

## **Miracle At Cana In Galilee**

John 2:1-12

Part 4

### **Some Thoughts About Drinking**

#### **Jesus**

1. If the wine at the marriage feast was strong drink, it could be argued Jesus was encouraging drunkenness.
  - a. Jesus had made 120 to 180 gallons of wine and the feast had been going on for a while before the wine ran out. (Jn. 2:6).
  - b. This would certainly be enough wine for the guests to become drunk if the wine had much alcoholic content.
  - c. We cannot be sure how long the feast lasted after Jesus changed the water to wine or how much of it was consumed. The Bible is silent in regard to these matters.
2. We can be sure Jesus would never encourage men to sin, but He always encouraged men to obey God. (Matt. 7:21; 12:50).

Matt 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven {will enter.}

Matt 12:50 "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

- a. He always taught His followers to glorify God. (Matt. 5:16).

Matt 5:16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

- b. Jesus would not have made a wine that could be easily abused by the guests or by the headwaiter or servants or others.
- c. We cannot be sure the guests had free access to the wine Jesus made or how much of it was served and over what period of time.
- d. No one knows how many guests were at the feast, but from the amount of wine Jesus made it can be assumed it was a large number.
- e. Again it is emphasized Jesus warned against causing others to stumble. (Matt. 18:6; Lk. 17:1,2).

Matt 18:6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Luke 17:1 He said to His disciples, "It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to him through whom they come!

Luke 17:2 "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the depths of the sea.

f. It is clear that causing others to stumble is a salvation issue and should be absolutely avoided.

## Paul

1. **Paul gave this warning.** (1 Cor. 10:31-32).

1 Cor 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

1 Cor 10:32 Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God;

2. Paul also gave warnings against causing others to stumble. (Rom. 14:21).

Rom. 14:21 It is good not to eat meat or to drink **wine**, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles.

a. Paul indicated wine could be dangerous to consume and cause others to stumble.

1) Causing others to “stumble” is not merely disliking, but it is causing them to violate their consciences.

2) It is causing others to become weak in faith and perhaps causing them to fall away from the faith.

b. It could be a danger to its drinker. (Eph. 5:18).

Eph 5:18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

1) These words do not mean they were to be drinkers, but avoid “drunkenness”

2) No drinker can be sure he/she will not become addicted to it.

3) No drinker can be sure he/she will not influence others to become addicted to it.

c. Wine could also cause others to stumble.

1) It might lead others to drink and become addicted to it.

2) Many a person who drank “a little” has influenced others to drink a lot.

3) It might cause one who believed it was wrong to drink wine to fall away from the faith when he/she saw one they admired and emulated drink it.

4) He warned against violating one’s conscience. (Rom. 14:23).

Rom 14:23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because {his eating is} not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

- “Faith” is likely used in the sense of conscience, but not conscience only.
- “Conscience” is not an infallible guide and can be corrupted and even seared. (Acts 23:1; 1 Tim. 4:2).
- “Faith” comes by hearing the word of God.” (Rom. 10:17).
- Things not authorized by the word of God are “sin.”

2. He taught Christians are to exercise self-control. (Gal. 5:22,23).

Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Gal 5:23 gentleness, **self-control**; against such things there is no law.

3. Those being considered for deacons were forbidden to drink “much wine.” (1 Tim. 3:8).

1 Tim. 3:8 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much **wine** or fond of sordid gain,

- a. The warning against “much wine” could be understood to mean the wine was alcoholic and dangerous.
- b. Additionally, it could also mean that even too much of a non-alcoholic or weak wine was dangerous.
- c. This did not mean other Christians could drink “much wine.”
- d. This warning did not apply just to deacons, but to Christians in general.
- e. Paul was not contending deacons could drink a little wine, but non-deacons could freely drink wine.
- f. Some understand “much wine” to mean no wine at all.

Ecc 7:17 **Do not be excessively wicked** and do not be a fool. Why should you die before your time?

- 1) The words “excessively wicked” did not mean they could be a little wicked.
- 2) It does not permit wickedness in moderation, but it is warning to avoid all wickedness. (1 Thess. 5:22).
- 3) This warning certainly did not mean they could lie, cheat, steal, curse, kill “a little.”
- 4) It is possible Paul was affirming deacons were to be non-drinkers of wine.
- 5) Deacons who choose to drink what they define as “a little” are setting a dangerous example for those who may not have the same self-control.

4. Elders were not to be given to or addicted to wine. (Tit. 1:7; 1 Tim. 3:3).

Tit. 1:7 For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to **wine**, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,

1 Tim. 3:3 not addicted to **wine** or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

- a. This prohibition would be for their moral and physical health.
- b. It would also be for their influence on the church having both strong and weak members.
- c. Some would seek to justify drinking on the basis the spiritual leaders of the church drink a little wine, bear, whiskey, etc.

5. Paul warned Christians about excessive drinking of wine. (Eph. 5:18).

Eph 5:18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation [debauchery, sinful behavior], but be filled

with the [Holy] Spirit,

6. Paul condemned drunkenness along with other “deeds of the flesh.” (Gal. 5:19-21).

Gal 5:19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,  
Gal 5:20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,  
Gal 5:21 envying, **drunkenness**, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

7. He encouraged Timothy who was having stomach trouble to “use a little wine.” (1 Tim. 5:23).

1 Tim. 5:23 No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little **wine** for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.

- a. Paul encouraged Timothy to take “a little wine” for his stomach’s sake.
- b. This was not social drinking, but was for his “frequent” stomach ailments.
- c. Timothy was a very fine man and did not want to cause others to stumble.
- d. Paul was concerned about his health, and encouraged Timothy to use “a little wine” for his health.
- e. We do not know if this consumption of wine was short or long term, but it was likely until his health improved.
- f. The words “little wine” could mean the wine was strong and “much” of it would bring on drunkenness.
- g. It could also refer to weaker wine that was all he needed for this stomach ailments.
  - 1) Timothy was having some undefined stomach problems.
  - 2) This could be due to the consumption of contaminated water with parasites, etc.
  - 3) Fermented wine was sometimes added to drinking water to purify it from germs and bacterial organisms.
  - 4) It is not clear if this wine was added to the water or was to be consumed in moderation apart from water consumption.
  - 5) It is clear that Paul was not promoting social drinking, but he was dealing with Timothy’s medical problem.

8. Older men were cautioned against drinking. (Tit. 2:1).

Tit. 2:1 Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.

- a. The word “temperate” is from “nephaliōs” [nay **fah** lee ahs].
  - 1) This word could mean “sober, temperate, abstinent in respect to wine.”
  - 2) In the New Testament the word seems to be a metonymy for “vigilant [alert, careful], circumspect [considering all circumstances and consequences].”

- 3) The verb form of “nephalios” is “nepho” [**nay foh**] and occurs in 1 Thessalonians 5:6 and is translated by the NASB “be sober.”
- 4) The NIV has “self-controlled” and McCord has “remain alert.”
- b. The word “temperate” would, at best, permit a moderate use of wine.
9. Older women were warned against being enslaved “to much wine.” (Tit. 2:3).
- a. “Enslaved” is from “douloo” [doo **lah** oh] the verb form of “slave, bond-servant.”
- b. This suggests the wine Paul had in mind was dangerous and consumed only in moderation.
- c. It was easy to become “enslaved” [addicted] to wine.
- d. They were to set a good example for the younger women they taught and influenced.
- e. This does not mean younger women were free to freely indulge in wine, but was teaching older women should set a good example for younger women.
- f. Wine was always associated with a warning regardless of age, gender, position.

### **An Interesting Comparison To Get Our Attention**

#### 1. Elders (1 Tim. 3:2,3).

1 Tim. 3:2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

1 Tim. 3:3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

- a. Paul used the word “nephalios” [**nay fah** lee ahs].
- 1) The word means “sober, temperate, abstinent in respect of wine.”
- 2) It could also be used as a metonymy for “vigilant, circumspect.”
- b. They must not be “addicted to wine.” NKJV has “not given to wine.” ASV has “no brawler.”
2. Deacons are required to “be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain. (1 Tim. 3:8).
- a. The words “me oino pollo prosechontas” translated “not given to much wine” mean deacons were held to the same high standard as elders.
- 1) The words “given to” come from “prosecho” [prahs **eh** koh].”
- 2) This is translated “given to ” [KJV, NKJV, ASV], “indulging in” [NIV], “addicted to” [RSV, NASB].
- 3) This word is used in Titus 1:14 and 1 Timothy 1:4 to refer to those who “give heed to” [KJV] or “occupy themselves with [RSV] or “pay attention to [NASB].

Titus 1:14 not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.

1 Tim 1:4 nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than {furthering} the administration of God which is by faith.

4) It is fallacious to conclude Paul encouraged Christians to give some attention to Jewish myths, but not too much attention.

b. Paul again warned against the dangers of wine.

3. Wives (1 Tim. 3:11). The Greek “gune” can be translated “women” and “wives” depending on the context.

1 Tim. 3:11 Women *must* likewise *be* dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things

a. Some believe this refers to deacons wives and others hold it referred to the wives of elders or deacons.

b. In context it would seem it referred to the wives of either elders or deacons.

c. Paul used to the word “nephaios” [temperate] as he did with elders.

d. Again this is a warning to be very careful in their conduct.

4. “Older men men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. (Tit. 2:2).

a. Paul again used the word “nephaios” translated “temperate.”

b. Older men were to be cautious in their conduct.

5. “Older women”

a. Paul used the words “me oino pollo” [not much wine] interpreted to mean they could drink a little.

b. Paul warned all to be cautious and older women were not an exception.

### **Teetotaler**

1. Personally, I am a teetotaler and encourage all others to be teetotalers.

2. The Bible teaches a Christian must exercise “self-control,” but I do not know if I could drink and maintain self-control.

a. Many in my family did not have self-control and became drunkards.

b. Not one would admit he/she was a drunkard.

c. Anything that causes me to lose my self-control is sin.

d. Many who drink what they call “a little” have lost more self-control than they admit or recognize.

e. One does not have to stagger and act crazy to be drunk.

f. Even small amounts of alcohol can impair judgment and reaction time.

g. It is sinful to lose any of our self-control.

h. We are not taught to keep some or moderate self-control.

3. I do not want to be a stumblingblock to others. (Matt. 18:6; 1 Cor. 10:32,33).

Matt. 18:6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

1 Cor. 10:32 Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God;

1 Cor. 10:33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the *profit* of the many, so that they may be saved.

- a. I might be able to handle a little wine, a little beer.
- b. No one can know this in advance.
- c. No one knows if he/she will always be able to maintain self-control.
- d. Others might not have that same strength.
- e. I do not want anyone to use me as an excuse for drinking.

4. I have seen the great damage that the consumption of alcohol has done to mankind.

All kinds of accidents - fatal and non-fatal.	Neglect of self and family	Murder
Abuse to others	Health	Other acts of violence.
Stealing	Adultery	Stepping stone to drugs.

5. One cannot be sure if the wine drunk in moderation is equal to our modern alcoholic beverages.

6. No one has a very good definition of how to define a little wine or a little beer drinking, etc.

7. Neither Jesus nor the apostles ever encouraged people to drink with the exception of Paul encouraging the teetotaler Timothy to drink “a little wine” for his stomach’s sake. (1 Tim. 5:23).

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