

The First Miraculous Sign: Water to Wine

John 2:1-12

October 4, 2026

Pastor Gary Hollinger

The miracles performed by Jesus were intended to authenticate His identity and teaching and cause people to believe in Him.

Responsible Bible readers must allow the text to say what it actually says without imposing preconceived ideas upon it.

I. The first miraculous sign of Jesus' deity occurred on what appears to be a family occasion. (v. 1-3)

II. Jesus both (mildly) rebuked and honored His mother. (v. 4)

When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," (John 19:26)

After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he was saying to them. (Luke 2:46-50)

"Jesus told them, "My time is not yet here..." (John 7:6a)

"The hour has come, that the Son of man should be glorified," (John 12:23).

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you." (John 17:1)

III. Jesus' mother apparently believed He had the ability to rectify the situation. (v. 5-7)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. (Luke 2:19)

Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. (Luke 2:51-52)

“Infancy Gospels”

- Creating twelve sparrows from clay and making them fly
- Cursing and slaying children who disturbed Him
- Changing the color of clothes in a dyer’s workshop
- Transforming playmates into goats and then back into children
- Miraculously shortening the family’s journey to Egypt

The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.) (Mark 7:1-4)

This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order. (Hebrews 9:9-10)

IV. Jesus provided both abundantly and excellently. (v. 8-10)

If thou be made the master of a feast, lift not thyself up, but be among them as one of the rest; take diligent care for them, and so sit down. And when thou hast done all thy office, take thy place, that thou mayest be merry with them, and receive a crown for thy well ordering of the feast. (Ecclesiasticus 32:1-2)

Do not get drunk on wine... (Ephesians 5:18a)

Drink your wine with a merry heart. (Ecclesiastes 9:7)

He makes grass grow for the cattle,
and plants for people to cultivate—
bringing forth food from the earth:
wine that gladdens human hearts,
oil to make their faces shine,
and bread that sustains their hearts. (Psalm 104:14-15)

For the LORD will deliver Jacob
and redeem them from the hand of those stronger than they.
They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion;

they will rejoice in the bounty of the LORD—
the grain, the new wine and the olive oil,
the young of the flocks and herds.
They will be like a well-watered garden,
and they will sorrow no more. (Jeremiah 31:11-12)

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD,
“when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman
and the planter by the one treading grapes.
New wine will drip from the mountains
and flow from all the hills,
and I will bring my people Israel back from exile.
“They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them.
They will plant vineyards and drink their wine;
they will make gardens and eat their fruit. (Amos 9:13-14)

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery... (Ephesians 5:18a, b)

Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine... Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks (Isaiah 5:11, 22)

Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise. (Proverbs 20:1)

Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat... (Proverbs 23:20)

Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
Who has strife? Who has complaints?
Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes?
Those who linger over wine,
who go to sample bowls of mixed wine.
Do not gaze at wine when it is red,
when it sparkles in the cup,
when it goes down smoothly!
In the end it bites like a snake
and poisons like a viper.
Your eyes will see strange sights,
and your mind will imagine confusing things.
You will be like one sleeping on the high seas,
lying on top of the rigging.
“They hit me,” you will say, “but I’m not hurt!
They beat me, but I don’t feel it!
When will I wake up
so I can find another drink?” (Proverbs 23:29-35)

...people are slaves to whatever has mastered them. (2 Peter 2:19)

“I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but I will not be mastered by anything. (1 Corinthians 6:12)

...it is not for kings to drink wine, not for rulers to crave beer... (Proverbs 31:4)

...not given to drunkenness... (1 Timothy 3:3a)

Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses. (1 Timothy 5:23)

Jesus said, “For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and **drinking no wine**, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man has come eating **and drinking**, and you say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and **a drunkard**, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’” (Luke 7:33–34)

On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare
a feast of rich food for all peoples,
a banquet of aged wine—
the best of meats and the finest of wines.

On this mountain he will destroy
the shroud that enfolds all peoples,
the sheet that covers all nations;
he will swallow up death forever.
The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears
from all faces;
he will remove his people’s disgrace
from all the earth.
The LORD has spoken. (Isaiah 25:6-8)

Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.

So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin. (Romans 14:13-23)

V. This first miraculous event provided reason for Jesus' disciples to place their increasing faith and trust in Him. (v. 11)

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30-31)

This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written. (John 21:24-25)

VI. Jesus' mother, Mary, was not the perpetual virgin of Catholicism. (v. 12)

While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you."

He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." (Matthew 12:46-50)

As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you."

He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." (Luke 11:27-28)

I will not yield my glory to another. (Isaiah 48:11)

"Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? (Matthew 13:55)

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. (Matthew 1:22-25)