

FOR PREACHING AGAINST THE USE OF ALCOHOL (John 2:1-11)

I. What did Jesus do?

- A. There are many that believe with this first miracle performed by Jesus, that He turned water into alcoholic wine.
 - 1. In a book entitled "Pastoral Psychology," the author stated, "At the very least the story of Cana's wedding feast indirectly approves the use of alcoholic beverages."
 - 2. People, apparently even those counseling preachers, make the assumption that the wine was intoxicating.
- B. What Jesus did was miraculously turn water into the juice of the grape.
 - 1. The word translated "wine" in this passage is the Greek word "oinos" and it can mean either intoxicating wine or grape juice.
 - 2. The context of the word always determines its meaning.
- C. Those that say that this was intoxicating wine will condemn drunkenness and use verses like:
 - 1. 1 Peter 4:3 - For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excesses of wine, revellings, banquetings and abominable idolatries."
 - 2. Ephesians 5:18 - "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit."
- D. They will then say that Jesus approved of social drinking but not drunkenness and this wedding, being a social occasion, proves that.
- E. The thing is, this thinking is contradicts itself.
 - 1. They would agree with you that excess is wrong and that drunkenness is excess.
 - 2. They will hold the view that "well drunk" in 2:10 means to get drunk or become intoxicated.
 - 3. If that is true, then Jesus supplied a large quantity of intoxicating wine to people who were already drunk.
 - 4. The dilemma is, either Jesus was not guilty of sin or that He was guilty of sin.
 - 5. If you believe that contributing to someone's sin is not sin then you can keep this view, but you would have to be pretty stupid to think that.
 - 6. Or, you have to believe that Jesus sinned, which contradicts clear scripture:
 - a. Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."
 - b. 1 Peter 2:22: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth."
- F. Let's focus on the phrase "well drunk" for a moment."
 - 1. The head of the marriage feast said that the best wine is served

- first and when the people have “well drunk” the cheap stuff is brought out.
2. The phrase under consideration can mean one is drunk or inebriated.
 3. Often, it is used to mean simply to drink enough or drunk largely.
 - a. The same phrase is found in the Septuagint Version in Psalm 23:5 - my cup runneth over.
 - b. It is used in Isaiah 58:11 to mean a garden watered sufficiently.
 - c. Other Old Testament passages show the same idea.
 4. If it does mean the people were inebriated, then you would have Jesus being like a bartender who keeps pouring drinks for those who've already had too much to drink.
- G. Not only that, but the phrase “good wine” is evidence that the wine Jesus miraculously made was not alcoholic.
1. The head of the feast knew immediately by the flavor of the wine that it was better.
 2. If he had been intoxicated, he would not have known if it was better or not
- H. For Jesus to have done what they say He did, He would have violated the Mosaic Law:
1. Habakkuk 2:15: “ Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!” - He would have at least violated the spirit of this woe, if not the letter of it.
 2. Proverbs 31:4-5: “ It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.”
- I. Drunkenness implies the amount of ethyl alcohol which is consumed in drinking.
1. The word “drunk” in the Greek means to begin to be softened, to grow drunk (marking the beginning of the process.”
 2. There are degrees of drunkenness and a person begins to be drunk when they begin to drink.
 3. The AMA has told us that there is no minimum blood alcohol level which can be set at which there will be absolutely no effect.
 4. Whenever an alcoholic beverage is ingested, the person begins to be softened and is drunk to that degree.
 5. The effects of alcohol begin with the first drink and progresses further as more alcohol is consumed.
- J. The object of the miracle that Jesus performed was to make known His glory (vs. 11).
- K. The nature of Jesus shows that He went about doing good (Acts 10:38), and that He was holy and harmless (Hebrews 7:26).
- L. Jesus, as God is the giver of every good and perfect gift, and we know the destructive nature of alcohol is neither good nor perfect.

M. To have turned the water into alcoholic wine would have not glorified Him and would have been totally against His nature.

II. **“Wine” doesn’t always mean alcoholic wine.**

- A. There are thirteen words in the Greek and Hebrew that are translated “wine.”
1. There are three that are the most commonly used.
 2. In the Hebrew, yayin and tirosch and in the Greek, oinos.
- B. There are times when they are used in a condemning way.
1. Proverbs 20:1 - “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”
 2. Proverbs 23:31 - “Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup; when it moveth itself aright.”
- C. There are times when they are used in an approved way.
1. Psalm 104:15 - “A wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine and bread which strengtheneth man’s heart.”
 2. Isaiah 65:8 - “the new wine is found in the cluster.”
 3. Isaiah 55:1 - “Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”
- D. When you see these verses, and others could be mentioned, you should be able to tell that the context determines whether it is approved or condemned.

III. **Why drinking alcohol is unacceptable.**

- A. First of all, many are going to point to Paul telling Timothy to take a little wine for medicinal purposes.
1. If it is the case that was alcoholic wine, which is debatable, it was for medicinal purposes, not social ones.
 2. I know that doctors have prescribed wine for heart patients.
 3. If such is the case, God knows if you are using it for medicinal purposes or recreational.
- B. We are talking right now about the use of it recreationally, not medicinally.
- C. Drunkards cannot enter heaven (Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).
- D. Why does God condemn it?
1. It causes hurt, heartache and many problems.
 - a. Alcohol, according to the World Health Organization, is responsible for nearly 4% of all deaths, which is more than AIDS, tuberculosis or violence.
 - b. In the US, its abuse is the 3rd leading cause of preventable death.
 - c. We all know of someone who has been destroyed or destroyed others because of the use of alcohol.
 2. Think of the physical toll it takes on the bodies of its users.
 3. Suicide rates for alcoholics are much higher than for non-drinkers.
- E. Notice the general teaching of the Bible:
1. The Bible not only condemns drunkenness but contains strong

warnings about alcohol's inherent dangers (Proverbs 20:1 - Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise; Isaiah 28:7 - "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.")

2. The Bible teaches us to care for our bodies (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.").
 3. It commands us to abstain from being a hindrance to others (Romans 14:13 - "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.").
 4. It teaches us to be in control of our minds and thoughts (1 Peter 1:13 - "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ").
- F. When you look at its teachings about all things, they all point to the condemnation of the use of alcohol, not its moderate intake.
- G. The only difference between a social drinker and a drunk is the difference of degree, not kind.