

A Revelation of Glory by Means of a Drink:

*The Divergent Nature of Christ as Seen
Through an Exegetical Analysis of John 2:1-11*

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

¹On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ²Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." ⁴And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and me? My hour has not yet come." ⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶Now standing there were six stone jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. ⁹When 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 ¹⁰and 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." ¹¹Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed.

John 2:1-11 is the narrative account of Jesus and his first miracle: the turning of water into wine. Smalley finds this passage to be "one of the most problematic actions of Jesus described in the Fourth Gospel."¹ It shows Jesus producing an exuberant amount of wine in a seemingly unnecessary miracle for a group of people already drunk. Moreover, he appears to do this at the request of his mother for social reasons although, when she asks, he abruptly rebukes her. He states that his time has not yet come; yet, this does not seem to stop him from acting. The narrative gives the impression to the reader that it has been cut off without an adequate conclusion and is then summarized as being the revelation of Jesus' glory, although later in the gospel, Jesus is said to have not yet been glorified. Without doubt, there is much to be unpacked from this Johannine gem.

Context

John 2:1-11 is a transitional passage amidst the greater context of the fourth gospel. It serves a dual purpose of concluding the author's introduction of Jesus, while detailing the

¹ Smalley, Steven S. John: Evangelist & Interpreter. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1998. p. 212.

inauguration of his public ministry. Chapter 1 has been used to establish an insider relationship with the reader wherein a deeper understanding is conveyed. Through John's introduction, (1:1-18) the reader has come to know that Jesus is the Logos (vv. 1, 2, 14);² that all things come into being through him (v. 3); that it is belief in him that perpetuates being a child of God (v. 12); that he has come from the father and has revealed that glory (v. 14); and that the world did not know him (v. 10). Furthermore, the author uses the witness of others to further develop the person of Jesus. John the Baptist calls him the Lamb of God (v. 29), the Son of God (v. 34), and testifies the spirit of God has descended on him (v. 32). Phillip says he is the one written about in the Law and Prophets (v. 45). John offers the reader an escalating introduction to the character of Jesus: The author describes him (1:1-18), people testify about him (1:19-51), he shows his power and purpose through actions with the changing of water into wine (2:1-11) and the cleansing of the temple (2:12-25), and finally the introduction culminates with what Jesus says about himself during his conversation with Nicodemus (3:1-21).³ This places Cana at a critical point in the understanding of John's main character.

Chapter 1 introduces the reader to various promises of the future while connecting Jesus' ministry to the past; these points are essential to understanding the passages that follow. He will surpass the greatness of John the Baptist⁴ (vv. 15, 26-27, 30); the disciples will see great things (v. 50) including heaven opening and angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man (v. 51). In relation to the past, Jesus brings grace and truth in contrast with that law given through Moses (v. 17). There are also prophetic implications to John the Baptist's rationale for baptizing: "that he [Jesus] might be revealed to Israel" (v. 31). These preceding verses set up

² See Collins, Matthew S. "The Question of *Doxa*: A Socioliterary Reading of the Wedding at Cana," *BibTheolBull* 25 (3, '95) p. 100-109.

³ Culpepper, R. Alan. *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983. p. 89. He makes a similar observation referring to this as a transition from titles to actions.

⁴ John is never given the title "the Baptist" in this gospel.

Jesus in relation to the laws of Judaism while assuring the reader that great things will accompany him. Finally, John 2:1-11 is found immediately following the calling of the first five disciples (Andrew, Peter, Phillip, Nathaniel and an unnamed disciple from v. 37). This is contextually important because the results of the miracle hinge on the disciples' reactions.

Structure

The wedding at Cana narrative follows the form of a simple miracle story,⁵ yet the theological overtones indicate to the reader that more is implied. Culpepper, in his book on Johannine narrative, points out the first two signs are “about the length of synoptic miracle accounts and [are] not greatly dissimilar from them.”⁶ These 11 verses comprise a complete unit that falls within a larger account. It primarily consists of narrative form with only essential dialogue and the occasional interspersed of the narrator's comments. Verses 1-2 provide the setting for the miracle giving the essentials of who – Jesus, his mother and his disciples; what – a wedding; when – on the third day; and where – in Cana. The preparation and need for a miracle is dictated in verses 3-5 as his mother informs Jesus that the feast has run out of wine. Further exposition of the characters is also included in these verses with detailing the mother-son interactions to the reader. Furthermore, the reference to the “hour” of Christ establishes the larger implications of this passage (v. 4). The miracle, or sign as John prefers to call it, takes place in verses 6-8. Jesus acts on his mother's implied request and instructs the servants to fill six stone water jars, then to draw from the top and take a bit to the chief steward. The actually miracle is understood to have taken place in verse 8, yet it is not until verse 9 that the miracle is confirmed. This confirmation then comes from a man ignorant of the supernatural background

⁵ Schnackenberg, Rudolf. The Gospel According to St John: Volume One: Introduction and Commentary on Chapters 1-4. Trans. Kevin Smyth. New York: Herder and Herder, 1968. p. 323.

⁶ Culpepper, Anatomy. p. 73.

of his drink. Verses 9-11 serve as a conclusion to the miracle, as well as a chance for the author to provide his input and commentary. The quality of the miracle is ascribed secondhand, and its source is wrongly attributed. John uses verse 11 to explain the results of the miracle and to tell why Jesus preformed it.

The most notable structural feature of this passage is the absence of discourse. Jesus reveals his glory through his actions and not through a lengthy discussion of higher things as is prevalent throughout the rest of John.⁷ The use of symbols in this passage and the relationship it has to parables influences its structural makeup. Commentators of all stripes will attempt to attribute Johannine symbolism to the text. Notable conclusions are the symbolism of the mother of Jesus as the church, and the symbolic replacement of the water of Judaism with the abundant wine of the new covenant. The wedding feast and bridegroom are also often noted to have allegorical inferences. The exegesis of the text will address these issues; however, regardless of what symbolic value is ascribed to an action or phrase, an educated reader of John must understand that the author regularly employs the use of symbols.⁸ Problems come into play with the understanding of this miracle when readers attempt to place more symbolic value on items than what the text can bear.⁹ Symbolism is prevalent in the fourth gospel; yet, the use of parables, the primary synoptic teaching technique of Jesus, is missing. Some scholars have claimed the Cana miracle is a fabricated legend that has arisen from a submerged parable of Jesus. Smalley interacts with these claims and correctly notes this is not the case at all, but rather the opposite is more likely: John has not created a miracle out of a parable, but rather a parable

⁷ i.e. John 3, Jesus' discourse with Nicodemus; and John 4, his interactions with the woman at the well.

⁸ See Brown, Raymond E. *The Gospel According to John (i-xii)*. The Anchor Bible. Garden City: Doubleday, 1966. He states, "We shall often discover in the Johannine use of symbols, the evangelist shows many different facets of this theology through one narrative" (103).

⁹ Smalley, *John*. He explains, "While the Cana story is obviously symbolic, in that it points to a spiritual meaning beyond itself, it is not necessarily more symbolic than other Johannine signs" (214).

has emerged from a miracle.¹⁰ Structurally, John 2:1-11 must be viewed as a brief narrative with possible symbolism and a defined purpose.

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

Verse 1 is a standard introduction to a narrative account. Despite its seemingly straightforward approach, several theological motifs are present that require sorting out. A reader will first notice the rather sparse setting information provided by the author. Collins claims this indicates that reader would have been familiar with the geography of the land and thusly the setting would not require expounding upon.¹¹ While this is possible, Collins misunderstands the focus of this story; the lack of explanatory material on the setting is better viewed as the author's attempt to strip away all but the essential material in order to keep the focus on the miracle.

Educated readers of verse 1 will note the connotations associated with "the third day" and the resurrection tradition of the church¹². Despite this apparent linguistic link, there is nothing in the text suggesting a connection between this narrative and Christ's resurrection on the third day.^{13,14} Various commentators have attempted to pinpoint the specific day in question. In order to do so, it must be understood that "the third day" mentioned in 2:1 is linked to dates mentioned in the preceding verses (c.f. 1:29, 35, 43).¹⁵ Bruce counts this phrase as being the third day, or

¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 215-216.

¹¹ Collins, "Doxa," p. 102.

¹² See Hemer, C. J. "Number: τρεῖς, τρίτος." The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology. Gen Ed. Colin Brown. Vol. 1. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967. p. 687.

¹³ Bruce, F. F. The Gospel of John: Introduction, Exposition and Notes. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983. p. 68; Schnackenberg, The Gospel According to St John, p. 325; and Smith, D. Moody Jr. John. Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999. p. 82.

¹⁴ This is in fact the only reference to the "third day" in the Gospel of John.

¹⁵ Barrett, C. K. The Gospel According to St John :An Introduction With Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text. London: S.P.C.K., 1958. p. 158.

rather two days later from the last mentioned event, which would be the calling of Nathaniel.¹⁶

Brown however counts it as being the third day after the baptism mentioned in 1:29-35.¹⁷

Furthermore, he and others have gone to great lengths to show the events at Cana possibly took place on the seventh day of the week.¹⁸ These discussions however tend to lead the reader away from the text at hand and into arbitrary dialogue not related to the author's purpose. In keeping with the author's train of thought, Bruce's explanation is closest to the truth. John did not intend to provide the reader a strict itinerary of the first week of Jesus' ministry; rather, the author uses the phrase "the third day" to show "the promise made in 1:50 or 51 was fulfilled very soon."¹⁹ Rudolf Bultmann contends this phrase comes from John's use of a "signs source," yet arguments such as these do nothing for a proper interpretation of the verses at hand.²⁰

John continues to set the stage by saying "there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee." The historic and symbolic nature of marriage and weddings will be dealt with in Appendix 2.

Literary as well as archeological evidence confirms the existence of Cana of Galilee.²¹ Cana is a distinctly Johannine city appearing nowhere else in the New Testament besides here, 4:46 and 21:2. John Calvin attributes the qualifier "of Galilee" to the existence of two other Canas in the immediate area.²² Josephus's reference to the city as "a village in Galilee which is called Cana"²³ further strengthens the argument that the qualifier is used to distinguish between multiple options. Barrett makes a seductive argument that "in Galilee" "is intended not merely

¹⁶ Bruce, The Gospel of John, p. 68. Also Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John, p. 158.

¹⁷ Brown, The Gospel According to John, p. 97.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 105-106; Also Schnackenberg, The Gospel According to St John, p. 325.

¹⁹ Schnackenberg, The Gospel According to St John, p. 325.

²⁰ Bultmann, Rudolf. The Gospel of John: A Commentary. Trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray. Ed. R. W. N. Hoare and J. K. Riches. Oxford: Western Printing Services, 1971. p. 113-15. For a full interaction with John's use of a "signs source" see Appendix 1.

²¹ Strange, James F. "Cana of Galilee." Anchor Bible Dictionary. Ed. David Noel Freedman. Vol. 1. New York: Doubleday, 1992. p. 827; Also Brown, The Gospel According to John, p. 98; and Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 115.

²² Calvin, John. The Gospel According to St John 1 – 10. Calvin's Commentaries. Trans. T. H. L. Parker. Ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959. p. 45.

²³ Strange, "Cana of Galilee," p. 827.

to identify the Cana in question, but also to indicate that the first miracle took place not in Judaea but in Galilee.”²⁴ This interpretation of the text bears some merit, considering verse 11 reiterates the fact that the first signs took place in Cana of Galilee. This deeper meaning, as appealing as it may seem, falls outside the bounds of the author’s probable meaning.

Verse 1 ends with the appearance of, for the first time in the gospel, “the mother of Jesus.” She is never named and appears only twice in John’s gospel: here and at the foot of the cross (19:25-27). Theories abound as to the purpose behind this veil of anonymity. Morris points out this suppression of name is quite odd considering the author is usually very good with names.²⁵ Before the author’s purpose in excluding the name of Mary can be established, a certain understanding of the epithet “mother of *n*” must be attained. In historic readings, this title is neither uncommon nor unusual;²⁶ furthermore, its use is to be seen as an honorable one that is bestowed on a “woman fortunate enough to bear a son.”²⁷ Martin, in his article dedicated to the label “Mother of,” concludes that in antiquity, and in this particular reading, the primary purpose to using “mother of” rather than a name is that the audience of a particular piece is familiar with the character.²⁸ This further builds on the author’s purpose of the story by emphasizing the relationship of Mary with Jesus, and showing that she is explicitly tied to him, as has been suggested by others.²⁹ In an effort to further emphasize Jesus, and sticking with cultural norms, John leaves Mary nameless. Despite this obvious rationale for the use of the phrase “mother of Jesus,” some commentators have attempted to paint this title with an allegorical brush

²⁴ Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 158.

²⁵ Morris, Leon. *The Gospel According to John*. Rev. Ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995. p. 156.

²⁶ Martin, Troy W. “Assessing the Johannine Epithet ‘the Mother of Jesus,’” *CathBibQuart* 60 (1, ’98). p. 69.

²⁷ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 98; Also Collins, “Doxa,” p. 103.

²⁸ Martin, “The mother of Jesus,” p. 63-73, esp. 70, 73.

²⁹ Collins, “Doxa,” p. 103, 107.

contending that the absence of a name points to symbolism of the new church or of new Israel.³⁰ Mary the Mother of Jesus holds definite symbolism within the church³¹, however verse 1 does not evoke this as such.

<2:2> *Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.*

Jesus and his disciples were not merely invited but were actually present as later verse will establish. The first bit of information that must be extracted from this passage is the roster of those present. Two possible answers emerge from the text. The first proposition centers on the tradition of the twelve first mentioned in John 6:67. Some have concluded that since after the initial callings found in chapter one, there can be found no additional disciples added, and since verse 67 refers to “the twelve” then all instances of “disciples” henceforth must refer to the complete number.³² This makes sense superficially, and by all accounts, the occurrences of μαθηται beyond chapter two most likely refer to the complete group; however, the issue comes to a head when examining the contextual information regarding 2:2. It has been noted in verse 1, as well as in the contextual examination, that this passage is directly tied to the preceding chapter. That being said, it is increasingly obvious that due to the connection between this episode in Cana and the callings that it immediately follows, the disciples listed as being present are only those five that were mentioned in chapter 1.³³

³⁰ Particularly Brown, The Gospel According to John, p. 107-109. The vast majority of scholars reject this claim. See Bruce, The Gospel of John, p. 68. who haphazardly claims this title is used by John to distinguish between the other women named Mary; Also Barrett, The Gospel According to St John, p. 158; Martin, “The mother of Jesus,” p. 66.

³¹ See “Mary the Mother of Jesus.” Dictionary of Biblical Imagery. Gen Ed. Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit and Tremper Longman III. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998. p. 540-541; Wu, J. L. “Mary.” Dictionary of that Later New Testament & Its Developments. Ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997. p. 723.

³² Barrett, The Gospel According to St John, p. 159; Smith, John, p. 86.

³³ This view is further fleshed out by Brown, The Gospel According to John, p. 98; Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 115; and Schnackenberg, The Gospel According to St John, p. 326.

The most prevalent misreading of this verse centers on Jesus' sanctioning of matrimony by his presence at a wedding. An article found in the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* on "marriage" explicitly states, "Jesus sanctioned marriage by his attendance at the marriage of Cana in Galilee."³⁴ Other scholars echo this claim on varying levels.³⁵ If anything can be read from his presence, it must come in the fact that he keeps silent and does not discount the ceremony. This is no more a polemic towards marriage than Jesus' presence in a boat (6:21) endorses sailing, or his riding on a donkey (12:14) supports this mode of transportation. At best, his neutrality can be argued, as is the case with the other Jewish celebrations Jesus attends. John includes this detail to carry the story along and to provide a setting for the miracle, not to exhibit the approval or disapproval of Jesus concerning the institution of marriage.

<2:3> *When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."*

The narrative progresses as the author introduces the need for the miracle. Efforts have been made to pin a reason for the lacking supply, from the addition of uninvited disciples,³⁶ to an indication that the wedding party was poor.³⁷ Dongell correctly notes the author does not include a reason for the shortage, and thusly the cause is not essential to the story.³⁸ The situation remains: They (presumably the wedding party) have no wine. The shortage of wine in antiquity carries the mark of a social taboo³⁹ that would bring dishonor to those responsible.⁴⁰ For further discussion on marriage and the associated feasts, see Appendix 2.

³⁴ "Marriage." *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. Gen Ed. Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit and Tremper Longman III. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998. p. 538.

³⁵ Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, p. 68; Dongell, Joseph. *John: A Bible Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition*. Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 1997. He claims it is not contrary to suggest that Jesus blesses marriage, but that this is not the main point of the story.

³⁶ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 102; and Calvin, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 46.

³⁷ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 156.

³⁸ Dongell, *John*, p. 58.

³⁹ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 156; Schnackenberg, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 326.

The Greek phrase οἶνον οὐκ ἔχουσιν is ambiguous as to the nature of the statement. In its most basic sense, Mary is simply relaying an observation to her son, a fellow guest. If examined by itself, this would be an accurate translation of verse 3; however, subsequent verses leave no question that at least an implied request has been made. Calvin asserts “it may be doubted whether she hoped or asked anything from her son”⁴¹ yet this opinion does not take into consideration her later instructions to the servants (v. 5), nor Jesus’ stern response (v. 4). Other commentators straddle the fence saying “the mother of Jesus brought him this information in the hope that he would remedy the deficiency,”⁴² or she trusts in her son’s ability even though nothing from his past indicates he would do something supernatural.⁴³ The most off the wall suggestion concerning this must be Bruce’s assertion that “Mary may well have had some responsibility for the catering” and thusly called upon her son’s resourcefulness.⁴⁴ An analysis of the ambiguous wording and responses by both Jesus and his Mother indicate to the reader that Mary’s words “carried an implied request [and she] assumed her son would somehow attend to the problem.”⁴⁵

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

Arguably, this verse presents more exegetical problems than any other in the passage. Jesus’ response to his mother can be divided into three phrases, each of which offers its own set translation problems. Whatever the final interpretation may be, this passage represents a direct

⁴⁰ Williams, Ritva H. “The Mother of Jesus at Cana: A Social-Science Interpretation of John 2:1-12,” *CathBibQuart* 59 (4, ’97) p. 84.

⁴¹ Calvin, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 46.

⁴² Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 159.

⁴³ Dongell, *John*, p. 58; Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 158.

⁴⁴ Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, p. 69.

⁴⁵ O’Day, Gail R. “John 2:1-12, The Wedding at Cana.” *The New Interpreter’s Bible: General Articles & Introduction, Commentary, & Reflections for Each Book of the Bible Including the Apocryphal / Deutrocanonical Books in Twelve Volumes – Volume IX*. Ed. Leander E. Keck et. al. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995. p. 536.

reply to Mary's statement in verse 3. Since the original manuscripts place the vocative form of woman (γυναι) after that which is translated "What concern is that to you and me?" it will be dealt with secondly.

Variations in the translations of this phrase⁴⁶ show its ambiguous nature. When τι εμοι και σοι is translated literally, the result is "What to me and to you." It is no wonder the tone and emphasis of the statement deviates among translations. The nature of the statement is the first item that needs to be garnered from the text. Regardless of how one reads it, this statement, certainly, carries with it an obvious element of bluntness;⁴⁷ it is a form of disengagement even if not taken as rudeness.⁴⁸ Brown sees in the text two possible meanings based on the use of the phrase in ancient literature: it is either used when one party has been unjustly wronged, or when someone is asked to get involved in a matter that does not concern them. He concludes, though rather hesitantly, that the phrase may mean, "This is not our concern."⁴⁹ Schnackenberg refutes this argument and bluntly states, "It never means, 'What concern is that of yours and mine?'"⁵⁰ This stance stands most inline with the text and does not read into it what is not there; we will later see that by Jesus' response he does in fact see it as a concern of his.

In a continued search for a definitive meaning of this ambiguous statement by Jesus, the best place to look is at other uses of the phrase. τι εμοι και σοι appears nowhere else in the Gospel of John. Phrasing similar to this occurs in multiple places of the Septuagint,⁵¹ yet the closest parallels come in the synoptic gospels. Here, it is always used it is in a conversation between Jesus and demons (Mark 1:24, Mark 5:7, Luke 5:7). The NRSV translates these

⁴⁶ See Appendix 3.

⁴⁷ Maynard, Arthur H. "Ti emoi kai soi," *NTStud* 31 (4, '85) 582-586. p. 582.

⁴⁸ O'Day, "John 2:1-12," p. 537.

⁴⁹ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 99; Also Williams, "The Mother of Jesus at Cana," p. 88.

⁵⁰ Schnackenberg, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 328.

⁵¹ c.f. Judges 11:12; 2 Chronicles 35:21; 1 Kings 17:18; 2 Kings 3:13; and Hosea 14:8.

passages consistently as: “What have you to do with us,” In these instances, the phrase projects a meaning of deviant purposes and natures; the demons understand Jesus is not on the same level as them. Maynard, in an article focused on this vague phrase, agrees. He contends the best translation ought to be “What have we in common?”⁵² Tasker takes this farther and suggests the phrase read, “Your concern and mine are not the same.”⁵³ While this translation fully relays the opposing priorities, it leaves out the explicit question word “τι,” and thusly partially misses the point. Despite the ambiguity of this statement, a concrete meaning can be rendered. Jesus is questioning the nature of Mary’s request; he is expressing the divergence between his matters and hers in an almost rhetorical question.⁵⁴ The rest of this verse further solidifies this view.⁵⁵

Jesus’ response to his mother is made more puzzling by his use of the vocative term for woman in his directing of the statement. All attempts to understand this phrasing require a grounding in the knowledge that the word *γυναι* does not carry the same negative connotations that it does in the English language.⁵⁶ Jesus uses this phrase often when referring to women in the Gospel of John (4:21; 8:10; 19:26; 20:15). It is understood to be a term of respect and affection, yet is undoubtedly an unusual way to address one’s mother,⁵⁷ and its use cannot be watered down.⁵⁸

⁵² Maynard, “τι εμοι και σοι,” p. 582.

⁵³ Tasker, R. V. G. John. The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press, 1960. p. 60.

⁵⁴ Westcott, B.F. The Gospel According to St. John. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959. He puts it as such: “Everywhere it [τι εμοι και σοι] marks some divergence between the thoughts and ways of the person so brought together. In this passage it serves to shew that the actions of the Son of God, now that He has entered on His divine work, are no longer dependent in any way on the suggestion of a woman, even though that woman be His Mother (37).”

⁵⁵ Maynard, “τι εμοι και σοι.” does an excellent job of fleshing out this argument and concludes that this phrase is representative of his divine nature and is used to express the gulf that separates him from his family (585).

⁵⁶ See Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John, p. 159; Bruce, The Gospel of John, p. 69; and Morris, The Gospel According to John, p. 158.

⁵⁷ Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 116; Morris, The Gospel According to John, p. 158; O’Day, “John 2:1-12,” p. 537; and Schnackenberg, The Gospel According to St John, p. 328.

⁵⁸ Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 116.

Experts present the full gamut of possibilities in the interpretation of this address. Morris explains this as “indicating that there is a new relationship between them as he enters public ministry.”⁵⁹ Brown disagrees asserting this “is not an attempt to reject or devalue the mother-son relationship.”⁶⁰ Calvin sees this as a polemic that “warns men not to transfer to Mary, what belongs to God.”⁶¹ Collins presents the most probable conclusion in stating, “Jesus address of her as ‘woman’ sets a certain distance between them. The reader is thus both not permitted to see her as anything but someone closely related to Jesus and yet, by his response, as someone distant from him.”⁶² The use of woman instead of mother is thematically linked to Jesus’ previous remark of “What to me and to you?” Any attempt to analyze these with separate meanings is in vain. Just as Jesus used “τί μοι καὶ σοί” to express the divergent understandings of his mother and himself, he uses the vocative “γυναι” to show the distance between her humanly nature and his godly nature: it is not that which is mortal that concerns him.

Jesus continues and qualifies his reply by saying, “My hour has not yet come.” The translation of this phrase comes easy with its straightforward syntax; those that see it as a rhetorical question that could read, “Has not my hour come?” express the only divergent theory.⁶³ This phrase is theologically charged and deeply tied to motifs running throughout the fourth gospel. An examination of the text of John shows the significance of the term “hour.”⁶⁴ This gospel repeats this expression multiple times, putting it both on the lips of Jesus as well as

⁵⁹ Morris, The Gospel According to John, p. 158.

⁶⁰ Brown, The Gospel According to John, p. 99.

⁶¹ Calvin, The Gospel According to St John, p. 47.

⁶² Collins, “Doxa,” p. 104. Although his conclusion is accurate, his premise for getting there – that this entire scene centers around the preservation of honor – is largely off base.

⁶³ See Williams, “The Mother of Jesus at Cana,” p. 91; Also Schnackenberg, The Gospel According to St John, p. 329.

⁶⁴ See Hahn, H.-C. “Time: ὥρα.” The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology. Gen Ed. Colin Brown. Vol. 3. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967. 845-849; Also “Hour.” Dictionary of Biblical Imagery. Gen Ed. Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit and Tremper Longman III. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998. 406. Both articles link the use of “hour,” especially in John, to Jesus’ impending glorification. The use of “hour” links the reader to God’s chronology in the life of Christ.

in the ink of the narrator: “My time has not yet come” (7:6, 8, 30; 8:20). In other passages, the use of “hour” conveys a distinct allusion to eschatological fulfillment (4:21, 23; 5:25, 28). The author is very clear that Jesus’ hour comes with his glorification, death and resurrection, along with the events that surround it (12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:32; 17:1). 17:1 is explicit in its wording of Jesus’ last prayer before his arrest: “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you.” Any understanding of “hour” outside of these bounds is unfaithful to the text and motifs presented in John.⁶⁵ The use of this phrase always points to the hour appointed by the father for the fulfillment of his plan.⁶⁶

Once again, this expression cannot be separated from its larger context: Jesus’ reply to his mother. By saying, “My hour has not yet come,” he is further qualifying what separates his understandings and that of his mother’s. In other words, “Jesus’ agenda is not set by human considerations or promptings,”⁶⁷ but rather “Jesus established firmly at the start that the entire course of his ministry would be shaped by its final goal as defined by the father’s will, not human preference.”⁶⁸

In view of the three statements that make up Jesus’ reply to his mother, one finds that each point to the divergent calling and nature of a mother and her son. Brown is correct in pointing out, as others have, that this response is not a rebuke.⁶⁹ If anything, this verse is a reference to the power of Christ, but only in so much as it points to his link with the Father, and eschatological fulfillment. This understanding of Jesus’ view of himself in the world along with how he sees his purpose will further aid in the understanding of the upcoming miracle.

⁶⁵ For instance, Brown, The Gospel According to John, p. 100, believes this expression only means the time of miracles has not yet come. Morris, The Gospel According to John, p. 158, believes it should read “It is not yet time for me to act.” This however does not explain why he performs the miracle.

⁶⁶ Barrett, The Gospel According to St John, p. 159; Calvin, The Gospel According to St John, p. 47; and O’Day, “John 2:1-12,” p. 537.

⁶⁷ Smith, John, p. 86.

⁶⁸ Dongell, John, p. 59.

⁶⁹ Brown, The Gospel According to John, p. 102.

<2:5> *His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”*

John uses this verse largely to progress the narrative as Mary instructs the servants⁷⁰ to follow the orders of her son⁷¹. Commentators are in near agreement that, due to Mary’s actions after her dialogue with Jesus, she could not have seen his words as a rebuke.⁷² Others attempt to attach meaning to her actions by claiming that Mary is confident in Jesus ability and resourcefulness to solve the problem even if she does not expect a miracle.^{73,74} Attempts have been made to try and connect Mary’s instructions to the servants with those given by Pharaoh to Joseph⁷⁵ (Gen 41:55); however, there is no reason to suspect this was part of the author’s purpose. In light of the preceding exchange with Jesus, the most likely explanation is that Mary understood her son’s statement on his higher purpose and sought to pave the way for whatever he chose to do in relation to his heavenly charge.

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

The author now moves the narrative towards the miracle; the audience does not yet know how Jesus will respond, but they can plainly see the stage has been set. Present in the area are six

⁷⁰ Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John*, says, “The use of “διακονος” is not the most natural word for household servants” (159). He continues by offering the suggestion that this may have been so the reader would recall the servants that bear wine in pagan and Christian cultus. The text however does not support this as John uses the same term in 12:26 when referring to his servants. There is also no obvious connection between this usage and the later Pauline use to title workers in the church.

⁷¹ Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*. He notes “There is no point in wondering how Mary comes to be giving orders to the servants in the strange house” (116).

⁷² Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 159; Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 160; O’Day, “John 2:1-12,” p. 537; and Schnackenberg, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 328, 331.

⁷³ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 100; Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, p. 69; and Dongell, *John*, p. 58.

⁷⁴ Calvin, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 48. takes an even more presumptuous approach and claims she is apologetic for her actions contrary to his wishes and ascribes all the power back to Christ.

⁷⁵ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 100; and O’Day, “John 2:1-12,” p. 537.

stone water jars used for the purification rituals of the Jews.⁷⁶ In a highly symbolic gospel such as John's, it is easy to try and assign meaning to the number of water jars: six. Despite this number's association with being a symbol of Jewish imperfection - being one less than seven - there is no reason to attribute this meaning in this context.⁷⁷ The argument that Jesus is replacing the imperfectness of Judaism with the perfection of a new covenant will be covered in depth later. The claim has been made that this explanation of the jars' purpose indicates John's audience is largely gentile and unfamiliar with the Judaic customs;⁷⁸ however, this position goes beyond the reaches of this single passage. The customs mentioned here undoubtedly refer to the washing practice described in Mark 3:1-4.⁷⁹ These rituals are grounded in Levitical law and stone was often used because impurities cannot pass to it unlike earthen vessels that must be broken if made unclean (Lev 29:11-38).⁸⁰ The translators of the NRSV have chosen to replace the capacity of each jar from the traditional Greek rendering of "two to three measures" with the more user-friendly quantity of "twenty to thirty gallons."⁸¹ The author includes these details is to show his reader the immensity of the contents.⁸²

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

⁷⁶ Brown, The Gospel According to John, p. 100. He also informs his reader that archeological evidence of these huge containers has been uncovered.

⁷⁷ Barrett, The Gospel According to St John, p. 160-161.

⁷⁸ Bruce, The Gospel of John, p. 69. He goes on however, to explain this reference is used to give clues to the spiritual meaning of this narrative.

⁷⁹ Morris, The Gospel According to John, p. 160.

⁸⁰ See also Baltensweiler, H., H.-G. Link and J. Schattenmann. "Pure, Clean." The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology. Gen Ed. Colin Brown. Vol. 3. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967. 100-108.

⁸¹ Schnackenberg, The Gospel According to St John, p. 332. According to his figures, a measure is equal to 39.39 liters, which converts to about 9 gallons.

⁸² Morris, The Gospel According to John, p. 160.

Jesus now begins to take charge; these actions after the dialogue with his mother further establish that his response “τι μοι και σοι, γυναι” was neither a rebuke nor a refusal to act.⁸³ From a narrative standpoint, the reader is ready for Jesus’ commands since Mary has already given the servants instructions to obey her son.⁸⁴ Jesus’ command includes the tone of authority⁸⁵ as he instructs them to fill the jars with water.⁸⁶ The servants comply, filling the jars completely. Morris has suggested this detail has been included to indicate that jars could hold no more and were comprised entirely of water.⁸⁷ The most likely reason to mention the complete filling of the six jars is to express “the greatness of the miracle, the lavishness of the gift.”⁸⁸ Admittedly, John uses symbolism of water elsewhere in his gospel to represent a relationship with God and salvation (3:5; 4:7-15; 7:37-39); however, this imagery does not fit the current context. Some suggest that John also uses water to symbolize the “old institutions of Judaism”;⁸⁹ discussion of this interpretation will be covered later.

<2:8> *He said to them, “Draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.” So they took it.*

Verse eight continues the interaction between Jesus and the servants: he commands, they obey without question. The use of the word “now” indicates these instructions come immediately after the jars are completely full. John’s use of the word “αντλησατε” for “draw” is noted by many as odd since this verb is usually used when referring to water drawn from a

⁸³ Barrett, The Gospel According to St John. He continues, “Jesus has not changed his mind in the interval, though he has indicated his independence” (160).

⁸⁴ Schnackenberg, The Gospel According to St John, p. 332.

⁸⁵ This is indicated by use of the imperative.

⁸⁶ Any attempt to reduce the amount of water present is in vain; the definite article τας (feminine, accusative, plural) indicates he is referring to all the jars and not just one jar.

⁸⁷ Morris, The Gospel According to John, p. 160.

⁸⁸ Schnackenberg, The Gospel According to St John, p. 333.

⁸⁹ Burge, G. M. “Water.” Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels. Ed. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992. p. 870.

well.⁹⁰ This has led some exegetes to believe that Jesus' miracle did not occur to the water within the jars as usually assumed, but rather, after the jars were filled the subsequent water drawn from the well was miraculously changed.⁹¹ This position offers an alternative to an understanding that Jesus produced an excessive amount of alcohol (120+ gallons). While the Greek may give the imagery of drawing from a well, it is unnecessary to assume Jesus is not talking about drawing from the jars; the jars and their filling would serve no literary purpose in the story if there are not employed in the miracle.⁹²

The second word selection that gives exegetes problems is the use of “*αρχιτρικλινω*.” Translators have disagreed on a universal rendering, and have thusly employed such words as governor of the feast, chief steward, master of the banquet, headwaiter, steward, master of the feast and master of ceremonies.⁹³ It is difficult to pin a meaning to this title since the New Testament uses it only twice: here and in verse 9. The word is etymologically comprised of three words: *αρχω* – to rule; *τρεις* – three; and *κλινω* – to recline.⁹⁴ In essence, this title labels the person as head of the triklinos, which is a three-sided table where guest recline, as was the Roman custom.⁹⁵ Two dominate opinions surface around this position. The first places the man to whom the wine was brought as the head of the servants, or more specifically, the headwaiter.⁹⁶ This effectively places the man as a servant who is at work for the bridal party; he would be responsible for the flow and events of the event. Barrett, with others, sees textual problems with

⁹⁰ Barrett, The Gospel According to St John, p. 160; Brown, The Gospel According to John, p. 100; and Morris, The Gospel According to John, p. 160.

⁹¹ Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John, p. 37-38.

⁹² For a full interaction with Westcott's argument see Barrett, The Gospel According to St John, p. 160; and Morris, The Gospel According to John, p. 160.

⁹³ See Appendix 3.

⁹⁴ The NIV Exhaustive Concordance. Ed. Edward W. Goodrick and John R. Kohlenberger III. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990; and The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament. Ed. Spiros Zodhiates. Chattanooga: AMG, 1992.

⁹⁵ See The Complete Word Study Dictionary, p. 161.

⁹⁶ Bruce, The Gospel of John, p. 71; and Schnackenberg, The Gospel According to St John, p. 333.

this interpretation and prefers to label the man more of a “toast-master”; a guest of the party would traditionally fill this role.⁹⁷ Those that advocate this position draw attention to the “chief steward’s” ability to summon the bridegroom – a feat unheard of for a servant. A definite designation for this person is impossible to obtain due to its solitary New Testament usage. “The man seems perhaps a little too familiar with the bridegroom and a little too unfamiliar with the servants,”⁹⁸ and thusly the latter designation seems most probable.

<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*

The narrator now introduces the reader to the miracle that has taken place; its transformation is not directly described and thusly “the divine action remains a mystery.”⁹⁹ It is logistically similar to the feeding of the five thousand wherein those involved realize the miracle only with the collecting of the crumbs (6:1-14). The fact that only that which was drawn is tasted gives credence to Westcott’s stance that only a portion (that which was drawn from the well) was miraculously changed.¹⁰⁰ This viewpoint misses the uniqueness and extent of Jesus’ miracle; it is made miraculous by its abundance. Calvin puts this in perspective by explaining the miracle produced enough wine “for 150 people at a merry feast.”¹⁰¹ *The Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* states, “All wine mentioned in the Bible is fermented grape juice with alcohol

⁹⁷ Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 160-161.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, p. 116.

¹⁰⁰ Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, p. 37-38. See also Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 162. who sees a possible comparison to the leper who was only healed on his way to the priests, yet he concludes, “it is hard to see a reason for mentioning the size of the pots,” and that it is better to see it as the whole of the water in the jars as being transformed.

¹⁰¹ Calvin, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 48. Furthermore if the wine was diluted at three to one, as was often the case, even more people could enjoy the transformation. See Watson, D. F. “Wine.” *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Ed. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992. p. 871.

content. No non-fermented drink was called wine.”¹⁰² Thusly the argument cannot be made that Jesus produced a non-alcoholic drink for the wedding party as may be asserted by some exegetes. The symbolism invoked by the production of such a great supply of wine is immediately apparent. Repeatedly in the Old Testament, an abundance of wine is used to show blessing and joy as well as a coming salvation (Gen 27:28; Is 25:6; Hos 2:21-22; Joel 2:24, 3:18; Amos 9:13; Zech 10:7).¹⁰³ Undoubtedly, the author of the Fourth Gospel wishes to evoke a similar image. Some exegetes see allusions to the Eucharist with Jesus’ production of wine. While this is entirely possible, the fact that John does not even narrate the Lord’s supper in the passion narrative makes this suggestion too implicit to consider likely; furthermore, “the story of John 2:1-11 is fully comprehensible without the eucharistic referent.”¹⁰⁴ The symbolism of water replacing wine will be dealt with later in relation to the symbolism of the passage as a whole.

The ability for multiple people to attest to the miracle adds credibility and authority to this narrative. Westcott explains, “The independent witness to the two parts of the miracle establishes its reality. The ruler of the feast declares what the element *is*, the servants know what it *was*.”¹⁰⁵ Furthermore the steward has not only seen, he has tasted. An interesting bit of irony comes into play with the ignorance of the steward.¹⁰⁶ Bultmann points out, “The steward of the feast does not know where the wine has come from, just as the Jews do not know where Jesus comes from, even if they imagine they do.”¹⁰⁷ This may be the author’s veiled allusion to what

¹⁰² Watson, “Wine,” p. 870.

¹⁰³ The best insight into this symbolism is provided by “Wine.” Dictionary of Biblical Imagery. Gen Ed. Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit and Tremper Longman III. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998. p. 953-954. See also Brown C. “Vine, Wine.” The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology. Gen Ed. Colin Brown. Vol. 3. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967. p. 918-923.

¹⁰⁴ O’Day, “John 2:1-12,” p. 538.

¹⁰⁵ Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John, p. 38.

¹⁰⁶ See Culpepper, Anatomy. p. 165-180, esp 165-169.

¹⁰⁷ Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 121.

has been spoken in 1:10, "...the world did not know him." The steward ascribes the drink to the bridegroom; the author's irony must be appreciated here as the steward makes a statement with theological depth he can never understand in his ignorance: the source of the wine is indeed the bridegroom, but not the one he calls, rather it is Jesus, the self-proclaimed bridegroom (3:29).¹⁰⁸

<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."

In his assessment of the wine, the steward seems to invoke a well-known tradition: that a host serves the poor wine only after the good wine has been consumed. Bruce stands in the vast minority with his position that this "practice was so well known as to be proverbial."¹⁰⁹ From a historical perspective, according to most, there is no such tradition in antiquity;¹¹⁰ in fact, the opposite seems to be the case.¹¹¹ Several suggestions have been offered to account for this: Schnackenberg sees this depart from tradition as a remark meant to be humorous.¹¹² Bultmann echoes this claim while proposing that it could possibly "be formulated ad hoc for the purposes of a miracle."¹¹³ Brown sees this stance as being overcritical and points out it is simply a reflection of human nature.¹¹⁴ Whatever the case may be, the author's use of a tradition unverifiable by antiquity is outside the scope of an exegesis on this passage.

The steward's reference to this practice brings up a question as to the state of sobriety shown by the wedding guests. The fact that Jesus produced wine for an already drunk crowd is certainly a cause for concern. To this Dongell points out that the steward is not referring to his

¹⁰⁸ Smith, *John*, p. 86. This imagery of the bridegroom must not be played out too far. Jesus does in fact call himself the bridegroom and the symbolism associated with this is deep. In this passage however, the bridegroom only plays the role of a character in the wedding setting.

¹⁰⁹ Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, p. 69.

¹¹⁰ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 100.

¹¹¹ Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 161.

¹¹² Schnackenberg, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 334.

¹¹³ Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, p. 118.

¹¹⁴ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 100.

actual guests, but rather is making a broad generalization. He continues to say, there is no indication the guests are drunk, and furthermore, Jesus in no way contributes to their drunkenness.¹¹⁵ Morris takes the correct path in understanding this passage by reemphasizing the main point is not the state of mind of the guest, but rather the superiority of the wine.¹¹⁶ The NRSV does a fair job in translating καλον as good and ελαςσω as that which is inferior; nothing should be read into the author's word choice except that the newly produced wine is decidedly better. The ultimate purpose the narrator includes the stewards response is to show that Jesus not only produces an abundance of wine, but of the best kind; thusly the quality and quantity of the wine indicates the quality and quantity of Jesus' miracle.¹¹⁷

<2:11> *Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed.*

John interrupts the story prematurely for the reader; there is no narration of the wedding party's response or the guest's emotions. He spends six verses on the setting, two on miracle, and two more on the confirmation and quality of the sign, yet he seems to give no resolution. Verse 11 is used more as an epilogue, if that term can be attached to such a short account, which functions as the author's commentary on the resulting situation.

John uses the term "first of his signs" to describe Jesus' actions at the wedding.¹¹⁸ Barrett contends this phrase more accurately means "primary sign";¹¹⁹ while the text allows this possibility, it is an unlikely translation when viewed in relation to the passage's immediate context. "First" is the most likely understanding since the water made wine was in fact the first

¹¹⁵ Dongell, *John*, p. 57.

¹¹⁶ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 162.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 163.

¹¹⁸ Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, p. 113-115. He sees this as further evidence John 2:1-11 came from a signs source. For more information see Appendix 1.

¹¹⁹ Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 161.

miracle recounted by the author. Many exegetes have observed that John uses the term σημεια rather than δυνάμις to describe these miracles.¹²⁰ The gospel writer's use of the word for sign over the traditional word for miracle is not without purpose, and it must be noted not all miracles in John are titled signs and the term σημεια need not imply a miracle.¹²¹ This linguistic selection is particularly noteworthy in comparison to the symbolism accompanying signs throughout the Bible. The signs that accompanied the prophets of the Old Testament were largely considered indicators of a coming salvation.¹²² In the same way, the miracles of Jesus signify "the beginning of the age of salvation, and ...are a foreshadowing and a promise of the coming universal redemption."¹²³ Thusly "the beginning of his signs," as Morris points out is a plausible translation,¹²⁴ denotes more than just the start of miracles; it is the start of an age. Furthermore, the Greek word σημεια has a similar meaning as the English word "sign." Both are used to point to, or explain, a larger entity or idea. In this case, the sign points to Jesus and is used to give the reader a better understanding of John's main character.

It was noted in the analysis of verse 1 that some scholars see a Johannine emphasis on the location in which Jesus' first miracle took place. To claim the author used the qualifier "in Galilee" in verse 1 to emphasize the miracle did not occur in Judea was shown to be an exegetical stretch. However, the author's reemphasis of the location in verse 11 seems to carry this added meaning.¹²⁵ In a biblical account that strips away all but the essential details, there must be a solid reason for this reference. Morris argues that this subsequent referral to the city of Cana is

¹²⁰ Morris, The Gospel According to John, p. 163. He points out the latter term is by far the favorite word for miracle in the synoptic writings. Also Bruce, The Gospel of John, p. 72.

¹²¹ Thompson, M. M. "John, Gospel of: Signs and Faith." Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels. Ed. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992. p. 379.

¹²² Hofius, O. and C. Brown. "Miracle, Wonder, Sign: σημειον." The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology. Gen Ed. Colin Brown. Vol. 2. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967. p. 627.

¹²³ Ibid. p. 631.

¹²⁴ Morris, The Gospel According to John, p. 163.

¹²⁵ See Barrett, The Gospel According to St John, p. 158.

placed here by the author in order to emphasize the humbleness of the setting: Jesus revealed his glory and preformed his first miracle not in an imperial palace, but in an impoverished village.¹²⁶

The most theologically loaded phrase in this passage is also the author's thesis statement: "and revealed his glory." The glorification of Jesus is a central motif in the gospel account of John with the word *δοξα*, and the words derived from it, appearing more in this gospel than all the others canonical gospels combined. The concept of glory is deeply rooted in the Old Testament; understanding how John's contemporaries viewed this notion is essential to coming to a concrete conclusion on its use here in verse 11. In its most basic usage, glory means opinion or reputation.¹²⁷ Throughout the Old Testament this term was closely associated with the Hebrew word "*kabod*" which carried the meaning: "honor intended for God, or the majesty and eminence which radiated from God's own being."¹²⁸ Interpretation of this word is further complicated by its various uses within the gospel and the presence of a recurring theme of Jesus' impending glorification. Within the Fourth Gospel numerous meanings are associated with *δοξα* and its derivatives such as: the reputation and public standing of people (5:41-44; 7:18; 8:50-54), the natural characteristics of God (1:14; 11:40), the attributes associated with the presence/appearance of God (17:5, 21-22), and the honor brought to God by others (21:19).¹²⁹ Without doubt, the author of the Fourth Gospel sees the complete glorification of Jesus as taking place with his death and resurrection (c.f. 7:39; 12:23; 13:31; 17:1-4).¹³⁰

Amidst these varying understandings and definitions, what the author meant with his use of the word *δοξα* can be ascertained. The first possibility that can be ruled out is that here in

¹²⁶ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 163.

¹²⁷ Burge, G. M. "Glory." *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Ed. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992. p. 269. Also Aalen, S. "Glory, Honour: *δοξα*." *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Gen Ed. Colin Brown. Vol. 2. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967. p. 44.

¹²⁸ Burge, "Glory," p. 44.

¹²⁹ *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*.

¹³⁰ See Smalley, *John*, p. 248-256. Also Burge, "Glory," p. 270.

chapter 2 the reference is pertaining to the death of Jesus; nothing in the text indicates this is foreshadowing, or is in any other way connected to the ultimate glorification that will occur later in the gospel. Collins has proposed another possibility in his extensive article on the usage of *δοξα* and has concluded that the term's usage in verse 11 is better associated with familial honor than with glory.¹³¹ This understanding falls within the exegetical possibilities of the text; however, this interpretation rendered by Collins takes too much away from the miracle and degrades it to simply a story about Jesus' social standing. He fails to explain how this would lead to the disciples putting their faith in him, which as we shall see, is central to the narrative.¹³² Calvin contends the revelation of glory is used by Jesus to establish his relationship with God and to exhibit his divine power.¹³³ Schnackenberg continues this thought and explains that when Jesus revealed his glory he was revealing his divine and creative power that was proper to him as God.¹³⁴ This possibility is the most accurate when viewed in context of the passage. It has already been mentioned that glory has a meaning consistent with the attributes and honor associated with God. Thusly, when Jesus reveals his glory, he is showing the connection he has with the Father, and the divine powers he himself carries. The miracle in verses 6-8 was a sign that pointed to the heavenly nature of Jesus; this sign revealed his divinity and his connection with the father and was a manifestation of "greater things to come" (1:50). It was not a full revealing of his glory, for that would only come in his "hour of glorification."¹³⁵

Upon the completion of the miracle John narrates the results: "and his disciples believed." Belief is a dominant theme of this book; in fact, the gospel itself claims to be written

¹³¹ Collins, "Doxa," p. 101, 105-108. He states this term could indicate "that Jesus revealed something of his good reputation or honor."

¹³² This theory fails to explain why the reactions of the bridal party are suppressed; if honor were indeed the focus, the emotions of those at the feast would be of the utmost concern to the narrator. See Dongell, *John*, p. 60.

¹³³ Calvin, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 50.

¹³⁴ Schnackenberg, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 335.

¹³⁵ Dongell, *John*, p. 60.

so that reader may come to believe (20:31).¹³⁶ Furthermore, the link between signs and a coming to faith is evident throughout the gospel. For instance, 6 out of the 16 verses that contain the word σημεια also contain the word πιστευω within the same sentence (2:23; 4:48; 6:30; 7:31; 10:41-42; 12:37) and 5 others have references to following or testifying on behalf of Jesus (3:2; 6:2; 6:14; 6:26; 12:8). Barrett sees these connections and explains, “Faith is indeed the purpose of the signs.”¹³⁷ The relationship between belief and signs is no different for the disciples then it is for others in the gospel. They have already exhibited a bit of faith just in their coming to Jesus as disciples,¹³⁸ yet as the gospel progresses we find they are still wrought with misunderstandings (14:5, 8; 16:12, 17, 25, 29).¹³⁹ This illustrates that their belief in Jesus was not the start of their faith, nor was it meant to constitute a completed faith.¹⁴⁰

This final phrase of the passage must be taken in context with other passages on the disciple’s faith. The best explanation ties together all the elements of this verse: Jesus revealed his glory by showing an element of his divine nature, the disciples believed and their faith increased because of this sign, yet a complete understanding was not rendered until the full glorification of Jesus with his death and resurrection. This understanding of faith being explicitly linked to signs and the revelation of Jesus divinity ties directly into Jesus’ seemingly cryptic comment to his mother. In verses 3 and 4, Mary comes to Jesus to talk about a humanly problem: there is no more wine. Jesus addresses his mother in way as to remind her of their divergent natures. In essence, Jesus is not saying he will not perform the miracle, rather he is saying Mary should not be worried about the earthly issues of social disgrace, but rather she should be concerned with the divine issues. His focus is on his hour and his glory, and thusly he

¹³⁶ Smalley, John, p. 174-176.

¹³⁷ See Barrett, The Gospel According to St John, p. 161.

¹³⁸ Calvin, The Gospel According to St John, p. 50.

¹³⁹ Schnackenberg, The Gospel According to St John, p. 337.

¹⁴⁰ Dongell, John, p. 60.

performs the miracle for this reason alone. This is further emphasized by the author's abrupt conclusion in verse 11; John is not interested in how the wedding party and guests react to the miracle because the miracle was not for them, rather the focus of this passage is on Jesus and how he has provided a sign to his disciples so that they might believe in him. Verse 11 does more than wrap up the passage, it gives it its meaning.

Interactions with The Passage as a Whole

Scholars from varying fields have noted the similarities between this miracle story and the pagan myth of the Dionysus cult. Since this is an issue that cannot be solved exegetically within the text alone little time will be spent on the issue. Bultmann is a strong proponent of this view and contends, "There can be doubt that the story has been taken over from a heaven legend and ascribed to Jesus."¹⁴¹ He supports this claim by looking at the similarities between these two stories. In the Dionysus legend, once a year water from the temple springs would produce wine, this would fill large jars in the temple; the notion of wine coming from water predates the Johannine tradition. Strengthening his claim, Bultmann contends the date traditionally ascribed to the wedding at Cana is January 6th, the same date as the Dionysus Feast.¹⁴² Other scholars refute this connection saying the similarities are not enough evidence.¹⁴³ Brown champions the opposition denying the connection by pointing out that Christian celebrations, from whence the dating of the miracle comes, were often set on pagan holidays as replacements to the heathen festivals. He continues by pointing out the narrator totally ignores the actual transformation of the elements, which is in stark contrast to the pagan metamorphosis.¹⁴⁴ Morris contends that if

¹⁴¹ Bultmann, The Gospel of John, p. 118-119.

¹⁴² Ibid. 119.

¹⁴³ Brown, The Gospel According to John, p. 100-101; O'Day, "John 2:1-12," p. 538; and Schnackenberg, The Gospel According to St John, p. 340.

¹⁴⁴ Brown, The Gospel According to John, p. 100-101.

anything, this similarity is used by the author to show the superiority of Christ.¹⁴⁵ The text seems to suggest this is an authentic historic account; however, the similarities exhibited between this, and pagan rituals cannot be ignored.

When John 2:1-11 is examined as a whole, one cannot help but notice an apparent symbolism centered on replacement and fulfillment. Before this symbolism can be unpacked, one must understand how both John and Jesus use symbols in the Fourth Gospel. Culpepper explains symbols in John are used by the author to “provide implicit commentary and directional signals for the reader.”¹⁴⁶ He continues, “John’s symbols are drawn from everyday life, but derive their significance from the rich associations they have acquired in the Old Testament and apocalyptic literature.”¹⁴⁷ Culpepper, in a statement most relevant to John 2:1-11, states, “The Johannine σημεία are symbolic acts.” In essence, John is a gospel of symbolism and any exegetical understanding must take place within this mindset. The person of Jesus, both as John portrays him and as the synoptics do, is known to have used symbolism in his actions. The most prominent example of this is his selection of twelve disciples (6:67). In this case, the connection between the twelve disciples and the twelve tribes of Israel is obvious. There is, in a sense, a motif of replacement evident in this selection process. Few would argue that Jesus had twelve disciples for the sole purpose of symbolizing the replacement of Judaism; he selected them to carry out his mission to the world, yet the number invokes a deeper meaning. This is very similar to the symbolism portrayed in this passage: the main point of this miracle is that it pointed to the glory of Jesus, and this revelation led to his disciple’s faith. The symbolism used can only deepen this focus.

¹⁴⁵ Morris, The Gospel According to John, p. 154.

¹⁴⁶ Culpepper, Anatomy, p. 181.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. 185.

In John 2:1-11 Jesus performs a miracle; this miracle supernaturally turns gallons of water into the choicest wine. From the surface this act seems to center on the social needs of a wedding party; however, upon deeper study, it can be concluded these actions had nothing to do with worldly needs, but rather divine desires. Amidst this divine deed, many commentators have seen the symbolism of the water of Judaism being transformed into the wine of Christianity.¹⁴⁸ This view fits in line with what has already been discussed concerning the symbolism employed with an abundance of wine, and is further enhanced when one realizes the jars used for Jewish purification are now being used for celebration with the best wine. Brown continues with the replacement theme by making a connection between the steward's comments, "you have kept the good wine until now," with the ushering in of the messianic age that replaces the old traditions.¹⁴⁹

A modified understanding of this symbolism sees the miracle in Cana as fulfillment rather than replacement. O'Day explains,

It is inaccurate to describe this miracle as Jesus' rejection of the waters of purification and hence a symbol of Jesus' rejection of Judaism. Rather, jars stood empty, waiting to be filled. Jewish vessels are filled with a wondrous new gift (c.f. 1:17). This miracle is thus neither a rejection nor a replacement of the old, but a creation of something new in the midst of Judaism.¹⁵⁰

Dongell reinforces this idea by point out that the jars used for the Jewish rituals were not destroyed, but rather employed in the symbolism of abundant wine.¹⁵¹ What Jesus is creating and instituting with this revelation of glory is a new age that supersedes the old; the salvation that ensues is out of the Jewish tradition,¹⁵² and represents the best of ages. This

¹⁴⁸ Barrett, The Gospel According to St John, p. 161; Brown, The Gospel According to John, p. 104; Bruce, The Gospel of John, p. 71; and Morris, The Gospel According to John, p. 155

¹⁴⁹ Brown, The Gospel According to John, p. 104. See also Watson, "Wine," p. 873.

¹⁵⁰ O'Day, "John 2:1-12," p. 538

¹⁵¹ Dongell, John, p. 60.

¹⁵² Smith, John, p. 84-85.

redefinition/fulfillment theory is the best understanding of the symbolism the gospel writer is trying to convey in this narrative. Undoubtedly, as Jesus reveals his glory through his godly abilities, he is not only showing his likeness to the Father, but makes known what is to come. The Old Testament symbolism of blessing and salvation coming with abundance of wine further reinforces this theological position.

Summary and Conclusion

The first of Jesus' miracles carries with it deep meaning and insight into how Jesus views his godly mission in a worldly society. The author, upon introducing his main character through the use of titles and the testimony of witnesses, uses eleven verses of narrative to show how a man who is God acts according to his own will in order to express his glory. This passage is a clear indication of the divergent nature of Jesus from those who surround him. When the mother of Jesus approaches him with an apparent problem in hopes of a solution, Jesus replies "What to me and to you, Woman; my time has not yet come." With these words on his lips, the narrator portrays Jesus as focused on his purpose, and even more importantly, aware of his power. Jesus decides to act, but not out of concern for the honor and reputation of the wedding party, but in order to lead his disciples to belief. Through actions, he produces an abundance of wine by employing the vessels of Jewish tradition; with this, he symbolizes all the blessings that are to come with the age he is ushering in. The wine, and more importantly his miracle, is deemed to be of the best quality. Just as the reader is told Jesus stands in the presence of those who do not know him (1:10) the source of the miracle is wrongly attributed; even with him in their presence, the world does not understand. Mary's concern was for the wedding party, but Jesus and the narrator have no concern with their fleshly issues. The focus of this passages is set in its final verse: Through his signs Jesus revealed his heavenly nature for the purpose of belief.

Within the Fourth Gospel as a whole, the wedding at Cana bridges the reader between an understanding of its main character Jesus and the message that he brings to the world. It comes on the heels of 1:50 in order to show that the promise made about the greater things to come was fulfilled quickly and richly. In a gospel written so that those who read it may believe (20:30), the writer has included this narrative in order to show the reader that belief is the natural reaction for those exposed to the reality of the coming Messiah. The inner circle of Jesus was the first to come to a faith in him, but others will follow. 2:1-11 gives the characters in the story, as well as the reader, a glimpse of what is to come for those who understand the nature of him who is from the Father.

τι εμοι και σοι: “What to me and to you?” – John gives his readers the key to understanding Jesus with this ambiguous statement nestled in the midst of his revelation of glory: Jesus is of a heavenly nature, any attempts to understand him and his teachings must look beyond worldly concerns and focus on “that which was from the beginning.”

Appendix 1

The Sign (σημεία) Source

An exegesis of John 2:1-11 cannot overlook the importance of signs in the Fourth Gospel; the first twelve chapters of John show heavy reliance on miracles to point to, and define, Jesus and his role in the gospel. This seemingly distinct literary unit in John has lead some scholars to ascribe their origins to a pre-Johannine source called the Signs or Semeia Source.¹⁵³ The main proponent of this source-criticism theory is Rudolf Bultmann although the idea did not start with his proposal.¹⁵⁴ Fortna places the following passages as part of this Signs Source:

Changing water into wine (2:1-11), healing an official's son (4:46-54), and a lame man (5:2-9), feeding the multitude (6:1-14) – and probably together with crossing the sea (6:15-25), giving sight to the blind (9:1-8), and raising Lazarus (11:1-45). (Some would also include the cat of fish now found at 21:1-4).¹⁵⁵

This document is proposed to be a basic narrative of Jesus and his works largely without discourses. Its existence is used to explain the distinctly Johannine usage of the word “sign” to describe Jesus’ miracles among other textual problems.¹⁵⁶ The most relevant evidence for this source, in relation to the miracle at Cana narrative, is the numeration of the signs found in 1:11 and 4:54. The water into wine miracle is detailed as his first sign, while the healing of the official's son is said to be his second despite the occurrence of other miracles in between these accounts.¹⁵⁷ Bultmann proposes this authorial reliance on an outside source to explain certain stylistic oddities as well as to assist in source and redaction criticism of the gospel.¹⁵⁸ This proposal holds wide acceptance, although “the hypothesis has never been universally

¹⁵³ This proposed document is often called SQ (from Semeia Quelle) due to German scholarship on the issue. See Fortna, Robert T. “Signs/Semeia Source.” *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Ed. David Noel Freedman. Vol. 6. New York: Doubleday, 1992. p. 18.

¹⁵⁴ The final theory of this source is often attributed to Bultmann although as others point out, the history behind a Signs Source goes back to Eduard Schwartz in 1908; for a complete history of see Smalley, *John*, p. 102, 104-108; and Fortna, “Signs/Semeia Source.” p. 19-20.

¹⁵⁵ Fortna, “Signs/Semeia Source.” p. 19.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 18.

¹⁵⁷ See Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, p. 113.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p. 113-114. Also *Smith*, *John*, p. 124.

accepted.”¹⁵⁹ The most easily recognizable problem in reconstructing this source comes in its near sole dependence on internal evidence to assemble the proposed source; this approach has lead some to call into question the “subjectivity of any reconstruction of a source based chiefly on stylistic criteria.”¹⁶⁰ Unlike the almost universally accepted use of the “Q Source,” within the synoptics, the “SQ Source” is largely debatable. These issues of redaction and source criticism tend to take exegetes away from the passage, and into hypotheses and theories; however, a basic understanding of these scholastic debates is essential to fully comprehending the context and background of this Johannine passages. For further information see Robert Fortna’s article on the “Signs/Semeia Source” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, as well as Rudolf Bultmann’s commentary on John especially pages 113-115.

¹⁵⁹ Fortna, “Signs/Semeia Source.” p. 19.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 21.

Appendix 2

Marriage in the NT Time Period

The original intended reader of John brings to the table an element of understanding that a contemporary reader never could: a knowledge of the rituals and feasts associated with the New Testament time-period, especially that of marriage. Numerous books exist that detail the two-thousand year old ceremony of matrimony; this appendix does not seek to elaborate on, nor even synthesize these sources, but rather to present the reader with enough knowledge of the subject as to allow he or she to full appreciate the text.

The commentators cited within this exegesis have noted the following observations concerning how marriage affects the interpretation of John 2:1-11. Morris acknowledges the incompleteness of current scholarship while presenting what available information is useful to a reader of the Fourth Gospel. The event started as a procession to the bride's home and ended at the bridegroom's house. Assumedly there was a religious ceremony followed by a prolonged feast. This feast may last up to a week.¹⁶¹ Schnakenberg echoes the observation that the feast could last up to a week, but adds, "Care was taken to provide enough wine, which was freely poured on such occasions."¹⁶² Wedding guests were also expected to bring gifts of goodwill to such occasions;¹⁶³ to run out of wine at such an occasion was by all means a social taboo¹⁶⁴ perhaps resulting in a loss of honor.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, Barrett explains a wedding feast is used to symbolizes the Kingdom of God elsewhere in the New Testament (Mark 2:19; Matt 9:15; Luke 5:34).¹⁶⁶

¹⁶¹ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 157.

¹⁶² Schnakenberg, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 336-337.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 156; Schnakenberg, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 327.

¹⁶⁵ Williams, "The Mother of Jesus at Cana," p. 92.

¹⁶⁶ Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John*, p. 157.

Other scholars further outline the background of marriage. Raymond Collins elaborates on the use and symbolism of the wedding feast in his article on “Marriage” in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. He states, “Early Jewish Christians...found in marriage a symbolic expression of God’s covenantal union with his people.”¹⁶⁷ Günther states, “Marriage is an institution clearly presupposed in the New Testament. It is not based on human regulations but on God’s commandment.”¹⁶⁸ The practice of the wedding was often surrounded by extravagance, both in material goods, as well as in emotion; it was a time of great celebration.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, symbolism abounds surrounding the title of bridegroom; however, this paper has sought to show that this imagery of Jesus is intended by the author as only a subtle bit of irony and should not be pursued too far. For a full analysis of “bridegroom” symbolism see Williams’ article on “Bride, Bridegroom” in *The Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*.

The primary historical information necessary for interpretation of John 2:1-11 concerning weddings and marriage in the New Testament it is a time of celebration. Further information can be gleaned from the articles on marriage in *The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*,¹⁷⁰ *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*¹⁷¹ and *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷ Collins, Raymond F. “Marriage.” *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Ed. David Noel Freedman. Vol. 4. New York: Doubleday, 1992. p. 570.

¹⁶⁸ Günther, W., C. Brown, H. Reisser and T. McComiskey. “Marriage, Adultrey, Bride, Bridegroom.” *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Gen Ed. Colin Brown. Vol. 2. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967. p. 579.

¹⁶⁹ “Wedding.” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. Gen Ed. Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit and Tremper Longman III. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998. p. 938.

¹⁷⁰ “Wedding,” p. 938-939.

¹⁷¹ Collins, “Marriage,” p.559-572.

¹⁷² Günther, “Marriage,” p. 575-590.

Appendix 3:

8 Common English Translations and the Discrepancies Among Them

KJV	NRSV	NIV	NASB
<p>¹ And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:</p> <p>² And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.</p> <p>³ And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.</p> <p>⁴ Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.</p> <p>⁵ His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.</p> <p>⁶ And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.</p> <p>⁷ Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.</p> <p>⁸ And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.</p> <p>⁹ When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,</p> <p>¹⁰ And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.</p> <p>¹¹ This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.</p> <p>¹² After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.</p>	<p>¹ On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.</p> <p>² Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.</p> <p>³ When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." ⁴ And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and me? My hour has not yet come."</p> <p>⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."</p> <p>⁶ Now standing there were six stone jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it.</p> <p>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 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." ¹¹ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed.</p> <p>¹² After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brother, and his disciples; and they remained there a few days.</p>	<p>¹ On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."</p> <p>⁴ "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied, "My time has not yet come."</p> <p>⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."</p> <p>⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.^[1]</p> <p>⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.</p> <p>⁸ Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."</p> <p>⁹ They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰ and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."</p> <p>¹¹ This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.</p> <p>¹² After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.</p> <p>Footnotes: [1] 2:6 Greek two to three metretres (probably about 75 to 115 liters)</p>	<p>¹ On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there;</p> <p>² and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.</p> <p>³ When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."</p> <p>⁴ And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come."</p> <p>⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."</p> <p>⁶ Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each.</p> <p>⁷ Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." So they filled them up to the brim.</p> <p>⁸ And He said to them, "Draw some out now and take it to the ^[1]headwaiter." So they took it to him.</p> <p>⁹ When the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom,</p> <p>¹⁰ and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when the people have drunk freely, then he serves the poorer wine; but you have kept the good wine until now."</p> <p>¹¹ This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.</p> <p>¹² After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother and His brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days.</p> <p>Footnotes: [1] Or steward</p>

REB

¹Two days later there was a wedding at Cana-in-Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, ²and Jesus and his disciples were also among the guests. ³The wine gave out, so Jesus's mother said to the servants, "They have no wine left." ⁴He answered, "That is no concern of mine. My hour has not yet come." ⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶There were six stone water-jars standing near, of the kind used for Jewish rites of purification; each held from twenty to thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water," and they filled them to the brim. ⁸"Now draw some off," he ordered, "and take it to the master of the feast"; and they did so. ⁹The master tasted the water now turned into wine, not knowing its source, though servants who had drawn the water knew. He hailed the bridegroom ¹⁰and said, "Everyone else serves the best wine first, and the poorer only when the guest have drunk freely; but you have kept the best wine till now." ¹¹So Jesus performed at Cana-in-Galilee the first of the signs which revealed his glory and led his disciples to believe in him. ¹²After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and the disciples, and they stayed there a few days.

NAB

¹On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ²Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. ³When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." ⁴(And) Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." ⁵His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. ⁸Then he told them, "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it. ⁹And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servers who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, "Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now." ¹¹Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him. ¹²After this, he and his mother, (his) brothers, and his disciples went down to Capernaum and stayed there only a few days.

ESV

¹On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ²Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. ³When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." ⁴And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." ⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸And he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it. ⁹When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now." ¹¹This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him. ¹²After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers ¹² and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days.

Footnotes:

[1] 2:6 Greek two or three measures (metretas); a metretes was about 10 gallons or 35 liters.
[2] 2:12 Or brothers and sisters. The plural Greek word adelphoi (translated "brothers") refers to siblings in a family. In New Testament usage, depending on the context, adelphoi may refer either to brothers or to brothers and sisters.

NLT

¹The next day^[1] Jesus' mother was a guest at a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. ²Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. ³The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother spoke to him about the problem. "They have no more wine," she told him. ⁴"How does that concern you and me?" Jesus asked. "My time has not yet come." ⁵But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶Six stone waterpots were standing there; they were used for Jewish ceremonial purposes and held twenty to thirty gallons^[2] each. ⁷Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled to the brim, ⁸he said, "Dip some out and take it to the master of ceremonies." So they followed his instructions. ⁹When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. ¹⁰"Usually a host serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone is full and doesn't care, he brings out the less expensive wines. But you have kept the best until now!" ¹¹This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was Jesus' first display of his glory. And his disciples believed in him. ¹²After the wedding he went to Capernaum for a few days with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples.

Footnotes:

[1] 2:1 Greek On the third day; see 1:35, 43.
[2] 2:6 Greek 2 or 3 measures (75 to 113 liters).

Discrepancies in wording:

- V. 1 REB – Two days later
NLT – The next day (footnote: On the third day)
ALL – On the third day
- V. 3 KJV – When they wanted wine
ALL – When the wine gave/ran out
- V. 4 KJV – What have I to do with thee
NIV – Why do you concern me
REB – That is no concern of mine
NAB – How does your concern affect me
ESV – What does this have to do with me
NRSV / NASB / NLT – What concern is that to you and me (us)
- V. 6 KJV – after the manner of the purifying of the Jews
NRSV / NASB / REB / ESV – for the Jewish rites of purification
NIV / NAB / NLT – the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing
- V. 8 KJV – governor of the feast
NRSV – chief steward
NIV – master of the banquet
NASB / NAB – headwaiter (NLT footnote: steward)
REB / ESV – master of the feast
NLT – master of ceremonies
- *Verse 8 includes some variation of “so they did / took it” except NIV which included it in 9.
- V. 10 NIV – choice wine
REB / NLT – best wine
ALL – good wine
- V. 10 KJV – and when men have well drunk
NRSV – after the guests have become drunk
NIV – after the guests have had too much to drink
NLT – when everyone is full and doesn’t care
ALL – and when the people have drunk freely
- V. 10 KJV – that which is worse
NRSV / NAB – inferior wine / one
NIV – cheaper wine
NASB / REB – poorer wine
ESV – poor wine
NLT – less expensive
- V. 11 KJV – beginning of miracles
NRSV / REB / ESV – first of his signs
NIV / NLT – first of miraculous signs (NLT different wording)
NASB / NAB – beginning of his signs
- V. 11 NRSV – and his disciples believed
NIV – and his disciples put their faith in him
REB – led his disciples to believe in him
NAB – his disciples began to believe in him
ALL – and his disciples believed on / in him

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