



VIEW WEST: THE ROAD LEADING FROM CANA OF GALILEE TO JOTAPATA (SEE PHOTO BELOW). THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE TWO CITIES IS ABOUT 2 MILES (3.2 KILOMETERS).

BELOW (VIEW NORTHWEST): THE END OF THE ROAD TO JOTAPATA FROM CANA. THE ANCIENT SITE WAS ON THE HILL BELOW THE RIDGE (TOP CENTER). IT'S IN THE SUNLIGHT.





VIEW EAST: CANA OF GALILEE (KHIRBET QANA) IS AT THE END OF THE ROAD (TOP CENTER) THAT LEADS FROM JOTAPATA (SEE "JOTAPATA" ON PAGE 99). FOR THE CANA OF GALILEE CONTOUR MAP, SEE PAGE 111.

CANA OF GALILEE (KHIRBET QANA; SEE MAP ON PAGE 119)

Archaeologists have identified more than one site for Cana of Galilee. I feature Khirbet Qana in this section. The traditional site is Kefar Kanna (see “Kefar Kanna” on page 115). It’s unnecessary to go through the proofs for the former site because, for my purposes, they detract from the message of Cana.¹ I like Khirbet Qana because of its beautiful setting and its location on one of the highways through Lower Galilee.

Once, I walked from Jotapata to Khirbet Qana and then to the Arab Christian village of Eilabun on the eastern end of the Beth Netofa Valley, a distance of about 8 miles (12.8 km; see map on page 111). On other occasions, I walked to Khirbet Qana from the Arab town of Kefar Manda (see map on page 108). The latter path takes you through the fields of farmers, whose owners and workers I greeted in the evening. It’s a time when everything is quiet, and you mostly only hear birds chirping. These times allowed me to reflect on my surroundings and the scenes available to Jesus and His disciples as they walked this way. Seeing the farmers in the fields made me think of the villagers Jesus would have met. The thought that He knows each person intimately and loves them perfectly causes me to marvel. As I write, I can picture the scenes in my mind.

One day, I sat on top of Khirbet Qana toward the evening to read John 2:1–11. I also listened to it as I looked over the valley (see the photos on page 106). The setting is not likely to be as perfect for you. It wasn’t always for me. At such times, I consider what Elder Packer taught after telling a story about a naturalist who heard birds singing as he walked through a crowded park, which no one noticed but him: “It is difficult to separate from all the sounds of city traffic the song of a bird,” Elder Packer said. “But you can hear it. You can hear it plainly if you train yourself to listen for it.”² Following his counsel will help you have a successful tour: train yourself to hear the right sounds and avoid distractions—practice at home.



VIEW NORTH: CANA OF GALILEE (CENTER). THIS PHOTO GOES WITH THE ONE AT THE TOP OF PAGE 107, WITH EXCAVATIONS OF THE ANCIENT CITY. YOU SEE HOW CANA WAS SITUATED ON THE HILL.

BELOW (VIEW SOUTHEAST): THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN ACROSS THE EXCAVATIONS VISIBLE IN THE PHOTO ABOVE, ACROSS THE BEIT NETOFA VALLEY. NOTICE THE VILLAGES ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE VALLEY (SLOPES OF MT. TURAN).





VIEW NORTHWEST: THIS PHOTO IS A DETAIL OF THE EXCAVATIONS OF ANCIENT CANA, WHICH YOU SEE FROM A DISTANCE IN THE PHOTO AT THE TOP OF PAGE 106.

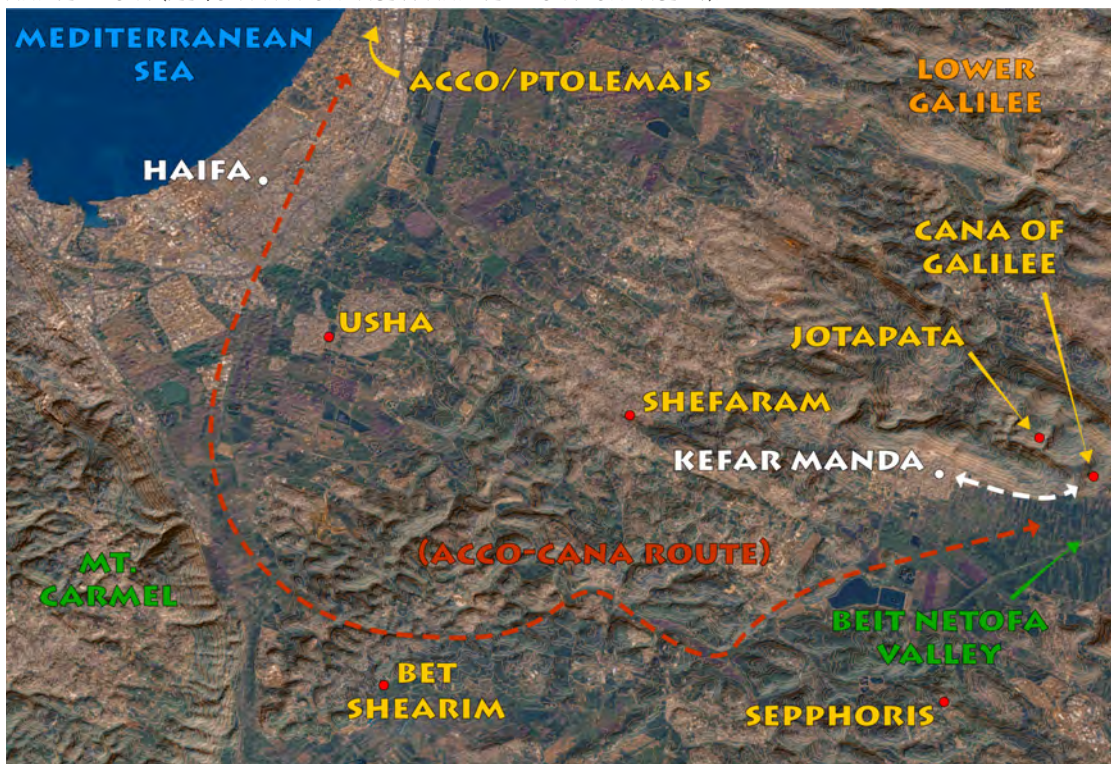
BELOW (VIEW SOUTH): THIS PHOTO IS A CONTINUATION OF THE ONE ON THE BOTTOM OF PAGE 106, LOOKING ACROSS THE CANA EXCAVATIONS. UPPER NAZARETH IS VISIBLE (TOP RIGHT) ABOVE THE TURAN VALLEY.





VIEW NORTHEAST: THE ROAD TO CANA (TOP CENTER), COMING FROM THE COASTAL CITY OF ACCO/PTOLEMAIS IN THE WEST (SEE MAP BELOW).

BELOW (VIEW NORTH): THIS MAP SHOWS THE PROXIMITY OF CANA TO THE COAST, AS WELL AS ANCIENT JOTAPATA AND SEPPHORIS (SEE "JOTAPATA" ON PAGE 99 AND "SEPPHORIS" ON PAGE 119).



NATHANAEEL'S HOME

In Hebrew, Nathanael means “God has given.” He was from Cana of Galilee (John 21:2) and an early disciple of Jesus (see John 1:45–51). There’s no evidence to identify him with Bartholomew except for textual suppositions based on what the gospel writers said and didn’t say. Nevertheless, what we know about him as Nathanael teaches an important lesson.

Philip went looking for Nathanael to tell him the good news: “We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” When Nathanael wondered out loud if such a one could come from the unimportant village of Nazareth, Philip responded with the invitation “Come and see.”

The invitation and phrase are ones the leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ have used a lot over the years, especially in General Conference talks. It’s almost always used in connection with an invitation to investigate the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and find out if something is here for you. It’s also used in personal conversion stories like the one told by Reyna I. Aburto, second counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency of the Church at the time. She began her talk with the following description of how she became a member of the Church:

After receiving an invitation to “come and see,” I attended The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for the first time at the age of 26. I had recently separated from my first husband. I had a three-year-old boy. And I felt powerless with fear. When I entered the building, I was filled with warmth as I perceived the faith and joy of the people surrounding me. It was truly “a refuge from the storm.” Three weeks later, I made the baptismal covenant with Heavenly Father and started my journey as a disciple of Christ, although my life has not been perfect along that journey.³

And there was the story told by Tracy Y. Browning, second counselor in the Primary General Presidency. She was raised on the island of Jamaica, joining the Church at age sixteen. She gave the following account of what happened to her after becoming a member:

As an early follower of the gospel, I encountered many who observed and perceived changes in my behaviors, practices, and choices after I joined the Church. They were curious about the “whys” of what they were seeing—why I chose to be baptized and join this congregation of believers, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; why I refrain from certain practices on the Sabbath; why I’m faithful in keeping the Word of Wisdom; why I read the Book of Mormon; why I believe in and incorporate the teachings of modern-day prophets and apostles into my life; why I attend weekly Church meetings; why I invite others to “come and see, come and help, . . . come and stay,” and “come and belong.”⁴

Elder Neil L. Anderson taught another application of the invitation to *come and see* as part of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with family and friends:

The Savior taught us how to share the gospel. I like the story of Andrew, who asked, “Master, where dwellest thou?” Jesus could have responded with the location of where He lived. But instead He said to Andrew, “Come and see.” I like to think that the Savior was saying, “Come and see not only where I live but how I live. Come and see who I am. Come and feel the Spirit.” We don’t know everything about that day, but we do know that when Andrew found his brother Simon, he declared, “We have found . . . the Christ” (John 1:41).⁵

The message of the Restoration is for all people. The invitation is to come unto Christ through the fullness of His gospel by accepting and living the covenants made at baptism and in temples or Houses of the Lord. The gate is baptism; the path leads to eternal family bonds in the kingdom of Heaven.⁶

TURNING WATER INTO WINE

President Howard W. Hunter gave a talk in General Conference entitled “The God That Doest Wonders.” He described Easter as “the great restoring and renewing resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, declaring all of the joy and eternal promise that event holds for mankind.” The prophet went on to say,

With you, I welcome this season of the year which reminds us that God is a God of miracles, that his Only Begotten Son is “the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in [him], though he were dead, yet shall he live” (John 11:25).

President Hunter used Jesus’s first recorded miracle of turning water into wine as an example of God’s wonders, suggesting something else we might think about as we read the story:

The first miracle by Jesus recorded in the New Testament was the turning of water into wine at the marriage at Cana (see John 2:1–11). But poor, indeed, was the making of the wine in the pots of stone, *compared with its original making in the beauty of the vine and the abundance of the swelling grapes*. No one could explain the onetime miracle at the wedding feast, but then neither could they explain the everyday miracle of the splendor of the vineyard itself.⁷ (emphasis added)

We don’t know much about the story’s background—who was getting married, why Mary seems to be in charge, or why Jesus and His disciples were invited. John does not provide the answers. The first two verses cover all we know by way of background. The remaining nine deal with the miracle itself.⁸

A few lessons stand out as we contemplate the miracle of Jesus turning water into wine. The first involves Mary, His mother. Only a few people knew about the miracle: Mary, the servants who did Jesus’s bidding, and the disciples who attended the marriage party with Jesus. Jesus did not intend that the miracle should be a public display of His power over the elements, as it was, for example, when He fed the five thousand with two fish and five loaves of bread.⁹

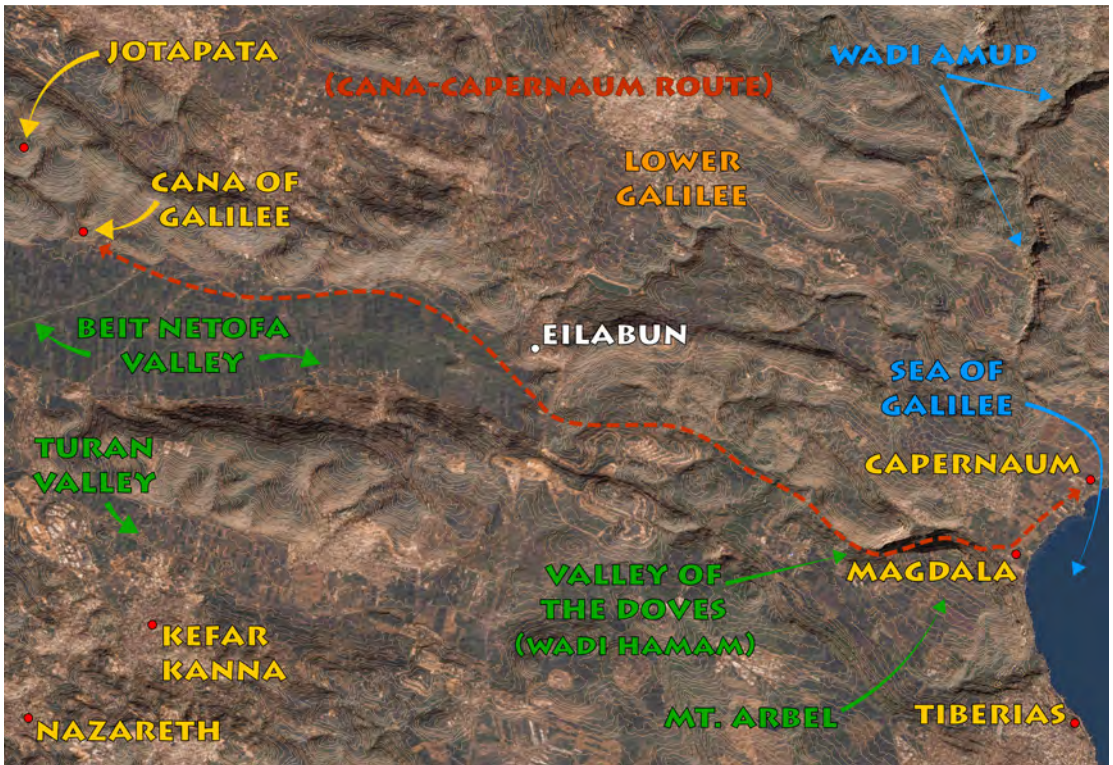
Knowledge of the miracle was preserved for those of us living today. From it, we learn a few details about Jesus besides the obvious ones attached to the miracle and its witness of Christ’s divine power. For example, Jesus honored His mother and respected her wishes. He did it, however, in a way that demonstrated the superior position of His Father in Heaven and the mission Jesus was yet to fulfill. When Mary told Jesus there was no more wine, He responded, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.” Jesus addressed Mary as He did hanging from the cross: “Woman, behold thy son!” His use of the word *woman* seems disrespectful today, but it wasn’t then, as many have explained.¹⁰

In addition, Joseph Smith added a clarifying phrase to John’s quotation of Jesus: “Woman, what wilt thou have me to do for thee? *that will I do*; for mine hour is not yet come” (JST John 2:4). The change shows, as Elder McConkie points out, that Jesus’s “answer to Mary was respectful and discreet. He agreed to do what she requested even though the hour for the heralding abroad of his miraculous powers was yet future.”¹¹

The religious writer and preacher Frederic Farrar (1831–1903) brought out another lesson of some import:

It was His first miracle, yet how unlike all that we should have expected; how simply unobtrusive, how divinely calm! The method, indeed, of the miracle—which is far more wonderful in character than the ordinary miracles of healing—transcends our powers of conception; yet it was not done with any pomp of circumstance, or blaze of adventitious glorification.

[Miracles] were indeed the signs . . . of His divine mission; but their primary object was the alleviation of human suffering, or the illustration of sacred truths, or, as in this instance, the increase of innocent joy. An obscure village, an ordinary wedding, a humble home, a few faithful peasant guests—such a scene, and no splendid amphitheatre or stately audience, beheld one of Christ’s greatest miracles of power.¹²



VIEW NORTH: CANA OF GALILEE CONTOUR MAP, SHOWING THE ROUTE FROM CANA TO CAPERNAUM. THE DISTANCE IS ABOUT 20 MILES (33 KILOMETERS).

HEALING THE NOBLEMAN'S SON

Jesus had been in Judea before “depart[ing] again into Galilee” (John 4:3). This was the time “he must needs go through Samaria,” where He met the Samaritan woman at “Jacob’s well” (see “Samaria” in *Blessed Pilgrimage*, vol. 2). He was in Samaria two days before He “departed thence, and went into Galilee,” coming “again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine.” The second recorded miracle wrought by Jesus in Cana of Galilee was a miracle of healing:

There was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come *down*, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come *down* ere my child die.

Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

And as he was now going *down*, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.

Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.



VIEW EAST: THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN FROM ABOVE CANA LOOKING TOWARD THE EASTERN END OF THE BEIT NETOFA VALLEY. THE ROAD RUNS AS IT DID ANCIENTLY FROM CANA TO THE SEA OF GALILEE AND CAPERNAUM. ALSO VISIBLE IS ISRAEL'S NATIONAL WATER CARRIER (TOP CENTER) RUNNING THROUGH THE VALLEY TOWARD THE COAST.

So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house. (John 4:46–54, emphasis added)¹³

Jesus tested the nobleman's faith with an accusation: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." The nobleman didn't respond to the claim or take offense; instead, he demonstrated his faith by staying true to his purpose: "Sir, come down ere my child die." Jesus was his only hope. If He did not intervene, the nobleman knew his son would die. He knew that Jesus alone could provide and save life. The nobleman had nothing to prove except his faith, demonstrated by his determined answer and a fervent belief that Jesus could and would heal his son.

Similarly, Jesus challenged the faith of "a woman of Canaan" then living in the region of Tyre and Sidon (see Matt. 15:21–28). She came to Jesus, pleading, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." And Jesus "answered her not a word." The woman must have continued her plea, for Jesus finally "answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Undeterred, she "worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me." Again, Jesus tested her faith with His answer: "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." He referred to "little dogs, household pets, who begged for the surplus morsels from the table." With faith like the nobleman's, the woman came back with: "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." It was enough. Her faith and "persistence and importunity in prayer" were rewarded when Jesus granted her petition.¹⁴

What lessons are these! Faith is tested. Persistence matters. Prayers are heard and answered. Well did Elder Holland teach: "Untested faith isn't much faith at all. We say we are built upon the rock of Christ. Well, we had better be, because life has its storms and squalls, and a sandy foundation simply will not hold when the wind blows, and the rain descends, and the floods come."¹⁵

ENDNOTES

1 Consider the following article if the subject of archaeology interests you: C. Thomas McCollough, “Searching for Cana: Where Jesus Turned Water into Wine,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 41, no. 6 (Nov./Dec. 2015): 31–39.

2 Boyd K. Packer, “Prayers and Answers,” *Ensign* (Nov. 1979), Gospel Library.

3 Reyna I. Aburto, “We Are the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” *Liabona* (May 2022), Gospel Library.

4 Tracy Y. Browning, “Seeing More of Jesus Christ in Our Lives,” *Liabona* (Nov. 2022), Gospel Library.

5 Neil L. Andersen, “It’s a Miracle,” *Liabona* (May 2013), Gospel Library.

6 Other notable talks include the following: **L. Tom Perry**, “Go Ye Therefore, and Teach All Nations,” *Ensign* (May 1984), Gospel Library; **Joseph B. Wirthlin**, “Without Guile,” *Ensign* (May 1988), Gospel Library; **Jeffrey R. Holland**, “He Hath Filled the Hungry with Good Things,” *Liabona* (Nov. 1997), Gospel Library; **Russell M. Nelson**, “Be Thou an Example of the Believers,” *Liabona* (Nov. 2010), Gospel Library; **David A. Bednar**, “Come and See,” *Liabona* (Nov. 2014), Gospel Library; and the following talks by **Dieter F. Uchtdorf**, “Fourth Floor, Last Door,” *Liabona* (Nov. 2016), Gospel Library; “Believe, Love, Do,” *Liabona* (Nov. 2018), Gospel Library; “Missionary Work: Sharing What Is in Your Heart,” *Liabona* (May 2019), Gospel Library; “Come and Belong,” *Liabona* (May 2020), Gospel Library; and “God Will Do Something Unimaginable,” *Liabona* (Nov. 2020), Gospel Library.

7 Howard W. Hunter, “The God That Doest Wonders,” *Ensign* (May 1989), Gospel Library.

8 For background ideas and things to consider regarding the story of Jesus turning water into wine, see the following: **Frederic William Farrar**, “The First Miracle,” in *The Life of Christ* (Madrid: HardPress, 2018), chap. 11, Kindle; **Bruce R. McConkie**, “Jesus Turns Water into Wine,” in *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1965), 1:115–17; **James E. Talmage**, “The Miracle at Cana in Galilee,” in *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Intellectual Reserve Inc., 2006), chap. 11, Gospel Library.

9 See Matthew 14:13–21, Mark 6:31–44, Luke 9:12–17, and John 6:1–14.

10 Elder Talmage wrote: “The noun of address, ‘Woman,’ as applied by a son to his mother may sound to our ears somewhat harsh, if not disrespectful; but its use was really an expression of opposite import. To every son the mother ought to be preeminently the woman of women; she is the one woman in the world to whom the son owes his earthly existence; and though the title ‘Mother’ belongs to every woman who has earned the honors of maternity, yet to no child is there more than one woman whom by natural right he can address by that title of respectful acknowledgment. When, in the last dread scenes of His mortal experience, Christ hung in dying agony upon the cross, He looked down upon the weeping Mary, His mother, and commended her to the care of the beloved apostle John, with the words: ‘Woman, behold thy son!’ Can it be thought that in this supreme moment, our Lord’s concern for the mother from whom He was about to be separated by death was associated with any emotion other than that of honor, tenderness and love?” See Talmage, “The Miracle at Cana in Galilee.”

11 McConkie, “Jesus Turns Water into Wine.”

12 Farrar, “The First Miracle.”

13 I put the word *down* in these verses in italics to emphasize the drop in elevation from Cana of Galilee to the Sea of Galilee, which is some 686 feet (209 meters) below sea level (see map on page 111).

14 McConkie, “Jesus Heals a Gentile’s Daughter,” in *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:328–29.

15 Jeffrey R. Holland, “Worldwide Devotional for Young Adults with the Hollands,” in *2023 Devotionals*, Jan. 2023, Gospel Library.