

International Conversation Cafe

New Testament: Jesus, the Miracle Worker, John 2

People enjoy the spectacular. Look at the way we go to live musical performances, large sporting events, and explore the unusual. After the experience, we like to talk about and relive what we saw. A miracle is a spectacular experience. Many miracles are described in the Bible.

What is a miracle?

A miracle, in the Bible, is when something happens that overcomes natural law, or the way things ordinarily work.

Have you ever seen a miracle or heard stories of miracles? Can you tell about it?

Jesus performed miracles such as giving sight to the blind, healing the sick from disease, and calming the wind and sea during a storm. A miracle is not magic or trickery. It is not the result of human effort like in giving medicine. Miracles are acts of power from God. They were given to help people understand that Jesus was sent from God with the right to heal and forgive sins. The following story is the first miracle performed by Jesus.

On the third day there was a wedding. It took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

"Dear woman, why do you bring me into this?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

His mother said to the servants, "Do what he tells you."

Six stone water jars stood nearby. The Jews used water from that kind of jar for special washings to make themselves pure. Each jar could hold 20 to 30 gallons.

Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the top.

Then he told them, "Now dip some out. Take it to the person in charge of the dinner."

They did what he said. The person in charge tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He didn't realize where it had come from. But the servants who had brought the water knew.

Then the person in charge called the groom to one side. He said to him, "Everyone brings out the best wine first. They bring out the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink. But you have saved the best until now."

That was the first of Jesus' miraculous signs. He did it at Cana in Galilee. Jesus showed his glory by doing it. And his disciples put their faith in him.

Questions

Who are the main characters in the story?

Retell the story in your own words.

Sometimes a story seems to be an example of what kind of events will come next. Jesus' first miracle brought happiness and saved the groom from shame. What does this seem to say about the kinds of things Jesus would continue to do?

"Glory" means honor. How did this miracle show that Jesus was honorable?

We do not read about Jesus' interactions with his friends at the wedding. But Jesus' followers believed in him after he did this miracle. How did this miracle inspire faith? (Faith and believe mean the same thing; it is the idea of trust.)

Why is it difficult to believe in miracles?

Why do you think miracles are important in the Bible?

"When miracles occur natural forces, are countered (overcome) by supernatural force."

Christian Theology, Millard Erickson, Page 408

Argument in Favor of the Existence of Miracles

Many people do not believe that miracles really happen because they have never seen or experienced a miracle. However, many things are true that are outside of our experience. Would you believe that a person can obtain speeds up to 322 Km/h (200 mph) in a free fall? We might find that hard to believe, but yet the record in free fall is 515 Km/h (320 mph). Just because free falling is outside of our experience doesn't mean that those speeds have not been achieved. Another example, if you approached a tribal chief in a tropical primitive area of the world and told him that it is possible for water to turn as hard as a rock, he would not believe you. He has nothing in his experience to say that this is even possible.

In the same way, just because our limited experience has not included miracles, does not mean that they don't exist.

Do you think there is merit in this argument? Why or why not?



Pretia, Mattia. Wedding at Cana. C.1655. Oil on canvas.
203x226 cm. National Gallery, London

1. *What do you notice in this painting?*
2. *What do you see that makes you say that?*
3. *What else can you find?*