

The Wedding At Cana: More Than Meets The Eye – John 2:1-12

John 2:1-12. We're studying the Gospel of John that we may believe. Believe and keep believing. Believe and live. And this week, we come to the wedding at Cana. Where, just like all weddings, there's more than meets the eye.

I remember saying to Becky one time during all the planning and preparation for one of our daughter's weddings, "What's the big deal? Why all the fuss? How hard can it be?" And very calmly, she stopped what she was doing, looked me in the eye, and with all due respect, said, "I think it would be better if you just didn't talk." And she was right.

Because there's far more to a wedding than meets the eye. From all the behind-the-scenes arrangements, to last-minute alterations, to all-out emergencies. Which is exactly the setting here in John 2. There was an emergency. And Jesus uses it to convey even *more* than meets the eye. More than what's *typically* true of a wedding.

Explanation

John 2:1-12 – [1] *On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.* "The third day" refers to the third day after Jesus went to Galilee. John 1:43. But far more than just a chronological indicator, it's a clue that something significant is about to happen. Because "the third day" is a recurring theme throughout the history of redemption when major events took place.

Like when Abraham took Isaac to be sacrificed. It happened on the third day (Gen 22:4). Or when God gave Israel the commandments at Mt Sinai; on the third day (Ex 19:11). King David rescued his family from the Amalekites, on the third day (1 Sam 30:1). Hezekiah was restored to health and worship, on the third day (2 Kings 20:5). Hosea said the exiles in captivity would be revived, on the third day (Hos 6:2). Esther went before the king to intercede for the people, on the third day (Est 5:1). And of course later on, Jesus himself rose again, on the third day (1 Cor 15:4).

It's a recurring theme throughout the history of redemption, to indicate that something significant is taking place. And this is no different. Especially so because of v2 – *Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples*. So the stage was set. Something's going down.

[3] *When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."* [4] *And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me?"*

Now, **woman** is not a label of dishonor. Like some people in *our* day use it. Rather, it's a polite way of getting her attention. Like he used it on the cross 3 years later. "*Woman, behold, your son!*" John 19:26. It was a polite, yet direct way of getting her attention and getting to the point.

Because he knew exactly what she was thinking and exactly what she wanted. "You're the Son of God and you can fix this. Why not?" And Jesus calls her on it. "*What does this have to do with me?*" "This isn't my problem to solve. Every opportunity is not a mandate."

Plus, he says in v4b – "*My hour has not yet come.*" His **hour**, referring to the time for him to fully reveal himself. It was still a ways off.

But Mary wasn't buying it. And applied even more pressure. V5 – *His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."* It's like she didn't even hear him. And isn't that just like a mom? There was a problem, her kid can fix it, let's go.

But it put him between a rock and a hard place. Wanting to honor his mother, while also honoring his Father. Honoring God's *plan* for his life. The hour *appointed* for him to fulfill all righteousness, all that was needed.

So in true Jesus form, he found a way to do both. To help his mom and bless the wedding, and honor his Father by remaining in the background. Not getting ahead of himself.

V6 – *Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.* The Old Testament Law required all *kinds* of ceremonial purification, and washing before you ate was one of them. Symbolizing your inward cleansing, just like your outward. That's probably why the jars were there.

[7] *Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim.* [They didn't skimp and they didn't delay.] [8] *And he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it.*

[9] *When the master of the feast [someone usually hired by the bridegroom, like a caterer in our day] 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 [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."*

Given his subservient role to the bridegroom, it was probably an expression of admiration. Like, "Wow! You've kept the best for last. You're something."

[11] *This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.* The point of the entire book. His followers believed. A refrain we're going find over and over again, that *we* might believe.

[12] *After this (Map 11, ESV Study Bible) he went down to Capernaum [down, even though Capernaum was northeast of Cana; because Cana was in the hills and Capernaum on the shore of the sea of Galilee], with his mother and his brothers and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days.* (ESV) His brothers, referring to some of his siblings born to Mary *after* Jesus. (Mt 12:46 et al)

That's the passage. And to say there's more than meets the eye here, is an understatement. Because there are four perspectives, four viewpoints, that reveal far more than just the facts. Far more than just the explanation.

And it's all based on the word **signs**. Did you see it? V11 – *This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee.* The first of *seven* signs in the following chapters (John 2-11). Six of them named as such. Signs, to reveal his greatness and inspire our belief.

Because *signs*, by definition, signify or "sign-ify" something greater. They point to something bigger. Something deeper. Something more, than meets the eye.

Like, for instance, the sign of Jonah. Who spent three days in the belly of a great fish to signify the time Jesus spent in the grave (Mt 12:38-42). Or how about the tabernacle? Serving as a sign, or copy, of heaven. Heb 9:24. They were *signs* of something greater.

Same here. The wedding at Cana is a sign of something greater than what meets the eye.

Starting with this:

Historically, it's an indicator of the power and glory of Jesus.

That's the first perspective from which to see all this. The miracle Jesus does, of turning water into wine, is an indicator of his power. His power to change the molecular structure of *water*, and his power to provide more than we could ask or imagine. His power over all the *universe*, and his power over us. Because we're part of it.

Historically, from our perspective 2000 years later, the wedding at Cana was an indicator of Jesus' power.

And, his glory. V11 – *This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory.* Displayed his greatness. Demonstrated his majesty. Supporting John's claim in 1:14, that *we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.* They *knew* it, his disciples *knew* he was God in the flesh, but they hadn't seen proof. They hadn't seen miracles. Until now. Until the wedding.

So historically, the wedding at Cana is an indicator of the power and glory of Jesus, that we may believe. Believe and *keep* believing. Believe and live.

Second, the second perspective that reveals more than meets the eye, is that . . .

Spiritually, it's a commentary on the difference between the Covenants.

By calling this a *sign*; and using wine, and purification jars, and a wedding to convey it; Jesus is indicating a shift in the ages. A movement from the Old Covenant to the New. Which makes this a commentary on the *difference* between the two.

We have to be careful we don't stretch it too far; especially since the analogy isn't explicit; but once you see the references, once you see the allusions, it's hard to avoid.

Like **Amos 9:13–14** – [13] “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when . . . the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. [14] . . . they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit.

Given that prophecy, and the abundance of wine at the wedding, it's hard to avoid the implication that the Old Covenant, the *old* way of relating to God was drawing to a close, and the New Covenant was about to be opened. Represented by wine and the lack thereof, the old way of austerity was yielding to the new way of abundance. Futility was giving way to victory.

Same for the purification jars. Representing the *emptiness* of the Old, versus the *fullness* of the New. And the *rituals* of the Old versus the *realities* of the New. Outward symbolism versus inward change. Stale water versus fine wine.

The whole event is a commentary on the covenants. The Old has gone, the New has come. (2 Cor 5:17) The Old is wanting, the New is fulfilling. The Old is lacking, the New is

plentiful. The Old is drudgery, the New is joyful. The Old is temporary, the New is forever. The wine will *never* run out. The celebration *never* cease.

That's the second perspective. *Way* more than meets the eye.

Third, is that . . .

Prophetically, it's a foreshadowing of present and future realities.

Present, because some of it is already happening. Right here in the church. Referring to the reality represented by the *bridegroom*. The guy who was commended for waiting to bring out the good wine. Waiting until *later* in the party.

Except in this case, it was Jesus who did it. Jesus took the place of the actual bridegroom, by doing what was normally reserved for *him*. Not literally of course, in the wedding, but prophetically. His actions foreshadowed his role as the bridegroom of the church. The provider for the church. The husband of the church.

So this event is a prophetic foreshadowing of something . . .

• **Present, in that Jesus himself is the bridegroom**

Right now. Like it says in Eph 5. Drawing on the analogy between husbands and wives, it says that Christ is the head of the church. Just like a husband. A bridegroom. And Christ *loves* the church. Christ gave himself *up* for the church. Christ nourishes and cherishes the church. Just like a good husband nourishes and cherishes his wife.

So the wedding at Cana foreshadowed something that's now a reality. That Jesus is our bridegroom.

But it also foreshadows something . . .

• **Future, at the marriage supper of the Lamb**

The endless celebration of our union with Christ, on the new heavens and new earth, at the end of the age. The very thing the Apostle John heard and saw a few years later when he wrote the book of Revelation. Reporting in chapter 19 that a great multitude will cry out, “Hallelujah! . . . for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready.” (7) His *bride*, referring to us. The church.

And an angel said, “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the lamb.” (Rev 19:9) The endless celebration with Christ for all eternity.

And he wasn't the only one who saw such things. Isaiah said the same in **Is 25:6-9** – *On this mountain [representing God's kingdom] the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. . . . [9] It will be said on that day, “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”*

It's a prophecy first spoken 725 years *before* Christ, that God reiterated 65 years *after* Christ; when he gave the Apostle John the vision of Rev 19. And in between, Jesus foreshadowed it with a little teaser. A little wedding in Cana with the best wine ever made, to whet our appetite for a future reality. A wedding celebration that will never end.

That's the third perspective from which to see far more than meets the eye. Prophetically, the wedding at Cana is a foreshadowing of present and future realities.

And last, the last perspective, is that . . .

Personally, it's an example of the blessings that follow faith and obedience.

Faith, shown by the mother of Jesus; and obedience, shown by the servants.

If this was the first miracle Jesus did, like it says in v11, that means it was the first his mom had seen as well. She knew who he *was*. She knew he was the *Savior*, the Messiah, a light for the Gentiles. She knew he was gifted; capable of conversing with the religious leaders at the age of 12. But she never saw any miracles.

And yet, she believed. For 30 years, she believed. She had faith. Saying to him in v3 – “*They have no wine.*” And to the servants in v5 – “*Do whatever he tells you.*” Those are statements of faith. All because she believed who he was, and that he could very well do what was needed. She had faith.

And the blessings followed. The wine flowed. A personal example that blessings *always* follow belief. **Blessings always follow faith.** They do. They may not be material blessings, like it was for the wedding; and they may not follow right away; but they'll come. From the blessing of salvation, to the blessing of fellowship, to the blessing of peace, love, joy, and all the rest.

That's why we can sing “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.” Because they always do. All because of our faith, apart from sight.

Not only that, but **obedience always brings blessing** as well. Like the *servants* found when they did what Jesus said. V7 – *Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. [8] And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” So they took it.* He commanded, and they obeyed.

And the result, was blessing. Blessing for them in witnessing a miracle and seeing his glory, and blessing for those around them in savoring God's best.

Don't skimp on your obedience. And don't delay. If you want maximum blessing, practice maximum obedience. It's a personal example for our personal lives. And the fourth perspective from which to see so much more than meets the eye. See and believe.

Prayer – God, open our eyes to see the glories of your word and the glory of your Son. Give us a greater appreciation for the covenant in which we stand, and the realities we enjoy. And spur us on to greater faith and obedience. Greater belief. Counting our blessings, and praising you for them.

You Are Loved.