. 6:4; Jn. 11:55; Jn. 12:1; Jn. 13:1; Jn. 18:28; Jn. 18:39; Jn. 19:14; Acts 12:4; 1 Co. 5:7; Heb. 11:28

**MacArthur** - The Feast of Passover commemorated Israel's deliverance from bondage in Egypt—when the Lord killed, by His death angel, the firstborn of the Egyptians but passed over the houses of the Israelites (Ex. 12:23-27). It was celebrated annually on the fourteenth day of Nisan (March/April). On that day, between 3:00 and 6:00 P.M., lambs were slaughtered and the Passover meal eaten. In obedience to Exodus 23:14-17, Jesus went up to Jerusalem to observe both the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread which immediately followed (cf. Ezek. 45:21; Luke 22:1; Acts 12:3-4). This is the first of three Passovers mentioned in John's gospel (cf. 6:4; 11:55). (See [John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) - scroll up and down for more text)

## Related Resource:

- [What is Passover?](#)

### John 2:14 **And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables**

NET John 2:14 He found in the temple courts those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers sitting at tables.

GNT John 2:14 κα̅ ε̅ρεν̅ ν̅ τ̅ ε̅ρ̅ το̅ ς̅ π̅ω̅λο̅ ν̅τα̅ς̅ β̅α̅ς̅ κα̅ π̅ρ̅ β̅α̅τα̅ κα̅ π̅ε̅ρ̅ι̅σ̅τ̅ε̅ρ̅ ς̅ κα̅ το̅ ς̅ κ̅ε̅ρ̅μ̅α̅τ̅ι̅σ̅τ̅ ς̅ κα̅θ̅η̅μ̅ νο̅υ̅ς̅,

NLT John 2:14 In the Temple area he saw merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; he also saw dealers at tables exchanging foreign money.

KJV John 2:14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

ESV John 2:14 In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there.

NIV John 2:14 In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money.

ASV John 2:14 And he found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

CSB John 2:14 In the temple complex He found people selling oxen, sheep, and doves, and He also found the money changers sitting there.

NKJ John 2:14 And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business.

NRS John 2:14 In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables.

YLT John 2:14 and he found in the temple those selling oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the money-changers sitting,

NAB John 2:14 He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money-changers seated there.

NJB John 2:14 and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and doves, and the money changers sitting there.

GWN John 2:14 He found those who were selling cattle, sheep, and pigeons in the temple courtyard. He also found moneychangers sitting there.

BBE John 2:14 And there in the Temple he saw men trading in oxen and sheep and doves, and he saw the changers of money in their seats:

- De 14:23-26 Mt 21:12 Mk 11:15 Lu 19:45,46

Herod's Temple - Court of the Gentiles  
Click to enlarge - see bottom right for note on Court of Gentiles

## JESUS IN THE COURT OF THE GENTILES

**And He found in the temple - Found** ([heurisko](#)) over means to find after searching, but Jesus did not have to search long to find the Jews profaning the Court of the Gentiles, which in itself a bit ironic as Jews considered Gentiles as in essence profane! In the diagram above, Jesus would have walked up the steps into the enclosed area and then through the partition marking off the Court of

the Gentiles but not in the Temple proper (the [naos](#)). The sight He beheld appalled Him and insighted holy outrage. The sacred building had been turned into a secular bazaar. Holy praise would have drowned out by noise of the animals and men bartering over prices.

**Phillips** explains that the Temple grounds were "divided into four courts. Coming in from the east and moving toward the sanctuary itself, a visitor would successively pass through the court of the gentiles, the court of the women, the court of Israel, and the court of the priests. With their usual contempt for all things gentile, the Jews had designated their court as a suitable place to transact business....The place of prayer for all nations smelled of the barnyard, sounded like a cattle market, was filled with noise and din, was the scene of many a swindle." (BORROW [Exploring the Gospels. John](#))

**Henry Morris** - "This visit to Jerusalem and the temple at the beginning of Christ's ministry is recorded only by John as is true with many of the other events and discourses in this Gospel. As the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23), John may well have been told more by Jesus and also been able to remember more through the Holy Spirit (John 14:26) than the other writers in order to do this." ([Defender's Study Bible Notes](#))

**Temple** (2413) ([hieros](#)) has the a basic meaning what belongs to divinity, sacred, holy and thus is the opposite of [bebelos](#) which means profane. It is defined by Louw-Nida as "pertaining to being appropriate for the expression of worship and reverence." In 1 Cor 9:13 **hieros** refers to the activities in the Temple involving the performance of various rituals. In 2 Ti 3:15 **hieros** refers to the "sacred writings" (the Holy Scriptures which in [context](#) would be the OT Scriptures as that was all that was available to the Jews). **Gilbrant** writes that "**Hieron** refers to the entire temple including its precincts and the temple hill or, in a limited sense, any portion of the temple such as the Court of Women (Luke 2:37) where Jesus stood before the altar after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:11), the Court of the Gentiles out of which Jesus drove the money changers (John 2:15), or the temple proper where the veil which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies was rent (Matthew 27:51). **Hieron** is only used in a literal sense in the New Testament. This is in contrast to its closely related term [naos](#) which is used both literally and figuratively as in 1 Corinthians 3:16: "Ye are the temple (naos) of God." (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**BDAG** has separate definitions listed for **hieros** and **hieron**, summarized as follows

[BDAG] **HIERON** (substantive neuter of the adjective **hieros**) sanctuary, temple (a) of Gr-Rom. temples; the temple of Artemis at Ephesus Acts 19:27. (b) of the temple at Jerusalem, including the whole temple precinct w. its buildings, courts, etc. (c) in a general sense, whether polytheistic or monotheistic: 1 Cor 9:13

[BDAG] **HIEROS** - (1) pert. to being of transcendent purity, holy, adj.. Holy hands, that touch nothing profane 1 Cl 33:4; (2) belonging to the temple and its service, holy thing, subst. ta hiera,

**J C Ryle** has an interesting note - I am inclined to see in this visit of our Lord to the temple at His first appearance in Jerusalem after beginning His ministry, a partial though very imperfect fulfilment of Malachi's prophecy: "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple." (Mal. 3:1+) While the Jewish nation was expecting the appearance of a conquering Messiah with power and great glory, the true Messiah suddenly appeared in the temple, and declared His presence, not by exhibiting temporal power, but by insisting on greater purity in the temple worship, as the first thing which the nation needed. That a fuller and more complete accomplishment of Malachi's words remains yet to come, I feel no doubt. But like many Old Testament prophecies about Messiah, the words were purposely intended to have a **double fulfilment**,—a partial one at Messiah's first coming to suffer, a complete one at Messiah's second coming to reign. ([John 2 Commentary](#))

**Those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables** - **Selling** is in the [present tense](#) picturing this as an ongoing activity. "At one time the animal merchants set up their stalls across the Kidron Valley on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, but at this point they were in the temple courts." (Carson) Animals for sacrifice needed to be sold because some of the pilgrims would have come from long distances and not brought animals along on the journey. In addition the inspectors of animals brought by some of the people were disqualified (probably most often for questionable physical defects) and they were forced to buy new animals (at unethical, exorbitant prices!) Money from other regions had to be exchanged for coins acceptable to the Jews and of course a fee was charged. This was a vibrant, albeit illegal business in God's House! Things have not changed much! I read recently of one false teacher who was worth over \$60 million dollars! His real payday is someday! Note that the family of the high priest controlled the selling of animal and charged exorbitant prices for the animals.

**MacArthur** - What had begun as a service to the worshipers had, under the corrupt rule of the chief priests, degenerated into exploitation and usury. Religion had become external, crass, and materialistic; the temple of God had become a "robbers' den" (Matt. 21:13). (See [John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) - scroll up and down for more text)

**Selling** (4453) (**poleo**) means to exchange, **barter**, sell, deal, trade in merchandise. **Louw-Nida** - "to dispose of property or provide services in exchange for money or other valuable considerations."

**Gilbrant** - is used in various ways in the New Testament. In the Gospel of John it refers to the businesses affected by Jesus' cleansing of the temple (John 2:14,16). In Acts it refers to the proceeds from the sale of property used for communal needs of the early Christians (Acts 4:34,37+; 5:1). Paul used it in his instructions concerning meat sold in heathen markets (1 Corinthians 10:25). In the Apocalypse it refers to the economic controls over buying and selling during the reign of the Antichrist (Revelation 13:17).

**Poleo** - 21x in 20v - Matt. 10:29; Matt. 13:44; Matt. 19:21; Matt. 21:12; Matt. 25:9; Mk. 10:21; Mk. 11:15; Lk. 12:6+; Lk. 12:33+; Lk. 17:28+; Lk. 18:22+; Lk. 19:45+; Lk. 22:36+; Jn. 2:14; Jn. 2:16; Acts 4:34+; Acts 4:37+; Acts 5:1+; 1 Co. 10:25; Rev. 13:17

**Money changers** (**hapax legomenon**) (2773) (**kermatistes** from **kermatizō** to divide into smaller money, which is from **kérma** = coin, akin to **keiro** = to cut short) which Vine says means "to cut into small pieces, to make small change." It is one who exchanges one type of currency for another. Louw-Nida - one who exchanges currency, either in terms of different types of currency or different values of the same currency. Only use in Scripture.

**Gilbrant** - This noun is not found in classical literature nor in the Septuagint. However, the verb **kermatizō** does occur in classical writings and implies the "making of change" or "exchanging large coins for smaller." The only New Testament usage of **kermatistēs** is in John 2:14 where it refers to "changers of money." Money changers regularly conducted business in the temple vicinity or courtyard, enabling worshipers to buy animals for sacrifice or to pay the temple tax. (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**Robertson** - Here (Jn 2) it is an obvious protest by Christ at the beginning of his ministry as in the Synoptics (AT THE END OF HIS MINISTRY) it is an indignant outcry against the desecration. The cessation was only temporary in both instances. ([John 2 Word Pictures in the NT](#))

**Rod Mattoon** - With all the racket, commotion, and trading, the Gentile seeking the Lord would be shut out. This was not an atmosphere for praying or worshiping. The priorities of the Jews was out of wack. They missed the purpose of the Temple's existence. Businessmen who attend a church for business contacts make the same mistake. The church is for worship. Animal sacrifices were irrelevant because they were not worshiping with the heart. They were going through the motions and rituals without heart. Sacrifices of animals can't make a man right with God. (See Isa 1:11-17, Jer 7:22-23, Hos 5:6, Hos 8:13, Ps 51:16-17). Do you find yourself making the same mistake of going through the motions of worship without worshiping with your heart? Beloved, God wants our hearts. (Read Mt 15:8, Pr 23:26).

**J C Ryle** - The **changers of money** came naturally enough where buying and selling went on, to meet the convenience of Jews who had nothing but foreign money, which they wished to exchange for the current coin of Jerusalem. The tendency of the whole custom was evidently most profane. It was no doubt connived at by the priests from covetous motives. They were either connected with those who sold animals and changed money, and shared in their profits; or else they received a rent for the privilege of carrying on business within the sacred walls. No doubt they would have pleaded that all was done with a good intention! Their end was to provide facilities for worshipping God! But good intentions cannot sanctify unscriptural actions. As Dyke says on the passage, "No pretence of good ends can justify that which is forbidden by God." ([John 2 Commentary](#))

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#### **NET Note - John 2:14-22.**

Does John's account of the temple cleansing describe the same event as the synoptic gospels describe, or a separate event? The other accounts of the cleansing of the temple are Matt 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; and Luke 19:45-46. None are as long as the Johannine account. The fullest of the synoptic accounts is Mark's. John's account differs from Mark's in the mention of sheep and oxen, the mention of the whip of cords, the Greek word **kermatistes** for **money changer** (the synoptics use **kollubistes**, which John mentions in Jn 2:15), the scattering of the coins (Jn 2:15), and the command by Jesus, "Take these things away from here!" The word for overturned in John is **anastrepho**, while Matthew and Mark use **katastrepho**; Luke does not mention the moneychangers at all). The synoptics all mention that Jesus quoted Isa 56:7 followed by Jer 7:11. John mentions no citation of scripture, but says that later the disciples remembered Ps 69:9. John does not mention, as does Mark, Jesus' prohibition on carrying things through the temple (i.e., using it for a shortcut). But the most important difference is one of time: In John the cleansing appears as the first great public act of Jesus' ministry, while in the synoptics it is virtually the last. The most common solution of the problem, which

has been endlessly discussed among NT scholars, is to say there was only one cleansing, and that it took place, as the synoptics record it, at the end of Jesus' ministry. In the synoptics it appears to be the event that finalized the opposition of the high priest, and precipitated the arrest of Jesus. According to this view, John's placing of the event at the opening of Jesus' ministry is due to his general approach; it was fitting 'theologically' for Jesus to open his ministry this way, so this is the way John records it. Some have overstated the case for one cleansing and John's placing of it at the opening of Jesus' public ministry, however.

For example W. Barclay stated: "John, as someone has said, is more interested in the truth than in the facts. He was not interested to tell men when Jesus cleansed the Temple; he was supremely interested in telling men that Jesus did cleanse the Temple" (John [DSBS], 94). **But this is not the impression one gets by a reading of John's Gospel: The evangelist seems to go out of his way to give details and facts, including notes of time and place.** To argue as Barclay does that John is interested in truth apart from the facts is to set up a false dichotomy. Why should one have to assume, in any case, that there could have been only one cleansing of the temple? This account in John is found in a large section of non-synoptic material. **Apart from the work of John the Baptist - and even this is markedly different from the references in the synoptics - nothing else in the first five chapters of John's Gospel is found in any of the synoptics.** (ED: THE SO-CALLED "YEAR OF OBSCURITY" FOR JESUS - see comments on Mark 1:14 for this "Time Gap" not described in the 3 synoptic Gospels; see also study by S Lewis Johnson - [The Messiah's Year of Obscurity](#))

It is certainly not impossible that John took one isolated episode from the conclusion of Jesus' earthly ministry and inserted it into his own narrative in a place which seemed appropriate according to his purposes. But in view of the differences between John and the synoptics, in both wording and content, as well as setting and time, it is at least possible that the event in question actually occurred twice (unless one begins with the presupposition that the Fourth Gospel is nonhistorical anyway). In support of two separate cleansings of the temple, it has been suggested that Jesus' actions on this occasion were not permanent in their result, and after (probably) 3 years the status quo in the temple courts had returned to normal. And at this time early in Jesus' ministry, he was virtually unknown. Such an action as he took on this occasion would have created a stir, and evoked the response John records in Jn 2:18–22, but that is probably about all, especially if Jesus' actions met with approval among part of the populace ("many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing." = Jn 2:23). But later in Jesus' ministry, when he was well-known, and vigorously opposed by the high-priestly party in Jerusalem, his actions might have brought forth another, harsher response. It thus appears possible to argue for two separate cleansings of the temple as well as a single one relocated by John to suit his own purposes. Which then is more probable? On the whole, more has been made of the differences between John's account and the synoptic accounts than perhaps should have been. After all, the synoptic accounts also differ considerably from one another, yet few scholars would be willing to posit four cleansings of the temple as an explanation for this. While it is certainly possible that the author did not intend by his positioning of the temple cleansing to correct the synoptics' timing of the event, but to highlight its significance for the course of Jesus' ministry, **it still appears somewhat more probable that John has placed the event he records in the approximate period of Jesus' public ministry in which it did occur, that is, within the first year or so of Jesus' public ministry.** The statement of the Jewish authorities recorded by the author (this temple has been under construction for forty-six years) would tend to support an earlier rather than a later date for the temple cleansing described by John, since 46 years from the beginning of construction on Herod's temple in ca. 19 B.C. (the date varies somewhat in different sources) would be around A.D. 27.

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### **Bruce Barton - WHY DO YOU GO TO CHURCH?**

Too many churches today do everything they can to make the time of worship convenient for people. And some people attend church because they see it as a place for personal contacts or business advantage. But worshiping God is not always convenient; it demands true devotion and self-sacrifice. Nor is it for our own earthly advancement. Our focus should be on God alone. We are to worship sincerely, reverently, and humbly. That is not to say we cannot be excited, even zealous, about God. But we are always to worship with reverence—recognizing and remembering who God is.

Many radio and television ministries have become little more than marketplaces for religion. Some of these programs spend a great deal of air time discussing premiums and offers we can receive by sending in a donation that will be used to continue and increase programming so that more people can be contacted to send more money. Jesus would not condemn all fund-raising; but when "worship" services are broadcast for no apparent reason other than to raise money, we should be suspect. Check with your church leaders to make sure the ministry you would like to support has validity. (BORROW [Life application New Testament commentary](#))

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**John 2:15 And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables**

NET John 2:15 So he made a whip of cords and drove them all out of the temple courts, with the sheep and the oxen. He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.

GNT John 2:15 κα ποι σας φραγ λλιον κ σχοιν ων π ντας ξ βαλεν κ το ερο τ τε πρ βατα κα το ς β ας, κα τ ν κολλυβιστ ν ξ χεεν τ κ ρμα κα τ ς τραπ ζας ν τρεψεν,

NLT John 2:15 Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables.

KJV John 2:15 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;

ESV John 2:15 And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables.

NIV John 2:15 So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.

ASV John 2:15 and he made a scourge of cords, and cast all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and he poured out the changers' money, and overthrew their tables;

CSB John 2:15 After making a whip out of cords, He drove everyone out of the temple complex with their sheep and oxen. He also poured out the money changers' coins and overturned the tables.

NKJ John 2:15 When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables.

NRS John 2:15 Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.

YLT John 2:15 and having made a whip of small cords, he put all forth out of the temple, also the sheep, and the oxen; and of the money-changers he poured out the coins, and the tables he overthrew,

NAB John 2:15 He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables,

NJB John 2:15 Making a whip out of cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, sheep and cattle as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over

GWN John 2:15 He made a whip from small ropes and threw everyone with their sheep and cattle out of the temple courtyard. He dumped the moneychangers' coins and knocked over their tables.

BBE John 2:15 And he made a whip of small cords and put them all out of the Temple, with the sheep and the oxen, sending in all directions the small money of the changers and overturning their tables;

- **He drove:** Joh 18:6 Zec 4:6 2Co 10:4
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Jesus Cleansing the Temple

**JESUS' PASSION FOR  
RIGHT WORSHIP!**

**And He made a scourge of cords** (KJV = "a scourge of small cords") - The **cords** used by Jesus to make the **scourge** ([picture of a scourge](#)) could have been from rope. This is a clear example of righteous anger manifest by the Righteous One (Isa 53:14) Himself.

Jesus' anger reminds us of Paul's three commands to the Ephesian saints **BE ANGRY** (present imperative), AND yet **DO NOT SIN**; (present imperative with a negative) **do not let the sun go down** (present imperative with a negative) on your anger." (Eph. 4:26+).

**NET Note** has an interesting note on **scourge of cords** - Several witnesses, two of which are quite ancient (i(66, 75 )L N (1 33 565



892 1241 al lat), have w'j (hos, "like") before fragellion (phragellion, "whip"). A decision based on external evidence would be difficult to make because the shorter reading also has excellent witnesses, as well as the majority, on its side (a A B Q Y {13 }Û co). Internal evidence, though, leans toward the shorter reading. **Scribes tended to add to the text, and the addition clearly softens the assertion of the evangelist:** Instead of making a whip of cords, Jesus made [something] like a whip of cords."

**Scourge** ([hapax legomenon](#))[\(5416\)](#)(**phagellion**) is a Latin loan word from **flagellum**, an instrument that when used by the Romans consisted of a thong frequent with metal tips to increase the severity of the punishment (Jesus' scourge surely did not have this latter composition!). **Wikipedia** - "A scourge ([Latin: flagrum](#); diminutive: *flagellum*) typically consists of several thongs fastened to a handle. A well known configuration of a scourge is the cat o' nine tails. The [cat o' nine tails](#) has two versions: the navy version is made of thick ropes with knotted ends, the army and civil prison versions are usually made of leather."

**Cords** [\(4979\)](#)(**schoinion** from **schoinos** = bulrush) means a rope or cord "made of (the fibers from) [rushes](#) (grasslike plants of the genus *Juncus*, having stiff hollow or pithy stems)." (Friberg) Here it refers to the composition of the scourge and in the only other NT use in Acts 27:32 it refers to the ropes that hold a ship's boat in place. Many more uses in the Septuagint - 2 Sa 8:2; 2 Sa 17:13; 1 Ki. 20:31; 1 Ki. 20:32; Est. 1:6; Job 18:10; Job 36:8; Ps. 16:6 = "The **lines** have fallen to me in pleasant places" ; Ps. 78:55; Ps. 119:61 = "The **cords** of the wicked have encircled me"; Ps. 140:5; Eccl. 12:6; Isa. 3:24; Isa. 5:18; Isa. 33:20; Isa. 33:23; Jer. 38:11; Jer. 38:12; Jer. 38:13; Ezek. 27:24; Amos 2:8; Amos 7:17; Mic. 2:4; Mic. 2:5; Zech. 2:1;

**Vincent** - The Rev. omits small, but the word is a diminutive of  $\sigma\chi\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma$ , a rush, and thence a rope of twisted rushes. The A. V. is therefore strictly literal. Herodotus says that when Cræsus besieged Ephesus, the Ephesians made an offering of their city to Diana, by stretching a small rope ( $\sigma\chi\omicron\nu\omicron\nu\omicron\nu$ ) from the town wall to the temple of the goddess, a distance of seven furlongs (1:26). The schoene was an Egyptian measure of length, marked by a rush-rope. See Herodotus, ii. 6. Some find in this the etymology of skein.

**Gilbrant** - From the time of Herodotus (Fifth Century B.C.) this noun can be traced in classical Greek as referring to a rope made of rushes; a measuring line, hence a measure or portion (cf. Psalm 16:6 [LXX 15:6]); a girdle; and metaphorically, cords of care (which bind one) (Liddell-Scott). The term occurs twice in the New Testament. In John 2:15 Jesus is reported to have made a whip out of cords (*schoiniōn*), and in Acts 27:32 Luke reported that the soldiers "cut off the ropes (*schoinia*) of the boat." (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**And drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen**- This would have been quite a feat for one man, for there is no suggestion His disciples joined Him. In fact one can only imagine what they must have been thinking, perhaps even something like "He's gone and done it now!" Clearly they did not fully comprehend why He took such radical actions. And one cannot imagine what went through the minds of the Roman garrison stationed in the [Antonia Fortress \(depicted at top of schematic\)](#) overlooking the Temple grounds. It is also notable that Jesus' "action could not have generated a riotous uproar, or there would have been swift reprisals from the Roman troops in the fortress of Antonia overlooking part of the temple complex." (Carson) While Jesus clearly **drove them all out**, it is not stated that He actually struck anyone, either human or animal. The text reads more literally **cast all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen**" so that the **all** would include both the pernicious perverted [perpetrators](#) and the innocent animals.

**Drove...out** (threw...out) [\(1544\)](#)(**ekbállō** from **ek** = out + **bállō** = to cast, throw, drive) means to cast, throw out often with the idea of force (cf Mt 21:12, Mk 11:15) John's use of **ekballo** makes me think he is almost using it as a play on words in light of other uses such as casting out demons (Mt 7:22, Mt 8:16, 31, Mt 9:34, Mt 10:1, etc) and casting unbelievers into outer darkness (hell)! Undoubtedly these money changers surely were influenced by "the flaming arrows of the evil one" (Eph 6:16+).

**Leon Morris** - It is clear that it was not so much the physical force as the moral power he employed that emptied the courts. (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

**Turner** writes ""It was surely the blazing anger of the selfless Christ rather than the weapon which He carried which really cleared the Temple Courts of its noisy, motley throng." (Jesus Master and Lord)

**Brian Bell** quips "This was "Worship made easy" at its finest! "Drive up, grab a sacrifice, do some worship, we'll get you home before the game!"

**And He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables**([trapeza](#)) - Jesus **poured out** their profits on the pavement! Imagine the scene as the crowds scrambled for the coins!

**Jerome** on Jesus' anger - "A certain fiery and starry light shone from his eyes and the majesty of Godhead gleamed in His face."

**Ryle** on the other hand says that "The allegorical meanings assigned to the sheep, oxen, and doves, by Augustine, Origen, and Bede, are too absurd to be quoted. They may be seen in the Catena of Aquinas." ([John 2 Commentary](#))

The Jews were required to pay a [temple tax](#) and **Money changers** were needed because neither [Roman denarii](#) (see [picture of portraits](#)) and [Attic drachmas](#) were permitted to be used in paying [the half-shekel temple-tax](#). Why? Because the coins had the imperial Roman portraits (see [picture of Marcus Aurelius](#)) which the Jews considered idolatry). The **money changers** exchanged these coins for [Tyrian coinage](#) at a profit. It is interesting that [Tyrian coinage](#) took on the role as the medium of payment for the [Temple tax](#) in Jerusalem, and subsequently gained notoriety as a likely mode of payment for [Judas Iscariot](#).

**Poured out** ([1632](#))([ekcheo](#) from **ek** = out + **chéo** = pour) means literally to flow out, to gush forth or to pour out. The inherent idea is to cause something to be emitted in quantity. It is a bit ironic that here John uses **ekcheo** to describe God pouring out His anger on unholy hypocrisy, but in 4 other NT uses **ekcheo** describes God pouring out His love in giving us the Holy Spirit! (Acts 2:17, 18, 33+ Titus 3:6+)

**Money changers** ([2855](#))(**kollubistes** from **kollubos** = a small coin or rate of change) which Vine says is literally "money-clipper!" Louw-Nida = "one who exchanges currency, either in terms of different types of currency or different values of the same currency." Used 3x in NT - Mt. 21:12; Mk. 11:15; Jn. 2:15

**Gilbrant - Kollubistēs** is related to **kollubos**, "a small coin," plus **-tēs**, a word ending that indicates one who does something. Consequently, a **kollubistēs** is "one who works with money." The term does not appear in the Septuagint and is used in the New Testament only in connection with Jesus' cleansings of the temple (Mt. 21:12; Mk. 11:15; Jn. 2:15). **Since the Law required every Jewish male 20 years and older to pay a half-shekel, money changers were needed for exchanging foreign money into traditional Jewish coinage in order to pay what evidently had become an annual tax.** Because Jews would travel to Jerusalem from all parts of the Roman Empire, currency from their home countries was converted to the currency used in Jerusalem. Jesus' epithet "**den of robbers**" (cf. Jer 7:11) may reflect the high exchange rate charged for this service—nearly 10 percent. Interestingly John's Gospel also uses another word in Jn 2:14 for money changer: **kermatistēs**. It appears only here in the New Testament and not at all in the Septuagint. Like **kollubistēs**, it is made up of a word for small coin, **kerma** (2743), and **-tēs**, the suffix denoting agent. John used them as synonyms for the purposes of this account. (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**Overtured** ([396](#))([anatrepo](#) from **ana** = again + **trepho** = turn) literally means to overturn and is used literally only in Jn 2:15. The only other uses are figurative, of "overturning" (upset) another's faith (2 Ti 2:18+) and "upsetting whole families" (Titus 1:11+) with false teaching.

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**J C Ryle** - The passage is one that ought to raise deep searchings of heart in many quarters. Are there none who profess and call themselves Christians, behaving every Sunday just as badly as these Jews? Are there none who secretly bring into the house of God their money, their lands, their houses, their cattle, and a whole train of worldly affairs? Are there none who bring their bodies only into the place of worship, and allow their hearts to wander into the ends of the earth? Are there none who are "almost in all evil, in the midst of the congregation?" (Prov. 5:14.) These are serious questions! Multitudes, it may be feared, could not give them a satisfactory answer. Christian churches and chapels, no doubt, are very unlike the Jewish temple. They are not built after a divine pattern. They have no altars or holy places. Their furniture has no typical meaning. But they are places where God's word is read, and where Christ is specially present. The man who professes to worship in them should surely behave with reverence and respect. The man who brings his worldly matters with him when he professes to worship, is doing that which is evidently most offensive to Christ. The words which Solomon wrote by the Holy Ghost are applicable to all times, "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God." (Eccles. 5:1.) ([John 2 Commentary](#))

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## Garbage In The Temple

Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? —1 Corinthians 6:19+

Today's Scripture: John 2:13-22

A number of years ago, a government investigation discovered that some truckers were hauling garbage in the same refrigerated trucks that were used to transport food. Part of the problem was that trucks making long trips could not afford to return empty.

According to the truckers, some considered garbage a dream commodity. They were paid to transport something that couldn't be damaged. During congressional hearings, a food science professor likened the problem to serving potato salad from a cat's litter

box.

This "pollution for profit" scandal is nothing compared to the one described in John 2:13-22. Jesus cast out the money changers from the temple because their schemes for financial gain had desecrated His Father's house. But just as bad is polluting the temple of our bodies with thoughts and practices that don't belong there (1 Corinthians 6:19<sup>±</sup>).

In many ways, we are no better than those truckers or the temple merchants of Jesus' day. We think it would be more profitable for us to carry the garbage of this world's values in our minds. May God forgive us, cleanse us, and help us to cast out everything that defiles the temple in which He alone has the right to dwell. — Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, help us love what's good and right—  
O make us pure within;  
And give us courage to repent  
When we would choose to sin.  
—D. De Haan

Christians must live in the world, but not let the world live in them.

**John 2:16 and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business.**

NET John 2:16 To those who sold the doves he said, "Take these things away from here! Do not make my Father's house a marketplace!"

GNT John 2:16 κα το ς τ ς περιστερ ς πωλο σιν ε πεν, ρατε τα τα ντε θεν, μ ποιε τε τ ν ο κον το πατρ ς μου ο κον μπορ ου.

NLT John 2:16 Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, "Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!"

KJV John 2:16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

ESV John 2:16 And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade."

NIV John 2:16 To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"

ASV John 2:16 and to them that sold the doves he said, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.

CSB John 2:16 He told those who were selling doves, "Get these things out of here! Stop turning My Father's house into a marketplace!"

NKJ John 2:16 And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"

NRS John 2:16 He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!"

YLT John 2:16 and to those selling the doves he said, 'Take these things hence; make not the house of my Father a house of merchandise.'

NAB John 2:16 and to those who sold doves he said, "Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace."

NJB John 2:16 and said to the dove sellers, 'Take all this out of here and stop using my Father's house as a market.'

GWN John 2:16 He told those who sold pigeons, "Pick up this stuff, and get it out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!"

BBE John 2:16 And to those who were trading in doves he said, Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a market.

- **stop making:** Isa 56:5-11 Jer 7:11 Ho 12:7,8 Mt 21:13 Mk 11:17 Ac 19:24-27 1Ti 6:5 2Pe 2:3,14,15
- **My Father's house:** Joh 5:17 8:49 10:29 20:17 Lu 2:49
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE TEMPLE JESUS' FATHER'S HOUSE

**And to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away** - It is interesting that Jesus drove the other things away with a **scourge of cords**, but not the **doves**. "Probably the doves were in baskets or cages and so had to be taken out by the traders." (Robertson) **Take...away** is in the [aorist imperative](#) indicating a command calling for them to obey immediately!

**Take...away** (142)([airo](#)) literally means to lift up something (Mt 17:27) and to carry it (Lxx - Ge 44:1, Ex 25:28 = the Ark). In the first Septuagint use of **airo** in Ge 35:2 Jacob told his household "**Put away** ([airo](#) in the [aorist imperative](#)) the foreign gods." Even as the foreign gods were an abomination that must be removed, so too the evil practices in the holy environs of God were an abomination! Jesus used **airo** in a positive sense when He declared "**Take** ([aorist imperative](#)) My yoke" (Mt 11:29+) and again when he said "**Take** ([aorist imperative](#)) up (your) cross." (Mk 8:34+)

**John Phillips** - This bold attack on the "syndicate" proclaimed Jesus, in the most authentic manner possible, to be the Christ. Alone and single-handed he had taken on the establishment, including the Sanhedrin and the powerful Sadducean party, which both sponsored and doubtless profited from this traffic. He had overthrown an entrenched system of evil that posed as a public benefit. In doing so, he had proclaimed himself the Son of his Father, whose house these profane intruders were defiling. In view of the Passover he had rid that house of the leaven of unrighteousness that had long corrupted it. (When the Lord left that temple for the last time he called it "**your house**," but by then he had already prophetically handed it over to judgment; see Matthew 23:38.) (BORROW [Exploring the Gospels. John](#))

**Stop making** ([poieo](#)) **My Father's house a place of business** - NLT = "Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!" **Stop making** is a command ([present imperative with a negative](#)) meaning to cease an action which is taking place. If Jesus had not already attracted the attention of the religious leaders, His reference to the Temple as His **Father's house** (note He does not say "our House" or Herod's house), would have raised their blood pressure for sure! Jesus is clearly making a Messianic claim, and indirectly claiming to be God, so don't let anyone tell you Jesus never claimed to be God, for He did so repeatedly (cf Jn 10:30+)! If Jesus called God His Father, the clear implication is that Jesus is saying He is the Son of God. He could not have been more clear! And even as a child in Luke 2:49+ Jesus asked His parents "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in **My Father's** house?" Later **John** writes "For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own **Father**, making Himself equal with God." (John 5:18+, see complete list below) If the unbelieving Jews still believed He was in essence calling Himself God (cf Jn 8:58+)! (See [Is Jesus God? Did Jesus ever claim to be God?](#))

**Father's** (3962)([pater](#)) in this [context](#) refers to God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus calls God *patér mou*, "My Father" (Mt. 11:27; Mark 8:38; Luke 2:49; John 10:18, 25, 29; Rev. 2:27; 3:5, 21), "my Father in the heavens" (Mt. 7:21; 10:32, 33; 12:50), "my heavenly Father" (Mt 15:13).

**All uses of the phrase MY FATHER in the Gospels**(most but not all refer to Jesus referring to God as His Father) - Matt. 7:21; Matt. 8:21; Matt. 10:32; Matt. 10:33; Matt. 11:27; Matt. 12:50; Matt. 16:17; Matt. 18:10; Matt. 18:19; Matt. 20:23; Matt. 25:34; Matt. 26:39; Matt. 26:42; Matt. 26:53; Lk. 9:59; Lk. 10:22; Lk. 15:18; Lk. 22:29; Lk. 24:49; Jn. 5:17; Jn. 6:32; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 8:19; Jn. 8:38; Jn. 8:49; Jn. 8:54; Jn. 10:18; Jn. 10:29; Jn. 10:37; Jn. 14:7; Jn. 14:20; Jn. 14:21; Jn. 14:23; Jn. 15:1; Jn. 15:8; Jn. 15:15; Jn. 15:23; Jn. 15:24; Jn. 20:17

### Related Resources:

- [What are the strongest biblical arguments for the divinity of Christ?](#)
- [Is Jesus God in the flesh? Why is it important that Jesus is God in the flesh?](#)
- [Was Jesus created?](#)
- [Is the deity of Christ biblical?](#)
- [Is Jesus Yahweh? Is Jesus Jehovah?](#)

**Business (1712)** (**emporion** from **émporos** = merchant) describes a place set aside for trade and business, and so an **emporium**, a market, a place where commerce occurs. The **cognate emporia (1711)** means trade, commerce. An **emporium** refers to "a large retail store organized into departments offering a variety of merchandise; commonly part of a retail chain." Peter uses the related (**cognate**) verb **emporeuomai** in 2 Peter 2:3<sup>±</sup> meaning to exploit, describing what the false teachers were doing to the people. False money dealers and false teachers both exploited the people. Three uses in the Septuagint twice to refer to **Tyre** - Deut. 33:19; Isa. 23:17; Ezek. 27:3

**Gilbrant** - In classical Greek **emporion** could mean a market center where there was no city (see Liddell-Scott). In the New Testament this noun occurs only in John 2:16 in the expression oikos emporiou, "a house of merchandise" (NIV: "a market"). In contrast to agora (57), "the open marketplace," emporion refers to an inside business here. Jesus drove out the money changers who had made the temple, which was meant to be a house of prayer, a market. (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

The other Gospels in describing what I feel is a second Temple cleansing (Mt 21:13 Mk 11:17) quote prophecies the Old Testament at this point...

Mt 21:13 And He \*said to them, "It is written, **MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER**; but you are making it a **ROBBERS' DEN**."

Mk 11:17 "Is it not written, **MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE NATIONS**'? But you have made it a **ROBBERS' DEN**."

Isaiah 56:7 Even those I will bring to My holy mountain And make them joyful in **My house of prayer**. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For **My house** will be called a **house of prayer** for all the peoples.

Jeremiah 7:11 "Has this house, which is called by My name, become a **den of robbers** in your sight? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," declares the LORD.

**THOUGHT:** We each need to examine our hearts when we come to worship (Ps 139:23,24). Is our heart like this court of the Gentiles, filled with chaos (animals, etc) and cheating (exorbitant exchanging of money)? We would do well to consider the wisdom of Solomon who warned "Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil." (Ecclesiastes 5:1)

**MacArthur** comments that "He was the loyal Son purging His Father's house of its impure worship (an action that prefigures what He will again do at His second coming [Mal. 3:1–3+; cf. Zech. 14:20–21+]).

**Robert Hawker** rightly observed, 'Oh! the forbearance of our adorable Lord, when driving those buyers and sellers from the temple, that he drove them not into hell!'

**Morris** - Three years later, when Christ came to the temple again and found the situation even worse, He called it "a den of thieves" (Matthew 21:13, quoting Jer 7:11). This coming to the temple may also be considered as a precursive fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies regarding Christ's coming to the future temple (Haggai 2:7; Malachi 3:1-4; Ezekiel 40ff.; especially Ezekiel 43:5). (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

**Constable** - The Old Testament predicted that Messiah would come and purify the Levites (Mal. 3:1–3; cf. Zech. 14:21). Jesus' action perhaps recalled these prophecies to the godly in Israel who may have wondered if Jesus was the Messiah. His actions did not fulfill these prophecies, however, which appear in millennial contexts. Jesus will yet return to the temple that will be standing in Jerusalem when He returns at His second coming and purify the Levites serving there then. ([Notes on the Bible](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [Who were the money changers in the Bible?](#)
- [Was Jesus ever angry?](#)
- [What does it mean that the house of prayer had been turned into a den of thieves?](#)

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**Question:** "[How many times did Jesus cleanse the temple? Why did He cleanse the temple?](#)"

**Answer:** Jesus cleansed the temple of the money-changers and sellers of merchandise because of His disgust at what they had made of God's house of prayer and His zeal to purify it from the abuse of ungodly men. Judea was under the rule of the Romans, and the money in current use was Roman coin. However, the Jewish law required that every man should pay a tribute to the service

of the sanctuary of “half a shekel” (Exodus 30:11–16), a Jewish coin. It became, therefore, a matter of convenience to have a place where the Roman coin could be exchanged for the Jewish half shekel. The money-changers provided this convenience but would demand a small sum for the exchange. Because so many thousands of people came up to the great feasts, changing money was a very profitable business and one that resulted in fraud and oppression of the poor.

Also, according to the Law, two doves or pigeons were required to be offered in sacrifice (Leviticus 14:22; Luke 2:24). Yet it was difficult to bring them from the distant parts of Judea, so a lucrative business selling the birds sprang up, with the sellers gouging the faithful by charging exorbitant prices. There were other merchants selling cattle and sheep for the temple sacrifices as well. Because of these sellers who preyed on the poor and because of His passion for the purity of His Father’s house, Jesus was filled with righteous indignation. As He overturned the tables of the money-changers, He condemned them for having turned God’s house of prayer into “a den of thieves” (Matthew 21:13). As He did so, His disciples remembered Psalm 69:9, “Zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.”

**Jesus’ first cleansing of the temple** is described in John 2:11–12 as having occurred just after Jesus’ first miracle, the turning of water into wine at the wedding in Cana. John makes it clear that it was “after this” that He went to Capernaum, where He “stayed for a few days.” Then in the next verse (verse 13), John tells us that the “Passover of the Jews was at hand” (NKJV). These verses trace Jesus’ movements over a short period of time from Cana in Galilee to Capernaum and eventually to Jerusalem for the Passover. This is the first of the two times Jesus cleansed the temple. The Synoptic Gospels do not record the temple cleansing mentioned in John 2, instead only recording the temple cleansing that occurred during Passion Week.

**The second cleansing of the temple** occurred just after Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem the last week of His life. This second cleansing is recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke but not in John. There are differences in the two events, aside from their being nearly three years apart. In the first cleansing, temple officials confronted Jesus immediately (John 2:18), whereas in the second cleansing, the chief priests and scribes confronted Him the following day (Matthew 21:17–23). In the first event, Jesus made a whip of cords with which to drive out the sellers, but there is no mention of a whip in the second cleansing. So there are two recorded occasions when Jesus cleansed the temple—the first time at the beginning of His public ministry, and the second time just after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem shortly before He was crucified.

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## **Bruce Barton - CHEAP WORSHIP**

We have so many opportunities for worship that we may trivialize its importance. We frankly have a difficult time identifying with believers elsewhere in the world who worship under threat of pain, imprisonment, even death. The faith of these believers is portrayed by exuberance, seriousness, and reverence in worship, despite their environment. Too often for us, worship seems to be nothing more than Christians getting together for fellowship, to learn from each other, and to help each other. While all that is good, it may not be true worship. If God is not the focus, the church is in danger of becoming nothing more than a service club.

Then what is true worship? True worship focuses on God, the one who is to be worshiped. When Christians gather to worship—that is, to meet with God—then their deepest needs and hungers are satisfied, for they are in touch with the Creator.

We dare not cheapen this truly miraculous and intimate privilege called worship. Jesus was angered by actions and attitudes that cheapened worship, and we must take care not to let such actions and attitudes into our church. How would Jesus respond to the worship in your church if he were to visit this Sunday? (BORROW [Life application New Testament commentary](#))

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### **Related Resources:**

- [What is a biblical theology of worship?](#)
- [Are any of the various worship styles unbiblical?](#)
- [What are the ingredients to a truly biblical worship service?](#)
- [What is true worship?](#)
- [How much of a role should media have in worship services?](#)
- [What is the meaning of Christian worship?](#)
- [How can I know how to properly worship God?](#)

**John 2:17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME.**



GNT John 2:17 μν σθησαν ο μαθητα α το τι γεγραμμ νον στ ν, ζλος το ο κου σου καταφ γετα με.

NLT John 2:17 Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: "Passion for God's house will consume me."

KJV John 2:17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

ESV John 2:17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

NIV John 2:17 His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."

ASV John 2:17 His disciples remembered that it was written, Zeal for thy house shall eat me up.

CSB John 2:17 And His disciples remembered that it is written: Zeal for Your house will consume Me.

NKJ John 2:17 Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."

NRS John 2:17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

YLT John 2:17 And his disciples remembered that it is written, 'The zeal of Thy house did eat me up;'

NAB John 2:17 His disciples recalled the words of scripture, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

NJB John 2:17 Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: I am eaten up with zeal for your house.

GWN John 2:17 His disciples remembered that Scripture said, "Devotion for your house will consume me."

BBE John 2:17 And it came to the minds of the disciples that the Writings say, I am on fire with passion for your house.

- **The zeal:** Ps 69:9 Ps 119:139
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME.** -This event fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 69:9. "For zeal for Your house has consumed me, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me." **Written** is in the [perfect tense](#) indicating this was written in the past and abides or remains. In other words what was **written** stands **written** and this same thought is used repeatedly in the NT as a way to affirm the [inspiration](#) of the Old Testament (See [slippery slope of Andy Stanley regarding the OT](#)). The idea of **zeal** is fervent passion, even "red hot passion," or better yet "holy passion."

**THOUGHT** - Notice the fact that the disciples **remembered** a specific Scriptural text from the Psalms and associated with text this event in John 2 shows that (1) they knew Scripture (they very likely had [memorized](#) it) and (2) they [rightly interpreted](#) Scripture (cf 2 Ti 2:15+). In this way they give us good role models to [emulate](#) (cf Heb 6:12+).

**THOUGHT** - The text before us shows that it is sometimes justifiable to be entirely absorbed and "eaten up," ([katesthio](#)) so to speak, by zeal for some aspect of God's glory which is being [sullied](#). Moses (Ex 32:16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21-29), Phineas (Nu 25:6, 7-8, 11-13), and Paul at Athens (Acts 17:15, 16+), are examples of such zeal. [Augustine](#) remarks on this text, "Let the zeal of the house of God ever eat thee.—For example: Seest thou a brother running to the theatre? stop him, warn him, be grieved for him, if the zeal of God's house hath now eaten thee.—Seest thou others running and wanting to drink themselves drunk? Stop whom thou canst, hold whom thou canst, frighten whom thou canst; whom thou canst, win in gentleness; do not in any wise sit still and do nothing." (cf Pr 27:17) (Ryle)

Notice the words **consume Me**, prophetic words that would prove true, for His zeal for God and true worship would lead to His crucifixion, fulfilling the will of His Father (cf. Isa. 53:4, 10+; Luke 22:22+; Acts 2:23+; Acts 3:18+; Acts 4:28+) Carson agrees adding that "For John, the manner by which Jesus will be 'consumed' is doubtless his death." (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

**Wiersbe** - "When Jesus cleansed the temple, He 'declared war' on the hypocritical religious leaders (Matt. 23), and this ultimately led to His death. Indeed, His zeal for God's house did eat Him up!" ([Bible Exposition Commentary - New Testament](#))

**Westcott** notes the double effect of this act as is true of Christ's words and deeds all through John's Gospel. The disciples are helped, the traders are angered.

**R. C. H. Lenski** comments "The stern and holy Christ, the indignant, mighty Messiah, the Messenger of the Covenant (Mal 3:1+) of Whom it is written: "He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering of righteousness," (Mal 3:3+) is not agreeable to those who want only a soft and sweet Christ. But John's record here. But John's

record here, and that of the second cleansing of the Temple (Matt. 21:12ff, Mk 11:15-17+, Lk 19:45-46+), portray the fiery zeal of Jesus which came with such sudden and tremendous effectiveness that before this unknown man, who had no further authority than his own person and word, this crowd of traders and changers, who thought they were fully within their rights when conducting their business in the Temple court, fled **pell-mell** like a lot of naughty boys.. (BORROW [The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel](#))

**Ryrie** - Christ was jealous for the holiness of God's house. The offense of the money changers was in their defiling it. (BORROW [Ryrie Study Bible](#))

**THOUGHT** - Where is God's Temple today beloved? It is YOU! YOUR BODY (1 Cor 6:19-20+) ! This begs the question "Are you **consumed with zeal** for the holiness of His Temple, your body?" Beloved, men (and women) are falling like flies (to use an old expression) into the depraved depths of internet pornography! I know it is a struggle, but we have the Holy Spirit in our temple. Paul made the clear distinction "if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live." (Ro 8:13+) So enabled by the Holy Spirit and the Holy Word we can resist and flee from temptation and HE WILL WIN THE BATTLE! Do not be deceived beloved brethren, God is not mocked! ( Gal 6:7-8+) See a great "**antidote**" for that sin which so easily entangles you (Heb 12:1+) - [Expulsive Power of a New Affection](#) See this article if you do not agree with great, grave danger of internet pornography - [Why Pornography is the Greatest Threat to Today's Church](#). Read this long list of incredible statistics on internet pornography to help understand the gravity of the situation - [Christians and Online Porn Archives - Enough Is Enough](#).

**Disciples** (3101) see note on [mathetes](#)

**Remembered** (3403)([mimnesko](#) means to bring to mind or think of again. It means to keep in mind for attention or consideration. Most of the NT uses convey this sense of recalling information from memory. NT uses - Matt. 5:23; Matt. 26:75; Matt. 27:63; Lk. 1:54; Lk. 1:72; Lk. 16:25; Lk. 23:42; Lk. 24:6; Lk. 24:8; Jn. 2:17; Jn. 2:22; Jn. 12:16; Acts 10:31; Acts 11:16; 1 Co. 11:2; 2 Tim. 1:4; Heb. 2:6; Heb. 8:12; Heb. 10:17; Heb. 13:3; 2 Pet. 3:2; Jude 1:17; Rev. 16:19

John 12:16 These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they **remembered** that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.

Luke 24:8+ And they (THE WOMEN) **remembered** His words (Lk 24:6,7+), 9 and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.

**Written** (1125)([grapho](#) from root **graph-** = primarily means to scratch on or engrave as on an ornament, reports, letters, etc; **English** = graph, graphic, etc) means to engrave or inscribe with a pen or stylus characters or letters on a surface which can be wood, wax, metal, leather, stone, parchment, dirt (John ), paper, etc. Other uses in John all referring to fulfilled prophecy except Jn 19:20 - Jn. 2:17; Jn. 6:31; Jn. 6:45; Jn. 10:34; Jn. 12:14; Jn. 19:19; Jn. 19:20;

**Zeal** (jealousy) (2205)([zelos](#) from **zeo** = to be hot, to boil [from sound of bubbling water], figuratively = fervent; [cognates](#) = [zeloo](#); [zelotes](#)) was originally a good word which described fervour in advancing a cause or in rendering service. **Zelos** for example gives us our English word **zeal** ([zealous](#) - filled with intense enthusiasm) which is generally a "good" word which describes eagerness, earnestness, enthusiastic devotion, single-minded allegiance, [undivided heart](#) [play [Single Heart](#), [Single Mind](#), [Mine Eyes Forward all the Time](#)], fervency, eager desire or ardent interest in pursuit of something, but it can take on a negative connotation when it describes a reaction which borders on extreme or fanatical. **Zelos** is used in a number of contexts to describe an intense **positive** interest in something, such as godly jealousy, active enthusiasm or zeal, (eg, John 2:17, 2Cor 7:7, 11, 9:2, 11:2).

**Spurgeon** comments on **zeal** in **Psalm 69:9** - His burning ardour, like the flame of a candle, fed on his strength and consumed it. His heart, like a sharp sword, cut through the scabbard. Some men are eaten up with lechery, others with covetousness, and a third class with pride, but the master passion with our great leader was the glory of God, jealousy for His Name, and love to the divine family. **Zeal** for God is so little understood by men of the world, that it always draws down opposition upon those who are inspired with it; they are sure to be accused of sinister motives, or of hypocrisy, or of being out of their senses. When zeal eats us up, ungodly men seek to eat us up too, and this was preeminently the case with our Lord, because his holy jealousy was preeminent. With more than a seraph's fire he glowed, and consumed himself with his fervour. ([Commentary on Psalm 69](#))

**Consume** (2719)([katesthio](#) from **kata** = down + **esthio** = to eat) means to eat up, consume, devour (Lk 8:5). Figuratively **katesthio** means to destroy by fire (consume, burn up) (Rev 11.5), by illegal exploitation

(rob, take complete advantage of )(Mk 12.40) or by strife within a group which cause great division (destroys division)(Gal 5.15).

**Gilbrant on katesthio - Classical Greek** the verb means “to eat, to partake, to take nourishment.” The compound word in classical Greek means literally “to eat down, to eat up.” It is used both literally (of food) and figuratively (of persons and property) to mean “to consume, to swallow, to devour.” In a purely figurative sense it means “to destroy.” **IN THE SEPTUAGINT** - The term is found extensively in the Septuagint with essentially the same meanings, though the figurative usage is dominant: (1) “to consume” by locusts (Dt 28:38; Ps 105:35)], by fire kindled in God’s mouth (Deuteronomy 32:22; Ps 21:9), by the sword (Dt 32:42); (2) “to devour” by a wild beast (Genesis 37:20), like a roaring lion (Ezek 22:25), like bread (Psalm 14:4); (3) “to destroy” by enemies (Leviticus 26:38).

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**Brian Bell** - Look what consumes Jesus...a love for His Fathers house. What are you zealous for? Everybody is consumed by something? Some are consumed with alcohol; They think they’re consuming it but it’s consuming them. Others are consumed with sex; It occupies their mind non-stop, it becomes slavery. Some are consumed with ambition; or loneliness, or hurting, or relationships. O. Like Jesus, may zeal for Gods house consume you; and zeal for God’s Word; and zeal for God’s heart for the hurting.

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**J C Ryle** - We see, for another thing, in this passage, how men may remember words of religious truth long after they are spoken, and may one day see a meaning in them which at first they did not see.

We are told that our Lord said to the Jews, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” St. John informs us distinctly that “He spake of the temple of His body,” that he referred to His own resurrection. Yet the meaning of the sentence was not understood by our Lord’s disciples at the time that it was spoken. It was not till “He was risen from the dead,” three years after the events here described, that the full significance of the sentence flashed on their hearts. For three years it was a dark and useless saying to them. For three years it lay sleeping in their minds, like a seed in a tomb, and bore no fruit. But at the end of that time the darkness passed away. They saw the application of their Master’s words, and as they saw it were confirmed in their faith. “They remembered that He had said this,” and as they remembered “they believed.”

It is a comfortable and cheering thought, that the same kind of thing that happened to the disciples is often going on at the present day. The sermons that are preached to apparently heedless ears in churches, are not all lost and thrown away. The instruction that is given in schools and pastoral visits, is not all wasted and forgotten. The texts that are taught by parents to children are not all taught in vain. There is often a resurrection of sermons, and texts, and instruction, after an interval of many years. The good seed sometimes springs up after he that sowed it has been long dead and gone. Let preachers go on preaching, and teachers go on teaching, and parents go on training up children in the way they should go. Let them sow the good seed of Bible truth in faith and patience. Their labour is not in vain in the Lord. Their words are remembered far more than they think, and will yet spring up “after many days.” (1 Cor. 15:58; Eccles. 11:1.) ([John 2 Commentary](#))

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## **Remember!**

When He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered . . . and they believed the Scripture. —John 2:22

Today’s Scripture: John 2:13-22

The disciples remembered—and then they believed. After the death of Jesus on the cross and His resurrection, they recalled and finally understood Jesus’ words, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19).

If our faith is to grow, we too need to remember the cross and the empty tomb. Jesus established a memorial of His death, a practice we call the Lord’s Supper, knowing that our faith and hope would be strengthened as we remember what He has done for us. He said, “Do this in remembrance of Me” (1 Corinthians 11:24). Every time we meet to drink of the cup and eat the bread, we remember what it cost Him to redeem us.

The true believer does not live in memories only, however, but with hope for the future. We are to partake of the cup and bread “till He comes” (v.26). The One who died for us also rose from the grave. As we think of our loved ones who have died in the faith, we look beyond to the day when the graves will be opened and we will meet them again. We can be sure that because Jesus lives we too shall live.

We may shed tears today in memory of those who have died. But as we recall Christ’s death and resurrection, our faith and hope are renewed. Let’s remember! M.R. DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We sorrow not as others do,  
Whose hopes fade like the flowers;  
There is a hope that's born of God,  
And such a hope is ours.  
—McNeil

In life and in death, Christ is our hope.

### John 2:18 The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us [as your authority] for doing these things?"

NET John 2:18 So then the Jewish leaders responded, "What sign can you show us, since you are doing these things?"

GNT John 2:18 πεκρθησαν ο νοουδαοι κα επανατ, Τσημεον δεικνεις μν τι τατα ποιε ς;

NLT John 2:18 But the Jewish leaders demanded, "What are you doing? If God gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it."

KJV John 2:18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

ESV John 2:18 So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?"

NIV John 2:18 Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

ASV John 2:18 The Jews therefore answered and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

CSB John 2:18 So the Jews replied to Him, "What sign of authority will You show us for doing these things?"

NKJ John 2:18 So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?"

NRS John 2:18 The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?"

YLT John 2:18 the Jews then answered and said to him, 'What sign dost thou shew to us -- that thou dost these things?'

NAB John 2:18 At this the Jews answered and said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?"

NJB John 2:18 The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us that you should act like this?'

GWN John 2:18 The Jews reacted by asking Jesus, "What miracle can you show us to justify what you're doing?"

BBE John 2:18 Then the Jews put this question to him: What sign of authority have you to give us, seeing that you do these things?

- **What sign:** Jn 6:30 Mt 12:38-42 Mt 16:1-4 Mk 8:11 Lu 11:29
- **For doing these things:** Jn 1:25 Mt 21:23 Mk 11:27,28 Lu 20:1,2 Ac 4:7 5:28
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JEWES SEEK A SIGN FROM SAVIOR

**The Jews ([Ioudaios](#)) then said to Him, "What sign ([semeion](#)) do You show ([deiknuo](#)) us as your authority for doing these things? - The Jews** in this context most likely refers to the Jewish authorities, leaders ([Sanhedrin](#)) or even the Temple police (cf. Jn 7:32, 45–46; Jn 18:3, 12, 18, 22; Jn 19:6; Acts 5:21, 22, 26+). Note that they do not specifically say it is unlawful for Jesus to have done what He did (and they did not arrest Him as they did Peter and the other apostles in Acts 5:17,18+), which at least implies that they knew some of the activities were not in accord with divine righteousness and holiness!

Jesus' actions exposing the crass commercialization also exposed the wickedness in the hearts of the Jews who had permitted such

defilement of the Holy Temple (and likely benefited financially from it - let's face it "religion" can be "big business")! **The Jews** wanted to see Jesus' "*papers*," (or "credentials") so to speak, or evidence which gave Him the authority to cleanse the Temple (The irony is they had complete access to His "credentials" in over 300 Old Testament [Messianic Prophecies](#)! They simply did not have eyes to see! cf Mt 13:14, 15+). They were there to challenge His authority. But were they specifically asking for a miraculously **sign**? Jesus answers them in the next verse giving them a [parabolic](#) response, one which in fact was a sign later referred to as the [sign of Jonah](#).

The NLT and NIV render this passage "But the Jewish leaders **demanded**," which is clearly stronger than "said."

**John MacArthur** points out that "Their demand for a **sign**, however, was foolish; the messianic act of single-handedly cleansing the temple was itself a clear **sign** that God had a message for them. In their hard-hearted unbelief, the Jewish leaders repeatedly asked for such **signs**, yet they never accepted the ones they were given. As John later wrote, "But though He had performed so many **signs** before them, yet they were not believing in Him" (John 12:37)" (See [John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) - scroll up and down for more text)

**D A Carson** has an interesting comment that "A **sign** that would satisfy them, presumably some sort of miraculous display performed on demand, would have signalled the domestication of God. That sort of 'God' does powerful stunts to maintain allegiance, and that kind of allegiance is not worth having. Indeed, if the authorities had eyes to see, the cleansing of the temple was already a '**sign**' they should have thought through and deciphered in terms of Old Testament Scripture." (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

The Jewish crowd ask a similar question in John 6...

"What then do You do for a **sign**, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform? (John 6:30+)

**Comment:** What were they called? Disciples (Jn 6:60+). And did they believe? Absolutely not. In fact they departed! (John 6:64, 65, 66+).

And in Matthew we read a similar question from the religious hierarchy

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a **sign** from You." 39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a **sign**; and yet no **sign** will be given to it but the [sign of Jonah](#) the prophet; 40 for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and **behold**, something greater than Jonah is here. 42 "The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. (Mt 12:38-42+, cf Mt 16:1-4+ Mk 8:11, 12+ Lu 11:29-32+)

Even some 20+ years later (about 55 AD) Paul spoke of the desire of Jews seeking signs rather than seeking the Savior...

For indeed Jews ask for **signs**, and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness (1 Cor 1:22-23+)

**THOUGHT** - Have you ever witnessed to someone and they said something like "*If I could see a sign, then I would believe.*" No they would not. That is the [specious smokescreen](#) for they know you cannot wave a magic wand and produce a **sign**, so they feel they have effectively deflected your presentation of the Gospel. In truth, they have not, because you have done exactly what Paul would have done -- you have preached Christ crucified and resurrected ("the [sign of Jonah](#)") and clearly explained to them that might have eternal life if they only believe. You have given them a "**sign**." But the truth is that they don't want a **sign** that points to the Savior! And yet the "day of grace" remains open to them and they might later give up seeking a sign and accept the Savior. Isaiah 55:11 "So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."

As **Guzik** says "This wasn't necessarily a bad question. Anyone who drove out the merchants from the temple courts claimed the authority to do it. The Jews wanted to know if Jesus really had this authority. The problem is that they demanded a sign from Jesus to prove it." ([John 2 Commentary](#))

**Robertson** adds "They may have heard of the "sign" at Cana or not, but they have rallied a bit on the outside of the temple area and demand proof for his Messianic assumption of authority over the temple worship. These traders had paid the Sadducees and

Pharisees in the Sanhedrin for the concession as traffickers which they enjoyed. They were within their technical rights in this question." (Word Pictures [John 2 Commentary](#))

Yet, ironically, the only **sign** the Jewish leadership will get is that predicted by Jesus in 2:19 - his crucifixion and resurrection, the "[sign of Jonah](#)" (Matt 12:39, 40+; Luke 11:29–32+).

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**Show** ([1166](#))([deiknuo](#)) means to show and has the sense of (1) to draw attention to, to point out, to show, to make known, to exhibit something (by visual, auditory, gestural, or linguistic means) so that it can be apprehended by the senses, to cause to see (Mt 4:8, Lk 4:5, Mt 8:4) or (2) to show so as to prove something is true or to make clear by evidence or reasoning. Show in the sense of demonstrate or prove as in Jas 3:13). To exhibit or present to the view of others. To explain the meaning or significance of something by demonstration.

Note the concentration of **deiknuo** in the most "graphic" NT book, the Revelation, or the revealing. How interesting that in the "revealing" we repeatedly encounter the verb to show, and specifically to show what God's plan is for the rest of the ages. Note that it is the bondservants whom will be shown these heretofore previously revealed mysteries! Little wonder that many do not understand (and/or are frightened by the book of the Revelation, for they are not His bondservants, but in fact are "earth dwellers"! ). Note especially that 5 of the 33 "showings" are related to heaven! God wants us to see this preview of coming attractions, that we might be motivated to live accordingly.

Matt. 4:8; Matt. 8:4; Matt. 16:21; Mk. 1:44; Mk. 14:15; Lk. 4:5; Lk. 5:14; Lk. 20:24; Lk. 22:12; Lk. 24:40; Jn. 2:18; Jn. 5:20; Jn. 10:32; Jn. 14:8; Jn. 14:9; Jn. 20:20; Acts 7:3; Acts 10:28; 1 Co. 12:31; 1 Tim. 6:15; Heb. 8:5; Jas. 2:18; Jas. 3:13; Rev. 1:1; Rev. 4:1; Rev. 17:1; Rev. 21:9; Rev. 21:10; Rev. 22:1; Rev. 22:6; Rev. 22:8

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### Bruce Barton - WHEN IS ANGER GOOD?

Jesus was obviously angry at the merchants who exploited those who had come to God's house to worship. There is a difference between uncontrolled rage and righteous indignation—yet both are called anger. We must be very careful how we use the powerful emotion of anger. It is right to be angry about injustice and sin; it is wrong to be angry over trivial personal offenses.

Jesus made a whip and chased out the money changers. Does his example permit us to use violence against wrongdoers? Certain authority is granted to some, but not to all. For example, the authority to use weapons and restrain people is granted to police officers, but not to the general public. The authority to imprison people is granted to judges, but not to individual citizens. While we want to live like Christ, we should never try to claim his authority where it has not been given to us. (BORROW [Life application New Testament commentary](#))

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### Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about anger?](#)
- [What does it mean to not let the sun go down on your anger?](#)
- [What does the Bible mean when it says in your anger do not sin \(Ephesians 4:26\)?](#)
- [How can I know for sure that my anger is righteous indignation?](#)
- [Was Jesus ever angry?](#)
- [Does God get angry?](#)
- [What does it mean that the house of prayer had been turned into a den of thieves?](#)
- [Could Jesus have sinned \(peccability or impeccability\)?](#)

**John 2:19** Jesus answered them, "**Destroy** this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

NET John 2:19 Jesus replied, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again."

GNT John 2:19 περὶ θηήσους καὶ ἐπέτατο, Ἄσατε τὴν ναὸν τοῦ καὶν τριῶν ἡμερῶν γερᾶ τὴν.

NLT John 2:19 "All right," Jesus replied. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

KJV John 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

ESV John 2:19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

NIV John 2:19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."



ASV John 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

CSB John 2:19 Jesus answered, "Destroy this sanctuary, and I will raise it up in three days."

NKJ John 2:19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

NRS John 2:19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

YLT John 2:19 Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.'

NAB John 2:19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."

NJB John 2:19 Jesus answered, 'Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'

GWN John 2:19 Jesus replied, "Tear down this temple, and I'll rebuild it in three days."

BBE John 2:19 And Jesus said to them, Send destruction on this Temple and I will put it up again in three days.

- **Destroy:** Mt 26:60,61 27:40 Mk 14:58 15:29
- **and in:** Mt 12:40 27:63
- **I will:** Joh 5:19 10:17,18 11:25 Mk 8:31 Ac 2:24,32 3:15,26 Ro 4:24 6:4 Ro 8:11 1Co 15:3,4,12 Col 2:12 1Pe 3:18
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Jesus Foretells His Resurrection

## JESUS SPEAKS PARABOLICALLY

Jesus gave the Jews a sign, but it one they could not comprehend.

In Matthew Jesus explains to His disciples why He speaks in parables or parabolic language...

Therefore I speak to them in **parables** ([parabole](#)); because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 "In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; 15 FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.' 16 "But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. 17 "For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. (Mt 13:13-17+, cf Mk 4:11-13+) (See also [Why did Jesus teach in parables?](#))

**Leon Morris** comments on the irony of "the fact that ultimately the Jews themselves were to be the means of bringing about the sign they asked Jesus to produce, and which they did not recognize when it came. There is further irony in that to put Jesus to death was to offer the one sacrifice that can truly expiate sin, and thus doom the Temple as a place for the offering of sacrifice." ([BORROW The Gospel according to John](#))

**Jesus answered them, "Destroy (luo) this temple (naos) - Destroy** is a command in the [aorist imperative](#). The irony is that about 3 years later the Jews would in effect "obey" Jesus' command and murder their own Messiah! **Robertson** says this "is the permissive imperative (see [permissive imperative - D-4](#)), not a command to do it." **NET** adds "The imperative here is really more than a simple conditional imperative (= "if you destroy"); its semantic force here is more like the ironical imperative found in the prophets (Amos 4:4, Isa 8:9) = "Go ahead and do this and see what happens." The word Jesus uses for **Temple** is not the same word ([hieron](#)) used in Jn 2:14,15 but is the word [naos](#) (used in Jn 2:19, 20, 21) which speaks of the inner sanctuary itself, which is apropos as the Holy of holies had been the dwelling place of the [Shekinah glory](#) prior to the destruction of Solomon's Temple and most clearly depicts Jesus Christ. (See [overview of the glory of the Lord, past, present, future](#))

**And in three days I will raise it up (egeiro)** - Today we know that Jesus was speaking prophetically of His resurrection from the dead, but His hearers did not have a clue! One can only imagine the puzzled looks on the faces of the Jews (including His own disciples) who had ask Him to show they by what authority He was cleansing the Temple. John gives us the readers of this Gospel the explanation in John 2:21 that "He was speaking of the temple of His body." These words 3 years later were the very words that the religious leaders used to condemn Christ "[calling to the stand](#)" false witnesses who declared "**This man stated, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.'**" (Mt 26:61, Mk 14:58) Of course even after 3 years of

miraculous signs they still did not understand Jesus' parabolic saying and thus they manipulated Jesus' words to achieve their evil end! This was the best evidence the illegally assembled "[kangaroo court](#)" of Caiaphas (Mt 26:57, Mk 14:53, 54) could produce in this infamous travesty of a trial.

**Robertson** - There is much confusion about this language since Jesus added: "And in three days I will raise it up" (kai en trisin hēmerais egerō auton). Those who heard Jesus, including the disciples till after the resurrection (Jn 2:22), understood the reference to be to Herod's temple. Certainly that is the obvious way to take it. But Jesus often spoke in parables and even in enigmas. He may have spoken of the literal temple as a parable for his own body which of course they would not understand, least of all the resurrection in three days. ([John 2 Word Pictures in the NT](#))

**Guzik** - Who raised Jesus from the dead? Jesus says that He will raise Himself, despite the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses and others. This was a claim no mere man could make, a claim repeated dramatically in John 10:18 "No one has taken it (HIS LIFE) away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." ([John 2 Commentary](#))

**J C Ryle** on John 10:18 quoted by Guzik above - Both the expressions deserve particular notice, because many now-a-days assert that our Lord's resurrection was owing to the operation of God the Father and of God the Holy Ghost, and that He did not rise by His own power. This is a dangerous heresy. That the Father and the Holy Ghost co-operated in the resurrection of our Lord's body there can be no doubt. It is clearly taught in many places. But to say that our Lord did not raise his own body, is to contradict the text before us, and the other which has been already quoted. ([John 2 Commentary](#))

**Morris on three days.** In addition to referring to the temple of His body (John 2:21), there may be a parallel reference to the raising up of the future millennial temple (compare Hosea 6:2+). (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

Once again John's gospel supplements the other Gospels at this point by indicating that Jesus enigmatically referred to His resurrection. As with His usage of parables, Jesus' cryptic statement most likely was designed to reveal the truth to His disciples but conceal its meaning from unbelievers who questioned Him. Later we read that this becomes Jesus' major mode of communication

And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables? Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. (Mt 13:10, 11+)

Only after His resurrection, however, did the disciples understand the real significance of this statement (John 2:22). And Jesus' words would prove prophetic, for through His death and resurrection, Temple worship in Jerusalem would be destroyed (cf. Jn 4:21) but be revived in the hearts of all who compose His spiritual temple, the Church (Ep 2:19–22+, cf 1 Pe 2:4–8+).

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**Destroy** ([3089](#))([luo](#)) means to loose, release, dissolve, of the loosing of the component parts from one another and so "destroy" (cf. use for the breaking up of part of ship in Acts 27:41+). **Luo** can also be used of the dissolution of life, or killing. This word means to set free what is bound. In this passage it means to destroy, break up, tear down and is the same verb Peter uses to describe the destruction of creation as we know it writing "the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." (2 Pe 3:10+). **John's uses of luo** - Jn 1:27 ("untie" Jesus' sandal thong); Jn. 2:19; Jn. 5:18; Jn. 7:23; Jn. 10:35; Jn. 11:44; 1 Jn 3:8 ("The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to **destroy** the works of the devil."); Rev 1:5+ ("To Him who loves us and **released** us from our sins by His blood" Note breaking of the seals unleashes the wrath of God on earth, the [tribulation](#)); Rev 5:2+ ("Who is worthy to open the book and to **break** its seals?" Answer? Jesus the Lamb slain!); Rev 9:14,15+; Rev. 20:3, 7+ ("Satan will be **released** from his prison") Paul uses luo figuratively to describe the breaking "down the barrier of the dividing wall" between Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:14+)

**Temple** (sanctuary) ([3485](#)) see note below on [naos](#). As in 1 Cor 3:16 "Do you not know that you are a **temple** (naos) of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

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**J C Ryle on why Jesus answered the Jews with such a parabolic declaration** - For one thing we must remark, it was a leading principle in our Lord's dealings with men, not to force conviction on them, but to speak to them according to what He saw was the state of their hearts. He answered fools according to their folly. (Prov. 26:5.) If He had given the Jews a more direct reply, He knew that it would have brought His ministry to an abrupt end, and would have led to His being cut off before the time.—For another thing, we must remember, that however dark our Lord's saying seemed when it was spoken, it did in effect tell the Jews of the greatest and most important sign which could be given them as a proof of His Messiahship. It told them of His future resurrection. It was equivalent to saying, "You ask me for a sign, and I will give you one. I will rise again from the dead the third day after my crucifixion. If I do not so rise from the dead, you need not believe that I am the Messiah. But if I do so rise, you will be without excuse if you do

not believe on me.” In effect our Lord staked the truth of His mission on His resurrection. He did the same when He said that He would give the Jewish nation no sign but that of the prophet Jonas. (Matt. 12:39.) When the apostles began to preach, they continually referred the Jews to Christ’s resurrection as the proof of His Messiahship. And why did they do so?—One main reason was, because their Master had told the Jews, the first time He appeared in the temple, that the great sign they must look to was His own rising again from the dead. ([John 2 Commentary](#))

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## PURITY OF WORSHIP

Jesus was zealous for the purity of worship—worship that he was going to make universally available through his death. Only by clarifying how the old system was intended could the new system have a place. Only by “destroying the temple” would Jesus be able to offer all believers personal access to God. Only by fulfilling the system of sacrifice could he become the perfect and final sacrifice for all mankind. The eventual destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. was the final evidence that the old system had been superseded by Jesus’ work on the cross and in the lives of those who believe in him. (LAC)

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### John 2:20 The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

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NET John 2:20 Then the Jewish leaders said to him, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and are you going to raise it up in three days?"

GNT John 2:20 ε παν ο ν ο ουδα οι, Τεσσαρ κοντα κα ξ τεσιν ο κοδομθη να ς ο το ς, κα σ ν τρι σ ν μ ραι ς γερε ς α τ ν;

NLT John 2:20 "What!" they exclaimed. "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?"

KJV John 2:20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

ESV John 2:20 The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?"

NIV John 2:20 The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?"

ASV John 2:20 The Jews therefore said, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?

CSB John 2:20 Therefore the Jews said, "This sanctuary took 46 years to build, and will You raise it up in three days?"

NKJ John 2:20 Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

NRS John 2:20 The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?"

YLT John 2:20 The Jews, therefore, said, 'Forty and six years was this sanctuary building, and wilt thou in three days raise it up?'

NAB John 2:20 The Jews said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?"

NJB John 2:20 The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple: are you going to raise it up again in three days?'

GWN John 2:20 The Jews said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple. Do you really think you're going to rebuild it in three days?"

BBE John 2:20 The Jews said, The building of this Temple took forty-six years; and you will put it up in three days!

- **Forty-six.** Ezr 5:16.
- **temple.** Mt 12:6. 26:61.
- **three days.** Ho 6:2.

- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE JEWS' EXPLODE WITH AN INCREDULOUS QUESTION

**The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple (naos), and will You raise (egeiro) it up in three days?"** - The response of the Jews indicates they interpreted Jesus' declaration literally and that He was speaking of the Temple of Herod. They were astounded that what had taken 46 years to build Jesus could accomplish in 3 days!

Ok, we know you're a carpenter...but 3 days?

-- Brian Bell

Josephus says that in the eighteenth year of Herod's reign ([Antiquities of the Jews 15.380](#)), about 20–19 B.C., **Herod the Great** began a reconstruction and expansion on the Zerubbabel's [temple, the second temple](#). "Herod had commenced its rebuilding partly to satisfy his lust for building, and partly in an attempt to stand well with his Jewish subjects, among whom he was very unpopular." (Morris) Josephus says that some 18,000 workmen were employed. The workers completed the main part of the project in 10 years, but other parts were still being constructed even at the time Jesus cleansed the temple. Interestingly, which the Temple was completed in about 63/64 AD, finishing touches were still being made at the time of its complete destruction by the Romans 70 AD. "The Jews by their rejection of Christ and their intransigence did indeed "destroy this temple," the literal temple. The Lord did not raise that one." (Phillips BORROW [Exploring the Gospels. John](#)) Today the famous "[Wailing Wall](#)" is built on part of the Herodian temple foundation.

**Bob Utley** - **Herod the Great** expanded and remodeled the second temple (from Zerubbabal's days, cf. Haggai) to placate the Jews. Josephus tells us that it was started in 20 or 19 B.C. If this is correct, it means that this particular incident occurred in the year 27–28 AD. We also know that the work continued on the temple until 64 A.D. This temple had become the great Jewish hope (cf. Jer. 7). ([John 2 Commentary](#))

**Bell** - The Jews missed the symbolic for the literal. They will again with: the new birth; the living water; the eating of flesh & drinking of blood!

**Ryle** on **raise it up in three days** - That this saying of our Lord, nevertheless, **was not thrown away and forgotten**, but stuck in the minds of the Jews, **though they did not understand it**, is strikingly proved by two facts.—One is, that the false witnesses brought it forward, though in a garbled form, when our Lord was arraigned before the high priests.—The other is, that the Jews taunted Him with it when He hung on the cross. (Matt. 26:61; 27:40.)

**Morris** points out that the pattern we see in these verses, a saying of Jesus, a complete misunderstanding, and an explanation, recurs in this Gospel (e.g. Jn 3:3ff.; Jn 4:10ff., Jn 4:32ff.; Jn 6:41ff., Jn 6:51ff.; Jn 11:11ff.; Jn 14:7ff.). It is not, of course, confined to John (see, for example, Mark 7:15ff.; Mk 8:15ff.), and we may see in it one of the ways in which Jesus instructed his hearers. (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

**NET Note** According to Josephus (Ant. 15.11.1 [15.380]), work on this temple was begun in the 18th year of Herod the Great's reign, which would have been ca. 19 B.C. (The reference in the Ant. is probably more accurate than the date given in J. W. 1.21.1 [1.401]). Forty-six years later would be around the Passover of A.D. 27/28.

**Build** (3618) ([oikodomeo](#) from [oikos](#) = dwelling + [doma](#) = building from [demo](#) = to build; [cognate](#) - [sunoikodomeo](#)) means literally to build, construct or erect a dwelling. John's only use of this verb.

**Temple** (sanctuary) (3485) ([naos](#)) in the Greek culture denoted the "abode of the gods" and was used to refer to a literal structure or building associated with, dedicated to and set apart to be a dwelling place for a deity. either pagan gods ([Acts 17:24](#)) or the true God ([Mt 23:16](#)). **Naos** describes the place where a deity was worshipped (cp Zacharias ministering to God in [Lk 1:9](#)). [Hieron](#) (2413) means holy, hallowed, consecrated and is derived from [hieros](#) [2413] which is an adjective meaning sacred, consecrated or belonging to or connected with the gods. The word Hieros or Hieron is distinct from **Naos** because the former words refer to the complex which is set apart and dedicated to the worship and service of Yahweh. In other words **hieron** designates the entire sacred enclosure, with its porticos, courts, and other subordinate buildings. Note that **Hieron** is closely related to [hieros](#) (2413) which is the word the NAS translates "Temple." **Naos** referred to the temple proper, including the inner sanctuary, composed of the outer room, the **Holy of Holies** and the innermost **Holy Place**. When our Lord taught in the temple, He taught in the **hieron**, in one of the temple porches. He expelled the money-changers from the **hieron**, the court of the Gentiles. When the veil of the temple was rent at the time of the death of our Lord (Mt 27:52), it was the veil of the **naos**, the curtain separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. When Zacharias entered the temple to burn incense (Lk 1:9), he entered the **naos**, the Holy Place where the altar of incense stood while the multitude were in prayer outside he people were "without," in the **hieron** (Lk 1:10).

Jesus used **naos** in a figurative to refer to His body as a temple (Jn 2:19, 20, 21). Paul extends this meaning to the individual believer's body as the dwelling place or inner sanctuary of the Holy Spirit (1Co 6:19), the inner sanctuary of the Holy Spirit.

### John 2:21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

NET John 2:21 But Jesus was speaking about the temple of his body.

GNT John 2:21 κε νος δ λεγεν περ το ναο το σ ματος α το .

NLT John 2:21 But when Jesus said "this temple," he meant his own body.

KJV John 2:21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

ESV John 2:21 But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

NIV John 2:21 But the temple he had spoken of was his body.

ASV John 2:21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

CSB John 2:21 But He was speaking about the sanctuary of His body.

NKJ John 2:21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

NRS John 2:21 But he was speaking of the temple of his body.

YLT John 2:21 but he spake concerning the sanctuary of his body;

NAB John 2:21 But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

NJB John 2:21 But he was speaking of the Temple that was his body,

GWN John 2:21 But the temple Jesus spoke about was his own body.

BBE John 2:21 But his words were about that holy building which was his body.

- **He:** Joh 1:14 Col 1:19 2:9 Heb 8:2
- **temple** 1Co 3:16 1 Cor 6:19-20 2Co 6:16 Eph 2:20-22 1Pe 2:4,5
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### JOHN'S EXPLANATION OF JESUS' "PARABLE"

The apostle John now gives his own commentary.

**Ryle** notes that "This verse is an instance of St John's habit of making explanatory comments in his Gospel as he goes on, in order to make things clear to his Gentile readers." ([John 2 Commentary](#))

**But** (term of contrast) **He was speaking of the temple (naos) of His body - Speaking** is in the [imperfect tense](#) indicating over and over. John explains Jesus' otherwise enigmatic statement. Of course even the apostle John did not have this insight until after His resurrection (Jn 2:22), but here he gives us his explanation from [hindsight](#). His resurrection was the sign Jesus would give to the Jews.

**Paul** used "**temple**" ([naos](#)) in the same way when he asked "Or do you not know (IMPLICATION? OF COURSE YOU DO KNOW THIS TRUTH!) that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, Whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore **glorify** ([aorist imperative](#) - "Just do it!" = [we need the Holy Spirit to obey this command](#)) God in your body." (1 Cor 6:19-20<sub>+</sub>)

**THOUGHT** - "Let it be noted, that as our Lord calls His own body a **temple**," so also the bodies of His believing people are called "**the temple of the Holy Ghost**" (1 Cor. 6:19.) If it was wrong to defile and profane the temple made of stone and wood, how much more is it wrong to defile by sin the temple of our bodies! St. Paul and St. Peter both call our bodies our "*tabernacle*." (2 Cor. 5:1<sub>+</sub>; 2 Pet. 1:13<sub>+</sub>.)" (J C Ryle)

As alluded to earlier, Jesus' words were recalled by the Jewish opposition albeit as false accusations at His trial. Notice how they

misquote (to their advantage) what Jesus said

“We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple ([naos](#)) **made with hands**, and in three days I will build another made without hands.’” (Mk 14:58)

and said, “This man stated, ‘I am able to destroy the temple ([naos](#)) of God (THEY ARE REFERRING TO THE LITERAL TEMPLE) and to rebuild it in three days.’” (Mt 26:61)

**NET Note** - The genitive "**of his body**" (tou somatos autou) is a [genitive of apposition](#), clarifying which temple Jesus was referring to. Thus, Jesus not only was referring to his physical resurrection, but also to His participation in the resurrection process. The New Testament thus records the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as all performing the miracle of Christ's resurrection. Jesus was speaking about the temple of his body. For the author, the temple is not just the building, it is Jesus' resurrected body. Compare the non-localized worship mentioned in John 4:21–23+, and also Rev 21:22+ ("I saw no temple ([naos](#)) in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple ([naos](#))."). John points to the fact that, as the place where men go in order to meet God, the temple has been supplanted and replaced by Jesus Himself, in whose resurrected person people may now encounter God (see John 1:18+, Jn 14:6). ([John 2](#))

**Temple** (sanctuary) ([3485](#)) see note on [naos](#)

**Bob Utley** - Jesus knew why He came. There seem to be at least three purposes: (1) to reveal God; (2) to model true humanity; and (3) to give His life a ransom for many. It is this last purpose that this verse addresses (cf. Mark 10:45; John 12:23, 27; 13:1–3; 17:1). ([John 2 Commentary](#))

### **John 2:22 So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken**

NET John 2:22 So after he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the saying that Jesus had spoken.

GNT John 2:22 τε ο ν γ ρθη κ νεκρ ν, μ ν σθησαν ο μαθητα α το τι το το λεγεν, κα π στευσαν τ γραφ κα τ λ γ ν ε πεν ησο ς.

NLT John 2:22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this, and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said.

KJV John 2:22 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.

ESV John 2:22 When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

NIV John 2:22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

ASV John 2:22 When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spake this; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

CSB John 2:22 So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this. And they believed the Scripture and the statement Jesus had made.

NKJ John 2:22 Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

NRS John 2:22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

YLT John 2:22 when, then, he was raised out of the dead, his disciples remembered that he said this to them, and they believed the Writing, and the word that Jesus said.

NAB John 2:22 Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the scripture and the word Jesus had spoken.

NJB John 2:22 and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and what he had said.



GWN John 2:22 After he came back to life, his disciples remembered that he had said this. So they believed the Scripture and this statement that Jesus had made.

BBE John 2:22 So when he had come back again from the dead, the memory of these words came back to the disciples, and they had faith in the holy Writings and in the word which Jesus had said.

- **His disciples:** Joh 2:17 Jn 12:16 Jn 14:26 Jn 16:4 Lu 24:7,8,44 Ac 11:16
- **and they believed:** Joh 2:11 Jn 20:8,9
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## BELIEF IN SCRIPTURES AND SOUND WORDS NOT MIRACULOUS SIGNS

**So when He was raised from the dead His disciples remembered that He said this- Was raised** is the divine passive speaking of the role of the Father (Gal 1:1+, Ro 10:9<sub>±</sub>), the Spirit (Ro 1:4NLT<sub>±</sub>, Ro 8:11<sub>±</sub>) and even the Son (read Jn 10:17–18) in the resurrection of Jesus! (See [Who resurrected Jesus?](#)) The resurrection changes everything! John later gives a "commentary" writing "These things His disciples **did not understand at the first**; but when Jesus was glorified, then they **remembered** ([mimnesko](#)) that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him." (John 12:16+) Their memory "Aid" of course would be the Holy Spirit! Have you ever considered that the Holy Spirit is the One Who enables our memory regarding spiritual truth? When the "shaky" disciples **remembered** what Jesus had told them, their faith was strengthened for **faith** comes from hearing, and hearing by the **word of Christ.**" (Ro 10:17<sub>±</sub>).

John's statement in this passage is in a sense a fulfillment of Jesus' prophetic promises to His disciples in the [Upper Room Discourse](#)...

John 14:26 "But the [Helper](#), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your **remembrance** ([hupomimnesko](#)) all that I said to you. (See also [Illumination](#))

John 16:4 "But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may **remember** ([mnemoneuo](#)) that I told you of them. These things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

**Was raised** (1453)([egeiro](#)) means to rise (stand up) from a sitting or lying position (Mt 8:26, 9:5), to awaken from sleep (Mt 8:25), figuratively to "awaken" from death (rise up) as used in this passage. The idea of wake up from death is conveyed by [egeiro](#) because sleep was used as metaphor of death for believers (there is however no "soul sleep") In the NT [egeiro](#) is found 141 times and 73 refer to the resurrection of the dead. Of these 73, with about 48 referring to the resurrection of Jesus = Ro 4:24, 25; 6:4, 9; 7:4; 8:11 (2x), Ro 8:34; 10:9; 13:11; 1Cor 6:14; 15:4, 12, 13, 14, 15 (2x), 1Cor 15:16 (2x), 1Cor 15:17, 20, 29, 32, 35, 42, 43 (2x), 1Cor 15:52; 2Cor 1:9; 4:14 (2x); 5:15; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:20; 5:14; Col 2:12; 1Th 1:10; 2Ti 2:8. [Egeiro](#) is the verb Paul characteristically used when speaking of Jesus being raised from the dead (although his favorite noun for "resurrection" was [anastasis](#)). [Egeiro](#) is used 19x in the "Resurrection Chapter" 1 Corinthians 15 and Paul uses the [perfect tense](#) when referring to Christ's resurrection (1Cor 15:4, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 29) which describes a past completed action with continuing effect. In short it speaks of the permanent effect of Christ's resurrection! The Risen Lord tells John "(I am - Rev 1:17<sub>±</sub>) the living One; and I was dead, and behold, **I am alive forevermore**, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." (Rev 1:18<sub>±</sub>)

**Disciples** (3101) see [mathetes](#)

**Remembered** (3403)([mimnesko](#)) means to bring to mind or think of again. It means to keep in mind for attention or consideration. Most of the NT uses convey this sense of recalling information from memory.

### Related Resources:

- [Who resurrected Jesus?](#)
- [First Fruits as a prophetic picture of Christ's Resurrection](#)
- [The Sign of Jonah as a prophecy of Christ's Resurrection](#)
- [The "Third Day" in Hosea - Does it predict Christ's Resurrection?](#)
- [Resurrection in the Old Testament](#)
- [The Two Resurrections - "First" and "Second" - on a timeline](#)
- [When will the Resurrection take place?](#)

- [Seven Resurrections in Scripture](#)
- [Why is the resurrection of Jesus Christ important?](#)
- [Why should I believe in Christ's resurrection?](#)
- [Is the resurrection of Jesus Christ true?](#)
- [What happens after death?](#)

**And they believed the Scripture and the word ([logos](#)) which Jesus had spoken** (see Jn 3:34+) - What does it mean **they believed the Scripture**? After Jesus' resurrection, they understood and **believed** the [OT prophecies](#) that He would be resurrected. For example we see this remembrance in Peter's pentecostal proclamation in Acts 2:24-28, 29+ in which he quotes the prophecy of the resurrection from Ps 16:8-11 as the Spirit brought this truth to his memory - Jn 14:26, cf Jn 16:13, Acts 13:35+.

Don't miss the fact that in this passage John under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit places the **Scripture** directly next to **the word which Jesus had spoken**! What is the implication? Both are [inspired](#) and [inerrant](#)! In fact, in Rev 19:13+ John referred to Jesus as "**The Word of God.**" The disciples **believed** "the Word of God" and "the Word Who was God!" (cf Jn 1:14+). And not that their belief was saving belief in contrast to the many who simply believed in Jesus' signs but not in the "Sign Producer." The foundation for the belief of the disciples was not miracles of power but the Word of power. Luke 1:37ASV+ says "No **word of God** shall be void of **power.**" Pauls says "the **word of the cross** is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the **power of God.**" (cf 2 Cor 6:7+, 1 Th 1:5+, Heb 1:3+) As noted in John 14:26 the Spirit brought to their '**remembrance all that**' Jesus had spoken to them. So the basis of their faith was the prophetic Word (OT) about Christ and the spoken Word of Christ.

**Scripture** is [graphie](#) (here in the singular) and in virtually all of the 51 NT uses it refers to the Old Testament writings. John does not tell us whether the Spirit brought multiple [Messianic prophecies](#) or a specific passage to their minds such as the prophecy of Messiah's resurrection in Ps 16:10 (as quoted by Peter) "For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay." Or perhaps He brought a passage to mind such as the [Messianic prophecy](#) in Isaiah 53:12+ "Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors."

John 20:8; 9 So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he (APOSTLE JOHN) saw and **believed**. 9 For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

Luke 24:44+ - Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

**MacArthur** adds that "Throughout his gospel, John generally uses the singular **Scripture** to refer to a specific passage (cf. Jn 7:38, 42; 10:35; 13:18; 19:24, 28, 36–37); if that is the case here, he is probably referring to Psalm 16:8–11 (cf. Acts 2:25–28; 13:35). He may, however, be making a general reference (cf. Jn 20:9) to the Old Testament prophecies regarding Christ's death and resurrection (cf. Luke 24:27+, Lk 24:44–47+). (MNTC-Jn)

**Morris** on **believed the Scriptures** - Note the superior category of faith (THE BIBLE) of the disciples to that of the **many**" (John 2:23) who believed "**when they saw the miracles,**" (John 2:23) but soon fell away. The disciples did not believe because of the miracles but because of the **Scriptures** and Jesus' words. It is far better to place one's faith in God's Word than in signs and wonders. (Defender's Study Bible)

**Believed** ([4100](#)) see notes on [pisteuo](#)

**Scriptures** ([1124](#))([graphie](#) from [grapho](#) = to write; English = graphite - the lead in a pencil!) means first a writing or thing written, a document. The majority of the NT uses refer to the Old Testament writings, in a general sense of the whole collection when the **plural** (= Scriptures - Matt. 21:42; 22:29; 26:54; Mk. 12:24; 14:49; Lk. 24:27, 32, 45; Jn. 5:39; Acts 17:2, 11; 18:24, 28; Rom. 15:4; 2Pe 3:16) is used and other times of a particular passage when the **singular** is used (= the Scripture - Mk. 12:10; 15:28; Lk. 4:21; Jn. 13:18; 19:24, 36f; Acts 1:16; 8:35; Ro 11:2; Jas. 2:8, 23) and is used in such a way that quoting Scripture is understood to be the same as quoting God!

**Word** ([3056](#))([logos](#) from [légō](#) = speak with words; English = logic) means something said and describes a communication whereby the mind finds expression in words. In the Greek mind and as used by secular and philosophical Greek writers, **lógos** did not mean merely the name of an object but was an expression of the thought behind that object's name. Let me illustrate this somewhat subtle nuance in the meaning of **lógos** with an example from the [Septuagint \(LXX\)](#) (Greek of the Hebrew OT) in which **lógos** is used in the well known phrase **the Ten Commandments**. The [Septuagint](#) translates this phrase using the word **lógos** as "the ten (**deka**) words (**logoi**)" (Ex 34:28), this phrase giving us the familiar term **Decalogue**. Clearly each of the "Ten

Commandments" is not just words but words which express a thought or concept behind those words. This then is the essence of the meaning of **lógos** and so it should not be surprising that depending on the context **lógos** is translated with words such as "saying, instruction, message, news, preaching, question, statement, teaching, etc". This understanding of **lógos** also helps understand John's repeated usage of this Greek word as a synonym for the second Person of the Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ ([see discussion below](#)). See discussion of "[The Logos](#)" (Jesus Christ) in John 1:14.

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**RESURRECTION** - For believers, the Resurrection places a confirming stamp on Jesus' life and words. It is not just one of many miracles of Jesus. Instead, it is the key to understanding God's plan; it is the central, foundational fact of Christianity. As Paul put it, "If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith" (1 Corinthians 15:14 NIV). Whenever we are troubled about what Jesus said or did, it usually indicates that we have drifted from our understanding of his resurrection. With the Resurrection settled, the rest of the record seems possible; but doubting the Resurrection makes the rest improbable. Do you accept his credentials as the risen Lord? (LAC)

## EXCURSUS ON SAVING VERSUS SPURIOUS BELIEF

**John Piper** has some very important comments on John 2:22-23

**John's Task: Belief in Jesus** - In John 1:12, John says, "To all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." After the miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana, John says, "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him" (John 2:11). Then after he drove the moneychangers out of the Temple and said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," John comments, "His disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken" (John 2:22). So John is on task. He is writing with a view to helping people see the glory of the Son of God, experience his grace, and believe on him as the Son of God and supreme treasure of their lives and have eternal life.

**Some Belief Is Not Saving** - In view of this, John 2:23–25 has an unsettling effect.

**What it says, in essence, is that Jesus knows what is in every heart, and so he can see when someone believes in a way that is not really believing. In other words, Jesus' ability to know every heart perfectly leads to the unsettling truth that some belief is not the kind of belief that obtains fellowship with Jesus and eternal life. Some belief is not saving belief.** So there are two things to focus on here. First is the glory of the omniscience of Jesus. And the second is the discovery that there is a kind of faith in Jesus that he does not approve and does not accept.

**Faith That Jesus Doesn't Accept** - We said there are two things we should focus on in this today's text: The first is the glory of the omniscience of Jesus. Now the second is the discovery that there is a kind of faith in Jesus that he does not approve. This is the implication of his omniscience that John focuses on. He draws out the implication that when Jesus looks into the heart of those who believed, he sees something other than the kind of faith that makes you a child of God. Remember John 1:12 says, "To all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). And here in John 2:23 it says, "Many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing." It seems Jesus should be thrilled. But he's not. John 2:24 says, "But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people." This is not the way he treats His own sheep whom He calls by name, His own disciples. When Jesus withholds Himself from them,

**He is saying that they are not believing in a saving way. They are not the children of God** They are not doing John 1:12. Whatever their faith is, Jesus does not approve.

**Not All That Looks Like Faith Is Really Faith** - John is still on task here. The aim of his book is "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 20:31). So it's crucial that John clarify that not all that looks like faith is really faith. It is unsettling. But that's the way life is. Better to have Jesus point this out, and help us come to terms with it, than discover it on our own when it may be too late. What's wrong with their faith? Are there clues here? Yes, there are. The first clue is the reference to signs and what Jesus says about this elsewhere. And the second clue is that this incident is mentioned as an introduction to the story of Nicodemus that comes next. Nicodemus is probably supposed to

represent the people (of John 2:23) who believe in one sense but not in the way Jesus approves.

**The Faith of Nicodemus** - Take the clue of Nicodemus first. Remember chapter divisions are added later. Don't pay much attention to them. John 2:25 ends, "For [Jesus] himself knew what was in man." And the next verses say, "Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him'" (John 2:25–3:2). I think this is the kind of faith Jesus sees in the people: "We know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him" (Jn 3:2). This is a great statement of faith. It's what some pious Jews believe about Jesus. It's what Muslims believe. It is a very high view of Jesus. He is "from God." God is "with him." What he does are "signs" of God's power in him. This is significant faith.

**Signs Meant to Point to Jesus** - But it is not saving faith. Nicodemus was not born again. That is the point of John 3:1–8. Nicodemus, with all his faith, needed to be born again. Nicodemus had no spiritual life. What he had seen was entirely natural, not spiritual. He was still spiritually blind. He did not see through the signs to the glory of the only Son of God. He only saw the signs, and they were so impressive that the natural mind drew the conclusion they must involve God. Notice the reference to signs in John 2:23—this is now the second clue about what's wrong with the faith of John 2:23—"Many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing." They believed when they saw the signs. Signs were meant to point people to the true Son of God and what he stood for. But many saw the signs and did not see what they stood for. (**For complete discussion please see Dr Piper's message [He Knew What Was in Man](#)**)

**Zane C. Hodges** wrote an article entitled "**Untrustworthy Believers—John 2:23–25**," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 135:538 (April-June 1978):139-52 and argued that these Jews in John 2 were genuine believers who "were not ready for fuller disclosures from the One they had just trusted" (p148)."

**Comment:** Be a Berean! Acts 17:11<sup>+</sup>- Even the title of Hodge's article strikes me as a theological "**oxymoron**" so to speak! Clearly Hodges belief is diametrically opposite to that of most conservative evangelical scholars. Only one teaching can be correct. And only one teaching results in eternal salvation. **These issues have eternal consequences.** See that no one takes you captive through specious reasoning (cf Col 2:8-9<sup>+</sup>), instead of letting the plain sense of God's Word mean what He says! Compare the sobering words of our Lord Jesus Christ - Mt 7:21<sup>+</sup>, Mt 7:22, 23<sup>+</sup>) (See [The Unusual Teachings of Zane Hodges](#), [The Teachings of Zane Hodges](#), [Joseph Dillow](#), [Robert Wilkin](#); [The Teachings of Zane Hodges](#), [Joseph Dillow](#), [Robert Wilkin](#); [Refutation of Teachings of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow](#))

**Thomas Constable** who was also a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary (where Zane Hodges was professor) disagrees with Hodges writing

Jesus did many signs (significant miracles) while He was in Jerusalem this time. These were probably healings and perhaps exorcisms. The Synoptics record that Jesus ministered this way virtually wherever He went. Consequently many people **believed** on Him. **As we have seen in the Synoptics, this does not mean they they placed saving faith in Him as the Son of God, however. Often the people who observed His miracles concluded that He was a prophet, but they were not always willing to acknowledge Him as deity.** (Bolding added) ([Notes on the Bible](#))

And even another professor from Dallas Theological Seminary held an interpretation diametrically opposite to that of Hodges. Here is the comment by **Edwin Blum** on John 2:23-25 in the [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#) (scroll up and down for more text)....

They believed in His name, that is, they trusted in Him. **This was not necessarily saving faith as the next verse** (John 2:24) **implies.** They believed He was a **great Healer**, but not necessarily a **great Savior** from sin. **Jesus** knew that a temporary excitement or a faith based on signs was not sufficient. Many of the early followers later turned back when He did not take up the role of a political king (cf. John 6:15, 60, 66).

**Below** are a number of expositors that interpret this section as belief that does not result in salvation or as Warren Wiersbe calls them "unsaved believers!" ([Bible Exposition Commentary - New Testament](#)) It seems clear that Zane Hodges propagated a false and dangerous teaching!

**Adam Clarke:** They believed him to be the promised Messiah, **but did not believe in him to the salvation of their souls:** for we find, from the following verse, that their hearts were not at all changed, because our blessed Lord could not trust himself to them.

**Larry Richards:** But the belief of the people was shallow; so shallow that "Jesus would not entrust [or commit]

Himself" to the crowds as He had to the Twelve. What is a shallow faith? Perhaps it is best to think of it as a faith that exists only as long as its object fits our expectations. **These people, who "believed" in Jesus superficially**, turned away from Him when He did not speak and act as they expected (see John 6:60-66). They "believed," but not enough to abandon their own notions and submit themselves fully to Jesus' fresh revelation of God. May God protect you and me and those we teach from shallow faith as we study John's Gospel. May He help us be willing to abandon our old ideas when He calls us to submit fully to His Son, Jesus, so that we might find life now. (Teacher's Commentary)

**Harold Wilmington:** Jesus knew that many of the Jews who professed to believe in him had only a superficial faith, relating to his miracles and not to his deeper ministry of deliverance from sin. John would later come back to this theme of "unbelieving believers" (see John 6:22-66; John 8:31-59). (Wilmington's Bible Handbook.)

**KJV Bible Commentary:** The word used to express belief (Greek pisteuo) is used in the next verse. But Jesus did not commit himself. Christ did not entrust Himself to them **because they were not true believers**. He concluded this because he knew all men. These were nominal (in name only) believers whose only interest was the miracles. He did not need their testimony for he knew what was in man. These people had not accepted Him with saving faith, but rather they accepted Him as a powerful miracle worker. (Online [KJV Bible Commentary](#))

**Gerald Borchert in New American Commentary:** The real point is that **Jesus did not believe their believing...** Accordingly, we need to understand that the living Jesus does not believe everyone's believing because he knows what is in them. Those words ought to stand as a warning to everyone. (See [John 1-11: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#) scroll up and down for more text)

**Steven Cole** commenting on John 2:24 - Jesus never committed Himself to unbelief. ([Jesus: True, Yet Rejected](#))

**William Hendriksen in Baker NT Commentary:** Jesus did not look upon all these individuals as being true believers to whom his cause could be entrusted. The reason why he did not do this was because he knew all men; i.e., knew just what was in the heart of anyone with whom he would come in contact.

**G Campbell Morgan:** If belief is nothing more than admiration for the spectacular, it will create in multitudes applause; but the Son of God cannot commit Himself to that kind of faith.

**Warren Wiersbe:** The words believed in John 2:23 and commit in John 2:24 are the same Greek word (pisteuo). These people believed in Jesus, but He did not believe in them! They were "**unsaved believers**"! It was one thing to respond to a miracle but quite something else to commit oneself to Jesus Christ and continue in His Word (John 8:30, 31). ([Bible Exposition Commentary - New Testament](#)) (Bolding added)

**Bruce Barton** - John did not recount any of the particular miracles Jesus performed in Jerusalem; he simply said that many people believed in Jesus when they saw the miracles he did. But, as the next verse indicates, this belief was not complete. The people believed in Jesus as a miracle worker or a political messiah, but not necessarily as the true Messiah, the Son of God. ([Borrow the Life Application Commentary](#))

## John 2:23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing

NET John 2:23 Now while Jesus was in Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover, many people believed in his name because they saw the miraculous signs he was doing.

GNT John 2:23 ς δ ν ν το ς εροσολμοις ν τ π σχα ν τ ορτ , πολλο π στευσαν ε ς τ νομα α το θεωρο ντες α το τ σημε α πο ει·

NLT John 2:23 Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him.

KJV John 2:23 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.

ESV John 2:23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.



NIV John 2:23 Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name.

ASV John 2:23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, during the feast, many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did.

CSB John 2:23 While He was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many trusted in His name when they saw the signs He was doing.

NKJ John 2:23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did.

NRS John 2:23 When he was in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, many believed in his name because they saw the signs that he was doing.

YLT John 2:23 And as he was in Jerusalem, in the passover, in the feast, many believed in his name, beholding his signs that he was doing;

NAB John 2:23 While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, many began to believe in his name when they saw the signs he was doing.

NJB John 2:23 During his stay in Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he did,

GWN John 2:23 While Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover festival, many people believed in him because they saw the miracles that he performed.

BBE John 2:23 Now while he was in Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover, a great number of people came to have faith in his name, after seeing the signs which he did.

- **many believed:** Joh 3:2 Jn 6:14 Jn 7:31 Jn 8:30,31 Jn 12:42,43 Mt 13:20,21 Mk 4:16,17 Lu 8:13 Ga 5:6 Eph 3:16,17 Jas 2:19,20
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

John 4:48 So Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe."

Mark 8:11-13 The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him. 12 Sighing deeply in His spirit, He \*said, "Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation." 13 Leaving them, He again embarked and went away to the other side.

## UNSAVED BELIEVERS

Don't miss the striking contrast between the genuine saving belief of the **disciples** in Jn 2:22 and the false non-saving belief of the **many** in Jn 2:23. And note crucial difference is the objects of belief, for the disciples focused on God's word, while the many focused on God's works or miracles.

**THOUGHT** - These persons (**MANY**) do not appear to have really believed with the heart (**ED**: see Ro 10:9,10<sup>+</sup>), but to have been only convinced in their understandings (**ED**: SO-CALLED "INTELLECTUAL ASSENT"). The distinction between intellectual belief and saving belief, and between one degree of saving belief and another, ought to be carefully noticed in Scripture. There is a faith which devils have (James 2:19<sup>+</sup>), and a faith which is the gift of God (Eph 2:8<sup>+</sup>, cf Ro 2:4<sup>+</sup>). The persons mentioned in this verse appear to have had the former, but not the latter. We are also told that **Simon Magus** "believed" (Acts 8:13<sup>+</sup>). Again, there is a real heart-belief which a man may have that admits of great increase. This is the belief spoken of in the preceding verse. (J C Ryle)

**D A Carson** entitles John 2:23-25 "**Inadequate faith.**" writing "Sadly, **their faith was spurious**, and Jesus knew it." (BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

**Alan Stanley** - There are at least 3 clear examples in the NT of false conversions; instances where people believed in Jesus and yet did not receive salvation....The first involves "many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing." (Jn 2:23) At first



glance we would expect these people to be saved. After all John 3:18 clearly states "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." And yet in spite of this "Jesus would not entrust Himself to them (Jn 2:24a). That's odd! These people believed in His Name....Evidently, then, salvation is more than just saying the words "I believe." They must come from the heart. In fact, the heart is central as Romans 10:9-10+ points out "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." The way Paul has structured these verses is significant. Mouth confession is important, but the crux--note that heart appears twice in the centre of this passage--is belief with the heart. Saying the words, even words from the Bible, is not enough! It must come from the heart. These people described in John 2:23 merely wanted a miracle worker! (See [Salvation Is More Complicated Than You Think](#))

**Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover (pascha), during the feast** - Jn 2:23, 24 serves as the introduction to Nicodemus' story, since John 3 constitutes tangible evidence of Jesus' ability to know men's hearts which in turn demonstrates His deity. Passover was a memorial, to remind the Jews of God's great deliverance in Egypt provided for them by the blood of a perfect lamb, his blood on the doorposts keeping their firstborn from being destroyed by the death angel.

**Moses** wrote "For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you. 24 "And you shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever. 25 "When you enter the land which the LORD will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe this rite. 26 "And when your children say to you, 'What does this rite mean to you?' 27 you shall say, 'It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes.'" And the people bowed low and worshiped." (Ex 12:23-27+)

**MacArthur on Passover (pascha)** - It was celebrated annually on the fourteenth day of Nisan (March/April). On that day, between 3:00 and 6:00 P.M., lambs were slaughtered and the Passover meal eaten. In obedience to Exodus 23:14-17, Jesus went up to Jerusalem to observe both the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread which immediately followed (cf. Ezek. 45:21; Luke 22:1; Acts 12:3-4). This is the first of three Passovers mentioned in John's gospel (cf. Jn 6:4; 11:55). (See [John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) - scroll up and down for more text)

**Many believed (pisteuo) in His Name (onoma)** - **Many believed** signifies a good start, but as John continues it was a false start in an Olympic race and in many track competitions one false start disqualifies the person from the race -- in one recent race the fastest 100 meter runner in the world was set to scintillate the crowd with a possible new world record, but false started and his race was over. Don't "false start" with Jesus and be disqualified when your life is over! (Mt 7:21-23+). **Many** "claimed" to believe but it was only "intellectual assent," not "heart reception." Superficial belief is a bit like a vaccine (I am an infectious disease specialist), for it "immunizes" the person from "catching" the "real disease!" One of my greatest fears is that there are many souls sitting in churches today (even evangelical churches) who have at some time in their life professed Christ and are in the false security that their belief has in effect purchased them an eternal "fire insurance policy!" Because of the miracles, many people professed to believe which recalls Paul's words in (Titus 1:16+) = "They profess ([present tense](#) - continually profess!) to know God, but by their deeds they deny ([present tense](#) - continually deny!) Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed." Clearly Jesus did not accept their profession of faith. No matter what the people themselves said, He did not accept human testimony, because He knew what was in each person's heart and mind. **Belief in His Name** involves more than intellectual assent or simply saying the words "I believe in Jesus." (or praying a prayer!) Saving belief calls for wholehearted commitment of one's life as Jesus' disciple (Mt 10:37+; Mt 16:24,25,26+, John 1:12+ Jn 20:31).

*He therefore did not entrust himself to these spurious converts.*

**D A Carson** adds "The people **believed in His Name**': the expression is *episteusan eis to onoma autou*, even though **their faith is spurious** (cf. Jn 2:22). To exercise faith on the grounds of having witnessed miraculous signs is precarious (Jn 4:48; cf. Mk. 8:11-13). Although miracles cannot command faith (Jn 10:32), it is better to believe on the ground of miracles than not at all (cf. Jn 10:38). 2:24-25. Sadly, **their faith was spurious**, and Jesus knew it. Unlike other religious leaders, he cannot be duped by flattery, enticed by praise or caught off-guard in innocence. His knowledge of men's hearts is profound, and accounts in part for the diversity of his approaches to individuals in the Gospels. He therefore did not entrust himself to these spurious converts. (The Greek repeats the verb, but with a slightly different meaning: we might paraphrase, 'the people trusted in his name, but he did not entrust himself to them.')

By implication, Jesus wonderfully promises to entrust himself to those who truly trust him (cf. John 10:14, 15). (BOLDING ADDED FOR EMPHASIS) (PNTC-Jn - see his context [The Gospel According to John](#) OR BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

*He had no faith in their faith*

-- John MacArthur

**John MacArthur** - Though they **believed in** Jesus, Jesus did not believe in them; **He had no faith in their faith**. Jesus "regarded all belief in Him as superficial which does not have as its most essential elements the consciousness of the need for forgiveness and the conviction that He alone is the Mediator of that forgiveness" (R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to St. John*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975], 65)....Like the seed that fell on rocky and thorny ground, those who possess such faith hear the Word, and initially receive it with joy (Mt 13:20+). But because their hearts are never truly changed, they fall away when affliction comes (Mt 13:21), or when worldly riches beckon (Mt 13:22). (See context in [The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**William MacDonald** - As a result of the signs which Jesus performed in Jerusalem at the Passover, many believed in His name. This does not necessarily mean that they actually committed their lives to Him in simple trust; rather, they professed to accept Him. There was no reality to their action; it was merely an outward display of following Jesus. It was similar to the condition which we have in the world where many people claim to be Christians who have never truly been born again through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (BORROW [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Edwin Blum** - **While... in Jerusalem** during the **Passover**, Jesus did other signs which John chose not to describe. The effect of these miracles (which were probably healings) was to elicit faith on the part of **many people**. They **believed in His name**, that is, they trusted in Him. This was not necessarily saving faith as the next verse implies. They believed He was a great Healer, but not necessarily a great Savior from sin. (See [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#) then scroll up and down for more text)

**Colin Kruse** - These signs led many people to believe in Jesus, but, as the next verse indicates, their belief was defective. 24–25. Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. There is a play on words here. In 2:23 we are told 'many people ... believed [episteusan] in his name', but in 2:24 the evangelist adds, 'But Jesus would not entrust [episteuen] himself to them'. Their 'trust' in him was not of a sort to make Jesus want to 'entrust' himself to them. Evidently, the belief of these people, based upon witnessing the signs Jesus performed, was shallow and inauthentic. (BORROW [The gospel according to John : an introduction and commentary](#))

**Skip Heitzig** - The words believe and commit are essentially the same word. Many people believed in Jesus, but He did not believe in them. **There is a faith short of saving faith**. Many people believe in God and Jesus. Superficial faith (see James 2:19). Emotional response. Unsaved believers. (NOTES) "Now when he, Jesus, was in Jerusalem at the Passover during the feast many believed in His name." Now stop right there. Now admit it, when you read those words you get excited. Wow, many are starting to believe in Jesus. This is awesome. Get their names, put them on the mailing list. Make them a deacon. Given them a responsibility. There's people that are believing in Him. You want to strike while the iron's hot. But keep reading. "Many believed in His name when they saw the signs which he did." So now we have a motivation. Now we have a reason. They are believing, but they are believing because of the miracles he did. Well you say, so what? But notice Jesus' response. According to John, his editorial comments "but Jesus did not commit Himself to them because he knew all men. He had no need that anyone should testify of man for he knew what was in man." In part, John, the author, wants you to know that his summary of these events in Jerusalem is that we are dealing with, we are looking at, we are observing a man who is more than a man, a man who exhibits the very characteristics and qualities of God, somebody who has well, x-ray vision into one's thoughts and motivations. One of whom you can call, you can say, and you can't say it of anyone else, for he knows what people are thinking. He knows what's in the heart and the very mind of a person. Those are John's comments. He exhibits the character trait of omniscience. He knows everything. And you will see this quite a bit through the book. But what's interesting is John's choice of grammar, his language use. It's really a play on words. It's say many believed in Him. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them. That's a play on words. Because the word "believe" and the word "commit" are essentially the same exact word. So if you'll permit me to re-translate that for the effect of the play on words. Many believed in Him but he did not believe in them. That's sort of the intended impact and the force of these words. There is a faith short of saving faith. And so how many people do you talk to, oh, I believe in God. I believe in Jesus. And especially we love that if somebody famous like our favorite musical rock star or something has any lyric at all that's spiritual. Oh wow, he must be a born again Christian. Why? Because he said "*spirit in the sky where I'm gonna go when I die?*" Or even if he mentions *Jesus*. We go oh, we get all excited. **But there is a faith that is short of saving faith There is superficial faith**. How do we know that? While James describes it. He says you say you believe in God, you do well. (James 2:19+) But I want you to know even the demons believe and they tremble. They believe in God so much that they have an emotional response. They tremble. **Warren Wiersbe** calls these people in Jerusalem by a special interesting little title. He calls them "unsaved believers." it's an interesting phrase. They are unsaved believers. He knows what's in their heart, He knows they want a free meal, He knows they want a miracle. He knows that they're not really fully committed to Him with saving faith. They just like what they see, they love the entertainment value, they're going along for the ride. Unsaved believers. "But he did not commit Himself to them, because he knew all men. And he had no need that anyone should testify of man for he knew what was in man." ([TRANSCRIPT](#))

**Bob Utley** on **believed** in the present context indicates "uncertainty as to the genuineness of the crowd's commitment to Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. Other examples of this superficial use of the term "believe" are in John 8:31–59 and Acts 8:13, 18–24

(see [Simon Magus](#)). True biblical faith is more than an initial response (**ED: AND MORE THAN INTELLECTUAL ACCEPTANCE**). It must be followed by a process of discipleship (cf. Mt. 13:20–22, 31–32+)...these superficial "believers" were drawn to Jesus by His miracles (cf. Jn 2:11; 7:31). Their purpose was to affirm Jesus' person and work. However, it must be noted that faith in the mighty works of Jesus was never adequate, persevering belief (cf. Jn 4:38; 20:29). The object of faith must be Jesus (cf. Jn 20:30–31). Miracles are not automatically a sign of God (cf. Matt. 24:24; Rev. 13:13; 16:14; 19:20). Jesus' works were meant to lead people to faith in Him (cf. Jn 2:23; 6:14; 7:31; 10:42); often people saw the sign but refused to believe (cf. Jn 6:27; 11:47; 12:37). ([John 2 Commentary](#))(See also [Believe, Trust, Faith, and Faithfulness in the Old Testament](#))

Compare **Simon the magician's** "belief" (and even baptism) in Acts 8:13+ - "Even Simon himself **believed**; and after **being baptized**, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed." And then in Acts 8:19-23+ we read about Simon's "belief"

(Simon says), "Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 "You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 **"Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you.** 23 "For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity."

**Observing** ([theaomai](#)) **His signs** - NET = "they saw the miraculous signs." These **signs** are not specifically recorded a fact John alludes to in John 20:30 and John 21:25. The Jews were continually ([present tense](#)) giving rapt contemplation to Jesus' miraculous **signs**. This seems almost too difficult to believe, that the Jews carefully observed first hand the signs of Jesus, but yet most of them completely missed His message of redemption! The verb **theoreo** is from **theoros** which means a spectator, one who looks at something with interest and purpose, carefully observing the details of what is happening. These Jews were "**seers**" of the Word (the Living Word Himself - Rev 19:13+) but failed to become "**doers**" of the Word and thus failed to become genuine believers.

One is reminded of James' command to "But **prove** ([present imperative](#) - [See discussion of the Need for the Holy Spirit to obey this and all NT commands](#)) yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves." (James 1:22+)

**J. Vernon McGee**: "A great many folk read that and say, "My, isn't it wonderful that people were believing on Him."**But it wasn't wonderful, friend, because theirs was not saving faith at all.** They merely nodded in assent when they saw the miracles that He did. So notice what follows." The language that is used here is saying that He did not believe in them. You see, they believed in Him, but He didn't believe in them. In other words, to put it very frankly, **their faith was not a saving faith**, which He realized, of course. He knew what was in their hearts. This is always a grave danger today for those who say they **believe in Jesus**. What do you mean when you say you believe in Jesus? Do you mean that you believe in the facts of the gospel? The important question is: Do you trust Him as your Savior who died for your sins? Was He raised for your justification? Is He your only hope of heaven? This crowd was interested, and when they saw Him perform miracles, they believed. They had to -- they saw the miracles. But Jesus didn't believe in them. He knew their belief was not genuine "because he knew all men." He knew what was in the human heart. He didn't need anyone to testify to Him of man because He knew what was in man. In other words, the Lord Jesus didn't commit Himself unto the mob there. The great company believed on Him, but He didn't entrust Himself to them. When Nicodemus came to Him at night, our Lord did commit Himself unto him because this man's faith was genuine. It is unfortunate that the movement here is broken by a chapter break. (BORROW [John 1-10 - Volume 1](#))

**William Cook** - These concluding verses of the chapter describe the **unsatisfactory** nature of Jerusalem's response to Jesus in addition to providing a transition to the next episode. The evangelist indicates that Jesus performed numerous signs during this visit to Jerusalem that are not recorded (2:23). John depicts the crowd's response by using a play on words. To paraphrase John's thought, 'during the feast many trusted in Jesus, but he did not entrust himself' to them (2:23b-24a). This may very well indicate the spurious nature of their faith (cf. 6:66; 8:31ff). (Focus on the Bible Commentary – John: Jesus Christ Is God.) (Bolding added)

**Which He was doing** - **Doing** is in the [imperfect tense](#) (over and over), "the imperfect denoting the wonderful works as in progress." (Vincent) Jesus did his first sign in Cana (Jn 2:11), but now he was doing many in Jerusalem. Already Jesus had become the center of all eyes in Jerusalem at this first visit in His ministry. Everybody is attracted to a "miracle worker" but sadly not to the worker Himself!

The belief of these Jews is of the same quality (so to speak - non-salvific) as the Jews in John 8

(Jn 8:30,31) As He spoke these things, many came to **believe** ([pisteuo](#)) in Him.8:31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who **had believed** ([pisteuo](#)) Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine

**Comment** - What does Jesus equate with belief in context? Disciples! All believers are disciples contrary to what some teach, saying disciples are believers who are more mature, "believers on steroids" as we

might say today. That is not what Jesus said! So what does Jesus say is one mark of genuine belief? Continuance in His Word. Beloved, we can apply this immediately -- If you claim to be a believer, a disciple of Jesus and you are NEVER in the Word of God, than you should do some serious circumspection of your heart as Paul describes in 2 Cor 13:5+. Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test?" ([Read the commentary on this passage](#) for not everyone agrees with this "reformed" interpretation, which I favor)

And so this is example of **believing** that falls short of genuine saving belief. Their subsequent actions demonstrated their belief was not genuine for Jesus accused them declaring "**you are seeking to kill Me**" (John 8:40) and after several heated exchanges, these same "believing" Jews "fulfilled Jesus' prophecy" (He had moments before uttered) and sought to kill Jesus, picking "up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple." (John 8:59) These Jews had a profession but not genuine possession in respect to their belief in Jesus).

John 8:31-see [in depth discussion](#)

#### Related Resources:

- [Romans Road to Salvation](#)
- Discussion of [False vs True Disciples-The Test of a True Disciple of Jesus](#)
- [What is the difference between a Christian and a disciple?](#)
- [What are some of the signs of genuine saving faith?](#)
- [Why is faith without works dead?](#)
- [What does it mean that even the demons believe \(James 2:19\)?](#)
- [How can I have assurance of my salvation?](#)
- [If you doubt your salvation, does that mean you are not truly saved?](#)
- [What if I don't feel saved?](#)
- [How can I detect a false conversion?](#)
- [Is salvation by faith alone, or by faith plus works?](#)
- [What does it mean that even the demons believe \(James 2:19\)?](#)
- [How can salvation be not of works when faith is required? Isn't believing a work?](#)
- [Why is salvation by works the predominantly held viewpoint?](#)
- [What does it mean that good works are the result of salvation?](#)
- [What does it mean to believe in Jesus?](#)
- [What does it mean to know Jesus?](#)
- [Does Jesus love me?](#)
- [What does it mean that Jesus saves?](#)
- [What is the way of salvation?](#)

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**Passover** (3957)([pascha](#)) is the transliteration of the Hebrew word [pesach/pesah](#) (06453) which is a masculine noun thought by some writers (Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon) to have its origin from **pacach/pasah** which apparently means to pass over; to spare (Ex 12:13, 23, 27 - "Jehovah will pass"). Depending on the context, **pascha** refers to the **Passover lamb** (Lk 22:7+), the **Passover meal** (Lk 22:8+), or the **festival of Passover** (Lk 22:1). The **Passover** as used in Lk 22:1+ is combined with the **Feast of Unleavened Bread** by Luke in a metonymy (one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it's closely associated) writing "the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**...called the **Passover**, was approaching." (Lk 22:1+) **Rooker** adds that "These two ceremonies were apparently combined at the beginning, for the Passover lamb was to be eaten with unleavened bread (Ex 12:8)." (NAC-Lk). The whole feast, including the paschal eve, is called the **festival of Unleavened Bread** (Ex 23:15; Lev 23:6+; Ezra 6:22; Lu 22:1, 7+; Acts 12:3+; Acts 20:6+); but the simple name "**Passover**" (when they celebrate the "Passover Seder") is the one commonly used by the Jews to the present day for the festival of Unleavened Bread (2 Chr 30:15; 35:1, 11; Mk 14:1)

**Passover** included: (1). Passover per se (Ex 12:6,7) (1st mo, Nissan, Lev 23:5).(2). Unleavened Bread: (Lev 23:6,7,8) for 7 days right after Passover (one day strictly), though to pascha is used either for the passover meal or for the whole 8 days (3) Firstfruits (Lev 23:9ff; 1Cor 15:20,21,22).

#### Related Resources:

- [What is Passover?](#)

- [How do the elements of the Passover Seder point to Christ?](#)
- [If Jesus is our atonement, why did He die at Passover instead of the Day of Atonement?](#)
- [What is the meaning and importance of the Last Supper?](#)
- [What are the different Jewish festivals in the Bible?](#)

**Observing** (2334) (**theoreo** from **theaomai** = to look at closely or attentively or contemplatively - even with a sense of wonder; cp **theoros** = a spectator) (Gives us English = theater, theorize) usually refers to physical sight but can also refer to perception and understanding. It means to gaze, to look with interest and purpose, to carefully examine with emphasis on or attention to details. To behold intensely or attentively. Our English word *scrutinize* conveys this sense, for it means to examine closely and minutely. To be a spectator and thus to understand or perceive. To contemplate (Heb 13:7<sup>+</sup>). **Theoreo** in some contexts can include the idea of to behold with amazement. For example, in Mark 5:15 **theoreo** is not translated merely "see" but "observe" for as **Vincent** explains that "(theoreo) was more than simple seeing. The verb means looking steadfastly, as one who has an interest in the object, and with a view to search into and understand it: to look inquiringly and intently." (**Ed Note:** And even with a sense of amazement.) John's uses of **theoreo** - Jn. 2:23; Jn. 4:19; Jn. 6:19; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 6:62; Jn. 7:3; Jn. 8:51; Jn. 9:8; Jn. 10:12; Jn. 12:19; Jn. 12:45; Jn. 14:17; Jn. 14:19; Jn. 16:10; Jn. 17:24; Jn. 20:6; Jn. 20:12; Jn. 20:14

**Wuest** on **theaomai** (Comment on Mk 3:11) It is used primarily, not of an indifferent spectator, but of one who looks at a thing with interest and for a purpose. It would be used of a general officially reviewing or inspecting an army, while **theaomai** would be used of a civilian looking at the parade. **Theōreō** would include within its meaning a critical, understanding investigation, while **theaomai** would speak of the mere registering of impressions. The demons exhibited interest and purpose in their critical observation of the Lord Jesus. They looked at Him with a practiced eye, long used to the measuring of the good and the true as exhibited in the character of God. They recognized in Him the embodiment of the holiness out from the presence of which they were driven when the angel Lucifer fell and became Satan, in whose fall they shared because they followed him in his rebellion against the Most High.

**Believed** (4100) (**pisteuo** - [click for lengthy discussion of faith](#) from **pistis**; **pistos**; related studies [the faith](#), the [obedience of faith](#)) means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. To accept as true, genuine, or real. To have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of something or someone. To consider to be true. To accept the word or evidence of.

**NOTE: Believed** (or believes) **in** [pisteuō eis] is found some 35 times in John and means to put trust in or on (E.g. Jn. 2:11; Jn. 2:23; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:18; Jn. 3:36; Jn. 4:39; Jn. 6:35; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 7:31; Jn. 7:38 Jn. 8:30; Jn. 10:42; Jn. 11:25; Jn. 11:26; Jn. 11:45; Jn. 12:42 Jn. 12:44; Jn. 12:46; Jn. 14:12).

James uses **pisteuo** to describe belief that does not save

James 2:19+ You **believe** (pisteuo) that God is one. You do well; the demons also **believe** (pisteuo), and shudder.

**Comment:** In this passage, James explains that not all believing will result in salvation. The believing he is describing in this passage is a mental or intellectual believing that is not associated in a change in one's heart and thus in one's behavior or actions. Belief in the New Testament sense that effects the **new birth** denotes more than a "demonic" like, intellectual assent to a set of facts or truths. The demons believe but they are clearly not saved. Genuine belief does involve an intellectual assent and consent of one's mind, but also includes an act of one's heart and will. Biblical saving faith is not passive assent but an active staking of one's life on the claims of God.

The respected Greek lexicon author **W E Vine** defines belief as consisting of

(1) a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth - (2 Th 2:11 - "in order that they all may be judged who did not **believe** [pisteuo] the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.")

(2) a personal surrender to the Truth (Jn 1:12<sup>+</sup> "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who **believe** [pisteuo] in His name") and

(3) a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender. (E.g. In Luke 3:8 Jesus says "Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance [conduct reflecting genuine heart change - see [Circumcision of the Heart](#)], and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.")



The first use of **pisteuo** is found in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) and is surely one of the most important uses of **pisteuo** in all of Scripture...

Genesis 15:6-[commentary](#) Then he (Abraham) **believed** (Hebrew = 'āman; [LXX](#) = **pisteuo**) in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

**Comment:** Note that in the OT, salvation was by faith, not works. Paul explains that Abraham heard the gospel - see Galatians 3:8+. It is also worth noting that the Hebrew word for "believe" in this verse is '[aman \(word study\)](#)' means to confirm, support or uphold and conveys the essential idea that one remains steadfast. At the heart of the meaning of the root of the Hebrew verb '[aman](#)' is the idea of certainty or firmness. The derivatives reflect the concept of certainty and dependability. In other words faith is not a blind leap into the dark but a confident commitment to the One about Whom abundant evidence bears ample testimony of His eternal, immutable trustworthiness. Faith is far more than mere hope that something unlikely may happen. It is a deep, internal certainty, rooted in our trust of what God has said.

**Name** ([3686](#)) ([onoma](#)) means that by which something or someone is called or known. Thus **a name** constitutes the distinctive designation of a person or thing. However in antiquity the **name** meant more than it does today. We use a **name** as little more than a distinguishing mark or label to differentiate one person from another. But in the ancient world the **name** signified not only the person's identity but the inherent character of the person designated by the name. Stated another way, in ancient times, one's whole character (title, reputation, person) was implied in the **name**. For example, in Mt 1:21 we read the angel's words to Joseph that Mary "will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." In John 1:12+ we see the phrase to "believed in His **Name**" but in that context (in contrast to the use here in John 2:23) **believed** refers to a genuine, saving belief that resulted in a new, "[circumcised](#)" heart.

In America everyone knows the Name "Jesus" and many would say they "believe" in His Name, but in fact have never truly been born again! This is a sad but true reality that many sitting in churches, come to church but never truly come to Jesus! Saving faith in His **Name** means one places complete trust in all Jesus is, all Jesus has declared in Scripture and all Jesus has accomplished to effect our eternal redemption (Heb 9:12).

As Peter says "there is salvation in **no one else**; for there is no other **NAME** under heaven that has been given among men by which we must (SPEAKS OF NECESSITY) be saved." (Acts 4:12+)

All John's uses of Name in the Gospel - Jn. 1:6; Jn. 1:12; Jn. 2:23; Jn. 3:1; Jn. 3:18; Jn. 5:43; Jn. 10:3; Jn. 10:25; Jn. 12:13; Jn. 12:28; Jn. 14:13; Jn. 14:14; Jn. 14:26; Jn. 15:16; Jn. 15:21; Jn. 16:23; Jn. 16:24; Jn. 16:26; Jn. 17:6; Jn. 17:11; Jn. 17:12; Jn. 17:26; Jn. 18:10; Jn. 20:31 = "but these have been written so that (PURPOSE OF JOHN'S GOSPEL) you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His **name**." (Where is true life found?)

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**Steven Cole - Superficial faith may be the starting point of genuine faith, but the test is whether it perseveres and bears fruit.**

Believing on the basis of signs (miracles) is better than not believing at all. In John 10:37-38, Jesus tells His Jewish critics, "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." But believing because of miracles will not result in salvation unless it is accompanied by repentance. Simon the magician believed, but he had not repented of his pride and love of power over the people. He was not saved. In the parable of the sower, it is only the seed that endures and bears fruit that is genuinely saved. (See, also, Matt. 24:13; Rom. 11:22; 1 Cor. 15:2; Col. 1:23; Heb. 3:12-14; 1 John 2:18-19.) Faith that perseveres sees with growing clarity the glory of Christ and what He did for us on the cross so that it perseveres when trials or persecution hit.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones (The Path to True Happiness [Baker], pp. 159-161) points out that there are some who "believe" in Jesus intellectually, but their hearts and their wills have never been touched. They may be scholars, but their knowledge has never changed their lives. Others have their hearts touched, but their minds have not been in operation. In fact, they have been told that they should not try to understand. Often, they have not submitted their wills to Christ. Experience is everything. There is a third group where their Christianity is almost entirely a matter of the will. They don't bother to understand and they aren't interested in their feelings. They just want to be doing things to serve God.

Lloyd-Jones argues that all three types have superficial faith because they have only picked out what appeals to them and believed in that. They haven't seen themselves as lost sinners and Christ as the only one who can save them. Their faith is partial, based on what they like about Jesus. But when things don't go the way that they envisioned, they fall away.

Many of us believed in Jesus with a shallow or superficial faith. We trusted Him because we wanted healing or success or something other than salvation from sin. But to go on and develop into genuine saving faith, you have to see yourself as the Bible



portrays you and see Christ for who He is. ([Does Jesus Believe In You?](#))

**Bob Utley** on **believed in** - John primarily combines "believe" with a PREPOSITION ([John 2 Commentary](#))

1. eis means "into." This unique construction emphasizes believers putting their trust/faith in Jesus
  - a. into His name (John 1:12; 2:23; 3:18; 1 John 5:13)
  - b. into Him (John 2:11; 3:15, 18; 4:39; 6:40; 7:5, 31, 39, 48; 8:30; 9:36; 10:42; 11:45, 48; 12:37, 42)
  - c. into Me (John 6:35; 7:38; 11:25, 26; 12:44, 46; 14:1, 12; 16:9; 17:20)
  - d. into the One He has sent (John 6:28-29)
  - e. into the Son (John 3:36; 9:35; 1 John 5:10)
  - f. into Jesus (John 12:11)
  - g. into Light (John 12:36)
  - h. into God (John 12:44; 14:1)

**John 2:24 But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,**

NET John 2:24 But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people.

GNT John 2:24 α τ ς ὃ ἤσο ς ο κ π στειεν α τ ν α το ς δι τ α τ ν γιν σκειν π ντας

NLT John 2:24 But Jesus didn't trust them, because he knew human nature.

KJV John 2:24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,

ESV John 2:24 But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people

NIV John 2:24 But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men.

ASV John 2:24 But Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for that he knew all men,

CSB John 2:24 Jesus, however, would not entrust Himself to them, since He knew them all

NKJ John 2:24 But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men,

NRS John 2:24 But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people

YLT John 2:24 and Jesus himself was not trusting himself to them, because of his knowing all men,

NAB John 2:24 But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all,

NJB John 2:24 but Jesus knew all people and did not trust himself to them;

GWN John 2:24 Jesus, however, was wary of these believers. He understood people

BBE John 2:24 But Jesus did not have faith in them, because he had knowledge of them all.

- **was not entrusting Himself** Joh 6:15 Mt 10:16,17
- **for He knew all men:** Joh 1:42,46,47 5:42 6:64 16:30 21:17 1Sa 16:7 1Ch 28:9 29:17 Jer 17:9 Mt 9:4 Mk 2:8 Ac 1:24 Heb 4:13 Rev 2:23
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SAVIOR SEES FALSE FAITH

John 2:24-25 is one sentence in the Greek.

**But Jesus** - Note the striking contrast with those who saw His signs. They may have seen His signs, but He saw their hearts. They saw only the external, but Jesus saw the internal. He saw their faith was fake!

Though they believed in Jesus, Jesus did not believe in them

--John MacArthur

**On His part, was not entrusting ([pisteuo](#)) Himself to them** - These people believed in Jesus, but He did not believe in them! They were "*unsaved believers*" (Wiersbe's words)! It was one thing to respond to a miracle but quite something else to commit oneself from the heart to Jesus Christ and continue in His Word (Jn 8:30,31, cp Acts 8:13). He knew their hearts and knew their outward faith

in Him was only superficial. Enthusiasm for the spectacular was present in them, but Jesus is always looking for genuine faith. See the interesting discussion of Simon the magician's "belief" in [Acts 8:13+]

*"He had no faith in their faith"*

-- Godet

**A T Robertson** - "But Jesus himself kept on refusing (negative imperfect) to trust himself to them." The double use of πιστευω [[pisteuo](#)] here is shown by Acts 8:13+ where Simon Magus "believed" (episteusen) and was baptized, but was unsaved. He merely believed that he wanted what Philip had. ([John 2 Word Pictures in the NT](#))

**John MacArthur** writes: "John based these two phrases (**believed** in Jn 2:23 and **entrusting** in Jn 2:24) on the same Greek verb for "believe ([pisteuo](#))." This verse subtly reveals the true nature of belief from a biblical standpoint. Because of what they knew of Jesus from His miraculous signs many came to **believe** in Him. However, Jesus made it His habit not to wholeheartedly "entrust" or "commit" Himself to them because He knew their hearts. Jn 2:24 indicates that Jesus looked for genuine conversion rather than enthusiasm for the spectacular. The latter verse also leaves a subtle doubt as to the genuineness of the conversion of some (cp Jn 8:31, 32+). This emphatic contrast between Jn 2:23, 24 in terms of type of trust, therefore, reveals that "**belief into His name**" **involved much more than intellectual assent**. It called for whole-hearted commitment of one's life as Jesus' disciple (cf. Mt 10:37; Mt 16:24-26)." (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#)) (Bolding added)

**Warren Wiersbe**: "The words **believed** in Jn 2:23 **entrusting** in Jn 2:24 are the same Greek word (pisteuo). These people believed in Jesus, but He did not believe in them! They were "**unsaved believers**"! It was one thing to respond to a miracle but quite something else to commit oneself to Jesus Christ and continue in His Word (Jn 8:30, 31+). John was not discrediting the importance of our Lord's signs, because he wrote his book to record these signs and to encourage his readers to trust Jesus Christ and receive eternal life" (Jn 20:30,31+) However, throughout the book, John makes it clear that it takes more than believing in miracles for a person to be saved. Seeing the signs and believing in them would be a great beginning; in fact, even the disciples started that way and had to grow in their faith (compare Jn 2:11 and Jn 2:22). (Check out a copy of [Be alive John 1-12: Get to Know the Living Savior](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

*These people had not accepted Him with saving faith,  
but rather they accepted Him as a powerful miracle worker.*

**Hindson** - Jesus remained in Jerusalem for the Passover, and many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles. The word used to express belief (Gr [pisteuo](#)) is used in the next verse ("entrusting" in John 2:24). But Jesus did not commit himself. Christ did not entrust Himself to them because they were not true believers. He concluded this because he knew all men. These were nominal ([in name only](#)) believers whose only interest was the miracles. He did not need their testimony for he knew what was in man. These people had not accepted Him with saving faith, but rather they accepted Him as a powerful miracle worker. (See online note in [King James Bible Commentary](#))

**Life Application Study Bible Notes** - The Son of God knows all about human nature. Jesus was well aware of the truth of Jeremiah 17:9, which states, "The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?" Jesus was discerning, and he knew that the faith of some followers was superficial. Some of the same people claiming to believe in Jesus at this time would later yell "Crucify him!" It's easy to believe when it is exciting and everyone else believes the same way. But keep your faith firm even when it isn't popular to follow Christ. (BORROW [Life Application Study Bible](#))

**David Guzik** - Many believed in His name when they saw the signs: Jesus knew that this was thin, superficial belief. It wasn't based on anything other than an admiration of the spectacular. Knowing this, Jesus did not commit Himself to them. "If belief is nothing more than admiration for the spectacular, it will create in multitudes applause; but the Son of God cannot commit Himself to that kind of faith." (Morgan) ([John 2 Commentary](#))

*It's the Word pointing to the Person of Jesus Christ that produces genuine faith*

**Jon Courson** - There are those who seek miraculous proof that Jesus is real and that He loves them. They search for physical, material, or financial verification of His reality. But theirs is a flimsy, faulty faith built upon a sandbar foundation because, as we will see, Jesus is not committed to those who demand a sign. You see, the problem with signs is that they're never enough. If you base your faith upon signs, you'll always be upset by the one that didn't happen—the prayer that wasn't answered, the healing that didn't come, the payment that didn't arrive. That is why our faith must be built and based not upon what Jesus does, but upon who He is. Who He is as revealed in the Word. That is why Paul says faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). It's the Word pointing to the Person of Jesus Christ that produces genuine faith. (See [Jon Courson's Application Commentary](#) scroll up and down for more comments)

**Reformation Study Bible** note - In biblical times the "name" summed up a person's character, activity, and place in God's purpose.

The faith of those mentioned here remained superficial, however, because they came to it only because "they saw the signs" (see Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties). For that reason, Jesus "did not entrust himself to them" (v. 24). 2:24, 25 Although Jesus did not exercise divine omniscience in the days of His flesh (11:34; Mark 13:32), He often displayed supernatural knowledge, important for His redemptive work, that indicated the divine endorsement of His claims and mission (1:48; Matt. 9:4; 17:27; Mark 11:2-4; 14:13-16). (Notes on [John 2:23](#), [John 2:24-25](#))

**Gerald Borchet** on John 2:23-25 - This section opens with a verse that indicates many "believed into" (the literal rendering of episteusan eis) his name when they beheld the "signs" (sēmeia; plural) he was doing. The Greek expression pisteuein plus eis is normally used for authentic believing. But the next verse indicates that Jesus did not "believe" (a likely translation of episteuen plus the dative) them. Some scholars have puzzled over the two expressions and have sought to argue for a distinction between the two Greek expressions by suggesting that there are here two different types of believing envisaged. [Particularly see Zane Hodges, "Problem Passages in the Gospel of John. Part 2: Untrustworthy Believers—John 2:23–25," *Bib* 135 (1978): 249–50. ED: BUT SEE [THE UNUSUAL TEACHINGS OF ZANE HODGES](#)] **But that is hardly the point. The real point is that Jesus did not believe their believing.** For people who have been brought up on a regular evangelical dose of hearing that humans determine their own destinies and that people become Christians by their believing, it is indeed salutary to remember that Jesus had something to say about what is acceptable believing. Because Jesus knew (ginōskein) what human beings are like, he was not confused about what was **authentic** or **unauthentic** believing. (See [John 1-11 - Page 168 - New American Commentary](#) - scroll up and down to show more text)

**J Vernon McGee:** The language that is used here is saying that He did not believe in them. You see, they believed in Him, but He didn't believe in them. In other words, to put it very frankly, their faith was not a saving faith, which He realized, of course. He knew what was in their hearts. This is always a grave danger today for those who say they believe in Jesus. What do you mean when you say you believe in Jesus? Do you mean that you believe in the facts of the gospel? The important question is: Do you trust Him as your Savior who died for your sins? Was He raised for your justification? Is He your only hope of heaven. (BORROW [John 1-10 - Volume 1](#))

**Henry Morris** notes that **entrusting** ([pisteuo](#)) "here is the same Greek word as "believe." ([pisteuo](#)) Although many in the Jerusalem crowd "believed in his name when they saw the miracles" (John 2:23), Jesus did not "believe" in them because He knew their hearts and knew their outward faith in Him was only superficial." ([Defender's Study Bible Notes](#))

**For He knew** ([ginosko](#)) **all men** - John frequently spoke of special insight possessed by Jesus (Jn 4:17; Jn 5:42; Jn 6:61, 64; Jn 13:1, 11; Jn 18:4). This of course speaks of the divinity of Jesus. (Mt 9:4+; Jn 16:30; Rev 2:23): **He knew all men** is a statement that was proven several times in John's Gospel. Jesus knew the character of Simon Peter declaring "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (Jn 1:42+). When "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" (Jn 1:47+). The Samaritan woman testified "Come, see **a Man Who told me all the things that I have done**; this is not the Christ, is it?" (John 4:29+). He knew that the Jewish leaders did not have God's love in their hearts (Jn 5:42+), and that one of His disciples was not truly a believer (Jn 6:64+). He saw the repentance in the heart of the adulteress (Jn 8:10,11+) and the murder in the hearts of His enemies (Jn 8:40ff+). Several times in the Upper Room message, Jesus revealed to His disciples their own inner feelings and questions. As you follow our Lord's ministry in John's Gospel, you see Him moving gradually out of the bright light of popularity and into the dark shadows of rejection (see Jensen's chart at top of page which depicts Jesus popularity). At the beginning, it was easy for people to follow the crowd and watch His miracles. But then, His words began to penetrate and convict their hearts, a point of decision for each person was reached, for conviction leads either to conversion or opposition. Conviction makes it impossible to be neutral about Jesus! People had to decide, and most of them decided against Him. You may say "I have not decided," but be aware (and wary) for such a statement is in fact tantamount to rejection (read and heed 2 Cor 6:2).

**THOUGHT-** [Melancthon](#) makes some very wise remarks on this verse, as to the example which our Lord sets us here of caution in dealing with strangers. It is a melancholy fact, which the experience of years always confirms, that we must not trust implicitly to appearances of kindness, or be ready to open our hearts to every one as a friend, upon short acquaintance. The man who does not hastily contract intimacies, may be thought cold and distant by some; but in the long run of life he will escape many sorrows. It is a wise saying, that a man ought to be friendly with all, but intimate with few. (J C Ryle)

**Leon Morris** has an excellent explanation writing that "To believe on the basis of the signs is to take as basic something we can see and to which we give weight on the basis of our experience. Jesus calls people to trust Him for what He is, not because He passes the tests we set. Those who had been attracted by the miracles would have been ready to try to make an earthly king of Him (cf. Jn 6:15). But he did not trust himself to them. **He looked for genuine conversion, not enthusiasm for the spectacular**" (NICNT-Jn - see context [John - Page 182](#) OR BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#)) (Bolding added)

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**DEFICIENT FAITH** Faith in Jesus can be deficient in at least two ways. The first occurs when we base our faith on the wrong motives. We should not believe in Jesus because of what he can do for us (or for what miracle he may have done for us); we should believe in him for who he is—the Christ, the Son of God. The second deficiency of faith pictures trust as a point of arrival rather than a point of departure. John described the disciples' attitude toward Jesus as belief, even though there was a great deal of room for growth. Either of these deficiencies leads to incomplete and immature faith. Does your faith rest on what Christ does for you or on who he is? (Borrow the [Life Application Commentary](#) - need to create an account so you can log in)

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Picture Prior to Evangelistic Tour

**ILLUSTRATION OF MODERN DAY "UNBELIEVING BELIEVER"** – ([Click more detailed discussion](#)) The picture above is from 1946 – do you recognize the man on the right? That's young Billy Graham! The man on the left is [Charles Templeton](#). But first let's back up! In 1936 at age of 19 Templeton after a night of partying experienced what he called a "profound change!" He said his life seemed "empty, wasted and sordid. It was though a black blanket had been draped over me. A sense of enormous guilt descended and invaded every part of me. I felt unclean." As he was kneeling at his bedside pleading "Lord come down. Come down." Then he said a weight was lifted off and "an ineffable warmth began to suffuse every corpuscle of his body." That was 1936. Then in 1941 Templeton founded a church in Toronto, Canada which grew quickly. In 1945 at Winona Lake, Templeton met with other your fundamentalist leaders including a young Billy Graham to found what we now call Youth For Christ International. It was Templeton who recommended that Graham become the organization's first evangelist. And together they toured the US and Europe (photo below is before their European trip). During the 1950's Templeton preached in 14 countries including to some crowds as large as 70,000. One Easter sunrise he preached to 50,000 in the Rose Bowl. It has been said had Templeton continued as an evangelist, we would be asking ourselves "Billy who?" Such was his power and influence. The National Association of Evangelicals in 1946 named Templeton one of the "best used of God." So what happened? Where is he today? Templeton said that the many years that he preached the Gospel he always doubted the Genesis account of Creation and he secretly rejected the Biblical teaching on divine judgment and hell. In 1957 after a long time of introspection he publicly declared himself to be an agnostic, someone who believes there is a God but cannot really know Him. In 1986 he published his spiritual memoir entitled "Farewell to God – My Reasons for Rejecting the Christian Faith." In this book he described his pilgrimage from Christian faith to agnosticism to atheism. How does this happen to one of the world's greatest evangelist, who had dedicated himself to preaching the Gospel and founded organizations to promote the Gospel and even to be an encourager to the man we see as the "poster boy" of evangelism, Billy Graham?

Here is a quote from **Templeton** spoken to Edward Babinski -

"When I finally shook free of Christianity, it was like being born again. I began to see all of life differently. The things that had once seemed important now seemed trivial. And things I'd never seen the meaning of or the essence of I began to appreciate for the first time." ([Leaving the Fold: Testimonies of Former Fundamentalists](#) by Edward Babinski who has a blog "debunking Christianity" - and so clearly I am not recommended his work but only linking to document the quote) ([Click more detailed discussion](#))

#### Related Resource:

- Counterfeit New Births - What the New Birth is Not!

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This section gives an excellent picture of saving faith, of what genuine faith is—of the kind of faith that really saves a person. (see Jn 6:66)

**1. Saving faith is not head knowledge, not just a mental conviction and intellectual assent** It is not just believing the fact that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. It is not just believing history, that Jesus Christ lived upon earth as the Savior just as George Washington lived upon earth as the President of America. It is not just believing the words and claims of Jesus in the same way that a person would believe the words of George Washington.

**2. Saving faith is believing in Jesus, who and what He is, that He is the Savior and Lord of life** It is a man giving and turning his life over to Jesus. It is a man casting himself upon Jesus as Savior and Lord.

**3. Saving faith is commitment—the commitment of a man's total being and life to Jesus Christ.** It is a man's commitment of all he is and has to Jesus. It gives Jesus everything; therefore, it involves all of a man's affairs. The man trusts Jesus to take care of his past (sins), his present (welfare), and his future (destiny). He entrusts his whole life, being and possessions into Jesus' hands. He lays himself upon Jesus' keeping, confiding in Him about his daily necessities and acknowledging Him in all the ways of life. He follows Jesus in every area and in every detail of life, seeking His instructions and leaving his welfare up to Him. It is simply

commitment of a man's whole being, all he is and has, to Jesus. (Jn 4:50—Heb 5:5-10.)

There are three steps involved in **faith** which alone saves, steps that are clearly seen in this passage. (See Ro 10:16-17 [for more discussion.](#))

1. There is the step of seeing (Jn 2:23) or hearing (Ro 10:16). A man must be willing to listen to the message of Christ, the revelation of truth.

2. There is the step of mental assent. A man must agree that the message is true, that the facts of the case are thus and so. But this is not enough. Mere agreement does not lead to action. Many a person knows that something is true, but he does not change his behavior to match his knowledge. For example, a man knows that eating too much harms his body, but he may continue to eat too much. He agrees to the truth and knows the truth, but he does nothing about it. A person may believe and know that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world and yet do nothing about it, never make a decision to follow Christ. This man still does not have faith, not the kind of faith that the Bible talks about.

3. There is the step of commitment. When the New Testament speaks of faith, it speaks of commitment, a personal commitment to the truth. A man hears the truth and agrees that it is true and does something about it (See commentary on James 2:14-26). He commits and yields his life to the truth. The truth becomes a part of his very being, a part of his behavior and life.

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**J C Ryle** - We are told that when our Lord was at Jerusalem, the first time, He "did not commit Himself" to those who professed belief in Him. He knew that they were not to be depended on. They were astonished at the miracles which they saw Him work. They were even **intellectually** convinced that He was the Messiah, whom they had long expected. But they were not "disciples indeed." (John 8:31.) **They were not converted, and true believers.** Their hearts were not right in the sight of God, though their feelings were excited. Their inward man was not renewed, whatever they might profess with their lips. Our Lord knew that nearly all of them were stony-ground hearers. (Luke 8:13+) As soon as tribulation or persecution arose because of the word, their so called faith would probably wither away and come to an end. All this our Lord saw clearly, if others around Him did not. Andrew, and Peter, and John, and Philip, and Nathanael, perhaps wondered that their Master did not receive these seeming believers with open arms. But they could only judge things by the outward appearance. Their Master could read hearts. "He knew what was in man."

**The truth now before us, is one which ought to make hypocrites and false professors tremble.** They may deceive men, but they cannot deceive Christ. They may wear a cloak of religion, and appear, like whited sepulchres, beautiful in the eyes of men. But the eyes of Christ see their inward rottenness, and the judgment of Christ will surely overtake them, except they repent. Christ is already reading their hearts, and as He reads He is displeased. They are known in heaven, if they are not known on earth, and they will be known at length to their shame, before assembled worlds, if they die unchanged. It is written, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." (Rev. 3:1+)

But the truth before us has two sides, like the pillar of cloud and fire at the Red sea. (Ex 14:20.) If it looks darkly on hypocrites, it looks brightly on true believers. If it threatens wrath to false professors, it speaks peace to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. A real Christian may be weak, but he is true. One thing, at any rate, the servant of Christ can say, when cast down by a sense of his own infirmity, or pained by the slander of a lying world. He can say, "Lord, I am a poor sinner, but I am in earnest, I am true. Thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee. Thou knowest all hearts, and thou knowest that, weak as my heart is, it is a heart that cleaves to thee." The false Christian shrinks from the eye of an all-seeing Saviour. The true Christian desires his Lord's eye to be on him morning, noon, and night. He has nothing to hide. ([John 2 Commentary](#))

**John 2:25 and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.**

NET John 2:25 He did not need anyone to testify about man, for he knew what was in man.

GNT John 2:25 κατι ο χρε αν ε χεν να τις μαρτυρ σ περ το νθρ που· α τ ς γ ρ γ νωσκειν τ ν ν τ νθρ π .

NLT John 2:25 No one needed to tell him what mankind is really like.

KJV John 2:25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

ESV John 2:25 and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

NIV John 2:25 He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.



ASV John 2:25 and because he needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man.

CSB John 2:25 and because He did not need anyone to testify about man; for He Himself knew what was in man.

NKJ John 2:25 and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

NRS John 2:25 and needed no one to testify about anyone; for he himself knew what was in everyone.

YLT John 2:25 and because he had no need that any should testify concerning man, for he himself was knowing what was in man.

NAB John 2:25 and did not need anyone to testify about human nature. He himself understood it well.

NJB John 2:25 he never needed evidence about anyone; he could tell what someone had within.

GWN John 2:25 and didn't need anyone to tell him about human nature. He knew what people were really like.

BBE John 2:25 He had no need for any witness about man; for he himself had knowledge of what was in man.

- **He did not need.** Jn 2:4. 4:32. 6:15. Mt 17:4. Mk 6:48. Lk 20:8. 22:49.
- **knew.** Jn 1:42, 47, 48. 4:17-19, 29. 5:42. 6:61, 64, 71. Jn 10:14, 27. 13:1, 11, 27, 28. 16:19, 30. Jn 18:4. 21:17. Ge 42:7, 8. 16:7. 1 Ki 8:39. 1 Chr 28:9. 2 Chr 6:30. Ps 40:17, 44:21, 139:2. Is 66:18. Ezek 11:5. Mt 9:4. 12:25. 17:25-27. 22:18. Mk 2:8. 12:15. Lk 5:22. 6:8. 9:47. 11:17.
- **what was in.** 1 Ki 8:39. Jer 17:10. Jer 20:12. Mk 7:21. Act 1:24. Rev 2:23.
- [John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JESUS KNOWS MEN'S HEARTS

**And because He did not need anyone to testify** ([martureo](#)) **concerning man** - NLT - "No one needed to tell him about human nature." Jesus did not need a human witness to reveal the heart of men, their innermost thoughts.

**For** ([gar](#)) is a straightforward term of explanation.

**He Himself knew** ([ginosko](#)) **what was in man** - This speaks of His omniscience and explains why no one needed to tell Him about human nature and at the same time revealed His divine nature. "This supernatural knowledge of man is a mark of deity. Some men of genius can read men better than others, but not in the sense meant here." (Robertson [Word Pictures](#))

**Vincent** on **knew** ([ginosko](#)) in the [imperfect tense](#) - The imperfect expresses continuance: He was all along cognizant as the successive cases presented themselves; thus falling in with the next words, "what was in the man," i.e., in each particular man with whom He had to do. No such characteristic as this was attributed to the gods of Paganism. "While, then, the gift of anything like general foreknowledge appears to be withheld from all the deities of invention, that of 'the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,' is nowhere found; nor was it believed of any member of the Olympian community, as it was said of One greater than they, 'He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man,' " (Gladstone, "Homer and the Homeric Age," ii., 366). **Robertson** adds " Imperfect active, "for he himself kept on knowing" as he did from the start." ([John 2 Greek Word Studies](#))

**THOUGHT** on **knew what was in man** - This means that our Lord, as God, possessed a perfect knowledge of man's inner nature, and was a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. We should remember Solomon's words in his prayer, "Thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men." (1 Kings 8:39.) The immense difference between our Lord and all ministers of His Gospel appears strikingly in this verse. Ministers are constantly deceived in their estimate of people. Christ never was, and never could be. When He allowed Judas Iscariot to be a disciple, He was perfectly acquainted with his character." (J C Ryle)

**Leon Morris** - This is to be understood in the light of the Old Testament view that God alone knows "the hearts of all men" (1 Kings 8:39). It involves an unobtrusive, but not unimportant, claim about the Person of Jesus. It is probably significant that "what is in the heart of his neighbour" is one of the seven things the rabbis thought of as hidden from people (Mekilta Exod. 16:32). John assigns



this knowledge explicitly to Jesus. Odeberg points out that in one place or another John attributes to Jesus knowledge of the other six as well (FG, p. 45). John clearly regards Jesus as possessed of a knowledge that is more than human, but just as clearly he does not regard this as vitiating his real humanity. Jesus' knowledge is derived from his close communion with his Father (Jn 8:28, 38; 14:10). (NICNT-Jn See context [John - Page 183](#) OR BORROW [The Gospel according to John](#))

**D A Carson** - Many commentators note the partial parallel to v. 25 in the Jewish commentary on Exodus, Mekhilta Exod. 15:23: 'Seven things are hidden from man—the day of death, the day of consolation, the depths of judgment, one's reward, the time of restoration of the kingdom of David, the time when the guilty kingdom [i.e. Rome] will be destroyed, and what is within another.' Scriptural proof for this final 'unknown' is elsewhere provided in Genesis Rabbah 65, viz. Jeremiah 17:10, 'I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind.' Even in this regard, then, Jesus, far from being limited like other human beings, does what God does (5:19, cf. SB 2. 412). (See context [The Gospel According to John](#))

**Believer's Study Bible** notes that "The contrast is between people who put their trust (pisteuo) in Jesus, and Jesus, who does not put His trust in people because He knows their motives and thoughts. Enthusiasm for the spectacular is present in them, but **Jesus looks for genuine faith.**" ([The Believer's Study Bible](#))

**J C Ryle** - In leaving the whole passage, I cannot help remarking what a faithful picture of human nature it exhibits, and how many are the ways in which human corruption and infirmity show themselves. Within the space of a few verses we find some openly profaning God's temple for the sake of gain,—some angrily demanding a sign of Him who shows zeal for purity,—some professing a false faith,—and some few only believing, but even these believing with a weak, unintelligent faith. It is the state of things which exists everywhere and always. ([John 2 Commentary](#))

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**To testify** (witness) (3140)([martureo](#) from [martus/martys](#) = witness = one who has information or knowledge of something and can bring to light or confirm something. English = **martyr**) in its most basic sense refers to a legal witness. Thus the verb **martureo** means to be a witness, to testify, to give evidence, to give testimony, to bear record, to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something. Testify relates to fact, not opinion, as in a courtroom setting. Uses of [martureo](#) in John's Gospel. First 5 uses refer to the witness of John the Baptist.- Jn. 1:7+; Jn. 1:8+; Jn. 1:15+; Jn. 1:32+; Jn. 1:34+; Jn. 2:25; Jn. 3:11+; Jn. 3:26+; Jn. 3:28+; Jn. 3:32+; Jn. 4:39+; Jn. 4:44+; Jn. 5:31; Jn. 5:32; Jn. 5:33; Jn. 5:36; Jn. 5:37; Jn. 5:39; Jn. 7:7; Jn. 8:13; Jn. 8:14; Jn. 8:18; Jn. 10:25; Jn. 12:17; Jn. 13:21; Jn. 15:26; Jn. 15:27; Jn. 18:23; Jn. 18:37; Jn. 19:35; Jn. 21:24

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### **Steven Cole - Saving faith begins with God by accepting His evaluation of our fallen hearts.**

The reason that Jesus didn't entrust Himself to these "believers" was that He knew what was in their hearts. But the implication is that they didn't know their own hearts. Since this section serves to introduce the interview with Nicodemus, he is an example. He thought that he was a good Jew, but Jesus stunned him by telling him that he needed to be born again. His goodness was not good enough to get him into the kingdom of God. Note two things:

#### **A. Only God truly knows the human heart.**

In 1 Samuel 16:7, the Lord tells Samuel, "For God sees not as a man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." Solomon prays (1 Kings 8:39b), "For You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men." (Also, see 1 Chron. 28:9; Ps. 139:1-18, 23-24; Jer. 17:10; Heb. 4:13.) So when John tells us that Jesus knew all men and knew what was in man, it is a witness to His deity. Jesus could peer beneath the surface and evaluate the thoughts and motives of hearts (Jn 1:47-48; 4:17-19, 29; 6:15, 64 16:30; 21:17; Luke 16:15). Now, here's the scary part:

#### **B. We need to ask the Lord to reveal His evaluation of our hearts to us.**

Proverbs 21:2 states, "Every man's way is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts." Jeremiah 17:9 says, "'The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?' When the Lord saves us, He gives us a new heart (2 Cor. 5:17), but the old man or flesh is not eradicated. There still lurks within us the bent to do evil. The problem is, we don't realize just how powerful and deceptive this monster within really is.

That's why Peter denied the Lord. He thought that he was stronger than he was. In fact, he denied the Lord's prediction of his denial because he thought he knew more than the Lord did! Later, when the Lord restored Peter with His threefold question, "Do you love Me?" the third time, Peter replied (Jn 21:17), "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." The Lord knows our hearts better than we know our hearts. We have to allow Him to reveal our hearts to us. He does this gradually (thankfully-we couldn't bear it all at once!) as we read and study God's Word. The more you see how weak and prone to sin you really are, the more you'll trust in the Lord to deliver you from temptation and sin.

If you've never done so, you must ask God to change your heart through the new birth. Christianity is primarily a matter of your heart

before God, not of rituals or keeping rules. As you walk openly before the Lord, letting His light shine into the dark places of your heart, you will grow in grace. If you're hiding some secret sin from others, remember, you aren't hiding it from the Lord. But you won't gain the victory over it until you expose it to Him. Until then, you're just playing games with yourself, because God knows the true condition of your heart.

So, we need to be careful because there is such a thing as superficial faith that does not result in salvation. Saving faith begins with accepting God's evaluation of us on the heart level.

### **3. Saving faith means having a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting Him as the One who saves you from your sins.**

Many people make a decision to follow Christ, but that decision is not an indicator of the new birth unless it springs from the right motive, namely, a desire to have our sins forgiven through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. R. V. G. Tasker (The Gospel According to St. John [IVP/Eerdmans], p. 65) wrote, "[Christ] regarded all belief in Him as superficial which does not have as its most essential elements the consciousness of the need for forgiveness and the conviction that He alone is the Mediator of that forgiveness."

**So, what does it mean for Jesus to believe in you, or to entrust Himself to you?** It has to do with a personal relationship. Trust is at the heart of all relationships. If you don't trust someone, you will not be close to him. You will keep him at arm's length, or just cut off all contact. To entrust yourself to someone, you must trust him. For Jesus to entrust Himself to you, He must trust you.

But how can He do that in light of our propensity to sin? First, there has to be the new birth where He imparts new life to us through the Holy Spirit. Only then is there anything in us worth trusting. Jesus did not entrust Himself to these superficial believers because He did not see their faith as the work of God stemming from the new birth.

Then, we need to walk in obedience to Him. In John 14:21, Jesus states, "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." He adds (Jn 14:23), "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him." The Lord entrusts Himself to those who obey Him and it is only those who have been born again who are able to obey Him from the heart (Rom. 6:17).

Some of the scariest verses in the New Testament are Jesus' words in Matthew 7:21-23: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'" These people professed faith in Jesus. They called Him "Lord." They were even involved in impressive ministries. But Jesus didn't know them personally. Their disobedience showed that although they "believed" in Jesus, He didn't believe in them. At the final judgment, Christ's evaluation of us will be the determinative factor. ([Does Jesus Believe In You?](#))

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**ILLUSTRATION** - Some people were touring a mint where coins are made. In the smelting area, there were caldrons of molten metal. The tour guide said that if a person dips his hand into water, someone could then pour the molten metal over his hand and he would not be injured or feel any pain. He asked a couple if they would like to prove the truthfulness of what he just said. The husband quickly replied, "No, thanks, I'll take your word for it." But the wife said eagerly, "Sure, I'll give it a try." Putting her words into action, she thrust her hand into a bucket of water and then held it out as the molten metal was poured over it. The hot liquid rolled off harmlessly, just as the guide had said it would. He then turned to the husband and said, "Sir, you claimed to believe what I said. But your wife truly trusted." (Adapted from, "Our Daily Bread," 12/84.)

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**JESUS KNOWS** It's easy to believe when there is excitement and everyone else seems to believe the same way. But sooner or later the opportunities will come to discover whether our faith is firm when it isn't popular to follow Christ. It is comforting to know that Jesus sees through our efforts to be more confident or perfect than we really are. In fact, we will not fully appreciate his grace until we recognize that he sees us and knows us exactly as we are, and he loves us anyway. Part of trusting Jesus is acknowledging that he understands us better than we understand ourselves. (LAC)