

# TURNING WATER INTO WINE

(Jesus' First Miracle)

John 2:1-11

## The Occasion

**The Ceremony (vv1-2):** Jesus and His disciples are invited to a wedding in Cana. By inviting the Lord the couple displays great understanding. Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain (Ps.127:1). *A Christless wedding is a failure from the start* (W. Graham Scroggie).

**The Crisis (v3):** The wine supply runs out, and Jesus' mother comes to him with the problem. Wine was very important. Lacking wine at a wedding meant social disgrace.

**The Chide (v4):** "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. John MacArthur comments: "*He's not saying it's your concern, not Mine or He wouldn't have done a miracle. He's saying it's My concern, not yours, in effect. But it means you don't have any relationship to what I do in this matter; it's Mine to do as God. And when the hour comes I'll do it.*"

## The Orders

**From the mother (v5):** Mary instructs the servants to do whatever Jesus tells them to do. She knew in heart He was going to act. Otherwise she would have never ordered the servants. She read a "yes" in what seemed to be a "no" answer.

**From the Messiah (vv6-7):** He tells the servants to fill 6 huge stone jars with water—those that were used for ceremonial washings.

## The Obedience

**Of the Servants (vv7-9):** They *fill* the jars to the brim. They *draw* out some water. And they *take* the water, which has turned into wine to the headwaiter. Jesus wanted the cooperation of men in this miracle. He could have filled the jars Himself, or just as easily created the liquid in the pots. But He knew that if the servants shared in the work, then they also shared in the blessing.

## The Opinion

**Of the Headwaiter (vv9-10):** He testifies that the wine is the best he has ever tasted! It was vintage wine.

## The Outcome

**For Jesus – His glory is revealed (v11):** He put His deity on display. Jesus' signs, miracles and wonders were not simply powerful displays of compassion, but were designed to really manifest who He truly was— the sovereign Creator and Ruler of the material universe.

- **Glory of His All-Sufficient Grace:** "Fill the jars with water."

The first word spoken by Jesus on this great occasion was significant: "Fill." He who is "full of grace" (chap. 1. 14) delights to give fullness of blessing.

Those old, empty stone water pots had taken center stage at the wedding. Those pots represent you and me. This is where God begins. The first step was to fill these pots with water. God can't use anyone, unless he becomes an empty water pot. First emptied of self, and then filled of the Spirit to the brim by God.

Less than 120 gallons might have sufficed, but this was to be a manifestation of His grace, so He gives "exceeding abundantly" above all their expectations. Every water jar was filled to the brim. He gives as much as we have room for.

- **Glory of His Transforming Power:** "The water was turned into wine."

This miracle is a picture of salvation. It demonstrates conversion from the old ways of the law, ceremony and purification to the new life of Jesus. Nobody knows how the water was turned into wine. Nobody knows how a sinner is turned into a saint.

*Under the Old dispensation, the first miracle of Moses, by whom the law was given, was to turn water into blood; under the New Dispensation, the first miracle of Jesus, by whom grace and truth came, was to turn water into wine (Herbert Lockyer).*

The blood speaks of Law and judgment; the wine speaks of grace and the fullness of joy. Wine is always a symbol of joy. Ps 104:15 –Wine gladdens the heart of man.

With fault, we could say that the water is like a relationship with God under the Old Covenant—that's Judaism, and the wine is like a relationship with God under the New Covenant—that's Christianity.

- The wine was **after** the water, and the New Covenant is **after** the Old Covenant.
- The wine was **from** the water, and the New Covenant is **from** the Old Covenant
- The wine was **better** than the water; and the New Covenant is **better** than the Old Covenant.

In the New Testament, wine is the most precious of emblems, for it symbolizes the Savior's precious blood shed for us on the Cross, when He Himself was poured out as water.

- **Glory of His Matchless Character:** "You have saved the best till now."

The last state is better than the first. The converted life is better than the purest of unconverted lives, as wine is richer than water.

All other wines manufactured by others to cheer the heart of man are but deceptive imitations. Christ gives the best, the best joy, the best peace, the best hope, the best promises, the best friendship, the best reward.

Best for last: This illustrates the ways of men and the ways of God. The world (and Satan also) gives its best first, and keeps the worst for the last. First the pleasures of sin—for a season—and then the wages of sin. First the sweet, then the bitter.

**For the disciples –Their faith is deepened (v11):** John MacArthur comments: "No miracle goes without result. The servants didn't go along with it but I'll tell you, those disciples really got their faith driven into the ground, didn't they? They got rooted. They had heard that He was the Messiah, now they saw that. And Jesus showed them His glory. He let them see a little dazzling glimpse of who He was. He was building His disciples. That's why He did it, for them. A simple miracle for them. You see, even miracles don't bring people to Jesus Christ unless they're drawn already by the Father."

Where JESUS is, there is joy!

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A modified version of Harold L. Willmington's outline, from  
THE OUTLINE BIBLE, Tyndale, 1999.