

John's Testimony and Jesus' First Sign in Galilee (John 1:19–2:12)

Dr. David Turner — Session 4

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Keywords

John the Baptist, Lamb of God, Cana, water into wine, first sign, disciples, purification, eschatology, Nazareth, Judean wilderness

Abstract

This instructional session by Dr. David Turner transitions from the poetic prologue of the Gospel of John into the unfolding historical narrative, focusing on John 1:19 to 2:12. Dr. Turner examines John the Baptist's testimony identifying Jesus as the Lamb of God and the subsequent calling of the first disciples, who are invited to "come and see." The teaching explores Jesus' first miracle at a wedding feast in Cana, where water is transformed into wine as a symbolic reveal of divine glory and prophetic blessing. Ultimately, the session demonstrates how these early signs function to manifest Jesus' identity and anchor the faith of his disciples.

Outline

I. Introduction to Session 4: John 1:19–2:12

- A. Transition from poetic prologue to sequential narrative
 - 1. Leaving the poetic prologue
 - 2. Beginning the sequential narrative
- B. Narrative methodology: interpreting "stories as stories"
 - 1. Avoiding immediate devotional extraction ("plaque-ifying")
 - 2. Analyzing narrative flow
 - 3. Analyzing structural arrangement
 - 4. Analyzing topical details

II. The Narrative Flow of John 1:19–2:12

- A. The Testimony of John the Baptist (John 1:19–34)
 - 1. Interrogation by Jerusalem authorities (priests and Levites)
 - a. Clarifying John's identity
 - b. Not the Messiah

- c. Not Elijah
- d. Not the Prophet
- e. John's self-identification as "the voice in the wilderness" (Isaiah 40)
- f. John's baptism with water contrasted with the coming Messiah

2. Direct testimony concerning Jesus

- a. Identifying Jesus as the "Lamb of God"
- b. The role of taking away the sin of the world (sacrificial context)
- c. Revealing Jesus as the baptizer with the Holy Spirit
- d. Witnessing the Holy Spirit descending like a dove
- e. Witnessing the Spirit remaining on Him

B. Calling of Jesus' First Disciples (John 1:35–51)

1. Andrew and Simon Peter

- a. Andrew's decision to follow Jesus
- b. Jesus' question: "What do you want?"
- c. The invitation to "come and see"
- d. Simon's calling to meet Jesus
- e. Renaming of Simon as Cephas (Peter)

2. Philip and Nathanael

- a. Philip's call by Jesus
- b. Philip's subsequent invitation to Nathanael
- c. Nathanael's initial skepticism ("Can anything good come from Nazareth?")
- d. Jesus' demonstration of divine insight under the fig tree
- e. The promise of greater visions of the Son of Man (Jacob's ladder, Genesis 28)

C. The Miracle and First Sign at Cana of Galilee (John 2:1–11)

1. The wedding feast at Cana

- a. The family and guest presence (Jesus, His mother, and disciples)
- b. The crisis of running out of wine

2. Cultural role of wine

- a. Wine as a daily subsistence drink
- b. Wine as a key theological symbol of joy and covenant blessing

3. The interaction between Jesus and His mother (Mary)

- a. Mary's request concerning the lack of wine
- b. Jesus' response regarding His "hour" of glorification
- c. Inconspicuous nature of the miracle to prevent premature reaction

4. The transformation of water into wine
 - a. Use of six stone purification jars
 - b. Choice of stone because it does not acquire ritual impurity
 - c. The servants' knowledge of the miracle's source
 - d. The master of the banquet's complete surprise at the superior wine
5. The significance of the sign
 - a. Revealing Jesus' divine glory
 - b. Anchoring and bringing the disciples to faith

III. Geographical and Archaeological Context

- A. Locations associated with John's ministry
 1. Wilderness regions near the Dead Sea
 2. Wilderness regions near the Yarmouk River
- B. Locations in Galilee
 1. Nazareth
 2. Bethsaida (hometown of Andrew, Peter, and Philip)
 3. Capernaum (northwest shore)
 - a. Archaeological ruins of St. Peter's house
 - b. Synagogue foundations
 4. Cana (village three miles northeast of Nazareth)
 - a. Site of the traditional "wedding church"
 - b. Large stone vessels discovered in archaeological digs

IV. Exegetical and Theological Synthesis

- A. The "Seven Days of New Creation" framework
 1. John's narrative structure reflecting a symbolic re-creation week
- B. Old Testament intertextual connections
 1. Creation light (Genesis 1)
 2. Moses seeking God's glory (Exodus 33)
 3. The Prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18)
 4. The suffering Lamb of God (Isaiah 53)
 5. The Jacob's ladder imagery (Genesis 28)
- C. Symbolism of Water and Wine
 1. Water linked to Jewish ritual purification (stone vessels)
 2. Water linked to spiritual cleansing (Ezekiel 36)

3. Wine representing God's eschatological, prophetic blessings
4. Wine associated with future restoration and abundance
5. The transition from ritual purification to messianic abundance

D. The Theology of Jesus' "Hour"

1. Jesus' hour as the primary target of the Gospel
2. The hour comprising the passion, cross, and resurrection
3. The distinction between general eschatological time and the specific hour of redemption