

Bible and the Headlines: Got Milk  
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Oscar Wilde is credited with saying, “Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.” Anyone who has walked along the dairy section of a supermarket would assume, if Wilde spoke the truth, milk from mammals should feel pretty good about itself. The refrigerated section contains an ever expanding range of milk imitators. Wilde had an imitator too. Anonymous is credited with saying that, “Flattery is actually the sincerest form of flattery.” This week’s stories reveal both imitation and hyperbole about this most basic lactic product.

On February 3rd The Arkansas Advocate featured, “Bill to Broaden Customer Access to Raw Milk Advances out of Arkansas House.” The sponsor of the bill is, “. . . familiar with hurdles in existing law for customers to purchase raw sheep, goat or cow milk from farmers.” Currently, if Arkansans wish to purchase raw (unpasteurized) milk, they must travel to the producing dairy or find a farmer’s market that stocks the product. Older Arkansans and those without transportation who seek the benefit of raw milk will benefit from the proposed bill.

The February 6th edition of the New York Times contained, “Got Weird? Milk Is Headed for Its Strangest Year Yet.” The author of the piece thought cow’s milk was going the way of the dinosaurs. Instead of further decline, the author notes, “In 2024, U.S. consumption of whole milk rose by 3.2 percent — only the second increase since the 1970s — while consumption of plant milk fell 5.9 percent.” Part of the rise in milk consumption is being driven by social influencers who explain milk on TikTok to Millennials who may have only consumed plant-based alternatives.

The New York Post on February 7th led with the article, “Chelsea Handler Reenacts Nicole Kidman’s Kinky ‘Babygirl’ Milk Scene at Critics Choice Awards 2025: It ‘Inspired Me’.” In ‘Babygirl’, Kidman’s character receives a glass of milk from her suitor, and is “. . . forced to drink it while keeping her gaze on her much younger lover.” The director of the film based the scene on her own experience of a suitor flirting with her at a bar by sending a glass of milk.

The Bible starts its relationship with milk using hyperbole. When God speaks to Moses at the burning bush, He says, “I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex 3:8). A land with an abundance of milk (and honey) means good living for the Israelites, and is repeatedly mentioned in the Torah.

In the New Testament, the promise of “milk” is also placed before God’s people. In 1 Peter 2, Christians are told, “Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow up into your salvation” (1Pe 2:2). In this metaphor, milk and its life sustaining goodness, is imitated by the Bible. This is the only case where the imitation is better than its lactic original.