

Did Jesus Really Rebuke His Mother?

This, the first of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory. And His disciples believed in Him.

JOHN 2:11

Written by Bill Perkins

Before anyone saw Jesus teach or heal,
there was a quiet moment at a village wedding in Cana—
the place where His glory first began to break through.
(John 2:1–2)

When Mary tells Him the wine is gone,
His reply in English sounds harsh:
"Woman, what is this to Me and to you?"
(John 2:3–4)

But the Greek—and the history behind it—
tell a different story.

The phrase *ti emoi kai soi* was a familiar Semitic idiom.
It never meant what the English seems to say,
"What does this have to do with us?"
It signaled something else entirely—
the moment belongs to God,
not to human prompting—
not even a mother's request.

The Old Testament uses the idiom
to mark a boundary of authority—
moments where the decision rests with God alone.
(Judg. 11:12; 2 Sam. 16:10; 1 Kgs. 17:18)

Early Christian teachers understood this.
Chrysostom said Jesus was "teaching that the hour of signs
is determined by the Father."
Augustine saw the phrase as Jesus placing the moment

under divine will.

Cyril of Alexandria said it "lifts the matter
to the level of the Father's authority."

Many modern scholars agree.

Raymond Brown calls it a "Semitic idiom
of divine prerogative."

Craig Keener notes it signals a difference in role,
not tension.

D.A. Carson says Jesus is appealing
to the Father's timing.

Mary seems to understand this.

She doesn't argue.

She simply tells the servants,

"Do whatever He tells you."

(John 2:5)

And when the Father's yes comes,

the water becomes wine—

not the wine of survival,

but the wine of joy.

(John 2:6–11)

The first sign.

The first unveiling.

The moment the Son steps forward

at the Father's word.

You may not know this about Jesus, but at Cana,

the disciples learned something essential—

Jesus never moved because of human urging.

He moved at His Father's voice.