

Miracle At Cana In Galilee

John 2:1-12

Part 2

Problem

1. Some believe Jesus was endorsing either drinking in moderation or perhaps drinking period.
2. Others believe Jesus was promoting drunkenness.
3. In order to properly understand this passage a brief study of wine needs to be made and also see if the wine here corresponds to our modern wine, beer, whiskey and other alcoholic beverages.

What Wine Was Commonly Consumed?

1. Was it the equivalent of our modern wines and other alcoholic drinks?
2. Many assume the wine consumed at the wedding feast and mentioned in the New Testament is equal to whatever they wish to drink.
3. This is an assumption and has no evidence to back it.
4. Wine could be mere grape juice or alcoholic in content.
 - a. Today the word "wine" always denotes an alcoholic beverage that can vary in strength.
 - b. This was not always the case with the Greek word "oinos" translated "wine."
 - c. It was used by the Greeks to refer to unfermented grape juice and to fermented juice.
 - d. One errs when he/she automatically says it always refers to fermented wine.
 - e. The Hebrew word for "oinos" [wine] was "yayin."

1) Some Old Testament passages praise the drinking of wine. (Song of Solomon 5:1; Psa. 104:15; Eccles. 9:7).

S o f 5:1 "[BRIDEGROOM] I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh along with my balsam. I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey; I have drunk my wine and my milk. Eat, friends; Drink and imbibe deeply, O lovers."

Psa. 104:15 And wine which makes man's heart glad, So that he may make his face glisten with oil, And food which sustains man's heart.

Eccles. 9:7 Go then, eat your bread in happiness and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works.

2) Other Old Testament scriptures warned against its great dangers. (Prov. 20:1; 31:4).

Prov. 20:1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.

Prov. 31:4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, It is not for kings to drink wine, Or for rulers to desire strong drink,

3) This would lead one to conclude the wine praised was either grape juice or a weak alcoholic wine drunk in moderation.

New Testament

1. The New Testament also makes reference to wine drinking.
 - a. In the 1st century wine was not all the same.
 - b. It could have no alcohol at all or it could have different amounts of alcohol and even other substances to make it more potent.
 - c. Wine could be used to sanitize water or give it a better taste or both.
 - d. A common way to drink wine was a mixture of three parts water to one part wine.
 - e. It would take much of this drink to intoxicate.
2. We learn that John the Baptist being a Nazirite was forbidden to drink wine. (Lk. 1:15).
3. Wine in the New Testament is not condemned nor commended.
4. There are cautions against drinking much of it.
5. Advocates of moderate drinking and advocates of non-moderate drinking often use the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee as justification for drinking.

Was Jesus A Drinker Of Wine?

1. Jesus was falsely accused of being a drunkard. (Lk. 7:33,34).

Lk. 7:33 "For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon!'

Lk. 7:34 "The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'

- a. It is clear this accusation was false, but it would seem that He did drink wine in moderation.
- b. The question is "Was the wine He drank fermented or unfermented?"
 - 1) Grape juice was often called wine and wine diluted with water could be called wine.
 - 2) If fermented, what was the strength of the wine?
 - 3) This needs to be examined in view of all of what the New Testament reveals on this subject.
 - 4) There is not enough evidence in the gospels to draw a conclusive conclusion in regard to the wine Jesus made.
- c. Jesus certainly was not a drunkard as His enemies falsely charged.

- d. Jesus was without sin. (Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 Jn. 3:5).
- e. Jesus would not have done what He forbidden others to do.

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.
2. Jesus would never encourage men to sin!
 - a. He always encouraged men to obey God. (Matt. 7:21; 12:46-50).
 - b. He always encouraged men to glorify God. (Matt. 5:16).
 - c. He would not have made a wine that could be easily abused by the guests.
 - d. 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.
 - e. No one knows how many guests were at the feast.
3. Jesus warned against causing other to stumble. (Matt. 18:6; Lk. 17:1,2).

Paul

1. 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.
 - b. It could be a danger to its drinker. (Eph. 5:18).
 - c. It could also cause others to stumble.
 - 1) It might lead others to drink and become addicted to it.
 - 2) It might cause one who believed it was wrong to drink wine to fall when he/she saw one they admired drink it.
 - 3) He warned against violating one's conscience. (Rom. 14:23).
2. He taught Christians are to exercise self-control. (Gal. 5:22,23).
 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. “much wine” could be understood to mean the wine was alcoholic and dangerous.
- b. It could also mean that even too much of a non-alcoholic wine was dangerous.
- c. This did not mean others 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.

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

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.

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

6. Paul condemned drunkenness. (Gal. 5:19-21).

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. This was not social drinking, but was for his stomach ailments.
- b. This could be because the wine was strong or it could be the weaker wine in quantity would not have been what his stomach needed.

1) Timothy was having stomach problems.

2) This could be due to the consumption of contaminated water with parasites, etc.

3) Grape juice or 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.

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 it seems to be a metonymy for “vigilant [alert, careful], circumspect [considering all circumstances and consequences].

3) The verb form of “nephaios” is “nepho” [**nay** foh] occurs in 1 Thessalonians 5:6 and is translated by the NASB “be sober.” 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).

Tit. 2:3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much **wine**, teaching what is good,

a. Older women were not to be “enslaved to much wine.”

1) “Enslaved” is from “douloo” [doo **lah** oh] the verb form of “slave, bond-servant.”

2) This suggests the wine Paul has in mind was dangerous and consumed only in moderation.

b. This does not mean younger women were free to freely indulge in wine.

c. 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 “nephaios” [**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.”

2. Deacons (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 words “me oino pollo prosechontas” translated “not given to much wine” mean deacons were held to the same high standard.

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].

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). Some believe this refers to deacons wives and others hold it referred to the wives of elders or deacons. It would seem it referred to the wives of either elders or deacons.

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

a. Paul used to the word “nephaliōs” as he did with elders.

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

4. “Older men” (Tit. 2:2).

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

a. Paul again used the word “nephaliōs” 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. Many in my family did not have self-control.

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

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

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

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

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

f. 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. No one knows if he/she will always be able to maintain self-control.
 - b. Others might not have that same strength.
 - c. 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	Murder
Abuse to others	Health	Other acts of violence.
Stealing	Adultery	Stealing

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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