

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION OF THE GLORY OF GOD

John 2:1-25

People are curious about many things. Some are trivial and others are quite profound. Many questions we raise do not have clearly defined answers and we often wind up with a multitude of opinions that are likely to be in conflict. Many of life's profound questions are answered to various extents in the Bible. For example, some of the more profound questions are as follows:

Why did God create the universe? We find great insight to the answer to this question in Psalms 19:1 where we find that creation is a statement of God's glory.

¹ The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Psalm 19:1 (NASB95)

Why did God create mankind and establish a relationship with man?

Why did God speak through prophets, through angels, and why did He send Jesus?

The answers to these questions are seen in the familiar passage that begins the book of Hebrews that was written to the early church. The first four verses give us a good start on the answers. Reading the rest of the chapter is recommended.

¹ God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. ³ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they. Hebrews 1:1-4 (NASB95)

Why were the Gospel accounts written?

The simplest answer to that question is this: To reveal Who God is in the person of Jesus Christ. In John Chapter 1 we see Jesus being referred to as the Word of God. Words are used to communicate. Jesus is God's **ultimate communication** of Himself to the world. We could go on to say that John showed the *deity of Christ*, Matthew showed Him as *King*. Mark showed Him as a *Servant* and Luke revealed His *humanity*. The actions Jesus took during His earthly ministry were part of that revelation. God's revelation of Himself to mankind throughout history has been progressive – He reveals more and more of Himself as time goes on. In the same way Jesus was careful during His time on the earth to reveal Who He is in “deliberate and progressive” steps. Let's see how this revelation unfolded in the second chapter of John.

Timing Is Important – 2:1-5

¹ On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; ² and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.” ⁴ And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come.” ⁵ His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.” John 2:1-5 (NASB95)

As Christians we are to join in the community activities as a means of being where we can minister to others. The family sponsoring the wedding may have been poor and was not able to buy enough wine. Mary was concerned and passed her concern onto Jesus.

The purpose for which Jesus came to live among us was not to provide wine for weddings. He did not come to multiply bread and fish to feed five thousand. He did not come to walk on water. Though He did these things, His main purpose was to die as a sacrifice for sin and in doing so to reveal the glory and truth of God. Jesus was just beginning His ministry and knew the potential power miracles could have in sparking a wave of politically driven fervor to elevate the “miracle worker” to some sort of earthly high office. Many times Jesus told those

close to Him “My time is not yet come.” Immediately before His arrest and crucifixion He changed this statement to “The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.”

Mary’s faith in Jesus to do something to meet the need of these people was not going to go unanswered. Genuine faith pleases God and He responds to it. Mary’s advice to the servants at the wedding needs to be heeded by all who would follow Jesus. That advice was “whatever. He tells you to do, do it!”

We can also see that Mary did not argue with Jesus and did not “plead” with Him to do something to help. She simply pointed out the need and left the results up to Him. She did all that she could do and then simply trusted Jesus to do what was appropriate.

Revelation Initially Limited – 2:6-10

⁶Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each. ⁷Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” So they filled them up to the brim. ⁸And He said to them, “Draw *some* out now and take it to the headwaiter.” So they took it *to him*. ⁹When the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, ¹⁰and said to him, “Every man serves the good wine first, and when *the people* have drunk freely, *then he serves* the poorer wine; *but* you have kept the good wine until now.” John 2:6-10 (NASB95)

You might call what Jesus did a *private miracle*. Mary, the servants and the 4 (or 5) disciples who were with Him were the only ones who knew what had happened. Jesus meant to keep it private in that it was not the right time in the progressive revelation that was unfolding at the time of His earthly ministry. (Examples of a public miracle are the parting of the Red Sea and feeding the five thousand.)

This miracle may also be seen as a parable in that the number six represents imperfection. The stone of which the jars were made is earthly and the water with which they are filled represents our humanity. We are filled to the brim with our humanity. When Jesus enters the picture, then that which we have in earthen vessels becomes transformed into a spiritual nature (represented by the wine).

The wine that ran out could be said to represent the Law which had a spiritual basis but lacked the power to save – it ran out before the job was done. Though it was good, it could not compare with the new wine, the “law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.”

The actions of the others involved in this miracle may be instructive in understanding various behaviors we encounter with people today. The servants were completely and unquestionably obedient. They did not have a clue as to what was going to happen, but they had an assignment and they were faithful to do their duty. There are certainly times in our lives when we are asked to carry out a task that may not make much sense to us at the time. However, such obedience can be used by God to accomplish the work of the Kingdom. We could agree with Samuel who told Saul “to obey is better than sacrifice.” The other side of that coin is that when we obey, we should be able to trust the person who is giving the instructions. Some people today will find themselves under the influence those who have a charming and charismatic demeanor and may blindly obey error.

The head waiter recognized the goodness of what Jesus had created but he did not know the Creator and, consequently, gave the credit for that goodness to someone else. Many people today enjoy life’s blessings and think that we have such blessings because of a benevolent company for which we work or a benevolent government that provides everything we might need. Such failure to recognize that the origin of every good and perfect gift is God Himself can create a culture that is either egocentric or one in which people are totally reliant on the state for every need.

Miracles Have a Meaningful Purpose – 2:11

¹¹ This beginning of *His* signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. John 2:11 (NASB95)

It could be argued that the purpose for which God does everything He does is to “reveal His glory.” There are many passages in the Scriptures that point to the fact that the reason God saved us to for His glory to be revealed in us.

Ro 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the **glory** which shall be revealed in us. (*It is not our glory but the glory of God that is to be revealed in us.*)

Ro 9:23 And that he might **make known the riches of his glory** on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, (*The vessels of mercy – those who have benefitted from His mercy – you and me.*)

1Co 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the **glory of God**.

2Co 1:20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the **glory of God** by us.

2Co 4:15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the **glory of God**.

Eph 3:21 Unto him be **glory in the church** by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Php 1:11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the **glory and praise of God**.

Php 2:11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the **glory of God** the Father.

Re 21:23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: **for the glory of God did lighten** it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

Though Jesus did not come to just do miracles, the miracles He did were for the purposes of revealing His glory and building faith in those who would follow Him.

Revelation Begins at Home - 2:12

¹² After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother and *His* brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days.

Early in His ministry, Jesus was still closely connected with His family. This visit to Capernaum was apparently immediately after the wedding in Cana. Sometimes it is more difficult to minister to those who are closest to us. We know from other references that Jesus’ family members were initially quite skeptical of what He was doing in teaching and healing.

Subtle Beginning to Bold Finale – 2:13-17

¹³ The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated *at their tables*. ¹⁵ And He made a scourge of cords, and drove *them* all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; ¹⁶ and to those who were selling the doves He said, “Take these things away; stop making My Father’s house a place of business.” ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, “ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME.” John 2:13-17 (NASB95)

These verses appear to be at a different point in time than immediately following the wedding at Cana. The other gospel accounts placed the cleansing of the temple at the **end** of Jesus’ ministry. Some commentators think this account is a separate event from the one recorded by the other gospels. However, it seems unlikely that Jesus “cleansed the Temple” twice. John’s purpose was not to present a chronologically correct account of the activities of Jesus but to present convincing evidence that Jesus is the Messiah. (But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. John 20:31)

It is helpful to read the accounts by Mark (11:15-18) and Matthew (21:12-13).

Confrontation of the “establishment” and the status quo of life is inevitable if real change for the better is ever to be made. Situations left to themselves only get worse and more confused. Restoring them to their proper place requires work and sacrifice. The conditions in the Temple at the time Jesus took action were an indication of how far from “God’s ideal” that things had deteriorated. When you are effective, then those who are against *what you are doing* take action against you. If you are not effective, then the opposition is subdued. (Note: Mark put the timing of this after the Fig Tree is cursed, while Matthew has it before the Fig Tree is cursed.)

There are spiritual lessons to be learned that would relate to us as the church and as individual being described as the “Temple of God.”

Jesus entered - He is not there until He comes in. The New Agers teach that everyone has "the Christ" in them, we just need to discover it. The truth of the matter is the Holy Spirit may visit but He does not inhabit the natural man.

He drove out all - Expect Jesus to drive all the profane and vain out of your life. We must be careful to not put it back when He drives it away.

Money changers and sellers - materialism must be replaced with spiritual values.

It is written - Our lives must be ordered in accordance with the word of God - by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

House of prayer - If we don't pray on our own, God may give us something to pray about.

You have made - We have the capability to mess up what God is doing.

Blind, lame came to Him at the temple - People needing help from the Lord should be coming to us since we are His temple.

He healed them - The church is a place of healing.

The spiritual significance is that now each of us is the temple of God and we must be careful to not let the “mundane and routine” of buying and selling crowd out the “spiritual” in our lives.

Challenges Will Come – 2:18-22

¹⁸ The Jews then said to Him, “What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?” ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” ²⁰ The Jews then said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?” ²¹ But He was speaking of the temple of His body. ²² So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken. John 2:18-22 (NASB95)

The Jewish leaders asked an excellent question regarding authority. This question is one we should pose to ourselves. By what or whose authority do we act in all phases of life. Are we people under authority or just doing what is right in our own eyes? Jesus behaved as if He had the authority (or right) to do what He did. The leaders saw this and hence asked the question. If we recognize the authority Jesus has granted to us in His name, then we can go out with boldness to do what He has authorized us to do.

We must not let the lack of miracles and mountain top experiences detract from the Lordship of Jesus in our lives. We must be about the process of putting our old nature to death and replacing it with the life of Christ in us.

Realization in Retrospect – 2:23-25

²³ Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. ²⁴ But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, ²⁵ and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man. John 2:23-25 (NASB95)

Our understanding of the meaning of God’s word is (at best) incomplete and many times it is necessary for us to be able to look back on events to recognize the fulfillment of what He has

said.

God is at work and He does miraculous things. Though He may not do miracles to prove He is God, those with eyes to see can recognize His handiwork all around them. Notice that toward the end of His ministry (last week) that many people saw the miraculous signs. The revelation of His glory was now being openly shown. Three years before this (at the wedding in Cana), only a few people were aware of the miracle He did.

Entrusting Himself to them may be in reference to the fact that though He did miracles, He did not plainly state to the general public “I am God.” He did miracles and He accepted praise. He would say things such as “Your sins are forgiven” which He admitted that only God can do, but He did not get up and make a public declaration that He was the Messiah. The reason was that He knew how people would react. Eventually, He did declare the full revelation to the Sanhedrin as we see in Mark’s account of the trial.

Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Mark 14:61-62

The result was predictable. Those leaders chose - in spite of all the evidence – to NOT believe Him. Upon this declaration, they sentenced Jesus to death. Do you recall, back at the wedding feast in Cana, Jesus said “My time has not yet come.” When He stood before the Sanhedrin, His time had come and He openly declare His identity.

Another possible application of “He did not entrust Himself to them” could be related to the fact that God does not make His power available (does not entrust it) to everyone who follows Him. We want to experience the power of God in our lives. However, before we can be trusted with it, we must first experience the holiness of God by being transformed into the likeness of Jesus.

The idea of empowerment has been around since the Garden of Eden. The possibility of being empowered was the very thing the serpent used to tempt Eve to disobey God and eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree. The ultimate in empowerment is to be as God is. One of the attributes ascribed to God is that He is omnipotent; that is, He is all powerful. The serpent said to Eve, “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing (*determining for yourself*) good and evil.” (Gen 3:5, NIV) (Parenthesis added.)

Is it a legitimate desire for humans to want to be like God? There is ample evidence in Scripture that being like God is not only legitimate, but we are commanded to become as He is. In fact, Jesus said quite plainly, “Be ye, therefore, perfect even as your Heavenly Father is perfect.” We find also that God uses circumstances in our lives to bring about a transformation of every person who has experienced the new birth. The goal of this transformation is that we will be conformed to the image of (be like) Jesus Christ. (Roman 8:28 and 29)

Many Christians want to be as God is – a legitimate desire – however, they want to be as He is with regard to power, knowledge, etc. Recall that “empowerment without principles with which to guide the empowered person results in chaos.” The **principle** with which we need to identify is that of being *as God is* with regard to holiness, righteousness, love, etc. Once we have “bought into” (are walking in) these principles, then God will empower us with the other things. When a person is principle-center, then satisfaction is derived from the relationship that this brings (being one with Christ) and not from what he can do.