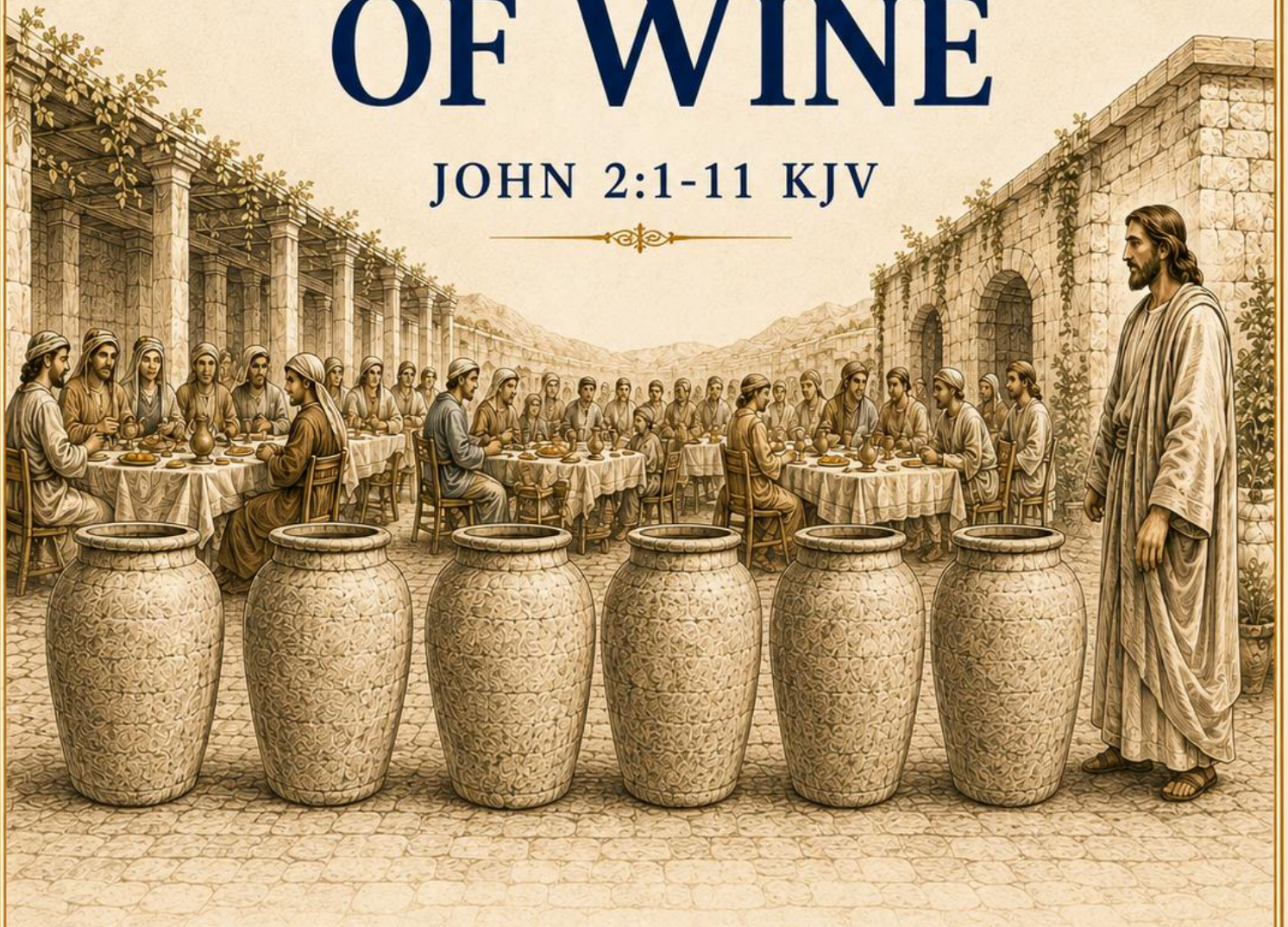


REASON TOGETHER CHURCH

AN ABUNDANCE OF WINE

JOHN 2:1-11 KJV



Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley
Pastor & Teacher

www.ReasonTogether.Church

REASON TOGETHER CHURCH
SERMON TRANSCRIPT

An Abundance of Wine

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Bring your questions. Open your Bible. Let's Reason Together the Word of God.

Aloha,

Welcome to Reason Together Church.

I am genuinely glad that you are here today.

Whether you are with us in the room or joining us online, thank you for opening the Word of God with us.

If this is your first time, please know that you are among friends.

You do not have to agree with everything before you ask an honest question.

You do not have to hide the parts of the Bible that puzzle you.

And you never have to be embarrassed because you want to look at a familiar passage more carefully.

Our invitation is the same every week.

Bring your questions.

Open your Bible.

Let's Reason Together the Word of God.

Before we begin, let's pray.

Father,

Thank You for giving us Your Word.

Thank You for the details You inspired the writers of Scripture to preserve.

Slow us down today so that we do not hurry past something important simply because the story is familiar.

Help us distinguish what the passage clearly says from what we may reasonably infer.

Guard us from forcing symbolism into every number or object.

But also guard us from overlooking the signs You deliberately placed before us.

Most of all, help us see Jesus.

Let His glory become clearer.

Let our faith become stronger.

And let our response be sincere obedience to whatever He says.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

Before we open our primary text, I want to take care of a few family matters.

We do not pass a plate at Reason Together Church.

If you are our guest, there is absolutely no expectation that you give.

If you are a member of another church, we encourage you to continue giving faithfully through your home church.

For those who consider Reason Together Church their church home, there is a giving box in the back and there are other ways to give if the Lord leads you to do so.

There is no pressure and no compulsion.

The Bible teaches that God loveth a cheerful giver.

Giving is worship, and worship should come from a willing heart.

We are also honored by every guest who has joined us today.

Thank you for trusting us with part of your day.

We have a guest card available, but we only ask for your first name and email address.

That simply allows us to thank you for coming and to make ourselves available if you have a question.

Our Keiki Kids Center is also available for families who would find it helpful.

And after the service, please join us at the Reason Together Café.

The coffee is free.

And so are the refills on the conversations.

Today we are returning to one of the most familiar miracles in the Bible.

Many of us learned it as children.

Jesus went to a wedding.

The wine ran out.

Jesus turned water into wine.

That summary is true.

But it is so brief that it can hide nearly everything John wants us to notice.

John does not merely tell us that Jesus made wine.

He tells us when it happened.

He tells us where it happened.

He tells us what kind of vessels were used.

He tells us why those vessels were there.

He tells us how large they were.

He tells us they were filled to the brim.

He tells us the quality of what Jesus produced.

He tells us who knew the source and who did not.

And finally, John tells us what the entire event revealed.

The title of today's study is:

An Abundance of Wine.

And our central question is:

Why did Jesus make so much wine?

Please open your Bible to John chapter 2.

We will begin with verse 1.

John writes:

“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.”

“And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.”

“Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.”

“His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.”

“And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.”

“Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.”

“And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.”

“When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was:”

“But the servants which drew the water knew; the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,”

“And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine;”

“And when men have well drunk, then that which is worse:”

“But thou hast kept the good wine until now.”

“This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory;”

“And his disciples believed on him.”

There is our passage.

There is the first sign recorded in John's Gospel.

And there is much more happening than a shortage of refreshments.

Let us begin where the people at the wedding began.

They had a celebration.

They had a bridegroom.

They had invited guests.

They had food.

They had wine.

And then something essential ran out.

Mary said it in five simple words:

“They have no wine.”

That sentence would have carried more weight in Cana than it usually carries in our hearing.

If refreshments run out at a modern reception, someone may be embarrassed.

Someone may make an emergency trip to the store.

The guests may joke about it for a few days.

But an ancient wedding joined families and involved the surrounding community.

The celebration could continue for several days, and hospitality was a public responsibility.

The bridegroom and his family were expected to provide adequately for those they had invited.

Running out of wine could bring humiliation upon the bridegroom.

It could bring shame upon the family.

And in a small community, that failure might be remembered long after the wedding ended.

This was not simply an empty cup.

It was a threatening disgrace.

The interesting thing is that most of the guests apparently did not know.

The ruler of the feast did not know.

The celebration had not yet collapsed.

The bridegroom had not yet been publicly confronted.

But the provision was gone.

There are moments when the music is still playing even though the supply has already run out.

The room looks normal, but beneath the surface someone knows there is not enough.

The strength, patience, money or answer is gone, and the people nearby may not know.

Mary brought the need to Jesus.

She did not give Him a detailed proposal.

She did not tell Him how many gallons to produce.

She did not tell Him what method to use.

She said:

“They have no wine.”

That is a worthy model for prayer.

We may bring the need to Christ without pretending that we know the best solution.

Lord, here is the shortage.

Lord, here is the weakness.

Lord, here is the place where our provision has ended.

Lord, here is what we cannot repair.

And then Jesus answered His mother:

“Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.”

To modern ears, the word “Woman” can sound cold.

It was not an insult in that culture.

Jesus would use the same form of address tenderly from the cross.

But it did establish something important.

Jesus was no longer acting merely as Mary’s son in an earthly household.

His public ministry would unfold according to His Father’s will and His Father’s timing.

And then He mentioned His hour.

That seems like an enormous response to a shortage at a wedding.

Mary said they had no wine.

Jesus spoke of His hour.

Why?

Because in John’s Gospel, the hour points forward.

John chapter 7 says that no man laid hands on Him because His hour was not yet come.

John chapter 8 says the same.

Then in John chapter 12, Jesus says:

“The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.”

In John chapter 13, Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father.

And in John chapter 17, He prayed:

“Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son.”

The hour ultimately leads us to the cross, the resurrection and the glorification of Christ.

That means Jesus looked at the need for wine and saw more than the immediate need.

He saw the sign in relation to the mission.

He saw Cana in relation to Calvary.

At Cana, He said to Mary:

“Woman...mine hour is not yet come.”

At Calvary, when the hour had come, He said:

“Woman, behold thy son!”

Mary stands near the beginning of the signs.

Mary stands near the cross.

And the first sign is performed beneath the shadow of an hour that is still coming.

We should be careful here.

John does not explicitly say that every drop of Cana's wine represented Christ's blood.

We do not need to claim more than the passage claims.

But neither should we miss the direction John gives us.

This sign reveals glory before the hour of glory fully arrives.

Then Mary turned to the servants and spoke her final recorded words in Scripture:

"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

That is a remarkably fitting final word from Mary.

She did not say:

Do whatever I tell you.

She said:

Do whatever He tells you.

She did not make herself the center.

She directed the servants toward Christ.

And those words sound very much like something spoken centuries earlier.

During the famine in Egypt, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread.

Genesis 41:55 says:

"And Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do."

We should call this a possible echo rather than a proven quotation.

But the resemblance is striking.

In Genesis, the people lacked bread.

In John, the wedding lacked wine.

In Genesis, the people were directed to the appointed son, Joseph.

In John, the servants were directed to Jesus.

Joseph opened storehouses filled through God-given wisdom.

Jesus created provision where no provision remained.

In both accounts, obedience stood between the shortage and the provision.

The servants at Cana were not given an explanation.

Jesus did not say:

I am about to perform the first sign of My public ministry.

He did not say:

This will reveal My glory to My disciples.

He gave instructions.

And they obeyed.

There is a difference between needing understanding and demanding control.

God welcomes sincere questions.

That is one reason we are Reason Together Church.

But sometimes we already understand enough to obey.

We may not know what God will do after the next faithful step.

But we know what He has told us to do now.

Forgive, tell the truth, pray, serve, give thanks, love your neighbor and trust Christ.

The servants did not understand the ending, but they obeyed the instruction in front of them.

Here is one thought I want you to remember:

The miracle began where the provision ended, but the servants entered it where obedience began.

Then John directs our attention to the vessels.

Verse 6 says:

“And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews.”

John could have written that there were six containers nearby.

That would have been enough to move the story forward.

But John deliberately tells us what they were made of.

Stone.

He deliberately tells us why they were there.

They were connected with Jewish purification.

In the purity customs of the period, stone vessels held a special place.

Earthen vessels could become ceremonially unclean and might have to be broken.

Stone was treated differently.

That makes these vessels historically appropriate for water associated with purification.

An early reader familiar with Jewish life would not picture six decorative flowerpots.

These were substantial vessels with a ceremonial purpose.

They spoke of washing, uncleanness and the holiness of God.

We must be careful not to dishonor what God had taught through purification.

The lesson is not that everything Jewish was bad and Jesus replaced it with something Christian.

Jesus, Mary, the disciples and the wedding were Jewish.

And the purity practices reminded the people of an important truth.

God is holy.

Uncleanness matters.

Cleansing is necessary.

But ceremonial water could only accomplish ceremonial washing.

It could wash the hands.

It could address ritual impurity.

It could not cleanse a guilty conscience.

It could not remove sin from the heart.

It could not make a person new.

The waterpots taught the need for cleansing.

Jesus came to provide the cleansing toward which every faithful ceremony pointed.

So I would say it this way:

Jesus did not despise what the waterpots represented.

He fulfilled what they anticipated.

And He used vessels associated with purification to contain the abundance of Messianic celebration.

The kind of vessel matters.

The material matters.

The former purpose matters.

The wine did not appear in random buckets.

It appeared where purification water had stood.

Now some interpreters go much farther.

Some say that six must symbolize incomplete humanity.

Some say that Jesus is a symbolic seventh waterpot.

Some say that each jar represents a day of creation.

Those ideas may be interesting.

But John does not tell us any of them.

We should never make a weak argument when the text has already given us a strong one.

The plain details are powerful enough.

They were stone.

They were used for purification.

They were enormous.

And Jesus chose them.

Then Jesus said:

“Fill the waterpots with water.”

The servants filled the first vessel.

Then another.

Then another.

All six had to be filled.

If each held approximately 20 to 30 gallons, that was physically demanding work.

Water had to be drawn.

Water had to be carried.

The servants had no hose to drag across the courtyard.

They did not turn a faucet and wait.

Their obedience required effort.

And perhaps at some point one of them wondered:

Why are we filling washing vessels when the problem is wine?

The instruction did not appear to match the need.

But they continued.

John says:

“And they filled them up to the brim.”

That phrase confirms the abundance.

It also closes the door on an ordinary explanation.

There was no room at the top to pour in a hidden supply of wine.

The servants knew what entered those vessels.

Water.

They drew it.

They carried it.

They filled every vessel.

And they filled them completely.

Here is another truth from Cana:

An empty vessel is not the end of the story when the Creator is standing beside it.

Someone may say:

But the vessels were not empty.

They were filled with water.

That is exactly the point.

They contained something ordinary that could not meet the present need.

The family did not need 150 gallons of washing water.

They needed what only Christ could provide.

There are times when our lives are full of things that cannot answer the deepest need.

Full schedules.

Full accounts.

Full houses.

Full calendars.

Full religious routines.

Yet something essential remains missing.

Only Christ can perform the transformation that the situation requires.

Let us consider the quantity.

Six vessels.

Two or three firkins apiece.

Modern estimates vary somewhat because ancient measures were not identical everywhere.

But the familiar calculation is approximately 120 to 180 gallons.

Think about that.

Jesus could have made one pitcher.

He could have supplied one table.

He could have produced enough for the ruler to announce that the emergency was over.

Instead, He told the servants to fill all six vessels.

And He told them to fill them to the brim.

We should not say more than we know.

We do not know how many guests were present.

We do not know how many days remained in the celebration.

We do not know how much the wedding would eventually use.

We do not know what happened to any wine remaining afterward.

Therefore, we should not insist that Jesus made more wine than the wedding could possibly need.

But we can say this without hesitation:

He made wine in unmistakable abundance.

The amount was not incidental.

The amount was part of the sign.

The God revealed in this passage is not struggling to stretch a final cup among too many people.

When Christ provided, scarcity gave way to abundance.

Then Jesus gave the servants another instruction.

Verse 8 says:

“Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast.”

That may have been the hardest instruction of all.

Filling waterpots with water made sense by itself.

But drawing from a purification vessel and carrying it to the ruler of a wedding feast was another matter.

What if it was still water?

What if the ruler tasted it and demanded an explanation?

What if the servants were blamed?

What if they were publicly humiliated while trying to prevent the bridegroom’s humiliation?

But John says:

“And they bare it.”

They carried what Jesus told them to carry.

They placed it before the person Jesus named.

And the water had become wine.

When did the transformation occur?

The text does not tell us.

Was it while the water stood in the vessels?

Was it while the servants drew it?

Was it while they carried it?

John does not say.

We know only that water went into the vessels and wine reached the ruler.

Sometimes we spend so much time asking when God acted that we miss the evidence that He acted.

Now we must address the question that often takes over this passage.

Was it wine or grape juice?

The Greek word John uses is oinos.

That is the normal word for wine.

By itself, one word may not settle every conceivable use.

Context matters.

And the context here strongly favors ordinary fermented wine.

The ruler treated it as wine.

He compared it with the wine that had been served earlier.

He evaluated it according to quality.

And he described the common practice of serving good wine first, then inferior wine after people had well drunk.

That statement makes natural sense in reference to fermented wine.

The ruler was not necessarily accusing the guests at that wedding of being drunk.

He was describing a familiar banquet practice.

People served the finest wine while their guests' senses were sharp.

Later, after they had drunk freely, an inferior wine might pass without the same scrutiny.

But the word of God is equally clear that drunkenness is sin.

Ephesians 5:18 says:

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”

The fact that Jesus made wine does not command every Christian to drink it.

It does not condemn someone who abstains.

It does not erase questions of conscience, health, addiction, medication or personal history.

And it certainly does not excuse intoxication.

We have addressed those matters in our earlier study about alcohol.

We do not need to preach that entire study again today.

Here, we can simply respect the text.

John calls it wine.

The ruler treats it as wine.

The context describes wine.

And our principal question is not whether Jesus made it.

Our principal question is why He made so much of it.

The ruler noticed something before he knew anything about the quantity.

He noticed the quality.

Verse 10 says:

“Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine;”

“And when men have well drunk, then that which is worse:”

“But thou hast kept the good wine until now.”

Jesus did not create something barely acceptable.

He did not produce a liquid that tasted as though it had been hurried.

He did not answer abundance with inferiority.

He supplied wine so excellent that an experienced ruler immediately recognized its quality.

There was abundance of quantity.

And there was abundance of quality.

That combination matters.

Sometimes human beings produce more by accepting less.

We stretch the recipe.

We dilute the product.

We lower the standard.

We say quantity has increased, but quality has disappeared.

That is not what happened at Cana.

Christ's abundance was not achieved by sacrificing excellence.

He provided a remarkable quantity of exceptional wine.

And the ruler said:

"Thou hast kept the good wine until now."

On the surface, that was a compliment to the earthly bridegroom.

The ruler assumed that the bridegroom had planned this surprising order.

He thought the bridegroom had stored the best wine and chosen the perfect moment to serve it.

But the bridegroom had not provided it.

Jesus had.

The earthly bridegroom received credit for a provision that came entirely from Christ.

Jesus protected him from shame.

Jesus supplied what he lacked.

Jesus allowed the celebration to continue.

And Jesus did not stand in the center of the room demanding recognition.

This was a quiet miracle.

No lightning crossed the ceiling.

No announcement interrupted the music.

No crowd gathered around the vessels.

The guests tasted the blessing without knowing its source.

The bridegroom received a compliment he had not earned.

Jesus covered the failure without exposing the one who failed.

That is a beautiful picture of grace.

Grace provides what we could not provide.

Grace protects us from the shame our insufficiency deserves.

Grace gives Christ the cost and allows us to receive the blessing.

We should not force every detail into an allegory.

But we should recognize the character of Jesus displayed in the event.

He was not indifferent to human embarrassment.

He cared about a family's joy.

He acted generously.

He acted quietly.

And He manifested His glory without humiliating the person whose provision had failed.

There is also a deeper meaning in the ruler's words:

"Thou hast kept the good wine until now."

The ruler meant:

You saved the finest wine until this point in the wedding.

But John's readers may hear something more.

God had kept His greatest provision until the coming of Christ.

John has already told us in chapter 1:

"And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace."

Then he says:

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

We must say this carefully.

The law was not bad wine.

The prophets were not inferior failures.

The ceremonies were not mistakes.

They were gifts from God.

The law revealed God's holiness.

The sacrifices revealed the seriousness of sin.

The purification practices revealed the need for cleansing.

The prophets gave promises that sustained generations.

But what they anticipated reached its fullness in Christ.

God gave real gifts through Moses.

God brought those gifts to their intended fullness through Jesus.

The best had been kept until now.

The shadow had prepared people for the substance.

The promise had prepared people for fulfillment.

The waterpots had taught the need for cleansing.

And now the One who truly cleanses was standing beside them.

There is another person in the story whom we should not overlook.

The bridegroom.

In that culture, the bridegroom bore responsibility for the feast.

The wine was his responsibility.

His supply had failed.

Yet Jesus stepped into the provider's role.

Jesus supplied the wine.

Jesus supplied it abundantly.

Jesus supplied the best.

Then the ruler called the earthly bridegroom and credited him for what Jesus had done.

Only one chapter later, John the Baptist says this about Jesus:

"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom."

That is John 3:29.

At the wedding in John 2, Jesus quietly performs the work of the bridegroom.

In John 3, Jesus is presented through bridegroom imagery.

The connection is powerful.

The earthly bridegroom could not provide enough.

The heavenly Bridegroom provided abundantly.

The earthly bridegroom faced shame.

The heavenly Bridegroom covered it.

The earthly bridegroom received the compliment.

The heavenly Bridegroom manifested the glory.

Here is another line worth carrying home:

The wedding ran out of wine, but heaven did not run out of provision.

That does not mean Christ promises to provide an unlimited supply of every earthly thing we desire.

This passage is not a blank check for luxury.

It is a sign revealing who Jesus is.

And the sign tells us that the true Bridegroom possesses everything necessary for the joy and salvation of His people.

Why wine?

Why a wedding?

Why such abundance?

Because readers who knew the prophets had heard language like this before.

Isaiah chapter 25 speaks of the Lord preparing a great feast.

Verse 6 says:

“And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things,”

“A feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow,”

“Of wines on the lees well refined.”

The passage continues with God swallowing up death in victory and wiping away tears from all faces.

That is not merely a prediction of better farming.

It is a picture of God’s saving reign.

Joel 3:18 says:

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk.”

Amos 9:13 says:

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper,”

“And the treader of grapes him that soweth seed;”

“And the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.”

The prophets pictured the coming restoration with abundance.

Not one shriveled grape.

Not one nearly empty cup.

Mountains dropping wine.

Hills flowing with blessing.

A feast prepared by the Lord.

Now come back to Cana.

A wedding feast.

The wine is gone.

Jesus arrives.

Six enormous vessels are filled to the brim.

The water becomes superior wine.

And His disciples see His glory.

Jesus did not stand before the crowd and announce:

I am the One of whom the prophets spoke.

He allowed the sign to speak.

The prophets had promised Messianic abundance.

The vessels at Cana now held abundance.

The quantity mattered because the abundance was prophetic language made visible.

The quality mattered because God had kept the best until now.

The setting mattered because the Messiah is the true Bridegroom.

The purification vessels mattered because Christ brings the cleansing that ceremonies anticipated.

Every major detail directs us toward Him.

There is also a creative dimension to the miracle.

Ordinary wine requires a process.

It begins with soil.

It requires water.

It requires sunlight.

It requires a vine.

It requires grapes.

It requires growth.

It requires harvest.

It requires fermentation.

And it requires time.

Jesus produced the finished result without waiting for the ordinary process.

How could He do that?

John answered before he ever brought us to Cana.

John 1:3 says:

“All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

The One standing beside those vessels had made water.

He had designed the grapevine.

He had established the processes through which grapes become wine.

He had created time itself.

The One who created the vine needed no vineyard.

The One who created the grape needed no harvest.

The One who created time did not need to wait.

Cana was not a magician's trick.

It was the Creator exercising authority within His own creation.

The miracle did not only demonstrate that Jesus could change one liquid into another.

It revealed who He was.

John also begins the account with an interesting phrase:

“And the third day.”

At the simplest level, John is locating the wedding within the sequence of days that began in chapter 1.

But the wording invites us to think.

John began his Gospel with:

“In the beginning.”

That deliberately echoes Genesis.

Then John repeatedly marks the passing of days.

Some readers see a new-creation pattern moving toward Cana.

The third day also carries other Biblical associations.

At Sinai, God told the people to prepare because He would come down in the sight of all the people upon the third day.

And the third day would become forever associated with the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Can we prove that John intended every one of those associations in John 2:1?

No.

We should not claim certainty where the text allows reflection.

But we should at least ask the Reason Together question.

Was John merely telling us the date?

Or was he preparing us to think about glory revealed on another third day?

At Cana, water became wine and Christ manifested His glory.

At the resurrection, death gave way to life and Christ's glory could no longer be hidden.

The association is worth considering even if we hold it with humility.

Now look carefully at verse 9.

John writes that the ruler tasted the water that was made wine:

“And knew not whence it was: but the servants which drew the water knew.”

That parenthetical statement is one of my favorite details in the passage.

The ruler was the expert.

The ruler held the recognized position.

The ruler could judge the quality.

But the ruler did not know the source.

The servants knew.

They knew because they had obeyed.
They knew because they had filled the vessels.
They knew because they had carried the cup.
They could not explain how Jesus had done it.
But they knew what had happened.
The ruler knew the wine was excellent.
The servants knew where it came from.
Here is the unique thought I want us to remember:
The guests tasted the gift, but the servants knew the Giver.
Everyone at the wedding benefited.
The guests drank the wine.
The family's shame was prevented.
The bridegroom received praise.
The celebration continued.
But most of them apparently did not know why.
That remains true in our world.
People enjoy life.
They enjoy rain and sunshine.
They enjoy food and friendship.
They enjoy music, beauty, family and laughter.
They taste the gifts of God without recognizing their source.
James says:
"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above."
The ruler recognized goodness.
The servants recognized the source.
And the disciples recognized glory.
There are levels of seeing in this passage.
The guests saw a celebration.
The ruler saw excellent wine.
The servants saw the result of obedience.
The disciples saw a sign pointing to Jesus.
What do we see?
Do we stop with the gift?

Do we merely evaluate whether it is pleasant?

Or do we follow the sign until we see the glory of the Giver?

John says:

“This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee.”

The word translated “miracles” carries the idea of signs.

A sign is not important only because of what it is.

It is important because of where it points.

If we stand beside a road sign and admire the paint without following its direction, we have missed its purpose.

The wine is extraordinary.

But the wine points beyond itself.

The quantity points beyond itself.

The quality points beyond itself.

The stone vessels point beyond themselves.

The wedding points beyond itself.

The bridegroom points beyond himself.

The third day points beyond itself.

They all direct our attention toward Jesus.

And John tells us what the sign accomplished:

It “manifested forth his glory.”

That language takes us back to John chapter 1.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,”

“And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,”

“Full of grace and truth.”

At Cana, His glory was not a bright light surrounding His body.

His glory was revealed through who He proved Himself to be.

The Creator.

The Provider.

The Purifier.

The promised Messiah.

The true Bridegroom.

The One whose hour would come.

And the One who supplies what human hands cannot provide.

Then John says:

“And his disciples believed on him.”

That is the proper response to the sign.

John does not say:

And His disciples became fascinated with wine.

He does not say:

And His disciples spent the rest of their lives measuring waterpots.

He says:

They believed on Him.

The sign accomplished its purpose when attention moved from the gift to the Giver.

Now let us gather the message into three forms of abundance.

First, there was abundance of quantity.

Approximately 120 to 180 gallons.

Six vessels.

Filled to the brim.

Scarcity gave way to provision.

Second, there was abundance of quality.

The ruler did not say:

At least we have something to serve.

He said:

“Thou hast kept the good wine until now.”

The provision was not merely large.

It was excellent.

Third, there was abundance of meaning.

The miracle spoke about creation.

It spoke about purification.

It spoke about prophecy.

It spoke about joy.

It spoke about grace.

It spoke about the Bridegroom.

It spoke about the coming hour.

It revealed glory.

The six vessels contained more than enough wine to attract our attention.

The sign contained enough truth to lead us to worship.
So why did Jesus make so much wine?
Because the abundance was part of the sign.
The prophets had promised a day of abundant blessing.
The Messiah had come.
The earthly bridegroom had run out.
The heavenly Bridegroom supplied.
The purification vessels had taught the need for cleansing.
The true Purifier stood beside them.
Human provision had ended.
Divine provision had only begun to be revealed.
And the best had been kept until now.
Before we close, let me give you several truths to carry home.

First:

Bring the need to Jesus.
Mary did not disguise the shortage.
She said:

“They have no wine.”

We do not honor Christ by pretending we have no need.

Bring Him the truth.

Bring Him the weakness.

Bring Him the place where your resources have ended.

Second:

Do whatever He says.

Do not use unanswered questions as an excuse to disobey what is already clear.

The servants did not know how the story would end.

They filled the vessels anyway.

Third:

Do not confuse ordinary content with sufficient provision.

The vessels could be full of water and still not contain what the wedding needed.

A life can be full and still be empty of Christ.

Fourth:

Remember that Jesus can cover shame without celebrating failure.

The shortage was real.

The bridegroom's insufficiency was real.

But Jesus did not humiliate him.

Christ supplied what was lacking and preserved the family's honor.

Fifth:

Do not stop with the gift.

The guests tasted the wine.

The servants knew the source.

The disciples saw the glory.

Follow every good gift back to the Giver.

And finally:

Trust the true Bridegroom.

Every earthly supply eventually runs out.

Every human provider has limitations.

Every celebration in this world eventually ends.

But Christ's saving provision is complete.

That brings us to the greatest need in the room.

It is not a shortage of wine.

It is the problem of sin.

Stone vessels cannot cleanse the human heart.

Ceremonial water cannot remove guilt before God.

Religious activity cannot create righteousness.

Good intentions cannot erase yesterday.

And none of us can provide our own salvation.

Romans 3:23 says:

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Our provision has run out.

Our righteousness is insufficient.

But heaven has not run out of provision.

Romans 5:8 says:

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Jesus went to the cross.

He paid the price for our sin.

He was buried.

And on the third day, He rose again.

The hour that had not yet come at Cana eventually came.

And when it came, Jesus did not merely protect one family from temporary embarrassment.

He bore our shame.

He carried our sin.

He satisfied the judgment we deserved.

And He opened the way to eternal life.

Salvation is not earned by becoming religious enough.

It is not earned by joining this church.

It is not earned by giving money.

It is not earned by winning an argument about wine.

Salvation is received by trusting Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:9 says:

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,”

“And shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead,”

“Thou shalt be saved.”

If you have never trusted Christ as your Savior, you can do that today.

You do not need special words.

You need sincere faith in Jesus.

But if it would help you express that faith, you may pray with me now.

Father,

I know that I am a sinner.

I know that I cannot cleanse my own heart or save myself.

I believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins.

I believe that He was buried and rose again.

I am trusting Jesus, and Jesus alone, as my Savior.

Forgive me.

Save me.

Give me the eternal life You promised.

Thank You for Your grace.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

If you prayed that today and sincerely trusted Christ, please speak with me after the service.

If you are watching online, please reach out to us through www.ReasonTogether.Church.

We would be honored to pray with you, answer your questions and help you begin growing in the Word of God.

For those who already know Christ, do not leave Cana in the past.

Take its question into this week.

When something runs out, ask whether Christ may be revealing an insufficiency you were never meant to hide.

When His instruction is clear, obey before you demand to know every detail of the outcome.

And when goodness reaches your life, do not merely taste the gift.

Recognize the Giver.

Share this study gently.

Do not begin by arguing with someone about alcohol.

Ask the more interesting question:

Why did Jesus make approximately 120 to 180 gallons?

Then read the passage together.

Notice the stone vessels.

Notice the purification.

Notice the brim.

Notice the quality.

Notice the bridegroom.

Notice the servants.

Notice the glory.

And let the sign do what John intended it to do.

Let it point someone toward Jesus.

Let's pray.

Father,

Thank You for the wedding at Cana.

Thank You for preserving details that teach us to slow down and look again.

Thank You that when human provision ended, Christ remained sufficient.

Thank You that He provided abundantly and gave what was best.

Thank You that He did not publicly shame the family whose supply had failed.

Thank You for the servants who obeyed before they understood.

Make us people who do whatever Christ says.

Thank You for the purification vessels and for the greater cleansing we receive through Jesus.

Thank You for the prophets who promised the abundance of Your kingdom.

Thank You for the true Bridegroom who supplies everything necessary for His bride.

Help us never become so interested in the wine that we miss the glory.

Help us never become so fascinated by the gift that we forget the Giver.

For anyone carrying a hidden shortage today, give that person courage to bring the truth to You.

For anyone who has never trusted Christ, draw that person to saving faith.

And for those of us who know You, make us faithful servants who obey Your Word and quietly carry Your provision to others.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

Before you leave, if you have a question about this study, salvation, the Bible or something entirely different, please come talk with me.

That is one reason we are here.

Please join us at the Reason Together Café.

There is free coffee and there are free refills on the conversations.

Take this study with you and share it as an invitation, not as a weapon.

You may encounter someone who wants to debate what was in the vessels.

Respect the question, answer it honestly and then invite that person to look at everything else John included.

The quantity mattered.

The stone mattered.

The purification mattered.

The quality mattered.

The Bridegroom mattered.

The servants mattered.

But above all, Jesus mattered.

The wedding ran out of wine, but heaven did not run out of provision.

The guests tasted the gift, the servants knew the source and the disciples saw the glory.

May we do all three.

May we receive His gifts with gratitude.

May we recognize their source.

And may we believe more deeply in the One to whom every sign points.

Thank you for reasoning together with us today.

May the Lord bless thee, and keep thee:

The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

And to our first-time guests especially, thank you for honoring us with your presence today.

Aloha Nui Loa.

REASON TOGETHER STUDIES

**PASTOR'S
COMMENTARY
AN ABUNDANCE OF WINE**

Why Did Jesus Make So Much Wine?

John 2:1-11; Isaiah 25:6-9; Amos 9:13-14; Joel 3:18; John 1:14-17; John 3:29 KJV

“This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory...”

John 2:11

Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley

Pastor & Teacher

Commentary in Brief

CENTRAL CONCLUSION John 2 most naturally describes Jesus turning water into actual fermented wine. The ordinary meaning of the Greek oinos, the wedding setting and the ruler's observation about banquet practice all point in that direction. Yet John does not present the event in order to settle a modern argument about beverage alcohol. He calls it Jesus' first sign and tells us exactly what the sign accomplished: it manifested Christ's glory and led His disciples to believe on Him.

The quantity and the vessels are important parts of the narrative. Six stone waterpots used in Jewish purification, each holding two or three firkins, were filled to the brim. A common rounded conversion produces roughly 120 to 180 American gallons, although another responsible calculation gives approximately 108 to 162 gallons. Ancient measures do not permit modern precision, but every defensible estimate describes astonishing abundance.

The stone vessels belong to the material culture of Jewish purity practice. Archaeology confirms that stone vessels were widely used by Jews in the late Second Temple period because stone was treated as resistant to ritual impurity. John does not say the vessels were evil or that Judaism was the bad wine. Jesus uses vessels associated with purification to provide the joy of the feast, suggesting fulfillment and transformation without inviting contempt for Israel's practices.

The event also resonates with the prophets, who pictured the age of salvation as a feast of rich wine and a restored land overflowing with wine. John then develops Jesus as the true Bridegroom and Provider. The ruler credits the human bridegroom for the excellent wine, but the reader knows that Jesus is the hidden source. The guests taste the gift, the servants know where it came from and the disciples see the glory of the Giver.

The Commentary therefore preserves a clear interpretive order. Establish what the text states. Explain the cultural details. Recognize strong canonical themes. Label debated echoes honestly. Then let John 2:11 govern the conclusion. The sermon is not finally about how much wine was present. It is about how much glory was revealed in the One who provided it.

1. The Title and the Real Question

The cover title, “An Abundance of Wine,” identifies the feature of the miracle that is often noticed but rarely examined. Many discussions of Cana stop at the question of whether the liquid was fermented. That question deserves an honest answer, but the remarkable amount, the kind of vessels and the purpose of the sign offer a richer path into John's Gospel.

The governing question is, “Why did Jesus make so much wine?” It is intentionally direct. The question creates curiosity, but it must not assume more than the passage supplies. We do not know the number of guests, the length of the remaining celebration or the amount eventually consumed. We can say that the provision was extraordinary. We should not claim that we can calculate the wedding's exact need.

2. John Tells a Sign Story

John does not call Cana merely an act of power. He calls it the beginning of Jesus' signs. A sign is a real event that directs the observer beyond itself. The family receives practical help, the ruler verifies the quality and the servants know the source, but the disciples receive the central revelation: they behold Jesus' glory and believe.

This distinction protects the study from becoming a curiosity piece. Gallons, Greek words, purification customs and prophetic parallels are valuable only if they help the reader follow the sign toward Christ. John 2:11 is not an afterthought attached to the miracle. It is the inspired interpretation of the miracle.

3. The Narrative Setting

The first sign takes place at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother is there, and Jesus and His disciples are invited. The setting is domestic, communal and joyful. The Word who became flesh enters ordinary human life and reveals His glory at a celebration shared by families and neighbors.

John's account is restrained. He does not name the bride, the groom or the host family. He does not tell us how Mary learned of the shortage. He gives the details needed for the sign while allowing Jesus to occupy the center of the account.

4. What May Be Meant by “The Third Day”

John begins, “And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee.” At the minimum, the phrase marks time in the sequence that begins with the testimony of John the Baptist and the gathering of the first disciples. Chronology is the certain function of the words.

Some interpreters also hear echoes of Sinai, resurrection or a new-creation pattern in the opening chapters of John. Each proposal has points of contact with the wider Bible. None is explained by

John at Cana. These connections may enrich private study, but the sermon should not make one debated symbolism carry the main argument.

5. Why a Wedding Matters

A first-century village wedding was not a brief private reception. It was a major family and community celebration in which hospitality reflected publicly on the households involved. To run out of wine was therefore more serious than discovering that one item on a menu was unavailable. The failure exposed the hosts to embarrassment and loss of honor.

The historical point should remain measured. Popular preaching sometimes adds a guaranteed lawsuit, a fixed financial penalty or other legal details that cannot be established from John 2. The safer conclusion is enough: an important celebration faced a humiliating shortage, and Jesus intervened quietly.

6. “They Have No Wine”

Mary's words are brief: “They have no wine.” She identifies the lack but does not prescribe the remedy. The statement allows the crisis to stand in its simplicity. Human provision has failed, and no ordinary solution is supplied by the narrative.

This is the first movement of the sign. The miracle begins where the provision ends. That observation may be applied pastorally, but not as a guarantee that Jesus will supply every material desire in the form we request. Cana reveals His sovereign sufficiency, not a formula for prosperity.

7. Mary and the Authority of Jesus

Jesus answers His mother, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.” Modern English ears can hear the address as disrespectful, but the term itself need not be insulting. Jesus uses “Woman” again at the cross when He entrusts Mary to the beloved disciple.

The sentence establishes independence and divine timing. Mary cannot control the sign by maternal authority. Jesus will act, but He will act according to the Father's purpose and His own hour. The account honors Mary most clearly when she directs the servants away from herself and toward the command of Christ.

8. “Whatsoever He Saith unto You, Do It”

Mary's instruction is one of the most useful discipleship sentences in the passage. She does not tell the servants what Jesus will say, explain how His command will solve the problem or promise that the command will appear reasonable. She simply places them under His authority.

The line resembles Pharaoh's instruction concerning Joseph in Genesis 41:55: “what he saith to you, do.” The verbal parallel is striking and may invite reflection on a greater Provider in a time of need. Deliberate quotation cannot be proved, so the Joseph connection should remain a possible echo rather than a declared key to the text.

9. Six Waterpots of Stone

John does not merely say that large containers were nearby. He gives their number, material, customary function and approximate capacity. Such specificity invites the reader to see that the setting of the sign matters.

The number six should not be converted automatically into a symbol of incomplete humanity because it is one short of seven. John supplies no such explanation. The defensible significance comes from what he states: there were six real vessels, each very large, connected with Jewish purification and filled completely.

10. Why Stone Matters Historically

Archaeologists have uncovered a distinctive Jewish stone-vessel industry from the late Second Temple period, including evidence from Galilee. Chalkstone cups, bowls and large vessels belong to the material culture of Jewish communities concerned with purity.

Stone was treated in Jewish purity practice as resistant to ritual impurity in a way ordinary earthenware was not. This helps explain why John identifies the material. The Bible does not contain a direct Mosaic command requiring these exact stone jars at a wedding. The practice reflects Jewish interpretation and custom, and the Commentary should use that precise description.

11. “After the Manner of the Purifying of the Jews”

The water held in these vessels supported ritual washing associated with Jewish purification. John is not introducing random storage jars. The containers carry a recognized religious and cultural purpose within Israel's life.

Jesus uses them as the location of a sign that supplies wine for celebration. The movement from purification water to feast wine may suggest fulfillment and transformation. It must not be turned into the hostile claim that Judaism is polluted, worthless or represented by inferior wine. Jesus is Israel's Messiah acting within a Jewish wedding and revealing the fullness that arrives in Him.

12. Two or Three Firkins Apiece

The KJV preserves the older English measure “firkins,” translating the Greek metretes. Ancient liquid measures were not perfectly uniform, and modern conversions therefore vary. Many English study notes estimate twenty to thirty American gallons in each jar, giving a total of approximately 120 to 180 gallons.

The NET Bible note uses about nine gallons for one metretes, producing approximately eighteen to twenty-seven gallons per jar and 108 to 162 gallons in total. The difference is important for precision but not for interpretation. Every responsible calculation reveals an amount far beyond a small emergency pitcher. Public teaching should use “about” or “roughly” and should never announce exactly 150 gallons as though John supplied that figure.

13. The Quantity Is Part of What John Wants Us to See

John could have said that Jesus made wine. Instead, he preserves the number and capacity of the vessels. The narrative makes the scale visible before the ruler ever tastes the quality. Quantity is therefore not an accidental fact discovered by modern calculation. It belongs to the way the sign is told.

We cannot prove how much remained after the wedding or whether every gallon was intended for immediate consumption. We can say that the supply was extraordinary, generous and unmistakably abundant. The wedding ran out of wine, but heaven did not run out of provision.

14. Filled to the Brim

Jesus commands, “Fill the waterpots with water.” John then says, “And they filled them up to the brim.” The servants' obedience is complete. They do not fill the vessels halfway, reserve room for another ingredient or substitute a more manageable task.

The brim also strengthens the narrative witness. The servants know what entered the vessels, the full capacity is involved and no practical space remains for a large amount of ordinary wine to be added secretly. This is a reasonable apologetic inference, though John does not pause to argue it formally.

The phrase should not be allegorized into the claim that Judaism had no room left or that the old covenant was spiritually useless. The text emphasizes full vessels and full obedience, not a coded denunciation of Israel.

15. “Draw Out Now”

After the jars are filled, Jesus commands the servants to draw and carry to the ruler of the feast. John does not describe a gesture, prayer, touch or visible moment of transformation. The change is known when the drawn liquid is received as wine.

The servants must move from filling to carrying without first receiving an explanation. Their obedience does not cause or earn the miracle. It places them close enough to witness what Jesus alone can do. The miracle began where the provision ended, but the servants entered it where obedience began.

16. The Ruler of the Feast

The ruler provides independent testimony concerning the result. He has not watched the servants fill the vessels, does not know the source and has no reason to support a staged claim. He simply tastes what is brought and recognizes it as excellent wine.

His ignorance is narratively useful. The person qualified to evaluate the wine is not part of the miracle's inner circle. The servants can testify to the source while the ruler can testify to the quality. Together, their different knowledge strengthens the account.

17. “But the Servants Which Drew the Water Knew”

John inserts this parenthetical detail to tell the reader who possesses privileged knowledge. The guests receive the benefit, and the ruler evaluates the gift, but the servants know where it came from because they filled, drew and carried at Jesus' word.

This yields the sermon's distinctive line: “The guests tasted the gift, but the servants knew the Giver.” Strictly, John says that they knew the source of the wine. The conclusion that Jesus is the Giver arises from the narrative as a whole. The line should be followed by that explanation so rhetoric remains anchored to the text.

18. The Human Bridegroom Receives the Credit

The ruler calls the bridegroom and says, “thou hast kept the good wine until now.” From the ruler's perspective, the groom or his household must be responsible for the surprising excellence. The reader knows that the true source is Jesus.

This quiet transfer of credit is beautiful. Jesus rescues the celebration without publicly humiliating the family, and the earthly groom receives praise for provision he did not create. The sign reveals Christ's glory to the disciples while protecting another person's honor before the crowd.

19. Jesus as the True Bridegroom

The bridegroom theme becomes explicit in the next chapter when John the Baptist says, “he that hath the bride is the bridegroom,” identifying Jesus within the image. Because John places that language close to Cana, readers have good reason to recognize a deeper pattern.

At the wedding Jesus quietly performs the role expected of the provider of the feast. The ruler speaks to the human bridegroom, but Jesus supplies the abundance. The text does not say that He legally replaces the groom. It presents a sign that prepares the Gospel's larger revelation of Jesus as the true Bridegroom.

20. “Thou Hast Kept the Good Wine Until Now”

The quality is as important as the quantity. The ruler does not merely say that wine has appeared. He calls it “the good wine” and is surprised that it arrives after the earlier supply. Jesus does not rescue the feast with something barely acceptable. The sign is marked by excellence.

The words “until now” first describe the serving sequence. They may also harmonize with John's larger claim that fullness, grace and truth have arrived in Jesus. That theological resonance is compelling, but it should be stated as a feature of John's narrative world rather than as a second dictionary meaning hidden inside the phrase.

21. Did Jesus Make Actual Wine?

Yes, actual fermented wine is the most natural contextual conclusion. The Greek word *oinos* is the ordinary term for wine. The setting is a wedding feast, the ruler evaluates quality and his comparison assumes a beverage whose effects can make later guests less discerning.

This conclusion should be stated plainly because changing the product to protect a modern position can weaken confidence in honest Bible reading. At the same time, the Commentary should avoid the opposite exaggeration. One narrative miracle does not answer every pastoral, medical or ethical question concerning alcohol today.

22. What the Greek *Oinos* Can and Cannot Prove

Oinos normally refers to wine and regularly denotes fermented wine. Lexical discussions sometimes note broader uses or attempts to distinguish stages of grape product. A word's possible range, however, does not erase the sense favored by a particular setting.

At Cana the wedding context, the ruler's banquet observation and the designation “good wine” converge. Therefore the approved wording is not, “*Oinos* can only mean alcoholic wine in every Greek sentence.” The approved wording is, “The context most naturally indicates actual fermented wine.”

23. What Does “Have Well Drunk” Mean?

The ruler describes the common practice of serving good wine first and poorer wine “when men have well drunk.” The underlying verb can refer to drinking freely and, in appropriate contexts,

becoming drunk. The statement assumes that alcohol can dull discernment and thereby make inferior wine easier to serve later.

The ruler is describing a banquet strategy, not issuing a factual report that every person at Cana was intoxicated. The sermon should not announce, “The guests were already drunk.” It should say that the ruler explains why the late appearance of the best wine reverses normal expectation.

24. Description Is Not Permission for Drunkenness

John records what Jesus provided, but Scripture never praises intoxication. Ephesians 5:18 says, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” The moral boundary remains clear even when the Cana narrative is read honestly.

The abundance also does not prove that the whole supply was consumed during the celebration. Provision is not identical with consumption. The Commentary should neither turn Cana into grape juice nor turn it into a defense of excess.

25. Why the Wine-versus-Juice Debate Must Stay Secondary

The substance question matters because readers deserve an accurate answer. It should be resolved early and briefly. If the commentary remains trapped there, the reader may never reach the features John emphasizes: the stone vessels, the abundance, the superior quality, the hidden source, the manifested glory and the disciples' belief.

A useful transition is: “It was real wine, but the kind of liquid is not the largest truth in the passage. The larger question is why the Lord made so much, why He used these vessels and what He intended us to see in Him.”

26. Isaiah's Feast of Salvation

Isaiah 25:6 promises that the LORD will prepare for all peoples “a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees.” The passage then speaks of the removal of the covering over the nations, the swallowing up of death and the wiping away of tears.

John does not quote Isaiah at Cana, but the canonical association is powerful. Divine salvation is pictured as a feast of rich provision and final victory. Jesus' first sign at a wedding, involving abundant superior wine, fits that prophetic world and points toward more than the rescue of one celebration.

27. Amos, Joel and the Mountains Dripping Wine

Amos 9:13-14 pictures restoration so abundant that “the mountains shall drop sweet wine.” Joel 3:18 likewise says, “the mountains shall drop down new wine,” while a fountain comes forth from the house of the LORD. Jeremiah 31 joins wine with the goodness of the LORD and the joy of restoration.

No single one of these texts is quoted in John 2. Their cumulative pattern matters. Abundant wine was an established prophetic image of divine restoration, covenant blessing and the joy of the age to come. Cana resonates with that expectation because the Messiah has arrived and the feast receives more than human resources could supply.

28. Abundance Without Prosperity Preaching

The scale of the miracle reveals the generous sufficiency of Christ. It does not create a promise that every Christian will receive excessive material wealth, uninterrupted celebration or an immediate solution to every shortage.

John's Gospel will lead from Cana to conflict, rejection and the cross. The same Jesus who supplies the feast gives Himself in His hour. Christian abundance must therefore be understood through His fullness, grace, life and saving presence, not through a guaranteed standard of possessions.

29. The Creator Compresses the Ordinary Process

Wine ordinarily comes through vines, grapes, harvest, crushing, fermentation and time. At Cana Jesus produces the finished result without the ordinary visible process. John has already introduced Him as the Word through whom all things were made.

The connection to John 1:1-3 is theologically strong. The Creator is standing beside the vessels. The sermon may say that He accomplished instantly what ordinarily develops through creation and time. It should avoid speculative claims about molecular rearrangement because John gives no physical description of the transformation.

30. Fullness, Grace and the Best Kept Until Now

John 1:14 says that the disciples beheld the glory of the Word made flesh. John 1:16 adds, “And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” Cana is the first narrated manifestation of that glory and fullness.

The ruler's amazement that the best has been kept until now fits the Gospel's opening announcement that the decisive gift has arrived in Jesus Christ. The law was given by Moses, and grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. This comparison must not be turned into contempt for Moses. John presents a movement toward the fullness embodied in the Son.

31. The Hour Casts a Shadow Toward the Cross

Jesus says at Cana that His hour has not yet come. Later in John, opponents cannot seize Him because His hour has not come. In John 12:23 He announces, “The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.” John 13:1 and 17:1 continue the same movement toward death, resurrection and return to the Father.

Cana's first sign therefore belongs to a mission whose climactic glory will be revealed through the cross. Mary's presence and Jesus' address “Woman” appear again in John 19:25-27. This narrative correspondence is secure. A direct claim that the Cana wine explicitly represents Jesus' blood should remain cautious because John does not state it in this passage.

32. The Beginning of Signs

John calls Cana the beginning of signs, which means more than first in a list. The first sign establishes patterns that will recur: a human need, a command from Jesus, material creation under His authority, incomplete understanding, testimony and belief.

Later signs will involve healing, bread, water, sight, life and resurrection. Each physical gift discloses something about the Giver. Cana prepares readers to ask not only, “What happened?” but also, “What does this reveal about Jesus?”

33. “Manifested Forth His Glory”

The glory is not manifested by spectacle before the entire crowd. Many guests may leave knowing only that the wine improved. The glory is manifested through a sign that must be recognized and interpreted.

Jesus' glory appears in sovereign authority, creative power, generous provision, superior quality, protection of another family's honor and fulfillment of God's promised joy. The sign is quiet, but its meaning is immense. Jesus did not merely save the feast. He signed His name across it.

34. “His Disciples Believed on Him”

The appropriate response is faith in Jesus. John does not say the disciples believed in miracles as an abstract category or formed a doctrine about wine. They believed on Him.

Their faith will continue to grow and will be tested by what they do not understand. Cana is a beginning. The public invitation should likewise move hearers from appreciation of provision to personal trust in the Provider.

35. The Quiet Mercy of Jesus

Jesus does not publicly expose the host, demand recognition from the ruler or require the bridegroom to confess his failure before receiving help. The intervention protects dignity while meeting need.

This quietness offers a pastoral glimpse of grace. Christ's glory is not diminished because another man receives the compliment. The Lord can act generously without making the recipient's humiliation part of the display.

36. The Best Arrived After Human Resources Failed

The ruler expects the quality to decline as the feast progresses. Instead, the best arrives at the point of human failure. That reversal belongs to the wonder of the sign.

The line should not become a promise that every late season of life will be materially easier. It does support a Christ-centered truth: human depletion does not limit the quality or sufficiency of what Jesus can provide according to His purpose. An empty vessel is not the end of the story when the Creator is standing beside it.

37. Strong Interpretation Versus Attractive Allegory

The passage invites theology but resists uncontrolled symbolism. Strong interpretation begins with details John identifies and connects them with themes John or the wider canon actually develops. Attractive allegory assigns meanings because they sound spiritual.

The six jars do not become six days of creation, six dispensations or incomplete humanity merely because a preacher can construct the pattern. Jesus is not the seventh jar. The inferior wine is not a code word for Judaism. Such claims distract from the real richness of the passage and make the Bible appear to say whatever the speaker imagines.

38. The Third-Day and New-Creation Possibilities

John opens his Gospel with creation language, repeatedly marks days and then begins Cana “the third day.” Some interpreters count the preceding sequence as a seven-day pattern and see the wedding as part of a new-creation presentation. Others connect the third day with Sinai or resurrection.

These proposals can be mentioned in advanced teaching as possible literary associations. They should not be presented as settled or necessary. The first sign's explicit newness comes from Jesus' revealed glory, not from an arithmetic scheme that every reader must accept.

39. The Servants and the Shape of Obedience

The servants receive commands involving heavy, ordinary work. Filling six large jars required time and effort. Nothing in the command itself explains the coming result. They fill, draw and carry.

Their example supports a careful application. Obedience does not manipulate Jesus, create divine power or purchase a miracle. Obedience places a disciple in faithful response to the Lord's word. The servants do what He says and thereby become witnesses to what only He can do.

40. Tasting the Gift and Knowing the Source

The ruler tastes without knowing, the guests benefit without explanation and the servants know where the wine came from. This distinction reaches beyond Cana. People may enjoy life, relationships, food, beauty and mercy without recognizing the Giver of every good gift.

James 1:17 says, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.” The sermon can therefore ask whether the hearer has merely tasted gifts or has come to know and trust the Giver. That question brings the sign into the present without reducing it to material provision.

41. Questions and Clarifications

Did Jesus make fermented wine? The context most naturally says yes. This does not authorize drunkenness.

Did He make exactly 150 gallons? No exact modern figure can be proved. About 120 to 180 gallons is a common rounded estimate, while another calculation yields about 108 to 162 gallons.

Were the guests drunk? John does not say so. The ruler describes a customary serving practice after people have drunk freely.

Why stone? Stone vessels were associated with Jewish purity practice and were treated as resistant to ritual impurity.

Did Moses command these exact jars? No direct Torah command requires this precise wedding use. The practice belongs to Jewish purity interpretation and custom.

Did the wedding consume all the wine? The passage does not say. Provision should not be confused with consumption.

Does the miracle prove that Christians should drink? No. It accurately identifies what Jesus made, but modern decisions also require the full Biblical witness, wisdom, conscience, health and love for others.

Is the abundance a prosperity promise? No. It reveals Christ's sufficiency and Messianic glory, not a guaranteed level of possessions.

42. Pastoral Guardrails

The wine question should be answered without mocking Christians who abstain. Some abstain from conviction, family history, medical necessity or care for those vulnerable to addiction. Honest exegesis and pastoral sensitivity belong together.

The passage must not be used to pressure a person in recovery or to dismiss the destruction associated with alcohol abuse. It also must not be rewritten out of fear that the text will be misused. The responsible path is truth with wisdom.

Preaching about Jewish purification requires special care. Jesus is not a Gentile outsider ridiculing Jewish religion. He is the Jewish Messiah revealing fulfillment within Israel's story. Any interpretation that produces contempt for Jews has departed from the spirit and setting of the passage.

43. Claims That May Be Taught with High Confidence

John presents six stone waterpots associated with Jewish purification, commands that fill them to the brim and reports that the drawn liquid is recognized as good wine. These are textual facts.

The context most naturally indicates fermented wine. The amount is extraordinary by every responsible conversion. The quality is independently verified. The servants know the source. The event is Jesus' first sign, manifests His glory and produces belief in His disciples.

The stone-vessel detail fits known Jewish purity practice in the late Second Temple period. The prophetic canon repeatedly uses abundant wine as an image of restoration and Messianic blessing. John's nearby bridegroom language strongly illuminates Jesus' role as the true Provider.

44. Claims That Must Remain Conditional

The exact gallon total must remain approximate because the ancient metretres was not perfectly uniform. The exact number of guests, remaining days and amount consumed are unknown.

The third day may evoke resurrection, Sinai or new creation. Mary's words may echo Genesis 41:55. The phrase “until now” may carry theological resonance beyond the ruler's immediate observation. The wine may stand within a broader path toward the hour and the cross. Each connection is worthy of reflection, but none is explicitly interpreted by John at Cana.

45. Claims That Should Be Rejected

The Commentary rejects claims that the number six necessarily symbolizes incomplete humanity, that Jesus is the seventh jar, that every jar represents a creation day or that the vessels encode an unstated prophetic timetable.

It rejects the claim that Judaism is the inferior wine, that the guests were certainly intoxicated, that the wedding could not possibly use the supply, that the sign commands all Christians to drink or that John explicitly teaches a sacramental transformation of wine into blood in this account.

It also rejects overprecise historical claims that Mosaic law commanded these exact stone jars, that the host certainly faced a lawsuit or that archaeology can identify the containers at Cana themselves.

46. Source Notes for the Pastor

The primary authority is John 2:1-11 read in the literary context of John 1:1-18, John 3:29 and the Gospel's repeated "hour" passages. Isaiah 25:6-9, Amos 9:13-14, Joel 3:18 and Jeremiah 31:12-14 establish the prophetic pattern of feast, restoration and abundant wine.

Craig R. Koester's study, "The Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11): Reading the Text in Its Cultural and Narrative Context," provides useful integration of the cultural setting, purification vessels and John's narrative purpose. Bernadeta Jojko's study of Jesus' hour and the Cana wedding assists the hour and bridegroom discussion.

Archaeological discussions of Jewish stone-vessel workshops in Galilee support the historical setting. Eyal Regev's methodological reflections on archaeology, purity and society counsel restraint when moving from artifacts to religious conclusions. The Brill treatment of purity's material culture in late Second Temple Galilee provides broader scholarly context.

The NET Bible note on John 2 gives approximately eighteen to twenty-seven gallons per vessel and 108 to 162 gallons total. Many English notes give the rounded twenty-to-thirty-gallon figure and total of 120 to 180 gallons. The difference should remain visible in research even when the sermon uses the familiar rounded range.

47. Gospel and Ministry Application

Cana is not merely an invitation to bring Jesus our shortages. It is an invitation to see who stands beside the empty vessels. The One who commands the servants is the Creator. The One who supplies the feast is the Bridegroom. The One whose hour will come is the Savior who gives Himself.

The congregation should be invited to move from tasting gifts without recognition to believing on the Giver. Gratitude for provision is good, but John seeks faith in the person of Christ. The disciples did not merely believe that a transformation occurred. They believed on Him.

For those who already believe, the servants offer a pattern of quiet faithfulness. Hear what He says. Do what He commands. Carry what He provides. Leave the glory with Him.

48. Final Pastoral Summary

The approved interpretation keeps substance, scale, setting and sign together. The substance was real wine. The scale was extraordinary. The setting involved stone vessels associated with purification. The quality was the best. The source was hidden from most of the room. The sign revealed the glory of Jesus.

Quantity matters because Christ does not appear as a barely sufficient emergency supplier. Quality matters because the ruler recognizes excellence. Stone matters because John places the sign inside Israel's pursuit of purity and the Messiah's transforming fullness. The servants matter because obedience gives them knowledge of the source. The bridegroom matters because Jesus quietly provides what the human celebration lacked.

The permanent center is John 2:11. The wedding ran out of wine, but heaven did not run out of provision. The guests tasted the gift, the servants knew its source and the disciples believed in the Giver.

49. Final Commentary Conclusion

Jesus' first sign is generous without being showy, powerful without being theatrical and richly symbolic without inviting uncontrolled allegory. He meets a real human need, protects a family from shame and supplies a feast with extraordinary abundance and superior quality.

Yet John does not allow the reader to remain at the table admiring the wine. He leads us to the glory of the Word made flesh. An abundance of wine becomes an abundance of evidence that the promised fullness has arrived in Jesus Christ. The wisest response is the response of the disciples: believe on Him.