

## ***DESIRING WINE***

Part of victorious Christian living is knowing to seek refreshment on occasion. We believe in drinking water. We rarely get enough of it. It is needed to keep the body purified. Without it, life ceases quickly. It is versatile in that it can be mixed with any other liquid except oil and can be taken with any meal. Good stuff. For spiritual purposes though, wine is better.

Types and shadows of things yet to come is one aspect of the Bible that makes it so fascinating to read. We know that Christ came to die, but He also came to set up a kingdom. That would be done through the exchange of natural life (that born of the water) for spiritual life (symbolized by wine throughout the New Testament). It becomes highly symbolic that His ministry should begin with the changing of natural water into natural wine. When asked to do this, He initially refused His mother, saying that it was not yet time. She insisted, saying essentially, "I'm your mom. I know who you really are. Do it!" Combining His obedience to her with His mission on earth, He began a ministry of these types of conversions.

He was probably the world's most successful wine salesman. He called His product "living water". When something is fermented and given life, we then refer to it as "spirits". When what is born of water, or man, is given the Spirit, we never thirst again. What was empty has been filled with the new wine of the Spirit. It takes a new wine skin to hold it, because the old man is too tough and brittle to contain the wine that grows and expands to make the vessel greater. That is why we discard the old man in baptism. The new wine, of course, gets better the longer it is kept in the vessel.

The living water has some of the same drawbacks as natural wine though. It tends to make you act drunk at times. You laugh just because you're happy. Your speech gets hard to recognize at times. Where water cleanses you, this wine stains you so that even in the company of outsiders, you are recognizable as one of Christ's. Where water puts out fire, this wine seems to fuel it, because it burns inside of you.

There is one last transformation that will occur between water and wine. The flood came when the natural rain fell in the time of Noah. The latter day rain will be a downpour or outpouring of the wine of the Spirit. The water that judged the world of Noah will be substituted for wine when it is time for our world to be condemned. It will be judged by those who have been filled with this "living water".

One other characteristic of the wine that was created by Jesus Christ. It makes you pretty mellow. He is the Prince of Peace and that is one of the fruits of the Spirit. Apparently it went into the ingredients of the new wine. You can tell who has been drinking of it by a variation of an old riddle. "What does a Christian say when he is pushed around or put under pressure? Not much! He just lets out a little wine."

## ***STUDY QUESTIONS***

1. Knowing that nothing in the scriptures is by chance, why do you think that wine was used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit?
2. Why do you think Jesus initially refused His mother's request at the marriage party, claiming that His hour had not yet come?
3. Why do you think He eventually gave in?

4. Does fermentation of water and juice into wine seem to be a good analogy of the action of the Spirit in our lives to create “living water” that is to flow from us?
5. Why is it to flow from us, rather than be contained?
6. Does the loss of self control when you put your life “under the influence” of the Holy Spirit frighten you?
7. Does it bother you to have some people, even some in the church, laughing at you for yielding control of your self to the Spirit?
8. Have you ever noticed the peace that you feel in your soul after a good dose of the presence of God? Or how tense and testy you get when a lot of time passes without a taste? Addictive, isn't it?