



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

Water Into Wine and the Wedding

The apostle John's objective in writing His eye witness account of Jesus' earthly ministry was as he stated in chapter 20 verse 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 may believe that Jesus is the Christ, that is the anointed one. Who is God the Son who became flesh and dwelt amongst humanity, touching every aspect of human life. Both private and public.

So the first sign that John included in his gospel to reveal that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is an event that celebrates relationships. A wedding where family and friends are invited. It is a time when the whole community comes together to celebrate a union of two who become one.

In eastern culture a wedding could last up to 7 days. The cost is extensive. The resources immense. The public and private expectations are extremely high. Into this culture where shame or honour determine everything, Jesus walks in.

John 2:1-11

Let us pray: Father thank you that by your Spirit you bring revelation into our hearts and minds. We thank you that you are always desiring us to know and experience you, and to live in the reality of your truth. May we never lose the wonder of you. In Jesus' name, amen.

As we journey through this real story, and discover the rich symbolism in the details comparing the old with the new, let us not forget the beauty in the simple truth that Jesus turned water into wine.

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 inward cleansing is what is required. He declared that with a new covenant relationship, He will replace their hearts of stone with a new heart. He will put His Spirit within them and deliver them from all uncleanness and shame.



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In Jesus, the new covenant and fulfilment of that promise had come. The old had become new. Jesus used six stone ceremonial pots that represented humanity. That is their hardness of heart and rebellion against God.

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

Yet humanity chose to usurp God's authority and in doing so, gave power to evil and their selfish desires. 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 perfect world for their own self gain.

Shame and fear enveloped them. As a result 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.

They now were living in the reality of what they had chosen to partake of, which was to become one with both good and evil. They had given power to their selfish desires and evil to rule over them. As a result of their choice, they activated evil and death into God's once perfect world.

What was God's response? God never changes. He still loves them and continues to pursue them and every individual in love. To reveal both His love for them and their need to be set free. As God is love He continues to do everything out of love, all to restore honour and freedom to humanity.

So Jesus used old stone vessels that were set aside for outward cleanliness. He 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 it to the master of the feast. The water was not only turned into wine, but into wine of the most excellent quality. A wine far superior to anything ever experienced before.

At a later time recorded in John's gospel, Jesus declares over all His disciples, *'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.



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The second aspect of what we can discover about Jesus and God from this miracle of Jesus turning water into wine is evident in the concern that Jesus' mother has. In her 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. But He knew that that time had not yet come. That time would come on the cross. When He would willingly give up His life and die the most public shameful death devised by humanity, at the hands of humanity. There was much Jesus was to do on earth before that time.

Remember believing and receiving Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, was John's intent in writing his account of Jesus' life. To reveal that the divine had become a man and in all power and authority of the creator, He willingly laid it all down and subjected Himself to the full human condition. To sacrifice His physical life to set humanity free.

In turning the water into wine Jesus' glory was manifested and 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 the shame of humanity. Jesus turned the shame of humanity into honour.

I remember listening to the life of a man who grew up in extreme poverty. He said the physical hardship of not having enough food to fill his belly each day or not having enough clothes to keep him warm was not his greatest challenge. The thing he resented the most about being poor was the shame.

Humanity looks to the outward appearance and makes judgements through their selfish hearts of stone. No one would acknowledge the man born into poverty as a person. This world damaged by evil gives no place, no voice and no value to the economically poor. All this shame was because he was born into poverty. The one thing that he desired above all else was respect or honour as a person.

Jesus restores honour and takes away shame.

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

Thirdly we can also discover about Jesus and God from this miracle, that 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 a part of His wonders.



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

Yet it is the servants who were 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.

The fourth detail that reveals the heart of God and Jesus is that the wine had run out. The things of this world are only temporary. They last for but a moment.

Out of the revelation of who Jesus is, the immediate response of Jesus' mother was to turn to the One she knew was eternal. 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 being controlled and dominated by the selfish desires of humanity. This is living in true freedom, to be in constant communion with the divine. Each day surrendering our self-will to that of the Father's will and drinking freely His living waters.

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

Throughout Jesus' earthly ministry He revealed that when custom, culture and traditions of man have been corrupted by humanity, they oppress, shame, prohibit and exclude others. This is the opposite to God and His kingdom.

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

The new wine, that is God's Living Waters, is poured out for all, upon all flesh. It is our free choice to be willing to receive and believe. On the cross Jesus made a way for us to enter into a new freedom and intimacy. A place of honour and inclusion. Everyday continually receiving and living in the flow of His Spirit. Being surrendered to the Father's will, living in His unending love, liberating truth and transforming power.

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.