

## Jesus Shines As God

☆ over wine (vv.1-11)

☆ over worship (vv.12-25)

In the Name of Jesus, God's wonder worker from heaven, dear followers of our Lord:

It's that time of year again. And looking at this text, I just have to ask: *Do you think Jesus would ever accept an invitation to the Super Bowl – half-time entertainment?* Some questions like that are idle speculation and not worth our time. But let's explore why Jesus does what He does. Some of Jesus' enemies considered Him gross and immoral. They accused Him of partying with prostitutes and sinners. They blasted Him for disrespecting the Sabbath and certainly the temple here. What's the difference between the half-time entertainers at the Super Bowl and this super Rabbi from Nazareth?

Two words: *authority* and *attitude*. We'll see first how Jesus hides His glory in order to reveal Himself as God. He is absolutely humble in His *attitude*. Then we'll see how Jesus actually attacks sensationalism in a sensational way. With *authority* He makes His miraculous signs stand out for all to see. The greatest miraculous sign of all, the mystery of the incarnation, God becoming flesh, is revealed. What some call "the game of life" revolves around this at the center of the world's stage. But this is not entertainment; this is salvation. Today we see in bold brilliance that **Jesus Shines As God** – first...

☆ over wine (vv.1-11)

It was now "*the third day*" since Jesus told Nathanael that he would see greater things than when Jesus knew him under a fig tree before He met him. Jesus was about to show everyone a few of the first treads on that "stairway to heaven" which is Jesus Christ Himself. The higher you climb into these details with the Holy Spirit, the more clearly you see how **Jesus Shines As God** – even **over wine**.

You could pick almost any gift shop in the Midwest and find at least one card or poster showing a glass of wine and words saying something like, "Whine relief." Are merchants just trying to excuse bad behavior? One radio preacher seemed to think so. Preaching hard against alcohol of any kind, he commented, "What about people who ask, 'Then why did Jesus make water into wine?'" The preacher's answer: "We're not going to talk about that." Then he went on with his anti-alcohol rant. Unfortunately, he also missed the point of Jesus' miraculous sign at the wedding in Cana of Galilee.

We don't know the wedding couple. They must have been close friends because Jesus' mother and brothers were invited. Mary was working on food and wait staff. And Jesus' disciples were all there. Maybe more came than expected because they ran out of wine, needed all week. Water – contaminated.

Again, we have to ask, "Was Mary whining when she came to tell Jesus, 'They have no wine'?" It's easy to treat God that way. We can either waste our prayer time whining and complaining, forgetting the thanks and praise we owe to God – or – we feel so unworthy that we keep spinning our wheels to fix our own problems. One thing I love about Jesus' mother Mary is the way she just came. Maybe she was a little bossy. Jesus was not her little boy back home in Nazareth. He needed to remind her that He is God. Whatever the reason for Jesus' seemingly harsh response, Mary trusted Jesus to help. As the Son of God, Jesus did not actually say, "*Dear woman,*" in the Greek original. Just, "Woman, what is that to me and you?" You have your concerns; I have my mission for our Father in heaven. But then He adds, "My hour has not yet come." Mary's faith shines bright and beautiful as she orders the servants: "**Whatever he tells you, do it.**" That's simple faith in action – to come, to ask, to trust.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, quotes are TPA ~ draft translation by the undersigned for the Wartburg Project – John.

Then Jesus does something spectacular in the most unassuming way. We have to marvel at how Jesus can do so much good so humbly and quietly. **Jesus Shines As God**, but only to glorify our Father in heaven. All three Persons of the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – are constantly glorifying each other, not themselves. And here we have an awesome picture of how God works in our lives too.

Easily enough, the One who said, “*Let there be light,*” could have said, “Let there be wine!” Instead, Jesus works with what He has. God wants us to work with what we have. Whether it’s talents and resources in the congregation, or time and money to work and pay your bills, work with what you have. God promises, “*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*” (Joshua 1:5) “*As thy days, so shall thy strength be.*” (Deuteronomy 33:25) “*I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*” (Isaiah 41:10) No energy drink can lift you up like God’s promises. Keep some helpful passages handy on paper and, best of all, in your heart. Late afternoon everyone is tired. You need some of God’s fine wine in the Word to fix your whine in the flesh.

Filling water jars to the brim? Dipping a little to drink? Nothing strange about that. But when Jesus says, “*Carry some to the head waiter,*” now you have to wonder. Jesus made fine wine far more expensive than this couple could afford. His love gave them a little nest egg since it was probably more wine than they could drink at the week-long wedding. But behind all Jesus’ generosity is clear proof He is the Creator. C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>12</sub>O<sub>6</sub> is glucose, plant sugar, more than H<sub>2</sub>O. Chemical formulas for wine are long and complicated. As soon as you have elements beyond hydrogen and oxygen, the Creator must have made them. **Jesus Shines As God – over wine.** No need to whine. It’s time for prayer and praise!

### ☆ over worship (vv.12-25)

If only Jesus had stayed in Cana! He could have opened His own wine shop. He could have helped the couple market their surplus and turned the town into the greatest exporter of liquid gold in the country. Think of all the people He could impress if He had just kept doing what He did so well! But Jesus had a mission to fulfill. He came to be the world’s Savior. And on the way to the cross it was necessary that **Jesus Shines As God**. Beyond the bottle, now He proves He is God **over worship**.

Maybe this doesn’t seem like that big a deal. Most modern Christians hear how the Jewish religious leaders went after Jesus and think, “That was then; this is now.” The assumption is, of course, we would never do such a thing. We know better – or do we?

Worshippers at the temple needed cattle, sheep and doves for sacrifices commanded by God through Moses 1500 years earlier. Over the years the market moved inside the temple courts. The High Priest made it mandatory that everyone buy from him. According to Jewish historian Josephus, the high priest had ranches in the Judean countryside to supply animals needed by pilgrims. He controlled supply, prices, and the rate of money exchange from foreign currency. Weren’t they just providing a service? Strangely, we go to the opposite extreme when we think this only about getting rid of fundraisers in church. Quiet temple courts were needed for something greater by far: worship in prayer and praise.

No one can rightly say Jesus is only a good man, a moral teacher. Either **Jesus Shines As God**, or he is a lunatic. They didn’t understand until three years later, but He was claiming He could raise His own body from the dead. Hard as it would have been to rebuild the 46-year masterpiece of Herod’s Temple, it was vastly more impossible for man to raise a dead body from the grave. Jesus was speaking about the temple of His body and claiming, “*I will raise it up again.*” John is reporting the first of three Passovers during Jesus’ Gospel ministry on earth. When the third Passover came, Jesus would offer Himself up as the Passover Lamb, the “*Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” – as John the Baptist identified Him. Trust in Jesus as your Savior, and you are on the Stairway to heaven!

Many souls were enabled by the Holy Spirit to see how brightly **Jesus Shines As God**. His miraculous signs convinced them. God turned the lights on in the Epiphany of our Lord. And He can see right into our hearts to know our need as well. Praise our spectacular, humble Savior! Amen.