

## Monday Evening Bible Study Group: John Chapter 2: Some Notes

As always, so much to choose from! Not least because John usually has at least two layers of meaning, and often more layers; and the detail usually has a purpose. So, Jesus enjoys a party and saves a young couple from embarrassment (level 1). So Jesus has unique powers (level 2). If you let Jesus into your life, be prepared for change (level 3). There is a theory that the bridegroom was John himself. Certainly Jesus' Mother had a special standing at this wedding. Joseph dead by now. Did Jesus support Mary until his younger siblings could take over that responsibility? Did Jesus bringing his disciples to the wedding explain why the wine ran out? Note that Jesus in effect called Mary "Lady" (respect), not "Woman" (which sounds rude). Note Mary's complete confidence in Jesus; and the servants' complete confidence in [Mary] [Jesus]. Numbers often mean something: 6 is an imperfect number, from which Jesus creates perfection. Enough wine to drown the guests! John is always more interested in the truth than in the facts. He is saying God's love overflows.

My hour has come. Interesting question here for us: Do we get the balance right between waiting for and then recognising the big opportunity, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, using every opportunity appropriately.

John's Greek audience would recall the stories of the Wine God Dionysius being able to fill empty kettles with wine. John is saying that is myth, here is reality... and reality in a humble home in a humble village.

John emphasises the Jerusalem part of Jesus' ministry. He and the other Gospel writers are not necessarily contradicting each other here. But they do when it comes to the timing of the storm in the Temple. Probably John (truth before facts again) wanted to punch home this story of Jesus being Messiah at the beginning of the public ministry, although he knew it took place at the end of the ministry. The anger? Think St George's demanding subs in St George's money, and food gifts in St George's produce, all managed by the Church Wardens who make a fortune from their monopoly; and the trading taking place in the only bit of the church open to those who haven't been Confirmed.

Jesus certainly didn't promise to re-build the physical Temple. He was saying (as many of the prophets had) that Temple worship had become irrelevant and its days were numbered. What are the essential of worthy worship??? It isn't just a matter of taste: ritualistic, chummy with God, professionalised, trendy, etc.

Miracles and Signs: Our best "magicians" do some very clever things. So do our best scientists. But the Signs (John's word) of Jesus are done to show what God is like. This perhaps helps to answer the criticism that when Jesus finished his earthly ministry there were probably just as many disabled, blind, leprous, mentally ill, and hungry people, as when he started his ministry. These signs are also signs of how we should try to live our lives. (Waitrose this morning, I was looking for a space for wheelchair and passenger in the

cafeteria and a middle aged man grabbed his coffee and breakfast and moved to let us in. He was a staff member on sick leave, so not all that mobile himself.)