

LESSON 7
JESUS' FIRST MIRACLE
WATER TURNED TO WINE

Our lesson comes from John 2:1-11. You will want to read the text to get the picture of what is happening.

This first miracle took place within three days of Jesus choosing the first of His disciples. Mary, Jesus, and the disciples were invited to attend a wedding feast in Cana. Cana was located probably northeast of Nazareth. Since this event happened so close to Jesus' selection of the first disciples, they would have been somewhat close to Nazareth and the Sea of Galilee.

There is no mention of Jesus' earthly father, Joseph, being at the wedding. Some think Joseph was dead, but we cannot prove that. Some have also thought that this wedding may have been a relative of Mary, and that is why she took such a personal interest in the fact that they ran out of wine.

Wedding feasts were known to last for several days. We can read about a wedding feast that lasted seven days in Judges 14:12. Historically, wedding feasts are said to have lasted as much as fourteen days. The groom would go to the house of the bride. The bride's friends would accompany her to the home of the groom. The bride and groom would enter into the bed chamber where the marriage would be consummated. Then the festivities would begin.

The very presence of our Lord at this occasion speaks to His sanction of marriage. That is important as we travel with Jesus through earthly situations. He would not have been there had He not been in favor of this union.

We need to remember that Jesus is about thirty years old. He is a grown man, but His mother had no problem calling the lack of wine to His attention. She simply said, "They have no wine."

We need to understand that there were several different kinds of wine in Jesus' time on earth. There was fermented, unfermented, and a type of wine that could make you drunk. Fermented is usually the kind that makes one drunk, but the fermented wine in Jesus' time was diluted with water. This kept it mild enough that you wouldn't get drunk. The unfermented was a lot like our grape juice, but it was also diluted with water.

The unfermented wine was not as good because it was not stored the same way the fermented wine was stored. The unfermented wine was cooked, strained, and stored in containers, and then put in cool water to keep it fresh.

The person in charge of the wedding feast was probably worried about what he should do because they had run out of wine. They probably had more people at the wedding than they expected, and the guests drank more of the wine than they had prepared. The feast may have also lasted longer than expected.

The custom was to serve the best first and then the less favorable as the wedding feast progressed. That is an important point which will be explained later in the lesson.

When Mary told Jesus there was no more wine, Jesus answered her in a way that, at first reading, sounds almost disrespectful. He said, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.” The term “woman” was actually a term of endearment. It was not at all disrespectful. Mary is asking Jesus to fix the problem, and He doesn’t think it is time to show the powers He possesses.

Mary was not convinced that He wouldn’t help, so she told the servants to do whatever Jesus told them to do. I believe that if God had not wanted Jesus to show His powers at this time, there would have been nothing He could do. As we see from the rest of the story, He was able to use His powers and perform a miracle.

There were six waterpots filled with water to accommodate the washing rituals performed by the Jews as they entered the feast. Each of these pots contained approximately eight gallons and three pints. Jesus told the servants to fill these pots with water, and they filled them to the top. Then He told them to draw out what was in the pots and take the liquid to the governor of the feast. They did as they were told. When the governor (or ruler) of the feast had tasted the water just turned to wine, he called the bridegroom. Scripture says that the governor did not know from where they had gotten the wine (verse 9).

This governor was impressed by the taste of this wine. He told the bridegroom that usually the best wine was served first, and then they would serve a lesser wine. He was complimenting the bridegroom on serving an excellent wine when others would have served an inferior wine.

There are some interesting things to notice about this first miracle. Jesus did not make a big scene about changing water to wine. He did not boast that He was the one that produced the superior wine for the wedding feast. He did not take the wine Himself to the bridegroom, but He allowed someone else to take it. There was no drawing attention to Himself as the one to save this happy event from disaster.

I feel certain that word spread about this miracle. The servants were really the only ones that knew what went into the pots, and you know they would have talked to others about this exciting event.

There is little said about the miracle other than that this miracle showed Jesus' glory, and His disciples believed on Him (verse 11).

Jesus, His mother, His disciples, and His brothers left the wedding and went to Capernaum.

There are many who believe that Jesus turned water into an alcoholic beverage. Here are some reasons why this cannot be true. These ideas come from a sound preacher of the gospel, well respect for his knowledge of the truth.

MIRACLE OF WATER TURNED TO WINE REASONS WHY WINE WAS NOT ALCOHOLIC

From "Studies In The Gospel of John" by Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

1. He would have been among winebibbers condemned in the Old Testament in Proverbs 23:20.
2. He would have engaged in that which brings man to poverty, Proverbs 28:21.
3. He would have violated the tone and tenor of Proverbs 20:1 and 28:29-32.
4. He would have been guilty of Habakkuk 2:15, putting liquor bottles to a neighbor's lips.
5. He would have become a bartender at a wedding.
6. He would have been an ancient bootlegger.
7. He would have been an accessory in turning a wedding feast into a drinking and drunken party.
8. He would have sent a drunken groom to his bride.
9. He would have been a part of the drinking problem, not the answer to it.

10. Would Jesus employ Messianic might to be part and parcel of what has always been a curse to man and a blight to human society?
11. Would this have been an appropriate beginning of His mighty miracles?
12. How could the manufacture of intoxicants ever be linked with a marvelous manifestation of His glory?
13. Modern breweries are not so linked today.
14. How could liquor making have produced greater faith in the disciples?
15. Why would anyone want to associate a fiery liquid that has made countless millions mourn with the Lord of Glory?

FOR DISCUSSION: WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THE LESSON?

1. Do you think Mary knew that Jesus had the ability to perform miracles?
2. Knowing the way people tell others about unusual events, what do you think would have been the reports as those at the wedding told about the water having been turned to wine?
3. How do you think Jesus' brothers would have reacted to this miracle?
4. What do you think verse 11 means when it says, "his disciples believed on him"?