

# The Gospel of John

## Lesson 2: *Replacing Old with New* John 2 (10-26Apr26AD)

**John 2:1** On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." 4 "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. 8 Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, 9 and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside 10 and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." 11 What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him. 12 After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days. 13 When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. 15 So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. 16 To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" 17 His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." 18 The Jews then responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" 19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." 20 They replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" 21 But the temple he had spoken of was his body. 22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. 23 Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name. 24 But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. 25 He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person.

## Jesus turns water into wine

**John 2:1** On the third day (Wednesday 10 April 26AD - 5 Nisan, after walking 25 miles on Tuesday from Bethsaida.) a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. (They are going to see heaven interact with earth) 3 When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." (She doesn't tell the bridegroom but she tells Jesus.) 4 "Woman, (Gunai = an affectionate term) why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." (The hour or time to die is not yet come. This is before he began his public ministry where he would be revealing himself to the world, and preparing to be crucified.) 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." (Listen to Mary) 6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. (Christ's fullness of grace is larger than the old covenant purification rites.) 7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. (Jesus replaces the old with the new) 8 Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, 9 and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside 10 and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." (Jesus' wine is better than the best. He does everything best.)

(Notes from the Fire Bible) The word "wine" (Gk. oinos) in the NT is a generic term and can refer to many types of grape beverage, either fermented (i.e. alcoholic and potentially intoxicating) or unfermented wine. The type of wine must be determined by the context.

Those who believe that both the wine provided at the beginning of the wedding and the wine Jesus made were fermented (alcoholic) and consumed in large quantities have to explain the following probabilities: (1) A number of guests at the wedding would likely be drunk or nearly drunk by the time Jesus is asked to provide more wine, since the guests had already drunk so freely that the host had run out of wine. (2) Mary, the mother of Jesus, would be showing regret that the intoxicating drink had run out and would be asking Jesus to supply people who may have already had too much to drink with even more alcoholic wine. (3) In order to respond to his mother's wishes, Jesus would be making 120-180 gallons of intoxicating wine, more than enough to cause extreme drunkenness. (4) Jesus would be making this intoxicating beverage as the very first of his miraculous "signs" by which he "manifested his glory" and showed that he is the Son of God and spiritual Savior of humankind.

To propose that Jesus made alcoholic wine would certainly seem to contradict the moral principles stated in other parts of God's Word. In light of God's holy nature (i.e., the fact that he is completely pure, perfect, complete and separated from evil), Christ's loving concern for humanity and Mary's good character, it is reasonable to conclude that the choice new wine Jesus created was pure, sweet and unfermented. These were characteristics associated with "new wine" at the time (as opposed to aged and fermented wine). In addition, the wine Jesus made was described as even better than usual. Considering the quantities and the occasion, it is likely that the original, inferior wine furnished by the head of the banquet was not fermented, or at least was greatly diluted (as were many forms of wine in those days).

It is significant that the Greek adjective translated "choice" and "best" (v. 10) is not agathos, meaning "good," but kalos, meaning "morally excellent and benefiting." Even secular writers of the time confirm the notion that the best "wines" were sweet and unfermented. The Roman writer, Pliny, stated the "good wine," called sapa, was not fermented (i.e., was not alcoholic). Sapa was grape juice boiled down to one-third of its original volume to increase its sweet flavor (IV.13). He also wrote that "wines are most beneficial when all their potency has been removed by the strainer" (Pliny, Natural History, XIV.23-24). Pliny, Plutarch and Horace all suggest that the best wine was the type that was "harmless and innocent." The phrase "have drunk freely" is from the Greek word methusko, a word that has two meanings: (1) to be or become drunk and (2) to be filled or satisfied (without reference to intoxication). Methusko may be understood here as the second meaning. However this text is translated, the banquet master is making a general observation that would have applied to any wedding celebration, no matter the type of drink served. He simply was acknowledging that hosts want to keep their guests happy and that satisfied guests do not suddenly raise their expectations. This remark does not assume that guests are drunk and for this reason lack the ability to discern the quality of wine. The context of this passage in no way suggests that Jesus participated in and contributed to a drunken party.

WINE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD. The production of grapes, both for eating and for squeezing into juice, was a very important part of the agriculture of the ancient Mediterranean world. Vineyards, fresh grapes, raisins and wine are frequently mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments.

The subject of wine in the NT raises several questions about the use of wine then and the use of wine today. The list of questions often include the following:

- (1) When the NT mentions "wine" (Gk oinos), was it always alcoholic as in modern times?
- (2) How would the alcoholic content in ancient fermented wine compare with that of various wines today?
- (3) Did Jesus use fermented (i.e., alcoholic) wine? (Fermentation is the biochemical process where yeast acts on sugars, breaking them down into alcohol and causing a beverage to become potentially intoxicating).

Certainly, it is incorrect and even unreasonable to claim that wine mentioned in the Bible was never alcoholic since the Bible contains many warnings and restrictions about intoxicating wine (Pr 20:1 \_\_\_\_\_; 23:31 \_\_\_\_\_, Eph 5:18 \_\_\_\_\_; Tit 2:3 \_\_\_\_\_; 1Pe 4:3 \_\_\_\_\_). However, it would be just as unreasonable to claim that all wine mentioned in the Bible was alcoholic. Those who are persuaded that all wine was alcoholic argue that since refrigeration was unavailable in ancient times, there was no way to preserve wine. Therefore, it would naturally ferment in the warm Mediterranean climate if it was not consumed immediately. But this view ignores a large amount of evidence provided by ancient writers such as Pliny (Nat. History 14.11.83) and Columella (De re rustica [On Agriculture] 12.29) who explain in detail the production of non-alcoholic wine known as aigloukos ("always sweet"). Pliny and Columella (and others) describe putting fresh squeezed juice into sealed containers and storing them under cold water until outside temperatures were low enough to keep the substance cool. This method, which could keep the juice sweet and fresh for about a year, would have worked well in the land of Israel (Dt 8:7; 11:11-12; Ps 65:9-13). People in the ancient world often preferred "sweet wines" since there were few choices of things to drink compared with the great variety that we have today. Because fermentation chemically reduces the natural sugars in grape juice, alcoholic wines were not as sweet as unfermented juice. For this reason, different processes were used to keep the freshly squeezed juice sweet, but unfermented.

The most common method of preserving wine in a non-alcoholic state for long periods was to boil the fresh grape juice down to about a third of its original volume, then store it in large clay jars or containers made of sheep or goat skin. Because of the high sugar content, it resisted spoiling over a long period and did not ferment (Columella, 12.19.1-6 and 20.1-8; Pliny, 14.11.80). Later, water could be added back to produce a flowing, like-fresh reconstituted (i.e., returned to a liquid state) juice again. At other times, water was added in order to dilute fermented wine, perhaps to reduce the percentage of alcohol or simply to increase the amount available according to the need or occasion. Greek and Roman authors gave various ratios or proportions that were used in mixing grape beverages. Homer (Odyssey IX.208ff) mentions a ratio of twenty parts water to one part wine. Pliny (14.6.54) mentions a ratio of eight parts water to one part wine. In general, about three parts water to one part wine was the typical blend. A three-to-one ratio is mentioned for use in both Hesiod (Works and Days, 596) and the Jewish Talmud (Shabbath 77a; b. Pesachim 108b). Among Jewish people in Bible times, social and religious customs often required wine to be mixed or diluted, especially if it was fermented. The Talmud (a Jewish work that describes the traditions of Judaism and Jewish religious

law from about 200 B.C. to A.D. 200) discusses this topic several times. Some Jewish rabbis insisted that unless fermented (i.e., potentially intoxicating) wine was mixed with at least three parts water, it could not be blessed and would defile, or spiritually corrupt, the one who drank it.

An interesting passage in the book of Revelation refers to “the wine of God’s fury,” by declaring that it will be “full strength” (Rev 14:10; see Jer 25:15). It was stated in that way because the original readers normally would expect grape beverages to be mixed with water.

**WINE: FERMENTED OR UNFERMENTED?** The most common Biblical word for “wine” is the Greek word oinos (e.g., Lk 7:33). Oinos can refer to two distinctly different types of wine from grapes: (1) unfermented juice and (2) fermented, or intoxicating, wine. This is supported by the following data.

(1) The Greek word oinos was often used by secular (i.e., non-religious, worldly) and religious authors in pre-Christian and early church times to refer to fresh grape (non-fermented) wine (Aristotle, *Metereologica*, 387.b.9–13). (a) Anacreon (c. 500 B.C.) writes, “Squeeze the grape, let out the wine [oinos]” (Ode 5). (b) Nicander (second century B.C.) writes about squeezing grapes and refers to the juice as oinos (*Georgica*, fragment 86). (c) Athenaeus (A.D. 200) writes about a man gathering grapes who “went about, and took wine [oinos] from the field” (Athenaeus, *Banquet*, 1.54).

(2) The Jewish scholars who translated the OT into Greek about 200 B.C. used oinos to translate several Hebrew words for wine. That is to say, the NT writers undoubtedly knew that oinos could be either fermented or unfermented juice from grapes.

(3) An examination of NT Bible passages also reveals that oinos can mean either fermented or unfermented wine. In Eph 5:18 the command, “do not get drunk on wine [oinos],” obviously refers to alcoholic wine. But in Rev 19:15, Christ is pictured in a winepress (a flat, lowered floor where grapes would be crushed by foot to produce juice). The Greek text reads: “He treads the winepress of the wine [oinos]”; the oinos that comes from the winepress would be fresh grape juice. In Rev 6:6 oinos refers to grapes still on the vine. These passages are evidence that people in NT times understood that “wine” (oinos) was a general word that could be used for two distinctly different grape beverages—sweet, unfermented juice or fermented, potentially intoxicating wine.

**JESUS’ GLORY REVEALED THROUGH WINE.** In his second chapter, John records that Jesus made “wine” out of water at a wedding at Cana. The wine miracle was one of Jesus’ seven miraculous “signs” (Gk semeia) in John’s Gospel that pointed to Jesus as being Israel’s Messiah and God’s Son, “full of grace and truth” (1:14, 17). This miracle is also part of the “newness” theme that John emphasizes in his opening chapters (“new wine,” 2:1–11; “new temple,” 2:14–22; “new birth,” 3:1–8; “new life,” 4:4–26). In the person and ministry of Jesus Christ, something brand new and unprecedented was emerging in the history of God’s relationship to humankind. However, the old order of Judaism (i.e., religion based on the interpretation of the Pentateuch and Jewish customs) was resisting, opposing and rejecting the “newness” that Jesus was bringing.

It is within this context of “newness” that we consider the question about the kind of wine Jesus created. Was it alcoholic or was it unfermented? Was it “new wine” or “aged wine”? As we have seen, it could have been fermented or unfermented, full strength or diluted. To find the answer, we must consider both the Biblical context of this passage and the moral position his action would probably represent. This study Bible proposes that most likely Jesus created “new wine” (pure and unfermented) rather than “aged wine” (alcoholic) for the following reasons:

(1) “New wine” fits better in the context of John’s Gospel with its focus on the theme of “newness” as part of the message that Jesus brings (cf. Mt 9:16–17; 2Co 5:17). In addition, old wineskins and old (aged) wine are associated with Judaism, not the gospel (i.e., the “good news” of Jesus Christ; see Lk 5:37–39). The highest goal of redemption (i.e., Christ’s work of spiritual salvation and restoring people’s relationship with God) is to make all things new (Rev 21:5).

(2) The quality of the wine Jesus made is called “choice” [Gk kalon] wine in contrast to “cheaper” (Gk elasoo) wine (Jn 2:10). According to various ancient writers, the “choice” (or “best”) wine was the sweetest wine—one that people could drink freely and in large quantities without harm (i.e., wine that had not reduced its sugar to alcohol through fermentation). The “cheaper” (Gk elasoo) wine was usually alcoholic wine that had been diluted with too much water. In ancient times (unlike today), wine was not thought to improve with age because it could sour into vinegar or form undesirable sediment (the part that would settle to the bottom).

(3) The goals of the wine miracle, as Jesus’ first miraculous sign, were to (1) reveal Jesus as the “creator” (Jn 2:9) and (2) reveal “his glory” and inspire his disciples to put their faith in him as God’s Son (Jn 2:11; cf. 20:31). It would seem highly unlikely that Christ showed his divinity (i.e., his God-nature) as the One and Only Son of the Father (Jn 1:14) by creating gallons of intoxicating wine for people who may already have drunk too much. Such an act could hardly be seen as a credit to his mission as spiritual Savior (cf. Mt 1:21).

(4) Since Jesus acknowledged the OT as God’s authoritative revelation, he would have supported the Biblical passages condemning drunkenness (Pr 20:1) and the words such as those of Hab 2:15, “Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors, pouring it ... till they are drunk” (Lev 10:8–11; Nu 6:1–5; Dt 21:20; Pr 31:4–7; Isa 28:7; Am 2:8, 12; 4:1; 6:6, Ro 14:13, 21. In addition, Christ’s perfect obedience to his Father (2Co 5:21; Heb 4:15; 1Pe 2:22) makes it unlikely that he would have done anything that could have compromised the strong warnings in God’s Word about alcoholic wine and its harmful effects (Pr 23:29–35). But turning water into fresh, sweet, unfermented harvest wine certainly could have revealed to his disciples Jesus’ glory as Lord over nature (Jn 1:3, 14), Creator of all things new—and as “the Christ, the Son of God” (Jn 20:31).

11 What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the **first** of the **signs** through which he revealed his **glory**; and his disciples believed in him. **(Not miracles, but signs that point to Jesus as God’s glory, in the cross - total ministry includes joyous feasts and occasions here on earth. 1st sign in Galilee.)**

12 After this he went down to **Capernaum (21 miles away)** with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.

## Jesus cleanses the temple

**John 2:13** When it was almost time (**Cleanse the temple of leaven/sin, at the beginning of Passover and his 70 week ministry**) for the **Jewish Passover, (Friday 19 April 26AD. Why “Jewish” Passover? No longer celebrated by Christians because Jesus is the Passover. Jesus replaces: Old temple worship with True worship; Old law with New birth; John’s baptism with Spirit baptism; Jacob’s well with Living water; Sheep & cattle with Jesus’ Sacrificial Lamb)** Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the **temple (Hiero = the entire structure)** courts he found people **selling** cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. 15 So he made a **whip (Whip? = wrath of God - God does not tolerate evil. Jesus desires to bring in the last days order of true worship - not through ejection of traders but thru death of the Father’s Son)** out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the **money changers (Moneychangers exchange Roman coins bearing images of blasphemous claims of rule and divinity for Tyrian coinage which was required to purchase sacrifices and pay the temple tax)** and overturned their tables. 16 To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a **market!**” (**A marketplace of cheating and making money off religion**) 17 His disciples remembered that it is written: “**Zeal for your house will consume me.**”

**Psalms 69:9 for zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.**

**Zechariah 14:21** Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD Almighty, and all who come to sacrifice will take some of the pots and cook in them. And on that day there will **no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD Almighty.**

**John 2:18** The Jews then responded to him, “What **sign** can you show us to **prove** your **authority** to do all this?” (“**What sign can we use to verify you?**”)

**Deuteronomy 18:20** But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death.” 21 You may say to yourselves, “**How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?**” 22 If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD **does not take place or come true**, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken **presumptuously**, so do not be alarmed.

**Deuteronomy 13:5** That prophet or dreamer must be put to death for inciting rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. That prophet or dreamer tried to turn you from the way the LORD your God commanded you to follow. You must purge the evil from among you.

**John 2:19** Jesus answered them, “Destroy this **temple (na’os = inner sanctuary proper - he is the sanctuary of the Spirit.)**, and I will raise it again in three days.” (**Jesus answers parabolically with a riddle the Jews misunderstand. The resurrection validates Jesus as a true prophet.**)

**Mark 14:58** “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.’”

**Matthew 27:40** ... “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!”

**John 2:20** They replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this **temple, (na’os)** and you are going to raise it in three days?” 21 But the **temple (na’os)** he had spoken of was his body. (**Jesus’ body is the temple - zeal killed him by angering Jews**) 22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. (**Resurrection fulfillment caused true belief.**)

**Revelation 21:22** I did not see a **temple (naos)** in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the **Lamb** are its **temple (naos)**.

**Psalms 16:10** because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

**John 2:23** Now while he was in Jerusalem at the **Passover Festival, (Friday 19-26 April 26AD)** many people saw the signs he was performing and **believed** in his name. 24 But Jesus would **not entrust** himself to them, (**Overthrowing Rome was not God’s plan**) for he **knew** all people. (“**man cannot know what is within another.**”) 25 He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he **knew** what was in each person. (**Worship Him to cleanse your heart.**)

**Jeremiah 17:10** “**I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve.**”