

GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN

02



CHRYSOSTOM

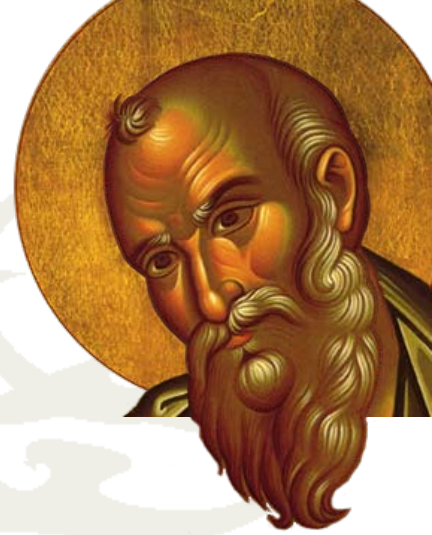
Read St. John Chrysostom's homilies on John chapter 2.



PRACTICE QUIZ

Take a quiz to test your knowledge of John chapter 2.

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Chapter two describes Christ's first miracle: turning water into wine at a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. Jesus, His mother, and His disciples attended a wedding where the host ran out of wine (which, in first-century Judea, would have been a serious insult to the guests) (2:3). When the Theotokos pointed out the problem to Jesus, He responded that

this had nothing to do with Him (or, by implication, her) because His hour had not come (meaning, Blessed Theophylact paraphrases, "It is not yet the right time for me to act") (2:4). At the same time, Christ honored His mother's request—showing, St. Romanos the Melodist says, that Christ is not subject to time—and turned the water in six waterpots (or stone storage containers) into fine wine (2:6-7, 10).

The Church Fathers teach that this miracle is directly related to the Holy Eucharist. St. Cyril of Jerusalem asks, "(Jesus) once changed water into wine by a word of command at

Cana of Galilee. Should we not believe Him when He changes wine into blood?" St. Romanos the Melodist adds, "Now we all partake at the banquet in the Church, for Christ's blood is changed into wine, and we drink it with holy joy."

Blessed Theophylact further says this miracle represents how Christ heals our sins and failings and corrects our wrong religious beliefs: "The six waterpots are brimming with this good drink—our senses have been healed so that we no longer sin in our actions; our reason has been healed so that we cease to err in our dogmas."

St. John follows this miracle with the account of Christ cleansing the Temple (the other Gospel writers put this event at the end of Christ's ministry). Seeing how some people were using the worship of God to make a profit, He drove out the sacrificial animals they were selling and proclaims, "Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise" (2:16). When He was challenged by the religious leaders regarding His right to engage in such an action He responded, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (2:19)—St. John explains that this is a prophecy concerning Christ's rising from the dead (2:21-22).

Pay special attention to Christ's words: "In three days I will raise it up." In these words Christ tells us that He would raise Himself from the dead, rather than being raised by someone else. This is important, St. Hilary tells us, because "by the power to take His soul again and to raise the temple up, He declares Himself God and the Resurrection His own work." This fact is directly related

to our eternal hope, St. Ambrose of Milan adds, because in this verse "He, therefore, Who has achieved the work of our resurrection, is plainly pointed out to be truly God."

You might wonder why, if people believed in Jesus, He did not entrust Himself to them (2:23-24). Blessed Augustine answers, "Because they were not yet born again of water and the Spirit."



LIFE TIP

Venerable Bede links the cleansing of the Temple to our personal behavior: "What, my beloved, do you suppose our Lord would do if He should discover people involved in disputes, wasting time gossiping, indulging in unseemly laughter, or engaged in any other sort of wickedness? Remember: when He saw traders in the Temple buying the sacrificial offerings meant to be made to Him, He was prompt in getting rid of them."