



21. John 1:19–4:54

"Wedding at Cana" from *The Life of Christ* by Carl Heinrich Bloch (1834-90)

The Book of Signs: From Cana to Cana

Signs and Discourses Pointing to the Nature and Mission of the Savior

Signs in John

- Preferred Johannine term: *sēmeia* or "signs"
 - John was very selective in the miracles or signs that he recorded, although he knew of many (20:30-31, 21:25)
 - *These were selected for what they told about Jesus*
- Seven Important "Signs"
 - **1 - Water into Wine (2:1–11)**
 - **2 - Healing of Nobleman's Son (4:46–54)**
 - 3 - Healing of the Lame Man at the Pool of Bethesda (5:1–18)
 - 4 - Feeding of the 5,000 (6:1–15)
 - 5 - Walking on Water (6:16–21)
 - 6 - Healing of the Man Born Blind (9:1–41)
 - 7 - Raising of Lazarus (11:1–57)
 - *The greatest sign, the resurrection of Jesus!*

Book of Signs (1:19–12:50)

- **Initial Days of the Divine Revelation (1:19–2:11, lecture 21)**
 - *Jesus the Lamb of God*
- **First to Second Cana Miracle (2:1–4:54, Overlaps with Initial Days, lecture 21)**
- Jewish Feasts and Their Replacements by Christ (5:1–10:42, lectures 22–23a)
- Raising of Lazarus and its Aftermath (11:1–54, lecture 23b)
- **Conclusion to the Book of Signs (11:55–12:50)**
 - *Jesus Prepared for Passover*

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The Light and the Witness(es)

Initial Days of the Divine Revelation (1:19–2:11)

- John the Baptist as a **witness of the Light**
 - The two prose “asides” in the *Logos* hymn (1:6–8 and 15) introduce John as a prime witness of the word
 - “And I, John, bear record that I beheld his glory, as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, even the Spirit of truth, which came and dwelt in the flesh, and dwelt among us.” (D&C 93:11)
 - John the Baptist or John the Beloved sharing a testimony that he heard from or which started with his earlier mentor?
- John’s ministry
 - **Contrast with the “repent and be baptized” of the Synoptics**
 - concerning his own mission (1:19–28)
 - concerning Jesus (1:29–34)
 - Jesus’ baptism is downplayed in John
 - “And I, John, bear record, and lo, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and sat upon him, and there came a voice out of heaven saying: This is my beloved Son.” (D&C 93:15)
 - Most likely John the Baptist, although possibly John the Beloved was present when this occurred

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Early Disciples Called

Initial Days of the Divine Revelation (1:19–2:11)

- **John the Baptist's Disciples Come to Jesus (1:35–51)**
 - Andrew and “another” (1:35–40)
 - Significance of John the Beloved's earlier role as a disciple of John the Baptist
 - John the Baptist was a relative (first cousin once removed?) of Jesus
 - John the son of Zebedee's mother was probably Salome (Matt 27:56), perhaps the sister of Mary—cousin of Jesus?
- **Simon Peter (1:41–42)**
 - Andrew's brother
 - Meaning of *Cephas* (*Petros*, “Rock”) as a seer: see John 1:42 JST
- **Philip and Nathanael (1:43–51)**
 - *Christ's supernatural knowledge of Nathanael, in Israelite “in whom there is not guile” (1:47)*
 - Nathanael may well have been reading of the story of “Jacob's Ladder” in Genesis 28:10–19
 - Jacob/Israel certainly could be characterized by guile (trickery)!

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First to Second Cana Miracle

(2:1–4:54, overlaps with initial days)

- **First Sign: Water to Wine at the Wedding at Cana** (miracle story, 2:1–11)
- Jesus Goes to Capernaum (narrative transition report, 2:12)
- Jesus at the First Passover (2:13–25)
- **Discourse on the New Birth: Dialogue** with Nicodemus (3:1–21)
- The Baptist's Final Witness (discourse, 3:22–36)
- Jesus Leaves Judea (narrative transition report, 4:1–3)
- **Discourse on the Water of Life: Dialogue** with the Samaritan Woman at the Well (4:4–42)
- Jesus Returns to Galilee (narrative transition report, 4:43–45)
- **Second Sign: Healing the Nobleman's Son in Cana** (miracle story, 4:46–54)

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The Wedding at Cana

- John 2:1–5, “And the third day *there was a marriage in Cana* of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, *the mother of Jesus* saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, *Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.* His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.”
- **Symbolism of the wedding feast**
 - Why was Jesus called?
 - While not clearly Jesus’ wedding (John or Nathaniel makes more sense), there is the sense of **the beginning of the union of Jesus and his people**
- **Significance of Mary’s presence**
 - “Mother of Jesus” here and in ch. 19



The Wedding in Cana (c. 1303-1305) - fresco by Giotto

- **“Woman”** (or *gyne*) address
 - Polite (cf., “lady”) but unusual for a mother
 - JST John 2:4, “Woman, what wilt thou have me to do for thee?”
 - **Gen. 3:15, Rev. 12**
- “the hour” of His glory or passion

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The Water Made Wine

(miracle story, 2:1–11)

- John 2:6–9, “And there were set there six waterpots of stone . . . Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, *Draw out now*, and bear unto the governor of the feast . . . When the ruler of the feast had tasted *the water that was made wine* . . .”
- Typical interpretations
 - Power of Christ over the elements
 - Theme of Abundance (up to 120 or 150 gallons)
 - Wine “eased sorrows, brought joy” > “. . . that they might have life more abundantly” (John 10:10)
 - Sacramental imagery
 - A “new” beginning; cf. old wine, new bottles
- “Draw out,” usually used with wells, points to ch. 4
- **Representative of the Incarnation?**
 - **Water = immortality/divinity, wine/blood = mortality**
 - 6 (number of incompleteness) here; does the Atonement make 7 (complete, perfect)?
 - **Presence of the “woman”** (Eve at fall, Mary at Nativity)
- John 2:11, “This beginning of *miracles* (*semeia*) did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.”

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John's Symbolism: A Spear Pierced His Side . . .



"Doubting Thomas" from
The Life of Christ by Carl
Heinrich Bloch (1834-90)

- **Presence of "the mother of Jesus" again at the crucifixion**
 - Witness of his life and mission
 - Points back to the first sign, water to wine at Cana
- John 19:34–35, "But one of the soldiers with a spear *pierced his side*, and *forthwith came there out blood and water*. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe."
- **Blood** and **water** imagery in John
 - **Sign of Christ's mortal inheritance from his mother, Mary: the power to lay down his life as an offering for sin**
 - **Sign of his divine inheritance from his Father: the power to take His life up again**
- Wound in Christ's side a continuing witness
 - John 20:20, 25, 27-28; 3 Nephi 11:15

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Jesus at the First Passover (2:13–25)

- "And the Jews' passover was at hand . . ." (2:13)
- The Cleansing of the Temple (2:13–22)
 - Contrast with the Synoptics, that have the cleansing at the *end* of the ministry
 - ". . . make not my Father's house a house of merchandise . . . the zeal of thine house has eaten me up." (2:16-17, see Zech. 14:21)
 - "What **sign** showest thou us?" "Destroy **this temple** and in three days I will raise it up." (2:18-19)
- Reaction (2:23–25)
 - "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."



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Discourse on the New Birth (3:1–21)



Visit of Nicodemus to Christ (1880)
John La Farge

- Nicodemus comes **at night** to Jesus, who is **the light**
 - He will not come out in the light until *after* the crucifixion
- John 3:3–5, “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man *be born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him . . . Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”
 - Being “born again” or “born from above (*another*)”, see Alma 5:14 Born of God
- John 3:6, “**That which is born of the flesh is flesh**; and **that which is born of the Spirit is spirit**.”
 - Flesh reference points to John 1:13-14
 - Water and spirit point to 1 John 5:6-7, “This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the spirit that beareth witness . . .”
 - Cf. Moses 6:59-60

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God So Loved the World . . .

- “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but **he that came down from heaven**, [even] the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even **so must the Son of man be lifted up**: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (3:13-15)
 - Hel. 8:15, “And as many as should look upon that serpent should live, even so as many as should look upon the Son of God with faith, having a contrite spirit, might live, even unto that life which is eternal.”
 - **Nicodemus seems to believe when he sees Christ crucified (19:39)**
- “**For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son**, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” (3:16-17)
 - “This is perhaps the most famous and powerful single verse of scripture ever uttered. It summarizes the whole plan of salvation, tying together the Father, the Son, his atoning sacrifice, that belief in him which presupposes righteous works, and ultimate eternal exaltation for the faithful.” (McConkie, *DNTC*, 1.144)
- John the Baptist’s final witness (3:22-36)
 - “He must increase, but I must decrease.” (3:30)
 - “He that cometh **from above** (same as “again” in 3:3) is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. . . . The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life” (3:31, 35-36)

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Discourse on the Water of Life (4:4–42)

- John 4:7–14, “There cometh **a woman of Samaria to draw water**: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. . . then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?”
 - **Presence and role of a woman**
 - **“draw out,” same word as in 2:8**
- “Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and **he would have given thee living water.**”
 - Meaning of “living” water: pure, flowing water fit to drink
- **Symbolism of Living Water**
 - Jesus’ revelation or teaching
 - Spirit as imparted by Jesus
 - **Jesus himself as source of eternal life**



"Samaritan Woman at the Well" from *The Life of Christ* by Carl Heinrich Bloch (1834-90)

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Cisterns vs. Living Water



Top: Water in a cistern at Maresha; *upper right*: water “from a rock” at Dan spring; *lower right*: head of Jordan at Dan

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A Well of Living Water . . .

- John 4:11–15, “The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast *nothing to draw with*, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?”
- “. . . Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But *whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst*; but *the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life*.”
 - Living water as necessary for eternal life as natural water is to natural water
- “The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, *neither come hither to draw*.”
 - *Drawing* an echo of 2:8 (drawing wine from the pots)
- 1 Nephi 11:24–25, “And after he had said these words, he said unto me: Look! And I looked, and I beheld the Son of God going forth among the children of men; and I saw many fall down at his feet and worship him.
- “And it came to pass that I beheld that the rod of iron, which my father had seen, was the word of God, *which led to the fountain of living waters, or to the tree of life*; which waters are a representation of the love of God; and I also beheld that the tree of life was a representation of the love of God.”

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Healing the Nobleman's Son

(miracle story, 4:46–54)

- “So Jesus came again into *Cana* of Galilee, *where he made the water wine*. And there was a certain *nobleman*, whose son was sick at Capernaum.” (4:46)
 - *Basilikos* (nobleman) translates literally as “royal official or relative of the royal family” and here probably refers to an official of Herod Antipas
- “*Cana*” reference completes the ring begun with chapter 2
 - *Water made wine = Word made flesh*
 - *Healing Power of the Incarnate Word provides segue to the healing of the lame man*

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