



Topic: Signs and Wonders. New Covenant. Bible Scriptures: John 20:31, John 2:1-11 and John 15:3.

## Water Into Wine

The apostle John stated his objective in writing His eye witness account of Jesus' earthly ministry in **John 20:31** '*...these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*'

His primary purpose was that we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the anointed one. He is God the Son who became flesh and dwelt amongst us, touching every aspect of human life, both private and public.

So the first sign that John includes revealing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God is an event that celebrates relationships. A wedding. It is a time when family, friends and the whole community come together to celebrate the union of two people.

In the culture at the time of writing a wedding could last 7 days. The cost is extensive. The resources needed immense. The public and private expectations were very high. Into this culture where shame or honour determine life, Jesus walks in.

## The New Wine

**John 2:1-11** *On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants,*

*"Whatever He says to you, do it." Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast." And they took it.*

*When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom.*



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*And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!" This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.*

## The Wonder of New Wine

As we journey through this real story I don't want us to lose the wonder of what Jesus did. We will discover there is much symbolism in the details comparing the old with the new, but let us not forget the beauty in the simple truth that Jesus turned water into wine because Jesus cares.

First let us look at the vessels Jesus used. There were six water pots of stone. Six is the number of man or humanity. According to the manner of purification of the Jews, these pots were set aside for outward cleansing.

In an era of dusty roads, sandals as footwear and eating of food with the right hand, it was essential for water pots to be set aside. These pots held the water used to cleanse the feet, hands, pots, cups and vessels from the dirt of the day. To the Jews outward cleansing was also a symbol of purification and honour.

Yet God revealed to them long ago that it was inward cleansing that is required. He declared that with a new covenant relationship, He would replace their heart of stone with a new heart. He will put His Spirit within them and deliver them from all uncleanness and shame.

In Jesus the new had come. The old had become new. Jesus used the stone ceremonial pots that represent humanity's hardness of heart and rebellion against God.

This is the great shame of humanity. Back in the beginning they tried to seize by force what God had already given to them. They had His image, His power and authority. They were as God as He gave them everything of Himself, including the stewardship of looking after His perfect creation.



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Yet they chose to overthrow God's authority and in doing so gave power to evil and their flesh. They enthroned themselves and chose to determine for themselves what was good and what was evil. As a result they used the gift of God's world for their own self-gain.

Shame and fear enveloped them. They ran from God. They disrespected Him and each other. The man blamed God for his selfish actions, the woman blamed Satan for her selfish actions and both became trapped in a web of lies.

What was God's response?

God never changes. He still loves them and continues to pursue them in love, to reveal both His love for them and their need to be set free. God does everything out of love, to restore honour and freedom to humanity.

So Jesus used old stone vessels that were set aside for outward cleanliness and said to the servants, fill the water pots with water. The servants filled them to the brim. Jesus told the servants to draw some out and give to the master of the feast. The water was not only turned into wine, but into wine of the most excellent quality. Far superior to anything ever experienced before.

At a later time recorded in John's gospel, Jesus declares over all His disciples **John 15:3** *'You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.'*

At the first Pentecost after Jesus ascended into heaven, He poured out His Spirit upon all flesh. It was a sign of a new experience of daily inward renewal and eternal life transformation.

**Water into wine, old into new, religion into relationship.**

Shame Into Honour

Second let us turn to the concern of Jesus' mother. In this shame-based culture if a wedding ran out of wine, the humiliation brought onto the families associated with the wedding would remain with them for years.

Jesus knew He had come to pay the cost for humanity's shame. However that would be at a later time on the cross.



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Where He would give up His life and die the most public shameful death devised by humanity, at the hands of humanity. Jesus knew that time would come.

Remember believing and receiving Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God was John's intent in writing his account of Jesus' life. The divine who became a man. In turning the water into wine His glory was manifested and as a result the disciples believed.

Jesus used the physical realm to open the eyes of humanity into the spiritual realm. In a practical way Heaven came down to earth in Jesus and smashed through the religious barriers and shame of humanity.

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*Jesus turned the shame of humanity into honour.*

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I remember listening to the life of a man who grew up in abject poverty. He said the physical hardship of not enough food to fill his belly or not enough clothes to keep him warm was not his greatest challenge. The thing he resented most about being poor was the shame. Humanity looks to the outward appearance and makes judgements through their selfish heart of stone. No one would acknowledge him as a person. He had no place, no voice and no value. All because he was born into poverty. The one thing he desired above all else was respect or honour. Jesus restored his honour.

**Water into wine, old into new, shame into honour.**

## Exclusion Into Inclusion

Thirdly Jesus invites all to participate in His wonders. He could have simply commanded the wine into existence just as He said, Let there be light and there was light. But instead He included the servants and asked them to fill the water pots. Jesus empowered them to be part of His wonders.

Jesus used humanity's cultural structure to empower the ones at the lowest end. The servants were not participating in the wedding. They were not guests they are servants. In the culture of the time servants are on the low end of the social scale.



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It is the servants who are empowered. They participated in the miracle and knew where the choice wine had come from and who was responsible.

This is a beautiful picture of the Kingdom of God. How the lowest in man's kingdom is raised up into a community of inclusion and equality.

**Water into wine, old into new, exclusion into inclusion.**

## Temporary Into Eternal

Fourth the wine had run out. The immediate response of Jesus' mother was to turn to the One she knew was eternal. The things of this world are only temporary. They last for a moment. In Jesus there is a continuous eternal supply of fullness of life. Everyday is a new day to receive more from Him and of Him, living by His Spirit and not by the flesh. Living in complete freedom in constant communion with the divine.

**Water into wine, old into new, temporary into eternal.**

Throughout His earthly ministry Jesus reveals that when custom, culture and traditions of man oppress, shame, prohibit and exclude others, they have been corrupted.

Jesus does not come against the social structure, He redefines it. He does not condemn the cleansing ritual, He transforms it. He does not cover the shame, He removes it with honour. He does not approve of exclusion, He includes all. He does not ignore the temporary need, He fulfils it eternally.

The new is poured out for all who are willing. On the cross He made a way for us to enter into a new freedom and intimacy with the Living God. To enter into a place of honour and inclusion. Everyday continually receiving and living in the flow of His Spirit.

Jesus the Christ, the Son of God turned water into wine, old into new, religion into relationship, shame into honour, exclusion into inclusion and temporal into eternal. There is none like Him.