

The Display of the Glory of Christ in the First Miracle John 2:1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. ³ And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.”

⁴ Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.”

⁵ His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do *it*.”

⁶ Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. ⁷ Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ And He said to them, “Draw *some* out now, and take *it* to the master of the feast.” And they took *it*. ⁹ When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. ¹⁰ And he said to him, “Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the *guests* have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!”

¹¹ This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

Introduction

We already know that from our experience in chapter 1. There is the first eighteen verses, which is the testimony of John the apostle himself. In the opening eighteen verses that some call the prologue, John gives his own testimony that the Word, who is Jesus Christ, is God, with God, created everything, is the Light, is the life, all of those things are part of that. "The Word," verse 14, "became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory. The glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." So in the opening eighteen verses, it is the testimony, the inspired testimony of the apostle John concerning the fact that Jesus is the Creator God Himself and yet distinct from God, being God and yet being with God. Then starting in verse 19, we have the testimony of the greatest of all Old Testament prophets, the greatest man who had ever lived up until this time--John the Baptist, the great and last Old Testament prophet and the first preacher of Jesus Christ. And he affirms that Jesus is the Messiah, the Lamb of God.

And then starting in verse 38 you have the third group of those giving verbal testimony--Andrew, Peter, John, Philip and Andrew--who are Old Testament believers who were true worshipers of the true God, who give us first-hand testimony that Jesus is in fact the Messiah, that He is the One spoken of by the Law and the Prophets, that He is the Son of God, He is the King of Israel. So the first chapter is verbal testimony from John the apostle, John the Baptist, and five followers of John the Baptist who then follow Jesus and later will become apostles. All of that is verbal testimony. Jesus is God, with God, is the Light, is the life, is God in human flesh, is the Lamb of God, is the Messiah, is the One spoken of in the Old Testament, is the Son of God and is the King of Israel. All of those confessions are made in that first chapter.

Now we come to chapter 2, we move from verbal testimony to testimony by the works of Jesus. And John is going to alternate now as we go through His gospel, between the words of Christ, and the works of Christ. He's going to have us look at the statements Jesus made that indicate His deity and the works He did that demonstrate and prove His deity. He will do what no one but God can do. And we see that in the very first miracle in chapter 2.

Lesson

Now in John's book, he gives us 8 signs, eight miracles that Jesus did that are signs pointing to His deity.

.He turns water into wine in chapter 2

He heals a dying man in chapter 4.

He cures a paralyzed man in chapter 5.

He creates food for thousands of people in chapter 6.

He walks on water at the end of chapter 6.

He gives sight to the blind in chapter 9.

He raises a man dead for days in chapter 11.

He creates a meal in chapter 21, breakfast for His disciples.

And then the culminating miracle beyond the eight, He is raised from the dead.

So those are the miracle signs that John records. And I would just remind you that in chapter 20, verse 30, it says this: “Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book.”

So I don't want you to think that these are the only miracles Jesus did, far from it. There are many others. They were a daily experience of those who followed Jesus.

And then in chapter 21, verse 25, the last verse in the gospel of John, John writes “there were 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.”

John is merely giving us samples of these miraculous evidences that Jesus is in fact God because He does what only God can do. In chapter 1, verse 14, the Word, the divine Word, the eternal Word became flesh and manifested His divine glory.

That's John's point. He shows His glory as God through these signs.

In chapter 2 that we have the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. His ministry to the crowds, His ministry to the people of Israel,

and His public ministry goes from chapter 2, verse 1 to the end of chapter 12. When you come to the end of chapter 12, that's the end of His public ministry.

Chapter 13 through 17 is His private ministry in the Upper Room to the apostles. And that is right before His death and resurrection, which then become the subject of chapters 18 to 21.

So the book is divided then into those sections: chapter 1, verbal testimony; chapter 2 to 12, public ministry; 13 to 17,

private ministry; 18 to the end, His death, resurrection, and post-resurrection appearances.

That helps locate you in the big scheme of things in the gospel of John.

I. The Wedding

II. The Woman

III. The Wine

I. The Wedding

1. On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.

On the Third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee

The third day after the previous meeting with Philip and Nathanael, which was concluded when Philip brought Nathanael, and Nathanael said in verse 49 concerning Jesus, “After we’ve examined You, we see You are the Son of God, You are the King of Israel.”

It’s the third day after that meeting. What that tells us is that from the time that John the Baptist said “Behold the Lamb of God” and turned his disciples away from him to follow Jesus--those five men to follow Jesus--from that day to this day everything happens in a week.

They have gone from being across the Jordan and Judah, all the way back to Galilee to the village of Cana, which is about nine miles, the ruins of it are about nine miles north of Nazareth. All of this happens in a very power-packed week. Jesus being declared, these men being called to follow Him, and they do so and end up in the town of Cana. We’re talking about Andrew and Peter and Philip and Nathanael and John and just incidentally Nathanael’s hometown, according to [John 21:2](#), was Cana.

This is a very small place. Nazareth, for example, the highest number we read about in terms of the population of Nazareth at the time of Jesus would be 500. That would be the max. Small place

Cana is a village 9 miles away, even smaller; maybe a few dozen people, a sort of a gathering place for the agricultural folks in that region; very, very small place. That would make this wedding a huge event. And obviously people from

Nazareth would know those people because they lived nearby, they farmed together, the people in the outlying areas would come to Nazareth when they needed things that could only be gained in Nazareth.

It would also be true that if a town of Nazareth has five hundred or less people, they know each other. They've been there for generations; they aren't mobile. They're not only friends, many are family, and that would be extended into Cana. So we're not surprised that Nathanael would be there because that's his village. We're not surprised that Mary would be there, she had lived in Nazareth for a long time. And we're not also surprised that the rest of these folks from Galilee, the other men who came with Jesus, would also be there. Surely they would know people in that wedding as well.

The Wedding is a very Significant Event

The fact that our Lord did His first miracle at a wedding emphasizes the sanctity of that covenant.

AW PINK STATES

"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage" (verses 1, 2). Christ here sanctifies the marriage relationship. Marriage was ordained by God in Eden and in our lesson, the Savior, for all time, set His stamp of approval upon it. To be present at this marriage was almost Christ's first public appearance after His ministry commenced. By gracing this festive gathering, our Lord distinguished and glorified this sacred institution. Observe that Christ was invited to be there. Christ's presence is essential to a happy marriage. The marriage

where there is no place for our Lord and Savior cannot be blest of God: "Whatsoever ye do... do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

Weddings matter. Public covenant matters. The ceremony matters; it always has, it always has. People are not married who just live together. People are married who make public covenant before God and before people.

Marriage is a condition of life designed by God, ordained by God, and authenticated in an open, public covenant.

It is the highest and noblest and best of all human relationships. No other human relationship is as wonderful as marriage.

It is called in the Bible "the grace of life." It is *the* most wonderful and most blessed of all common graces. And we talk about common grace.

What we mean by that is a grace gift from God to all people without regard to whether they believe in Him. That's a common grace. And of all the common graces--the beauty of the world, a sunset, sleep, health, a good meal, falling in love--of all the common graces, the epitome of common graces is marriage. It is the best gift that God can give to humanity in general without regard to whether they know Him at all.

Any society that honors marriage, any society that elevates marriage--a life-long commitment openly; a covenant made and kept between a man and a woman who rear children in the bond of that love--any society that honors marriage will be blessed temporally. It will prosper. It will be safe. It will be secure. It will know peace. It will have a minimum of crime.

On the other hand, any society that fails to honor marriage as a covenant, open covenant between a man and a woman for life, in which children are reared and cared for; any society that diminishes marriage, that fails to honor marriage, is corrupt, is doomed to chaos, turmoil, evil and judgment. Where marriage for life is not honored, where the covenant vows between a man and a woman are not kept, immorality abounds. Immorality overruns the culture, delinquency overruns the culture. The fabric of society is shredded and even escalates. Our Lord honored marriage by attending and doing His first miracle at a wedding.

The Roman Catholic Church has decided that because Jesus was at this wedding, **marriage is a sacrament**. The Roman Catholic doctrine of the sacrament and the sacrament of marriage is based on John 2, that Jesus was at a wedding. Verse 2, both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding, as well as the mother of Jesus being there from verse 1. Based upon that, the Roman Catholic Church has developed the notion that marriage is a sacrament simply because Jesus was at a wedding.

Now what do you mean a sacrament? Well, those of you who come from Roman Catholic backgrounds, you know what that is saying. The sacraments are baptism, confirmation, communion, extreme unction, holy orders, penance, and marriage. Now what is a sacrament in the Roman Catholic system? **A sacrament is a sacred rite in which God grants efficacious grace.**

What do we mean? It is a sacred rite in which God grants inward spiritual grace through Jesus Christ. Let me take it further. Roman Catholicism says this, **“Marriage as a**

sacrament, like the other sacraments, is a means by which God dispenses through Christ efficacious grace for justification and the promise of eternal life in marriage.”

Now I'm happy that the Roman Catholic Church puts a priority on marriage. I'm glad that they want people to be married. But to get there by telling people that this is the path of justification and eternal life is a lie. That's not true.

There is no efficacious, justifying grace in marriage. It's a common grace. It's not a saving grace. Somehow marriage becomes a means by which Christ causes grace to enter the soul with mysterious effects, causing justification which has to be aided by works and becomes a pledge of eternal life. That's right out of Roman Catholic theology.

That's all utterly absurd, of course. But marriage is ordained by God. And it is the universal, relational, common grace that's at the top of all common graces in the benefits that it provides.

This Wedding is a major event going on, it lasted for days. Some writers say they usually would start in the middle of the week and go on for many days. Sometimes they would start

early in the week and go all week long, as long as seven days.

When people came to this celebration, they came because there had been a betrothal, an engagement period. About a year earlier, the couple had been engaged. That's a legal, binding, covenantal contract that could only be broken by divorce. But the marriage wasn't consummated; it wasn't consummated till the end of this party.

What was going on all that year? The husband was preparing a place for his bride. That's what he did. He built a house for his bride. He may be extended on the father's house, the family house. The bridegroom had full responsibility for all the cost of the wedding.

And his job was to get everything ready, and then when everything was ready and the house was built and the house was furnished and all preparations were made and he had demonstrated that he had what it took to care for this girl and to provide for this girl, the party began.

It was a great celebration because he had been working hard for a year. She had been waiting and preparing for this, and finally the time comes, and it's just an immense celebration.

Hebrews 13:4

Let marriage be held in honor among all,

Now, **the Mormon church has an interesting interpretation of this passage.** They have taught for years, that Jesus, a polygamist, married the sisters Martha and Mary, and that a descendant of one of their children founded the church. In some of their circles, it is being

taught that the wedding at Cana was in fact, the Lord's own wedding. This is an ingenious interpretation; in fact, someone deserves a medal for remembering to invite Jesus to His own wedding.

Most men start forgetting things after they are married. Had Jesus forgotten His own wedding?! No, Jesus was among the invited guests.

So He starts His miracle ministry with a friends and family miracle, transitioning Him from the obscurity of Nazareth to public ministry. By the way, Joseph isn't mentioned and I would assume that Joseph was dead. He must have died during those silent years. There were people who knew Joseph and Mary. **John 6:42** says there were people who knew His parents, they knew Joseph and Mary, but Joseph was very likely dead. We know he was gone by the time Jesus went to the cross because in John 19, when He's hanging on the cross, He commits His mother, Mary, into the care of John the apostle because she's a widow. Which means then that He had been the father once His earthly father Joseph had died, Jesus as the oldest son would have taken the responsibility to care for the widow and the family.

II. The Woman

³ And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.”

⁴ Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.”

⁵ His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do *it*.”

And the mother of Jesus was there. Not surprising. Again, how many generations of her family had lived in the little town of Nazareth? A few hundred people. And how well would they have known the folks just up the road? Not surprising, likely related--cousins, extended family, close friends. Maybe Mary was there because she, of course, would have been who served, just her character as a godly woman demonstrated in her Magnificat at the time of our Lord's birth. She would have been a wonderful woman, a loved woman, a beloved woman. She probably had some role to play in the wedding to serve as indicated by the fact that she sees the problem and brings it to Jesus.

Whenever Mary had a problem, who do you think she went to for a solution at home? He never had a bad idea in His life. He never had a wrong solution in His entire life. He never led her one step in the wrong direction. He had the perfect solution to every dilemma. He had the perfect answer for every predicament. Everything that ever went wrong in a house, He knew why it went wrong and how to make it right. He was the most wise, intelligent, resourceful person that had ever lived or ever will live on this earth. And He was in the house with her.

You know, some of us are severely challenged domestically. Things I can't do; I can't solve all problems, not by a long shot.

But He would know the way to solve every problem. And not only that, He cared about people. He was compassionate, He was kind, He was loving, He could see the issues. Who else would she go to? Who else? Who else had one that they would go to the equal of Him? None. He had the perfect solution to every dilemma, the perfect answer to every question, perfect solution to every problem.

And she also knew He cared and He cared deeply about people because He loved as only God can love. I don't think she's necessarily asking for a miracle. She just goes to the One she would always go to when there was a very difficult predicament. So she simply says to Him, "They have no wine," "they have no wine." She's learned as a widow to trust in His leadership and His wisdom.

Oh, by the way, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that you don't want to go to Jesus if you need something, you want to go to Mary to ask Jesus. The whole idea that you go Mary to plead with Jesus because Jesus can't resist Mary comes from this passage.

Oh by the way, never mind that she was rebuked by Him for asking. This is the only time in the New Testament that Mary ever made any request to Jesus. And He responded by saying, "None of your business."

But this is where the Catholic Church finds the fountain of its Mariolatry, going to Mary to get things from Jesus.

Verse 4, after Mary says to Him, "they have no wine,"

Jesus said to her, "**Woman.**" **Woman, not mother? It's not harsh to say "Woman."**

Some say it's kind of the southern expression, "ma'am."

It's not harsh, but it's not intimate. It's not mother. It's courteous.

By the way, it's the same word that He used on the cross in John 19 when He said to her, "Woman, behold your son," and handed her over to John. He called her "woman" there as well.

Why? Because He is telling her we don't any longer have the relationship we've had up till now. It's over. She is no longer in a position to act as an authority in His life. She is no longer in a position to tell Him what to do, to make suggestions to Him.

This would be a big change because I'm pretty confident that everything she ever asked of Him, everything she ever desired of Him, He gave out of His love. But she could no longer demand anything from Him. She played no role in His ministry.

Listen to this carefully. **When He was twelve years old, He gave her a preview of this moment, and He was in the temple talking to the officials, and He said, "I must be about My Father's business."**

And this day His Father's business started and His mother's business ended.

From here on He was saying, "I don't do your business; I do My Father's business. I'm done with My mother's business, fully engaged in My Father's business."

Can I even extend that?

He never asked for suggestions from anybody...from anybody. In fact, when people gave Him suggestions, He normally rebuked them such as "Get behind Me, Satan." Here His rebuke is a little milder. He says, "What does that have to do with us?" "What does that have to do with us?"

This is so critically important. The years of compliance, the years of submission, the years of obedience are over. He is finished with His mother's business and He is now doing His Father's business. He says from here on, as we'll see in John, **"I only do what the Father tells Me to do. I only do what the Father wills that I do. I only do what I see the Father do. It is the Father who gives Me His Word, and it is what the Father speaks that I do."**

He is distancing Himself from that mother/son relation which had existed for thirty years. To call her mother would have kept that relationship kind of intact.

“Woman” shows that she is now dealing not with her son, but with the Son of God.

What does that have to do with us? What an amazing statement. By the way, that statement is made a couple of times in the Old Testament. It’s made in Matthew 8 and Mark 1 and Mark 5; it’s a very familiar expression; it’s a Semitic kind of expression, literally it is as “What to Me and to you?” What is it that concerns you and Me together?
Nothing. What do we have in common? Nothing.

It is a separating statement. I am completely free from you as to your desires, your wishes, your advice.

He sealed this in Matthew 12:46.

He was speaking to the crowds and His mother and brothers were standing outside and they wanted to talk to Him--Mary and His half-brothers. “Someone said to Him, ‘Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside standing out there seeking to speak to You.’ Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, ‘Who is My mother? Who are My brothers?’ Stretching out His hand toward His disciples He said, ‘Behold, My mother and My brothers. Whoever does the will of My father who is in heaven, he is My brother and My sister and My mother.’” The only relationship I have is with people who do My Father’s will. Other human relationships

cease. That's what He's saying. What do we have in common? He completely distances Himself from Mary.

And then He says this, **“My hour...My hour has not yet come.”** This is the first time we see this statement, but we're going to see it again. We're going to see it in chapter 7. We're going to see it in chapter 8. We're going to see it in chapter 12. We're going to see it 13, 17, “My hour has not come.” “My hour has not come,” or “My hour has come.”

This is a phrase that in its fullness looks at the cross, the hour of His death and resurrection. And what Jesus is saying is,

“Look, we don't have anything in common because I'm now on a divine schedule that culminates in My death and everything leads to that. Every event, every issue, every circumstance is leading to that final hour.”

And then He does what she asked. He made the point, and it just so happens that this is on the divine timetable. I don't know that she knew that. Certainly she didn't assume some great miracle. She probably assumed just some kind of a natural solution. But it was on God's list to be done there and then.

III. The Wine

³ And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.”

⁶ Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. ⁷ Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ And He said to them, “Draw *some* out now, and take *it* to the master of the feast.” And they took *it*. ⁹ When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. ¹⁰ And he said to him, “Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the *guests* have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!”

¹¹ This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

Now, in the East, wine at a feast was essential. The rabbis taught, “without wine there is no joy.” It was not that people were drunken; in fact, drunkenness was such a disgrace that they were careful to mix wine with enough water to prevent it. Wine, in fact, was their primitive system of purifying the water.

It is a passage like this that raises questions in good people about the subject of drinking. Here you have Jesus creating wine. The question is, “Does the Bible teach abstinence?” No. In fact, Paul

encouraged Timothy, in I Timothy, chapter 5, verse 23, to “. . . drink . . . a little wine for the sake of your stomach . . .”.

But what is often the missing ingredient in the discussion is the fundamental difference between the wine that the Bible allows and the wine from the local grocery store. In fact, careful comparing of Scripture and culture will reveal that what we are buying and drinking today is comparable to “strong drink,” and that was prohibited in Scripture.

So what about the wine? Well, it was a staple drink in the ancient world, and they made it from all kinds of fruit, mostly grapes, but other fruit as well. And let me just remind you of the fact that wine and the juice of any of those fruits was subject to fermentation because there was no refrigeration. So everything fermented and developed alcohol. To quench your thirst with water was dangerous because water was not purified. But to quench your thirst with fermented wine was dangerous because you could get drunk and that was a sin. You didn't want to be sick and you didn't want to sin. So the way they dealt with that is that they diluted the water, or they diluted the wine with

water, one to three to one to ten--ten parts water, one part wine, down to three parts water, one part wine. And they did that so they could drink the water because it had been purified, and they could drink the wine and it wouldn't make them drunk because it was diluted. So this would have been prepared in the normal fashion and it ran out. This is a problem--big problem, big embarrassment.

One historian wrote,

Wine today has a much higher level of alcohol than wine in the New Testament. In fact, in New Testament times one would need to drink eleven 8-ounce glasses of wine in order to consume the same amount of alcohol found in one martini.

In other words, it was possible to become intoxicated from New Testament wine, but one's drinking would affect the bladder long before it affected the mind.

Those who today, try to find a green light in drinking the modern day alcoholic beverages, overlook the basic difference between wine that was acceptable in Jesus' day and the beverages of today.

What was God’s protection from drinking something that was considered intoxicating or “strong drink”? Solomon writes, in Proverbs, chapter 23, verses 31 and 32,

Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper.

In summary, as Norm Geisler of Dallas Seminary wrote,

Though fermented wine was drunk in Bible times and though the Bible approved of wine- drinking, one needs to remember that the alcoholic content was much less than that of wine today. What is used today is not the wine of the New Testament! Therefore, Christians ought to recognize that wine, beer, or other alcoholic beverages are actually “strong drink” and are forbidden in Scripture.

This passage, in John, chapter 2, is one that is so misused. There are those who say, “Well, hey, if it’s good enough for Jesus . . .” or “Jesus created it . . .”.

I am compelled at that point, to defend the character of Christ. It is utterly impossible to imagine Jesus not only being present at a drunken party, but actually creating the substance that aided in their drunkenness. That is inconsistent with His character.

Ladies and gentlemen, what I find equally tragic is that while our society is finally waking up, in this post-prohibition generation, to the dangers and travesties of alcohol, at the same time, the church is embracing it. How is it that secular magazines are decrying the fact

that alcohol is America's favorite drug, while the church is teaching responsible drinking, which is another term for "moderation".

How tragic that in our country, more than 500,000 children are termed alcoholics, and many of them got their first drink from their own kitchen refrigerator. More than fifty percent of them are living in homes with parents who claim to be religious. It is not the first time that the church, in the name of liberty, has strangled common sense.

23 percent of the drinkers consume 76 percent of the alcohol. Most drinkers then are binge drinkers. They drink to get drunk. So any encouragement to drink ends up encouraging binge drinkers cause they're the largest percentage of people who drink and they are the most self-destructive and the most destructive of other people. In the face of that, it is amazing to me that we now have a generation of young so-called self-styled pastors encouraging their young people to drink alcohol. One very prominent pastor, **Mark Driscoll, repented publicly for not drinking alcohol** sooner.

There's a book written by Darren Patrick called The Church Planter, it's a book written to this young generation of sort of entrepreneurial pastors and in the book he says, "The biggest problem among these young pastors is drunkenness." And he actually says if you're having a problem with alcohol; take a break until you get control of it. Have you ever heard in your life in the history of the church that a big problem among pastors was drunkenness? This new freedom, this new liberation

is damaging. Pastors shouldn't be doing that. They shouldn't be advocating that. What they're telling those kids to drink isn't anything like what was going on in the scriptures.

The Biblical view of Alcohol, and drinking

Ephesians 5:18

18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

All drunkenness does is produce debauchery. ..dissipation, *asotia*, recklessness, unrestrained debauchery. That's what drunkenness produces.

Now the word "wine" is an interesting word the word wine is *oinos*, the Hebrew is *yayin*, *oinos* and *yayin*.

And when you look at a Hebrew lexicon or Hebrew dictionary and you look at the word *yayin*, for example,

the Jewish Encyclopedia will tell you it refers to mixed wine...

the wine in the Old Testament time was mixed and the wine in the New Testament time as well was mixed.

There are a number of different Hebrew words that refer to wine but the common word is *yayin*.

There are a few others, *tirosh*, *chamar*. *Tirosh* refers to new wine, *chamar* refers to something fermented. Then there's the Hebrew word *shakar* which refers to strong drink.

And the root of that word means to be drunk, for stronger drinks from other than grapes and unmixed.

Shakar would be the unmixed strong drink.

But whether you had wine or something stronger than wine, unmixed, these had an intoxicating potential.

Oinos, wine, the word that the New Testament uses, definitely has an intoxicating potential, and that's why there are so many warnings in the Scripture against drunkenness.

The 1901, Jewish encyclopedia distinguishes *yayin* which is wine from *shakar* which is strong drink strictly on the matter of how much alcohol content it had.

So they were very aware of the potential of drunkenness. Wine was common in the New Testament. And because wine was so common in the New Testament, as it was in the Old, there are so many warnings about drunkenness.

It carries the potential to make you drunk, to cause you to lose your control, restraint, sense, and therefore we would conclude that drunkenness at any level is a sin...it is a sin. **Romans 13:13** is listed with vices. **Galatians 5:21** it is listed with vices; 1 Corinthians 5, 1 Corinthians 6.

Drunkenness is an altered state of consciousness in which you don't have control. It's the opposite of being sober minded and self-control.

For the Christian, it is unthinkable, it is an outright sin. And we are called to avoid it. These instructions that are given to us are not ambiguous in any sense. **In 1 Peter 4:3 we read, "For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desires of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries."** That all goes together.

You never see in these lists drunkenness sorted out from the rest. It's a package deal.

Where there is sensuality, lust, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties, abominable idolatries, there is sin. And it doesn't...it doesn't easy isolate itself from those kinds of behaviors, thus the warnings are very, very strong. The Bible constantly warns of the danger of drunkenness cause it leads to all these other kinds of debauched behaviors.

Now even in the Old Testament the warnings are the same.

Proverbs 20: 1,

wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging and whoever is deceived thereby is not wise

You do back things, stupid things when you're drunk. You say bad things, stupid things when you're drunk. And bad consequences come from them.

, Proverbs 23:19, "Listen, my son, and be wise and direct your heart in the way, do not be with heavy drinkers of wine or with gluttonous eaters of meat, for the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty and drowsiness will clothe one with rags."

Don't hang around people who get drunk.

v29,, **"Who has woe, who has sorrow, who has contentions, who has complaining, who has wounds without cause, who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long over wine and those who go to taste mixed wine."**

" Don't look on the wine when it's red and sparkles in the cup when it goes down smoothly. It bites like a serpent, it stings like a viper"

**Your eyes will see strange things,
And your heart will utter perverse things.**

**³⁴ Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea,
Or like one who lies at the top of the mast,**

What fool would go on the top of a mast and try to take a nap? Only a drunk. That's about the most dangerous...it is the most dangerous place on the ship. Who takes a nap on a mast? A drunk. What are you doing up there?

But this is how drunks do.

v35, "They struck me but I didn't become ill, they beat me but I didn't know it. When shall I awake? I'll seek another drink."

Warnings the Scripture gives us of the idiocy and the folly of drunkenness.

Isaiah chapter 5 talks about leaders who are drinkers, men of honor who are drinkers who are drunkards, who make wrong judgments. Isaiah 5, Isaiah 28, Isaiah 56, Hosea 4, all kinds of warnings about drunkenness.

Now on the other hand, we want to be faithful to the full picture of Scripture. There are in the Old Testament, Leviticus 23 and Exodus 29, offerings of the fruit of the vine brought to God. Judges 9 makes reference to wine being an enjoyable drink. Isaiah even uses wine in the fifty-fifth chapter and the first and second verse, very familiar, as symbolic of a blessing come by wine. It was a part of daily life in Bible times, it was even used medicinally, do you remember the Good Samaritan? The man who was wounded? Wine was used as an antiseptic in his wounds. Scripture recognizes wine. It has a place in society but it has a potential that can be highly damaging.

It wasn't so damaging in ancient times because people didn't drive cars. It would damage them and they might damage others in brawls and they might end up killing other people. But they didn't wield the kind of weaponry that people who are inebriated wield today at 70 miles an hour, crashing and careening into crowds of people.

And I want to add, just a significant word, **there were some people in the Old Testament times and apparently in the New**

Testament times as well, who never drank at all anything alcoholic.

Well I want to introduce you to group number one that didn't drink in Leviticus 10: 9, "The Lord said to Aaron, the High Priest, be a head of the Aaronic priesthood, do not drink wine, *yayin*, or strong drink, *shakar*, neither you nor your sons with you when you come into the tent of meetings so that you will not die."

Wow! Don't drink anything that is alcoholic when you come here or you may die because this is a holy place.

It's a perpetual statute throughout your generations. Not just you, Aaron, this is perpetual. This goes on for all those who stand as priests unto God so as to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, the unclean and the clean. Unclean...drink wine; strong drink; clean...do not. Profane...drink wine, strong drink... holy do not so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them through Moses. You have a very important responsibility to teach all divine truth revealed to you to the sons of Israel, the people of Israel. You need to be clear minded, clear headed, and you need to set the highest example of holiness.

Numbers 6 we move from those who were in positions of leadership as priests, they were the officers of the theocratic Kingdom.

To those who desire to take the highest vow for holy living called the **Nazarite vow, meaning to be separated**. When a man or woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazarite to dedicate himself to the Lord, this is the highest level of dedication and devotion to the Lord, he **shall abstain from wine and strong drink, no vinegar, neither anything made from wine or strong drink, any grape juice or fresh or dried grapes all the days of his separation shall not eat anything produced by the grapevine from the seeds even to the skin**. And it goes on to talk about some other things. So if you took that most severe, most devout of all vows, you would never drink anything that came from the grape or the fruit.

Another is in Proverbs 31, that famous chapter for which we turn to find about the woman's role. But there's more there, the first part of the chapter, **talking about kings, rulers**. And when it comes to rulers, there are specific words here,

verse 4,

"It is not for kings, O Lemuel,, it's not for kings to drink wine or for rulers to drink or desire strong drink."

Why? They'll drink and forget what's decreed and pervert the rights of all the afflicted. Give strong drink to him who is perishing. Save the strong drink to somebody who is agonizing in the throes of death, like an anesthetic to ease his pain. Give wine to the one whose life is bitter. Let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his trouble no more, ease him with a little to calm his troubled spirit.

But a ruler? No. A priest? No. One who takes the highest level of devotion? No. A ruler? No.

That is why **Isaiah 5:22** brings judgment down on the leadership of Israel because they were engaged in consumption of **alcohol** and it had perverted their leadership. In fact, they are designated by their drinking for judgment. "Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine and valiant men in mixing strong drink." What that verse means is judgment is going to come down on the heads of people in positions of leadership who are drinking.

1 Timothy chapter 3, we all know about the behaviors of people in leadership who are inebriated. But let's talk about people in positions of responsibility in the life of the church. Let's talk about a pastor, an overseer, an elder here, 1 Timothy chapter 3. It tells us he must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, that's a one-woman man, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, **not devoted to wine...not devoted to wine**. And that's the elder. What about the deacon? We talked about deacons earlier. What about the deacons responsibility? Is theirs

any less? Deacons in verse 8 of that chapter must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, **nor addicted to much wine**, or fond of sorted gain.

Wine is an issue here. It's an issue for priests. It's an issue for kings. It's an issue for people who take the highest level of devotion. It's an issue for rulers. It's an issue for pastors. It's an issue for deacons.

Why? Because there's always the potential for drunkenness, and drunkenness leads to dissipation. It leads to foolishness, uncontrolled words and uncontrolled actions.

So, the Scripture is crystal-clear on this matter of drunkenness. And it's also crystal-clear on the issue of people in leadership,

staying away from that because they have responsibility before God not only to render right judgments and to teach truth accurately, but to set a pure example.

Even in a non-religious sense, the Christian must avoid the sin of drunkenness because it is the path to debauched thinking and debauched acting. Drunkenness is the old way of life. We don't live that way anymore.

Is the alcoholic beverage today the same as it was in ancient times? Are we comparing apples to apples here? Because people who advocate the fact that believers are free to drink alcoholic drinks will always say they're in the Bible, they drank alcoholic beverages in the Old Testament. They drank alcoholic beverages in the New Testament. They drank wine in the Old Testament. They drank wine in the New Testament. The disciples drank wine. Jesus drank wine. We can drink wine. That's it!

That then begs the question, was the wine consumed in the Old Testament and the New Testament, the same as alcoholic drinks today?

Today there is an unlimited supply...unlimited. Now let me tell you something else about it. It was a thousand years after the New Testament that the process of distillation was developed and invented

What did distillation do? It increased the **alcohol** content potentially from 40 percent to 75 percent..

A little after that, during the time of Napoleon, some kind of process known as chapitalization(?) was developed and that added another potential five percent alcohol.

That's where you get things like whisky, hard liquor, with this high **alcohol** content. Today fortified wines would be as high as twenty percent **alcohol** and even higher than that.

So to start with, we're talking about a different amount of this available. We're talking about a different alcoholic content. Something else you need to understand, very important.

Wine in ancient times was boiled or mixed...boiled or mixed. And I'm not just telling you this because Bible writers talk about it, I'm telling you this is secular history. Everybody knows this was the case. And if you take wine that was typically two to four percent and you boil it, what happens to the alcohol? It's gone. What you have left is a paste that can then be remixed with water.

On the other hand, if you just mix it with water, three parts to one would have been the average, three parts water to one part of wine, you dilute the **alcohol content significantly.**

And I say, in ancient times, the wine was either boiled and out went all of its **alcohol** content, or it was mixed.

Professor Samuel Lee of Cambridge University says

that *yayin*, the Hebrew word for wine, or *oinos* the Greek word, does not refer only to intoxicating liquor made by fermentation.

But both words, but in particular his interest is the word *yayin* refers to a thick, un-intoxicating syrup or paste produced by boiling to make it storable. This thick substance was stored then in skins. It is a thick syrup. It is, somebody said, to the grade of jelly and once it's put in the skin that's supple, it can be squeezed out of the skin on to bread like your grape jelly on bread, or dissolved in water and mixed to become a drink.

So says the professor at Cambridge and he draws this from a description of this very process by Pliny, the ancient Roman historian who said this is what they did. Pliny talks about an un-intoxicating wine.

Another ancient writer from Athens and here's a direct quote that came from a wonderful article by Robert Stein. It says,

“The gods,” this is a Greek writer in Athens, “the gods have revealed wine to mortals to be the greatest blessing for those who use it right. But for those who use it without measure, the reverse, for it gives food to them that take it in strength and 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 life to those who mix and drink it moderately, it gives good cheer. But if you over-step the bounds, it brings violence, mix it half and half and you get madness, unmixed bodily collapse.”

Plutarch in his symposiacs(?) says, as a beverage it was always thought of as a mixed drink.

Quote: “We call a mixture wine, although the larger of the components is water. The ratio of water might vary,” says Robert Stein, “but only barbarians drank it unmixed and a mixture of wine

and water of equal parts was seen as strong drink, equal parts, half water, half wine was strong wine, and frowned on. The term wine, or oinos in the ancient world then did not mean wine as we understand it today, but wine mixed with water or from a paste, completely without any intoxicating power because it had all been boiled out."

A document called The Apostolic Tradition indicates that the early church followed this custom, serving only mixed wine whether from a syrup paste or a liquid base.

The wine then of biblical times could well have been unintoxicating from a syrup base, or marginally intoxicating because its fermentation had been diluted so much in the mixture with water. Taking a very conservative estimate, for example, if water is three-to-one mixed with wine, the level of alcohol would be between 2.25 and 2.75 percent which is well under the 3.2 percent alcohol necessary to be classified as an intoxicating drink

. Four to one would take you down to 1.8 to 2.2. and the only way you could possibly get drunk would be just to consume volumes of it.

Now what are we saying? Homer, Plato, Pliny, other ancient writers detail the practice of diluting wine with water, of also boiling it down to a paste. Homer's Odyssey, you remember that from your English Lit class, or from your European Lit class, Homer's Odyssey refers to mixtures as high as 20 to 1, twenty parts water, one part fermented juice.

The Greeks wrote of those who drank undiluted wine as barbarians.

The Jewish Mishnah, the Mishnah is the codification of Jewish laws that are imposed upon the Jewish people, and in the Mishnah four cups of wine were poured out for the Passover, mixed with water two or three parts. So the wine consumed in the Passover, according to the

Mishnah, is two or three parts water. And again, commonly wine was boiled so that all the alcohol evaporated. The residue was a paste mixed with water, alcohol free, common in Rome, common in Egypt, common in Jewish life

When you look at the Scripture, you see this. Song of Solomon talks the beautiful talk between the bridegroom and the bride about mixed wine...mixing wine. Proverbs 23:30 talks about mixing wine. Isaiah 65:11, mixed wine.

In Proverbs 9, there is a statement there that relates to this in the category of wisdom, being wise, Proverbs 9, "Wisdom has built her house," verse 1, "Hewn out her seven pillars, prepared her food and mixed her wine. Come eat my food," verse 5, "and drink the wine I've mixed." Wisdom mixes the wine. Mixed wine is important in the Bible. Unmixed, strong drink is dangerous.

In Revelation 14 and verse 10, a picture of the wine of the wrath of God which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger. Even when God talks about the wine of His anger, it is mixed wine.

Okay, now why? Why did they mix it? You say, "They're taking out all the fun. Come on. We want the buzz. We like the buzz. We like the flavor if you put water in, you mess up the flavor, you take away the fun."

Let me tell you why they mixed it with water. And I'm just going to take it down to four things that I found in looking at the history of this.

#1, to conserve the supply. Obviously spread it out.

#2. Here's one you probably didn't think about, **to increase the flavor**. Yes, to increase the flavor.

.Found a New York Times article in July of 2010 and the article said this, "Water is a flavor enhancer in two drinks...wine and coffee." Water is a flavor enhancer in wine and coffee. They determined this in a laboratory by studying the properties of these

two things, wine and coffee, and how they are affected molecularly by the introduction of water. And they determined in their studies that water mixed with coffee and wine releases the flavor and subdues the bitterness. The article went on to say that with wine above ten percent alcohol, the wine is pungent, irritating, and acidic and the flavor is not released. Add water and flavor molecules reduce the **alcohol** content in percentage, reduce the irritating features, they all disappear and the flavor is enhanced, and the same is true with coffee.

Try it with coffee. Okay. If you want to look that up, New York Times, July 28, 2010 and there's a lot more in that interesting article.

#3

to prevent drunkenness. That's a pretty important one, don't you think? Have you been to Israel in the summer, or in the spring, or the early fall when it's 110? And your body is losing heat because you're walking. In those days you're working outside in the blazing sun. That would be true of all the Middle East, Mediterranean climate areas, they needed liquids. And there was always the danger that if you just kept taking it in, not only would you run out of the supply but you would of necessity put yourself in a position to be drunk. That's why sometimes it was mixed up to 20 to 1.

#4, and here's the really critical thing to understand. Wine was mixed with water as an antiseptic. The purpose of mixing the wine with the water was to sanitize the water...to sanitize the water. That's what's really going on. To make water safe cause you can't live without water. No one can. They were living in extreme heat and working hard and the world was unsanitary and bacteria was everywhere. It was not a sanitary world, would you agree with that? We don't even know what sanitary was until the end of the nineteenth century. Read the book, The Great Influenza it will change your view of the world when you realize that it wasn't until the nineteenth century that anybody knew such

a thing as bacteria existed. No one ever had a disease diagnosed accurately until the late eighteen hundreds. They didn't know anything about where it came from. God knew. Part of the Fall was to produce fermentation because in the Fall bacteria were set loose in the world and they were potentially destructive and deadly. Fermentation provided an antiseptic in the stomach that killed bacteria. In that sense, fermentation is a gift to a fallen world.

At Oregon State University, two microbiologists tackled this problem and this is available from October of the year 2002, The American Society for Microbiology.

These two microbiologists at Oregon State University discovered that wine inactivated or killed virulent bugs called pathogens and they named them. They've reproduced that in the lab and they watched it happen. E coli, salmonella, staphylococcus, the staph that we all know about from hospitals, and clebsialla(??) and that wine within 30 to 60 minutes completely kills all that bacteria. And, by the way, they go on to say all kinds of other potentially lethal pathogens.

Now here's the interesting part. Their studies determined that it's not the **alcohol** that does it, it's not the alcohol. In the process of fermentation, malic and tartaric acid are produced in the process and malic and tartaric acid are what killed the bacteria so that they are even in the paste when all the **alcohol** has been burned off. In fact, they're so convinced of this that they are currently working, ladies, on a wine based spray disinfectant to kill the bacteria around your kitchen, your house, and at the hospital and their tests have proven it to be as effective as hydrogen peroxide.

So wine in that condition becomes a gift from God so that people could drink water and have the bacteria that naturally exists in water be killed and wine becomes a drink of safety.

Others even say that the grapes and the skins of the grapes have resveratrol in them which aids in the cases of ulcers. So, God

gave wine as a means of health and to prevent illness in the ancient world, a common grace it is.

You say, “Well then why don’t you drink it?” I live in a sanitary world, right? I live in a sanitary world. I don’t live in the world they lived in. I don’t have any need for that. It was necessary then, it’s not necessary now. But it was in low supply, mildly alcoholic, mixed with water, mixed with milk. Sometimes they mixed it with spices.

Today, it’s not necessary.

Endless supply, gas stations, convenient stores, markets, drug stores. The lowest alcoholic content would be beer, four to five percent, all the way up 75 percent in some whiskeys. And what disturbs me is that the products are especially designed to sell to whom? Who are they trying to sell them to? The most irresponsible part of the population, who are they? Kids, young people. What they do is they market them with half-dressed women and macho men, right? You could watch a hundred beer commercials and you wouldn’t know anything about beer. They also put high sugar content in it because they know kids are used to drinking sugared drinks along with high alcohol content and they make these sweet high alcohol content drinks 40 ounces to create the buzz. And then they spend four billion in ads and nobody needs any of it. But they need the money.

What Jesus is about to create is one of the most fantastic tasting wines of His day. It is His own recipe, His own selection of spices, and with just the right blend of the best grapes. Was it fermented? Of course, otherwise, the water would not have been purified. Was it

strong drink, like that sold today? Absolutely not, or Jesus would have violated other Scripture, and in so doing, would have sinned.

6 Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece.

Jesus did not turn the water into wine because He did not want the party spoiled, He had deeper truth in mind.

Arthur Pink writes,

Judaism still existed as a religious system – there were purifications, but it ministered no comfort to the heart. It had degenerated into a cold, mechanical routine, utterly destitute of joy in God. Israel had lost the joy of their marriage to Yahweh.

Here are these twenty gallon stone pots. People would come and the servants would pour water from them onto their hands in a prescribed fashion. This was external cleansing.

7 Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And He said to them, “Draw *some* out now, and take *it* to the master of the feast.” And they took *it*. 9

So they filled them to the brim, which is what He wanted. If they weren't filled to the brim, somebody would just say He added wine to the water. But if the water goes all the way to the brim, there's nothing left to...no room left. That was the point.

And by the way, you have people who are completely disinterested parties now who are going to give testimony to this miracle. They don't have any stake in this issue. They're not trying to prove anything about Jesus. These are servants, whoever they were, the people who were serving there.

They might not have been full-time servants. They might just have been friends and folks who were willing to do this. But they don't have any issue. They are disinterested parties who are going to witness and give testimony to this miracle. So they filled the water pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

“And He said to them, ‘Draw some out now and take it to the head waiter’-so they took it to him. When the head waiter tasted the water which had become wine.”

Whoa-whoa-whoa; when did that happen? Well, that happened between verses 8 and 9. What? No, it actually happened in the white space between verses 7 and 8. They filled it to the brim and all of a sudden they drew some out, took it to the head waiter, they took it to him and the head waiter tasted water which had become wine. This is so understated. This is like in the backdoor. Where's the miracle? I mean, this is massive. How do you get wine? Grapes. How do you get grapes? Vines. How do you get vines? Seeds. How do you get seeds? Other vines. How do you make the vine grow? Sunlight, water, earth. How do you get the wine? Crush, strain.

There are no grapes, no vines, no seeds, no other seeds, no sunlight, no water, no earth. Nothing. He's created wine out of nothing. I mean, at least He could have said, “Wine!” Right? I mean this is a pretty dramatic deal here.

The head waiter tasted the water which had become wine, and didn't know where it came from.

But the servants who had drawn the water knew they knew what happened. So you've got these completely disinterested

eyewitnesses giving testimony that He had literally created wine to replace water.

And it becomes apparent right away because the headwaiter calls the bridegroom and the bridegroom is the guy who wants the news 'cause he's responsible for this.

Said to him, **“Every man serves the good wine first, and the people have drunk freely, then he serves the poorer wine, but you’ve kept the good wine until now.”**

That’s just axiomatic. Everybody does that. You do that. You have company over. If they keep eating long enough, they’re going to get the leftovers that are still in the refrigerator. You know, I mean, that’s the way it goes. You prepare something; you give them what you’ve got. If they’re still hungry, you start digging down into yesterday and the day before and last week. I mean, that’s...so he says, “Nobody does this. Nobody keeps this quality of wine until the end, nobody does that.” Which is the unexpected, again an indifferent witness to the fact that this was wine. And it was not only wine, it was the best wine that had ever been consumed, pure, sweet, unfermented, delicious, like nothing else the man had ever tasted.

So you have this testimony of a creative miracle in the mouth of people who have no stake in trying to prove anything about Jesus. It’s amazing.

Look back at verse 11. Jesus manifested His glory when He caused the wine to flow and, in fact, left the newlyweds, nearly ninety

gallons of wine as His wedding gift. From the sale of that, they were probably able to afford a real honeymoon.

But the word “glory” is the Greek word “doxa,” from which we get our word “doxology”. Jesus began to reveal His deity, His attributes, His power, His glory.

And so we sing:

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures
here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*