

## John 1:17-2:25 Chapter Study

### INTRO

As I mentioned in our first study 2 weeks ago, Outlining John's Gospel is difficult because he doesn't follow a strict timeline or chronology of Jesus' life as the other 3 gospels do.

Writing his gospel last, John focuses his story on the themes of Jesus' life & teaching the other 3 had left out.

One of the things John does a lot is to insert really deep & rich teaching on who Jesus is *into* narrative passages. We see that in our study tonight.

### I. THE SIGNS Chs. 1-11

#### A. Jesus as Creator 1:1-5

Some really heady stuff here.

And what he wrote has been instrumental throughout church history in clarifying the Church's position on both the deity & humanity of Jesus.

#### B. John the Baptizer Points to Jesus 1:6-34

Then, beginning with v. 6, John speaks of John the Baptist, a well-known figure of that time who was heralded by the common people as a prophet; the first to appear on the scene in 400 years.

The Gospel writer John was just a teenager when he became a disciple of John the Baptizer.

And it was while following John that he met & began following Jesus.

While John the Baptizer was accepted by the people as a mighty prophet, he claimed his entire role was to prepare for & point to the Messiah whose coming was imminent.

When Jesus showed up one day, John said, "There He is!" And young John began following.

In vs. 6-34, John uses the Baptizer's testimony to Jesus as the Messiah as the framework for expanding on who he'd come to understand Jesus as.

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**18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.**

"No one has seen God at any time" – What about Abraham & Moses? What about Gideon who we just studied, or Samson's parents?

All these saw someone they *thought* was God.

What John means is that no one has seen God in His essence as God.

No one has seen God in the fullness of His radiant glory.

As God told Moses, no one can see Him thus & survive.

Abraham, Gideon & Samson's parents saw what is called a *theophany*; an appearance of God as a man.

His glory was hidden as He took on the appearance of a human being for a short time.

Moses didn't see God's *person*, He merely saw the glow of His glory after He had passed by – like we can see the light of the sun after it's dipped below the horizon.

While no one has *seen* God in His divine essence – Jesus, as the only begotten Son

who enjoys the closest possible relationship with the Father, has “**declared**” Him.

Here’s where the translators have to take a word rich in meaning and reduce it to something that really doesn’t do justice to it.

You see, the Greek word translated “declare” meant far, far more than what the English word means.

It spoke of a thorough explanation—one that brought complete & thorough understanding. But more than that, it led to a *personal experience*.

For a few years I worked in fast food, traveling around CA opening units & training new crews.

The training team I led followed a set pattern in training people for their positions.

We first explained the job, then demonstrated the job to them.

Then we had them try it themselves while we talked them through it.

After they demonstrated a certain proficiency we just observed and added more instruction as it was needed.

That’s a good illustration of what this word “declare” means.

Jesus didn’t just talk *about* God – He *showed* the very character of God & brought people into contact with it.

He made God personal & showed how the knowledge of God was something to experience & live by.

I made an interesting discovery on the training team that applies to the Christian life.

The last step in *really* learning something, is to *teach & train* someone else.

I found that the way to promote someone from being a mediocre worker to being a standout, was to have them train someone else.

And so it is in the faith.

Our own growth in Christ is enhanced when we take on the charge of training others.

People will often come to me and say that they need someone to personally disciple them.

Not always, but often, what they mean is that they want **ME** to disciple them.

If I took on everyone who asked, I’d have no time for anything else.

What’s interesting is that many of those who ask for discipling have known the Lord for several years.

They’ve been faithful in going to church & have shown some real growth in spiritual things.

I encourage such people to, instead of looking for someone to disciple *them*, look for a new believer *they can disciple*.

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What John says in vs. 14-18 means that in Jesus was a full & complete revelation of God.

No one & nothing offers a more complete revelation.

## **19 Now this is the testimony of John,**

Meaning—the Baptizer.

**when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?”**

We will encounter a phrase found here again & again in John's Gospel.

It's the phrase, "the Jews."

He doesn't mean *all* the Jews; he's referring to a select group – the religious & political leaders in Jerusalem.

When John began to attract a crowd out to the Jordan to be baptized, they sent out some guys to investigate & asked him who he was & what he was doing.

**20 He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ."**

John knew that of greatest concern on the part of the leaders would be anyone who claimed to be the Christ, which is the Greek word for 'Messiah.'

The reason the leaders were worried about this is because there had been a string of would-be messiahs who'd come along and had caused a lot of trouble.

Every uprising they began was quickly put down by the Romans, with a loss of more power on the part of the Jewish leaders.

So they did their best to discourage any new movement gathering behind someone who was not under their control – and John wasn't.

John let them know right off that they didn't need to worry about him.

**21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."**

The scriptures foretold that before the Messiah came, Elijah would reappear to announce him.

Moses said that one day a mighty prophet would arrive who would complete the law & give more instruction about how to follow God.

When asked if he was either of these, John said he wasn't.

**22 Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" 23 He said: "I am 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the LORD," ' as the prophet Isaiah said."**

The guys needed to take back some kind of report to their bosses in Jerusalem, so they asked John what they should say.

They asked – "What do you say about yourself?"

John's reply is instructive.

"I'm a voice!" In other words – "Who I am doesn't matter. What **DOES**, is the message."

What's interesting about this is that later, when Jesus was asked about John, He said of all the prophets born up to that time, John was the greatest of all!

He was greater than Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, & Ezekiel.

Some of the prophets performed powerful miracles & signs.

John isn't recorded as doing even one!

Yet Jesus says he was the greatest of all—all because he had the unique task of preparing the way for the Redeemer.

Yet when John is asked about himself; he deflects the attention off himself to the One he was sent to point to.

This is an important lesson for all those who are called to play a role in leadership

in the Body of Christ.

Never allow the *position* God graciously grants you to go to your head.

Don't get hung up on titles.

Don't expect or demand that people honor you for the office you fill.

Don't let pride pollute your calling.

You're nothing but a *voice*; & your message isn't "Hey, look at ME; aren't I special?"

It's, "Look to Jesus!"

## **24 Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees.**

A good portion of the 70 men who comprised the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Supreme council, were of the sect known as the 'Pharisees.'

## **25 And they asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"**

They wanted to know where John got his authority.

Who'd authorized him to baptize Jews.

Remember – baptism was something ONLY Gentiles did as a way to show their desire to become Jews.

For Jews to be baptized was a way of saying that they were no better than Gentiles & needed to make a radical step of coming back to God.

The Jewish leaders took this as an offense because John was in effect saying they were doing a lousy job of leading the nation religiously.

## **26 John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. <sup>27</sup> It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose."**

When asked about himself, about where he got his authority, John again points them back to the coming Messiah. It didn't matter who he was or where he got his authority.

All that mattered was that they get ready for the One who was about to come  
Who's authority was *supreme*.

## **28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.**

"Bethabara" means "house of the ford." {Not a garage}

It was a place on the eastern bank of the Jordan near Jericho where the river widens out & gets shallow enough for someone to cross over on foot when the water is low.

Since it was a common place for crossing, a little community had grown up there.

It made for an ideal place for large crowds to gather & for John to do baptisms. Here's what likely happened . . . {Show map}

As John was preaching a message of radical repentance, the people came out to him by crossing over to the eastern side, thus leaving Israel.

As they came up out of the water, they would walk on over & back into Israel as if they were entering it for the first time in this new state of repentance and readiness to walk with God.

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**29** The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said,  
**“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! <sup>30</sup>**  
**This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred**  
**before me, for He was before me.’**

When Jesus had been baptized by John 40 days earlier, the Spirit told him Jesus was the Messiah, the One he’d been sent to point to.

And in a flash of revelation, John understood Jesus’ mission – He was sent to be a *sacrifice*.

Then John says something remarkable – he says that Jesus was *before* him.

What’s odd about this is that Jesus & John were cousins; their mothers were related.

And John was born several months *before* Jesus.

Yet here John says that Jesus is *older* than he.

John understood that Jesus is the Rock of Ages, the eternal God.

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John goes on . . .

**31** I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel,  
therefore I came baptizing with water.”

John is simply saying that until THAT MOMENT of revelation by the Spirit, he didn’t know his own cousin was the One he’d been sent to herald.

Certainly John had heard from his mother Elizabeth, the story of Jesus’ birth.

And how his own life & mission were tied to Him.

It’s one thing to hear the testimony of others, but an altogether different thing to hear the truth from the Spirit Himself.

**32** And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from  
heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. <sup>33</sup> I did not know Him,  
but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom  
you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who  
baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ <sup>34</sup> And I have seen and testified that this  
is the Son of God.”

Before Jesus came to the Jordan to be baptized by John, John kept pointing to the One who WOULD come – simply referring to Him as “the Messiah.”

*After* Jesus was baptized, & His identity was made clear by these signs from heaven, John pointed people, not just to a generic “Messiah” but the *person* – Jesus of Nazareth.

### **C. Jesus Gathers the First Disciples 1:35-51**

**35** Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples.

John is going to now tell us how he began following Jesus.

But he follows the Baptizer’s example & refers to himself only obliquely.

**36** And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of  
God!” <sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, “What do you seek?” They said to Him, “Rabbi” (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), “where are You staying?” <sup>39</sup> He said to them,

**“Come and see.” They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).**

These two understood Jesus to be coming in the role of a *rabbi*, one of those itinerant religious teachers who’d become a fixture in Israel at this time, especially in Galilee.

They were less numerous or popular in the south because the Jewish leadership was based in Jerusalem. That’s where the temple & priests were.

They asked Jesus where He was going. He invited them to follow.

**40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas” (which is translated, A Stone).**

Andrew was so impressed with Jesus he immediately went to find his brother Simon, saying that they’d found the Messiah. He came to see & Jesus dropped a bomb on him.

That bomb came in the form of a *name change*.

Here’s what’s so unusual about this.

Naming something was a way to show authority over it. Fathers named their children.

When you purchased a new piece of property, you named it to show it belonged to you.

By assigning Simon a new name, Jesus was asserting his authority over him & saying that by associating with Jesus, a new phase had opened in Simon’s life.

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‘Simon’ is the shortened form of ‘Simeon’ which means ‘to hear.’

It’s the name Leah gave her 2<sup>nd</sup> son by Jacob because God had “heard” her prayers.

The original Simeon was impetuous, cruel, & unstable.

He was so unstable he never secured a definite territory in Israel among the tribes and ended up just sort of blending in among the rest.

So while the name ‘Simon’ strictly means “to hear,” by Simon’s time it had come to carry a strong connotation of meaning shaky, untrustworthy, unsteady.

In light of that, what Jesus said was a great kindness, because ‘Cephas’ is Aramaic for “stone” or “rock.”

Simon’s association with Jesus will see him turned from Unsteady to Rocky!

He began as an impetuous & unsteady guy who over time developed into a steadfast follower of Christ.

We know him better as “Peter” which comes from the Greek translation of Cephas; Petros.

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**43 The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, “Follow Me.” 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.**

As Jesus began the trip north, He invited another disciple to follow Him.

Philip was from Bethsaida which lies on the northernmost shore of the Lake of Gennesaret, near where the Jordan enters the lake from the North. It was the hometown of the brothers Andrew & Peter, though by then they'd moved to Capernaum because there was a better market for the fish they caught.

**45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” 46 And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”**

Like Andrew, Philip was compelled to tell others about Jesus & told his friend Nathanael.

Nate wasn't at all impressed by the report.

The reason why was because of where Jesus was from – Nazareth!

Nazareth was a tiny little burg that had become a work-camp for the many Jewish craftsmen who were building Sepphoris, Herod's new Roman-style capital a few miles north.

As was typical of all such boom-towns, it had a reputation of being a pretty rough place.

The idea that the Messiah would come from such a place was, well, repugnant. It certainly was to Nathanael, so he scoffed at the suggestion Jesus could be the Messiah.

Philip knew the solution to Nate's unbelief would be to encounter Jesus personally.

**47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!” 48 Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” 49 Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”**

Jesus' first words to Nathanael were like a laser beam cutting to the heart of the man.

Nate was a guy who held honesty as a supreme virtue.

He would not compromise with the truth one iota.

It's not that he was *proud* of being a man of integrity; it was that he *really was, & knew it*.

So when Jesus identified this trait in him, Nathanael was blown away & asked, “How'd you know that? Did Phil tell you about me?”

Jesus replied by saying, “Hey, before Philip even talked to you, I saw you sitting under that fig tree where he found you.”

Jesus had been no where near & Nate rightly realized Jesus' knowledge & vision must mean that He was indeed the Messiah, the King of Israel.

But notice that he also calls Him the “Son of God.”

This is another evidence that the Jews of that time expected the Messiah to be more than just a man. They expected Him to be divine as well.

**50 Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you**

**under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." <sup>51</sup> And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."**

Jesus invited Nathanael to be a witness of even greater things, things that would make his faith in Jesus even more solid.

When He said, **"You shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man,"** He was using a story the disciples would have easily remembered.

In Gen. 28 when Jacob was running from his angry brother Esau after just having cheated him out of the birthright & blessing, he spent a night at a place called *Bethel* – the House of God.

That night, Jacob had a dream, in which he saw a ladder or staircase stretched from Heaven to Earth.

On that staircase a multitude of angels were going up & down.

Jacob understood that the dream spoke of God's desire to bring the power & reality of the spiritual realm into the natural world, and that the natural world was taken up into the purposes of God.

Over time, the Jews had come to understand that Jacob's dream was God's way to show him that it would be through him that the way to heaven would come.

When Jesus said this, He was claiming to be the fulfillment of that promise.

He was Jacob's staircase.

#### **D. The First Sign: Water to Wine 2:1-12**

**<sup>1</sup> On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.**

Cana was a tiny village in Galilee, not far from Nazareth. {Map}

During the time Jesus' family had lived there they'd made friends all over the area & Mary was in Cana attending a wedding.

The way this is worded, it sounds like Mary was *helping* with the wedding.

**<sup>2</sup> Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.**

As would be appropriate if Mary was an official part of it.

**<sup>3</sup> And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."**

This wasn't merely commentary she was giving – it was an appeal for Him to do something about it.

Here's why –

A Jewish wedding feast was one of the few times in the difficult & dreary lives of the Jews at this time when they relaxed the usual stiff rules and just had a good time.

The feast often lasted for several days, and was accompanied by a lot of music, dancing, story-telling, all around gobs of food and drink.

Imagine the best wedding reception you've ever attended – then extend it over 4, 5, 6 days. That was a Jewish wedding feast!

The bride's family was responsible for providing all the refreshments, while others brought the entertainment. Everyone was to contribute to the celebration in



some way.

About the only thing that could spoil the party was if it started raining, or if they ran out of food & drink, especially drink, which was wine.

Even if it rained, they could move indoors – but if the wine dried up, people would pack up and go home feeling like they'd not been given the proper hospitality.

And forever after, that newlywed couple would bear the stigma of being stingy & rude.

It was the kind of social faux pas no one wanted to commit.

If you ran out of wine at your wedding, well, you'd have to hang your head in shame for the rest of your life in that village.

That's why Mary went to Jesus.

She knew who He was, & thought He might have a solution to the crisis.

**4 Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.”**

It sounds like He's saying, “SO?!? What's that got to do with Me?” But that isn't it at all.

This isn't the “Woman,” of “Hey woman, get me a beer!”

This is a respectful, “Ma'am.”

Though Mary is His mother & their relationship is warm & close, Jesus shows a deep parental respect for her.

He asked what a failure of the wine has to do with Him.

He knows what she's suggesting, but He tells her that the time for Him to begin His ministry has not yet come.

While this seems to shut the door on her request, there was something in the way

He said it that encouraged her to press on . . .

**5 His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.” 6 Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece.**

One of the rituals the Pharisees had spread among the people was an elaborate process for washing hands before eating.

This ritual required a lot of fresh water, so 6 large vessels stood by for the many days of the celebration.

Since the feast had been going on for a while, the pots needed to be refilled.

**7 Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And He said to them, “Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.” And they took it. 9 When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. 10 And he said to him, “Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!”**

With 120 to 180 gallons of wine, they wouldn't have to worry about having

enough.

There would be more & to spare.

What surprised the master of ceremonies was that this wine was superior to the first.

Usually the best wine was consumed *first*, & once the guests were sated, then the cheap stuff was brought out.

No one was the wiser because their critical faculties were dulled enough.

Of course, the wine Jesus made was the *best* wine ever consumed.

But the miracle was witnessed only by the servants & the disciples.

It was done quietly, without either the guests or the newlyweds even knowing.

If we were writing the Gospel, we'd plan for Jesus to perform His first miracle in a far more dramatic way & in a more important setting.

We'd put Him in the Temple in Jerusalem, with the priests & Sanhedrin gathered round, as well as 100,000 spectators.

Then He levitate several feet off the ground, a bright light from heaven would shine down, angels would come & fly around Him, then He would make a couple lions suddenly appear under His feet.

Yeah, we'd have Him make a grand entrance, very much like the people of the day were expecting of the Messiah.

But Jesus performed His first miracle in near secret – and all for one thing – to save a young couple from a life of shame --

To make sure the joy of their wedding wasn't tainted by something as silly as running out of drinks.

So while the setting & nature of this miracle doesn't fit *our* expectations, it's perfect as the preface to Jesus' mission.

He came humbly & quietly to remove our shame & fill our lives with joy by making us His bride.

## **11 This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.**

John identifies this miracle as the first of the "signs" that Jesus performed.

He doesn't call it a "miracle" or use the word in the other 3 gospels for the miracles Jesus did.

A 'sign' is something that points to a lesson or truth beyond itself.

John weaves his whole story of Jesus around specific *signs* that pointed out Who Jesus was.

Here he says that the disciples real faith in Jesus began with their seeing this sign.

It revealed the glory that was in Jesus during the incarnation.

That glory wasn't something that dazzled the eye so much as it dazzled the heart & soul with the tender way Jesus used His awesome power.

Think about it, if you possessed consummate power, would you reserve it and only use it at select moment, to, let's say, make sure there was enough wedding cake?

## **12 After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.**

### **E. Jesus in Jerusalem 2:13-3:22**

## 1. Clearing the Temple 2:13-22

**13** Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

It was part of the law of Moses that Jews who could make the journey had to attend the Passover each year in Jerusalem.

**14** And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. **15** When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. **16** And He said to those who sold doves, **"Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"** **17** Then His disciples remembered that it was written, **"Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."**

The temple was a massive complex of buildings with a wide expanse of open space.

At the southern side where the main entrances to the temple grounds were located was a marketplace.

This market was allowed by the priests, each merchant being licensed & approved for a hefty fee paid to them.

As worshippers arrived at the temple, they would convert their Roman coins into the sacred Temple shekels at an outrageous exchange rate, then they would use this sacred temple currency to buy a pre-approved animal for sacrifice.

There was usually change left over which was good no where else, so in exchanging the temple shekels back to Roman coin, they were hit yet again.

The result was that the merchants were getting rich and the priests richer – all on the backs of the common people who were already being taxed to death by the Romans & the civil government of Israel.

The common people knew it was all a terrible racket but there was nothing they could do about it.

Many sincere people who wanted to worship God had become so disillusioned, they had stopped going to Jerusalem because it was too painful to see what a mockery the worship of God had become.

It was this religious marketplace that had helped drive the Essenes out of Jerusalem and into the wilderness in places like Qumran.

Jesus had been to the temple every year since he was a kid.

He'd seen this travesty many times.

But now that He's begun His ministry, it's time for Him to *take action*.

Don't think that He just flew into a rage & started swinging like a wild man.

What He did was measured & a reasonable response to the abomination that was going on.

He walked around & collected the bits of rope He found littering the temple grounds from the many people who'd bought then led their sacrifices over to be offered up.

Then He sat down and made a nice whip of them.  
This all took a while, enough to make sure He wasn't in some blind rage.  
Once the whip was ready, He stood, and began to wade through the stalls and tables, flipping them over, and cracking the whip behind the goats & sheep to send them stampeding out of the temple grounds.  
One look at His face warned anyone who saw Him that there wasn't going to be any bargaining or negotiating.

He was on a mission & would not be stopped till it was complete.  
As Jesus made his way through the market, dismantling it as He went, a passage from Psalm 69 flashed in the memories of the disciples who followed behind Him.

The Psalmist spoke of a holy anger that would mark the righteous one.

I love this story because it reminds us that Jesus, the One who *turns water to wine* to save a young couple from embarrassment, will also *turn tables over & cracks the whip* of righteous indignation when God is being misrepresented by those who are supposed to be His spokesmen.

Anger is not a sin! But it can *become* sin when it drives us to do that which is wrong.

And most anger is fueled by selfishness.

We don't get our way or aren't being treated the way we think we deserve and so we get angry. That's misplaced anger.

Good anger, holy anger is the kind we see here - anger when that which is good & right is being abused or neglected.

It's anger when injustice is being perpetrated, and when the poor & powerless are being ripped off.

Sunday, Wes showed us what the LRA is doing to the innocent & defenseless in Uganda.

That shouldn't just make us sad – it ought to make us deeply angry.

And that anger ought to move us to measured, reasonable action.

Jesus collected a bunch of cords, made a weapon, then measured out the right portion of violence to cleanse evil from the holy grounds.

Sometimes it's right to quietly turn water to wine.

Other times the only thing to do is crack the whip.

It's only as we walk in the Spirit of God that we will know which is the right time for which.

**18** So the Jews answered and said to Him, “What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?”

Jesus had just upset their nice little racket & a major source of their income.

They demanded He show them some credentials.

**19** Jesus answered and said to them, “**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**” <sup>20</sup> Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?”

<sup>21</sup> But He was speaking of the temple of His body. <sup>22</sup> Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which

## Jesus had said.

They asked for a sign – He gave them one: The Resurrection when the temple of His body would rise from the dead on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day.

But they thought He was speaking of *Herod's temple*, which was still under construction.

Herod had begun the project 46 years before, in 19 BC, & it would take over 30 <sup>[1]</sup> years for it to be completed.

The scope of the project was immense, so Jesus' claim sounded like the raving of a lunatic to them.

It wasn't till much later that the Apostles realized Jesus had been referring to the resurrection and not Herod's temple at all.

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At Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin, the main charge they tried to level against Him was tied to this clearing of the temple.

They understood His action was appropriate for someone who claimed to be the Messiah.

When they asked for validation of His authority, He referred them to the Resurrection.

They spun it to mean Herod's temple and found witnesses who said that Jesus had said He would DESTROY the temple, then raise it again.

Jesus never said any such thing.

What He did was challenge them to destroy the temple of His body, and He would rise again from the dead.

What's curious is that the witnesses the Sanhedrin did call, couldn't get their exact quotes to jive with one another, so their testimony was tossed out.

## 2. Many Believe in Jesus 2:23-3:21

**23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. 24 But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, 25 and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.**

While the Jewish leaders asked for a sign that would prove Jesus' authority, Jesus refused to give them what they wanted.

Instead, He healed & worked wonders among the common people so that many came to faith in Him.

Clearing the temple had made Him a champion & hero among them.

A popular movement began to rush Him into the office of Messiah & King of Israel.

But Jesus resisted this because He knew the crowds were just being excited by the things they were seeing.

They had not come into a full orbed & well ground faith in Him as the Redeemer.

They were good & ready for the spectacular show of miracles, but they weren't ready for the humiliation & suffering that was yet to come.

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These last verses remind us that popularity, even with the religious crowd, isn't

necessarily a sign that God's blessing is on a thing.

Success has ruined many a man & ministry.

When we're faithful to the calling the Lord gives us, it can often result in dramatic results.

People sing your praises and all of a sudden you find yourself the attention of the press, and are getting book offers from major publishers.

It's natural to assume that this is a platform to reach an even wider audience.

But that assumption may be totally wrong.

It can be wrong because the publisher has his own agenda – to make money!

And the people who suddenly show up and want to be a part are often just along for the ride while they can line their pockets with the goodies of a successful ministry.

Jesus knew the enthusiasm of the crowds wasn't based in the reality of faith in Him as He was.

It was a faith in what they wanted Him to be.

Only more time & more exposure to Him could bring about the right kind of faith.

So He didn't allow them to hijack God's plan for His life & mission.

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[1]

*The Gospel of John : Volume 1.* 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.