

“...nor drunkards... shall inherit the kingdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 6:10)

Countless people throughout history have used the biblical account of Jesus turning water into wine in John Chapter 2 to justify not only the consumption of alcohol, but also drunkenness. How many people started out with the intention to drink moderate amounts only to descend into an out of control life style of partying, drunkenness, alcohol dependence and eventually total ruin? God's word warns, as we see in real life, that alcohol frequently brings sorrow, hardship, health woes, and death. While alcohol may or may not destroy your life on earth, it will certainly destroy your eternal soul. The Bible tells us that hell had to increase in size because of the sin of drunkenness. ***“Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning that they, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!...Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure.”*** (Isaiah 5:11,14). It also clearly says in 1 Corinthians 6:10 that, ***“nor drunkards...shall inherit the kingdom of God.”***

So how do we reconcile the miracle of Jesus turning water into wine, and the fact that the bible spoke often of people consuming wine, with the contrasting commands against drunkenness and alcohol consumption? Both in the Bible and in English at the time it was translated, the word **“wine”** referred to any product of the grape, whether it is fermented or not, including simple grape juice. **Isaiah 65:8** tells us that, ***“...new wine is found in the cluster,”*** meaning the word **“wine”** applies to juice that is still in the grape that has not had a chance to ferment. Therefore, wine in the Bible does not automatically mean alcohol. When the Bible uses the word **“wine,”** a negative context refers to alcohol, while a positive or neutral context likely refers to grape juice. The sole purpose of alcohol in scripture is as a pain reliever for those about to die. ***“Give strong drink***

unto him that is ready to perish.” (Proverbs 31:6)

With that in mind, let's take a second look at the account of Jesus turning water into “wine” at the wedding in Cana. We have already established that the word “wine” isn't always alcoholic. Consider also **Habakkuk 2:15:** ***“Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also.”*** Serving alcohol to anyone is sin. This means that if Jesus, who perfectly fulfilled the law and the prophets (**Matthew 5:17**), served alcohol at that wedding, (which was the equivalent of 164 gallons for people who were already “well drunk”), and contributed to people's drunkenness, there would be a woe (God's judgment for sin) pronounced upon him and he could not be the perfect, sinless sacrifice to pay for the sins of the world. Of Jesus, the Bible says, ***“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”*** (2 Corinthians 5:21). Based on this **we must conclude that Jesus served non-alcoholic grape juice** at that wedding. Please don't use the Lord Jesus as an excuse to indulge in sin.

In addition to clear warnings against drunkenness, eight times in the New Testament, we are given the command to **BE SOBER**. ***“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”*** (1 Peter 5:8) In this example, not being sober opens you up to destruction. Any time you are intoxicated on alcohol or any substance, legal or illegal, you are not sober, and are breaking this commandment, which is sin. Maybe you have been drunk in the past or get drunk once in a while, but don't believe you are a “drunkard.” The first time someone lies, they become a liar. The first time someone steals, they become a thief. The first time someone commits adultery, they become an adulterer. Likewise the first time someone gets drunk, they are a drunkard in the sight of God and are in

need of forgiveness. Have you even been drunk before? ***“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”*** (James 2:10)

God is perfectly Just and Holy. Anyone who is guilty of drunkenness, or breaking his law in any way, must face judgment and the penalty of what they've done. ***“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”*** (Hebrews 9:27) The penalty for breaking God's law is eternity in hell. ***“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.”*** (Revelation 21:8) You need forgiveness!

God, in his love and mercy has provided for us a way to be forgiven by sending his Son, Jesus, to die a bloody death on the cross as our substitute. ***“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”*** (Romans 5:8) During his life on earth, Jesus perfectly kept all of God's commandments and then was punished on the cross to satisfy the demands of God's justice for your sin. Even in your sin and rebellion, Jesus took the punishment you deserve so you could be forgiven. ***“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...and with his stripes we are healed.”*** (Isaiah 53:5) He was buried, and rose again from the dead on the third day, conquering death and proving his death was acceptable to God as a payment for sin. ***“...he [God] hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him [Jesus] from the dead.”*** (Acts 17:31) This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Forgiveness through the gospel is received under the conditions of ***“...repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** (Acts 20:21)

REPENT! *“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”* (Luke 13:3) Repentance is humbling yourself and admitting your guilt and spiritually lost condition before God. It is recognizing that you have sinned against him alone, that your sin has separated you from him, and that you deserve hell because of your sin. It also means to be sorry for your sin and rebellion against God, confess it, and hate it. *“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation.”* (2 Corinthians 7:10) Surrender, and turn from going your own way in life to going God’s way by submitting to Jesus as your Lord. Repentance also means to recognize that you have no merit, good works, or attributes that play a role in your salvation. Until you realize you are lost and utterly helpless to contribute anything to your salvation, you will not receive grace and forgiveness. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”* (Ephesians 2:8-9) You must recognize that your only hope of redemption is to trust solely in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ as a payment for your sins.

FAITH TOWARD OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”* (Acts 16:31) Believing is more than just acknowledging that Jesus Christ exists; it’s even more than acknowledging that he died and rose again. *“...the devils also believe, and tremble.”* (James 2:19) True belief is placing your complete confidence and trust in Him alone and His ability to save you by his death and resurrection. You must believe with all your heart that Jesus is the Son of God, and that He died on the cross to save you. *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”* (Romans 10:9-10) If the Lord is gracious enough to bring you to a place of repentance and desperation, recognizing that you are in need of salvation, you must cry out and call upon the Lord Jesus and ask

him to forgive you for your sins and save you. *“...and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* (Romans 10:10,13)

If it’s genuine, the very moment that you repent and believe the gospel, you will be **“born again.”** Being **“born again”** means to have a conversion experience in which God supernaturally changes your heart and transforms you from a child of disobedience into a child of God. *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”* (2 Corinthians 5:17) You will have a new nature, new desires to love Jesus Christ, to obey his word, to be with other Christians and to live for him every day. Loving God will manifest as a willful obedience to his word in your life. *“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”* (1 John 5:3) You will never be without sin, but you will no longer love your sin, live for your sin, or be in bondage to your sin; no matter how much power it has over you now, you will have victory over it, including alcohol. *“For sin shall not have dominion over you.”* (Romans 6:14) If these realities are absent in your life, it is likely you have never truly been forgiven of your sins.

How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.” (Hebrews 2:3) Today may be your day of salvation, friend. Do not wait! You are not promised tomorrow! The author begs you on Christ’s behalf to repent and trust Him as your Lord and savior before it’s eternally too late! *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”* (Titus 3:5)

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