

The Miracles of Christ - Miracles of Water into Wine

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[0 : 0 0] I'm glad to have you here Chris but you you do need a warning about half of these guys play golf about half of them fish sometimes it gets pretty deep in here you just need to be warned about that are you a spring fielder okay well that's close enough if you're willing to have some of your yellow springs oh yeah absolutely absolutely we're we're grateful to have you here and let's let's have a word of prayer shall we once again father we pause to give you thanks for this new day the best way we can express our thanks is to give it back to you and ask you to be pleased to use us this day in any way that you see fit thank you for all that you've done for us through our Lord Jesus Christ and for the truth that lies ahead we ask for a facility of understanding it that is beyond our own thank you for providing the content for us and we pray that as we delve into it you will use it to edify each and every one of us we continue to pray this morning for Suji for Dave the situation they're facing difficulty involved we ask for increased alertness and awareness on the part of the technicians and physicians who are attending her we thank you for all this new technology that is made available that didn't exist a generation ago may it be applied to her in the best possible way thank you for the day ahead and all that it holds and for being at the center of it for the meal we'll enjoy together in Christ's name amen amen all right today in connection with the books the books that you've received we're going to begin our initial examination of the miracles and the very first one is the very first one and it's found in John's gospel so if you will turn to that please in John's gospel chapter 2 we will begin examining this in some ways it is what might actually be referred to as a premature miracle as a premature miracle now you wonder where in the world is that coming from and is there anything involving the almighty that can be premature or late or anything else and I'm not really prepared to fully answer that because it's way above my pay grade but we do have an interesting expression or there anything else and there anything else and there anything else that I think will surface that I think will surface that will cause you to wander and maybe allow your imagination to wander a little bit as mine does so far as we know and I think the text will indicate this that this is the first miracle that our Lord is going to perform out of about 30 plus that will be recorded in the scriptures but there will be many more in addition to that that in the scriptures. And John reminds us of that when he closes out his gospel in the very last chapter and the last couple of verses when he says, many other signs did Jesus in the presence of his disciples that are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may know that Jesus is the Christ and that through believing you might have life in his name.

So what we have is not all of the miracles that Jesus performed during that three year period, but we do have all that God saw fit to include in the sacred record. And that's what we're going to be examining. And this is the first of them. And the reason that I suggest that it, at least on the surface and to us humans, appears to be just a little bit out of sync or maybe premature will become obvious as we get into the text. First of all, they're going to be attending a wedding.

And a Jewish wedding 2,000 years ago was radically different from what we would perceive as a wedding today. So the first thing you have to do is dismiss all American traditions regarding weddings, brides and grooms and all the rest of it, because these folks were here a lot sooner than we were.

And what we have to do is try to bridge a cultural gap and get back into where they were and what was going on 2,000 years ago. And admittedly, that is not an easy thing to do. So a Jewish wedding 2,000 years ago generally lasted several days, sometimes a whole week. You can imagine the community, and by the way, these weddings were almost always attended by locals. These people were most, for the most part, within walking distance or maybe just a few miles away. There was a great deal of interrelation. I mean, you had to be very careful what you said about whom because they were probably related to somebody there. And that's the way these communities were. There was a lot of intermarriage and a lot of families, a lot of neighbors getting together, etc. So when they had a wedding, it was a big bash. It was a Jewish thing and all of the accoutrements that went with it. One of which was wine.

And the wine was for enjoyment. It was not for intoxication. Now, I know there are a lot of people, particularly in the Christian community, who are opposed of alcohol of any kind at any time.

[5 : 47] And generally speaking, I think that's probably a pretty good rule. But the Bible does not forbid the use of alcohol. It does forbid drunkenness, whereby an individual loses control of their faculties and is capable of doing something stupid that he wouldn't do if he were not under the influence.

But the Bible gives us numerous examples of people drinking wine, one of whom I'm convinced was our Lord. And it is not as some super fundamentalists would suggest that Jesus turned this into the most delicious grape juice that anybody ever drank. He turned it into wine. And it was recognized as wine.

And it was enjoyed as wine. And I cannot tell you what the alcohol percentage was, because we just don't know. But we do know that typically, the wine, the juice of the grape, once it was fermented, in the Jewish community, ordinarily was diluted with four parts water.

Sometimes more. Sometimes more than that. But that took the inebriation aspect pretty much out of it. And you would have to almost drink more than you could hold in order to become wacky.

You know? So that's not an issue here. And I think we can safely say without any qualification that it was wine and that it was real wine.

[7 : 18] And one of the reasons they did was because the water actually almost always needed some kind of purification. Because they didn't have the facility for, what's the word?

What's the word? Okay, making the water drinkable, potable. You know, they didn't have the ability to do that.

So they would mix the water with the wine and the alcohol in the wine, once it was fermented, would have a more sterile effect on the water and make it better to drink.

So that's what's taking place here. And ordinarily, the wine would flow freely. And ordinarily, there were several people in attendance. So far as we know, we are told here in the text, if you will look at chapter 2 of John's Gospel, and on the third day, and I'm not going to go into that, the first two days are more involved.

But on the third day, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. And the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the wedding.

[8 : 37] Again, we do not know for sure, but from all appearances, the discipleship or the apostolic band that would number 12 has not yet been completed.

Because this occurred very early in the earthly ministry of Jesus. And by very early, I mean only a short time before he had undergone the baptism by John.

And John bore witness that this is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, the dove descended, etc. And John tells us in chapter 1 of John's Gospel, which we'll not go back to, but John says, For the purpose of introducing the Messiah to Israel, I have come baptizing.

That was John's principal responsibility. And he baptized Jesus, and then we are told that he entered into this situation that we find here in chapter 2, after having just chosen a few disciples. And if you will look, for instance, in verse 35 of chapter 1, John, again, the next day, John, and this is not John who wrote this Gospel, this is John the Baptist, John was standing, and two of his disciples, and he looked upon Jesus as he walked and said, Behold, the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak.

These two disciples will be identified as two who will become two of Jesus' apostles. But right now, they're following John the Baptist.

[10 : 20] And the text says, they heard him speak. That is, they heard John speak. And they followed Jesus. Well, that would be a logical thing to do. Because the man you are following, John the Baptist, Jesus just publicly introduced this man, Jesus of Nazareth, to be the Messiah.

And it's only logical that they would leave following John and begin following the one John had identified. Of whom John would later say, He who comes after me is greater than me.

I'm not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoes. And of course, John was talking about Jesus. So here, John is losing two of his disciples, but he's not jealous.

Because he's already said, Jesus must increase, I must decrease. So he was pleased that these two disciples were leaving him and following Jesus.

Jesus turned and beheld them following and said unto them, What do you seek? And they said unto him, Rabbi, which translated means teacher, where are you staying?

[11 : 29] Now remember, this is a whole new situation. These two men had never laid eyes on Jesus before. But they are so impressed with John, who's identified him as the Messiah.

And they ask him, Where are you staying? And he said to them, Come and see. They came therefore and saw where he was staying. And they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, We have found the Messiah, which translated means Christ.

And he, that is Andrew, brought him to Jesus, that is his brother, Peter, Simon Peter. And by the way, Simon, Peter, and Cephas, all the same person.

And he said to him, You are Simon, the son of John. You shall be called Cephas. Some translate that Caiaphas, Cephas, which translated means Peter.

[12 : 43] All right, now we've got two disciples. We've got Andrew and Peter. And the next day we read in verse 43, He purposed to go forth into Galilee and he found Philip.

And Jesus said to him, Follow me. Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. And Philip found Nathanael and said to him, We have found him of whom Moses and the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

And Nathanael said to him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? And Philip said to him, You just come and see. So Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him and he said, Behold an Israelite in whom is no guile.

That's quite a compliment. He's saying, Here is an Israelite who is a straight shooter. Remember, this guy is honest as the day is long. He's a sincere man.

And Nathanael says, How do you know me? Jesus answered and said to him, Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.

[13 : 59] That's an interesting expression, when you were under the fig tree. What's he doing under the fig tree? He was under the fig tree because that's where his mama put him. I don't know if they had these little play pens back then, like we do today, where you plunk the little youngster down in so he can't get out, he can't hurt himself, and it's padded, and all the rest of it, you know.

But it was a frequent thing there for mothers to take their children and put them under the fig tree for the shade that it would provide, because the sun was almost always on them.

And that was a primary way of caring for the little ones. You just set them under the fig tree and the mother would be nearby and she'd go about doing whatever it was she was doing.

But it was a place for infants. And what Jesus is saying in response to Nathanael's question, How do you know me? I knew you.

I saw you when you were under the fig tree. That's a veiled reference to the preexistence of Christ. There wasn't a time when he didn't know him. So now we've got Peter and Andrew and Nathanael and Philip, four members recruited for this 12-member band that it's going to be.

[15 : 14] And I think we can probably safely say, although this is an assumption, that all four of them, plus Jesus, were going to be guests at this wedding.

They may have been last-minute add-ons. We don't know. And it's a possibility that they may have increased the number that was provided for, so there's going to be a little bit of a situation developed.

Can I quickly say something here? It almost looks like there's a miracle that just happened right there. I think it probably was. Jesus saw Nathanael in the tree, but he didn't actually see him with his eyes. He saw him as a spirit.

He saw him. He knew he was there. I think so, and that's precisely, that's at least what the text implies. He doesn't state it clearly so that we can take it to the bank, but I think that that's probably what is involved.

So when we come to chapter 2 then, an opening, on the third day, this, I take it, is the third day after the baptism by John.

[16 : 13] On the third day, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now, I don't have a map. I'll bring a map. I know some of you have maps in your Bible, but you need to understand that Cana is just a small town, a little burg, and it's in northern Israel.

It's in the region of Galilee where Jesus is from, although he was born in the tribe of Benjamin. He was born in Bethlehem, but he was reared in Nazareth.

So he is going to be referred to as a Galilean, and you've got to understand a little bit of the dynamics that were involved here culturally because Galilee was considered the hinterland.

And the negative thing about Galilee was it was right next door to Gentiles. You just step over the border from Galilee, and you're in Gentile territory, and you come south of the border, and you're in Samaritan territory.

So you're in a losing situation psychologically and culturally either way you go. We know that the Jews and the Samaritans have no dealing. So here is Galilee sandwiched in between Gentiles and Samaritans.

[17 : 38] And this is one of the reasons when Jesus was identified as we have found the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. Nazareth? That's in Galilee. Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?

Can any good thing come out? So it was a kind of a put down. He was wrong from the wrong side of the tracks. That's the way of looking. But this is where the wedding is going to be, and it was a joyous occasion.

And when Jews had weddings, they just pulled out all the stops, and there was dancing, and there was the Jewish dance, and the feasting, and the feasting, and the drinking, and the wine, and it flowed freely.

And now we've got what appears to possibly be five perhaps unexpected guests. And it seems as though one of the principles involved in this wedding is none other than the mother of Jesus.

This kind of leads me to believe, and I'm reading into the white spaces here, maybe relationships. The mother may very well, and Jesus himself may very well have been actually related to some of these people.

[18 : 44] We don't know, but that's a possibility. At any rate, they are a long way from town because Nazareth, where they're from, is considerable distance from Galilee.

Yet Mary, the mother of our Lord, is there. And we are told that, in verse 3, when the wine gave out, we don't know how many days that took for the wine to give out.

And I think, rather than saying, the wine gave out, maybe I'm going to read something into this, but I think, I don't think it was the idea that they're completely out of wine.

I think, the meaning is, they are really running low on wine, and they are in danger of exhausting the whole supply.

And to them, that would have been a cardinal embarrassment, a really faux pas. So, what is at risk here, is the possibility, of embarrassing the groom, because he was actually in charge, of the whole thing, and the groom, would assign, or sometimes even pay, depending on how well healed they were, they would pay one, to assume the responsibility, for being the master of the feast.

[20 : 03] And that was kind of like, I guess you could almost, kind of like a caterer, who's overseeing the whole thing, and seeing to it, that everything is in order, and he's engineering, and running the feast, as it were, so that those of the immediate family, can be relieved, of those responsibilities.

And Mary, is obviously, the mother of Jesus, is obviously, connected with these people, either by relationship, friendship, or something, because she becomes aware, of a very threatening situation, and she is concerned about it.

She does not want, the time, the occasion, to be ruined, for the bride and groom, because of the embarrassing situation, of running out of wine.

So, she came to Jesus, and said to him, they have no wine. Or, if you will, the wine is almost all gone.

And Jesus' response is, one that kind of takes us aback, because it almost appears, disrespectful, and unkind.

[21 : 11] He addresses his mother, woman, what is going on, about that? Well, a couple of things. One is, and this is just a Wiseman opinion, you can take it or leave it, but I suspect that Jesus, is speaking to his mother, not merely as her son, but as her Lord.

Jesus was a theanthropic person. That is, he was, and is, the God, man.

And, in his mannishness, in his humanity, he, of course, would address his mother, his mother. And I suspect that he is speaking here, from the standpoint, of his deity.

He's going to use that expression again, on the cross. Remember, hold it Joe. On the cross, when Jesus is about to expire, he turns, looks down, upon, his mother, and says, woman, behold your son.

And he was referencing, John. The disciple, who wrote John's gospel. What Jesus was doing, was relinquishing, the care and responsibility, for his mother, from himself, to John.

[22 : 44] And it may be, that of all the disciples, she was closest to John, in friendship, in association, maybe she knew him longer, or whatever, I don't know.

And then, he turns to, his mother, and says, woman, behold, your son. And he is referencing, John.

And I think we have, pretty good indication, although, a lot of tradition, you have to take, with a grain of salt, because it's not always, verifiable at all. But, I remember, when we visited, ancient Ephesus, the site of Ephesus, there, a remarkable, remarkable city, in old, ancient, Asia Minor, there is, a specific place there, that is labeled, and marked, and identified as, and believed by all of the locals, to have been, the residence, of John.

The apostle John. And you'll recall, John was the last, living, apostle, of the twelve. He was the one, who was isolated, on the Isle of Patmos, and he gave us, the book of the Revelation, as well as, his own gospel.

And, the tradition goes, that, John, provided for, cared for, gave housing to, assistance to, Mary, the mother of Jesus, there in, Ephesus.

[24 : 17] And that, she lived there, in Ephesus, with John, until she passed on. And John, so far as we know, was probably in his, maybe in his, 90's, when he passed on.

Which was very unusual, for one in that day, and age, to live that long. Now what did you have, Joe? You know, I just want to say, real quick, it tells us, next, can you read what, his mother said, that she knew, that God, that Jesus was divine.

She already knew that. Well I think, that's going to surface, that's going to surface. He's more than my son, he is my God, and my Lord. She knew that, but you can tell me. Well we don't know, exactly how much, she did know, but she did know this, and she implied this, that he could do something about it.

Right, exactly. Now the question is, is this an appropriate time, and place, for him to reveal, himself, publicly?

That seems to be, the issue here. And when he says, and she comes to him, and says, they're almost out of wine, you know. And Jesus says, well, that's, that's got nothing to do with us, what, what, what is that to us?

[25 : 26] That, in other words, that's not, that's not our responsibility, or my responsibility. And, I think it's, here we, we are deeply indebted, and we are grateful, for every line of scripture.

But, there are some things, that you cannot include, in writing. And one is, body language. When you're looking, at somebody, you can often read, an expression on their face, that's very difficult, if not impossible, to put down on paper.

And, I just wonder, I'd give anything, for the little exchange, that took place, between Jesus, and his mother, when he told her, oh, mine hour has not yet come.

Now, he's going to use that expression, a number of times. But, most often, it refers to, his crucifixion. That is, his hour, that will have come.

And that's, he'll, he'll identify that, later on, when he says, Father, the hour, is come. This is it. That he came, into the world for.

[26 : 43] But, that's three, or three and a half, years away. So, when Jesus says here, mine hour, has not yet come. My thinking is, he's talking about, the disclosure, of his public, ministry, and identity, that, this is not the time, or place for that.

that. And, I cannot duplicate, the expression, that I think, was on his mother's face, when he told her that, but I will try.

Woman, what is that to us? Mine hour, has not yet come. In other words, she's saying, yes, I know, I know, but, but, and, and Jesus, gets the message, and it is as if, he's saying, okay, you know, okay, Gary, what?

Is there anything, earlier in scripture, that indicates, that she would know, that he had that capability, to do? Well, like Joe said, there's every reason, to suspect, that she had, an extraordinary son, on her hands.

No doubt about that. We do not know, exactly, what she knew, or when she knew it, how privileged, she was of it, but you know, this goes all the way back, to his birth, the annunciation, the angels, the magi, when they came, and worshipped him, brought him the gifts, and, remember, when they took Jesus, into the temple, to offer sacrifice, because, she was in, Joseph and Mary, were in the position, that if they did not, redeem Jesus, then, they would have to take him, leave him to the temple, for the priest to care for.

[28 : 53] So, they offered, the sacrifice, that was required, for the first born child, because you see, the first born, belongs to the Lord. And, and, and, Hannah did that, when she had her first born, she promised the Lord, if you will give him to me, if you will give me a son, I'll give him back to you, all the days of his life.

And, God heard her prayer, and, she, took her son, after she weaned him, she took him to the temple, and turned him over, to the priests, and the priests raised him, and by the way, they did a bang up job, because, Samuel turned out, to be really something.

And, he grew up there, and he became, the priest gopher. Those little legs, would run errands, all over the place. And, and he grew up there, because, his mother, did not redeem him, and she gave him back, to the Lord.

So, Joseph and Mary, go into the temple, about, six weeks after Jesus is born, for the purpose of redeeming him, because they're not going, to hand him over, to the temple, to take care of him.

And remember, old Simeon is there, and Simeon sees Joseph, and...