
a *Grace Notes* course

Life of Christ 100

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Lesson 107

The Wedding at Cana of Galilee
The Divine Guidance of Jesus Christ
The First Cleansing of the Temple

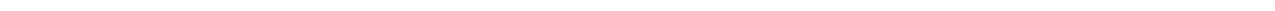
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The Wedding at Cana of Galilee

Cana was a town in Galilee, due west of the Sea of Galilee and north of Nazareth, about halfway between the two.

The ancient Jewish wedding ceremony would go like this:

There were typically many attendants to the bride and groom. The groom would select a friend to be his best man.

The weddings were often held in the fall, after the harvest, so that the maximum number of people could attend. Relatives would travel relatively far to attend.

The bride was transferred to the house of the bridegroom's father in a wonderful, boisterous, fun parade. Flowers were scattered, songs were sung. A procession of virgins accompanied the bridegroom.

A feast took place, which could last as long as a week. This traditionally began in the evening.

Riddles were told.

Love songs were sung, usually the words of the Song of Solomon were set to music for this.

A cloak or skirt was spread over the bride which represented the marital commitment. This was the high point of the feast.

The ceremony would seldom have the presence of a government official or priest.

Friends and relatives recited Biblical passages or quoted historical wisdom as the couple stood before them.

After this the couple was left alone to consummate their marriage in a room specially prepared by friends and relatives. While the consummation took place the party outside continued.

Later the couple would emerge from the consummation room with evidence of the woman's virginity on a piece of cloth.

The Text, John 2:1-11

John 2:1, "And a wedding began on the third day in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there."

This third day is really one week's time since Christ returned from the wilderness.

Day one has the testimony of John the Baptist to the Levites, John 1:19-28. This occurs at Bethany beyond the Jordan.

The next day Christ comes back from the desert, and arrives at Bethany where John remains with his disciples, John 1:29-34.

The day after that Christ calls His first disciples, Andrew, an unnamed disciple, and Simon Peter, Andrew's brother, John 1:35-42.

On the fourth day, Philip and Nathaniel Bartholomew are called, John 1:43-51.

Three days later, Christ is in Kana, about three days walk from Bethany beyond the Jordan.

Christ's mother, Mary was present at this feast.

Now if Mary was very young when she gave birth to Christ, then she would be middle aged by now somewhere in her forties.

Since the birth of Christ and her tremendous display of maturity during that period we have seen her but once. That time was the time that Joseph and Mary took Christ to the Passover in Jerusalem. At that event, Mary displayed a fair amount of immaturity.

Since that event, Mary has given birth to other children through Joseph, and raised them.

She has apparently also been widowed, since the Passover event is the last time that Joseph appears on the radar screen.

John 2:2. "Now indeed Jesus was called into the wedding, and His disciples."

The ascensive use of the conjunction *kai* is translated indeed. This betrays some surprise on the part of the writer. Although Mary was already present at this feast, it was unusual for others to be invited while the festivities were in full swing.

The passive voice of the verb *eklethe* reveals that Christ was polite. He did not barge in, but he was called. The passive voice shows us that Christ did not produce the action of the calling, someone else did.

The use of the conjunction *eis* indicates that he was outside of the wedding, an uninvited guest.

The third person singular of the verb *ekle.the* shows us that only Christ at first is called in; His disciples are left outside. This further indicates that Christ was called in because Mary was His mother not because of His celebrityship. The fact that John mentions Mary's presence supports this.

The conjunction *kai* plus the phrase *hoi mathetai autou* reveals that the extension of the invitation to the disciples was more of an afterthought.

Although this was a large Jewish wedding the addition of five or six more people would have placed a pretty serious burden on the wedding logistics. The Bride's father would have to pay for the consumption of food and drink by the disciples. Furthermore, these things were planned carefully according to how many guests were attending. Six more would have strained the limits of that plan.

John 2:3. "And the wine having failed, Jesus' mother says to him, "They have no wine".

So Mary has a firm grasp of the obvious. There is more to this verse than that.

John dramatized this moment, and not because Mary was speaking. The failure of the wine would have been a serious impediment to the celebration. If this was only midweek in the celebration, it would have been a social disaster.

This moment is dramatized by the use of the dramatic or historical present tense of the verb *legei* to speak.

The focus of the disaster is revealed by the position of the participle *husteresantos*.

This participle is in the genitive absolute. This shows a grammatical disconnection with the rest of the statement in the verse. It shows that although Mary made the statement, she really had no idea why this had happened.

It is extremely likely that the wine failed due to the presence of six additional guests Jesus and His disciples. It also means that Jesus and His disciples were helping the wine shortage along by drinking along with the other guests. It does not imply drunkenness on their part. They did the polite thing.

Mary's statement is one which is pregnant with meaning. She is verbally elbowing her son. Hey, this was a bad situation.

Mary's verbal elbowing has to do with the deity of her Son. She more than anyone else knows that He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. She wants Him to use His deity to solve this problem.

There is no record of any miracle occurring from the hand of Jesus before this one. Christ has only just received the filling ministry of the Spirit at His baptism, which would have included the gift of miracles.

Therefore, Mary is not working from precedent here. She has not seen Christ do this before. Her concentration is not on the spiritual gift of miracles, which has yet to function; it is on the deity of Jesus Christ.

Though Mary does not have a clue as to why the wine has failed, it was most likely very obvious to Christ.

Though Mary only sees a quick solution to a social disaster, Christ sees much more. His responsibility in the doctrine of kenosis. Mary misses the point badly.

John 2:4. "And Jesus says to her, "What is to me and you, ma'am? My hour has not come."

Again John uses the dramatic or historic present to make the scene vivid. Again this is done with the verb *legei*, 'to speak'.

Our Lord uses a Hebrew idiom to make it clear to His mother that He now has His own realm of authority.

The idiom is literally from the Greek phrase *Ti emoi kai soi*. "What is to me and you?."

Christ very clearly says in this idiom, "Mind your own business."

What is amazing here is that Christ has just finished with the severe tests in the wilderness, and two of the three at least attempt to get Him to do the same thing that His mother is attempting here.

So Christ has to set the boundaries of His own authority with His mother. This is His affair, and not hers.

Christ uses a formal term for woman in the vocative case to gain the attention of His mother. *gune*. translates best as 'ma'am', or 'lady'. It can be a term of affection, and is almost always a term of respect, but it is formal, and it shows the objective way that Christ is addressing His mother. He is reproving her, after all.

Christ used this same term as He was dying on the cross. John 19:26 says, "Ma'am, behold your Son." There, it is definitely a term of respect and affection.

Christ then makes the issue clear: His hour has not yet come.

This hour does not refer to the hour of His kingdom ministry, for that ministry was most certainly in action even at that time.

The baptism of John was the official beginning of the kingdom ministry; from that time Christ had the filling ministry of the Spirit, and the spoken authority from God.

Christ has gathered the first of His disciples, who will be instrumental to His kingdom pronouncement.

The kingdom ministry was designed to introduce the millennial kingdom and its king to the people of Israel.

The kingdom ministry is not synonymous with the reign of the king. The reign of the king will include the full revelation and implementation of His Godly powers and character.

The hour when He can reveal and use His deity has not come, and He must make that clear to His own mother.

The hour of Christ's glorification can only come when He is accepted by the chosen nation, Israel. So far, that acceptance has not come.

Alva J. McClain has suggested six reasons for the Israelite rejection of Christ in his fine theological work, *The Greatness of the Kingdom*. They are just as valid today as they ever were.

1. The high spiritual requirements our Lord laid down as essential for entrance into the kingdom (Mk 1:15; Lk 18:1517; John 3:35).

2. His refusal to establish a kingdom merely social and political in character (Lk 12:1330; John 6:515).
3. His denunciation of the current religion with its traditionalism, legalism, and ritualism (Lk 11:3754).
4. His scathing arraignment of the ruling classes (Matt 23).
5. His association with and compassion for the outcasts of Israel (Matt 9:1013; Lk 15:1,2).
6. His exalted claims for Himself (John 5:1618; 10:2433; 18:37).

John 2:5. "His mother says to the servants, 'Do whatever this one says to you.'"

Now it appears that Christ's mother keeps steaming straight ahead in spite of the rebuke of her Son. But this is not the case.

She says, *poiate* the imperative second person plural of the verb *poieo*., 'to do'. This is a command, but the direct object of the command is *ti* an 'whatever'. The indefinite particle *an* leaves the command wide open to the authority of Jesus Christ.

The *whatever* can mean that Christ tells them nothing.

The *whatever* can mean that Christ will give money and tell them to head to the nearest liquor store.

Or the *whatever* can mean that Christ will rely on the Father and the Spirit to solve the problem.

Although the possibility exists for the presence of some contempt in this statement, it is much more likely that it is a straightforward statement of complete humility.

Mary takes the rebuke of her Son with great self esteem, and recovers in a matter of moments so that she is completely humble when it is her turn to speak next.

John 2:6. "Now there were six stone water jars according to the custom of the Jews for purification, each containing two or three metretai."

This verse is purely explanatory by nature. It sets the stage for the narrative to follow.

A *metretai* was about ten gallons. This gives us an idea of the great size of this wedding and just how much wine was being consumed. 20 or 30 gallons times six makes it 120 to 180 gallons of wine that Christ was going to make.

These stone water jars were there to hold water for dishwashing and handwashing. In other words, they were there for common, sanitary usage. The water, though sanitary and no doubt potable, was a grade below that which is drinking water.

It was the Jewish custom to wash hands and dishes both before and after meals. A large volume of water would be needed for such a task.

If Christ was going to turn all of this water into wine, it would provide enough for perhaps a hundred guests over the course of several days. Perhaps this wedding was still in its early stages, but it is more likely that the wine was intended to be too much; not to tempt everyone to over drink to a state of inebriation, but instead to symbolize the overflowing nature of the plan of God and the millennial kingdom.

David had said some thousand years before this event, "My cup runneth over." This is certainly evidence of that very thing.

Joel 2:24 contains a messianic and millennial prophecy that catches this same symbology, "And the vats will overflow with the new wine and oil."

How appropriate that this first miracle should be so very millennial.

The wine offering of the feast of first-fruits represented the prosperity that would come from the appropriation of grace provision for spiritual life. The feast itself celebrated the law giving at Mt. Sinai.

John 2:7. "Jesus says to them, 'Fill the water pots with water.' And they filled them to the top."

Now Christ gives a direct command it is the imperative mood of the verb *gemizo* to fill.

The verb itself always takes the negative connotation 'Full of wickedness'; 'Full of smoke'. It is even used of the seven plague and the abominations of Revelation.

This negative connotation is related to the usual base purpose of the water jars.

The jars are to be full of dishwater, not pure, clear drinking water.

This dishwater is a good symbol for the world, and the Christian's involvement in it. You really do not want to partake of it, but it is used by God to make us clean such is the role of the undeserved suffering that is so often a part of living in the devil's world.

So Christ wrinkles His nose when he orders the servants to fill the jars with water. He is setting up a really striking contrast by using a verb of distaste.

The forthcoming miracle is really going to be a strong contrast and wonderful surprise.

John 2:8. "And He says to them, 'Draw it now and take [it] to the headwaiter.' And they took [it]."

This reveals that Christ knew beforehand just what had happened to the dishwater.

The previous verse shows Christ's premeditation; this one shows its execution.

Now Christ was doing this by the spiritual gift of miracles.

A spiritual gift is a part of the human spirit, the spiritual frame of reference in the soul.

A spiritual gift is given by the sovereignty God the Holy Spirit. It only operates under His initiative.

This passage tells us much about that gift.

That the one doing the miracle has full knowledge of the intent of the Spirit.

That the one doing the miracle participates fully in the execution of the miracle itself.

That it takes a lot of doctrine to appreciate what the Spirit is doing in the substance of the miracle.

That miracles contained great symbolism and drew their meaning from the substance of the miracle accomplished. They are thus a reflection of the order of God.

Christ could not have done this miracle on the initiative of His own deity; such would violate the principle of kenosis, and such a violation would invalidate the entire incarnation.

Christ voluntarily restricted the independent use of His own divine attributes during the incarnation.

John 2:9. "Now as the chief steward tasted the water which had become wine and had not known where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water had known) the chief steward loudly summoned the bridegroom."

This is a very convoluted verse that is an explanation that must explain itself.

John is revealing the miracle here, but he deems it appropriate to explain the reaction to it from the viewpoint of the chief wine steward. The scene is intended to be comic.

The chief steward is like a *maitre d'hotel* at a fancy restaurant. He knows all the protocol, all of the details concerning a wedding feast. The perfect timing, the perfect food, etc. The bridegroom would leave the details to this man so that he could concentrate on his bride. You can imagine that these men were quite stuffy, persnickety to the extreme, and very demanding. You can also imagine this man fretting as the wine ran out "What shall we do?" Yet here comes the servants with a 20 gallon stone jar full of wine. They are saved from disgrace! They need not hear the dreaded words... "You'll never work in this town again." But the steward has standards, and he must taste the wine. In this pinch anything but pure vinegar will do...

Now this chief steward 'tasted' the wine. This verb is *geuomai*, which fits well into the picture of winetasting. It means to savor, or relish something by taste. To really enjoy any experience.

John goes out of his way to make it clear that the steward did not know the source of the wine, although the servants did. It is the secret that the servants hold; you can see their hidden, silly smiles, and their mental giggling. The fretting, ruined chief steward is saved from certain social death, and he does not yet know.

Now the chief steward tastes the wine, and he immediately reverts to that unique form of snob degeneracy that only chief stewards and *maitre d'hotels* can express. Without delay he calls the bridegroom. He is so amazed with what he considers a blunder on the part of the bridegroom that he violates one of his own rules.

The verb *phoneo* is used to denote that the chief steward uses a loud call in order to summon. The verb is used of the trumpet blast, the rolling thunder, the voice of John the Baptist in the wilderness, the shout of the archangel at the second coming, and even the voice of God. This guy is not whispering.

He is calling to reprove the bridegroom because this great wine had remained hidden until now.

John 2:10. "Every man first puts forth the good wine and whenever they [the guests] have become drunk the inferior [younger]. You have kept the good wine until now."

The chief steward reveals a custom that makes a fair amount of sense. Serve the good wine first.

Drunk people cannot appreciate good wine. Their senses are dulled.

Drunk people cannot tell when inferior wine is served their palates are corrupted.

You can hear the stuffy way in which this man communicates. He is instructing the bridegroom with a very imperious tone of voice "Every man..."

Of course, the poor man has no way of knowing that this wine has only become so minutes ago. He makes a fool of himself before his knowing servants.

The Greek adjective *elasso*. is translated inferior. It really means younger, which translates well as inferior when a wine frame of reference is in view.

John 2:11. "This beginning of the signs Jesus did in Kana of Galilee and manifested His glory and His disciples believed in Him."

The word *arche*. indicates that this is the very first miracle that Christ performed. It is translated beginning.

It is for this reason that we know that Christ the child never did miracles. It is also for this reason that we know that even as an adult Christ never did miracles until this time.

This is what tells us that Mary had no frame of reference for the spiritual gift of miracles: the same gift that Christ used to perform this one.

John appropriately calls this miracle a *se.meio.n a* sign. The miracles and healings that Christ

performed were all designed as signs things which would point to His messiahship.

All of these things originate outside of Christ Himself due to the doctrine of kenosis.

This sign manifested His glory. It is an attestation of His messiahship. In none of these signs is Christ's full glory revealed; they only point to what is there.

Glory here is a reference to the character of God revealed in Christ. As such, these signs do not point to Christ's deity, but to the character of God revealed in His humanity. That is the primary focus of the signs.

The character of God was produced through the humanity of Christ by His appropriation of Divine grace in the ministry of the Spirit and the study of the Word.

The signs also point to Christ as the Messiah, the one who is fit to rule Israel and all the world in the millennial reign.

John also mentions that His disciples believed in Him at this point.

John 1:49 reveals that Nathanael Bartholomew was certainly a believer. The mental attitudes of the other disciples are not revealed.

Philip, Andrew, Simon Peter, Nathanael Bartholomew, and perhaps one unnamed disciple were the others present at this feast.

This was the clincher. Other signs had attended Christ in His life. The miracles surrounding His birth were more than a few trivial things. The triple miracle of His baptism was really fantastic, but it had happened to and not by Jesus.

Now Jesus does a miracle, and because of it, His disciples believed.

There is more meaning than what meets the eye in this miracle. It is not just a miracle; it is a symbol miracle.

The symbol miracle is one which reveals something about the kingdom.

Christ refers to wine in the kingdom context in Matt 9:17. There, the new wine represents the plan of God for the millennium, while the wineskins represent the subjects of the kingdom.

Here Christ turns common dishwater into superb wine; it was probably the best vintage in history.

The common dishwater represents the ritual plan of God for Israel. It is serviceable, and even potable as water, but not what you would always want to drink if you did not have to (This makes the desire to return to the ritual plan even more amazing).

The new wine represents the millennial rule of Christ, and the policy of God for that rule.

This is finest of times under the greatest of rulers. Christ is the essence of justice, love, grace, and order, and His reign will be characterized by fantastic peace and prosperity.

This miracle therefore points to the greatness of the rule of Christ, and the change from the plain to the immaculate.

The Divine Guidance of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ functioned under a system of divine guidance that was both similar to and unique from that used by church age believers.

Some believers in history have attempted to use the unique way in which Christ was led, and therefore ended up with disaster. If you stay with what is just for us as church age believers you will go the right way.

The unique part of divine guidance for Christ was that the Messianic prophecies related to the first advent. Christ knew these prophecies quite well as a part of His expertise on the Old Testament canon of Scripture. When He determined from His store of wisdom that it was time to fulfill a certain prophecy, then He did so with full confidence.

The wise decisions that Christ made in prophecy fulfillment were always kept within the constraint of His perfect character. Christ knew that He would fulfill prophecy; He did not manipulate events so that He would and thus look good. He let the opportunities present themselves within the integrity of the way that He conducted His life, and then He fulfilled them.

We do not have 'personal' prophecies about our lives as Christ did, and therefore we must avoid the Messiah syndrome with reference to divine guidance. Events in the Bible are not types for our lives; Bible verses do not provide direct guidance

concerning where we should go or what we should do; there is no kind of 'twilight zone' guidance from the pages of Scripture.

One of the best illustrations of the Messianic guidance which Christ received from Old Testament prophecy is His wilderness temptation. The question is this: How did Christ know to go to the desert at that time? Here is what we do know:

Matthew 4:1, "Then Jesus was led up into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil"

The verb is in the passive voice, which indicates that our Lord did not produce the action of the verb but instead received it. The constantive aorist tense summarizes the past action into one moment of time. The verb itself means to lead from a lower to a higher point. This point can be figurative, as in the case of spiritual maturity, or literal, as in this instance. Christ was going from the low point of the Jordan River (just a few miles from the lowest land elevation on the planet) to the rough wilderness above. This emphatically does not mean snatched away, as some have tried to make the point that the Spirit picked our Lord up and bodily moved Him to the desert. This is translated, 'was led up' The Spirit did the leading and Christ did the following.

A second prepositional phrase puts forth the leadership of the Spirit, who was the direct agent of the leading. It is HUPO TOU PNEUMATOS, and translated "by the Spirit.

The last clause of the verse is a purpose clause. The verb is the aorist passive of PEIRAZO, which means to put someone to the test. Depending on the one doing the test, the purpose may be good or bad. This is translated, 'to be tempted by the devil'

In the battle to come, it will be the ministry of God the Holy Spirit versus the temptation of the devil.

This is the first evidence testing done under the conditions of the church age. Christ is our prototype for the fulfillment of God's plan for the church age dispensation. An entirely new and never before tried set of grace assets will be put through its paces over the next forty plus days.

Mark 1:12, "And immediately the Spirit cast Him out into the desert"

The major difference here is in the verb that is used to describe the action of the Spirit in getting Christ to the desert.

The verb EKBALLEI is in the present tense, which reveals an action as it happens. It is the dramatic way to present the action typical of Mark's gospel. The verb literally means to cast out. The Spirit 'cast out' Christ into the wilderness. Again we do not yet know how this occurred, only that it did.

Luke 4:1, "And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan and was being led by means of the Spirit in the desert." The main change here is the revelation that Christ was led by the Spirit for the duration of His stay in the desert, and that it was from a state of being full from the Spirit that gave the leadership.

Four words work together to form the foundational statement of the verse. They are translated "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit."

The nominative case of PLEIREIS forms the key part of the description it denotes a state of complete fullness. It can denote thought or emotion, negative or positive, but the idea here refers to the control of the soul.

The verse does not say how, but it does make it clear that Christ is under the control of PNEUMATOS HAGIOU, the Holy Spirit.

The first thing that Jesus does under the control of the Spirit is return from the Jordan, where he had just been baptized. The word for returned is HUPESTREPSEN, which is in the aorist tense. This describes a past action occurring in one moment of time, and thus the translation "He returned".

The second thing is that "He was being led by means of the Spirit."

The verb is the simple verb for the act of leading. It is in the passive voice and so reveals that the subject receives the action of leadership. The imperfect tense indicates that the action took place over a duration of time in the past, and not just at one moment. It is translated, "He was being led."

The preposition EN plus the instrumental case of means shows that the Spirit was the means of the leading.

en te. eremo. EN TEI EREMO portrays both location in the desert and the amount of time spent there. It is translated, "in the desert" This tells us that the Spirit not only led Christ to the desert, but also the entire time that He was there.

Analysis of the three.

God the Holy Spirit exerted leadership in getting Christ to the desert to be tested.

Christ is our prototype, and therefore the way in which the Spirit leads Him is the way in which we are led.

The way in which the Spirit leads is fully revealed in the New Testament canon.

Just because all the mechanics are not revealed in these passages about the wilderness temptation does not mean that they are not there. In fact, it is implicit that they are from the mention of the Spirit's leadership.

The Spirit guides through the recall of Bible Truth.

The Spirit guided Christ through the recall of both the principles of Divine character and Messianic prophecy.

In this case, the Spirit recalled Isaiah 40:35, "A voice is calling, 'Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain broad valley. Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'"

Christ understood this passage as we do it reveals the ministry of John the Baptist. Malachi 3:1 corroborates this fact.

And the ministry of John the Baptist was to prepare the way for the Messiah in the desert. From this it would seem obvious the direction that Christ would take upon the completion of His baptism straight to the desert.

And so Christ obeyed the leadership of the Spirit and entered the desert not by hocus pocus but by the recall of Messianic prophecy and application.

Divine Guidance and the Essence of God

In order to remain in the direct will of God you must begin with humility based on the essence of God proper.

In order to remain in the direct will of God you must have spiritual self esteem based on the capabilities of God.

In order to remain in the direct will of God you must make decisions from the noble victorious ideology of the Christian way of life. 1 John 5:4: "And this is the victorious ideology that has overcome the world's system, our doctrine."

The victorious ideology includes the right mental attitude of Divine Character.

The overall principle of righteousness and justice.

The motivation of personal love for God and virtue love for mankind.

The grace approach to problem solving and flexible proficiency.

The forethought of organization.

The principle of willpower in self control.

The extension of willpower over time in the temperament of faithfulness and dependability.

The communication with integrity.

The victorious ideology includes an understanding of the true goal.

The victorious ideology includes a thorough understanding the field of endeavor.

The victorious ideology includes an understanding of the mechanics which lead to the attainment of the true goal.

Implementation of the victorious ideology in any field of endeavor or matter of guidance will result in your ending up where God wants you in His direct will.

In other words, make the decision from the best available information.

Recognize the function of the Divine Decree in the presentation of opportunity, but sift opportunity through the filter of Divine Character.

Do not seek to make things happen because of your unhappiness with your life circumstances.

If things are bad and the opportunity arises to move on, then do so. If things are bad and Divine character demands that you move on, then by all means do so.

Do not let circumstances dictate your decisions. Difficult circumstances are a test of your willpower and faithfulness, but not necessarily messages from God. Christ ran into endless difficulty in the execution of His ministry, but He did not use them as an excuse to stop teaching the Word. This is one of the primary reasons that I am still in the ministry.

On the other hand, if circumstances are overwhelming they may prompt you to reconsider your present position through the lens of divine character. You may find violations which force you in another direction. The divine discipline of Paul illustrates this.

Sometimes even when you have all of your ducks in a row with a decision God still overrules. You can bet that He has a greater purpose in mind for you if He does. 1 Thess 2:18 is the perfect illustration.

The First Cleansing of the Temple

A distinction must be made between the two times that Christ cleansed the temple. Christ cleansed the temple at the beginning and end of His ministry. The second occurrence came during the last week of His life, and is recorded in Matt 21:12,13; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-48; John 2:13-25

Before Christ went to Jerusalem and the Temple, and after he changed the water into wine, He stayed a few days in Capernaum (John 2).

His mother and His brothers (according to the flesh), and His disciples were all there with Him.

Capernaum was the headquarters of Christ's Galilean ministry, and that ministry comprised the majority of His overall effort.

Matthew 9:1 calls Capernaum Christ's 'own city'.

Christ chose Capernaum because it was the most important city in the region. The Romans had a sizeable military contingent there, and there were many government officials about. It was an important trade center, and much commerce came there because of the fishing industry.

Here, Christ could teach the kingdom to Jews and Gentiles alike. He could have an impact that would be talked about throughout the region.

This points out that Christ had a plan for His ministry; that He was organized and wise in the spreading of the word; He imitates His father in this area of foresight and planning.

John 2:13, "And the passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up into Jerusalem"

Now, it does not indicate in this verse that His disciples were with Him, but verse 17 says that His action here prompted their recall of an Old Testament passage. That verse does not absolutely require the disciples' presence. One of three things: Christ went up alone, and His disciples joined Him at the temple; Christ went up alone, and His disciples heard about the cleansing after the fact; Christ went up with His disciples, but John failed to mention it here. The second option is the most probable.

We do not know if Christ had been to Jerusalem in the 15 or so years since His first passover. It is unlikely that He did, because He is not remembered or identified in any real way by the officials in the temple. When He does His deed, they ask Him for a sign. This reveals their ignorance.

The passover had to be a rather poignant time for Christ.

On His mind would rest the burden of the sins of the world, for He knew that He would have to pay for them in the not too distant future.

As He enters the temple, that grand representative structure of all that He is and will do, His mind is full of doctrine.

Through this structure, and the doings of the priests, the people are to come to know the Father through Him.

John 2:14, "And He found in the temple the ones who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the ones who were seated, the money changers."

The temple had become the very center of an extremely corrupt system. It was the ultimate monopoly, and the evil priests manipulated that monopoly into a moneymaking machine.

The Law prescribed that only sacrifices without spot or blemish were worthy for sacrifice in the temple.

The chief priests manipulated this by making sure that no one had a worthy animal. They sent their inspectors to school for months so that they could identify the defects of any given animal. Actually this just became an excuse for disqualifying the animals brought by the heads of households. They also came to charge the people for the inspection of their animals. This evil led many to just give up and buy the animals that the temple provided, without even trying to bring their own. This was wrong, wrong, wrong. The whole point of the sacrifice was that it would come from the family; that the man would know the animal personally; that he would see the cost of sin, and greatness of God's sacrifice in sending His own Son. The reason for all this rigmarole was so that the people would have to buy an animal from the temple. Of course the prices on these animals was greatly inflated, and the chiefs priests made a great profit from them.

Furthermore, the chief priests and officials made it so that the animals could only be bought with the official temple currency, and the exchange rates were quite exorbitant. Thus, the moneychangers.

With the clinking of coins and the mutter of exchange and the baahing of sheep and the cooing of pigeons and the mooing of cattle you could hardly hear yourself think in the house of worship. There was record of more than three thousand head of sheep in the temple at one time. What cacophony! What corruption!

So, Christ walks into His Father's house, the house designed for learning about His sacrifice, and He finds the worst kind of corruption. What follows is not an act of anger, but justice.

John 2:15, "And He made a scourge from ropes and He cast all of them out from the temple and the sheep and the oxen, and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers and He overturned the tables."

Physical wreckage is much preferred over spiritual corruption.

There were a bunch of moneychangers, and only one Christ, but they did not attempt to stop Him.

Was Christ an imposing figure, or were they so shocked by this action that they did not respond?

The scourge of ropes could have been a fearful weapon, when wielded by one with skill.

The tables used by money changers were really just small stools, behind which the clerk sat on the ground. They were laden with coins, but would not have taken any great strength to overturn. It is more likely that Christ kicked them over than turned them over by hand.

Christ had a human body unpolluted by the influence of the sin nature. He could have been an imposing figure indeed.

Christ had been a carpenter by trade. It is likely that He had great strength in His hands and arms, because the profession was even more rigorous then than it is now.

John rather humorously adds the driving out of the sheep and oxen; he makes a funny because you already expected them to be driven out. Christ drives out the wimpy bankers and moneychangers and inspectors, and even the oxen and sheep.

By pouring out the coins and overturning the tables, Christ made it impossible for them to determine whose money was whose. He effectively destroyed their profits.

John 2:16, "And to those who were selling doves, He said, 'Remove these things from here [in any direction], do not make the house of My Father a house of merchandise.'"

This is the final part of the cleansing phase.

The verb *airo* [*arate*] is in the aorist imperative. The aorist tells us that Christ intended for the command to be carried out immediately.

The first words of Christ in this incident contain a command. He has legitimate authority in this place.

Christ calls the temple 'the house of His Father'. This is the legitimizing factor.

Christ is the rightful heir to the throne of Israel.

Christ is the rightful chief priest of Israel.

Christ is the Son of God.

Therefore, what He does here is an expression of natural law.

The Greek word EXOUSIA summarizes natural law in the concept of legitimate authority. It includes in its definition both rights and legitimate authority. The question arises: did Christ have the right to exert authority in the temple? The answer is a very emphatic yes!

The word EMPORIOU is the source of our English emporium. It really does describe well a Wal-Mart kind of store. There was so much stuff in the temple it more resembled an emporium than a place of worship.

This principle applies directly to the church.

The church is to never become a business or a house of merchandise for the purpose of profit.

The policy for giving and distribution of the Word of God must always remain grace. The ancient temple was the center for the distribution of truth. The chief priests had put a price on the Word, and such a thing was evil. The same thing is true today.

The Word of God should never come with a price tag. Instead, through the grace giving of believers, a budget is set for the dissemination of the Word. The contributions received through grace giving are to be considered the direct will of God for the budget of that local assembly.

Attempts to augment the church budget through merchandising step outside of God's direct will, and illegitimize the ministry of the church that does so.

If the Jews there at the temple were flabbergasted by Christ's actions, then they were certainly just as flabbergasted at his words.

John 2:17, "His disciples remembered that it was utterly written, 'Zeal for Thy house will devour Me.'"

This quotation comes from Psalm 69:9. John cites it in order to remind his readers that Christ is the Messiah about whom the Old Testament prophesied.

Christ's supernatural fulfillment of more than three hundred Old Testament prophecies is one of the most stunning testimonies to the veracity of the Word of God.

The periphrastic construction of the verb EIMI with the participle GEGRAMMENON really

emphasizes the writing of the Word. 'It stands written' is not a bad translation; what should be stressed in the translation is the unchangeable nature of the Word, once written.

Psalm 69 itself is one which describes undeserved suffering.

In the first several verses David relates a desperate situation: he is up to his neck in water... he is sinking in a bottomless pit of quicksand, vv.23.

David takes some of the blame on himself and his sin against God, v.6.

However, since he confessed his sins whatever deserved suffering he had was immediately converted to undeserved.

Verse 10 makes it clear that David's zeal for the plan of God is the single most contributing factor for his undeserved suffering.

qin'ath is the Hebrew word for zeal, and it denotes emotional action. There are two kinds: crusader arrogance emotional revolt, and emotionally charged legitimate action. The zeal here is legitimate. It is governed completely by thought.

The phrase 'for my father's house' is a reference to the temple. The temple stood for the plan of God for Israel. It was a standing metaphor for Bible Truth and spiritual growth, and ultimately of relationship with God.

Here is undeserved suffering for blessing. Here is undeserved suffering for being a believer in Jesus Christ and fulfilling God's plan for your life.

The final part of the Psalm makes it very clear that the zeal is not the direct source of the suffering, but the people who do not like the zeal for God's plan, "And the insults of those who insult thee have fallen on me."

Christ acted with zeal, but it was good zeal. He is not acting in anger, but in love for God. Christ is not consumed by zeal itself, but the zeal causes others to pursue Him and hate him.

This event signals the beginning of organized resistance to Jesus Christ, and foreshadows His death and resurrection.

John 2:18, "The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, 'What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?'"

The Jews were no doubt flabbergasted by Christ's assumption of authority in the temple, and his reference to it as 'His Father's house'.

They desired of Him a sign, some outward miracle that would prove His position of authority.

This is fascinating, because it is not more than two weeks since the temptation of Jesus Christ, when the devil took Christ to the top of this same temple and tempted Him to jump down as a sign to these same men. Christ rejected the method proposed by Satan, but more than that, He knew that all the greatest signs in the world mean nothing to people who stand negative to the Truth.

Such were these men. They demanded a sign, because they assumed they would not receive one. They assumed that Christ's authority was not legitimate. This is the same leadership that went to John the Baptist just a few weeks before. They got a pretty good explanation from John at that time about the person of Christ, the Messiah.

Negative volition rejects God, regardless of how easy it is to believe.

Positive volition accepts God, regardless of the obstacles to belief.

John 2:19, "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'"

This is Jesus' supply of a sign. Of course, the Jews would have to wait three years for this sign. It is the resurrection sign, the greatest sign of all time.

Note that Christ concentrates on the greatest sign even though He will do many other things, such as miracles and healings.

Christ had ample reason to know of His resurrection. The correct interpretation of the story of Jonah and the big fish would render the information of His death and resurrection. Christ did not pull this idea out of thin air, He pulled it out of the Old Testament through the recall ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 12:38-40 gives the full explanation of this, "Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, 'Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.' But He answered and said to them, 'An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the

sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the Sea Monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.'"

This is a simple simile, and nothing else.

Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the Sea Monster;

Christ would descend to Sheol, under the abyss after His death and before His resurrection.

This prediction of a sign so scared the Jews that they insisted a guard be put on His tomb after His death. Matthew 27:62-66.

Notice that Christ implicates the Jews in His death. Already He is seeing the sign of their murderous negative volition.

But the Pharisees didn't get Christ's statement, not yet, except for one.

John 2:20, "The Jews therefore said, 'It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?'"

They did not get the point.

The temple had been building for forty six years to date. It would hardly be finished for another forty.

It is singular that the Pharisees who were there were stricken by the ludicrous nature of Christ's claim as they perceived it. Yet had they perceived it as Christ proclaimed it, they would have thought it much more so.

According to their perception, they would have to tear down the temple around them.

This was the temple of bribery. Herod, the half-breed Jew gave it to the Jews so that they would love him as ruler.

The Jews hated Herod, but took the bribe anyway.

The temple itself was a perfect symbol of Jewish hypocrisy, and yet they were quite blind to that hypocrisy.

They were not about to tear down Herod's temple, their pride was inextricably wound together with this building.

Christ gives the Jews an interesting test by remaining vague about to which temple He refers.

Christ has legitimate authority to order this temple of Herod's destroyed, but He does not do that.

John 2:21, "But He was speaking of the temple of His body."

Christ was deliberately vague, but He was definitely communicating about His body as this verse reveals.

Since Christ always communicated clearly, the Jews misunderstood Him from their own blind arrogance.

John 2:22, "When therefore He was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken."

An interesting point, but there were others who heard this and believed it.

Nicodemus certainly heard these words, and they were likely to have prompted his curiosity to come to Christ.

Nicodemus provided for Christ's burial along with Joseph of Arimathea.

Joseph of Arimathea was also among the Jewish rulers at this event, and heard this statement as well.

The passive voice of *egert* reveals that Christ did not raise Himself, but that He would be raised, specifically by the power of God the Holy Spirit. Rom 1:4.

When Christ says that He will raise the temple Himself in verse 19, He must be speaking from the Godhead. Christ did not raise Himself. He could say this in a Trinitarian sense. The Positive Response at the Passover

John 2:23, "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, beholding His signs which He was doing."

Remember, Christ came down to Jerusalem from Cana in order to participate in this Passover.

In this verse John reveals a positive response to Christ's ministry. Remember, John is likely an eyewitness to these events.

The positive response was belief. This belief is total trust in a person or institution for what they offer.

The belief was directed toward the name of Christ. Parents designed the names of their children so that they would reveal the essence of the child. Christ's name was Jesus, which meant salvation in the Hebrew. The essence of Christ was truly salvation. And He would die as a substitute for the sins of mankind, and satisfy the justice of God regarding the issue of human sin.

The positive response has a cause: they beheld the signs which He was doing.

Christ was performing miracles. Christ was healing the sick and lame.

John 2:24, "But Jesus Himself was not trusting Himself to them, because He knew all men."

This is truly a great verse, revealing God's wisdom incarnate in Jesus Christ.

Although man must believe in Christ, Christ does not have to believe in man.

God understands perfectly the nature of human degeneracy and the total depravity of man.

God never has to trust man, and in fact is wise not to trust him.

This applies to believers. We are never required to entrust ourselves to man unless it is legitimate authority.

We must be wise in choosing whom we will trust.

Do not take 'knowing all men' as the equivalent of omnipresence or omniscience. During the incarnation Christ voluntarily restricted the independent use of His Divine capabilities and the independent expression of Divine character. Instead, He knew all man because He knew the principles related to the nature of man. If you know these principles, then you truly know man.

John 2:25, "And because He did not have need for anyone to testify concerning man; for He Himself knew what was in man."

This reveals the background for verse 24.

The word for need is *chreian*. It comes from the 'grace' word group.

charis is the approach to problem solving. This is grace.

chrestos is the ability to solve problems within the parameters of the grace approach. This is proficiency.

chreian is the absolute necessity of doing things according to approach of grace and the ability of proficiency.

But this verse says that Christ did not have a need for anyone to testify concerning the nature of man that He knew Himself what was in man.

First how did Christ know this Himself? The only answer is that He had combined experience with the Word of God. He did not know the nature of sinful man from His divine nature.

Christ derived the principles of human nature from Scripture, and confirmed them through the observation of man in His life.

Second, the phrase 'what was in man' refers directly to the principles of human nature. The human soul, the human body, the old sin nature, the imputation of Adam's Original Sin, all of these things are 'what are in man.'

Since this verse concentrates on the negative in man, it is the combination of the sin nature and original sin that Christ used to conclude that He should not trust Himself to man.
