

AM John 2:1-12 Signposts

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- [0 : 0 0] And reading from the beginning of that chapter, the well-known story of Jesus at the wedding in Cana.
- John chapter 2, from the beginning. On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples.
- When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, they have no wine. And Jesus said to her, woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.
- His mother said to the servants, do whatever he tells you. Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.
- Jesus said to the servants, fill the jars with water. And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.
- [1 : 0 8] So they took it. When the master of the feast tasted the water, now become wine, and did not know where it had come from. Though the servants who had drawn the water knew, the master of the feast called the bridegroom 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. This is the first of his signs Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him.
- And after this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and his brothers and his disciples, and he stayed there for a few days. Amen.
- And may God add his blessing to the reading of his word. A word of prayer. Our Heavenly Father, as once again we bow in your presence, we ask that your word be our rule, your spirit our teacher, and your greater glory, our supreme concern.
- Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Amen. It's often claimed that faith is contrary to reason.
- [2 : 3 3] And undoubtedly some kinds of faith are contrary to reason. Someone that's high on drugs might go to the top of a great skyscraper and think that they can jump off the top and fly.
- Their faith and their ability to fly is totally unfounded in any rationality. That is a faith that is abrogated all reason.
- On the other hand, the faith that we are called to by the Lord Jesus is not a faith divorced from reason. Francis Schaeffer usefully defined faith as follows.
- Faith is trusting Jesus on the basis of sufficient reason. Faith is trusting Jesus on the basis of sufficient reason.
- Jesus does not call us to trust on him in some sort of intellectual vacuum. I think it's in John 5 that Jesus says, you know, here's a series of reasons for believing in me.

[3 : 51] The scriptures, the miracles, the life that I'm living, the prophecies that I'm fulfilling. He lays out a series of grounds, grounds for trusting in him, in the life that he lived, in the teaching that he gave, the miracles that he performed, the prophecy that he fulfilled.

Quite interesting, in Matthew's Gospel, if you look particularly at the nativity stories, in Matthew 1 and 2, Matthew records a little bit of the story, and then says, and thus was fulfilled what was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, or whoever in the Old Testament.

Another little bit of the narrative, and then Matthew says, and thus was fulfilled what was spoken of. And there are a whole series of, and thus was fulfilled what was spoken.

And of course, perhaps the greatest grounds for trusting in Jesus lie in the cross and the resurrection. And so we are given grounds, sufficient reasons for trusting in Jesus.

Now this morning, I want to continue exploring John's Gospel with you. And on previous visits, those of you with excellent memories, will remember that I have three times preached on John chapter 1.

[5 : 18] And the first time I preached on John chapter 1, we looked at it in terms of there we find everything that we need to know concerning the Gospel.

Because we are pointed to Jesus, through a series of names or titles. He's called God, he's called Son of God, he's called Son of Man, he's called Messiah, he's called King, he's called Word, he's called the Lamb of God.

And if you in fact go to the end of John's Gospel, John tells us why he writes the Gospel. John chapter 20, verse 30. Because there we read Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book.

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

So John tells us basically, he's got three reasons for writing. that you might understand who Jesus is as the living God made flesh.

[6 : 30] That you might understand what he came into the world to do, to be the Messiah, giving his life on the cross. That's the thrust of these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah pointing to his work, the Son of God pointing to his identity, and thirdly, that understanding who Jesus is and what he came into the world to do, you may have to trust in him, have life in his name.

And then, the second time I looked with you at John chapter 1, we looked at the theme of Jesus, the light of the world. John begins the gospel in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

And through him all things were made. Without him nothing was made. In him was life. That life was the light of all mankind. And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness is not understood or overcome it.

And this theme of light and darkness is one that John explores as we go through the gospel. The great claim of Jesus, I am the light of the world which is actually repeated in two different chapters.

And in John 9 you have the miracle of the man born blind which is a story of light coming into this man's physical darkness but also light into his spiritual darkness as he comes to understand who Jesus is.

[8 : 12] and then the third time I looked with you at chapter 1 we consider two different ways to respond to Jesus. Chapter 1 verse 10 we are told he was in the world and though the world was made through him the world did not recognize him.

He came to that which was his own but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him to those who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of God.

Children born not of natural descent nor of human decision or a husband's will but born of God. Two ways to respond.

So there in chapter 1 you have everything. John points us to who Jesus is what he came into the world to do and indicates that there are two ways to respond and he's writing that you might respond in a positive way.

Well this morning I want to move on to the second chapter in this well-known story of Jesus turning the water into wine. The story is fairly straightforward.

[9 : 25] Jesus is at a wedding they run out of wine his mother asks him to do something about it and Jesus miraculously turns the water into wine verses 3-5 when the wine was gone Jesus' mother said to him they have no more wine and obviously Jesus' mother expected him to do something about it and Jesus says dear woman why do you involve me?

My time has not yet come but his mother persists his mother said to the servants do whatever he tells you and before we turn to what I think is the crux of this story I would draw your attention to that phrase of Jesus in reply to his mother where he says my time has not yet come and the surface this could simply be that Jesus felt that his mother was pushing him out into his public ministry before he was ready for that but perhaps more intriguingly it introduces us to a theme that runs through the gospel of John at various points certain things happen and we get little footnotes that it was not his time or his hour he really annoys the Pharisees and the Sadducees for example and they're about to stone him and somehow or another Jesus just walks away from it and we're told because his hour had not yet come and then when we reach the events around the cross we find that this is the hour for which he had come just a couple of examples in John 8 for example

Jesus spoke these words while teaching in the temple course near the place where the offerings were put and he was obviously upsetting people and then we're told yet no one sees them because his hour had not yet come and then when we get to John 12 and when we get to John 12 we're into the events of what we would call Holy Week the last week of Jesus' life the events leading up to the cross and in John 12 verse 20 we're told of some Greeks who wanted to see Jesus and they came to Philip and we're told that Philip went to tell Andrew and Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus and Jesus replied the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified and then a little later in that passage in John 12 27

Jesus goes on now my soul is troubled and what shall I say Father save me from this hour no it was for this very reason I came to this hour Father glorify your name and then as we go into the next chapter in John chapter 13 which relates the events of the last supper the first verse there it was just before the Passover festival and Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and to go to the Father and having loved his own who were in the world he loved them to the end and that all perhaps reminds us that everything is secondary to the cross and the resurrection Jesus healing people is secondary to the event to the reason that he came the hour that he came for was the hour of the cross and following that the resurrection now turning to the essence of this story the key to me seems to lie in turning the water into wine lies in verse 11 where we're told this the first of his miraculous signs

Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee he thus revealed his glory and his disciples put their faith in him the first of his miraculous signs I always remember in my young days going to one of the churches in Motherwell which was holding a sort of theological brains trust our question time and there was a question come up about miracles now the panel was a minister a doctor a lawyer and a scientist and I was intrigued that the doctor and the lawyer and the scientist had no trouble at all with the miracles of Jesus the minister however had grave doubts about the reality and validity of the miracles and I thought that ever so sad here was the scientist the doctor and the lawyer they had no problems with the miracles of Jesus and in verse 11 here we're told in essence three things first of all the miracle was a sign secondly the miracle revealed his glory and third there was a consequence that consequence being that his disciples put their faith in him so we're clearly told that through this display of supernatural ability

[15 : 32] Jesus reveals his glory there's a consequence some folk at least put their trust in him they weren't trusting in an intellectual vacuum they'd seen something extraordinary some of them knew that the water in these jars was water and yet when it was poured out it was wine they trusted Jesus on the basis of what was going on before their eyes and this is the very antithesis of faith as some sort of leap in the dark I wish I had a pound for every time I've heard someone say that faith is a leap in the dark well some faith might be a leap in the dark but Christian faith is based on sufficient reason miracles are signs or we might think of miracles as evidence and interestingly in John's gospel we find seven specific miracles and it's worth taking note of them overall

Jesus obviously performed countless miracles and going back to John giving us the reason for writing in John 30 31 we're told Jesus performed many other signs which are not recorded in this book but these are written these are written so why did John select these seven miracles and it seems to me he selects them because they are representative of different realms of the power of the Lord Jesus miracles it's a good question for you what are the seven miracles in John's gospel well we're watering the wine here in chapter two in chapter four we're told

Jesus healing the official son in chapter five there's the healing at the pool and then two miracles in chapter six first of all the feeding of the five thousand and Jesus walking on the water then chapter nine and that whole chapter is given over to the healing of the man born blind and then the bulk of the eleventh chapter is given over to the raising of Lazarus from the dead and it seems to me that John has selected these miracles in a representative way there are three miracles that represent Jesus power over the fabric of creation the water into wine the feeding of the five thousand the walking on the water and earlier we were thinking of Jesus speaking to the wind and the waves and all of these incidents point to the fact that

Jesus is the creator of the universe as we are told in chapter one and these miracles reflect his rule over the very fabric of creation it is his creation he can do what he wants to do with his creation if he wants the wind to be still he will tell the wind to be still and it will if he wants to walk in the water he will walk in the water if he wants to feed 5,000 with what seems an impossibility a little boy's lunch picnic lunch then he can do that three miracles that represent his power over the fabric of creation and then there are further three miracles that represent Jesus power over the decay disease and disintegration of a sinful world namely the three healing miracles healing of the official son healing of the man at the pool and the blind man and these show

Jesus power over the consequences of the fall three miracles that point to his power over the fabric of creation three miracles that point to his power over the consequences of the fall in terms of sin and disease and of course one miracle which represents his power over death itself the raising of Lazarus and Paul tells us that death is the last enemy to be destroyed so John presents us with these seven miracles which he indicates as signs and the point of a sign post is not that you stop and admire the sign post or the sign but that your attention is drawn to what the sign post is pointing you to and the sign is pointing us to the power of the

[21 : 16] Lord Jesus over creation over sin and over death miracles are signs and through these we are told that Jesus reveals his glory the miracles of Jesus are not miracles for the sake of the miraculous we have noted that there are signs events in space and time and history that give us grounds for trusting Jesus but we always need to get beyond the miracle to the person who performed the miracle the important point about all the miracles is not the miracle themselves but the person who performed the miracle the real focus it's not the miracle but Jesus himself John chapter 2 verse 11 this the first of his miraculous signs

Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee and he thus revealed his glory his glory Thomas Watson one of the great Puritan writers said glory is the sparkling of the deity and in these miracles we see the sparkling of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ now the Psalms of course Psalm 19 tells us that the heavens declare the glory of God the skies proclaim the work of his hands the very fabric of the universe is evidence of a creator James Clark Maxwell is one of my scientific heroes I've actually got a huge volume on Scotland it's supposed to tell you everything you need to know about

Scotland places people so on and it tells you about all sorts of obscure people and oddly James Clark Maxwell is not mentioned in this huge compendium and James Clark Maxwell was undoubtedly the greatest scientist that Scotland ever produced there was a documentary on television not so long ago the man who made the modern world without the scientific researches of James Clark Maxwell you would have no mobile phone television car you name it it's all based in his work Albert Einstein had a photograph of James Clark Maxwell above his desk in his study because he regarded him as perhaps the greatest scientist of all time well James

Clark Maxwell said there was never a theory of the universe that did not need God to make it go because he was well aware that the heavens declare the glory of God God reveals his glory in the very fabric of the universe but yet in a more wonderful way God reveals his glory in his son John chapter 1 verse 14 the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us and we have seen his glory the glory of the one and only who came from the father full of grace and truth we have seen his glory writes John where at a wedding in Cana of Galilee in the healing of a man born blind in the raising of

Lazarus the glory speaks of who he is as the eternal son of God the creator of the universe and his glory is an objective reality whether we see it or not whether we take cognizance of it or not C.S.

[25 : 45] Lewis wrote a man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word darkness in the walls of his cell Jesus revealed his glory and here is a reminder that Jesus is God with us no ordinary person can turn water into wine no ordinary person can feed 5,000 with a little boy's picnic lunch no ordinary person can raise people from the dead these miracles point us beyond themselves to the one who performed them I already refer to John 12 where we find these Greeks coming to Philip asking and their question is sir we would see Jesus well that's why John writes his gospel so that people might see Jesus that is everything else is secondary to that that is what

John is seeking to do to show us Jesus to show us the one who came from God the Father wants to expand our understanding of him and give us reasons for trusting in him so the miracles are signs they're evidence they reveal his glory and there is a cause and effect within them this is the first of his miraculous signs Jesus performed at Cana and Galilee and he thus revealed his glory and his disciples put their faith in him a number who witnessed this event at the wedding realized what was going on not everybody did no doubt many of the guests were too wrapped up and enjoying themselves to give a moment's notice where the new wine came from but some did and clearly they paused for thought they saw in Jesus someone extraordinary someone to be trusted and followed and obeyed and so they put their faith in him

Jesus writes that we might see Jesus who he is what he came into the world to do and understanding that we might believe in him John 20 verse 30 again Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name so in John chapter 2 we are introduced to this first miraculous sign or evidence that Jesus sets before us and the miracles then are signs pointing us to the power of Jesus over creation his power over the consequences of the fall his power over death itself and to reveal his glory reminding us that we always need to get beyond the miracle to the person who performed the miracle and having done that we need to put our trust in him may we indeed do so let us pray

Father God thank ■ for our some ■ but can do so