

# ***International Bible Lessons Commentary***

## ***John 2:1-12***

**New Revised Standard Version**

***International Bible Lessons***  
**Sunday, January 24, 2016**

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, January 24, 2016**, is from **John 2:1-12**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** discusses *Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further* to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the **International Bible Lessons Commentary** website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. If you are a Bible student or teacher, you can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the **International Bible Lesson Forum**.

## ***International Bible Lesson Commentary***

### **John 2:1-12**

**(John 2:1) On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.**

On the first day, Jesus called Andrew, Simon Peter, and most probably John (the writer of the Gospel of John) to be His disciples. On the second day, Jesus called Philip and Nathanael to be His disciples. John the Baptist introduced Jesus as "the Lamb of God." The five disciples called Jesus, "Rabbi" (or Teacher), "Messiah" (or Christ), "Son of God," and "King of Israel" (John 1:35-52). On the third day, Jesus went to a wedding with His new disciples. Mary, His mother, was there.

**(John 2:2) Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.**

In the Bible, the relationship between Jesus and the Church is sometimes described as or compared to a marriage relationship. John the Apostle described his vision in heaven: "Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: 'Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.' (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.) Then the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' And he added, 'These are the true words of God'" (Revelation 19:6-9).

(See also: John 3:29, Revelation 18:23; 21:2; 21:9; 22:17). By attending this wedding, Jesus showed His disciples how important marriage and the family is, even though Jesus never married. Jesus wants His followers to participate in activities pleasing to God, including marriage if that is God's will for them personally. Marriage is a God-ordained and good institution that Jesus upheld so some later would not despise marriage or think or teach that it is improper for followers of Jesus to marry.

**(John 2:3) When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.”**

By His presence at the wedding, just as His important ministry and the calling of His disciples had begun, Jesus affirmed the importance and value of marriage. Jesus' mother came to Jesus and stated a fact that revealed a need. She knew that He was concerned for the needs of others, even as she was. The availability of wine at a wedding feast was considered a social necessity, and to run out of wine would have been a huge social embarrassment, if not worse. Just as wine at this wedding was a necessity, so Jesus' teaching is a spiritual necessity for everyone.

**(John 2:4) And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.”**

Calling His mother “Woman” was not unkind or unloving no matter how it might sound to our sensitive ears. Written words do not always convey the love or the tone of the person speaking. By addressing His mother as “Woman,” Jesus showed that He was not going to meet the need at the wedding party simply because His “mother” asked Him to do so. Later, some would teach the false doctrine that Mary is “the Queen of Heaven,” and teach their followers to pray to her to intercede with Jesus for them, convincing them that Jesus would never refuse His mother's request. Perhaps to show that this future false teaching is untrue, Jesus called His mother “Woman.” Jesus' use of “Woman” when addressing His mother should have prevented the worship of Mary in later centuries. Furthermore, Jesus said His true mother and brothers (the true members of God's family) were those who did the will of God: “For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother” (Matthew 12:50). His mother, Mary, would demonstrate her true faith in Jesus at this wedding feast. Though Jesus' hour had not yet come to manifest or reveal himself to the world, Jesus would do His first sign quietly and unnoticed except by a few which would keep the attention where it belonged at that time — on the bridegroom and the bride at their wedding.

**(John 2:5) His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”**

Jesus' mother totally trusted in her Son. He had never failed to honor His father and His mother on earth. All of His life, she had found Him dependable and concerned about others, seeking to serve them and meet their real needs. She knew He would do the right thing, and she trusted in His wisdom whatever the situation, because she knew Him. Therefore, she told the servers at the wedding feast: “Do whatever He tells you.” At that moment, they did not know that in obeying Jesus they would be doing the will of God.

**(John 2:6) Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.**

The six stone water jars were for ritual washings. Though they might externally clean a person's hands before eating, the focus of attention was on a ceremonial law to be kept and not on personal hygiene. During His ministry, some criticized Jesus for His teachings on the traditions of the Jews: "The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles. So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, 'Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?'" (Mark 7:3-5). Jesus came teaching; and just as new wine will burst old wineskins, Jesus' teaching, sacrificial death, and sending of the Holy Spirit to fill believers will cleanse morally and spiritually on the inside those who believe in and follow Him. Therefore, Jesus made ceremonial washing obsolete, but not washing for physical cleanliness and good health.

**(John 2:7) Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim.**

The servants went to Jesus immediately at the instruction of Mary. Jesus simply said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." As far as we know, the servants did not ask, "Why?". As far as we know, He did not give them an explanation for what He was going to do through them. These servants simply obeyed Jesus completely and waited for further instructions. When Jesus said, "Fill," they obeyed completely by filling these jars "to the brim."

**(John 2:8) He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it.**

The servants obeyed Jesus explicitly. We do not know the exact time the water changed to wine. If it did not change until the moment it touched the lips of the master of the banquet, then no telling what the servants might have been thinking as they took water (soon to become wine) to the master. If the water turned into wine the moment they drew some out, they could give it to the master with true joy in their hearts and on their faces. They certainly found true joy after they obeyed Jesus and saw the results.

**(John 2:9) When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom**

No doubt God and Jesus perform countless miracles. Our moment-by-moment existence and the life of each person in the world are divine miracles-after-miracles. The master of the banquet did not know that a miracle had changed the water into wine. Most of the miracles God and Jesus do are never seen or recognized by us and others. The servants who obeyed and trusted in Jesus when they did what Jesus told them knew that a miracle had been performed by Jesus through them. The obedient servants of

Jesus Christ give thanks and see far more miracles than unbelievers. Jesus honored the bridegroom (just as Jesus will be honored at the marriage supper of the Lamb), rather than draw attention to himself as the One who served the bridegroom and bride at this wedding.

**(John 2:10) and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.”**

Spiritually, the “choice wine” was the calling of Abraham and the giving of the Law of God to Moses so the Israelites could be a kingdom of priests for God to all the nations. When Jesus came as the promised Messiah, the Person that the Law of God and the prophets pointed to, God had saved the best for that time and all subsequent human history. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the followers of Jesus are filled with “the best” that gives them true and lasting joy, peace, guidance and power for service. When believers see Jesus face-to-face at the marriage supper of the Lamb, they will enjoy the best of God and all things for eternity.

**(John 2:11) Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.**

In Jesus’ first sign, Jesus revealed His glory to His mother, who trusted in Him when she brought a real need to Jesus. In Jesus’ first sign, Jesus revealed His glory to the servants who obeyed Him completely and trusted He knew what He was doing when they obeyed Him. In Jesus’ first sign, He revealed His glory to His disciples as they observed the entire event and they believed in Him. Jesus confirmed in His first sign what they had said about Him after they first met Him. And they would see many more signs; because Jesus said to these disciples: “Very truly I tell you, you will see ‘heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man’” (John 1:51).

**(John 2:12) After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there a few days.**

Perhaps to give His family and disciples time to rest after the wedding or to explain more about the meaning of His first sign to them, as well as give himself more time to spend in prayer to His Heavenly Father as was His custom, they all went to Capernaum. Then, Jesus went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, where He cleansed the temple and began to manifest His glory by working many signs publicly. John reported: “Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person” (John 2:23-25).

## Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. From John 1:35-52, what are some of the names or titles that John the Baptist and Jesus' first disciples called Jesus?
2. From these names, which ones mean the most to you personally? Give a reason for your answer.
3. What might be the significance of Jesus accepting the invitation and taking His disciples to a wedding soon after He called them?
4. Do you think Jesus did what His mother wanted because she was His mother and His mother asked Him? Who did Jesus say were His mother and brothers?
5. What are some of the results when people obey Jesus immediately and completely?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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