

The Book of John – 13

Introduction: We are moving from the introduction of the witnesses (**Chapter 1**) to the **first** of many signs recorded by John. As we look at **John chapter 2**, we will see two specific events presented to us.

In verses **v1-12**, we see a **marriage festival**. In verses **13-25**, we see **the Lord in Jerusalem for the Passover festival**.

It will help us, at the onset of this chapter, to understand **these two events and the customs associated with them** before we delve into the text more specifically.

The first event, as mentioned, is the **Marriage Feast**.

Before the Marriage Ceremony and Marriage Feast is - The Betrothal

“The biblical terms, betrothal, and espousal, are almost synonymous with marriage and as binding.”



II Samuel 3:14 *“14 And David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth Saul’s son, saying, Deliver me my wife Michal, which I **espoused** to me for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines.”*

Matthew 1:18 *“18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother **Mary was espoused to Joseph**, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.”*

Hosea 2:19 *“19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; Yea, I will **betroth** thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, And in lovingkindness, and in mercies.”*

“In Jewish culture, the groom’s father paid a bride price, or **mohar**, to the bride’s family in order to negotiate the betrothal and, in essence, “purchase” the bride. The groom would also give a gift to the bride called a **mattan**, which became a part of the property the bride would bring into the marriage. These gifts were not always monetary; they may have been property or even services provided to the bride’s family.”

Genesis 24:1-4 *“1 And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. 2 And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: 3 And I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God*

*of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: **But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.***

Genesis 24:53 *“53 And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.”*

“These are the usual articles, with money, that form a woman’s dowry among the pastoral tribes. Rebekah was betrothed and accompanied the servant to Canaan.”¹

“Between the betrothal and the marriage, some interval elapsed, varying from a few days, in the patriarchal age, Gen 24:55, to a full year, for virgins and a month, for widows, in later times.”²

“The bride would not know the day or hour of her husband-to-be’s return, so the groom’s arrival was usually announced with a trumpet call and a shout, so the bride had some forewarning.”³

The Bible states in **I Thessalonians 4:16**, *“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven **with a shout**, with the voice of the archangel, and **with the trump of God**: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”*

The Marriage Ceremony

“Before the ceremony, which was attended by a select few (most likely family), the bride would take part in a ritual cleansing. After the ceremony, the couple would attend a wedding feast in their honor.”⁴

The Marriage Feast (Marriage Festival)

*“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.” **John 2:1-2***

Often this was “A week-long event in the ancient world that involved meals, dancing, and religious rituals...Revelation describes history as culminating in the messianic banquet, or “marriage feast of the Lamb” (Rev 19:7–9)”⁵

¹ Commentary - Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible Brown, David, A.R.; Jamieson, Robert

² Smith’s Bible Dictionary

³ <https://www.gotquestions.org/marriage-customs.html>

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ The Lexham Bible Dictionary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

The Marriage feast "...was usually held at the house of the groom (**Mt. 22:1–10; Jn. 2:9**) and often at night (**Mt. 22:13; 25:6**)." As seen in **Matthew 22**, this is at the parent's house of the groom." "Many relatives and friends attended, so the wine might well run out (Jn. 2:3). A steward or friend supervised the feast (Jn. 2:9–10). **To refuse an invitation to the wedding feast was an insult** (Mt. 22:7). The guests were expected to wear festive clothes (Mt. 22:11–12)." "In special circumstances, the feast could be held in the bride's home (Gn. 29:22)"⁶

This gives us an understanding of **the presence of Jesus, the disciples, and the Lord's mother, Mary**. (They were invited to this feast. **v2**)

This gives us an understanding of **the servants**. They were there to facilitate the service of the feast.

The **governor of the feast** was the chief of stewards or friend there to supervise and watch everything went smoothly.

The second event mentioned in this chapter is the **Passover Festival**. The institution of the Passover is found in **Exodus 12:1-14**.

"The Passover was also called the feast of unleavened bread (Exod. 23:15; Deut. 16:16) because only unleavened bread was eaten during the seven days immediately following Passover (Exod. 12:15–20; 13:6–8; Deut. 16:3–8). Unleavened bread reflected the fact that the people had no time to put leaven in their bread before their hasty departure from Egypt. It was also apparently connected to the barley harvest (Lev. 23:4–14)."⁷

"Passover (Heb. *pesah*) comes from a verb meaning 'to pass over', in the sense of 'to spare' (Ex. 12:13, 27, etc.). Exodus 12:13 "13 *And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.*" "In NT times, all Israelite males were expected to appear in Jerusalem thrice annually, for the Feasts of Passover, of Weeks or Pentecost, and of Tabernacles."⁸

"What was once a family observance in the home is transformed into a national pilgrimage festival."⁹

⁶ New Bible Dictionary (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 734

⁷ Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 567–568.

⁸ New Bible Dictionary (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 872.

⁹ Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1014.

Deuteronomy 16:6 *“6 But at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt.”*

It is easy to see why we find these introductory words in **John 2:13-14** *“13 And the **Jews’ passover was at hand**, and Jesus **went up to Jerusalem**, 14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:”*

As we read this chapter over the next many weeks, I want us to think about the context of these two events: the Marriage Feast and The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.