

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Did Jesus Turn Water Into Alcoholic Wine?

by: Ryan Hasty

Did Jesus really turn water into wine? The answer is unequivocally “yes.” But that is not what we generally want to know about this text. We want to know whether Jesus turned water into fermented, alcoholic wine. There are several problems with taking this interpretation:

First, many Christians who justify from John 2 the consumption of alcoholic beverages of today are unprepared to take this argument to its logical conclusion. If Jesus did indeed produce alcoholic wine, not only would it be morally right to drink it, it would also be morally right to produce it, sell it, serve it, and even bank a living from it. But this is further than many are prepared to go because that would absolutely and undeniably cause others to stumble.

Secondly, John 2:6 tells us that Jesus filled 6 stone water pots 20 to 30 gallons each to the brim. That is 120 to 180 gallons of wine. If He truly made alcoholic wine, we’re no longer in the

realm of “temperate” consumption and social drinking – it’s a binge.

Third, John 2:10 tells us that Jesus made this wine after they were “well drunk” or had “drunk freely” where they would not have been able to detect poorer wine had it been served afterwards. If we’re to assume, as many do, that this means they were well on their way to being inebriated, than the fact that Jesus prepared 120 – 180 gallons means that He used His first miracle to contribute further to their intoxication (Hab 2:15). Is this consistent with the sinless nature of our Lord?

Fortunately, there is a more reasonable view to consider as it pertains to our Lord’s first miracle that does not propose as many problems. The evidence is considerable that Jesus actually produced nonalcoholic, unfermented wine of the highest quality.

First, the term “wine” in biblical times could refer to fermented or unfer-

mented drink. Part of the problem with interpreting John 2 correctly is that we assume it was alcoholic wine merely because wine in our day exclusively refers to an alcoholic beverage. But when we use the term “church” today, we typically refer to the building in which Christians assemble. Yet in the bible, the term “church” always refers to people. The Greek word for “church” is “ekklesia” and literally means a people “called out.” Words can change meaning over time. Despite how the term “wine” is used today, bible wine could refer to an unfermented beverage (Isa 16:10; 65:8; Jer 48:33; Lam 2:11-12). Therefore, we must approach John 2 with this possibility in mind and let the inferences we derive from the context and not our current culture teach us its proper interpretation.

Second, it is more plausible to assume that the phrase “well drunk” or “drunk freely” is similar to what Economics calls, “The Law of Diminished Marginal Utility.” If you eat a piece of cake, it tastes good. If you eat a second piece, it is diminished in its ability to satisfy you. If you eat a third piece, you probably could have done without it. By the fourth piece, you might start feeling sick. In other words, the more you have of something, the less you appreciate it. It is more plausible that this is what the head waiter is referring to, that the more you drink of something the less you care what it tastes like simply because your taste buds have become saturated.

Third, the wine Jesus made was of the highest quality. It was “good wine” (John 2:10). Historical writings provide evidence that the best wine of biblical days was nonalcoholic. Pliny the Younger said, “The most useful wine has all its force or strength broken by the filter.” Plutarch said, “Wine is rendered feeble in strength when it is frequently filtered. The strength or spirit thus being excluded, the wine neither inflames the brain nor infests the mind and passions, and is much more pleasant to drink.”

Fourth, turning water into unfermented juice of the grape would have been the better miracle. This wedding was right before Passover (John 2:13) which was right before the time when the first grapes of the season were about to be harvested; only old wine remained. The reference to Jesus’ wine as “good wine” indicates fresh grape juice before the first harvest and would have been an evident wonder of God when it was tasted this late in the year just before Passover.

Finally, it is inconceivable to suggest that Jesus provided these Jews with 120 – 180 gallons of substance that the bible says mocks, destroys, leads to poverty, woes, sorrows, contentions, babblings, worries without cause, impairs judgment, in-

flames passions, and enslaves. If Jesus did that, He sinned. If He sinned, that disqualifies Him from being the unblemished Lamb of God.

Are we prepared to take that stance concerning the Lord? Did the one who spoke so strongly against stumbling blocks (Luke 17:1-2) become one Himself? Fortunately, Christians have a Savior in whom we need offer no apologies.

Jesus Was Called a Drunkard...And He Didn't Deny It

by: Ryan Hasty

“In Luke 7:34, we read that Jesus’ critics called Him a drunkard. Some have suggested that they would not have called Jesus a drunkard if He did not at the very least imbibe alcoholic wine on occasion. Others say the fact that Jesus never explicitly denied the charges means He at least consumed moderate amounts of alcohol. And so this text is used as justification by some that we can consume modern day distilled alcohol.

First, Jesus’ enemies were not interested in painting an accurate picture of Jesus. They merely wanted to discredit Him and rob Him of His influence. As a result, He was called many things – a Samaritan (John 8:48), demon-possessed (John 7:20), and a sinner (John 9:24). If we follow the same logic, does that mean Jesus had just a little bit of sin? Did He have a little bit of demon in Him? Was He at least part Samaritan? If we can see the utter falsehood in these accusations, why do we assume that the fact they called Him a drunkard means He engaged in the social drinking of alcohol?

Second, when you fight on the front lines long enough, you get used to taking some beatings. You will be slandered, insulted, and falsely accused. In the process, you learn that some false charges hurled at you are not worth defending. When Jesus was called a Samaritan in John 8:48, he neither confirmed or denied it. Is His silence affirmation that He was of Samaritan descent? No, Jesus was keenly aware of the fact that those who knew Him needed no denial; and those who hated Him would accept no denial. When Herod questioned Jesus as the chief priests and scribes accused Him, Jesus was silent (Luke 23:9). Why? Because there are some accusations not worth defending. So when Jesus said instead, “Wisdom is vindi-

cated by her children,” it implies that His followers were well acquainted with his manner of life and would continue to be so through eternity.

Third, when Jesus’ enemies claim that John refused wine (Luke 7:33), some assume John only refused intoxicating wine. However, the Nazarite vow prevented those under it from consuming any product from the grape, fermented or unfermented (Num 6:3-4). The contrast between John and Jesus is not that one did not consume alcoholic beverages whereas the other did. The contrast is that John was given to austerity and ascetic customs leading some to believe he had a demon (John), while Jesus went the opposite route by engaging people in social atmospheres leading some to accuse Him of being a drunkard (Jesus).

Finally, it is concerning that those who use this passage to claim Jesus engaged in social consumption of alcohol place more faith in the claims of Jesus’ enemies than the bible’s numerous warnings against strong drink (Prov 20:1; 21:17; 23:29-35; 31:4; Isa 5:11, 22). It begs the question of who we are allowing to influence our decision-making more, Jesus’ enemies or the Holy Spirit Himself?”

Continued from page 7

ease (Luke 9:57-62). We must love Jesus more than our own lives (Rev. 2:10). Do you love Jesus the most?

To be a **disciple of Jesus means that we are willing to bear our own cross for the Lord.** (Luke 14:27). This is not talking about the suffering that comes simply because we are human beings. Saints and sinners alike will contract terrible diseases, endure floods & fires, and suffer through things like traffic accidents. Instead salvation from sin and service to Jesus Christ will inevitably bring at least some suffering. The “pleasures of sin” will have to be abandoned (Hebrews 11:24-26). The temptations of the devil will have to be resisted. The persecution of men will have to be endured (1 Peter 3:12). Are you willing to bear your cross for Jesus?

Finally, a **disciple of Jesus must be willing to forsake all else for Jesus.** (Luke 14:33) Now, I don’t believe that Jesus is saying that we must automatically and unnecessarily sell all our possessions. But this passage is teaching that we renounce all that we have in our heart and that we are willing to give up all that we have for Jesus if need be. Jesus must be King and Lord of our lives.

A Servant's Heart

by: Greg Gwin

Our Lord taught that if we would be truly great in His kingdom, we MUST develop a servant's heart. "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Mt. 23:11). If we understand this truth, then we will be working more and more to acquire the attitudes and characteristics of a servant. What are some of these?

If I possess a servant's heart, then I will be ready and willing to do any job that needs to be done even when it is not the job that I really wanted to do. Some tasks are difficult and receive little recognition, but I'll do these anyway. After all, I shouldn't be doing my works to be "seen of men" (Matt. 6:1ff).

With a servant's heart, I will worry less (ultimately none at all) about how others serve me, and I will be more interested in finding ways to serve others. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20:26, 27).

As a faithful servant, I will not be rebellious against God, the things taught in His word, or to those who are in authority over me (elders, parents, employers, etc.). To do so would be completely contradictory to the whole notion of servanthood (I Peter 5:5-7).

As I grow in these attributes of a servant, I will begin to see my needs and myself as less important in the "bigger scheme" of things. "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3).

And finally, as a servant who is seeking to please God, I will grow in the realization that my work is never done - that I have never done as much as I could have or should have done. "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, 'we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do'" (Luke 17:10).

Study Opportunities

Sunday Bible Study: 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship Assembly: 11:00 AM

Meeting At

Homewood Suites of Bozeman
1023 E Baxter Ln,
Bozeman, MT 59715

Everyone Welcome!

What Does It Really Mean to Be a Disciple of Christ?

by: Lee Hyatt

Matthew 28:18-20 says, 'And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.' These words were uttered by our Savior to His apostles shortly before His ascension into heaven to sit at the right hand of God. We commonly refer to this statement as the "Great Commission." These words are called a commission because Jesus was giving the apostles

the authority to carry out the task at hand. The commission is great based on its worldwide scope. In this statement Jesus commissioned the apostles and us (Matt. 28:20) to go forth and make disciples.

Matthew 28:19

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...

The word disciple is used 268 times in 255 verses in the King James Version. Most of these verses use the term disciple(s) merely to identify certain people as followers. For example, John had disciples (Mark 9:14) and the Pharisees had disciples. The Jews claimed to be disciples of Moses (John 9:28). Jesus also had disciples (Matthew 9:10). Thus, the word

is primarily used in the New Testament to refer to converts to Christ. In this article we will raise the question: WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN TO BE A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST? What does it take to be a disciple? Is simply being a good moral person enough? Did the fact that Scripture refers to Cornelius as a devout man make him a disciple? Is being a sincere religious person enough? That would describe Saul of Tarsus prior to his conversion (Acts 23:1; Acts 7:58-8:3). Did Saul belong to Jesus when he participated in Stephen's stoning? How about just being a "church member" or someone who simply claims the name "Christian?" (1 Cor. 5:1-13) Let's look at eight traits that according to Scripture will be a part of our lives if we are truly disciples of Jesus.

By definition, **a disciple is a learner of Jesus.** Thayer defines the term as: "a

learner, pupil, disciple....one who follows one's teaching...." Jesus has invited all men to become learners of Him (Matt. 11:28-30) In fact, the word of God stresses the only way we become followers of Jesus is through learning His word (John 6:44-45). This means I need to learn what Jesus thinks about such things as sin, service, sacrifice and salvation. I cannot be a disciple of Jesus unless I'm willing to spend time learning about Him.

A disciple of Jesus learns for the purpose of **becoming like Jesus**. Jesus plainly taught that the goal of discipleship was for the pupil to become like the master (Matthew 10:24-25; Luke 6:46). Thus, we learn in order to be more like Jesus. In practical terms this means: When we learn what Jesus thinks about something, we will want to think that way too. When we understand how Jesus feels about something, we will want to feel that way too. When we see how Jesus acts and reacts in various situations, we will want to act and react in the same way.

A disciple is expected to **abide in Jesus' words**. "Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32) What this plainly means is we are to abide in all of Jesus' words and only in Jesus' words (Matthew 28:18-20; Gal. 1:6-9). The application is I must know what His word says, I must do what His word says, and I must view His word as the only true authority in my life.

Jesus taught in the parable of the vine and the branches (John 15:1-6) that He expects **disciples to bear fruit** and to become increasingly fruitful. We can bear fruit for Jesus in many ways. When we turn from sin, then we bear the fruits of repentance (Luke 3:8). When we live righteous lives, then we bear the fruits of righteousness (Romans 6:17-22). When we listen to the Spirit's instruction, then we bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-33). When we do good works, then we bear fruit unto the Lord (Col. 1:10).

Disciples of Jesus will love other disciples. A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35) In Scripture, love is not just declared, it is demonstrated as well. (1 John 3:17-18)

Disciples of Jesus love Him the most. This means we love Jesus more than family (Matt. 10:34-37). This means that we love Jesus more than our own comfort or

Continued on page 4

Daily Bible Reading

September 2019

September 2	Genesis 1-3	September 17	Genesis 29-30
September 3	Genesis 4-5	September 18	Genesis 31
September 4	Genesis 6:1-8:19	September 19	Genesis 32-34
September 5	Genesis 8:20-10:32	September 20	Genesis 35-36
September 6	Genesis 11-14	September 23	Genesis 37-38
September 9	Genesis 15-17	September 24	Genesis 39:1-41:36
September 10	Genesis 18-19	September 25	Genesis 41:37-42:38
September 11	Genesis 20-22	September 26	Genesis 43-44
September 12	Genesis 23-24	September 27	Genesis 45-47
September 13	Genesis 25-26	September 30	Genesis 48-50
September 16	Genesis 27-28		

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