

Gospel Reflections:  
JOHN 2

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JOHN 2:1-11

<sup>1</sup> And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of JESUS was there:

<sup>2</sup> And both JESUS was called, and His disciples, to the marriage.

<sup>3</sup> And when they wanted wine, the mother of JESUS saith unto him, They have no wine.

<sup>4</sup> JESUS saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.

<sup>5</sup> His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.

<sup>6</sup> And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

<sup>7</sup> JESUS saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

<sup>8</sup> And He saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

<sup>9</sup> 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,

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> This beginning of miracles did JESUS in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

Here is the first public miracle that JESUS performed in His 3-year earthly public ministry. Interesting that He says to His mother, Mary, “Woman, My time is not yet come.” But He, being fully Divine and also fully Man but without sin, would – in the retaining of the omnipotence of GOD – know in some way what the future would hold from moment to moment. Saint Paul says of The Almighty in I TIMOTHY 1:17 that He is “eternal, immortal, invisible, The only wise GOD.” Therefore “be honour and glory for ever and ever” to Him. GOD The Son, being of the same substance as GOD The Father [Council of Nicea], in His Incarnation would not be all Present, but He would still be all knowing, all wise and all good.

Therefore, although JESUS seems to await for events to force upon Him the beginning of His public ministry with this first miracle – and awaits Mother Mary’s request for His miraculous intervention here – all these things are in fact occurring according to His Divine Providence, which He knew and decreed before He ever set down the foundations of creation!

This raises the interesting question of how GOD preserves man’s free will, and yet at the same time His Grace is necessary for us to come to His salvation. Saint Paul says in ROMANS 8:28-30, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love GOD, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to The Image of His Son... Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” This is part of The

Mystery of the fabric of creation and of GOD's providential hand working through our lives, the lives of others and the world around us.

JOHN 2:12-17

<sup>12</sup> After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and His disciples: and they continued there not many days.

<sup>13</sup> And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and JESUS went up to Jerusalem,

<sup>14</sup> And found in The Temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

<sup>15</sup> And when He had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them all out of The Temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

<sup>16</sup> And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not My Father's house an house of merchandise.

<sup>17</sup> And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Thine House hath eaten Me up.

Who do we love first in our lives: GOD or things of this world? As we have noted, the core of the covenantal faith of Israel was to be, stated just after The Shema in DEUTERONOMY 6:5, to love The LORD with all the heart, mind and soul. But here those in charge of the spiritual welfare of GOD's sheep, via The Temple, had allowed the making of profit at the expense of people to supplant The First Great Commandment.

Those in authority in GOD's House at this time had all the right external observances of The Law of Moses in place, but had neglected the love of GOD first. Like many superficial Christians today who in truth love the world more than The Lord, these religious rulers and their religious business associates no doubt had all had the largest mezuzahs on the doorposts of their houses; the largest phylacteries on their foreheads and the forearms; the most elaborate tassels hanging from their cloaks. But what they lacked was humility and righteousness from within. Therefore their hearts were tainted by iniquity and their first love was the acclaim of men and the comforts of the world.

So CHRIST chastises the religious leaders of His Day, in particular The Pharisees who claimed such righteousness before GOD in the eyes of men, in MATTHEW 23:23-25, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of The Law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess."

If the inside of the cup is not clean, the outside's seeming cleanness is a hypocritical illusion. Salvation is a free gift of GOD. But The Temple authorities had allowed the setting up of a great barrier, the requirement of the meager wealth of the

poor, widowed and oppressed, that they buy out of their pockets the required animals for sacrifice according to The Law of Moses. Here these religious men had forgotten to “love your neighbour,” The Second Great Commandment which JESUS quotes from LEVITICUS 19:18.

The LORD, Who revealed Himself in His Law to Israel, is as David says in PSALM 102:8, “...merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.” But Heaven forbid if any poor of Israel under the hypocritical Pharisees, in bed with the moneychangers within the very courts of The House of GOD, should choose to feed his family in place of buying a dove for an offering at The Temple! “The Law of GOD says, and we are its interpreters and enforces, sitting in the seat of Moses!” But being unclean on the inside, they had forgotten the heart of The Law of The LORD – mercy, graciousness, forgiveness and charity – to those who were most in need of it!

#### JOHN 2:18-22

<sup>18</sup> Then answered the Jews and said unto Him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things?

<sup>19</sup> JESUS answered and said unto them, Destroy This Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

<sup>20</sup> Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was This Temple in building, and wilt Thou rear it up in three days?

<sup>21</sup> But He spake of The Temple of His Body.

<sup>22</sup> When therefore He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them; and they believed The Scripture, and The Word which JESUS had said.

Again we see the leaders of GOD’s Chosen People in the time of CHRIST placing their faith for deliverance, salvation and blessing – not in The Almighty Himself – but in the building, The Temple, built with human hands; in pomp and pageantry; in meticulous external fencing of The Law of GOD in every smallest corner of men’s lives. This, the called out nation, ordained by GOD to be a light of hope and righteousness to the Gentiles and a glory to The LORD!

It would take the personal intervention of The Almighty, in His Coming in The Incarnation, to do in His Person of JESUS CHRIST what His unfaithful bride servant Israel had failed to do. So it’s noteworthy here to recall the adoration of old, righteous Simeon of the infant JESUS, when His parents brought Him to The Temple according to The Law of Moses, in LUKE 2:29-32, “Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word: For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel!”

But little did men understand, nor want to understand, that The Consolation of Israel – The Messiah JESUS – had come to give His life up for the sins of the world, to redeem the souls of His saints, on The Cross. The common messianic expectation of

Israel, contained in PSALM 118:26 is “Blessed be He that cometh in The Name of The LORD” –

בְּרוּךְ הוֹבֵא בְשֵׁם יְהוָה

– BARUCH HABA’ BESHEM ADONAY – would be lavishly laid at the feet of The Lord when He entered Jerusalem on The Passover that became The Last Supper.

We find this expectant messianic language in MARK 11:9-10, “And they that went before [JESUS CHRIST], and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is He that commeth in The Name of The Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in The Name of The Lord: Hosanna in the highest!” But later that same week, after The Saviour had instituted The holy Eucharist recorded so stirringly in The Gospels, He suffered and died on The cruel Cross to pay for the sins of the world.

But with His resurrection, so we also are raised to newness of life in Him, both now and forever! So Saint Paul writes in ROMANS 6:4-5, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into JESUS CHRIST were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as CHRIST was raised up from the dead by The Glory of The Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life!”

The Kingdom of GOD did indeed come to Israel in The Person of The Consolation of GOD Incarnate. But He did not deliver a political or national restoration of the Jewish nation in That Day. Rather, He began the expansion of His eternal Kingdom of righteousness on earth as it is in Heaven by His death and raising again of The Temple of His Body on the third day!

#### JOHN 2:23-25

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> But JESUS did not commit Himself unto them, because he knew all men,

<sup>25</sup> And needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man.

Many Jews in The Day of The First Advent of CHRIST believed they were seeing the coming of the restoration of national Israel, “believing” in JESUS according to their own agenda because of the miracles they witnessed Him doing. GOD on their own terms according to their will, a disease many today in The Church suffer from as well. Saint John records that CHRIST knew their hearts and the nature of fallen man, again confirming The Divinity, as well as The Humanity, of JESUS.

The prophet records in JEREMIAH 17:9-10, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I The LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” As David says of the foolish man, and indeed of all men apart from His Grace and salvation at The Cross, in PSALM 14:1-2, “...They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from Heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek GOD.”

But JESUS knew their hearts because, as The Council of Chalcedon confesses in 451 AD that “The same Son, our Lord JESUS CHRIST, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly GOD and truly Man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards His Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards His manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards His Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards His manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer; one and The same CHRIST, Son, Lord...”

[Hebrew Old Testament from <http://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0.htm>]  
[English Bible quotes from King James Version]