

*He Loved Me . . .*

*He Loves Me Lots*

*The Gospel of John*

Text

John 2:1-11

Topic

Jesus performs His first sign  
by turning water into new wine

Title

***"Vintage Jesus"***

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**Over one million Americans homebrew beer.**

Homebrewing supplies have been in high demand nationwide during the pandemic. A major supplier of homebrewing equipment says business has increased 50%.

Home wine making kits start at under \$100.00.

Before you throw back a cold one to fight depression from COVID19, consider this news from England:

- 1mil additional people have become addicted to alcohol as a result of lockdowns.
- The lockdowns fueled a 20% spike in alcohol-related deaths in 2020.

**Jesus turned water into wine.**

The Lord wasn't a homebrewer. He was attending a wedding, and the host ran out of wine.

The lack of wine had nothing to do with drunkenness. It wasn't like Captain Jack Sparrow wondering, "Why is the rum gone?" Wine was associated with joy:

- The psalmist said, "wine... makes glad the heart of man" (104:15).
- Putting it negatively, we read in Jeremiah, "Gladness and joy have been taken away... I have made the wine cease from the winepresses; no one treads them with shouts of joy" (48:33).

"Why is the wine gone?" was a social blunder from which you might never recover.

One minute there was *no* wine, and the next, there was *new* wine. It was a miracle, touted by the apostle John as "the beginning of signs Jesus did" (v11).

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 There Is No Wine For You In Religion**, and **#2 There Is New Wine For You In Regeneration**.

### **#1 - There Is No Wine For You In Religion (v1-6)**

You can probably name several movies whose opening scene is the end of the story that will be told. *Saving Private Ryan* is a particularly good example.

**The opening scene of Jesus' ministry anticipates the end of a significant portion of the Bible's story.**

Jesus will return to Earth in His Second Coming as a Bridegroom with His bride. A wedding feast follows. In the Revelation, we read, "Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!" " Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready" (19:7 & 9).

## **Turning water into wine at the wedding anticipates the future marriage supper.**

Joh 2:1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.

One commentator said the following about "the third day":

*The strong connection to Genesis, and specifically to creation, thus far in [John's] Gospel suggests that the first six days of Jesus's ministry are to be seen as parallel to the first six days of creation. Jesus, the one through whom all things were created and by whom new creation takes place, is beginning His creative activity in human history.*

John only, always, calls Mary "the mother of Jesus."

He respects her *among* women but never *above* women.

Jewish weddings followed three well-known stages:

1. First was the betrothal. It was a legally binding engagement that took place nine months to a year before the wedding celebration. Betrothal could not be broken except by divorce.
2. Second was the procession. The groom and his friends would go to fetch the bride and joyously lead her and her friends back to the house he had prepared for them.
3. The third stage, which is described in our text, was the wedding feast. The celebration could last for as long as a week. It was a major social event for both families and the community.

Joh 2:2 Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.

We have met five disciples: Andrew, John, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael. We will meet the rest of the gang later in the book.

Joh 2:3 And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

Mary is *not* to be referred to as the mother of God.

Mary was the human agent through whom the eternal Son of God took on a human body and a human nature and entered the world. She is never to be revered.

The mother of Jesus evidently had a role in the feast. She stepped up like a wedding coordinator. Joy was about to turn into sour grapes.

Beginning with the mother of Jesus telling Him, "They have no wine," the dialog between them is odd. It causes scholars headaches.

Joh 2:4 Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

"Woman" is not disrespectful. It's equivalent to calling her, "Ma'am." It is less intimate than "Mom." I suggest that it has to do with something Jesus explains in Matthew's Gospel:

Mat 12:46 While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him.

Mat 12:47 Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You."

Mat 12:48 But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"

Mat 12:49 And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers!

Mat 12:50 For whoever does the will of My Father in Heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

Jesus did not disrespect His mother or family. When it came to salvation, however, they were no different from everyone else. "Woman" is the perfect

way to address His mother to emphasize her spiritual condition. She carried baby Jesus to term, but she needed to be born-again.

“What does your concern have to do with Me?” is the English translation of the saying, “What to me and to you?” It is apparently what Jews said when something was not their responsibility. In my family, we say something attributed to Gollum: “Not its business.”

Jesus didn’t walk around doing random miracles. He hadn’t performed a miracle because John calls this the “beginning of signs” (v11). Bottom line: It is unclear what His mother expected.

“My hour has not yet come,” or similar words will occur four more times. The fact that His time had come will be mentioned three times. It puts us on notice that God has perfect timing, despite our fears to the contrary.

If His hour had not yet come, why did Jesus perform the sign?

The Expositor’s Commentary sheds some light by saying, “The whole phrase might be rendered, ‘Mother, you must let Me act here in My own way.’ ”

Jesus called her “Woman,” and now He let her know that she could not influence what He would do going forward in His ministry. He *would* perform His first sign, not because of His mother’s request, *but because of His Father’s leading*.

Joh 2:5 His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.” The mother of Jesus did not take Jesus’ words as a refusal. She seems to have understood that Jesus was no longer under her authority. She left it up to Him to do what He was going to do or not do.

Since we’ve pointed out before that Jesus only did what His Father told Him to do, we can with confidence say that He sought the Father for guidance.

Her comment has served saints for centuries as a wonderful rule of life. Dr. J. Vernon McGee said that he always wanted to preach a Mother's Day sermon on these words.

**Whatever Jesus says to you as His servant, *do it.***

Joh 2:6 Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece.

"The purification of the Jews" were ritual washings. They weren't for hygiene. They were added to God's Law by Rabbis and passed down orally from generation to generation.

Listen to these instructions about hand washing, quoted from a Jewish resource:

1. This may sound strange, but before washing your hands, *be sure that they are clean.*
2. Remove your rings - unless you never remove them, in which case they are considered "part of your hand."
3. Fill a cup with water and pour twice on your right hand. Repeat on the left. (Left-handers reverse the order).
4. Pour three times on each hand making sure the water covers your entire hand until the wrist bone with each pour. Separate your fingers slightly to allow the water in between them.
5. After washing, lift your hands chest-high and say the prescribed blessing. (Say this blessing only if you intend to eat more than two ounces of bread).
6. Rub your hands together and then dry them.
7. Be careful not to speak or get involved in anything else until you've recited the blessing on your bread and swallowed some.

The Jews knew these steps like the back of their hand. At first hand, ritual washings did not seem so bad. They meant well, but purification had gradually gotten out of hand. Ordinary Jews had their hands full with extra-biblical rites and rituals. Taking matters into their own hands led to self-righteousness. The

religious leaders were heavy-handed and refused to lend a helping hand. They were on-hand to criticize.

**T**he waterpots were monuments to ritual religion.

There is no wine, so to speak, in religion, philosophy, psychology, or any of the vain pursuits of man that exclude God. They may seem to satisfy for a time, even a long time. In the end, you're left thirsting for the joy of salvation.

### **Ritual religion never leads to regeneration.**

#### **#2 - There Is New Wine For You In Regeneration (v7-11)**

Gimli the dwarf challenged his elf companion, Legolas, to a drinking game. About the time the dwarf went unconscious, the elf said that he was feeling "a slight tingling sensation."

Yes, Jesus created fermented wine. There is an argument that it was merely grape juice. Before you scoff, turning water into grape juice *would* be a miracle. It would bypass the natural process of grape production. The Pulpit Commentary writes, "The vine, with all its wondrous processes - the vineyard, the wine press, and other appliances - have all been dispensed with, and the same power which said, 'Let there be light,' called these additional elements together, originated them by His will."

What the grape juice argument fails to consider is the fact that most often when wine is mentioned in the Bible, the context cautions that it could cause drunkenness. It is also true that the Jews diluted their wine 3-to-1 with water to avoid drunkenness.

This passage is not about whether or not a Christian can or should drink alcohol, and I don't want to get into it. "Have it to yourself and to God."

My only comment is a (hopefully) judgment-free observation. When I was saved in 1979, drinking alcohol was the exception, not the rule, for believers.

Quite the opposite is now the case. I sincerely hope it isn't evidence that we are becoming more like the world.

Joh 2:7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim.

I explained at some length last week that we attribute Jesus' *walk* and *works* on Earth in His first coming to His being submitted to His Father and empowered by the Holy Spirit. They are not works of His deity even though He was fully God and fully human. If they were performed from His deity, Jesus could not have promised, "he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father" (John 14:12).

Have you ever been in a think-tank kind of meeting in which each person must suggest a solution to the problem? Foolish plans usually get overruled if they are brought up at all. God will ask **you** to do things that might seem foolish.

**It is comforting to know that God the Father asked Jesus to do things that seemed foolish**

Filling waterpots with water makes no sense if your problem is wine-lessness. The servants would also seem like fools. Nevertheless, they obeyed Jesus.

Joh 2:8 And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast." And they took it.

We aren't told when the water was wine. Knowing God's perfect timing I'd guess that it was the moment "the master of the feast" tasted it.

Joh 2:9 When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom.

Everything in this miracle shows no collusion between Jesus and any of the persons at the feast. This wasn't a magician's illusion.



## **No hocus pocus, only Holy Ghost-us.**

Joh 2:10 And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!"

A proficient "master of the feast" had a refined palate for foods and beverages. He recognized a superior vintage when he tasted one.

Having "well drunk" doesn't mean they were drunk. Quite the opposite. It may mean when they had drunk as much as they judged proper or as they desired. Did a guest drink too much at your wedding? He (or she) was not "well drunk."

It strikes me odd that in a culture so stressed about hospitality that any host would plan to serve inferior beverages at any time.

Maybe the master's saying was a *maxim* - a short, easily remembered expression of homespun wisdom. An example in English would be, "Birds of a feather flock together."

Interesting thing about maxims: For most of them, there is a contrary maxim. "Birds of a feather" may "flock together," but we also say, "Opposites attract."

- "The bigger the better" & "Good things come in small packages"
- "What's good for the goose is good for the gander" & "One man's meat is another man's poison"
- "You're never too old to learn" & "You can't teach an old dog new tricks"

A competing maxim to the master's "You saved the best for last" would be, "You put your best foot forward."

No matter how we take the master's statement, the wine he tasted was the best he would ever taste again in his life. I remember bumper stickers that said, "God don't make no junk."

Joh 2:11 This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

Saying the sign was a “beginning” puts us on notice that there is a specific set of them.

“Beginning” with turning water into wine, there are six miracles that the Gospel of John specifically identifies as “signs” (2:1-11; 4:43-54; 5:1-18; 6:1-15; 9:1-41; 11:1-57).

A “sign” makes what it stands for more evident than words. In this case, they make evident Jesus’ “glory.” Jesus performed the signs that the Jewish Scriptures attributed to the coming Messiah. His identity, His “glory,” was manifested by signs.

“His disciples believed in Him” doesn’t mean that they did not believe before the miracle. What the Lord did in Cana strengthened their belief in Him.

**J**esus said, “I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:29). It will bring Him joy. We could go so far as to say we are His joy.

We wait for our heavenly Bridegroom. While we wait, we have, in a spiritual sense, new wine in the person of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit goes hand-in-hand with wine in the Bible:

- The disciples received the promised gift of God the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and were so full of joy that they were accused of being drunk.
- In the churches that were afterward founded, believers are reminded, “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart” (Ephesians 5:18-19).

## **You and I in Christ are vessels filled to the brim with new wine.**

We've been getting encouraged about our relationship with the Holy Spirit in these studies in the Gospel of John.

Regardless if you are a charismatic or a cessationist, the following is true for **all** believers:

- The moment you believe and receive Jesus, you are baptized, or *plunged*, into the body of Jesus Christ (First Corinthians 12:13).
- God the Holy Spirit indwells you (First Corinthians 6:19-20). Since He is a person, not a force, you can't have only a part of Him. He is present in His abundance.
- The empowering of the Holy Spirit was unconditionally promised you as a gift to be received, not achieved (Acts 2:28).
- God says to us that He is a good, good Father who will "give" the Holy Spirit every time you ask Him (Luke 11:13).

**Believe the *promise*... Receive the *gift*... Ask your Father for His Spirit.**