

# Exalting Jesus Christ

## "Wine, Money Changers and Signs"

### INTRODUCTION:

- I. From the beginning of our studies of John's gospel we said the purpose of this unique gospel is to demonstrate beyond any doubt that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
  - A. Throughout this wonderful gospel account we are provided with a world of evidence for believing in the deity of Jesus Christ.
    1. In fact, the apostle John revealed the purpose for writing this gospel:
      - a. **John 20:30-31** – *And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but 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.*
    2. We have already seen some of the evidence the apostle John offers to prove the deity of Jesus Christ:

- a. The apostle John affirmed Jesus was "the Word" and told us:  
**John 1:1** – *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
- b. And then John added: **John 1:14**: *And the Word became 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.*
3. John the Baptist also bore witness to the deity of Jesus:
  - a. **John 1:29-34** – *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' 31 I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water." 32 And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. 33 I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34 And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."*
4. And then there's the testimony of Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter.

- a. **John 1:40-42** – *One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus.*
  5. We also have the testimony of Philip.
    - a. **John 1:45** – *Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."*
  6. And finally, in this first chapter of the gospel of John we have the testimony of Nathanael.
    - a. **John 1:49** – *Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"*
  - B. All this wonderful testimony to the deity of Jesus Christ is found in just the first 51 verses of John chapter one.
    1. Six specific claims to the deity of Jesus all found in chapter one.
- II. When we come to the second chapter of John, the author relates three specific incidents in which the deity of Christ was also fully and completely asserted.

- A. Therefore, as we continue our studies of the gospel of John entitled, "Exalting Jesus Christ" let's look at these three incidents testifying to the deity of Jesus Christ.
  - 1. These incidents deal with "Wine, Money Changers and Signs."
    - a. The first will be changing water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana.
    - b. The second will be driving out those who bought and sold merchandise in the Temple in Jerusalem.
    - c. And the third will be the signs Jesus did while in Jerusalem that caused many Jews there to believe in Him.

**Body:**

- I. So, let's begin by traveling to the small Galilean town of Cana where we find a wedding feast taking place, and where Jesus is about to change water into a fine wine.
  - A. In John chapter two we find Jesus attending such a wedding – probably a very large wedding with hundreds of guests as we will see in just a moment.
    - 1. Here's the event as John records it.
      - a. **John 2:1-11** – *On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. 3 And*

*when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." 4 Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it." 6 Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. 7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast." And they took it. 9 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. 10 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!" 11 This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.*

2. The real issue at the wedding was not the wine running out, but rather who replenished it.

3. Jesus had taken ordinary water set aside to ceremonially wash guests' hands and eating utensils and used it to make wine – exceptional wine at that. There were actually two miracles here:
  - a. The first miracle is one of creation – turning water into wine – a live demonstration that *"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."* **(John 1:3)**
  - b. The second miracle is one of time – Jesus demonstrated that He is Lord even of time, since the Lord instantly created wine which normally takes time to age – approximately 40 days. **(John 1:10)**
4. But notice a very subtle testimony to the deity of Jesus coming from Mary, His mother.
  - a. When the wine ran out, Mary turned to Jesus and said, *"They have no wine."* **(John 2:3)**
  - b. Jesus knew exactly what Mary was asking Him to do, but instead He mildly rebuked her by saying, *"Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."* **(John 2:4)**

- c. Mary was hinting that Jesus take care of the issue of the wedding party having run out of wine – which could easily be done by the Son of God.
    - d. However, Jesus politely let her know that He would chose His own time and place to work miracles.
  - 5. But, Jesus did as requested, and commanded that the waterpots be filled completely – six pots containing somewhere between 20 to 30 gallons of water apiece.
    - a. That's at least 120 gallons of wine – which is an indication that the wedding party was most likely fairly large.
  - 6. John tells us: **John 2:11** – *This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.*
    - a. For one brief moment at the beginning of the ministry of Jesus, the veil is lifted to reveal His glory – to reveal the glory and majesty of God wrapped in the humanity of the man called Jesus.
  - 7. This stunning miracle was further evidence to His disciples that Jesus was truly the Christ, the Son of the Living God – the Messiah.
- D. By the way, let me add a little here about the wine which Jesus created out of mere water.

1. There are several words in both the Old and New Testaments translated wine.
  - a. Sometimes the word is used to simply refer to grape juice.
  - b. At other times the word wine describes grape juice that is not fully aged, but which is still mildly intoxicating if consumed in large volumes.
  - c. And at other times the word wine is used to describe strong drink that is clearly intoxicating.
2. The Bible clearly condemns the drinking of intoxicating wines:
  - a. For example, priests were forbidden to drink this kind of wine:  
**Leviticus 10:9** – *Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die.*
  - b. **Proverbs 20:1** – *Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.*
  - c. **Isaiah 5:11** – *Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may follow intoxicating drink; who continue until night, till wine inflames them!*
3. Therefore, to ensure no one would violate the Law of Moses by drinking the kind of wine condemned by God, the Jews developed elaborate formulas for diluting wine with water until even children could consume it.



4. Unfortunately, today many try to justify the drinking of wine by pointing out that Jesus turned water into wine. There are several reasons why this is really twisted logic.
  - a. First, wines typically consumed in Biblical times were nothing compared to the fortified wines of today.
    - (1). In fact, God condemned the mixing of wines to fortify their intoxicating properties.
    - (2). **Isaiah 5:22** – Woe to men mighty at drinking wine, woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink. . .
  - b. Second, as I mentioned earlier, wines were diluted with water before consuming. But even undiluted wines in the days of Jesus were only 4 to 5 percent alcohol compared to the 12.5 to more than 14.5 percent alcohol content in wines today.
5. So, don't make the mistake of believing wines today compare to the wine Jesus created at the wedding feast at Cana.
6. Most likely that wine was significantly less than 4 percent alcohol – probably similar to the 1 to 2 percent alcohol content in most children's cough medicine – and also diluted with water by Jesus Himself, according to Jewish custom.

- II. The second event recorded in John chapter two that testifies to the deity of Jesus is cleansing the temple in Jerusalem of the money-changers, and those who bought and sold there.
  - A. After leaving the town of Cana of Galilee, according to **John 1:12-13**, Jesus, along with His mother, brothers and disciples, spend a short time in Capernaum on their way to Jerusalem to participate in the Passover.
    - 1. The Passover was the greatest of all Jewish feasts. It was celebrated in remembrance of when God delivered the Israelites from Egypt, as recording in Exodus chapter 12.
      - a. According to Jewish rabbinical law, every male within 15 miles of Jerusalem was required to make the journey to keep this sacred celebration.
      - b. But in reality, Jews from all over the world would come to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, even though they might only be able to do this once in their lifetime.
      - c. The population of Jerusalem would suddenly swell to as many as 2-and-a-half million visitors every year.
    - 2. Opportunistic Jewish officials saw this as a great opportunity to make huge amounts of money off these Jewish travelers.
      - a. Since it would be too difficult for most to travel thousands of miles carrying the animal sacrifice they would make in

Jerusalem, many travelers found it easier to simply purchase their sacrificial animal in Jerusalem.

- b. However, once an animal was purchased from a vendor in the city, it had to be inspected by the priests to ensure it was without spot of blemish – and the priests charged a fee for that service.
  - c. Or, you could purchase an animal in the temple courtyards that had already been examined for purity by the priests, and you would pay an even higher price.
  - d. Plus, every Jew was required to pay an annual temple tax to provide for the care and maintenance of the temple.
3. However, to complicate matters for the weary travelers, the temple tax and all monies paid to priests to inspect an animal, or to purchase an animal already inspected by the priests, had to be Jewish currency. Foreign currency was not accepted.
- a. Enter the money-changers.
  - b. These were men who sat up booths throughout the temple courtyards and who exchanged foreign currency for Jewish currency – usually at an exorbitant exchange rate; sometimes as much as 10 to 20 times the fair market value.

- c. And all of these businessmen – those who sold animals, and those who exchanged money – were given permission by the High Priest to conduct business in the temple courtyards.
- d. And a percentage of what these men made went to line the pockets of the High Priest and his family.

B. Let's pick up the story here.

1. **John 2:13-17** – *Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. 15 When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. 16 And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" 17 Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."*
2. Jesus took a decisive action to remove from the temple those who were desecrating it.
  - a. The reason is because the temple in Jerusalem was a sanctified place – the dwelling place of God.

3. But did you notice the words Jesus spoke that must have shocked the Jewish religious leaders?
  - a. *"Do not make MY Father's house a house of merchandise!"*  
**(John 2:16)**
  - b. Jesus clearly, and unmistakably said God was HIS FATHER!
  - c. The Jewish religious leaders understood perfectly what Jesus was saying – Jesus was claiming equality with God by claiming to be the Son of God, the Messiah.
4. Jesus had every right to drive out the money-changers and those who bought and sold in the temple because this was His Father's house – and Jesus was God's Son.
5. And that brings us to the third and final claim made in John chapter two concerning the deity of Jesus.

III. No doubt the incident of Jesus cleansing the temple brought a passage from the Psalms to the minds of those present.

A. John mentions that Psalm in verse 17.

1. **John 2:17** – *Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."*

a. This is taken from the Messianic prophecy found in **Psalm**

**69:8-9** – *I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an*

*alien to my mother's children; 9 because zeal for Your house*

*has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach  
You have fallen on me.*

2. While the Lord's disciples recognized this was the fulfillment of a Messianic prophecy, the Jewish religious leaders and the disgruntled merchants demanded more positive proof of Jesus' claim. They wanted a sign.
  - a. **John 2:18** – *So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?"*
  - b. **John 2:19-22** – *Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"*  
*21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body. 22 Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.*
  - c. In terms that were too veiled for even His disciples to catch at the moment, Jesus prophesied of His own resurrection from the dead.
3. How would this prove the deity of Jesus?
  - a. **Romans 1:1-4** – *Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God 2 which He*

*promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, 4 and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*

- b. The greatest evidence for the deity of Jesus – the greatest proof that He is truly the Son of God – was His resurrection from the dead.
  - c. He was *"declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."*
4. The sign that would prove Jesus had the authority to drive money-changers and merchants from His Father's house would be the irrefutable sign of an empty tomb three days after Jesus had been crucified and left for dead.
- B. This shallow type of faith – a faith that is sustained by signs – prompted John to write the following postscript.
- 1. **John 2:23-25** – *Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. 24 But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, 25 and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.*

2. Although the signs Jesus did are not recorded, *"many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did."*
3. However, Jesus did not *"commit Himself to them"* – meaning He did not put His trust in those who believed after seeing the signs.
  - a. Jesus knew the fickle nature of man because He could see into the hearts of men.
  - b. He knew the people who would believe on Him because of the signs He did would just as quickly turn against Him when He didn't live up to their Messianic expectations – when He made it clear that He had no intention of being the kind of Messiah the Jews were seeking.

## **CONCLUSION:**

- I. So, how do we make application of all this to our lives? What are the lessons here for us?
  - A. Everything Jesus did and said pointed toward His deity – proving that He is truly the Son of God – the Redeemer and Savior of all mankind.
    1. First, the power Jesus had to turned water into wine can also transform and radically change your life from sinner to saint.
      - a. The miracle of conversion comes at the moment when your sins are all washed away in the waters of baptism, and you are raised to walk in newness of life.



- b. Only Jesus – the Redeemer and Savior – can do that because He IS the Son of God.
2. Second, the burning zeal of Jesus to cleanse the temple of God from all that defiled it is the same burning desire Jesus has to remove all that defiles your heart – the temple of God.
- a. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** – *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*
  - b. If the temple of your heart has been defiled and desecrated by sins you've allowed to enter there, then expect a cleansing visit from Christ – and don't be surprised if He brings a scourge with Him.
  - c. The Hebrew writer, quoting from Proverbs, says: **Hebrews 12:5-6** – *"My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives."*
3. And finally, all the signs you need – all the evidence you need – to trust in Jesus Christ have all been given and are all contained in this book.

- a. The apostle Paul tells us, *"faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (**Romans 10:17**).
- b. You don't need additional signs to produce faith in Jesus Christ – all you need is to read and trust in the divinely inspired Word of God.
- c. Remember the words of the apostle John? **John 20:30-31** – *And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but 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.*
- d. If you want *"life in His name"* then come to Jesus now.