

Bedford Bulletin

Columbus Street church of Christ

512 Columbus Street Bedford, Ohio 44146

----- Building Phone: 440-232-2231 -----

Website: www.bedfordcoc.com

E-Mail: dave.evangelistcoc@gmail.com

*"God
made
us alive..."*

*Together
with Christ*
Ephesians 2:5

Water Into Wine

From the record of the events at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee we can learn many things. Things about the authority of Jesus, about His deity, about His humanity and concern for our needs. But the one thing that some seem to get from this account is that Jesus somehow approved of social drinking. I'd like to present this article to attest to the opposite. We should quickly dismiss any notion that Jesus encouraged social drinking here. Did Jesus place His stamp of approval on social drinking by turning water into wine? If we are to believe this, we must first prove that He in fact made water become an alcoholic beverage. We must conclude that the strength of the alcohol and amounts consumed then is the same as today. And we must accept beyond any doubt that God approves of consuming a substance that by all modern proofs, harms the body and causes the senses to be dulled.

So, the first questions we should address is this: What kind of wine did Jesus turn the water into? If we are going to hold to the teaching that "It's ok to consume alcohol, we must prove it was an intoxicant that Jesus made for everyone to drink. Was it fermented or unfermented? The word "wine" in John 2 is from the Greek word oinos. Vine says that it is the general word for wine. It can be translated 3 ways. (1) Juice that is still inside the grape (Rev. 19:15), or (2) It could be translated as a fermented

Knowing & Doing God's Will

Proverbs 11:14

juice of the grape (Acts 2:13), and (3) It can be translated as freshly pressed juice from the grape (Matt. 9:17).

The one thing we cannot do is to assume that the word “wine” is equal to the wine of our day. Nor can we assume that fermented juice is under consideration. Ask this question, where is the evidence in the text that shows that Jesus turned water into a drink that got people drunk? If anything, the text reveals that the wine was unfermented by the word “*good*” found in ver. 10. **Albert Barnes on this point:** [The good wine] This shows that this had all the qualities of real wine. We should not be deceived by the phrase good wine. We often use the phrase to denote that it is good in proportion to its strength and its power to intoxicate; but no such sense is to be attached to the word here. Pliny, Plutarch, and Horace describe wine as good, or mention that as the best wine, which was harmless or innocent. The most useful wine was that which had little strength; and the most wholesome wine was that which had not been adulterated by the addition of anything to the juice. Pliny expressly says that a good wine was one that was destitute of spirit (lib. lv. C. 13). It should not be assumed, therefore, that the good wine was stronger than the other: it is rather to be presumed that it was milder (Barnes).

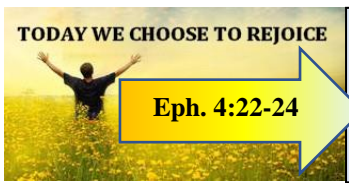
When I meditate on what it means that God is Holy (Rev. 4:8; Psa.99), and then what it means for me to be holy (1 Pet. 1:16) and in light of what the Bible says about intoxicating drink (Prov. 20:1; 23:31-33, etc), I find it impossible to suggest that anyone, especially those I love drink at all. It is equally hard for me to believe that Jesus who loves me, would produce wine of such a nature, and approve of it which in our day is responsible for so many deaths, divorces, violence, diseases, addictions and such things that harm so many today. According to the World Health Organization: “Alcohol is a toxic and psychoactive substance with dependence producing propensities. Alcohol consumption contributes to 3 million deaths each year globally as well as to the disabilities and poor health of millions of people.” **According to the Addiction Center,** “Alcohol kills more people than all other drugs combined”. **One could easily argue from Habakkuk 2:15, if Jesus did provide between 120 and 180 gallons of intoxicating drink, He would have been guilty of violating the law, thus sinned. Thankfully, we are not forced to draw such a conclusion because the text does**

not provide such evidence, nor could we because we know He lived without sin (Heb. 4:15).

Consider this: Even if Jesus turned the water into the kind of fermented wine that was “common” in Palestine during that time, that wine could in no conceivable way be compared to anything one could buy today. J.W. Shepherd notes: “Jesus made real wine out of water. But there was a great difference between the Palestinian wine of that time and the alcoholic mixtures which today go under the name of wine. Their simple vintage was taken with three parts of water and would correspond more or less to our grape juice. It would be worse than blasphemy to suppose, because Jesus made wine, that he justifies the drinking usages of modern society with its bars, strong drinks, and resulting evils (J.W. Shepherd, *The Christ* 90).”

If we’re going to assert that Jesus helped people to drink, and approves of it today, we must equalize, or reconcile our thoughts with the Bible’s teaching of who Jesus is. Jesus of Nazareth was and still is far from an ordinary man. This was proved when Jesus took a material substance, “water”, and changed its chemical makeup. No man, ordinary or even exceptional possesses that kind of power. Not just water to wine, but raising the dead, walking on water, healing all manner of disease. Jesus is deity and this miracle proved it. Nicodemus was right when he said of Jesus, “*no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him*” (John 3:2). Jesus indeed came from God, was with God, and was God (John 1:1-2). More? Can any man teach like Jesus did? Can any man do the works Jesus did. Let Jesus’ words remind us of what our answers should be, “*If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38 but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and [a]believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him*” (John 10:37-38). All the miracles, teachings and signs that Jesus refers to prove He is the Christ. That will never change, that will always be true. This beginning of miracles (v.11) was no exception. Those who saw, those who knew Him were filled with faith. Not that they didn’t already have faith, but their faith was made stronger. Reading the scripture’s record of all miracles of Christ, should fully convince us that Jesus is indeed the Son of God (John 20:30-31). It should fully convince us also that Jesus as the Son of God, loved us more than His own life. He is deity, and for this reason Jesus must of necessity have the same nature as the Father. For this very reason the Jews sought to kill Him (John 7:1; 11:53...). The Jews in the first century hated His purity, and the fact of His deity proved over and over by His miracles. They didn’t want to listen to Him, just like

many in this world today refuse Him. Even to say Jesus is not God. But we already know He is God because only God can turn water into wine.

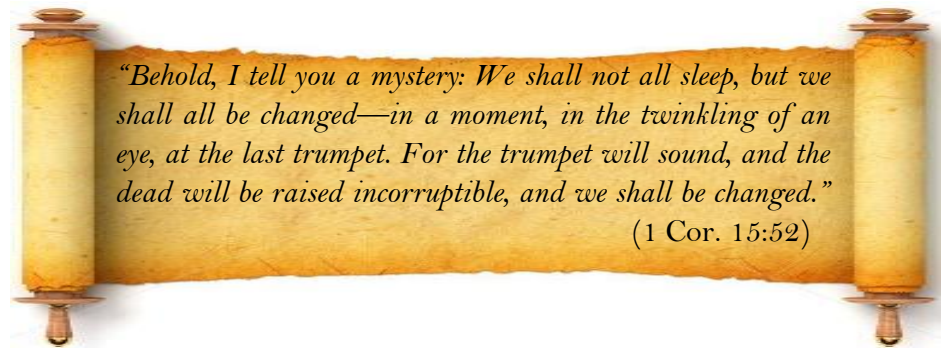


“22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”

Jesus, our Savior is now in Heaven. He is no longer

turning water into wine, but we He did “change” water into wine and that assures us that He has the power to change. Spiritually, Jesus has the ability to change us into disciples pleasing to God. Change watered down disciples into strong, steadfast disciples. Change “sinners” into obedient, God fearing sons. He provided us with something that is so powerful that it changes our course from hell to heaven. By the power of His word (Rom. 1:16) even the most vial of sinners can be changed. Nothing is too hard for God, *“Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?”* (Jer. 32:27). We’re told the Christians at Corinth *“once were”* fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, drunkards, homosexuals etc., but they were, *“were washed...sanctified...justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God”* (1 Cor. 6:10-11). Jesus changed sinners in Thessalonica into servants of the living and true God (1 Thess. 1:9). Jesus is in the business of changing lives. Won’t you let Him in to work on your life?

As always, in Love
Dave Scarpino



Times of Our Services

Sunday Morning Bible Study	9:00 AM
Sunday Morning Worship	9:50 AM
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 PM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:30 PM

What Must I Do to Be Saved?

1. Hear the gospel----- John 6:45; Romans 10:17
2. Believe the gospel ----- John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6
3. Repent of sins----- Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30
4. Confess Christ ----- Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized----- Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38
6. Remain faithful unto and until death ----- Revelation 2:10; Matthew 10:22

Welcome One and All!

Our faithful Creator is worthy to be praised in this assembly. All praise to Him who reigns above in majesty supreme! He gave His Son to die, for all mankind, that He might redeem all. Our blessed Redeemer suffered and died for our sins and is now risen and sitting at the right hand of God as Head of the church. Let us offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, knowing that He is the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him. (Hebrews 5:8-9) *“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!”* (Isaiah 6:3)