

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to battle?" 1 Corinthians 14:8

KJV

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"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls..." Jeremiah 6:16

Sounding Out The Faith

 November 2019

The Great Wine Debate



The great wine debate over what the Bible teaches concerning the Lord's supper. To begin with, we must consider the "Attitude of the Scriptures" themselves toward the wine itself. It is totally out of character with what the Bible teaches regarding intoxicating wine to believe that the Lord Jesus would use this liquid to represent His blood.

From the very beginning of the Bible, it is obvious that wine has played a major part in the sins of men and the tragedies that are in this world.

1. God makes a comparison for wine in Deuteronomy 32:33, "Their wine is the poison of dragons and the cruel venom of asps." Ask anyone who has ever had a hangover about the bite of alcohol. Ask the "winos" with cirrhosis of the liver, or those whose brains have been pickled because of the alcohol. Wine is indeed as the "poison of dragons and the cruel venom of asps".
2. God associates wine with violence. Proverbs 4:17 says, "For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence." Any social worker in this country will tell you that the vast majority of domestic violence incidents involve alcohol. Ask any police officer and they will tell you that the majority of violent deaths, stabbings, and shootings involve alcohol in some form or another.
3. God says in Proverbs 20:1, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

Think about this verse for just a moment. If the God of Heaven says that those who are deceived by wine and strong drink are fools, isn't it highly unlikely that His Son would use wine at the ordinance of the Lord's supper?

4. God tells us we are not even to look upon intoxicating wine. "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." (Proverbs 23:31-32)

Not only are we not to drink it, but we are not even to look upon it. How could Jesus use it without looking at it? That doesn't even make sense. If He did, He would have been breaking the law and the Scriptures clearly state He didn't break the law in any part.

5. God says that wine causes people to forget the law. Proverbs 97:0-5 says, "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted."

This is good advice for our two so-called Baptist presidents of recent years, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton. One says that his favorite beverage is a particular brand of whiskey, and the other was often seen sipping wine with his meals.

If this is good advice for political leaders, certainly this is excellent advice for those in positions of "religious" leadership such as the world's foremost Baptist evangelist whose Presbyterian wife and he are known to use wine.

However, most importantly, members of the Lord's New Testament churches shouldn't drink unless they would pervert the judgment in God's Word.

6. God says that wine inflames and that those who drink strong drink and wine do not regard the Lord's work. "Woe unto them that rise up early

in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! And the harp, and the viol, and the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands." (Isaiah 5:11-12)

Wine inflames the uncontrollable passions of lust and it is certain that those under the influence of wine are not considering the fact that one day they, too, shall stand at the judgment before God Almighty.

7. God pronounces a "woe" upon those who drink wine and says that it perverts their judgment and takes away their righteousness. "Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!" (Isaiah 5:22-23)

Wine breaks down the natural barriers of morality and causes people to do and say things that they normally would not do if they were not under the influence of alcohol.

8. God says that those who drink wine and strong drink cannot be merry (sing a song), but the end result of their drinking is bitterness. "They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it." (Isaiah 24:9)

9. God associates those who drink wine with "drunkards" filled with pride and that their beauty is a fading flower.. "Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!" (Isaiah 28:7)

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10. God says that wine causes people to err. *"But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment."* (Isaiah 28:7) That preacher who is a winebibber, one who drinks wine, cannot stand and preach and be the instrument of God to condemn sin.

11. The Bible records that Daniel associated drinking wine with defilement and refused to drink it. *"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."* (Daniel 1:8)

12. God associates the drinking of alcoholic, intoxicating wine with blasphemy, desecration of holy things and heathen worship. *"Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, or iron, of wood, and of stone."* (Daniel 5:1-4)

13. God associates drinking wine with "whoredom" and says that it takes away the heart. *"Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart."* (Hosea 4:11)

14. God associates the consumption of wine with disease and having companionship with scorners. *"In the day of our king the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine; he stretched out his hand with scorners."* (Hosea 7:5)

15. The Bible says that wine causes rebellion against God and that it keeps people from crying out to God with their hearts. *"And they have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds: they assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me."* (Hosea 7:14)

16. God says that the drinkers of wine "weep and howl" and that they need to awake to the truth and cease from drinking this awful beverage. *"Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth."* (Joel 1:5)

17. God says that a person who drinks wine is a "proud man neither keepeth at home" and that he sins by doing so. *"Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man,*

neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people." (Habakkuk 2:5)

18. God pronounces a woe upon those who offer their neighbor a drink of intoxicating beverage. He also says that the man offering the drink is filled with shame and associates drinking with sexual impurity. *"Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the LORD'S right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory. For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee, and the spoil of beasts, which made them afraid, because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein."* (Habakkuk 2:15-17)

19. And finally, God uses wine as the symbol of that which causes false religion, blasphemy, fornication, martyrdom, murder, harlotry, abominations, filthiness, and identifies it as the drink of the anti-Christ. *"With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."* (Revelation 17:2)

Yes, the attitude of the Scriptures and the Author of the Scriptures is very definitely against the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Surely a person cannot be an honest student of the Bible and suggest that the lovely Lord Jesus Himself used this intoxicating beverage at the institution of this most sacred of church ordinances.

Jesus was sinless, pure, and holy. *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* (II Corinthians 5:21) How could He, who came to do His Father's will, disregard the fact that God had placed a curse on those who give their neighbor drink? *"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."* (John 5:30) Alcohol is evil, according to the Scriptures so it couldn't possibly represent anything about our Lord.

Its consumption brings great ill in this world. It causes men to lose their senses, desert their families, beat their wives, rob their neighbors and murder innocent citizens.

The consumption of alcohol in any form is a sin. It causes great sorrow and heartache in this old world. Certainly Jesus, who came to give life and that more abundantly, would not offer His disciples that which steals their brains away. *"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."* (John 10:10)

The attitude of the Bible toward alcoholic wine forbids its use at the Lord's Table.

Actions in the Scriptures:

Secondly, we must consider the actions in the Scriptures of those who were affected by intoxicating, alcoholic wine. The use of wine is recorded in the Bible and many, many times it is associated with great tragedy, sin, moral corruption, depravity, degradation and reprobation.

Certainly one cannot deny that alcohol is a curse upon our society. Certainly one cannot deny that its use has caused great grief and brought much sorrow upon our nation. Yet, not only ours, but every nation where drinking is promoted.

However, the horrible things caused by alcohol are not confined to today's society. Much sorrow was brought upon the world from the very first encounter with wine.

1. Noah is the very first man to be recorded as drinking wine. (Genesis 9:20-25) From its introduction into this world, wine has caused nothing but harm, sin, and trouble. This first recorded consumption of intoxicating, alcoholic wine produced tragic results.

It brought about the down-fall of a great prophet. It was at the root of nakedness. It brought about the most disgusting, depraved, amoral, ungodly sin imaginable and resulted in the curse of an entire nation of people.

2. Lot is another man whose entire life was changed because of intoxicating wine. In fact, the whole world was changed because of Lot's consumption of wine. (Genesis 19:29-36)

One cannot deny that the use of wine played a central part in the diabolical plot of this man's two wicked-hearted daughters to commit incest with their father. They schemed to get their father drunk so that he would commit this heinous crime, this depraved act.

Lot would not have done such a dastardly deed as fathering children by his own two daughters had his sense of moral decency not been impeded by alcoholic, intoxicating wine. Here again the drinking of wine caused untold heartaches and troubles in this world.

3. In the Biblical story of Jacob and Esau, we see again that wine played a part in this tale of deceit and lies. (Genesis 27:1-29) In this account Jacob pretended to be his brother, Esau, and tricked his father into giving him his elder brother's blessing and birthright.

In verse 25 of this passage, we find that Jacob brought his father wine to drink so as to dull his senses, confuse the old man, and deceive him. Perhaps this trickery could not have been accomplished had Isaac not been under the influence of this wine.

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At any rate, no one can deny that wine was present when this web of lies was spun.

4. In II Samuel 13:28-29, we read again that drinking wine contributed to great sorrow and sin. In this brief passage, we are told that Absalom used wine to make it easier to kill his brother, King David's son, Amnon. *"Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and, and be valiant. And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled." (II Samuel 13:28-29)*

Regardless of the situation, wine devalued the young man's character so that murder could be perpetrated.

5. In Esther 1:10, we find that wine is mentioned in the fall from grace of Queen Vashti. *"On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he command Methushan, Bizthan, Harbona, Bigthan, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king."*
6. In Job 1:13, we are told that wine was being consumed when tragedy struck Job's children. *"And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:"*
7. The drinking of wine is responsible for the actions of King Belshazzar that brought God's wrath upon him and destroyed the nation he ruled. *"Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein." (Daniel 5:1-2)*
8. We are told that while Moses was upon the mountain receiving God's commandments, the children of Israel were busy drinking, dancing, fornicating and begging Aaron to make them a god of gold. *"And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." (Exodus 32:6)*

Certainly alcohol played a significant role in this dark time in Israel's history. God had been so good to them, led them out of bondage and now as their minds were controlled by the alcohol, they fell to the basest sort of iniquity.

What an example! Over and over again God has spoken of the tragedy, heartache, sorrow, sin and wickedness that drinking wine has caused.

Scarcely could an honest student of the Bible suppose that the one thing that has been respon-

sible for so much woe, would be the choice of our Savior at His last supper.

Example after example has been given in the Scriptures of the destruction that drinking wine produces. Incest, the murder of a prince, the cursing of a nation, the downfall of a prophet and a queen, abomination, blasphemy, desecration of holy things, false religion, and the martyrdom of millions of God's saints can be laid at the feet of this demon, wine.

Admonition From the Scriptures:

However, the most compelling reason that alcoholic, intoxicating wine could not have been used at the Lord's table is because of the admonition from the Scriptures, the Biblical mandates and proofs that Jesus did **not** use wine at all, but rather the purest grape juice.

Again I say that while all of the wine using "brethren" I have ever talked to, retreat to some elaborate recipe for making wine to try and prove their theory, we shall stick just to the context of the Bible.

I personally do not care to know how to make wine. Since God did not include the process in the Scriptures, I doubt sincerely that the way that the wine is made matters to Him. Wine is wine! Whether it is Mogan David or made at home, wine is still wine! Try as they may to justify the use of the devil's drink at the Lord's supper, we must not be concerned with tradition, but rather stick with "what saith the Scriptures". *"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (Colossians 2:8)*

1. We must start with God's instructions to His priests in Leviticus 10:8-9. *"And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations:"*

This was God's instructions to the priests and He said that it would be a "statute for ever throughout your generations". If it was impossible for the priests of the Old Testament to drink wine, is it not impossible for the High Priest of the New Testament to drink wine?

Consider Hebrews 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15; 5:10; 6:20; and 7:25-26. Jesus is the Highest High Priest. Those "wine" brethren will say that at the Lord's supper He was not yet the High Priest, but again I ask, "What saith the Scriptures?" The Bible says, *"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and for ever." (Hebrews 13:8)*

Yes, before the foundation of the world was laid, Jesus was our High Priest. His Father commanded that the priest could have no wine. It would, therefore, be impossible for Him to have used alcoholic, intoxicating wine at the institution of the Lord's supper.

Not only this, but using this same logic, a saved person cannot imbibe in any alcohol, wine, or strong drink. Revelation 1:5-6 says, *"And*

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Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." He has made New Testament church members kings and priests therefore, we have no right to partake of any wine.

2. We must also consider a passage from the Book of Wisdom, Proverbs 31:4. *"It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink:"* If it is not for kings to drink wine, was not the Lord Jesus Christ Himself the "King of kings"? (I Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14)

Again we must say that from eternity past, He has indeed been the King of kings and Lord of lords. The Scriptures attest to His royalty. Great anthems have been written to proclaim Him King of kings. Jesus could not be less.

He, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever has always been the King of kings. It is preposterous to even think that He was guilty of transgressing the law that His Father proclaimed.

3. To completely exhaust the Bible on this very important subject would be impossible. However, to fully understand this debate between wine and grape juice advocates, we must consider when the Lord's supper was instituted. It is a given fact that the Lord's supper was given as an ordinance at the time of Passover. (Matthew 26:2, 16-30)

Now comes the question, did the Jews use alcoholic, intoxicating wine or grape juice at Passover? To comprehend the answer, we must go back to the institution of the Passover in Exodus 12.

We are told that each family had to have a lamb. Not just any lamb would do, but it had to be a male of the first year without blemish. (Exodus 12:5) Second, they were to eat bread, not just any bread, but specifically unleavened bread. (Exodus 12:8) Notice that before the observance of Passover, the people were to remove **ALL** leaven out of their houses. (Exodus 12:15)

They were not to remove just the leaven from the bread, but all leaven. Now, friend, in order for the grape juice to ferment into wine, there must be the presence of yeast, or leaven as the Bible calls it.

Grape juice will sour and turn to vinegar, but it will not ferment without the leaven. If there could be no leaven in the house whatsoever, then the wine, with its leaven, had to be removed as well as the leavened bread.

It would make no sense whatsoever to remove only part of the leaven, that which was in the bread, and leave another source of this picture of sin in the wine. Did Jesus use alcoholic, intoxicating wine at the last supper? Man's tradition says, "Yea," but the Scriptures say, "Nay!"

Jesus did not have alcoholic, intoxicating wine available for the occasion, but only the

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4. Next we must consider what the liquid at the Lord's table represents as recorded in Matthew 26:27-29. *"And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."*

The beverage of the supper in no uncertain terms represents the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, dear friend, if this represents the blood of Christ, it must then be the purest liquid available. It must also be noted that dealing with the Lord's supper, the Bible never uses the term "wine", but rather refers to the liquid as the "fruit of the vine", thus grape juice. (Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18)

Wine cannot be the fruit of the vine, it is not pure. How can something that is not pure represent the blood of Jesus which was the purest blood? The "wine" brethren then say that the leaven, yeast, is in the grape juice naturally because it exists on the grape skins themselves and therefore nothing is added to the grape juice.

But this is worse than admitting that the leaven had to be added. If leaven, yeast, represents sin, which it most surely does, and Jesus said that the grape juice of the Passover represents His blood, then by their own admission, the churches who use alcoholic intoxicating wine in conjunction with the Lord's supper or communion are denying the very deity of Jesus Christ Himself.

If the yeast is present naturally, then that is saying that His blood contained the natural taint of sin. It is saying that the blood flowing through His veins was tainted by that natural sin and therefore, denying that He had no human father, and that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit as the Scriptures say. (Matthew 1:20)

Instead, this yeast is put "upon" the grape by the outside environment. The vine does not produce the leaven, but rather it is a result of the surrounding impurities put on the grape. This is confirmed by Isaiah 53:4-6, *"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."*

His blood was not just blood of another spotless lamb, His blood was precious blood, perfect blood, sinless blood, and atoning blood. As He held up the cup at the last supper, He said, "This is my blood of the New Testament." He was not holding up wine which contained the leaven of sin, but rather the purest grape juice with no imperfections, no leaven, no yeast, no taint of natural sin produced by the grape.

5. If all this evidence has not been sufficient to persuade the reader that grape juice and not wine is the correct element to be used for the Lord's table, then consider this. According to the Scriptures, a man who is a pastor may not have any wine. *"Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;" (1 Timothy 3:3) "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;" (Titus 1:7)*

Now this being as it is, then, the pastor of a local, New Testament church could not even take the Lord's supper with his own church. If intoxicating, alcoholic wine is used at this very solemn occasion, this excludes the overseer of the flock from partaking in this church ordinance.

This, in turn, raises another valid question. If the shepherd of the flock is not present, then who administers the ordinance to the local church? Does a visiting preacher administer it? If so, then, the concept of the local church is destroyed. Do the deacons administer it? Again, this opens a virtual "pandora's box" and some very interesting contradictions to the Scriptures.

Another question is this. If children are members of that local church which uses wine in the observance of the Lord's supper, are they given alcoholic, intoxicating wine, too? I cannot believe that genuine, true Christian parents would want to start their children on the road to ruin by introducing them to alcohol consumption, at church, no less.

And what about the recovering alcoholic? Is he or she to be excluded from partaking of the Lord's table? Who would want the responsibility of causing this brother or sister to fall back into the sin of drunkenness?

I sincerely believe that if a person is honest before God, that person could not seriously entertain using wine in any solemn situation, including and especially in observance of the Lord's supper.

If I am totally positive of anything, I am absolutely sure that true, Baptist churches have no business using worldly and apostate practices in them. Wine, as are all alcoholic beverages, is not suitable for God's people in any circumstance or occasion.

We are told to abstain from all appearance of evil. *"Abstain from all appearance of evil." (1 Thessalonians 5:22)* One of the greatest evils in this world is alcohol. Traditions of men, not the Bible, is the basis for this defilement of the Lord's supper observance. We must remember that it is His supper and He alone has the right to determine what can and cannot be used at its observance.

The use of alcoholic, intoxicating wine in the Lord's supper is a hold-over from Roman Catholic traditions and is certainly not sub-

scribed in by any true Bible believer. I was once told that real independent Baptists all used wine at the Lord's table. Well, that just isn't so! Many of our Baptist forefathers would rather have died than turn the ordinance of the Lord's supper into some Bacchanalian feast.

In closing, the Apostle Paul rebuked the carnal church at Corinth for their attitude toward the Lord's supper. They were treating it as a festive party instead of a solemn, memorial supper.

God help us not to fall into the same sin. Let us not do what Matthew 15:9 warns of. *"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."*

God help us who claim the name of Christ to be above reproach and not be "...given to wine" in any form, at any time.



Other Bible References On Drinking

Deuteronomy 21:20—Drinking leads to a host of sins and dishonor to parents

I Samuel 25:33; 36:38—A man dies after a drunken spree

I Kings 16:8-10—A drinking king is murdered by his own captains

I Kings 20:13-21—Drinking kings are left vulnerable and attacked

Proverbs 4:17—Violence results from drinking

Proverbs 20:1—Wise men will not indulge in drinking

Proverbs 21:17; 23:21—Drinking leads to poverty

Proverbs 23:7-8—The body rebels after drinking

Proverbs 23:35—Drinking is habit forming, one drink leads to another

Isaiah 5:11-12—Woe pronounced to the drunkards

Isaiah 28:7—Drinking brings on spiritual blindness

Ezekiel 44:21—Priests are not to drink wine

Joel 1:5—Young virtue sold for the price of a drink

Amos 6:6—Drinkers not concerned with God