

John - Chapters 2:1-4:42 - Things are Changing

Our next section of study will include three segments of our film: the wedding at Cana and the cleansing of the temple, the visit of Nicodemus and the testimony of John the Baptist, and the woman at the well. We'll watch them separately, but we'll have to consider them as a whole to get a fuller message from them.

I realize this is a long study guide and will take some time to get through and some might think, why do I need to come to class when it's all right here? The answer to that is very simple: this is prepared and printed weeks before we'll actually get to, so there's no telling what else I might learn and add to the class by then that won't be in this study guide.

As usual, the better answer comes to me after the class is over. When I said last week that Jesus was no longer Mary's son, what I meant was that the relationship had changed, not the relation. He was still her son and he was still concerned about her, just as when he left her with John on the cross. But the relationship had changed because his primary identification had changed. When we were children, we were identified as being the children of so and so. But as we grew and entered into new phases of life, then our identification began to change. We were still the children of so and so, but our identification changed to things like whose spouse or parent we were or what we did for a living or where we lived. In addition, the relationship between child and parent changes. When we were children their word was law and what they said, we had to do. As we grew and married, then our primary family and responsibility was no longer the parents but the new family that had been established.

Sometimes as parents age then the roles get reversed and the children have to act more like the parents for their parents. So in this chapter Jesus remains Mary's son, but he is becoming more than just that. She has no more of a special claim on him than anyone else but has to approach him like everyone else, that of student to rabbi, of servant to Lord, of person in need to the one who can supply that need. Likewise, James and Jude identify themselves as servants of Christ, not as brothers of Jesus, because while their relation remains, the relationship has changed. Jesus has become more than Jesus ben Joseph of Jesus of Nazareth. He is Jesus the Messiah, Jesus the Lord, Jesus the Son of God, Jesus the Savior; and he must be approached as such. Or to use another example. The way we approach and interact with Ken Bailey when we run into him at the BBQ or church is different from the way we interact with him in his courtroom. It's not that the people have changed, but their position and authority have changed.

Outline Review from the Introductory Handout

1. New Way is Greater than the Old

Sign #1

Jesus changes water into wine in Jewish ceremonial water containers

- demonstrates superiority of new ways over old Judaism
- demonstrates Jesus' superiority of Greek god of wine

Sub-Sign #1a

Jesus cleanses the temple

Explanation and Misunderstanding of the Signs

visit of Nicodemus who is a teacher of the law (old way) who can't understand being born again (new way)

Further Explanation of the Signs

John the Baptist decreasing as Jesus increases

Final Explanation of Elaboration of the Signs

the woman at the well

- 1) Jesus offers her himself as living water that is superior to water offered by well of Jacob (Israel)
- 2) Jesus tells her that old ways of worship that are dependent on places such as temple is being replaced by worship in spirit and in truth
- 3) Jesus reveals himself to her as the Messiah of both Jews and Samaritans

General Introduction

In the first chapter we were introduced to Jesus in his entirety, so we know more about him than the people around him in the Gospel. They have some inkling that there's something different about him, but they don't have the full picture that we had presented to us in the Prologue.

In the following episodes from the life of Jesus that John has chosen to include in chapters two through four, we'll see a theme of change and transition. It's both disturbing and exciting as we watch this change from Jesus the carpenter, the son of Mary, to Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.

One consistency - mission of Jesus is to culminate on the cross - the crux of the matter

- no wine - time not yet come (Messianic age to be time of free-flowing wine and joy)
- what authority to perform a Messianic sign - destroy temple and will raise it in 3 days
- Son of Man to be lifted up
- John the Baptist pointed to him as source of eternal life

9 Changes in this Section

Change #1 - no longer the son of Mary

Change #2 - water into wine - something new to replace old Judaism and sacrificial and ceremonial system - called 1st of the signs - does John mean it was the very first sign, the first sign that signified something beyond itself or the first sign that he's recorded - Mary seems to expect something to happen, on what basis.

Change #3 - leaving for Capernaum with mother and brothers and disciples - brothers are still with him, but this relationship will soon change too

Change #4 - cleansing of outer court of the temple - Jesus has authority to take charge of temple and he will replace the temple

Change #5 - Nicodemus learns that his old way of earning his way in the kingdom through heritage, study, law-keeping and ritual means nothing and that even he, a leader of the nation, must experience a Spirit-led and Spirit-filled regeneration and repentance.

Change #6 - John the Baptist's sphere of influence is decreasing

Change #7 - Jesus breaks taboo and speaks to a Samaritan woman of ill-repute

Change #8 - time is coming when temple and old system will be replaced

Change #9 - Samaritans accept and believe Jesus

Other Recurring Themes:

1. no one except Jesus, servants and disciples know about the first miracle - things have been hidden from some and revealed to others - The Master of Ceremonies (leadership) and the bridal party (Israel) didn't recognize the miracle but the lowly did.

Matthew 11:25 and Luke 10:21 record Jesus' prayer (Matthew 11:25) At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. (NKJV)

This is a reference to the Psalms (Psalms 8:2) Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, Because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger. (NKJV)

which is also mentioned directly later in Matthew (Matthew 21:15-16) But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise'?" (NKJV)

2. Jesus didn't entrust himself to those who believed because they'd seen a miracle or a sign. "he knew what was in a man"

Notice when Nicodemus comes he cites the signs as why he knows Jesus is from heaven.

leadership and crowd both ask for signs as proof.

crowds who followed for the signs wanted another sign and to get something for free from him or to see a show.

belief in words is better but belief in signs is better than nothing.

In chapter 10 he'll tell the Pharisees that they should at least believe him because of the signs if they wouldn't believe his words, but here we're told that the Samaritans

he spent two days with believed “because of His words” - at the end of the chapter he returns and is asked for a healing and tells the crowd that they won’t believe unless they see signs and wonders (unlike the Samaritans)

Thomas is told that the blessed are those who haven’t seen and still believe.

“I believe in Jesus because of who he is, not because of what he does”

3. Never mind the teenagers and the hippies, Jesus is really misunderstood. everybody always seems to misunderstand what they’re told: the Jewish leaders; Nicodemus, the woman at the well

4. Who said what: Where do the words of Jesus and John the Baptist end in chapter 3 and the commentary of John begin?

5. Jesus is greater than.....

Jacob who gave us this well and drank from it himself?

6. Old Testament points ahead to Jesus -

‘ it is written’ - zeal for your house

‘just as Moses lifted up the snake’

7. Jesus may meet us where we’re at, but he meets us on His terms, not ours. Notice how when he answers somebody’s statement or question he often doesn’t really seem to answer what they’re expecting, but looked beyond their superficial level to get to the heart of the matter. He doesn’t give people what they want, he gives them what they need. Not like shopping at Mahoney’s. Cut through the clothe to get to the cheese.

Digging Deeper

Wedding at Cana

1. the Messianic age was said to be a time when wine and blessing would flow freely. This is demonstrated by the six water jugs that held between twenty and thirty gallons of water. At an average of 25 gallons that’d be at least 150 gallons of wine, far more than they’d need to finish the wedding.

2. Mary seems to be rebuffed by Jesus, yet still has faith enough in him to tell the servants to do whatever he says. Perhaps faith is believing even when it seems like you’re not getting what you asked for.

3. Six large water pots - The number six is symbolic of imperfection or incompleteness. The commonly seen message is that Jesus is replacing the imperfection of the Jewish ritual and law with the perfection and completion of grace. The fact that the six pots are filled to the rim is taken as symbolic of the old system being completed or fulfilled. Jesus often said that he didn’t come to abolish, but to fulfill.

4. Quotation of the day: “Now we can see what John is teaching us. Every story tells us not of something Jesus did once and never again, but of something which he

is for ever doing. John tells us not of things that Jesus once did in Palestine, but of things that he still does today. And what John wants us to see here is not that Jesus once on a day turned some waterpots of water into wine; he wants us to see that whenever Jesus comes into a man's life, there comes a new quality which is like turning water into wine. Without Jesus, life is dull and stale and flat; when Jesus comes into it, life becomes vivid and sparkling and exciting. Without Jesus, life is drab and uninteresting; with him it is thrilling and exhilarating." - William Barclay

6. Consider that above quote. "Every story tells us not of something Jesus did once and never again, but of something which he is for ever doing." If that's true, then he's still healing the sick, raising the dead, opening the eyes and ears of the blind and deaf, still intending us to have life and have it more abundantly; still giving the Spirit without limit; still calming storms and still praying for us.

7. Final thoughts from Robert Willoughby's "John - Believing on the Son" from the Deeper Life Pulpit Commentary Series:

...from the underlying reality of John's story, we may learn how abundant is our Lord's provision for our spiritual need. He turns the "water" of fruitless, joyless living under law into the "wine" of abundant, joyful life lived in the Spirit. He transforms our impotent, guilt-ridden past into a fruitful, powerful. Spirit-controlled present.

Certainly the law served an important purpose in the plan of God. Paul teaches us that one of its functions was to define the nature of sin and convict us of our guilt. "For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, 'Do not covet' " (Romans 7:7). Furthermore, the law, through its commandments, its ceremonies, its sacrifices and its curse, served to prepare its followers for the coming of the One who would redeem us from its curse (Galatians 3:13).

But the law was powerless to enable the kind of behavior and attitude it required. And the more we tried in our own strength to meet its demands, the more we despaired of ever succeeding. We found ourselves identifying with the testimony of despairing Paul: "For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. . . . What a wretched man I am!" (Romans 7:18-19, 24).

It was then that we made the wonderful discovery of the Spirit-filled life! We learned that we had "died to the law through the body of Christ, that [we] might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God" (7:4). We ceased from our vain attempts to overcome sin and our self-efforts to be holy. We counted ourselves "dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (6:11). We offered ourselves in full surrender to God, receiving by faith the gracious gift of His Holy Spirit. His indwelling

and anointing brought His beautiful fruit into our lives. We began to see the fruit of "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). It was indeed a whole new kind of life—Christ living in us.

When on the day of Pentecost the 120 disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, they broke out into joyous praise. It is fascinating that the amazed on-lookers interpreted their joy as the effect of "too much wine" (Acts 2:13)! It is equally as interesting to hear the instruction of Paul to the Ephesians: "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled [literally, keep on being filled] with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). The new wine of the Spirit!

Jesus and Money Changers

1. There were only a few times of the year when the animal sellers and money changers would have been at the temple, and Passover was one of those. The older commentaries made a great deal out of the high rates that were charged for the animals and proper coinage and used that as the reason for Jesus' anger. The newer commentaries have reconsidered this and decided that the rates weren't that high and that Jesus' anger was caused by their crowding out the court of the Gentiles, making it impossible for the Gentile believers to study, worship and pray in the only part of the temple that was open to them.

2. This couldn't have been a full-scale attack, with Jesus and his disciples actually taking over part of the temple and holding it until they retreated, as some of the more liberal commentaries who view Jesus as a mistake-making and image creating human. The temple was kept under close guard and watch during the Passover and any large disruption would've brought the Romans in automatically and often violently. (Luke 13:1; Acts 21:30-33)

3. Since it wasn't a full-scale revolt, it must have been a symbolic action. The priests saw it as a claim of either being a prophet or even the Messiah. They would have recognized the symbolism of cleansing the temple, especially the court of the Gentiles from the Old Testament. (Malachi 3:1-3; Zechariah 14:16 and 14:21). That's why they asked for a sign as proof that he had the authority to do this. They didn't ask why, they already knew that.

4. Notice the scripture that John says the disciples remembered about zeal for your house has consumed me. It actually occurs twice in the Psalms. The first is in Psalm 69:9. What's interesting to note in this occurrence is a reference to Jesus' brothers and family and their lack of belief that we'll see coming up. The verse before this reads, "I have become a stranger to my brothers, and a foreigner to my mother's children." The second occurrence is in Psalm 119:139 and the complete verse reads as a foretaste of Jesus' meeting with Nicodemus and some of his confrontations with the priests and Pharisees: "My zeal for your house has eaten me up, because they have forgotten your words." Your version probably reads that "My zeal

has eaten me up” but the LXX translation, which is the one that Jesus and John and everybody else would have been reading then states that it is “My zeal for your house that has eaten me up” or consumed me.

5. When did this happen? John places this event near the beginning of his book. The other three Gospels place it near the end. There are several possibilities:

- 1) John is right and the other three are wrong.
- 2) John is wrong and the other three are right.
- 3) John moved the event to the beginning because he’s far more worried about arranging his material topically than chronologically.
- 4) There were two cleansings, one at the beginning and another at the end of Jesus’ ministry. After all, the events in this part of John took place before the other Gospels began their accounts. Most of the two years of Jesus’ ministry from the other three Gospels are summed up in John 7:1.

Nicodemus

1. Nicodemus came at night - night is symbolic of a darkness of understanding, a time of hiding and secrecy; just like the Pharisees hid behind their own darkness of self-made and self-measured righteousness.

2. to be born again - What was Nicodemus coming to ask Jesus? He never even got a chance to ask anything before Jesus dug through his opening statement and got to the heart of the matter: that he and his fellow Pharisees and other leaders were wrong; they couldn’t get to the kingdom of God through their rituals and close observance of the law and outward ritual cleanliness and study of the law. Even upstanding leaders like themselves needed the same thing as the common people they despised: to be born again, to have a regeneration of their spirit and heart through the Holy Spirit, who also can’t be controlled or legislated, but who is like the wind, blowing where it will and having an effect on everything, but like Jesus, does so on his own terms.

3. born of water and spirit - probably does not refer to ritual of baptism. Christian ritual of baptism was not yet established, so Jesus couldn’t have expected Nicodemus to know what he was talking about if he were referring to something that would take place in the future. Water was symbolic in the Old Testament for different things: cleansing, repentance, the Word of God. This would have been the context that a teacher of Israel should have been thinking in. When he heard water he probably would have thought of Jeremiah 2:13; Jeremiah 17:13; of Psalm 72:6; Isaiah 44:3; Isaiah 11:9. When he heard about being born of the Spirit, he should have thought of the dry bones of Ezekiel 27:1-14 and Ezekiel 36:26

4. earthly things and heavenly things - if Jesus spoke to him about the Kingdom of God and the Spirit as they operated on an earthly level and he didn’t understand, how could he possibly understand if He started telling him about things on an even high level. There we get to what might have been Nicodemus’ question, had he been allowed to ask. He must have wanted to know about the Kingdom of God in heaven and what it was like and instead Jesus told him that he needed to learn how to enter the Kingdom of God on earth, some place that they weren’t expecting to find it.

Woman at the Well

1. The text says that Jesus had to go through Samaria. The older commentaries always made a big deal out of the Jews not traveling through Samaria but going a longer route around it. That wasn't actually true all the time, and they were willing to travel through Samaria, although they hurried along as fast as they could. They also would do some business with them, since the disciples had gone into the town to buy food, but a Jewish man talking to any woman in public, but especially a Samaritan woman, and asking to use her drinking vessel which would have made him ceremonially unclean, was something that just didn't happen. (Ron Motz and his orthodox Jewish friend's dishes)

2. The question remains, when the text said that he had to go through Samaria is that because it was the shorter route or does it mean that he had an appointment of destiny with the woman at the well that compelled him to go that way?

3. Despite what we saw in the film, the well was deep. It's presently 138 feet deep and may have been deeper before, so Jesus needed the woman's help to get a drink. Ordinarily travelers carried a portable jar or skin that they could use to get water from the well. Either Jesus didn't have one, the disciples had it or he'd rather talk to her than use his own.

4. Notice the difference this time and the other times we've met women at wells. It was at a well in Genesis 24 that Abraham's servant picked out Rebekah to marry Isaac as she showed herself to be a woman of virtue. In Genesis 29 Jacob fell in love with Rachel at a well. In Exodus Moses met his wife at a well. This woman isn't virtuous like Rebekah and Jesus doesn't have to struggle like Jacob with the rock over the well or fight off other shepherds like Moses to provide not just water but living water, so to answer her question, he is one greater than Jacob and Moses.

5. The woman knew that Jesus was a Jew because of his accent and his wardrobe. She saw the tizit, or the fringes on his prayer shawl. That was known as the hem or the wings of the garment. Everybody had them, but there was a tradition that the hem of the Messiah's would have healing properties (Malachi 4:2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings;) Remember the woman with the issue of blood who believed that she'd be healed if she just touched the hem of his garment?

6. Once again we find ourselves talking about water. Notice the two directions of this living water. It is given by Jesus to us and then it wells up in us, presumably to flow out so that others can notice. There's no point in having this living water if we don't share it with others.

7. Did the woman begin to perceive that Jesus wasn't talking about literal water? She would have been familiar with the books of Moses, since that's all her people accepted as scripture, and she would have known and perhaps thought of the story of water from the rock. Exodus 17:5-6 and Numbers 10:7-12. However, being a Sa-

maritan she wouldn't have known of the other Old Testament references to the living water, which is why Jesus told her that they worshipped what they didn't know. By rejected the rest of the scriptures, the law and the prophets, they had missed out on much of what God revealed about himself and his nature.

8. ---- Sidebar ---- bird walk ---- chasing the rabbit down the hole ---- Look back at the two accounts of Moses getting water from the rock. It's not unusual to get water from rocks in the dessert. There are soft rocks over there that absorb water and then you can get it back out by hitting the rock. That's what they say, don't ask me who they are.

What makes the Biblical account different are three things:

1) we're told that the rock was hard, not soft (Psalm 114:8 says that it was a rock like flint, this isn't the kind of rock that you get water from)

2) the sheer amount of water that would've been needed to water all the people and their livestock. There were a bunch of folks. Even if we concur that the word translated as thousands has been translated or counted incorrectly and the number was much smaller than the 600,000 to 2 million people traditionally counted n the Exodus (but it's not the Bible that's in error if there's a mistake here, it's our translation that is in error) there were still probably people in the tens of thousands, plus their animals. That's a lot of water.

3) we're also told that the rock split as it gave rivers of water (Psalm 78:16-17)

9. ---- Sidebar ---- bird walk ---- chasing the rabbit down the hole ---- What is the symbolism behind the rock and why was Moses banned from entering the promised land for striking the rock the second time? How does all this connect to Nicodemus needing to be born from above of water and spirit and the Woman at the well being confronted about her loose lifestyle? First of all, remember that a symbol can have more than one meaning, or you'll really get lost.

For the first rabbit, we'll start with 1st Corinthians 10:4, where Paul tells us that the rock they drank from was Christ. How is our salvation offered? Not through ritual or sacrifice but by the blood of Christ as it flowed at the cross. Hence, the living water came when the rock was struck. How do we appropriate this? Not by deed or action, but by calling upon Him. How was Moses to get the water the second time? Not by re-striking or repeating his actions (Hebrews called the sacrifice of Jesus a once for all event, not needing repeating) but by calling upon the rock. In this symbolic train of thought, he did not enter the promised land because he didn't call upon the rock in faith but did it his own way and struck the rock and struck it twice.

For the second rabbit, we'll start with Ezekiel 11:19 or 36:26, where God promises to take away a heart of stone and replace it with a living heart. In this symbolic vein, our stony hearts are the rock. As we're struck with the pain and tears of repentance (Moses=law, rod=correction, get it?) it hurts and we're grieved, but as we accept the living water of Christ and forgiveness, then that living water wells up in us until it flows out like it did out of the rock. When Nicodemus comes to Jesus, presumably to ask him about the kingdom of heaven, Jesus tells him in so many words that he needs to repent and believe or else he'll never see the kingdom of heaven, either on earth or beyond. When the woman asks for the living water, she has to confront her sin as Jesus tells her to get her husband. The wind blows where it will,