

The Miracles Of Jesus Christ: Water Into Wine (Part One)

by Martin G. Collins

Forerunner, "Bible Study," November 2006

The first miracle Jesus Christ performs during His ministry is changing water into wine at a marriage feast in Cana (John 2:1-11). When we compare what Christ and Moses each did with water, Jesus' miracle shows the contrast between law and grace. Moses changes water to blood, and Christ changes it into wine. Earlier, in John 1:17, the apostle John writes, "For the law was given through Moses, [and] grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." Moses' turning of water into blood suggests judgment (Exodus 7:14-17), while Jesus' turning of water into wine implies generosity and joy. In John 3:17, John comments, "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world [what the law does to sinners], but that the world through Him might be saved [what grace does for those who repent]."

This miracle demonstrates at the earliest possible time that Christ's ministry would be one of grace and truth, as an extension and complement of the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17-19). Jesus had come to fulfill God's law, that is, to teach it and live it as an example of how to apply it to everyday life (Luke 24:44-45).

1. Why is John's statement that this miracle was the "beginning of signs" by Christ so important? John 2:11.

Comment: That we are told that the miracle in Cana is the first Jesus performed discredits the false traditions that He worked miracles during the thirty years before His public ministry. It invalidates the miraculous accounts in the apocryphal gospels, which have been excluded from the Bible because of their contradictions to Scripture and their counterfeit nature. All stories about Christ's alleged miracles done prior to His public ministry are false.

2. Why does Jesus perform His first miracle at a marriage ceremony? John 2:1.

Comment: Jesus heaps great honor on marriage by using such an event to manifest His glory. The apostle Paul writes, "Marriage is honorable among all" (Hebrews 13:4), but society increasingly scorns marriage, a fact clearly seen in rampant premarital sex and divorce upon demand. Like Christ's coming, a wedding is a joyous celebration.

Jesus and at least six of His disciples were invited to the wedding, suggesting that the wedding couple were concerned about the character of their guests. As His blessing and presence are essential to marital happiness, Christ must be involved in our marriages. However, those who desire His involvement must invite Him in. Had Jesus not been invited to this wedding, a serious problem would have marred the marriage feast. We can learn that couples in whose marriage Christ is involved have a great advantage in solving problems that arise later.

3. Why was running out of wine a problem? John 2:3.

Comment: Weddings in the ancient Near East included a strong legal side, especially regarding providing the appropriate wedding gift, of which the wedding feast was a part. When the supply of wine failed at this wedding, more than social embarrassment was at stake. The bridegroom and his family could have become financially liable for inadequate wedding provisions. The seriousness of the lack of wine (symbolizing a lack of joy) helps us to appreciate the blessing contained in the miracle Jesus performed (Ecclesiastes 9:7-9).

This situation relates to the common problems couples experience in marriage, even among God's people. We cannot always stop problems from developing, but we can overcome them with the help of Christ who dwells in us and therefore within our marriages (Romans 8:10).

4. Why does Jesus rebuke His mother for her seemingly innocent request? John 2:4.

Comment: When Jesus reprimands Mary, calling her "woman" (*gunai*) rather than "mother" (*meter*), He implies that He is not conforming to her authority but acting under His Heavenly Father's authority. This statement establishes that Mary, even as His physical mother, has no authority over Jesus, destroying any belief that urges us to pray to Mary to intercede for us. On the two occasions in which Mary is seen intruding in His ministry—here and in Matthew 12:46-50—Jesus verbally moves her aside. His rebuke censures her assumption of authority she does not have. She also seems to lack the humility with which we must go to God with our requests.

Since the Father had already predetermined Jesus' agenda, Mary's request is inappropriate because she tries to determine what He should do. The Father would not have let Mary change His plan, so He had probably already inspired Christ to perform this miracle. Obviously, Jesus does not deny Mary a solution, but He does mildly rebuke her for her attitude toward Him and His purpose.

5. What does Mary's response demonstrate? John 2:5.

Comment: On behalf of the newlyweds and their families, Mary prudently goes to Jesus to solve their wine problem, emphasizing the value of friends and brethren praying for the marriages of others. The strength of Mary's faith is exhibited when she orders the servants to follow Jesus' instructions, confirming her acceptance of what He had said to her in verse 4. She demonstrates both meekness and faith by expressing a humble attitude. This is what service to Christ is all about, living in obedience to His every word.