

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

All quotations are from the ESV.

### CHAPTER 1

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

The very first sentence of the Gospel of John begins in English as the book of Genesis does. Something existed “in the beginning”... something (or someone) that was present during the creation account of Genesis. Not only was this thing or being - here described as the Word - present during creation, it was present with God during creation. The only being or entity that could have existed during creation is God Himself; therefore, the logical conclusion must be made that “the Word was God.”

**1:2) *He was in the beginning with God.***

Given the context of this sentence, it is evident that “the Word” that was mentioned as being present with God (1:1), is assigned the male gender. Therefore a mystery exists - who is He? And how did this He manifest Himself?

**1:3) *All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.***

The one who was present with God, was God, and is personified as a He... everything was created through Him. The word “through” in Greek is a primary preposition, meaning that it is denoting the means by which an action was done. Through this personified being (who has yet to have been given a specific name), creation - the totality of it - was being made.

**1:4) *In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.***

The Word that existed in the beginning, the Word that was identified as being God and the one through whom all creation was made, life was in Him (for all things - living and nonliving - were made by Him). The life that he possessed and carried is equated to the light that belongs to mankind. Therefore, separate and apart from Him, there is no life, and only darkness.

**1:5) *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.***

The Word of God that is God that contains life... He is opposite of darkness. The light, if it is possessed by man, will cause its carrier to be set apart and distinct. And with the light, there is continual victory over darkness.

**1:6-8) There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through Him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.**

Following the description of “the Word” (v.1-5), a new description begins with a totally different character. This character was a man sent from God - a God sent prophet. The name of this man is John (not to be confused with the John who authored this book). John is described further as “a witness” - someone who bore a testimony about the light. Why did he bear witness about the light? He bore witness because believers had to be made. He had a message from God to deliver, and his mouth and speech had to be the vessel by which people were prepared for the mysterious Light that was to come. There exists in this passage a clear distinction between John and the Light. As will be seen later on in this gospel, there will be those who confuse John for “the Light” or Old Testament prophets. However effective John may have been, he was no more than a God sent witness concerning the Light that was about to come.

**1:9) The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.**

As already mentioned in the previous verse, John - a man sent from God - was not the true light. The one and only True Light gives light to all mankind, for it is the standard the light supplies by which we are called to live. The light was going to manifest itself before its own creation - the world and all its inhabitants.

**1:10) He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him.**

The True Light was dwelling among mankind; God came down to His own creation. Since He created all, He knew all. Everyone and everything was known by Him. However, this is in contrast to what the world thought of Him. The world did not know Him. Therefore, the world was without light - an ignorant world without knowledge of God manifesting Himself before mankind - thus it was a world full of darkness.

**1:11) He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him.**

The Light gave Himself to the world and dwelt with those He created and possessed authority over. Despite this, humans rejected Him. This verse, and the ones that precede it and immediately follow after are a summary of the life, ministry, and rejection of the True Light.

**1:12-13) But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.**

“But” implies a contrast with the passages that precede it. In verse 11, the author of the gospel describes the light as one who was not received. However, in verse 12, we see that there are those who “did receive Him,” and as a result, they received something in return - adoption into the family of God. There is no greater privilege than this, but it is only given to those who receive the light. This is a condition that applies even today. The one who receives the light must be one who is born of God. As will be seen later in the gospel, there is a pattern one must follow in order to be born of God (see John 3).

**1:14) And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

In previous verses, the author had continued to personify and illustrate “the Word.” This passage might be the most important one in the chapter because it ties together prophecy and proof of the divinity of the One who is being written about. The Word that was present during creation, the Word that is equated with God, had already manifested Himself in the Flesh (note how the verbs are past tense, thus John is reflecting about someone in the past who had already come). Not only that, but he dwelt among us humans. This makes “the Word” Immanuel which is “God with us” in Hebrew, therefore making this being the One who was prophesied about by the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14). The apostle Matthew also caught on to this (see Matthew 1:23). The Word was full of two different things: grace and truth. Immanuel would in His very essence be all grace, but He would also be all truth, meaning that the reconciliation of everyone would be dependent on Him and Him alone.

**1:15) (John bore witness about Him, and cried out, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because He was before me.’”)**

This verse is a parenthetical that adds some additional information about “the Word” who became flesh. We learn that John had already bore witness about Him to lay down a foundation that the Word could build His ministry upon. The Word, though being born after John (Luke 1:57; 2:8ff), actually in fact existed before John. John acknowledges that he must take a lesser place than the one to come.

**1:16) For from His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.**

This verse begins with the word “for” implying that it is carrying on the thought that preceded the parenthetical interjection in the previous verse. The Son sent from the Father, as mentioned

previously, was full of grace and truth. However, Christ's coming to redeem humanity was grace that we cannot measure, fathom, or fully comprehend - it is simply "grace upon grace." It is through Him (the Fullness)- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - that we have received this wonderful gift.

**1:17) For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**

Just as Moses, a Biblical figure from the Old Testament who was revered by the Jews, received the law from God on Mt. Sinai and delivered it to the Hebrew people, Jesus Christ delivered to the entirety of the human race a law, not based on legalism or heavy conditions that carried punishment if not met, but a law based on grace and righteousness. This is the Law of Christ.

**1:18) No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.**

There is an intense and extensive complexity to God and His very being. God has never been witnessed in His fullest glory, because human minds cannot bear the thought of infinite majesty. Moses, when he saw the back of God, even he did not witness God Himself (Exod. 33:20-33). John reiterates that God is one in His being, for He is the only God and there is none like Him. However, John then states that God sits at the Father's side. Is this some kind of blasphemy? Is it some kind of heresy? Absolutely not. John is merely describing the Son - God as a servant - and His relationship with the Father - God as an authority figure. The Son is about to be made known to the world because the Father is sending Him. The world will now see the submissive and servant like nature of God revealed through Jesus Christ.

**1:19) And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"**

The author of this gospel, John the Apostle, transitions from a summary of the incarnation of the Word to a deeper elaboration of the ministry of John the Baptist and Christ. The man sent from God (v. 6), John the Baptist, was the messenger blazing the trail for Christ. A Jewish delegation from Jerusalem, which was the seat of the Sanhedrin, heard of John's ministry in the wilderness (see Luke 3:3 ff.) The Jewish delegation, eager from the coming of the Messiah, asked John a simple yet complex question concerning his identity, for they thought by his message that he could be the Messiah.

**1:20) He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ."**

John the Baptist openly stated concerning his identity who he was not - he was not the one, true, prophesied Messiah that they were seeking after.

**1:21) And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” And he answered, “No.”**

Following John the Baptist's denial of he being the Christ, the priests and Levites question him further so that they can know by what authority does he teach and baptize. They first ask specifically if he is Elijah. It is worth noting that Malachi prophesied the coming of Elijah the Prophet in the last days (see Malachi 4:5-6) so the Jews were looking forward to the return of the great prophet. However, John denies to be the Elijah whom they are seeking. They then ask him if he is “the prophet.” It is of personal opinion that they are referring to Jeremiah, who was also prophesied as returning in 1 and 2 Maccabees. John denies being either one of these individuals.

**1:22) So they said to him, “Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”**

The priests and Levites again ask a question regarding John's identity. Because their earlier questions didn't result in any helpful answers, they try a different approach by asking the same question in an open-ended way, that way John is forced to state who he really is. Remember, the priests and Levites were commissioned to find out exactly who John was, therefore their questions are being asked in an urgent fashion.

**1:23) He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.”**

John does not want the attention to be put on himself, but rather the message that he preaches, this is why he calls himself a voice in the wilderness - a reference to Isaiah 40:3-4. Though he said he was the voice, they (the priests and Levites) are still not satisfied and press him further in the next two verses. In this passage, John demonstrates his meekness and humility by assuming the position of “trailblazer.” John knows that his mission was to prepare the world for the ministry of Christ. Do we, ourselves, have such humility?

**1:24) (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.)**

The author offers a parenthetical here and mentions the certain sect of the Jews from whom the priests and the Levites had been sent. The Pharisees were strict followers of the Law, so much so that they inserted their own traditions into doctrine thus making void their faith. Throughout Christ's ministry, the Pharisees ask Jesus questions concerning the Law and the Prophets to test Him.

**1:25) They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”**

The priests and Levites move from questioning John concerning his identity to testing him. They want to know by what authority John is baptizing (immersing) individuals in water. The Jews knew what baptism was even before Christ came with a superior baptism. Tradition states that baptism, prior to the time of John the Baptist and Christ, was used as a cleansing ritual by the Jews to introduce Gentiles into the religion. What is peculiar about this baptism is that John wasn't baptizing Gentiles, he was baptizing Jews. John was introducing something entirely new before the priests' and Levites' eyes, a baptism that was paving the way for the coming of the Messiah! In addition to all of this, baptism was an act that introduced one into a new relationship. The Jews had long thought that it would be Elijah or the Messiah that would have the privilege of initiating this new relationship, and the fact that John was neither of these would have been frustrating to the Jews. Nonetheless, John states that his baptism is merely a precursor to the superior baptism that is to come.

**1:26-28) John answered them, “I baptize you with water; but among you stands one you do not know, even He who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.” These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.**

God's own people could not recognize the Messiah even though he came in the midst of his own people. John, here, is referencing Jesus Christ, and the coming ministry and Kingship of the Messiah. John in his humility acknowledges that he is not worthy to even be a servant of the One who is coming after him.

**1:29-30) The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’**

As John is baptizing in the Jordan River (Matt. 3:13), Jesus comes to him wanting to be baptized. As Jesus is walking toward him, John declares to those who are near him that Jesus is the One he was prophesying about. Jesus is identified as being the Lamb of God. The Jews used various animals for sacrifices, but lambs and goats were often the animals of choice. In Exodus 12, it was a slaughtered lamb that would protect a household from death during the Passover. The blood of the lamb covered one from death and washed away the sins of an individual(s). John again reiterates the fact that this is the One who is greater than he. Though John was born before the incarnate Jesus, Jesus was before creation and time, for He was in the beginning.

**1:31) I myself did not know Him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.”**

Though John and Jesus are related (see the gospel of Luke), he did not know the true identity of Jesus as the Messiah. John was getting the world ready for the coming of the Messiah, yet even he did not know who the Messiah was going to be. This is because the Messiah was going to reveal Himself to ALL Israel, John included, at one time.

**1:32-34) And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and have bore witness that this is the Son of God.”**

John, stating what he just witnessed after baptizing Jesus, notes that the Spirit descended “from heaven like a dove.” Why did the Spirit appear as a dove? Guy N. Woods in his commentary on the gospel of John notes, “This bird, in oriental lands, was regarded as sacred and its presence suggested gentleness, kindness, innocence, and peace.” All of these qualities are evident in Jesus throughout His ministry. It shows that Jesus and the Spirit were one. There is also something peculiar about the baptism by which Jesus baptizes - it is with the Holy Spirit. It is because of the ministry of Christ that the Holy Spirit came to the apostles, giving them instruction and guiding their ministries. When one is baptized into Jesus Christ, as will be discussed later, the Holy Spirit becomes our helper (in ways that will also be discussed later).

**1:35-36) The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as He walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”**

When John the author narrates “the next day,” he is not referencing an actual twenty-four hour period of time that has elapsed. Rather, he is just denoting that these events have taken place after Jesus’s baptism. Following the baptism of Christ, and following Christ going into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, John stands with two of his disciples to point out the Lamb of God. He must have said it with absolute awe, for it is not the first time that he has stated this! John is absolutely amazed that he gets to see and witness the Lamb of God in person.

**1:37) The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.**

The two disciples, one of whom is named in the next few passages, hear John say concerning Jesus that He is the “Lamb of God.” That is all it took for these two men to leave John and join Jesus. They did not even need to hear the words of Christ in order to follow Him. The ministry of John matured these men to the point that they absolutely knew, with no doubt in their minds, that the individual they were now following was in fact the Lamb of God.

**1:38) Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (Which means Teacher), “where are you staying?”**

Jesus, being an all-knowing God-Man, did not need to ask them a question to gain an answer for Himself. Anytime Jesus asks a question, it is always meant for the person to whom the question is asked. Jesus knows what and who they are seeking. By asking this question, the two men are forced to acknowledge and confirm the identity of the One they are following. They know Jesus to be a knowledgeable man with wisdom to share, and that is why they call Him “Rabbi.” John the author adds a parenthetical here to elaborate in Greek the meaning of this Hebrew word. According to Britannica, a Rabbi is “a person qualified by academic studies of the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud to act as spiritual leader and religious leader of a Jewish community or congregation.” Jesus was likely not an educated man in the sense that he was never trained or held an apprenticeship under another Rabbi. Jesus’ “rabbiship” came directly from His divine knowledge. The two men, wanting to be taught by the Teacher, ask Jesus where he is staying.

**1:39) He said to them, “Come and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.**

“Come and you will see.” It is of personal opinion that this statement carries with it a double meaning. Jesus speaks both literally and figuratively here. He takes these men to where he was staying in the region. But in a figurative sense, once Jesus’s ministry on Earth was accomplished, then His followers would come to understand that His true abode was Heaven all along. Every single one of Jesus’s disciples, if they continue to follow Jesus all their life, will be able to see where Jesus dwells. The disciples followed Christ and spent the day with Him. Some translations translate “the tenth hour” as “four in the afternoon.” Imagine all that these two disciples learned from their Rabbi, and in addition, imagine how close they were able to get to God Incarnate. This was the beginning of a very close relationship between Jesus and these two disciples.

**1:40) One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.**

One of John’s disciples that is not a disciple of Christ is identified as Andrew. The other disciple is not explicitly named in this gospel, but some believe it to be John the author. I do not believe that the other individual is John, because in Matthew’s and Mark’s gospels, John followed after Jesus along with his brother James. Who the other individual is, I do not think anyone can be certain. Andrew is the brother of Simon Peter, probably the most infamous of all the soon-to-be apostles.

**1:41-42) He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).**

Andrew is the first to explicitly confess that Jesus was the Messiah. Andrew, naturally, couldn't help but tell his own brother, Simon, about the Messiah. John the author then explains in his gospel what the word Messiah means for his Greek audiences. In Greek, Christos means "anointed one." An anointing was used to appoint a king or a high priest. This Anointed One was prophesied about by Jewish prophets centuries prior to His coming, and many did not understand what the true mission of the Messiah was. For centuries, Jewish leaders taught and misled the people by stating that the Messiah would restore glory to the nation of Israel on this Earth. And although the Messiah in a sense would revive the nation of Israel (see Galatians 6:16), the revival would be a spiritual as opposed to a physical one. Simon was brought to Jesus, and all it took was Jesus looking at him to tell what kind of man he would be. Simon is told by Jesus that he would be called Cephas (in Greek, it is Peter), which means "rock" or "stone." Peter had a solid faith and stubbornness to him that made him stand out among the apostles. I believe it to be one of the reasons why Jesus often "picks on" Peter throughout His ministry.

**1:43-44) The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.**

Following Jesus's commissioning of these four apostles, Jesus traveled to the region of Galilee. Some of Jesus's most influential work and teachings came from His ministry in Galilee. His own hometown was in the region, and the homes of many of the apostles were also from this region. Jesus found Philip of Bethsaida and commanded Philip to follow after Him. The Greek phrase John uses here for the quotation is "Akolouthei moi." The Greek word Akolouthei meaning "follow or reach" can also be rendered "to be in the same way with" or "to accompany" (Strong's 190). In order for one to follow after Jesus, one must be in one accord with Jesus Christ. Philip's ministry as an Apostle does not get a whole lot of attention in comparison with some of the Apostles, but one can definitely see that his teachings on conversion (see Acts 8:26ff) must have been in alignment with the teachings of Christ on conversion. Interestingly, Philip is from the region of Bethsaida. It is likely that Andrew, Peter, and Philip were all familiar with one another since they were all from the same fishing community, for Bethsaida was a community that was built around the fishing enterprise.

**1:45) Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”**

It did not take long at all for Philip to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Philip goes to Nathanael (presumably a relative or a friend) and tells him of this good news of the Messiah's coming.

Philip cites the Law and the prophets as evidence of Jesus being the Messiah. The Tanakh is what is being referred to when he states “the Law and the prophets.” The Tanakh is a collection of twenty-six books that partly make up the Old Testament. Therefore, the Old Testament is an early and reliable witness to the Messiah, contrary to what Jews at that time and today may think. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which was prophesied in the Tanakh; He was born of a virgin, which again was prophesied in the Tanakh; and He came to establish a new covenant, which was also prophesied in the Tanakh. He is the Earthly son of Joseph, a carpenter; but most importantly, He is the Son of God.

**1:46) Nathaniel said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”**

Nazareth was an insignificant town. It did not have any commercial, religious, or historical significance. Such a great individual like the Messiah was not expected from such a small town. Bethlehem was the place where the Messiah was to come, and He did. However, after Herod’s massacre of the innocents... Joseph, Mary, and the infant Messiah were forced to relocate to Egypt and then to Nazareth where He was raised. Nathanael doubted that a person like Jesus could come from such a place. However, Philip essentially states “see for yourself.”

**1:47-48) Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” Nathanael said to Him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”**

Nathanael honors Philip’s request and goes to see Jesus, despite his hesitation to admit that anything good could come out of Nazareth. Jesus, having not even met Nathanael, is able to identify 1) Nathanael’s Israelite heritage and 2) the pure motives of Nathanael. According to Baker’s commentary on John, Nathanael was “one who possesses the spirit, the piety, and the integrity which become a man who is really a Jew, who fears God and obeys his law... He is really what he professes to be - a Jew, a descendant of the patriarch Jacob, fearing and serving God.” (Baker 188). A true Jew was also one whose bloodline remained pure from the descension of Jacob until the incarnate coming of Christ. The only one who would have known his own bloodline in its entirety would have been Nathanael and his family. However, Jesus knew of the pure bloodline of Nathanael. Nathanael was also one without deceit. Not to be confused with him being morally perfect, Jesus is referring to the righteous motive of Nathanael. Nathanael does not purposefully sin against the Law. Nathanael wants to know how Jesus knows of him, because this obviously caught him off-guard. Jesus demonstrates his omniscience (all-knowingness) by describing the whereabouts of Nathanael prior to Nathanael coming to meet Him.

**1:49) Nathanael answered Him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”**

Once Nathanael understood that Jesus was an omniscient being, he came to believe that Jesus was of God. Nathanael gives three descriptions of Jesus - He is the Rabbi (or Teacher as John explained earlier), He is the Son of God (more on this later), and He is the King of Israel. This is a confession that acknowledges that Jesus was more than just a man, He was one with Divine authority.

*1:50-51) Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” And He said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”*

It is only logical that a human being would seek evidence before coming to a conclusion. Jesus is not condemning Nathanael, rather He is stating that greater things will be accomplished, and that there will be signs that could only compliment the faith of Nathanael. Jesus then gives a figurative statement regarding the opening of heaven and coming of angels upon the Son of Man. This will be accomplished by Jesus when He goes to the cross, becoming a bridge between Earth and Heaven. The description of Christ as the Son of Man is a humble one. Not only is Jesus sent from God, He is sent in the form of human flesh for the purpose of servitude. Jesus is the Priestly Servant King.

## CHAPTER 2

**2:1-2) On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with His disciples.**

Unlike Luke's account of the life of Christ, John's gospel is not in any particular order. This third day is not referencing a literal third day between Jesus's baptism and the wedding, rather it is referencing a period of time that has elapsed after the baptism, calling of the disciples, sign before Nathanael, and the wedding. Jesus went to a wedding in Galilee and Mary, the mother of Christ, was present there. She was likely someone of importance to the persons that were being married, since it seems that she was put in charge of their servants. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding, indicating that Jesus was also likely close to the newly wedded parties.

**2:3-5) When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you."**

A lengthy discussion could be had here about the misuse of this passage to support social-drinking, but I will refrain in my commentary on this verse. Did Mary come to Jesus and tell Him of the situation just to state the fact, or did she come to Jesus expecting Him to do something about it? It is of personal opinion and speculation that Mary had seen or witnessed Jesus's power earlier on. Though this was the beginning of His signs in Cana of Galilee, who isn't to say that Jesus did super-natural works prior to reaching Cana? Mary recognized the authority that Jesus had. As servants of the Lord who believe in all that Jesus did and taught, will we "do whatever He tells us?"

**2:6) Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification each holding twenty or thirty gallons.**

Physical and moral purity. The Jews placed a lot of focus on the physical aspect of purity. The *Netilat Yadayim* was the Jewish ritual of washing hands before a meal. Although these rules for washings were not written down until the completion of the Babylonian Talmud (around 500 AD), there was an oral code regarding this physical washing. Even today, there are practicing Jews who view as obligatory a ritual washing before and after eating a meal. Since this was a wedding, large jars of water were placed there so that the attendees could wash after each meal (it should be noted that Jewish weddings last for days, and therefore many different courses would have been prepared). In Greek, John states that each jar contained two to three measures. A measure, being about 10 gallons, would mean that twenty or thirty gallons (as the ESV

translates) of water would have been in each jar. Therefore, at the wedding, they had anywhere from 120 to 180 gallons of water.

**2:7-8) Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” So they took it.**

Jesus instructed the servants (who were told by Mary to obey what Jesus tells them) to fill up each of the 20 to 30 gallon jars. These jars would have certainly taken some time to fill up, especially since water pumps and modern water technology were not available at that time. After filling up the jars to the brim, as Jesus had commanded them, they took the jars to the master of the feast. During this time in the Jewish community, the master of the feast was one who would ensure that things were running smoothly at the wedding and that the quality of the food and drink was satisfactory. In regards to wine, the master of the feast would taste it to ensure that it had low alcohol content and great taste. If the wine had both of these things, it was considered “good wine.”

**2:9-10) When 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 and 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.”**

The master of the feast tasted the wine. The wine (which in Greek is *Oinos*) likely had small amounts of alcohol in it for preservation purposes. The wine would have not been a highly intoxicating drink. It was common, as it is still to this day, for attendees of the wedding to drink until they’re drunk. The good wine, though low on alcohol content, could have caused drunkenness in large quantities. Individuals would drink the wine freely until their senses were dulled, and then they would drink the “poor wine” or a drink with higher alcohol content. This was not the case at this wedding. When the master of the feast makes this statement concerning the custom of the day, he is stating his shock and awe that such good wine could have been made at this point in the wedding. Jesus did something that was unheard of in the day by breaking several laws of science - **He turned something that was once tasteless, to something that was sweet. To apply this spiritually, when one has been baptized into Christ Jesus, they are turned from nasty, disgusting, muddy water into brand new wine.** Those in Christ are made into a new creature.

**2:11-12) This, the first of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory. And His disciples believed in Him. After this He went down to Capernaum, with His mother and His brothers and His disciples, and they stayed there for a few days.**

Some translations render this passage a little bit differently at the beginning. It is of personal opinion and speculation that this was not the first miracle or sign Jesus did in His entire life, however, I do believe that it is the first one that He did in His ministry. Mary understood the power of Jesus (see John 2:5) and it is very possible that He performed a sign earlier on in a different region. In addition to this, John even mentions at the end of his account “Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.” (John 21:25) This sign truly showed that Jesus was part of the Glorious Godhead. By performing this miracle, Jesus demonstrated His ability to control and alter the physical and chemical elements of water and wine. This sign also gave His disciples faith that He truly was the Messiah that they were seeking. If anyone was going to rescue and redeem the Jews, it was going to be this Man. Jesus and those with Him then traveled to Capernaum where His ministry would continue. Although Capernaum is more North than Cana, they had to travel down to a lower elevation. Skeptics use this verse to prove the inaccuracy of the Scriptures, but it just proves itself to be true.

**2:13) *The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.***

The Passover was a major holiday and feast practiced by the early Hebrews. Of the three major feasts, most are probably more familiar or have knowledge of the Passover in comparison with the Feast of Booths and Pentecost. Jerusalem, the city at the center of the Palestinian world and the Jewish faith was the location of the Passover festival. People would flock there to take part in the ceremonies at the Temple. The Passover would take place on the fourteenth day of the month of Nisan, the first month of the Jewish calendar (overlaps March and April on the Gregorian calendar). The purpose of the Passover was for the Jews to remember the days before the Exodus, when God sent the Angel of Death to kill the firstborn of those who did not cover their doorpost with blood, but God spared the Hebrews because they had covered their doorposts with the blood of lambs as the Lord had instructed. Today, Christians can celebrate a different Passover every first day of the week - when we take the Lord’s Supper, we remember and celebrate the blood of the lamb (Jesus Christ) that covers and wipes away our sins.

**2:14) *In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there.***

The Temple was at the center of the Hebrew faith. Following the Tabernacle, the Jewish community had built two Temples to God. The First Temple was constructed by Solomon and was completed in 957 BC. The First Temple was later destroyed by the Babylonians who had overtaken Jerusalem in 586 BC. The Temple that Jesus was in the midst of was the Second Temple. The Second Temple was completed in 516 BC following the return of Jewish exiles from Babylon. The Second Temple was inferior to the First Temple in many respects as it was not as majestic and beautiful as the first. Jesus goes into the Temple and He sees merchants

selling animals in the common area to be offered as sacrifices for the Passover. There was nothing inherently wrong with this practice as it made it convenient (and expedient) for travelers from afar to offer a sacrifice without having to take an animal on the journey with them. However, to do it in the Father's House and to do it with the motive of making a profit enraged Jesus. Money-changers, who were also present in the Temple on Passover, would alter exchange rates and collect high interest, making a profit from stealing the money of sojourners. As will be seen in the following verses, this enraged the Son of God.

**2:15-16) *And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, “Take these things away; do not make my Father’s house a house of trade”***

From where and from what did Jesus come up with a whip? Guy Woods, in his commentary, suggests that Jesus perhaps got pieces of rope used to lead (or maybe even restrain) animals into the Temple. Regardless of how he got the whip, he used it to drive those selling animals and exchanging currencies out of the Temple. Why was Jesus angry at these individuals? He was angry because he was zealous for God's House. Jesus said, "do not make my Father's house a house of trade." His motive for driving the merchants out was to ensure no one made a business out of serving God. If you have ever been to a movie theater, then you'd likely know that the beverages and pop-corn that are sold there are way overpriced. They do this knowing that people will pay more money rather than deal with the inconvenience of sneaking in food or beverages from their own home. Likewise, the merchants at the Temple were taking advantage of sojourners and marking up prices of animals as well as corrupting the currency exchanges. God's house was no place for such business to be taking place. His house is not a house of trade, it is a house of worship.

**2:17) *His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”***

The disciples remember what is written in Psalm 69:9. I find it interesting that the disciples, though they did not have personal copies of the Torah or the Tanakh, recall this passage. This just goes to show the power of singing in worship and teaching. Through the singing of Psalms in Synagogue worship, the disciples were able to recall a message. Singing can indeed teach. In Psalm 69, a psalm written by David, David pleaded with God to save him from those who hate him. In verse 9, however, David recalls that hatred of him stems from a hatred of the Lord. "For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me." Jesus Christ was zealous for the House of God. He was zealous because those who were working in the Temple did not have a true love for God, rather they demonstrated reproach by dishonoring Him at the Temple.

**2:18-22) So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you will raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.**

After Jesus drives out the money changers and those that have defiled the temple through selfish commerce, the Jews ask for an explanation as to why He did so. Jesus answers them with a response that would have caught anyone (especially a dedicated Jew) off guard - “I can raise this temple in its destroyed state in three days.” The Jews, understandingly so, misinterpret what Jesus is saying as they believe He is talking about the Jewish Temple. However, John gives the correct interpretation of what Jesus meant by saying this by stating this was something to be fulfilled during the Resurrection of Christ - Jesus’ dead body (the Temple) would rise from the tomb (the Temple raised up). It wasn’t until after the Resurrection that the Apostles and disciples understood what Jesus was saying.

**2:23-25) Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.**

Belief in devotion... God demands that we have both. Those that had believed in Jesus during this time did so because they had seen the signs that Jesus had performed (you can’t fault them, as this was one of the primary reasons Jesus performed such signs; cf. John 20:30-31). They had a credible belief based on the evidence they had seen for themselves, however, something kept Jesus from entrusting Himself to them. It is of personal opinion that Jesus did not entrust Himself to them because He knew what was within their minds and hearts - an attitude of Commercial Devotion. The people, just as the Israelites had done all throughout their history, had only followed after Him because of what He could do for them, not what they could do for Him