

TURNING WATER INTO WINE

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February 23, 2020

John 2:1-11

1. Three days after the events we studied last week we find Jesus back in Galilee with John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael in tow.
2. We will see in later studies that they were not yet appointed as apostles, nor had they totally given up their secular employment.
3. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was involved in a wedding in Cana of Galilee.
 - a. Probably a small village located north of Nazareth that no longer exists.
 - b. Mary was not an invited guest, but more likely a part of the family.
4. Jesus and His five followers were invited to attend.

NOTE: We need to be careful that we do not become so legalistic that we cannot mix with and enjoy the company of others. 1 Corinthians 5:9-13

I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; 10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler — not even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? 13 But those who are outside, God judges. REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES.

NOTE: We are in the world to win worldly people to Christ, but once they are won to Christ people are to be disciplined and held accountable for their lifestyle choices.

5. This passage of Scripture is often misused and interpreted subjectively in order to justify social drinking, but that was not its purpose, nor does it support that premise.
6. We will look at the passage under three headings.
 - a. What happened?
 - b. Why did it happen?
 - c. Why didn't it happen?

I. What happened?

A. They ran out of wine because someone had not made adequate preparation which would be a source of embarrassment for Mary's relatives.

NOTE: These marriage celebrations could last for a week and involve the entire community.

B. Mary came to Jesus and told Him that they had run out of wine.

C. Jesus gently reproved His mother for prevailing upon His deity prior to the scheduled time for His public ministry to begin.

1. He referred to her as, "Woman."

2. As a man Jesus was Mary's son, but as God He was her Lord.

D. Mary, confident that Jesus would not allow her family to be embarrassed, instructed the servants to do whatever He said.

NOTE: Obviously God the Father was not opposed to Jesus exercising His power because Jesus later said, "He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." John 8:29

NOTE: Helping people with everyday matters is a way we can show God's love and concern.

- E. Jesus instructed the servants to fill six large water pots with water.
1. Each water pot could hold between twenty and thirty gallons.
 2. They were usually used to hold water to be used for ceremonial cleansing.
- F. The servants were then told to take some of the contents of the water pots to the headwaiter who in turn praised the bridegroom for the quality of the wine.
- NOTE: The result of the miracle provided water mixed with wine in accordance with the recipe used by respectable society. See Roman Numeral III

II. Why did it happen?

- A. Subjectively I would say it happened because Jesus cares about and involves Himself in every aspect of our lives.
1. Matthew 6:31-32
"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' 32 'For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.'"
 2. Philippians 4:6-7
Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- B. Objectively it happened for the reason stated in verse 11; it was an opportunity for Jesus to manifest His glory to His disciples.
1. Three days prior Jesus had told Nathanael, "You will see greater things than these." John 1:50
 2. John made it clear that his Gospel was not an exhaustive treatment of the life of Christ. John 21:25
And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.
 3. John also made it clear why he recorded what he did. John 20:30-31
Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but **these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.**
NOTE: The Word of God is meant to be redemptive.

III. Why didn't it happen?

- A. It did not happen because Mary had some power over Jesus or special standing with Jesus.
1. Jesus' response to Mary's request makes the above reality clear.
 2. In another context Jesus established the fact that His earthly family did not have some special claim upon Him. Mark 3:31-35
Then His mother and His brothers arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him. 32 A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You." 33 Answering them, He said, "Who are My mother and My brothers?" 34 Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers! 35 "For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother."

B. It did not happen to give modern day Christians an excuse to drink alcoholic beverages.
NOTE: Hermeneutics involves interpreting the Bible in the light of its historical context, something that is ignored by those who want to justify the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

1. The Talmud, which contains the oral traditions of Judaism from about 200 BC to 200 AD, states that the four cups every Jew was to drink during the Passover were to be mixed in a ratio of three parts water to one part wine. (This was the common recipe used by respectable society.)
2. Another reference from around 60 BC states, "It is harmful to drink wine alone, or again to drink water alone, while wine mixed with water is sweet and delicious and enhances one's enjoyment."
3. The writings of the early church leaders makes it clear that water mixed with wine was used in the Lord's Supper.
 - a. In 250 AD Cyprian wrote, "Nothing must be done by us but what the Lord first did on our behalf, as the cup which is offered in remembrance of Him should be mingled with wine... Thus, therefore, in considering the cup of the Lord, water alone cannot be offered, even as wine alone cannot be offered. For if anyone offer wine only, the blood of Christ is disassociated from Christ... Thus the cup of the Lord is not indeed water alone, nor wine alone, unless each is mingled with the other."
 - b. Earlier, Clement of Alexandria wrote, "It is best for the wine to be mixed with as much water as possible... For both are works of God, and the mixing of the two, both of water and wine produces health, because life is composed of a necessary and a useful element. To the necessary element, the water, which is in the greatest quantity, there is to be mixed in some of the useful element (the wine)."
4. Even respectable, secular society frowned on drinking unmixed wine which was referred to as strong drink.

"The gods have revealed wine to mortals, to be the greatest blessing for those who use it aright, but for those who use it without measure, the reverse. For it gives food to them that take it and strength in mind and body. In medicine it is most beneficial; it can be mixed with liquid and drugs and it brings aid to the wounded. In daily intercourse, to those who mix, and drink it moderately, it gives good cheer; but if you overstep the bounds, it brings violence. Mix it half and half, and you get madness; unmixed, bodily collapse." Mnesitheus of Athens
5. To put this in perspective one would have to drink twenty-two glasses of unfortified wine mixed with three parts water to consume the amount of alcohol that is in two martinis.

NOTE: Most wines that people consume today are fortified with additional alcohol beyond that which occurs in the natural fermentation process. This is done to increase its intoxicating effect.

APPLICATION

1. Peter wrote about those who distort the Scriptures to their own destruction. 2 Peter 3:16
2. It is a sad thing when people who profess to be Christians try to use the Word of God to justify behavior that cannot be justified by the accurate handling of the Scripture.
3. Trying to justify today's love affair with intoxicating beverages through the use of Scripture is a total misuse of the Bible.
4. May our exposure to, and the study of, the Scriptures result in a growing faith and a fruitful and effective life.