



John 2 By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now in our Bibles now to John's gospel chapter two.

Last week in chapter one, the declaration of Jesus just who He is. And then the witness of John the Baptist concerning Jesus and how that John encourages his disciples to follow Jesus. And the beginning of the gathering together of the disciples in chapter one. The last one being that of Nathaniel who when Jesus gave him a word of knowledge, he was convinced that He was indeed the Messiah. And Jesus said in essence, Stick around, man. You haven't seen anything yet. So that ended chapter one. From now on, He said, You're going to see the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man, as He related Himself to the dream of Jacob who saw the ladder going into heaven and the angels of God ascending and descending on the ladder. Jesus is saying, I'm the ladder. You're going to see the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man.

We are told now that,

The third day (2:1),

probably the third day after Nathaniel and the gathering of these disciples,

there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee (2:1);

Cana of Galilee is a short distance away from Nazareth. It is on the side of the hill as you leave Nazareth which is sort of in a little valley. You go over the top of the hill and on the other side, you come to the area of Cana in the region of Galilee. It's on the way towards the Sea of Galilee from Nazareth.

There was a marriage. In that culture, the marriage was always a very colorful and wonderful celebration. It was real party time and it wasn't like our wedding ceremonies today. It was something that lasted over a period of time, the celebration.

and the mother of Jesus was there. And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage (2:1,2).

They were all invited. Came to this gala celebration.

And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus said unto him, They have no wine (2:3).

Evidently, Mary knew all about her son. Before He was born, the angel when declaring to her that she had been chosen of God to be the human instrument to bring God's Son into the world, and would do so without the benefit of a relationship with a man but the Holy Spirit would plant the seed in her, the angel said, He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the highest and will sit upon the throne of David. So the angel informed her that the Son that was to be born was indeed the Messiah. Now she has watched Him as He has grown up. He has now come into manhood and I believe that Mary is, as He was now baptized and He begins to gather disciples, that she is anxious to more or less have Him begin to display the divine powers that He possessed.

There are indications in the scripture that there was some suspicion that was cast upon Mary because of the birth of Jesus. The whispers were passing the rumors of the early birth of the child from the time that she married Joseph. You remember and we'll get to it when we move through John how that as Jesus was disputing once with the Pharisees, they cast an aspersion at that. They said, We were not born of fornication or intercourse out of wedlock is what they were accusing Him of.

I think that Mary perhaps was interested in sort of vindicating herself. Anxious that He be recognized now by all as the Messiah. I think that in her declaration to Him, They've run out of wine, that it was in essence a request for Him to come to the aid of the host.

Jesus answering her said, Woman (2:4),

And this term here is not one of distance. It was a very endearing term. It's the same word that Jesus used when He was on the cross and saw Mary, His mother, standing there and John standing beside her and He said, Woman, Behold thy son. But it was a term of endearment. Today it's a little distant in our English language. If you call your wife, Woman, or you call your mother, Woman, it's a little distance. But not so. In the Greek language here it is a warm endearing term. You might translate it, Mother dear. It's a very warm and endearing term.

what have I to do with thee? my hour is not yet come (2:4).

Jesus had an extremely keen sense of timing. He knew that God had declared a day in which the Messiah would come. It would be 483 years from the time the commandment went forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. And there was that time of the revealing of the Messiah to the nation of Israel. And Jesus was very careful that there not be a premature movement to acclaim Him as Messiah.

And so He is soft pedaling. Through the years of His ministry around Galilee, He doesn't really bring things out into the public and into the open until He is making His triumphant entry into the city of Jerusalem and He carefully prepares that triumphant entry. He sends the disciples into the village to get the donkey in order that He might fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah, "Your King cometh unto thee but He is lowly, He's riding on a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9).

When the disciples begin to quote the Hallel psalm, the Messianic Psalm 118, "Hosanna, Blessed be the King, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (Psalm 118:26), knowing that that was a Messianic song, when the disciples began to chant that on the path down the mount of Olives towards Jerusalem, and the Pharisees said, Lord, You better rebuke Your disciples. Don't You hear what they're saying? That's blasphemy. Jesus said, If they would hold their peace, these very stones would cry out (Luke 19:37-40).

And so He was waiting for that God-appointed day and thus, it's early, it's premature, Mom. It isn't the time yet. My hour has not yet come. In the seventh chapter of John, we'll find Him declaring a couple of times, The hour isn't yet come. Again in the eighth chapter, in the twelfth chapter, until we finally get, when we get to the twelfth chapter it changes a bit. He said, The hour is near. And then in chapter seventeen, as He is ready to give His life He said, Father, the hour has come. He was very keenly aware and sensitive to timing.

When we get to the twentieth chapter, John will tell us that Jesus did many other signs which He did not record. But "these," He said, "I have written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and by believing have life in His name" (John 20:31). This is one of the first signs that John has chosen to prove that Jesus is the Messiah. He gave to us last week the witness of John the Baptist that Jesus was the Messiah. He will bring in witnesses as we move along to the fact that Jesus was the Messiah. He will also, as we're going through John, give us many signs specially picked. John is careful in picking the various things. Jesus did many things and in the last chapter he said, "I suppose if we wrote them all, the libraries in all the world could not hold the books that should be written and could be written about what Jesus did" (John 21:25).

So John was selective and this is the first sign that John selects in order to prove that Jesus was the Messiah as Jesus turned the water into wine. So He said to her, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." Mom, what am I going to do with you? The hour hasn't come yet.

But Mary just went over to the servants and said, Whatever He tells you to do, do it (2:5).

Mothers know their boys.

And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews (2:6),

They had these large waterpots for purifying. In order to be purified, you had to do it with running water. You couldn't put water in a basin and wash in the still water. You had to have pouring water. So they had these big waterpots and they would take the water out and pour it and you always purify under running water.

They held two or three firkins apiece (2:6).

A firkin is nine gallons. Each of these waterpots held between eighteen and twenty-seven gallons. So if we would put an average to them, six of them, you have about a hundred and twenty gallons of water in the six waterpots.

Jesus said unto them [the servants], Fill them with water. And they filled them up to the brim (2:7).

I like that. Might as well get it all. Fill it to the brim. If the Lord is going to bless you, take it all. Don't just give Him a half opportunity. Just let Him do it all the way.

And he said unto them, Draw out now, and bear to the governor of the feast. And they bare it (2:8).

I wonder what they were thinking. Out of wine, now they're taking water to the governor of the feast.

And the ruler of the feast, when he tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know from whence it was: (but the servants that drew the water they knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And he said unto him, Every man at the beginning sets forth the good wine; and when

men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but you have kept the good wine until now (2:9,10).

You've reversed things, huh? Usually they put the good wine out first. And of course, it's true after a while when eating anything, your taste buds get sort of satiated and you don't taste as keenly. That's why in fancy restaurants, they serve you the sherbet sometimes between courses to sort of clean your palate so that you can get the good flavor again as you go into a new course. Because the taste buds just sort of get loaded and they're not as keen. And so the same with the wine. You put out the good first. When a person is drunk a little bit, the taste buds get sort of loaded and of course, you get sort of loaded and then you bring out the stuff that's sort of cheap. But this guy marvelled at the good wine that was brought out.

This was the beginning of miracles that Jesus did in Cana of Galilee (2:11),

This was the start of the miraculous works of Jesus. The first sign and of course, it's quite a remarkable sign. Changing the water into wine. His power over the elements is demonstrated here. The ability to change the elements.

and He manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him (2:11).

This was the beginning. They had started following Christ and the movement has now began. The movement that will ultimately bring Him to His hour of glory when He gives His life as a ransom for our sins.

After this he went down to Capernaum (2:12),

there on the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee,

he, and his mother, and his brothers, and his disciples (2:12):

Notice His brothers are listed separately from His disciples. From the scriptures we do know that He had several brothers who were, of course, half brothers to Jesus. James, Judas, Simon are named as His brothers; as well as sisters. This is when they were hearing of Jesus and they said, Isn't this the carpenter's son? Aren't His brothers with us to this day? And they were offended because of Him because they knew Him. And that's when He said, "A prophet is not without honour, except in His own town, and among His own people" (Matthew 13:57).

and they stayed there just for a few days (2:12).

But He was later to establish His ministry headquarters in Capernaum. This was to be the center for the activities of Jesus. As He would minister throughout the Galilee region, Capernaum would become home or home base for Him. So they come to Capernaum and just establish things. They are there just for a short period,

And then because the Jews' passover was at hand, Jesus went up to Jerusalem (2:13),

Jesus was obedient to the Mosaic law that required the adult male Jews to be in Jerusalem for the feast. We see Him here at the feast of the passover. This is not the first time, of course, He had gone to Jerusalem for the feast even as a child. You remember He was taken by His parents to Jerusalem for the feast when He was about twelve years old. And we find Him in Jerusalem for the feast of the tabernacles. We find Him again in Jerusalem for the feast of Hanukkah, the winter time feast. And so Jesus made it a point to be in Jerusalem for the feasts in obedience to the Mosaic law.

And He found in the temple (2:14)

The word "temple" here is a reference to the outer court area, not the inner court. There's another Greek word for the inner court. This is the outer court, the "hieron" and He found there; it would be sort of the court of the Gentiles, there were

those who sold the oxen and the sheep and the doves, and the changers of money who were sitting there (2:14):

And they have made it sort of a marketplace. According to the traditions, these little concessions were authorized by the high priest, a franchise kind of a thing, and he received commissions from the sales of the animals for sacrifice and from the changing of money.

When you brought an animal to sacrifice it to the Lord, it was necessary that that animal be perfect. God said He didn't want any roadkill. You weren't to just bring in some damaged animal to give to God. Some cast off. But you were to bring in the finest. It had to be without spot, with a blemish in order to be accepted as a sacrifice. And thus they were selling animals that had already been examined. You see, you brought your animal. The priest would examine it to make sure that it didn't have a blemish. To make sure that it was perfect. And if he found a blemish, it would be rejected. He would not offer it as a sacrifice.

Many times a person would bring a lamb and they'd come with their family and they wanted to make an offering to the Lord and as the priest examines it, he would find some little blemish and he would reject it. So here you are, you're already there to worship God and to sacrifice and your lamb has been rejected so you could go over to these booths. And you could buy a lamb that had already been certified for sacrifices. But you'd pay twice the price because of its prior certification. You could buy doves which had been certified but again at extremely high prices.

So there was first of all a gouging of the people. You could not give in the offering to God any coin that had the inscription of a Roman emperor. They considered that an image and sacrilege and they would not accept it as the temple offering. So the moneychangers were there. They would take your Roman coinage that could not be used in the temple offering and they would exchange the Roman coinage for the temple coinage, the temple shekel. But again, exchange it at a very high rate of exchange. You'd have to pay twenty-five percent or so, the loss of that, and of course these fellows were taking the difference.

A couple of things. Number one, the gouging of the people who had come to worship God, taking advantage of their desire to worship God to make personal profit off of it. The profiteering off of religion. Paul the apostle when writing to Timothy warns of those false teachers who would teach that godliness is a way to riches or a way to gain money. Using it for personal financial gain. He said, "From such turn away" (1 Timothy 6:5).

The second problem with this merchandising there in the temple grounds was it was making religion easy. You can more or less buy your way in and making it easy on the people. Convenient. You don't have to go out to your flock and get a lamb and bring it all the way. It was a convenience kind of a thing, making it easy. And Jesus saw this.

And He made a scourge of small cords (2:15),

Probably the cords that they had tied around the oxen that were for sale. Cords that were lying around. And He went around and picked up these cords that were once the leashes on the oxen and He made this whip.

he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and He turned over the changers' money, overturning the tables (2:15);

There are those wimpy people who want to make Jesus a wimp and so they say, Well, it didn't say He ever struck anyone. It didn't say He didn't either. You know what I think. I think He was a man's. Here is a guy in there, why didn't they stop Him? I think He was rugged, I think He was rough. When He saw this abomination, He was just so upset He went through that place dumping over the tables and money. That would have, you would think that they'd all just gang up on Him. What are You doing here dumping the money on the floor? These guys are scrambling to pick up the money. He begins to drive out the oxen and those that were selling them, the sheep.

And He said unto them that sold the doves, Take these things out of here; don't make my Father's house a house of merchandise (2:16).

This is at the very beginning of the ministry of Jesus. This happens to be the second sign that John gives to us to show that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus is calling the temple My Father's house. At the end of the ministry of Christ, the final week; probably the day after His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the next day He came back into Jerusalem and once again He cleansed the temple. So He did this at the beginning of His public ministry and once again at the end of His public ministry. So twice Jesus cleansed the temple from the merchandising that had become so common within the temple itself.

"My Father's house," they all knew it was the house of God and thus He is claiming to be the Son of God as He cleanses the temple.

And his disciples remembered the scripture, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up (2:17).

Psalm 69:9. They remembered that psalm as they saw Him with this zeal going in and cleaning up the place.

Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign do you show us, seeing that You're doing these things (2:18)?

What sign do you give us to authenticate Your actions here? You say that this is Your Father's house, what sign do you show us? Of course, He is fulfilling a prophecy of the Messiah. Thus, what sign do you give to us that You are the Messiah? That this is Your Father's house. That You are the Son of God.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, We've been building this temple for forty-six years, and You're going to raise it up in three days (2:19,20)?

John, of course, is writing towards the end of the first century and he said,

But he spoke of the temple of his body. And when He was risen from the dead, the disciples remembered then His words (2:21,22);

Paul the apostle refers to our bodies not as a temple but as a tabernacle. When you talk about a temple, you're thinking of something rather permanent. When you talk about a tabernacle, you're thinking of something rather temporary. You're talking about a tent and a tent is a temporary kind of thing. It might be good for a couple weeks vacation but oh, you begin to long for a shower again. So we don't think of a tent as, I just bought a new tent and I'm going to pitch it in the park and I'm going to live there for a while. It's a temporary thing. Never thought of as permanent. And so Paul uses the analogy again of our bodies as a tent. In 2 Corinthians 5, "We know that when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, that's not made with hands, that's eternal in the heavens. So then we who are living in these tents do often groan, earnestly desiring to be freed, not to be an unembodied spirit but to be clothed upon with the body which is from heaven. For we know that as long as we are living in these bodies, we are absent from the Lord but we would choose rather to be absent from these bodies, that we might be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:1-8).

What Paul is teaching and what the Bible does teach is that the body isn't the real you. The body is just a tent in which you are living for a while. The real you is spirit. The body is God's gift to us and it's a marvelously designed instrument whereby my spirit can express itself. I'd have a hard time expressing myself to you tonight if it weren't for my body, if I were just pure spirit. And in the same token, you'd have a hard time understanding what I was trying to express if you didn't have a body.

So the bodies are the instruments by which we can tell what we are, what we feel, what we think, we relate through the medium of the body to each other. So as you relate to me what you are and what you feel, what you think, I begin to know you. I begin to understand you. I begin to appreciate you and admire you. I begin to love you. And we come into these meaningful, loving relationships through the instrument of the body as we relate to each other. We are always, it seems, so associating the body with the person that it's hard for us to think of that person separate from the body. But in reality, the real me is spirit. This is just a tent, it's getting creaky, getting old, getting holes, and falling apart, getting threadbare. And one of these days I'm going to move out of this tent. Don't mourn. I'm going to be moving into a mansion, a building of God not made with hands that's eternal in the heavens. I appreciate the tent. I thank God for the marvelously designed body. I marvel at God's creative genius. But I'm looking forward to the building. That permanent dwelling place for my spirit.

So death for the child of God is just moving out of the tent into the house or the mansion. Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it weren't so, I would have told you" (John 14:2). It's the new body that He's gone to prepare for you. And one day, I'm going to move. Kay is going to send out change of address cards. No longer living in the tent. Now living in that building of God.

My prayer that we all move together. "Beloved, I show you a mystery; We're not going to all of us sleep, but we're all going to be changed, In a moment, in a twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:51,52). The metamorphosis. That glorious change from the tent as we move into the house where Jesus Christ is coming again. He said, "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I'm going to prepare a place for you. And if I go, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2,3). And I think that that time is very, very close at hand. And I wait with excited expectation for the glorious return of Jesus Christ and the moving out of the limitations of this tent into the house, the building of God not made with hands.

So Jesus is referring to His body as a temple, not as a tent but as a temple. And He said, "If you destroy this temple, in three days I will raise it up." So He is talking about His death and resurrection. The ultimate sign of the truth and the fact that Jesus was the Messiah and is the chosen of God will be in the resurrection. The third day when He rises from the dead will be the confirmation, the sign, the ultimate sign.

Later on, Matthew chapter 12 tells us that the Pharisees and the scribes came to Jesus and they said, Show us a sign. And Jesus said, A wicked and an adulterous generation seeks after a sign; but no sign will be given to it, except the sign of the prophet Jonah: For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the

belly of the whale, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12:38-40). So once again, the same sign, His death and resurrection. The resurrection from the dead, the sign.

Not understanding that Jesus was talking about His body but thinking of it in a literal sense. He had just cleansed the temple so thinking that He's talking about that temple that He had just cleansed, gotten rid of the merchants, they said, We've been working on this thing for forty-six years. And of course, was a magnificent building. Close to ten stories high. Made of huge stones, covered with gold and it was just a magnificent beautiful place. They would be working on it for another twenty years. It took sixty-six years to complete the building of that temple. And now Jesus said, Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. They, thinking of that great temple of Herod, said, You're going to raise it up in three days?

Mark tells us when Jesus was brought before the high priest, and they were seeking to get witnesses against Him. "Many witnesses came and made charges, which could not be verified or confirmed. Spurious charges. One of the witnesses said, I heard Him say that if we destroy this temple that is made with hands, He will rebuild it in three days, a temple that's not made with hands" (Mark 14:56-58). That was his interpretation of what Jesus had said here, still thinking at that time He's talking about that earthly temple of Herod. But Jesus, of course, was talking about His body.

The disciples didn't understand at that time. As we go through John, you'll find that many times, the disciples are sort of mystified by what Jesus said. They believed Him and they were following but He would make these statements and they would, I'm sure, turn to each other and say, Do you know what He's talking about? And it wasn't until after His resurrection that things began to fall into place. They began to understand some of the predictions that He had made.

One interesting thing about prophecy, I don't think that any of us really fully understand prophecy until after it's been fulfilled. And then we can see clearly, Yes, this is what it meant. So when He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them,

and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said (2:22).

Paul the apostle said, The gospel that I preach unto you, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scripture, was buried and rose again the third day according to the scripture. So they did not understand the scriptures that the Messiah would be despised and rejected, cut off, put to death. They didn't understand that until after His resurrection. And then after His resurrection, then they believed the scriptures that spoke of the Messiah's rejection and death. Then it all came together in their minds. Then they understood, and then they believed the scriptures and the words of Jesus because now it has been fulfilled and they can see the fulfillment of it.

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did (2:23).

He then began to work miracles. John doesn't record any of the miracles that Jesus did. But He began to no doubt heal the sick and this was such a great part of His ministry. And so when people saw the miracles, many of them believed in Him.

But He didn't believe in them. A faith that is predicated upon seeing miracles is not a faith that Jesus will commit Himself to. Our faith can't be established in spectacularism. Our faith has to be established in the word of God. They were watching the miracles of Jesus and they trusted in Him but He didn't trust in them. They committed themselves to Him,

But He did not commit himself to them (2:24),

because their faith and their trust was predicated upon the spectacular, upon the miracles. That is not the kind of faith that Jesus puts His trust in man. Oh yes I believe, I had a great experience. It was just so marvellous, I felt tingling all over my body. Jesus does not commit Himself to that kind of faith that believes because it had tingling sensations. Your faith cannot be established upon the miraculous. Your faith has to be established in the word of God. That's the only true foundation for faith is God's word.

People testify of great feelings of joy and elation. I'm not opposed to feelings. I believe in feelings and I've had the feelings of joy and elation as a child of God. I've had the glorious peace that passes human understanding. I've had those moments where you just so sensed the presence of God you break out in just weeping before the Lord or I've had those experience of just inexpressible joy. I've had the whole gamut of experiences. But my faith isn't based in any of the experience that I've had. My faith is

based on the solid word of God because though I've had exalted kind of wonderful experiences, I've also had times where I felt just miserable. And if my faith was in my feelings so great and glorious; Oh this is wonderful, then what about the day that I wake up and I feel miserable? Out of sorts? So you see, our feelings are too variable to put your faith in feelings. It's got to be something more solid than that and it's the word of God upon which our faith is based and founded. That's the kind of faith that Jesus will commit to. With these who believed because they saw the miracles, "Many believed on Him when they saw the miracles which He did, but Jesus did not commit Himself to them."

Actually, the Greek words are the same. It's translated commit here but it's the same word that the people who believed in Jesus, He didn't believe in them; or they committed themselves to Jesus, He didn't commit to them; or they trusted in Jesus but He didn't trust in them. That is that faith premised upon the viewing of the spectacular. He didn't believe in them because,

he knew all men (2:24),

He knew that it was a shallow faith. It was a faith that was predicated upon a moment of excitement. Didn't have a strong foundation. John tells us also that,

He didn't need that anyone should testify of man: for he knew what was in man (2:25).

He didn't need for someone to say, You watch out for that Judas Iscariot. He's sort of shady. He knew from the beginning who it was that would betray Him. He didn't need someone to come along and give Him inside information. He knew men, He knew what was in man.

In reality, chapter three is just a continuation. The Jews had come and they had said, What sign do you show us? And we have then Jesus giving them the sign, working the miracles and many following, believing because they saw the miracles. And now, one of the leaders of the Jews in chapter three will come to Jesus. He's going to ask more thoroughly about Jesus. He said, "We know that You have come from God because no man can do the things that You are doing unless God is with him." So we get now this discussion and some of the most basic and foundational truths of salvation are listed and given to us here in John chapter three. So a lot to study, meditate, muse over as you go through the third chapter of John. This is foundational, get it down pat as that will be our next study, third chapter of John.

May the work of God by His Holy Spirit be accomplished in your life this week as you grow in grace in your walk and fellowship with Jesus, in your understanding of His love and His purpose for your life. May this be a special week for you of God's revelation of Himself to your own heart. A time when the Holy Spirit opens up your understanding to the word of God in a richer, fuller way. A week of real spiritual development as we seek to follow Jesus Christ and commit our lives to serve Him. May God be with you and may God bless you. In the wonderful name of Jesus our Lord.