

JOHN 2

When the Creator Cleanses

In each chapter of our study of John's Gospel, we will attempt to highlight the four themes introduced previously: Jesus as Logos, Light, Life, and Lamb. Although these themes will prove more prominent in some chapters than others, each chapter will remind us of these four truths about Jesus.

A Wedding

The first "sign" (John's word for "miracle" that directs us to the identity of Jesus as the Logos-Lamb) recorded by John is turning water into wine. The primary point of the story is to direct us to two fundamental truths.

First, Jesus is the Divine Creator – the Logos. Consider the desperate situation the host of this wedding were in. To run out of wine at the wedding was dishonorable. It was a failure of hospitality. When his mother comes to him, she knows he alone can resolve the situation. Jesus does so by creating wine *ex nihilo* ("out of nothing") like God did at creation. Likewise, there are clear parallels with the first plague of Egypt wherein God turned the Nile River into blood. One was an act of judgment while the other was an act of grace. In the former, the poisoned water brought great sorrow whereas in the latter, the transformed wine brought great feasting and fellowship.

Furthermore, Jesus is portrayed as the Lord (another "L" word!) of the Feast. The joy of feasting and celebration at a wedding are common enough. Yet Jesus's first work is to continue such joyous celebration. So much so that Jesus creates better wine.

Thus, what we see is that Jesus is the Divine Logos whose Kingdom is one of joy and celebration.

A War

The Bible begins with a wedding and quickly turns to war. It will conclude with a war that climaxes in a wedding. John's Gospel follows the story of Genesis by celebrating the wedding in Cana whereby Jesus continues the celebration. John then turns our attention to Jesus cleansing the Temple.

Although often highlighted for its shocking scene of violence from Jesus ("meek and mild"), the scene is about more than righteous anger. Jesus cleanses the Temple which

had been polluted by corrupt religion. Having monopolized the sacrificial system, the religious elites inflated prices and thus preyed on the poor and the worshipper. This is evil and ungodly.

But Jesus cleansed it. That's the point. The Logos that creates out of nothing and promotes festivity and joy is the same He is the one that cleanses all uncleanness and evil. The two are related. There can be no joy without cleansing. There can be no true worship without the Logos transforming hearts.

Christ accomplishes this is by the means of his cross. Notice, again, John's timing of these events. In both verse 13 and 23, he reminds us of Passover. And at the center of the Temple scene is his proclamation that he will "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." In case the meaning remains mysterious, John explains, "But he was speaking about the temple of his body." Jesus will accomplish his work of cleansing when he dies as Lamb and is raised as a conquering Lord.