

# Connecting the Jots

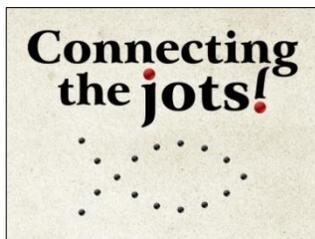
## *The Blood of Grapes*

Part 1 – October 6, 2013



Last week, we looked at Jesus' command to become like children to enter His Kingdom. (Mat 18:3) And, we began a series of stand-alone messages, piecing together parallel passages and stories from the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Each week, you'll connect verses like a puzzle.



I said I'd introduce a simultaneous series on the same lines as becoming like children who not only read His Word, but dig for treasure, play seek-and-find with our Abba/Daddy, and hunt down and connect the images He's scattered and concealed throughout His Word. I'm calling it, "Connecting the Jots".

It's like connecting the *dots*, only ... with *jots*. Jesus said ...

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law [the first five books] or the Prophets; [the last 17 books of the OT] I have not come to *abolish* them but to *fulfill* them. [Coincidentally ... maybe ...  $5+17=22$ , the number of epistles/letters in the NT] I tell you the truth, *until heaven and earth disappear*, not the smallest letter, [iota (Strong's G2503); often translated as *jot* (as in, "jot it down")] not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished." – Matthew 5:17-18 NIV

When I'm challenged: "You take that *literal*? Like, every *letter*?" I say, "Oh, it's *worse* than that; I take it *way beyond the Bible*. **If we had eyes to see, I believe we'd see that every created thing is a Jesus-jot, a piece of a puzzle that finds its fulfillment in Him.**"



Today is Communion Sunday, which means **we must open our eyes and examine ourselves.**

A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. – 1 Corinthians 11:28-29 NIV



Yikes! How do we examine ourselves? What're we looking for? How do we recognize the Lord's *body*? We need to connect some *jots*! We looked at the wedding in Cana, where Jesus turned the water into wine. Why was His first public sign, turning water to *wine*? (John 2:11)

Why *wine*? Well, what's the only thing, besides *Jesus*, that can turn water into wine? A grapevine. Dirt. Water. Sunshine. Wine.

Khirbet Cana, the likely location

Connect the jots: what did Jesus claim to be?



“I am the true vine, [starting as the *Tree of Life* in the *Garden of Eden*] and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit ... No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit ... – John 15:1-5a NIV condensed

In a perfect setting, a celebration, a wedding, **God-the-Gardener proclaims with *this sign that His Son, the True Vine, has come!*** Connect the jots to Adam and Eve: (Gen 3:24) cut off from the Tree of Life in the Garden; their intimacy with the Gardener severed by their sin, which was *restored* through Jesus’ *righteous blood*.

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life ... – Proverbs 11:30a NIV

So, **we examine ourselves for the fruit of righteousness, the confirmation of our connection to the True Vine by His Spirit.**

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. – Galatians 5:22-23a NIV

But now, back to the wedding and the water into wine; **if the vine is Jesus, then the wine is His blood.** *Connect the jots!* Yeshua (Jesus’ name in Hebrew) is first cried out in scripture on Jacob’s deathbed (Gen 49:18) during his prophetic blessings.<sup>1</sup>



This is the first time that wine is symbolized as blood.

The scepter [Royal Staff] will not depart from Judah, [Jesus’ family line; we covered this in, “The Lion Trap” (4-22-12) and “The Lion’s Tale” (5-20-12)] nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, [fulfilled when they were nailed to the cross] until he comes to whom it belongs ... he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes. – Genesis 49:10-11 NIV

Jacob is referring to the winepress of Judah being blessed with abundance; **the blood of grapes symbolizes joy and prosperity.** This is what grapes, wine, and winepresses *mostly* represent in scripture ... but, not always.

John offers this incomparable glimpse of Jesus, in Revelation ...

He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. ... He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. – Revelation 19:13, 15b NIV

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<sup>1</sup> We covered this in, “The Story of Joseph: Deathbed Blessings” (8-18-13)



Ancient winepress in Avdat, Israel

When Jesus told the story of a landowner who planted a vineyard and dug a winepress, He ended with a stark warning ...

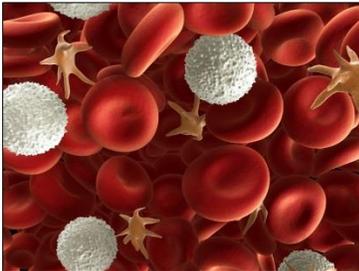
“Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.” – Matthew 21:43-44 NIV

Two choices: **surrender to His mercy to be broken and restored, or rebel against His grace to be crushed by His wrath.** Examine and ask: **am I allowing Jesus to break you of what needs breaking?**



It's odd how God uses the same symbol for **gladness and regret, abundance and scarcity, blessing and curse, and mercy and wrath.** And, it's amazing to see how they connect at the cross, as **Jesus satisfies God's wrath, and restores our relationship, with His blood, the wine of the True Vine of the New Covenant.**

Ever notice that, although grapes range in color, wine comes in red and white? Just like blood cells! What a *fascinating coincidence*.



White cells defend the body. *Like God!* (And, they come in five types). Red cells look like crushed grapes; they deliver life to the body. *Like Jesus!* And, platelets release growth factors. *Like the Spirit!* And, is it just me, or do the platelets look like grape stems?

So many jots, so little time! Moses' staff turned the Nile to blood and killed the fish. (Ex 7:20-21) Then it broke the rock to release the water (Ex 17:5-6) to restore his people as he led them out of the desert of Sin. (Ex 17:1) And, Paul tells us that that rock was Christ. (1 Cor 10:2-4)



And, at that wedding, **He turned purification water into wine to announce the bride-price He'd pay to lead us out of our sin.** So, it's good to **examine which sins you're refusing to part with.**

Do you think Jesus was aware of that *fascinating coincidence* when He lifted His cup, to serve that first communion, at the Last Supper, His final Passover, on the night of His betrayal? What was on Jesus' mind as He examined *Himself* and said ...

“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,” he said to them. “I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God.” When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. – Mark 14:24-26 NIV

Wait. They “sung a hymn”? Yep. The Hallel. It's Psalms 113-118, recited or sung at Passover. This is what was on Jesus' mind as He prepared to be crushed and poured out.

From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised. ... Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, who turned the rock into a pool, the hard rock into springs of water. ... The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow. ... How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. O Lord, truly I am your servant; I am your servant ... The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? ... I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done. ... The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. O Lord, save us; O Lord, grant us success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you. The Lord is God, and he has made his light shine upon us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you. – Psalm 113:3; 114:7-8; 116:3, 12-16; 118:6, 17, 22-28 NIV



Red blood cells are like tiny sponges; they release the oxygen as they squeeze through the tiny capillaries.

In the same way, **Jesus had the life squeezed out of Him on the cross, in order to breathe new life into us. Like a sponge, He absorbed the bitterness of God's wrath on our behalf.**

And, this is why our last jot is so significant.

When Jesus finished His task, **He drank from the vine, but it was a sponge soaked in bitter wine vinegar, and secured to a staff, and lifted to His lips,** and He drank and said, "It is finished." (John 19:29-30) And, **on the third day, the seal was broken, the tomb was open, the cork blew out, and the eternal celebration began!** So, examine yourself, appreciate what it took to turn that water into wine, and **just make sure you've joined the party.**