

That You May Continue to Believe...



AN Exposition of the gospel of John

Wedding at Cana & Cleansing of the Temple John 2:1-25

The Gospel of John was written with a purpose. It was written to encourage first century Jewish Christians to continue to believe in Jesus Christ.¹ You see, nearing the end of the first century, Jewish believers were under intense pressure to forsake the Savior and return to the synagogue and to Judaism. John the Beloved wrote his gospel to encourage them to stick with Christ. Now to accomplish his goal, he employed different stories and events involving Jesus to remind his readers of Jesus' glory and just how worthy He was of their worship. Still, his method was not primarily to overload them with miracles. There are some miracles, of course. But the book doesn't contain as many miracles as the other gospels. That fact, in and of itself, doesn't diminish the idea of the miraculous things Jesus did in His earthly ministry. But it does tell us something about John's design and intention. Listen to John 21:24.

^{ESV} **John 21:24**...This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true. ²⁵ Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

Now, I think what is clear from John 21:24 is that John could have written a lot more. I think it is clear that John picked out the things that he wrote intentionally. That is, he wrote with a purpose in mind. John 20:31 explains what that purpose was.

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

To sum up, John was not nearly as concerned with the quantity of the miracles Jesus did as he was with what some specific miracles actually said about Jesus. Nowhere is that more clear than in the two stories that are contained in John 2.

The two stories that we will be looking at this morning, the wedding at Cana and the cleansing of the temple, are very different from each other. Still, it is that distinctiveness from each other that makes them work so well in the same chapter. I mean think about it. One story, the story of the wedding at Cana, is the story of a wedding in a small rural community in Galilee. The other story, the story of the cleansing of the temple, not only takes place in the capital city of Jerusalem but also takes place in the most holy spot in the city of Jerusalem.

One scene, the wedding at Cana, is a scene of intense joy and belief. The other scene, the cleansing of the temple, is a scene of tumultuous judgment made even more tragic by hardened hearts and rampant unbelief.

The one story is the story of a lack that Jesus makes up. The other story is a story of excess that Jesus thins out.

In the first story, the wedding at Cana, Jesus acts behind the scenes and only the lowliest of servants comprehend the enormity of the miracle He accomplished. The second story, the story of the cleansing of the temple, is done in the sight of the nation and its religious leaders. And even though it is done in their sight, they cannot comprehend either what Jesus was doing or why He wanted to do what he did.

Having said all that, let's look together at the first story in John 2:1-12.

^{ESV} **John 2:1**...On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples.

Now the initial words, **"on the third day"** ought to get your attention right off. The reason for that is not related to the "third day" of the resurrection or anything like that. The reason it is important is because John has made it a point to spell out the chronology of events. Let me show you what I mean.²

^{ESV} **John 1:19**...And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, **"Who are you?"** (Monday) (Day 1)

^{ESV} **John 1:29**...The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, **"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!..."**(Tuesday) (Day 2)

^{ESV} **John 1:35**...The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, (Wednesday) (Day 3)

^{ESV} **John 1:39**...He said to them, **"Come and you will see."** So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. ⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "**We have found the Messiah**" (which means Christ). (Thursday) (Day 4)

^{ESV} **John 1:43**...The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "**Follow me.**" (Friday) (Day 5)

^{ESV} **John 2:1**...On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. (Sunday) (Day 7)

Now, I am not trying to emphasize that the events took place on particular days of the week. The only thing I am trying to emphasize is that one week has been completed since the announcement of John the Baptist. The theme of completion is going to be important in John 2:1-12. It may be that the author is trying to call to mind the initial week of creation; I'm not sure. The one thing that seems clear is that a week has transpired and the fact that it has transpired is important.

The other point is that Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding. It is possible that Mary may have already been at the wedding (ἦν...imperfect...*was*) and that Jesus and His disciples joined (ἐκλήθη...aorist...*was called*) the wedding celebration already in progress. The extra strain of Jesus and His five disciples (Andrew, unnamed disciple...John, Simon Peter, Philip and Nathanael) may have contributed to the wedding running short of wine or it may have been poor planning on the part of the hosts. What is clear is that Jesus' mother (the name Mary is never used in John) wanted Him to know that that the wine had run out. Look at verse 3.

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

Now, it may have been that Mary was helping with the wedding. It may have been that the wedding was that of one of their relatives (an idea that seems all the more likely since Jesus' disciples were also invited). Ancient Jewish wedding celebrations could last up to a week and running out of wine or food was the ultimate social faux pas. What seems clear is that Mary wanted Jesus to know about the problem and clearly expected Him to do something about it. I can say that based on both the text that lies before us and a vast history of personal experience. Women, even the most godly, precious women, are not apt to relate details to the men in their lives simply for the sake of relating details. When a woman relates the details of some problem to a man, it means that she expects him to do something. When she says, **"Mother's trees really need to be trimmed."** She is not just passing on information for the joy of passing on information. She is saying, **"I want you to do something about Mother's untrimmed trees, now."**

It is not clear here however what Mary wanted Jesus to do but she wanted Him to do something and no I am not reading anything into the text here as the following verse makes clear.

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

Now the answer that Jesus gave to His mother is a strange one. There is a sense in which it is clearly a rebuke. First of all, He purposely chooses not to call her mother. The term He uses is not disrespectful; it is in fact, rather courteous. But it is courteous in a way that distances Him from Mary. The NIV translation of **"Dear Women"** has too much affection in it. The KJV and ESV translation of **"Woman"** sounds more harsh than it ought. I think the right amount of distance

is communicated by the phrase, **“Madam”** or perhaps better by the East Texas variant, **“Ma’am.”**³

The other phrase translated by the NIV as **“why do you involve me”** is literally **“what is that to thee and me?”**⁴ The same phrase is used elsewhere in the Old Testament.⁵

ESV 2 Samuel 16:10...But the king said, **“What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the LORD has said to him, ‘Curse David,’ who then shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’”**

ESV 1 Kings 17:18...And she said to Elijah, **“What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!”**

ESV 2 Chronicles 35:21...But he sent envoys to him, saying, **“What have we to do with each other, king of Judah? I am not coming against you this day, but against the house with which I am at war. And God has commanded me to hurry. Cease opposing God, who is with me, lest he destroy you.”**

ESV Judges 11:12...Then Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites and said, **“What do you have against me, that you have come to me to fight against my land?”**

It is also used in the New Testament. In Mark’s Gospel, it is used by demons in their pleas to Jesus.⁶

ESV Mark 1:24...**“What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are--the Holy One of God.”**

ESV Mark 5:7...And crying out with a loud voice, he said, **“What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.”**

The idea behind the phrase can be either (1) the recognition that there is some point of contention between two people, or (2) the recognition that one person does not want to be drawn in to the concerns of another. I think it is this second manner in which Jesus is responding. His response telling her, "**My time has not yet come**" indicates to me that Jesus has His own agenda and that is a point that I think is strengthened by his use of the word "**Ma'am**" rather than "**mother**".

The idea is that He is now in a new relationship to His mother. It is not clear if she wanted Him to vindicate her character somehow or to step forward and show Himself to be the Virgin-born King of Israel. But he makes it very clear that He is fulfilling someone else's agenda, namely the Father's and that neither she nor anyone else is going to dictate to Him what He is to do or when He is to do it.

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

The interesting thing is Mary's response in spite of the fact that He clearly tells her He does not want to get involved. I think that is something you see elsewhere in the gospels.

^{ESV} **Matthew 15:22**...And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "**Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.**" ²³ But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "**Send her away, for she is crying out after us.**" ²⁴ He answered, "**I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**" ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, "**Lord, help me.**" ²⁶ And he answered, "**It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.**" ²⁷ She said, "**Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.**" ²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, "**O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.**" And her daughter was healed instantly.

But Jesus always seemed to respond to faith, to belief, to confidence in Him. I think that even here John is trying to get his readers to see that faith in Jesus never leads to disappointment.

Anyway, the point is that Mary still expects Him to act. Now, I have no idea whether she had ever seen Jesus do a miracle before or not. There are all kinds of apocryphal stories about Jesus in His youth doing miracles like makings doves out of clay⁷ and the like but they are just that apocryphal. The Scripture never tells us whether He had ever done any miracle before this time or not. What it does tell us is that this is the first miracle that was to be construed as a sign.

One other point, a few Catholic commentators have made a huge point out of Mary's role here a mediatrix. That is, they go to seed on Mary's ability to get what she requested from Jesus and encourage the faithful to intercede through her to Jesus as opposed to directly appealing to Christ. There is great danger in doing that...and based on the text it could be argued that there were a lot of potential mediators in the New Testament better suited to that particular task than Mary. Remember in John, she is nameless. Now let's look at verse 6.⁸

^{ESV} **John 2:6**...Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷ 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.

There were nearby six waterpots each about the size of an old-time galvanized trashcan. They were made out of stone, which meant that they were not easily defiled under the standards of the ceremonial law. Jesus told the servants to fill

them up and they complied by filling the waterpots up to the brim. The six waterpots would have held between 150 and 180 gallons of water. Then Jesus told to draw some out and to take it to the master of ceremonies of the wedding. They did what he told them.

Now, I know that you know that Jesus changed this water in wine. But here is a question I want to ask, **“Where does it say that?”** Now, I do believe that that is what happened. I believe He changed the water into wine and, in fact, it does say that later on in verse 9. But it doesn't say that in verse 6-8 and I am emphasizing the point because I think verses 6-8 form the chiasmic center of the passage and that by focusing exclusively on the miracle of turning the water into wine we might miss what that miracle meant.

So, if I could take a minute I would like to show what I think is the chiasmic structure of the passage and then move to what I think is the major point being made in the story. Now, I am not arguing for the infallibility of my interpretation but you and I both know that John was selective as to what he wrote and that his selectivity was related to what he was trying to accomplish with his readers.

Now having said that, I think verses 1-2 are parallel to verses 11-12. You will notice if you look at verses 1-2 that they contain something about Jesus, His disciples, His mother and Cana of Galilee. Of course, the exact same ideas are repeated in verses 11-12: Jesus, His disciples, His mother and Cana of Galilee.

Next in verses 3-5 there is something about the quantity of wine and there is an urgent appeal that the servants do whatever Jesus says. In verses 8-10, the servants are told by Jesus to something and they do it straight away and then there is something said about the quality of the wine.

Finally, in verses 6-7, the stone water pots used for ceremonial cleansing are filled up and after that happens something new and better follows.

Now, the normal interpretation of the passage is that Jesus changed the water in the pots into wine and then had the servants draw out from the pots and take some to the master of ceremonies of the wedding. That means that Jesus made approximately 180 gallons of wine. Now, I have no problem with the extravagance of the gift. Jesus is always extravagant in His gifts but B.F. Wescott has a really interesting observation here.⁹ He notes that the word for “**draw**” (ἀντλήω) is used in other places in the Bible and it is always used of “**drawing water out of a well.**”

^{ESV} **Genesis 24:13**...Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water.

^{ESV} **Genesis 24:20**...So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw water, and she drew for all his camels.

^{ESV} **Exodus 2:16**... Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock.

^{ESV} **Exodus 2:17**...The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and saved them, and watered their flock.

^{ESV} **Exodus 2:19**...They said, "An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and even drew water for us and watered the flock."

^{ESV} **Isaiah 12:3**...With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

^{ESV} **John 4:7**...A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."

^{ESV} **John 4:15**...The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

Now, here's the point he is making. When the servants drew out they weren't drawing out of the waterpots but out of the well. First, Jesus had the servants fill up the ceremonial waterpots with water and then He had them draw more water from the well and that water was turned into wine. Now Wescott isn't denying that the water in the waterpots was turned into wine but what he is doing is saying is that the emphasis is on the filling up the ceremonial law or if you like it is on the fact that Jesus is going to fulfill the law and then give out the good stuff. Said another way, the point is that Jesus is going to fulfill the law and then give salvation and the Holy Spirit to all those who believe in Him.

That idea seems to support the point made by the emphasis given by the master of the banquet in verses 9-10. Look what he says there.

^{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 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."**

In the story, this is the point. The wine so far has been good but this is really the good stuff and is so radically different from what has come before that something has to be said. Now, if you were a first century Jew straddling the fence between Jesus and Judaism what would be your conclusion? The law was good but it was a harsh taskmaster...and Jesus fulfilled it. Why would we want

to go back under it again? It would be better by far to stick with Jesus and wonderful gift of salvation with the Spirit of God.

Then verses 11-12 close the story and since we've already talked about them so there is no need to belabor them. Of course, you may be asking what is wrong if I prefer to think the wine came out of the waterpots as opposed to the well. My response is absolutely nothing. I think, even if you hold that, that the point of the passage is still the same. First, the law will be filled up or fulfilled by Jesus and then He will give genuine joy, salvation and blessing afterwards¹⁰. His time had not yet come as He clearly pointed out to Mary but it was coming. You see the point is that Jesus is doing something new, something better than what has gone before.

^{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. 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.

Of course, I expect that there are a few who will hear this tape that will be asking the question about wine and whether or not we should ever drink it. My response, just to be brief, is yes wine in the Bible means wine. The word used here means real wine and whether or not you drink wine is up to you. Wine was a very common drink in the Bible and the attempts by some to change the word οἶνος into Welch's grape juice are marred by poor scholarship in most cases and blatant dishonesty in the others.

I freely admit that the wine in the Bible was generally cut with water reducing its strength to as little as a third or a fifth of original potency¹¹. I also freely admit

that the Scripture blasts drunkenness in any form as a dreadful sin. That having been said, I don't see how anyone can deny that such things are a gift from God if used responsibly. On the other hand, I have to add that the only wine I have had in the last two years has been in communion services at other churches.

The point John is making in this story is that Jesus is going to fulfill the slavish demands of the ceremonial and even moral law and then give out an extravagant abundance of joyous salvation in its place. **Moses first sign was to turn water in blood; Jesus first sign was to turn water into wine**¹². Brothers and sisters, let us strive to be undistracted in what Christ has wrought on our behalf. He has fulfilled the law in our place, obtained for us an everlasting salvation and given us the joyous gift of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. How could we ever leave Him or deny Him?

Now in the rest of the chapter, John is going to make the point that Jesus is the new temple and that He is a better temple than what went before. He does that explaining that the old temple was defiled. Look at verse 13.

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

Now Passover was a joyous time of the year for the ancient Jewish people. In it, they celebrated their glorious deliverance out of the land of Egypt by the glorious power of God.¹³ According to the Jewish tractate Pesachim and Josephus, in New Testament times Jewish men and boys were required to appear in Jerusalem each year to attend the Passover.¹⁴

You can see almost immediately, I think that verse 13 is parallel to verses 23-25. In both, the words Jerusalem, Passover and Jesus are repeated. When Jesus arrived at the Passover, He was dismayed by what He saw.

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

Now the temple courts included a huge parcel of land somewhere about the size of thirty football fields. The whole area was called the temple while the building that housed the Ark of the Covenant was also referred to as the temple. In English, we use one word to mean both things sort of like capitol can mean the city of Washington, or the place where Congress meets. In Greek, they had two words to distinguish between the whole compound and the smaller holy place. The larger area was called the **ἱερόν** (pronounced hi-er-ron) while the smaller holy place was called the **ναός** (pronounced na-os).

The largest part of the temple complex **ἱερόν** (hi-er-ron) was called the Court of the Gentiles. In that section of the temple, Gentiles were allowed to congregate and worship and pray. They were not allowed any further in toward the sanctuary.

The next area inward and upward from the Court of the Gentiles was called the Court of Women. Though it was called the Court of Women, it was not an area exclusively for women. The term **“Court of Women”** meant that women could no farther in toward the sanctuary.

The next area in was the Court of Israel, which meant that regular Israelite men could no farther. It was both inward and upward from the Court of Women. After that came the Court of the Priests and then after that only the High Priest could tread and then only once a year.

Now the story in verse 13, takes place in the Court of the Gentiles. There the priests in charge of the Temple complex had starting allowing merchants to set up shop. In one sense, of course, such a move made perfect sense. It was a large area and worshippers coming to the Temple either needed to buy animals to sacrifice (they were often much too difficult to carry) or they needed to exchange their foreign money (money that often had pagan images stamped on it) for money that would be acceptable to give as an offering. One problem was that they gouged their customers. They charged excessively for the animals they sold and for the money they exchanged. Still, Jesus objected to their presence not their practice.

Now, I should add this is one of those areas where critics of the Bible really show their disdain for the authority of Scripture. Let me explain why. Matthew, Mark and Luke say that Jesus cleansed the Temple the final week of His life and that it was what led up to His arrest and crucifixion.

^{ESV} Matthew 21:13...He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers."

^{ESV} Mark 11:17...And he was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers."

^{ESV} **Luke 19:46**...saying to them, "**It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers.**"

John, on the other hand, says that Jesus cleansed the Temple right at the beginning of His ministry. Anyway, most liberal scholars say that that proves that John was wrong about his chronology. Others say it proves he didn't care about chronology. Some say John got it right but the other gospel writers missed it, which is an especially dangerous thing to say since Luke starts off his gospel by saying that he wrote down everything in order¹⁵. Still I think it is highly likely He cleansed the temple twice¹⁶. I see the instance in John occurring at the beginning of His ministry and the instance in the other gospels at the end. One other thing, it seems that in the two or three years between the two events, things had only gotten worse. In John, Jesus says, "**You've turned the temple into a house of merchandise.**" In the other gospels, He says, "**You've turned it into a den of robbers.**" Anyway, notice the text in verse 15.

^{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. ¹⁶ And he told those who sold the pigeons, "**Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.**" ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, "**Zeal for your house will consume me.**"

Now the whip he made was probably made of rushes or reeds since no sticks or weapons were allowed in the temple compound. Nevertheless, the whip and the assertiveness of His righteous indignation moves the offending parties out of the Court of the Gentiles right out of the temple. Now notice what passage of Scripture His disciples remembered. It is taken from Psalm 69.

^{ESV} **Psalm 69:8**...I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother's sons. ⁹ For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.

Now notice the subtle difference between how Psalm 69:8 uses the word “consume” and how John 2 uses it. In Psalm 69, the point is that “**zeal for God’s house**” has taken over his life and controls everything He does. In John the verb is future. It is not “**consumes**” me but “**will consume**” me. In other words, the disciples understand that His zeal will get Him killed.

^{ESV} **John 2:18**...So the Jews said to him, “**What sign do you show us for doing these things?**”

The Jews in charge didn’t argue that things had gotten out of hand. What they wanted to know was why Jesus felt He could presume to take it upon Himself to cleanse the temple.

^{ESV} **John 2:19**...Jesus answered them, “**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**” ²⁰ The Jews then said, “**It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?**” ²¹ But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

Now His answer was remarkable. He challenged them “destroy this temple” and He uses the word *ναός* (pronounced na-os) meaning “inner sanctuary” or “holy place” instead of the word *ιερόν* (pronounced hi-er-ron) meaning “temple compound.” There are a couple of different ways to understand the phrase 46 years. Harold Hoehner presents a compelling case that what they were saying is that this “**inner sanctuary**” has been standing here complete for forty-six years¹⁷. Other scholars say that they take the phrase for “**inner sanctuary**” to mean the whole complex and are instead saying, “**This whole complex has taken forty-six**

years to get to this point.” I think Hoehner is right but the point is that they thought He was talking about buildings and He was really talking about the actual place where God dwelt among men, His own body.

And here is the major point. Just as He promised to fulfill and replace the ceremonial law, so He promised to fulfill and replace the temple. He was presenting Himself for what He was which was the place where God and man commune. Now, if you were a first century Jew how would that strike you. I think it would cause you to wonder why affiliation with the synagogue would be more important than communion with God in the true temple of God, Jesus Christ. That I think is John's point.

Now notice how the chiasm finishes itself off in verses 22-25. First, in verse 22, we see the reference to Scripture again.

^{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.

Then in verse 23-25 it's Jesus, Jerusalem and the Passover with this one added thought. He knew what was in the hearts of those that said they believed in Him but did not. It harkens back to Nathanael and it stands as a stern warning to those who are willing to cast Him over for temporal security.

^{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. ²⁴ But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people ²⁵ and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

To sum up, He is the one coming to fulfill the law and give the joyous gift of salvation and the spirit. He is the true tabernacle of God, who has pitched His tent among men. He is the true temple; He has proven His enduring worthiness by bearing our sin and rising from the dead. He is the one place we can take our worship to God and have it received; He is the one place that will never be defiled and He is always ready to receive true worshippers.

¹ Peter F. Ellis, *The Genius of John*, (Liturgical Press: Collegeville, MN, 1984), 5.

² D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 167-8.

³ Ibid, pg. 170. I display no original thought here at all. Carson's discussion is my excellent guide.

⁴ B.F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1954), 36-37.

⁵ R.E. Brown, *Gospel of John V.29* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 99. Also Wescott, 37.

⁶ C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to Saint John: An Introduction with Notes on the Greek Text*, (SPCK: London, 1978), 191.

⁷ Acutally this story comes from the Koran. Table 5.110...When Allah will say: O Isa (Muslim word for Jesus) son of Marium! Remember My favor on you and on your mother, when I strengthened you I with the holy Spirit, you spoke to the people in the cradle and I when of old age, and when I taught you the Book and the wisdom and the Taurat and the Injeel; and when you determined out of clay a thing like the form of a bird by My permission, then you breathed into it and it became a bird by My permission, and you healed the blind and the leprous by My permission; and when you brought forth the dead by My permission; and when I withheld the children of Israel from you when you came to them with clear arguments, but those who disbelieved among them said: This is nothing but clear enchantment.

⁸ Carson, 169.

⁹ Wescott, 84-85. ἀντλήσατε *Draw*. There is considerable obscurity as to the meaning of this word. According to the current interpretation the water in the vessels of purification was changed into wine, and the servants are bidden to draw from these. There is nothing in the text which definitely points to such an interpretation; and the original word is applied most naturally to drawing water from the well (iv. 7, 15), and not from a vessel like the waterpot. Moreover the emphatic addition of νῦν seems to mark the continuance of the same action of drawing as before but with a different end. Hitherto they had drawn to fill vessels of purification: they were charged *now* to "draw and bear to the ruler of the feast." seems most unlikely that water taken from vessels of purification could have been employed for the purpose of the miracle. On the other hand, the significance of the miracle comes out with infinitely greater force if change is wrought through the destination of the element. That which remained water when kept for a

ceremonial use became wine when borne in faith to minister to the needs, even to the superfluous requirements, of life. This view, that the change in water was determined by its destination for use at the feast can be held equally if the water so used and limited to that which was used were “drawn” from the vessels, and not from the well. If, however, the traditional view of the miracle be retained no real difficulty can be felt in the magnitude of the marriage with gift which Christ endowed the house of a friend.

¹⁰ C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 299. Dodd is usually too liberal for me but here I think he is right on. “What then is the water, which is replaced by this wine of God? The evangelist has given us a hint when he says that the waterpots were there κατὰ τὸν καθαρισμὸν τῶν Ἰουδαίων (according to the purification of the Jews). They stand for the entire system of Jewish ceremonial observance—and by implication for religion upon that level, wherever it is found, as distinguished from religion upon the level of ἀλήθεια (truth) (cf. iv. 23—4). Thus the first of signs already symbolizes the doctrine that ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωϋσέως ἐδόθη, ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο (the law was given through Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ). It is thus that the glory of Christ is manifested—by a sign, which sets forth the truth that with His coming the old order in religion is superseded by a new order. “

¹¹ The quote at the end of 2 Maccabees (not part of the canon of Scripture) is instructive. NRS 2 Maccabees 15:39 For just as it is harmful to drink wine alone, or, again, to drink water alone, while wine mixed with water is sweet and delicious and enhances one's enjoyment, so also the style of the story delights the ears of those who read the work. And here will be the end.

¹² Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, (Downers Grove: IVP, 1993), 268.

¹³ Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Times of Jesus*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962), 77ff. Jeremias estimates against Josephus (he says the number was closer to 3,000,000) that Jerusalem swelled to about 180,000 at Passover. He does that based on the number of lambs sacrificed, etc. Fascinating.

¹⁴ William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-1954), vol. 1, 121.

¹⁵ Brown, 117. Brown is typical of what I mean. Listen to how it sets up his discussion. “Later on we shall discuss the question of whether the action attributed to Jesus is a historical likelihood (that is his way of saying, we’ll talk about whether it really happened). Assuming for the moment that it is, which chronological localization is the more plausible? That we cannot harmonize John and the Synoptics by positing two cleansings of the temple precincts seems obvious (I don’t understand why it is so far-fetched). Not only do the two traditions describe basically the same actions, but also it is not likely that such a serious public affront to the Temple would be permitted twice. Let us look at the arguments that favor John’s dating and those that favor the Synoptic dating.

Many scholars (J. Weiss, Lagrange, McNeile, Brooke, J. A. T. Robinson, V. Taylor) think that the Johannine dating is the more plausible. They point out that in the Synoptic tradition there is only one journey to Jerusalem, the journey that precedes Jesus’ death; and since the Temple is in Jerusalem, the first three evangelists had no option about where to place the scene. The Johannine outline, which has several journeys to Jerusalem, was freer to locate the scene at the point in time

where it really happened. It is also argued that the Synoptics themselves betray some traces of a much earlier setting for the scene. For instance, we saw that in answering the challenge about his right to do these things, Jesus raises the question of John the Baptist. Does this not indicate that John the Baptist's ministry is a recent memory, an indication that fits John's localization better? Again, at the trial of Jesus his statement about the Temple is recalled with difficulty by the witnesses as if it had been uttered long before; in John's chronology it would have been uttered at least two years before.

Other scholars (Bernard, Hoskyns, Dodd, Barrett, Lightfoot) argue for the Synoptic chronology. They say that such a serious affront to Temple worship would have forced the priests to take quick action against Jesus.

¹⁶ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John (Rev.)* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 190.

¹⁷ Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 40-43. I have quoted Hoehner at length here...It seems that a better approach is to determine what the Jews meant by "temple" when they were debating with Jesus. There are two Greek words for temple which are distinguished by Josephus. The first term ἱερον refers to the whole sacred area which includes three courts or enclosures. The first court was the "Court of the Gentiles." Within it was the second court, namely, the "Court of the Women." There only Jews and their wives could enter. Gentiles were not allowed. The third court was within the second court and only Jewish men were allowed to enter it. Also within this third court there was the "Priests' Court," open only to the priests. The second term for the temple is οἶκος which is the sacred building alone, and it was located within the Priests' Court. Both terms are translated "temple" in the English with no distinction.

The Gospels make the same distinction. For example, in referring to the whole sacred area to ἱερον is used (Matt. 21:12 = Mark 11:15 = Luke 19:45) while on the other hand οἶκος is used when speaking of the sacred building (Matt. 27:51 = Mark 15:38 = Luke 23:45). John's Gospel is consistent with this distinction, for notice in 2:14-15 that Jesus found the money-changers in the temple court, that is, to ἱερον (cf. also John 5: 14; 7: 14, 28; 8:2, 20, 59; 10:53; 11:56; 18:20) while in 2:19-20 John uses οἶκος when the Jews were talking about the destruction of the temple edifice. Therefore, the Jews were speaking of the temple edifice and not the whole sacred precincts.

Returning to Josephus it seems clear that the first part of Herod's rebuilding the temple was the temple edifice which was done by the priests in one year and six months. Since the reconstruction began in 20/19 B.C., the sanctuary would have been completed in 18/17 B.C. Adding forty-six to the last figure brings it up to A.D. 29/30. The Jews' statement would mean that the temple edifice had stood for forty-six years.

Both old and recent translations (e.g., AV, ASV, RSV, NEB, NASB, and NIV) translate it as though the building process was still continuing. Grammarians and commentators see the aorist passive οἰκοδομήθη "to build" as a constative aorist noting that the process of building was for forty-six years. But Morris finds it difficult to accept the idea of a constative aorist when the building process was still going on. In fact both Morris and Westcott contend that the Jews were referring to the completion of a definite stage of the work and that no building was going on when these words were spoken. However, is it not better to note the distinction of the two terms for temple, and that the Jews were not talking about the temple precincts ἱερον. which were in the process of

construction until A. D. 63, but they were referring to the temple edifice *ναός*. which was completed in 18/17 B.C.? The aorist could be constative in that it took one and a half years to build the temple edifice or it could be an effective or perfective aorist in that one looks at the conclusion or results of the action, namely, the temple has stood as a completed building for forty-six years. The latter view does more justice to the temporal dative, *ἔτεσιν* in that the completed building extended for a forty-six year time period. Therefore, the Jews were asking Jesus how He would be able to raise up .in three days the temple edifice which had stood for forty-six years.

Since the temple reconstruction began in 20/19 B.C. and the temple edifice was completed in 18/17 B.C., forty-six years later would bring the date to the year A.D. 29/30. This means, then, that Jesus' first Passover was the spring of A.D. 30. The Jews were telling Jesus that the temple edifice had stood for forty-six years and was now just beginning its forty-seventh year. This fits well with the results of the first part of this chapter where it was concluded that Jesus was baptized in the summer or autumn of A. D. 29. Thus there was a period of anywhere from four to nine months between Christ's baptism and the first Passover in His ministry.