

John 1:36-51 and 2:1-11

In last week's lesson, we discovered a unique connection between Genesis and the Gospel of John.

Surprisingly, both books took us back to "**the beginning**" of creation.

Certainly that wasn't surprising in the case of Genesis, but what about John?

Why would the Holy Spirit begin the Gospel of John *in Genesis*, so to speak?

Well, that's because He wanted to draw our attention to the fact that Jesus Christ is God, the Creator of all things.

Yes, as a member of the Godhead, being co-equal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ is God in the flesh.

John 1:1 **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."**

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And then, in V6, we are introduced to John the Baptist, the herald of Israel's King.

Yes, his job was to introduce and identify Jesus Christ as their Messiah.

Also, and this is the part that affects us most directly, John identified Jesus as -- **"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."**

As we noted in last week's lesson, the Old Testament sacrifices could only cover sin.

You might say they were somewhat like a giant credit card with its debt unpaid and increasing daily, anticipating the

time when Jesus would **"put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."**

So on that day when John identified **"--- the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,"** he had unveiled the most wonderful news that mankind could possibly hear.

It was wonderful. It was absolutely necessary.

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As we finished last week's lesson, John and two of his disciples had just noticed Jesus walking by.

John 1:36-37 **"And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!**

37: And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus."

Yes, you're right. Jesus' first two disciples had formerly been John's disciples.

And as we have just seen, John literally sent them to Jesus with his blessing. No, there wasn't one scrap of jealousy in John's heart.

His whole aim in life was to step aside in order to promote Jesus' ministry.

As he said in John 3:29-30 -- **"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.**

30: He must increase, but I must decrease."

And that day, as he pointed out "-- **the Lamb of God!**" to his disciples, he was beginning the process of emptying himself for Christ.

Oh how the Church of Jesus Christ would grow if His followers had that kind of attitude!

Parents would willingly give up their children for missionary service, and bickering and jealousy would soon die away.

Yes, John is the grand example of self sacrifice, and one that even Jesus' disciples would take a long time to emulate.

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V 37-39 **"And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.**

38: Then Jesus turned, and saw them

following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

39: He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour."

No doubt they had been sitting under John's teaching for some time now, and I'm sure he would have taught them to be expectantly looking for their Messiah. And I'm also sure they would have heard John's announcement the previous day when he referred to Jesus as "--- **the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.**"

All that night they must have turned it over and over in their minds. So the next

day, when John identified Jesus once again as "-- **the Lamb of God,**" they were ready to go.

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Actually, only Andrew is named. However, we can probably assume that the other man was the Apostle John.

In this Gospel, John simply calls himself the other disciple, or doesn't identify himself at all.

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So they started following Jesus, but they didn't make themselves known.

Perhaps they weren't brave enough to introduce themselves, and were quite content to just keep Him in sight, hoping that He would notice them.

And, of course, Jesus, Who is always
conscious of our heart's desire, did
notice them --- **"What seek ye?"**

Their first word said it all.

They called Him **"Rabbi"** or teacher, and they
couldn't have chosen a better title.

Indeed, He was the greatest teacher they
could have encountered: --- **"In whom
are hid all the treasures of wisdom and
knowledge."**

And their first question was quite
significant also --- **"Where dwellest
thou?"**

No, they weren't looking for a few words by
the wayside; they wanted to make an
appointment with this Teacher.

They wanted to be taught on an ongoing
basis, and were more than willing to
make themselves available.

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How often, in our own busy schedules, we're satisfied with just a few words from Jesus.

How often we are encumbered by many things, when we could be sitting at Jesus' feet.

Even if you make an appointment with your doctor, you'll probably find yourself waiting in his waiting room.

On the other hand, if you're willing to spend time with the Creator of all things, you'll get the same reception that these two disciples did.

V 39 **"He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour."**

If John was using Roman time when he wrote this Gospel, then the disciples would have arrived at 10 a.m., and they stayed all day.

And I'm sure the time literally flew by. However, they didn't keep Jesus to themselves.

V40-41 **"One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.**

41: He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ."

So it all began when John the Baptist told Andrew and perhaps John, and then Andrew told Peter.

That's how the Gospel spreads, doesn't it?

And did you notice Andrew's words? --- **"We
have found the Messiah."**

How easily this simple fisherman identified his Messiah, while his so-called religious leaders would never get it right.

1 Peter 2:7-8 **"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,
8: And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."**

Yes, it was simply a case of willing ignorance.

They didn't want to get it right.

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V 42 **"And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona:---"**

Did you notice that Jesus didn't need an introduction? He already knew his name and even his father's name.

Certainly the Good Shepherd **"calleth his own sheep by name."**

And not only did He call him by name, He immediately changed his name --- **"thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone."**

I'm told by those who study this sort of thing that Simon's name means obedient.

And not only that, but his father's name means dove.

So here we have *obedient*, the son of a *dove*. Doesn't sound much like the Simon we know, does it?

No, "A stone" would be much more appropriate.

He would be Cephas, the rough stone that he was, and the polished stone that Jesus would make of him.

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V 43-44 **"The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.
44: Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter."**

One thing you will notice about Jesus' disciples is the fact that they came to their Master in several different ways. Andrew, and probably John, were directed to Jesus by their teacher.

And then Andrew brought his brother.

And certainly each one of us has those special connections to friends and

family that we are responsible to cultivate.

However, in Phillip's case, Jesus personally tracked him down.

Yes, Jesus went "--- **into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.**"

It was a simple case of the Good Shepherd seeking His sheep.

And then there was Paul, who had no thought of Christ at all, but was personally apprehended by a seeking Saviour.

Yes, God has many ways of bringing His children home.

However, we only have one way, and that's by obeying the great commission.

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It's interesting to note that Jesus changed Peter's name immediately, but he left Philip's alone.

I say it's interesting, because Philip, who was probably Jewish, had a rather common Greek name that wouldn't be a particular asset to someone following a Jewish Messiah.

But Jesus didn't change it.

V 44 **"Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter."**

No, he didn't have a very impressive name, and he didn't come from a very impressive town either.

Bethsaida means, the house of nets, which I suppose was quite appropriate since most of its inhabitants were fishermen.

No, it wasn't a centre for learning or commerce; it was just a fishing village.

And to be perfectly frank, it was a fishing village with very little spiritual insight.

Unlike these three disciples, the general inhabitants had no appreciation for Jesus at all.

We see that in Math. 11:20-21 **"Then began he (that is Jesus) to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: 21: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."**

However, in spite of all this, Jesus found three of His disciples, namely Andrew, Peter and Philip, in that little fishing village with no spiritual insight.

No, it doesn't really matter where you have come from. What's important is who you have *come to*.

If Jesus has chosen you, you're a child of the King.

Eph. 1:4 **"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:"**

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V 45 **"Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did**

write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

I'm sure that both Philip and Nathanael knew the scriptures, but, unfortunately, neither of them had their local facts right.

Jesus wasn't the son of Joseph, and He hadn't been born in Nazareth.

Now you couldn't really blame them for not knowing that. However, this lack of information sure made things more difficult.

The very moment Philip mentioned "**Jesus of Nazareth,**" Nathanael stopped him cold.

"Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" --- and, of course, he was right.

There wasn't one scrap of evidence in scripture that would support the notion

that their Messiah would be born in
Nazareth.

And they both knew that He was to be born in
Bethlehem, the birthplace of His
ancestral father David.

So Philip was faced with a dilemma.

He had met Jesus personally, and just *knew*
He was their Messiah, but he couldn't
prove it.

So he simply said "**Come and see.**"

V 47-48 "**Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him,
and saith of him, Behold an Israelite
indeed, in whom is no guile!**

**48: Nathanael saith unto him, Whence
knowest thou me? Jesus answered and
said unto him, Before that Philip
called thee, when thou wast under the
fig tree, I saw thee."**

--- **"Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"**

You will notice that Jesus made this comment **"of him,"** not to him, so no doubt He had spoken to the disciples while Nathanael was approaching.

However, Nathanael heard Him, and apparently he wasn't impressed.

At this point, he wasn't convinced that Jesus was their Messiah, so he probably put it down to so much flattery.

In fact, and in so many words, he responded, how would you know that? I'm a perfect stranger.

I think Jesus' answer nearly blew him away!

--- **"Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee."**

Perhaps that fig tree had been Phillip's
place of meditation, a quiet spot where
he could be all alone.

However, that day, there had been an
observer, and an observer that could
look right into his heart.

And when Jesus looked at Nathanael's heart,
He found **"an Israelite indeed, in whom
is no guile!"**

And now it would be a *believing* heart.

V 49 **"Nathanael answered and saith unto him,
Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou
art the King of Israel."**

And then Jesus said something that was
prophetic.

V 50-51 **"---- Because I said unto thee, I
saw thee under the fig tree, believest
thou? thou shalt see greater things
than these.**

51: And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Yes, there would be great days ahead for Nathanael as he witnessed Jesus' miracles, His power over death, and finally, His resurrection.

And there are great things ahead for us also, as we begin Chapter 2.

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John 2:1-2 **"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:**

2: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage."

On this festive occasion, Jesus was to perform His first recorded miracle, and

like all the others, it would meet a practical need.

However, and again like all the others, this miracle would be a sign that would confirm His person and ministry.

So with all that in mind, it is hard to imagine why Jesus would choose Cana of Galilee, an obscure corner of the country far removed from Jerusalem.

And, in fact, outside of the kitchen help, no one was immediately aware that anything unusual had happened.

Well, no one, that is, except the rather bewildered bridegroom who was getting all the credit.

However, I'm getting a little ahead of the story, so let's begin at the beginning.

V 1-2 **"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the**

mother of Jesus was there:

2: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage."

Probably this was a marriage of a close relative.

You will notice that the mother of Jesus **"was there,"** but it doesn't say she was **"called."**

And as we read on, it becomes quite apparent that she was probably there to supervise the kitchen staff.

On the other hand, Jesus and his five disciples were **"called,"** or, in other words, they were invited guests.

Certainly the bridegroom had called Jesus as an honoured guest. However, because of recent developments, etiquette required him to invite His five disciples also.

Consequently, his guests list was increased
by six rather than one.

And, as we all know, fishermen have a good
appetite.

Oh, I'm sure he was happy to do it.

However, his generosity might have
stretched his resources just a little
too far.

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Of all the places Jesus could have picked to
perform His first miracle, it's quite
significant that He chose a wedding.

However, did you ever consider the fact that
Jesus must have been at that first
wedding in Eden also?

And not only would He have been there, but
as part of the Godhead, it would have
been His own idea.

Yes, marriages are very important to Jesus.

They are a sacred institution, and the only one that pictures His mystical union with His church.

So be sure to invite Christ to your wedding, and even if it is too late for that now, you can still invite Him into your marriage.

You will find that He is the One Who can turn your water into wine.

V 3-4 **"And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.**

4: Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come."

You might have noticed that Joseph was not there.

I think this is a good indication that Mary was now a widow.

And being the eldest son, Jesus would have taken much of the responsibility that normally belonged to Joseph.

And even though Mary had other sons, it seems quite obvious that Jesus was her problem solver.

So it was the most natural thing in the world, when things started to go wrong in the kitchen, for her to go to Jesus.

However, Jesus' situation had changed, and although she had not accepted it yet, her situation had changed also.

Jesus had begun His public ministry, and from that point on, He would be getting His directions from His Heavenly Father, not His earthly mother.

Of course, Mary was still His own dear mother, but under these new circumstances, her petitions would

carry no more weight than any other believer's.

Yes, as far as His public ministry was concerned, she would not be directing His agenda.

That right belonged to His Heavily Father.

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"Woman, what have I to do with thee?"

To our thinking, these words seem a little harsh, but knowing Jesus, I'm sure they were not.

He was simply reminding her that He was under different orders.

And this little scene that we are observing flatly denies the Catholic Church's teaching that Mary has any special privileges.

Unfortunately, this humble believer has been called the queen of heaven, and she is

beseached to "Show that thou art his mother" to "Lay thy maternal commands on the Saviour."

Such teaching is nothing less than blasphemy.

Jesus, and only Jesus, is our Advocate with the Father, and Mary has never been our advocate with the Son.

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Getting back to the wedding.

Did you notice what Jesus' rationale was for not taking care of this situation immediately?

He said, "**Mine hour is not yet come.**"

So even though it was Mary's hour, and she thought He should do something, it was not God's hour, and consequently it was not Jesus' hour.

Actually, V3 says "**they wanted wine**", which
can be better translated, "the wine
began to fail."

No, it hadn't run out yet, it was just
getting very low.

And obviously, Jesus was waiting until it
was all gone.

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Many times God doesn't answer our prayers
when we think He should.

Many times He waits until all hope is gone.

So, just like Mary, we must learn to trust
Him, and stop trying to dictate to God.

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And you know as well as I do, if Jesus had
acted sooner, someone would have denied
the miracle altogether.

They would have said the kitchen help simply
watered it down to make it last.

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Well, Mary had learned her lesson.

She stopped trying to solve the problem, and simply said --- **"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."**

So now it was Jesus' responsibility.

V 6-8 **"And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.**

7: Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8: And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it."

There's an old hymn that goes like this ---

"Fill the water pots with water, fill them to the brim.

Do exactly what He tells you, leave the miracle to Him."

That's good advice, and it would make our lives so much simpler.

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V 6 says **"there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews."**

These large containers were absolutely necessary in an age when there was no indoor plumbing, and the Jewish customs of purification demanded a great deal of water.

However, that day, Jesus put them to a marvellous new use.

And you know what? He can put us to a marvellous new use also, that is, if we are *clean* vessels, and if we are emptied of self.

V 9-11 "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,

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.

11: This beginning of miracles did
Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and
manifested forth his glory; and his
disciples believed on him."

Do you know how much two or three firkins
is?

Apparently it's about six to eight gallons,
so that means each waterpot would hold
about 12 to 24 gallons.

So multiply that by six, and you have
something in the neighbourhood of 72 to
144 gallons of wine.

Now that's a lot of wine!

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In next week's lesson, we will be
considering the fact that this was not
wine in the sense that we think about
wine today.

It was a beverage to go along with their
food, and not a drink that would lead
to addiction or intoxication.

Jesus wouldn't have provided that kind of a
drink.

However, the point I would like to make today is that it was an abundant supply.

In fact, 72 to 144 gallons of wine is a lot more than they would have needed for the *entire* banquet.

And as you will remember, the guests had **"well drunk"** before it arrived.

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So I wonder what the bridegroom would do with all that wine?

Well, he couldn't store it in those six large jars. They were needed for his water supply.

So whether he sold it to defray his expenses for the wedding, or whether he gave it to someone else, it did have a definite material value.

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Perhaps he had overextended himself for the sake of Jesus and His five disciples, but he certainly wasn't the loser.

And even though our Lord has never promised us material riches for serving Him, He is no man's debtor.

Yes, we serve a God Who **"is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us ---"**

So just like those stone jars, why don't we just let His power work in us?