

GOSPEL OF JOHN
THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' MIRACLES
JOHN 2:1-11

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Introduction

Soon after Jesus began His ministry in Jerusalem, John relates this event at Cana of Galilee where Jesus turned water into wine. This event is important in John's account because it is **the first of many different miracles or signs** that John records that Jesus did in the presence of His disciples! (*Vs. 11*)

What was the purpose of the many miracles of Jesus? Well, John says this toward the end of his book:

John 20:30-31—“*And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*”

John saw Jesus' miracles as signs of the truth of the both the Person and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ rather than as just mere wonders!

It is important to keep this in mind as we look at any miracle of Jesus!

I. LET'S CONSIDER THE SETTING.

Vs. 1a—“*And the third day...*”

As we look at what has been written thus far, we can come to the logical conclusion that this is talking about **the third day after Nathanael became a disciple in Chapter 1.**

Vs. 1b—“*...there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee...*”

We are not told whose marriage this was. We are not told who the bride is or who the groom is. **It is not really relevant, because the focus here is on Jesus!**

All we are told is that it was in Cana of Galilee. Cana was a town about nine miles north of Nazareth where Jesus grew up.

But there are some things we need to understand about Jewish weddings. Wedding celebrations were very elaborate events and as such they sometimes could last as long as a week.

Vs. 1c—“*...and the mother of Jesus was there.*”

Some have even speculated that the wedding may have been that of a close friend or even a relative of Mary because she appears to have had some responsibilities.

It has been even thought that perhaps Mary was the hostess at this wedding, because she knew about the lack of wine, and she directed the servants to follow Jesus' orders. (But we don't really know!)

Vs 2—“*And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.*”

When a wedding was held, the entire town was invited, and most made the effort to come (it was considered an insult to refuse an invitation to a wedding). With Cana being near Nazareth he may have known the bride and groom. In any case, **His presence was intentional.**

The disciples mentioned here, who were also called to the marriage, are the five who have been called thus far – **John (the disciple not mentioned by name in John 1:40), Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael.**

Jesus' ministry has already begun! We know that **Jesus was on a mission to save sinners!** This was the greatest mission in the history of mankind! **Nothing else could be more important!**

Also, realize that **Jesus has these five newly called disciples who needed to be discipled!** Yet, we see that Jesus took time to attend this wedding and take part in its festivities.

Some folks have the idea that serious Christians shouldn't take time from “*important*” work for Christ for social occasions. But we need to see that **social occasions can be great opportunities to bring glory to God and should be looked at as opportunities to minister to folks!**

By participating in these events, **Jesus was able to be involved with some of the very people He came to seek and to save!** He was also able to bolster the belief of His new disciples! (*Vs. 11*)

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LET'S CONSIDER THE SETTING.

II. LET'S CONSIDER THE SITUATION.

Vs 3 - "And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine."

The week-long weddings in Jesus' time must have had about the same impact on family budgets as weddings do today.

In Jesus' day, banquets were prepared for many guests who would spend days celebrating the new life of the married couple.

To accommodate these guests, careful planning was needed.

Running out of wine meant more than just an embarrassment to the family because it broke the strong unwritten laws of hospitality. In fact, I've read where the father of the groom, whose responsibility it was to provide food and wine for the celebration, could actually be sued by the relatives of the bride for running out of either food or wine!

Also, wine was symbolic of joy. To have no wine was equated with having no joy. A marriage was supposed to be a joyous event, but we see here that disaster was imminent!

So this was a serious problem!

III. LET'S CONSIDER THE SIDE ISSUES.

Let's take a few moments to deal with two side issues that people love to bring up any time this story is read or referred to:

A. Was Jesus Being Disrespectful To His Mother? (Vs 4)

Can you imagine your mother asking you to do something for a neighbor, and you responding to her by saying, "***Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.***"

If your mother is anything like mine, she would probably have at a minimum given you "***the look***" or more likely made your **teeth rattle in the back of your head!**

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Responding to a mother's (or any woman's) request in twenty-first-century America with "***Woman...***" may sound very impolite and offensive to us.

As Believers who are commanded to "***honor***" our ***father and mother***" (***Ephesians 6:2***), such an expression would be way out of line today if one was talking directly to his mother.

But the thing is that we should not judge a 1st century expression by today's vernacular or standards!

It was **not** rude or inappropriate for a man in the first century to speak to a lady by saying the Greek word that is translated here as, "***Woman.***"

In fact, "***this was a highly respectful and affectionate mode of address.***" (Word Studies in the New Testament, Vincent, 1997)

And it had "***no idea of censure***" (Word Pictures in the New Testament, Robertson, 1932, p. 34).

Jesus used this word when complimenting the Syrophenician woman's great faith in ***Matthew 15:28***—"***Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.***"

He also used it affectionately when addressing Mary Magdalene after His resurrection in ***John 20:15***—"***Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?***"

And lastly, He used it when speaking to His grieving mother one last time from the cross in ***John 19:26***—"***When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!***"

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Adam Clarke has noted: *“Certainly no kind of disrespect is intended, but, on the contrary, complaisance (meaning polite respect, willing to please), affability, tenderness, and concern, and in this sense it is used in the best Greek writers.”*

As to why Jesus used the term **“woman”** (*gunai*) instead of **“mother”** (*meetros*) when speaking to Mary (which even in first-century Hebrew and Greek cultures was an unusual way to address one’s mother), it has been noted that **Jesus most likely was indicating that there is a new relationship between them as he enters his public ministry.**

Evidently Mary thought of their intimate relations of the home at Nazareth as persisting. But Jesus, in his public ministry, was not only the son of Mary, **“the Son of Man”**, **He was “the Son of God”** who was to bring the realities of heaven to people on earth. A new relationship was established.

It seems best to conclude that Jesus was simply **“informing”** His mother in a loving, yet firm manner, that as He began performing miracles for the purpose of proving His Deity and the Divine origin of His message, His relationship with His mother was about to change.

So, don’t let Satan try to deceive you in this **“side issue”** that Jesus was somehow disrespectful of His mother. **Because He wasn’t!**

- B. Was The Wine Jesus Made Alcoholic?**
This miracle has been the most prominent text that is used by Believers to justify the acceptance of and participation in the social drinking of alcohol.

It is argued that **if Jesus made wine at a wedding feast at which He attended, then surely He does not object to Christians drinking wine today.**

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If the wine that Jesus made was alcoholic wine, then surely no one could deny this reasoning. there could be no logical reason to deny that even Jesus Himself partook of some of the wine that He made, along with His mother and His disciples.

Christian advocates of social drinking are however very reluctant to support drunkenness, because they know full well the Bible condemns drunkenness (**1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21**)

But if this text is used to support moderate drinking, it must also be admitted that drunkenness is acceptable for the text says that the guests had **“well drunk”** before the Lord made the extra 120 to 180 gallons wine. (**John 2:10**)

Unbelievers have no problem with thinking the context supports drunkenness because they picture Christ as **“one of the boys”** and the wedding feast like one today (i.e. a drunken feast). But as we will see in a moment, that is NOT realistic.

However, I want us to understand that the wine the Lord made was without a doubt non-alcoholic wine (i.e. grape juice)!

Understand that the word **“wine”** in the Bible can be either alcoholic or non-alcoholic.

Vineyards were extremely prevalent in Palestine, and the **wine** from them was a part of the staple diet of the Hebrews.

Generally when **wine** is mentioned it has no sinful connotations. **Wine** could be drunk freely by the Israelites. It was to be offered to the Priests as drink offering, and abundance of wine was considered to be a great blessing from the LORD. (**Deuteronomy 7:13**)

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Remember how the prosperity of the Land of Canaan was measured by the size of its grapes (*Numbers 13:23*). Also, in some of His parables, Christ likened the Church (kingdom) to vineyards. (*Luke 20:9; Matthew 21:28*).

He even likened Himself to a vine, and His father to a husbandman! (*John 15:1-4*)

Wine was among the “*first fruits*” *Nehemiah 10:37*, it was even called “*wine*” while still in the cluster (*Isaiah 65:8*), and was “*gathered*” with summer fruits! (*Jeremiah 40:10*)

It was “*wine*” while it was in the wine press! (*Isaiah 16:10*)
In these examples it is clear that the wine was non-alcoholic.

Sometimes **wine** was a blessing, other times it was a curse. **Intoxicating wine** is never used in a good sense in Scripture. Evil is always associated with it!

Proverbs 20:1; 23:31-32

The death penalty was imposed upon the priest who drank any of it before entering the Tabernacle! (*Leviticus 10:9-10*)

The priests and prophets erred in judgment and vision because of wine. (*Isaiah 28:7*) Israel was not even permitted to give their neighbor a drink of wine! (*Habakkuk 2:15*)

In all the verses I just mentioned, **it is the consumption of the wine itself that is condemned, not just the amount.**

Now, I’m not suggesting that God's people in the Bible never drank alcoholic wine. Many of God's people erred through wine. Noah got drunk and displayed his nakedness! (*Genesis 9:21*) Lot’s daughters got him drunk and committed incest with him. (*Genesis 19:32-38*).

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There are plenty of Scriptural reasons why we as Christians should abstain from drinking alcohol.

1. Alcoholic wine is associated with evil!

1 Thess. 5:22–“*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*”
It is undeniable, and statistically proven that alcohol is the root cause of many crimes against society.

(Its associated with road mishaps, rapes, murders, broken homes, poverty, and divorces. It brings misery and shame to all those who become addicted to it.)

The word “*abstain*” means “*hold ones self from*”. Since alcohol is associated with evil, the Christian must abstain from it.

2. Alcohol is what causes one to grow drunk.

Ephesians 5:18–“*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*”
 (“*Drunk*” in that verse comes from a word which signifies “*to make drunk, or grow drunk (an inceptive verb which marks the process of the state of being drunk*” (Vine). The New Testament not only forbids drunkenness, but also beginning the process of becoming drunk. It therefore forbids drinking, even in “*moderation*”, because the first glass is the beginning of the process.

3. It destroys your health.

Overwhelming evidence is available from various sources to show that alcohol does irreparable damage to the body. Especially affected is the brain and liver. Pregnant women are advised by doctors to totally abstain during pregnancy lest they send toxic (poison) to their baby. A Christian's body belongs to God (*1 Cor 16:19-20*). Thus a Christian who wilfully destroys his body is robbing God!

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4. **Alcohol destroys the Christian's influence for Good.**
As Christians we are to be "*the salt of the earth*" and "*the light of the world*" (*Matthew 5:13-16*).

What would others think of our "*Christianity*" if they knew we partook of alcoholic beverages? Even those in the world can see the inconsistency of a Christian drinking alcohol.

5. **Alcohol intoxicates your brain.**
The Bible commands us to be "*sober*"!
(*1 Thessalonians 5:6,8; 2 Timothy 4:5; 1 Peter 1:13*)

The word translated "*sober*" comes from a word which means "*to be, sober, temperate, abstinent, especially in respect of wine), sober minded, watchful, circumspect.*"

We can understand by this that God wants us to be clear headed at all times.

So, if you cherish your health, your home, your influence, your soul, and your life, stay away from alcoholic beverages!

If the *wine* made by Christ had been alcoholic, He would have been guilty of aiding and abetting sin. But, Christ was sinless, and He is the perfect example for us to follow. It is inconceivable that he made an abundance of an alcoholic beverage!

THE SETTING; THE SITUATION; THE SIDE ISSUES. . .

IV. LET'S CONSIDER THE SAVIOUR!

- A. **Mary Directed The Servants To Obey Jesus! (Vs 5)**
I believe, if I'm not mistaken, that these are the last recorded words of Mary. These are words that need to be heeded!

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- B. **Jesus Gave The Servants Instructions! (Vs 6-7)**
Careful attention to the instructions of Jesus was essential!
That's still the case today!

- C. **When Jesus Was Obeyed, A Wonderful Thing Happened! (Vs 8-10)**
Disaster was averted! Disappointment turned to joy again!
The water was transformed into wine. And not only wine, but the best of wine!

But, a greater thing happened. (*Vs. 11*)

1. In this miracle, "**Jesus manifested His glory!**"
2. In this miracle, Jesus bolstered belief in His disciples.

Conclusion

So, what do we take away from this beginning of miracles?

Don't let Satan get you sidetracked into having issues with what Jesus said to His mother. Don't let the world or your own mind get you to believing that God is OK with you drinking alcohol! He's not!

Focus on the fact of what this miracle really shows!

1. It shows us that Jesus really is Who He said He is!
2. If we want what's best, we need to listen to Jesus' instructions and obey what He says!