



## NEW BEGINNINGS CHRISTIAN CHURCH GOLD COAST, QUEENSLAND

QUALIFIED FOR EVERY BLESSING BECAUSE  
OF THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS

### WATER INTO WINE

Turning the water into wine was the first sign performed by Jesus. He and His disciples were invited to a wedding in Cana. Unlike John the Baptist, Jesus was not an ascetic; He came 'eating and drinking'. He was no party-pooper. He didn't stand alone in a corner drinking cordial, judging those who were making merry. He celebrated with them. And for good reason, as we shall see.

Weddings were big social occasions. All eyes would have been on the host to see whether he would excel or disappoint. Would he put on a lavish banquet; or would the reception be remembered for its scantiness? This wedding was in full swing when the servants suddenly realised they were out of wine. What a disaster! This would have meant public shame for the wedding couple.

Jesus' mother turned to Him for help. He told the servants to fill six water pots with water. Each pot contained 20-30 gallons, i.e. a total of 120-180 gallons. As the servants began to pour, the water turned into wine. Someone said, 'The water saw its God and blushed!'

John sums up this event with these words: 'This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him' (John 2:11 NKJV). Jesus did many miracles, but John selects seven of these and calls them 'signs' and shares his gospel account around these. A sign is a miracle with a message. The seven signs reveal different aspects of His glory so that we might believe in Him and put our trust in Him (John 20:30&31).

So what is the message of this sign? The clue is to be found in the purpose of the water jars: 'Now there were set there six water pots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews...' (John 2:6 NKJV). These stone jars normally held water used for ceremonial cleansing of hands and feet which was an important part of old covenant life.

These jars were empty. They needed to be regularly filled because under the law people would constantly need to be cleansed. It's interesting to note that there were six jars, the number symbolising that which is incomplete.

What Jesus did signified that He was about to change the stone, cold, empty way of man's religion into a living and joyful relationship with Him – likened to a wedding celebration. The water, representing the continuous need for cleansing under the old covenant, has been replaced by wine, the symbol of the new covenant. As new covenant people we are not trying to cleanse ourselves; we are celebrating the fact that we are totally and permanently clean!

#### **The new covenant is a covenant of excellence and abundance**

Usually at weddings the best wine would be served first. Then when guests were intoxicated and unable to tell the difference they would serve inferior wine. But the master of the banquet said this wine was superior to the wine they had served earlier. This is a beautiful picture of the fact that God has saved the best until last. 'But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises' (Hebrews 8:6). As new covenant people we are highly favoured to be living in the dispensation of God's grace!

Not only is this covenant vastly superior to the old covenant, it is also characterised by lavish abundance. Just think of it, there were 180 gallons of wine. If there were 90 guests that would have provided 2 gallons of wine for each person. Much more than enough! Just like the abundance of grace we have in Christ. We have grace upon grace. He has brought us into His banqueting house and our cup runs over.



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## WATER INTO WINE – P2

### The two covenants contrasted

Let's look at the excellence of the new covenant more closely.

The old covenant was with Israel; the new is with a spiritual nation comprising men and women from every tribe, nation, people and tongue

The old covenant was temporary and is now obsolete; the new is eternal

The old covenant had a fading glory; the new has an ever-increasing glory

The old covenant was written with ink on tablets of stone; the new is written by the Spirit on hearts of flesh

The old covenant consists of shadows; the new reveals the substance

The old covenant prescribes a daily routine; the new announces a finished work

Under the old covenant there was a continuous offering of sacrifices; under the new there is just one sacrifice once for all

The old covenant says, 'Do'; the new says, 'Done' The old covenant covers sin; the new has taken away our sin

The old covenant purifies the flesh; the new cleanses the conscience

The old covenant reminds us of sin; under the new there is no remembrance of sin

The old covenant is a ministry of condemnation; the new is a ministry of righteousness

The old covenant kills; the new makes alive

The old covenant says, 'The wages of sin is death'; the new says, 'The gift of God is eternal life'

The old covenant condemns even the best; the new saves even the worst

The old covenant perfected nothing; the new has perfected us for ever

Under the old covenant we are cursed; under the new we are blessed

The old covenant commands a day of rest; the new provides a life of rest

Under the old covenant a veil separates people from God; under the new the veil is rent



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The old covenant says, 'Don't come near, or you will die'; the new says, 'Draw near with confidence'

Under the old covenant you need a priesthood; under the new you are the priesthood

Under the old covenant you go to the temple; under the new you are the temple

Under the old covenant selected people are anointed; under the new all are anointed

The old covenant brings bondage; the new brings freedom  
The old covenant is flesh-appealing; the new is Spirit-empowering

The old covenant gives rules to regulate behaviour; under the new the Spirit transforms the heart

Under the old covenant we are married to the law; under the new we are married to Christ

The old covenant is inadequate; under the new we are sufficient for all things

The old covenant has conditional promises; the new has better promises

The old covenant says, 'You shall'; under the new God says, 'I will

'Yes, He changed the water into wine!

*Ken Legg*