



# Disciplers Bible Studies

JOHN  
LESSON 3

## The New Wine and New Temple John 2:1-25

### Introduction

In Chapter 1 we had a glorious overview of the totality of Jesus Christ in all of His divine dimensions. We also were introduced to John the Baptist, the remarkable forerunner and identifier of the Son of God to the Jewish multitudes. Jesus then started assembling the men who would be a part of His unique team to begin His public ministry. Thus, John has given us a divine springboard to launch into the Book of Public Ministry and Miraculous Signs.

In Chapter 2, we see Jesus turning water to wine and cleansing the temple. In both of these stories Christ is alluding to a judgment on the old order of Jewish worship and pointing to a new age that He is bringing (Hebrews 10:20).

The creation of wine from water was a supernatural sign to help the bridegroom and to demonstrate Jesus' power and authenticity to His disciples, mother and a few servants. The second part of Chapter 2 takes place during the Passover in Jerusalem and deals with Jesus cleansing the temple of wrongful business activities. There is a tendency to confuse this action with another "cleansing" which is covered in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-46), and which happened at the beginning of the last week of His earthly life. Even though some modern scholars think that there was only one "cleansing", the two different events are explained by the fact that the Synoptic writers were embodying the Galilean tradition whereas John wanted to supplement the Gospel accounts with a record of Christ's early ministry in Judea.

### Outline of John 2:1-25

- I. First Sign: The New Wine
- II. The New Temple
- III. Memory Verse

### I. The New Wine (2:1-12)

#### A. The Setting of the Sign (2:1-5)

##### 1. Cana

The first part of Chapter 2 occurs in the town of Cana where Jesus' first miracle took place. It is meaningful to note that Jesus chose a place of rejoicing, not a place of mourning, to first demonstrate His transforming power and beneficent grace. He came, not only to comfort our sorrows, but to bless our happiness and joy. He brought us, not only peace in times of adversity, but "joy inexpressible and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8).

##### 2. A Semi-private Celebration

Interestingly, the event is a semi-private wedding where Jesus, His mother and disciples are all present. We may surmise that the wedding involved some relative or close friend of Jesus' family since His mother held a special place at the affair. She felt responsible when the wine ran out. She also had the authority to order the servants to do whatever Jesus told them.

##### 3. Weddings in Jesus' Day

Weddings were quite different in those days in Palestine than our weddings today. The wedding feast preceded the wedding itself, and was much longer than a day. The host, the bridegroom in this instance, supplied the food and wine and the guests enjoyed, rejoiced and celebrated.

##### 4. Deeper Need Than Wine

So, when Jesus' mother said, "*They have no wine,*" it suggested to Him a much deeper need of humanity. Christ's answer to His mother, "*What is that to you and me?*" indicates that His concern was very different than hers - so different that neither she nor any other human being can share it.

##### 5. Jesus' Compassion and Sympathy

The setting in vs. 5 was a joyous occasion, financed probably by a humble family who suddenly faced

one of those disasters of daily life – the kind of thing that causes shame and embarrassment, and maybe a sense of inferiority. Jesus showed His compassion and sympathy for the host and worked this first sign to manifest His glory.

### B. The Symbolism of the Sign (2:6-8)

The symbolism represented in these verses is:

- Water is the whole ancient order of Jewish ceremony which Christ would replace with something better;
- Old Wine is the old order of Jewish religion;
- New Wine symbolizes spiritual joy. In Luke 5:38, Jesus spoke of His teaching as “new wine”;

In the Old Testament, prophets sometimes used wine to symbolize an intense joy and heart satisfaction in God Himself.

### C. The Significance of the Sign (2:9-11)

#### 1. A Supernatural Miracle

The turning of the water to wine is both simple in its substance and profound in its meaning. It is not a meaningless exhibition of Christ’s divine power, but a supernatural miracle of deep significance.

As R.V.G. Tasker writes in the Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, “Some critics have compared this “luxury” miracle, as they have termed it, very unfavorably with the merciful acts of healing performed by Jesus. Was it really necessary, they have asked, to supply a wedding party with such an abundance of wine? And even though the host was helped out of an embarrassing situation, can it honestly be said that the miracle bestowed any lasting benefit on those who were present? But these are the wrong questions to ask; for none of the miracles of Jesus were kind actions to alleviate human distress and nothing more. They were, as this Gospel invariably calls them, signs displaying the glory of Jesus and the wonder of His redeeming love.”

#### 2. Sign Points of Salvation

The primary significance of this sign is that new wine was lavishly offered and freely provided to signify the full salvation to be won by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Christ came to fulfill and terminate the old order of Judaism with its austere legalism and external formalities, and to replace it with a new worship in Spirit and in truth. The new way is a joyous exhilarating of the Christian gospel (Hebrews 10:19-20).

### 3. New Joyous Life in Christ

The old wine, which had run out, was the old order of things: the Jewish religious life where people tried to keep the Ten Commandments and failed. The new wine is a new creation produced completely by Christ, showing that He came to give new birth and new life to men and women. It is this new joyous life in Christ which is infinitely better than the old.

Verse 11 is especially meaningful in pointing out the impact of this sign miracle on His disciples, “*This beginning of signs Jesus did in Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.*”

### 4. The Visit to Capernaum (2:12)

After the wedding, Jesus, His mother, His brothers and His disciples went down to Capernaum and stayed a few days.

## II. The New Temple (2:13-25)

### A. The Cleansing of the Temple (2:13-17)

#### 1. The Celebration of Passover

Following the short stay in Capernaum, the Passover was soon to be celebrated. It was the duty and privilege for every Jewish male who lived within 20 miles of Jerusalem to go to the Temple at least three times per year for special Jewish feasts.

The main celebration was the Passover. Every Jewish worshiper had to come to the Temple before God with either a bullock, lamb or dove, according to his financial standing. These animals or birds were offered as burnt offerings or trespass offerings for sin.

Established in Mosaic law, these sacrifices had been ordained by God to prefigure the true sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, for the sins of the world. By this symbolism, God would prepare His people to understand the Lamb of God, Jesus, and His mission.

#### 2. Sacrificial Animals and Money Exchange

The animal sacrificed had to be examined by the priests to make sure it was a healthy, unblemished animal. The priests would declare all animals unfit, thereby forcing worshipers to buy “clean” animals provided by the Temple at exorbitant prices.

In addition, there was a Temple tax which the priests charged every worshiper as another source of lining

their pockets with income. This tax amounted to half a shekel, a Jewish coin. Many worshipers from other areas had to exchange their money for the Jewish shekel because only the shekel could be offered as a gift to God. The Temple moneychangers charged excessive exchange rates and fleeced the poor pilgrims who came to worship God with foreign currency.

This selling of sacrificial animals and exchanging money at exorbitant prices was shameful. And it all took place right in the area of God's own Temple - a place called the Court of the Gentiles.

### 3. Jesus' Reaction

Jesus' reaction to seeing His Father's house used as a place of merchandising and dishonest practices was severe anger. He made a whip of cords, upset their tables and drove the moneychangers out. The majesty of God and Jesus' divine authority must have been clearly visible because no one dared resist Him. The sellers and animals also were driven out of the Temple leaving overturned tables, foreign coins and shekels scattered on the floor.

When questioned by the Jews about His authority to do this, Jesus told them, "*Destroy this temple (meaning His body), and in three days I will raise it up.*" In effect, Christ was telling them that the old Jewish order of religion with its corrupt priests and moneychangers was being replaced by His new way and new life. He was and is the foundation of the New Temple.

## B. Response to Jesus' Cleansing

### 1. The Reaction of the Jews

The response of the Jews was clearly one of disgust and unbelief. If they had been right with God, they would have seen the correctness of Jesus' attack. They would have appreciated that He may have been the Messiah because of His courage to interrupt the shameful activity and sacrilege that had disgraced their Temple for so many years. Instead of that reaction, they said, "*What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?*" Jesus answered the Jews, "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*"

They could not comprehend these words, thinking only of the physical construction and time to rebuild this same structure.

### 2. The Reaction of the Disciples (2:17, 21-22)

Jesus' righteous anger and divine display of power and courage deepened the disciple's inner conviction that He was indeed the Messiah. They remembered Psalm 69:9 which points out that the Messiah would be burned up with zeal for His Father's house.

Christ's astonishing words to the Jews about destroying this temple and in three days raising it up did not register with the disciples until He had risen from the dead. Then they knew He was speaking of the Temple of His own body.

Jesus Christ is the true Temple of God. Similarly, all who believe in Him and receive Him in their hearts are temples of God. 1 Corinthians says, "*Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*" God lives in the hearts of those who believe through the entrance of the Holy Spirit. In the church age, God's temple is His true church.

Jesus knew that soon the Jewish Temple would be gone. He told the Samaritan woman in Chapter 4:21, "*The hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.*" This symbolism of the Temple was intended to point to Him. After His death, resurrection and ascension, the Jewish Temple would no longer be needed.

## Application

There is a direct application here of Christ cleansing the Jewish Temple and our own need for Christ to cleanse our temples. Are you keeping your temple, your body and mind, in an honoring and pleasing posture toward God? Have you acknowledged that you need cleansing? Do any of the rooms of your temple need to be turned over by Jesus and cleansed thoroughly of such things as pride, loss of temper, selfishness, critical spirit, grumbling, lust or other sins?

### 3. The Reaction of many others in Jerusalem (2:23-25)

In Vs. 23, we note that at the Passover feast "*Many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did.*" Jesus apparently performed other supernatural miracles in Jerusalem that John did not include in his Gospel (See 20:30).

### C. Marginal Believers

Interestingly, in Vs. 24, Jesus was not entrusting Himself to these professing believers. He understood their hearts and knew that their faith and allegiance was marginal. The only men and women who Christ takes into the inner depths of His person and purpose are those who are absolutely sincere and child-like in their faith and trust - those who are genuinely conscious of their need for forgiveness and are convicted that Jesus alone is the Mediator of that forgiveness.

#### **Application**

From this Scripture we should note very carefully and thoughtfully that Jesus Christ knows precisely and accurately the sincerity and genuineness of our hearts, minds and souls toward Him. He knows exactly whether you and I are totally surrendered to Him as Lord and Savior, or if we are acting or kidding ourselves. He knows if we are professing Christians or real Christians (Matthew 7:22-23; Luke 6:46). Are you the same person Monday through Saturday as you are at church on Sundays and at Disciplers Bible Studies?