The Christian and Alcohol

To Drink or Not To Drink?

“A Biblical Approach to a Perplexing Question”

By Pastor Donnie Shumate
A 15,000 word thesis on the subject of why a Christian should not partake of alcoholic beverages, for the Degree of Master Of Theology, to be examined by the Board of Directors of the Plain Truth Bible Institute.
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Introduction

The purpose of this writing is for the instruction of the reader who has a genuine desire to know where a Christian should stand on the subject of alcoholic beverages.

Most people have a formed opinion on our subject at hand. The author of this writing also has his own personal opinion on this subject because of its devastating effects on his family. As we begin this study let us challenge ourselves to honestly look at what God’s opinion is on this subject.

Hopefully this writing will be beneficial for the Christian who is willing to study what the Bible declares about the subject of alcohol. If we want to know what God thinks about a subject, we have one source that gives us God’s opinion. His opinion is the one that counts. So let us lay aside our preconceived notions and look to God for what He says on the subject of consuming alcoholic beverages.

May we apply these truths to our individual lives and teach them to our children that they might be free from the bondage of the bottle. Alcohol should be discussed in our homes with our families, especially those with young children. We should expose alcohol for what it really is, a destructive weapon of the devil.

These lessons can be taught in Sunday school classes, home Bible studies, or in a Bible College classroom. As other issues of our faith are being fought on every hand, I believe it is critical that we teach others about the pitfalls of alcohol.

If we do anything less, we fail to teach the truth of the Word of God, and many will fall into the snare of Satan as a result. Jesus said in John 8:32 “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

May God bless you as you study His Holy Word.
Pastor Donnie Shumate
Chapter 1

The Secular View of Alcohol

The world’s view concerning the consumption of alcoholic beverages varies from total abuse to total abstinence, with great variations in between. There are programs designed to help those who become addicted to alcohol, and the results of these are of mixed. Some claim they work well, while others say they are of little benefit. There are hundreds of thousands of individuals who are desperately seeking help with the problem of alcohol abuse.

The world’s view of alcohol deceives people. It lures them into the use of alcohol by portraying it as something wonderful. This deception of Satan draws the young and old alike. The worldly view of alcohol is most often associated with pleasure.
One major deception of alcohol is that it brings

―Pleasure to the Partaker.‖

Alcohol is dangled before the eyes of our children in pictures and posters that promote vile thoughts that the Word of God declares to be sinful. Most of these ads appeal to the lust of the flesh. These ads can be found on billboards, in magazines, or on posters in stores, and are often filled with pictures of beautiful women dressed in immodest apparel.

Alcohol is seen in the context of bringing pleasure to the partaker, and is rarely viewed as dangerous. “The majority of people who drink alcohol never believe that they can actually become alcoholic. Most people believe that alcoholism affects only a small portion of the population. Furthermore, people tend to identify alcoholics as individuals who have reached very low bottoms such as those who are homelessness or can not hold down jobs.‖ These beliefs are completely wrong and lead many further down the road to destruction.

Advertising is mainly responsible for the misconceptions about the pleasure associated with the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Radio advertizing is one of the largest methods used to reach consumers of all ages.

Studies have shown that young people are regularly being targeted by these ads. One report finds that alcohol advertisers “frequently violate a relatively weak voluntary standard, resulting in substantial undue youth exposure to alcohol advertising.‖ The statistics are shocking. Children are being taught through advertizing that there is pleasure in consuming alcohol, when they should be taught that alcohol will consume them.
Alcohol is acceptable in the Secular World

Because of the Profits it Produces.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1Timothy 6:10: “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

Another argument for alcohol is the huge sales it produces. “Alcoholic beverage sales grew by nearly 10% during the 12 months ended May 31, according to financial information company Sageworks, even though the average unemployment rate during that time exceeded 9.3%.”

“Sales expanded more than 9% in 2008, the first full year of the recession, when the average unemployment rate was 5.8%. Sales slumped dramatically the following year, but were still 1% higher, as the unemployment rate shot up to about 9.3%.”

“In 2010, sales jumped more than 9% as unemployment grew to 9.6%. "These numbers grew almost in spite of the recession," said Sageworks analyst Sam Zippin, noting health care was the only other industry to maintain growth through the recession.” Other than going to the doctor, [alcohol] is another need to have.”

Retailers are reaping profits at the expense of the personal loss of families and individuals who are addicted to alcohol. Many retailers are convinced that they could not survive in business without the profits gained from the sale of alcoholic beverages.

The Government of the United States of America is also convinced they too cannot be without the revenue produced by alcohol. In 2007, $5,626,187,000 was brought in by taxes. That’s a lot of money. As we note that the years following 2007 showed increases in sales, it must be logical to conclude an increase in tax revenue also.
Alcohol is accepted in the Secular World because of the

“People who Promote it.”

The people of renown are greatly responsible for creating an image of acceptance within society by publicly partaking of alcoholic beverages.

Movie stars popular with the young and old alike have influenced millions by their lack of moral fiber concerning the consumption of alcohol. During live broadcasts, certain television news anchors consume wine, impacting the consciousness of countless viewers. Musicians old and young alike record songs which make alcohol seem like their best friend or, at the very least, a constant companion.

The religious people of most every denomination have little or no objection to occasional or even regular consumption of alcohol.

Here is an excerpt from Pastor Bob Woolkfolk’s commentary, titled A Christian Perspective On Drinking Alcohol. I reduced the size of the font intentionally so that the following comments could easily be distinguished from my own.
“Alcohol was a part of the social world of the people of Jesus's time and Jesus' first miracle was turning water into wine. He did not tell people not to drink but he counseled them not to get drunk. The scripture says to be sober and it does not discourage the use of alcohol in a moderate way, but it always counseled us not to drink to the point that we can't function and cannot do what we need to do to take care of our families, to take care of our personal business, to worship God.

So alcohol can be both bad and good.

Alcohol in a societal sense has been abused to the point that it is the #1 drug that people consume in America. They don't do it to bring joy and peace into their lives.

They do it from an addicted position. And to be addicted to alcohol is not what Christians are supposed to do.

But they can use it to stimulate their body functions, to help them have peace and relax without becoming intoxicated, and then alcohol use can be justified.

For me, I abstain. I have not had a drink of alcohol for over 30 years and I don't recommend that anybody drink but I don't persecute people who do drink.

I recommend that they don't get drunk because then it's hindering their body functions, hindering them from thinking right. If someone is drinking to the point of hindering their body functions, their thinking, then they need to ask God, "Should I drink or not?"

Alcohol can be good. Some people drink wine to build up and combat anemia, which is low blood, and doctors recommend it. They say that the French are more healthy and have healthier hearts than Americans because they drink wine with every meal and wine helps to break down the fat from the foods that they eat.\(^iv\)

In my opinion, Pastor Woolfolk’s view of alcohol seems to be the mainstream religious view of our day. But is the world’s view of alcohol the correct viewpoint for a true believer in Christ? The world’s viewpoint is much different than God’s viewpoint. Sadly, there are millions of people who are deceived and are partaking of the poison of alcohol. They have been fooled into believing the secular view of alcohol.
Chapter 2

The Scripture and Interpretation

Psalm 119:89
“For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.”

“Once God declared His Word, it is unchangeable and stands firm in heaven as a beacon to all believers. To those who hope that God will somehow change His mind and accept all people into heaven, this stands as a reminder that their hopes will be dashed.”

We cannot depend on any person’s opinion of what is right or wrong other than the opinion of God Almighty.

God has given us His thoughts on the important subjects of life. They are found in the Bible. This is “The Book” of all books. It is unchanging, and it is forever settled. Since God has given us His Word, it is our responsibility to study it that we may know and apply His truths to our individual lives.

As we study the Bible, it’s necessary to be cautious with interpretation of the Holy Scripture. There are far too many people who take the importance of Bible interpretation very lightly. We recall the Apostle Paul’s charge in 2 Timothy 2:15:

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Our duty is to study God’s Word, that we may have the approval of God, not the applause of men. Many Bible teachers and preachers today are in the business of pleasing men, instead of pleasing God. We should study too rightly divide the Word of truth. In other words, we are to study it and then cut it straight. We should tell it like it is. Straight truth is sharp, but it is beneficial to us as we develop as maturing Christians.
To handle the Word of God correctly and accurately, there must be principles or rules established for proper Bible interpretation.

Without such rules and principles, a person can take bits and pieces of the Scripture and form many different doctrines. This is a serious and grave error. Many people have been lead astray by doctrines that have been developed by twisting God’s Word or by vague interpretations of the Scripture.

Biblical Hermeneutics is the study and science of proper interpretation. One of the principles of Biblical Hermeneutics is called “the context principle.” This is defined as “That principle by which God gives light upon a subject through either near or remote passages bearing upon the same theme. Every sentence of verse in the Bible has something that precedes it and something that follows it, except Gen. 1:1 and Rev. 22:21.”

As we read the Bible in order to properly interpret the meaning of a verse, one should study and consider the verse within in the context of the subject matter surrounding the verse.

I would like to briefly illustrate the importance of understanding the context of Scripture by using the following verse. Romans 8:28 is often quoted as “All things work together for good.” However, to quote this alone is not correct because the context of the verse reveals much more.

**Romans 8:28**

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

The Context reveals that all things work together for good to them that love God. Even more revelation is given as the context reveals it is “to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

Therefore, we conclude that context is very important in Bible study. Without properly understanding the context, we are not able to correctly divide the Word of God.
Let’s consider the book of 2 Peter, chapter 3 for a moment. We discover in chapter 1 verse 1 that Peter is writing to the saved. Notice the first three verses of chapter three:

2Peter 3:1-3

“1 This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:
2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:
3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,”

Peter encourages his readers to be stirred up in their pure minds by remembering the words which were spoken by the Holy Prophets and the Apostles of the Lord.

As we study and examine the context, a student of the Bible should also pay special attention to the words that make up the verses and their meanings. A Bible dictionary is a Bible student’s companion and trusty friend if they are to rightly divide the Word of Truth.

To properly interpret the Bible, a student must have the correct meaning of the words that make up the verse. Our King James Bible is, without a doubt, God’s Word for the English speaking people! It is accurate and complete. It is the Word of God without error.

Over the four hundred years since its translation, some of the words of the Bible have changed in meaning. Let’s examine a word from the Bible that has dramatically changed in meaning over the years.
James 2: 3

“And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool.”

The word “gay” is not defined today the same way it was when translated into the King James Bible in 1611. According to Merriam-Webster, the modern word “gay” has four different definitions. It is used in the English language today in two different ways, as an adjective or noun.

Here are the modern definitions for this word.

“1. a: happily excited: MERRY <in a gay mood>b : keenly alive and exuberant: having or inducing high spirits<a bird's gay spring song>

2. a: BRIGHT, LIVELY <gay sunny meadows>b : brilliant in color

3: given to social pleasures; also: LICENTIOUS

4. a : HOMOSEXUAL <gay men>b : of, relating to, or used by homosexuals <the gay rights movement> <a gay bar>”

The following is the definition for Gay from the “American Dictionary Of The English Language, Noah Webster 1828.

1. Merry; airy; jovial; sportive; frolicksome. It denotes more life and animation than cheerful.

Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay.

2. Fine; showy; as a gay dress.

3. Inflamed or merry with liquor; intoxicated; a vulgar use of the word in America.

Gay, n. An ornament. [Not used.]
“Between the years of 1828 and 2004 the word “gay” has drastically changed in meaning. In a little more than 175 years, the word has changed from a word that meant “happy merriment” to a word that today means the “homosexual movement.” (To be very honest, it took much less time than the 175 years between the publishing of these two dictionaries to change the meaning of the word “gay”. In reality it has happened in my lifetime, or about 50 years. D.S.)

The following is a partial list of words that have changed in meaning since 1611. This list is to show that there are many words that have changed in meaning over the last four hundred years.

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In studying the words of the English language, we find that there are many words which are used analogously.

The term “analogously” (pronounced uh-nal-uh-guhs-ly) means “having analogy; corresponding in some particular: a brain and a computer are analogous.” The following are some examples of how one word can have several different meanings. Grammer.net gives us the following sentences using words that have a double meaning.

1. After taking a shot with his bow, the archer took a bow.
2. I had to console my mom after I sold her console.
3. No one could believe how much produce our garden could produce.
4. There’s no dessert in the desert for those who desert.
5. The family was hoping their live plants would live.
6. There’s simply no use for something you can’t use.
7. They were going to project the project at the local theater.
8. It’s not easy to resume work without a resume.
9. The band booked the studio to record their record.
10. Everyone knows it’s not lady-like to intimate with intimate apparel.
11. The salesman was standing so close it was impossible to close the door.
12. The rebel seized the opportunity to rebel.
13. The artist worked for hours to perfect the nearly perfect work.
14. The sport agent’s resigning affected the star’s resigning.
15. The incense incensed the customers.

One can easily see there are many words that have a dual meaning in the English language. This is also true of our Bible. In the King James Bible, there are words with dual meanings.

In conclusion, interpretation of the Scripture is essential for a correct understanding of the Scripture. A Bible student must study the words of the Bible to get the correct context in order to properly interpret the Scripture. The meaning of some words have changed over the last four hundred years. There are some words in the English language that have dual meanings. The word “wine” is one of these words. In the next chapter we examine the word “wine” to better understand its meaning.
Chapter 3

The Scriptural View of Alcohol in the Old Testament

The word “wine” is found over 180 times in the Old Testament alone. We will not examine every verse that uses the word wine but will consider several before this chapter is completed.

It is important to understand that the Scripture is our final authority. The teachings of the Bible are never contradicting, even if a person does not understand them. If there are passages that we do not understand, we should realize that it’s not that the Scripture is unclear. Instead, it is that we do not correctly perceive what we are reading. Consider the following verses:

**Proverbs 20:1**

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”

**Proverbs 23:29-32**


They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed 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.”

**Habakkuk 2:15**

“Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!”
After reading these passages, you must concur that, according to these verses of Scripture, it is wrong to drink alcoholic beverages. When God’s Word declares that something is wrong, it is wrong. When the Scripture makes a clear statement on a subject, it is the mind of God upon that subject. The Bible is made up of words that are the words of God. Let’s examine the words of a few verses that condemn drinking alcoholic beverages.

**Proverbs 20:1**

*“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”*

The word “wine” used here in Proverbs 20:1 is the Hebrew word that is pronounced “yayin” It means to effervesce. Effervesce is a verb, and is defined as the following:

1. to give off bubbles of gas, as fermenting liquors.
2. to issue forth in bubbles.

It is very clear from the definition of this word that it is an intoxicating beverage that is being discussed in Proverbs 20:1.

The verse goes on to declare that wine is a “mocker.” The word “mocker” has the meaning “to make mouths at. That is, to scoff.” So, we have learned that the beverage of our text is alcoholic and it’s a scoffer. It doesn’t sound so great, and we have only discussed a few words.

Proverbs 20:1 also declares that “strong drink is raging.” The term “strong drink” has a different meaning than the word “wine.” “Strong drink means an intoxicant, that is, intensely alcoholic liquor.” “Yayin” scoffs at those who partake of it, yet strong drink is even worse. This beverage has a much higher alcohol content.

Let’s examine the word “raging” in the verse. This word means “to make a loud sound (like English “hum”); by implication to be in great commotion or tumult, to rage, war, moan, clamor.” This is a negative, violent condition to be in.
Proverbs 20:1

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”

This verse speaks of all alcoholic beverages, from the less alcoholic to the strongest beverages, in a negative context. The verse then makes a very dramatic statement. “Whosoever” means all of humanity. It is an all inclusive word. It applies directly to every living person on the face of the earth, no matter what race, social status or background they may have.

The phrase “is deceived” defines the condition of those who partake of intoxicating beverages. This phrase means “to stray (causatively mislead), usually (figuratively) to mistake, especially (morally) to transgress; by extension (through the idea of intoxication) to reel, (figuratively) be enraptured: - (cause to) go astray, deceive, err, be ravished, sin through ignorance, (let, make to) wander.”

It is very clear from the words of this verse that alcoholic beverages are not to be consumed by anyone. They are dangerous and deadly. It is also very evident from this verse that those who do drink alcoholic beverages are deceived.
Genesis 14:18
“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.”

In Genesis 14, we find the second time wine is mentioned in the Bible. The first time wine is mentioned in the Bible is in Genesis, Chapter 9. We note it’s first mentioned as wicked and sinful. However, in Genesis 14 it is used as a gift. The question to consider is the following: is this fresh grape juice or fermented wine?

The context of the Scripture does not reveal the answer clearly. Many authors of modern commentaries claim it to be fermented. However, there is no proof that the wine spoken of was anything other than fresh grape juice, unless you take the opinion of a commentary author. Opinions are not facts. This is nothing but speculation on their part.

Remember that the word “wine” can mean either fermented or unfermented.

In the book of Proverbs, Solomon wrote about “new wine.”

Proverbs 3:9-10
“9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: 10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.”

The context of this verse deals with giving to the Lord and the blessings to those who partake in this privilege. Solomon teaches that those who give of the “firstfruits” of their increase will receive a great blessing of the Lord. Solomon says that their barns would be filled with plenty and their presses would burst out with new wine. However, many church members give only the leftovers!
**The word “presses” references a wine press.**

“Many of the ancient wine presses remain to the present day. Ordinarily they consisted of two rectangular or circular excavations, hewn (Isa 5:2) in the solid rock to a depth of 2 or 3 feet. Where possible one was always higher than the other and they were connected by a pipe of channel. Their size, of course, varied greatly, but the upper vat was always wider and shallower than the lower and was the press proper, into which the grapes were thrown, to be crushed by the feet of the treaders.”

The phrase “with new wine” in Proverbs 3:10, according to Strong’s Concordance, is the Hebrew word “tiyros.” It means “in the sense of expulsion, must or fresh grape juice (as just squeezed out).”

*Tirosh* occurs 38 times in the Old Testament Bible and it never refers to fermented drink. *Tirosh* always refers to the unfermented fruit of the vine, which is the fresh, sweet juice from the newly harvested grapes.

After studying the meanings of the words, we can conclude that this verse is not speaking of fermented wine, but of juice that has just been pressed out from the grapes.

Another verse in the Old Testament used to falsely justify the use of alcohol is found in the book of Isaiah.

**Isaiah 55:1**

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

This verse speaks to those who are spiritually thirsty to come and partake of the spiritual offerings of God. This can in no way be understood to mean a physical fermented beverage of any sort. To make such a claim is a distortion of the meaning of the Scripture.
The following is an excerpt from Smith’s Bible Dictionary commenting on “wine” in the Old Testament. “The simple wines of antiquity were incomparably less deadly than the stupefying and ardent beverages of our western nations. The wines of antiquity were more like syrups; many of them were not intoxicant; many more intoxicant in a small degree; and all of them, as a rule, taken only when largely diluted with water. They contained, even undiluted, but 4 or 5 percent of alcohol.”

Dr. J. William Kanoy wrote “It should be taken in mind when reading in the Bible concerning “Wine,” we are seldom dealing with the strongly intoxicating and loaded liquors...These were harmless and sober as our own teas, coffees, and cocoas. Had they not been so, the ancient populations would have been perpetually in a state of drunkenness.

We can conclude from the teaching of the Bible in the Old Testament that wine and strong drinks were not approved of by God. There are no contradictions in His Word. The contradictions are found in the minds of sinful men who desire to do evil.
Chapter 4

The Scriptural View of Alcohol in the New Testament

In the New Testament, we find the word “wine” used twenty-nine times. It is found in all four of the Gospels and seven other books of the New Testament. In this chapter we will examine several verses to determine what the New Testament has to say about the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

The first time we find the word “wine” in the New Testament.

The very first time we find the word “wine” in the New Testament is in Matthew 9:17. This verse is often used to say that the consumption of alcohol was a part of a normal lifestyle during the time of Christ. Again, let me stress the importance of context in the Scripture.

We must also remember that there are no contradictions in the Bible. If there were contradictions, we would have a book that we could not trust. We have determined from the Old Testament that the use of alcoholic beverages is wrong in God’s sight. Since God does not change, we know that He still feels the same about the use of alcohol.

How then can the Bible teach it is wrong in one part and permissible in another? It cannot and be the infallible perfect word of God. Let’s examine Matthew chapter 9 more closely. Let’s begin in verse 14 to get the correct context.

Matthew 9:14

“9 Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?”
The disciples of John the Baptist had come to Jesus to ask a question. The context of these verses deals with the question of Biblical fasting, not drinking alcoholic beverages. As it is with all Scripture, if we miss the proper context we will not correctly understand the meaning of the Scripture. We are commanded to rightly divide the Word of God. We should be like a craftsman who is cutting a straight edge with a sharp knife. He labors and painfully works to cut his craft with accuracy.

In the following verses, Jesus answers the question asked by John’s disciples by giving them three understandable illustrations. Jesus taught in a way that was easily understandable by using simple illustrations.

Matthew 9:15 -17

“15 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

16 No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.

17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.”
In verse 15, Jesus taught that the kingdom of Heaven is like a marriage ceremony. He is the bridegroom. His disciples were to be filled with gladness because the bridegroom was with them.

In verse 16, He illustrates how it is wasteful to put a new patch on an old garment. An old garment is worn and easily torn, and therefore it is useless to put a new patch on old clothes.

Third, Jesus taught about the wineskins. The old skins were stretched out to a point that they could be stretched no more. If they are reused and filled with new wine, and the process of fermentation began, they will burst.

We should remember that Christ is teaching about fasting, not the drinking of alcohol. Jesus used this to illustrate His point, but He never gave approval to the use of alcohol. This event is also recorded in Mark chapter 2 and Luke chapter 5.

Let’s revisit the context principle. It is defined as “that principle by which God gives light upon a subject through either near or remote passages bearing upon the same theme. Every sentence or verse in the Bible has something that precedes it and something that follows it- except Gen.1:1 and Rev.22:21. Every verse must be studied in the light of its context.”

Looking at the context reveals that the lesson was about fasting and the Disciples of Christ. Don’t allow anyone to teach you that Christ put His approval on the use of alcoholic beverages. It is not the case here or anywhere else in Scripture.
Another verse often quoted to bring forth controversy over the use of alcohol is found in Matthew chapter 11.

Matthew 11:
“16 But whereunto shall I liken this generation?
   It is like unto children sitting in the markets,
   and calling unto their fellows,

17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.”

Again, we must consider the context of the Scripture. These verses do not approve the consumption of alcoholic beverages. The subject of the text is the Jews and their rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah. They were like children who could never be pleased, no matter who tried to please them.

Verses 16 and 17 illustrate that they were never satisfied, even when attending a wedding or a funeral. In verses 18 and 19, Christ teaches that John the Baptist came without eating or drinking, and they called him a devil. Jesus came eating and drinking, and they claimed Him to be a glutton and a winebibber.

Verse 19 says that Jesus came eating and drinking. Did he over eat? It is my opinion that he did not. Did he drink intoxicating wine? I do not believe so. The word “drinking” means to “imbibe.” This is defined as the following:
1. to consume (liquids) by drinking; drink: He imbibed great quantities of iced tea.
2. to absorb or soak up, as water, light, or heat: Plants imbibed moisture from the soil.

If we say that this verse proves that Christ drank alcohol, then we must also say that John the Baptist “hath a devil.”
John the Baptist is a unique character in the Scripture. The story of his birth is found in Luke chapter 1. John the Baptist was born to the priest, Zacharias, and his wife, Elisabeth. The Bible declares that these two people were “both righteous before God.” They had no children and were well beyond child bearing years. However, it was their desire to have children. They never let their desires interfere with God’s direction for their life. One day while Zacharias was performing his priestly duties in the temple at Jerusalem, an angel spoke to him.

**Luke 1:13 -16**

“13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.”

John was born as promised. From the time of his conception, he was called to be set apart, holy, and consecrated unto God. He was the forerunner of our Savior and a man who lived his life apart from the use of alcoholic beverages of any sort.
John 2:1-11

“1 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whosoever he saith unto you, do it.

6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.
9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew ;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.”

This passage is frequently referenced in the debate of our current topic. Did Christ turn the water into alcoholic wine or fresh grape juice? Again, we recall that the word “wine” has a dual meaning in the Bible. So, the debate continues with each side defending their own opinions. However, there is a much deeper issue in this passage that needs to be discussed.

As I read the passage of John 2, I quickly realize that it is not the wine, or the wedding that is the centerpiece of this portion of Scripture. The centerpiece of this story is the one who is called “Wonderful” in the Old Testament.

*Isaiah 9:6*

>“6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

The word “Wonderful” is an English translation for the Hebrew word “pele’.”

It means “a miracle—marvelous thing, wonder (-ful, fully).”
The real question to be addressed is: “Would Jesus Christ have created an alcoholic beverage?” Consider the following:

1. If Christ created an alcoholic beverage, would such a miracle have been contrary to the teaching of the Old Testament Bible?

2. If the creation of an alcoholic beverage was contrary to the Bible, would it not have been a sin to do such an act?

3. If the creation of an alcoholic beverage were a sinful act, could Christ have created such a beverage and be the perfect sinless Lamb of God?

4. If Christ was found with Sin, would we still be in our sins?

Let’s consider these four questions one at a time.
1. If Christ created an alcoholic beverage, would such a miracle have been contrary to the teaching of the Old Testament Bible?

We have determined that the word “wine” in the Bible has a dual meaning. In that determination, we have concluded that we can, by the context of the verses, know whether the Bible is referring to fermented or unfermented wine. The Old Testament speaks against fermented beverages.

**Proverbs 23:29-31**

“29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? 30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. 31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. 32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.”

There is no doubt that the answer to this question must be **yes**. We can say with God’s authority that the creation of any alcoholic beverage is contrary to the teaching of the Old Testament Bible.
2. If the creation of an alcoholic beverage is contrary to the Bible, would it not be a sin to do such an act?

In reading the passage in John 2, it is evident that the wine was not only created, but it also was consumed.

**John 2:8**

“And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.”

**Habakkuk 2:15**

“Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!”

Would it be a sin for Jesus Christ to create a product for consumption that the Bible directly warns against? Would the creation of an alcoholic wine at this wedding have been a violation of the Scriptural teaching found in Habakkuk chapter 2?

**Proverbs 20:1**

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”

Could it be that Christ overlooked Proverbs 20:1? No way! If we believe that Jesus created alcoholic wine and shared it with everyone at the wedding feast that day, then He must have been deceived. But how could Christ be deceived? He could not have been! He is God! His knowledge is complete. Christ has never been deceived about anything!

If the creation of an alcoholic beverage is contrary to the Bible, then it must have been a sin. There is no doubt about it because it is contrary to the teaching of the Scripture.
3. If the creation of an alcoholic beverage were a sinful act, could Christ have created such a beverage and be the perfect Lamb of God who is sinless?

I do not believe that Christ would have created an alcoholic beverage for consumption by others, for doing so is contrary to the Bible. If Christ Jesus had done this, He would not have remained sinless. Thank God His Word declares Him to be sinless!

2Corinthians 5:21
“5:21 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.”

4. If Christ was found with Sin, would we still be in our sins?

If Jesus Christ was with sin, then you and I are still in our sins for His sacrifice would have been in vain. God demanded a sinless sacrifice for our sins!

1Peter 2:21-22
“21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.”

*Christ could not have created any wine, other than fresh grape juice, and be the sinless Savior. Those who believe Jesus created alcoholic wine have never really considered the ramifications of such a creation. Thank God I have a sinless Savior!*
JESUS CHRIST

At Calvary

In each of the four Gospels, we find the account of the crucifixion of Jesus. Each of these passages is placed in the Bible to give clarity of the events that took place on that day. Jesus was arrested, abused, falsely accused, and sentenced to death. God’s plan of Salvation was being fulfilled!

In John 19:28 we find Christ on the cross and He said these two words:

“I thirst.”

How could Jesus be thirsty? The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is Creator.

Colossians 1:16-17

“16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

When Jesus went to Samaria, it was not by mistake. He was on a mission. There was a thirsty woman He met at the well that day. Jesus spoke to her about her problem, and offered her “living water.”

John 4:10

“10 If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”

John 4:14

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

But on Calvary’s cross, Jesus the Creator, suffered physical thirst.
Christ was thirsty because He was in a fleshly body. Although He was the Creator and Sustainer of all that is or ever will be, He experienced thirst. He experienced human feelings, just as we all do. From the time He and the disciples left the upper room, to the time He was lifted up on the cross, there is no record that Jesus was not offered any water to drink. He had been violently beaten at the whipping post. The blood and fluid loss from His physical body had been great. On the cross, His internal organs, which likely were deprived of water, were dry and cried out for nourishment. He was thirsty because of His humanity.

There is also another reason for Christ’s thirst on the cross. He was not merely a man, but He was God in the flesh. Christ was Deity dying on that old rugged cross. The main reason He spoke these words, “I thirst,” is revealed in the Scripture. Christ came to earth to fulfill the will of God the Father.

**Hebrews 10:7-9**

> 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

> 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

> 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second.”

Jesus said “I thirst” because it was a fulfillment of the Old Testament Scripture.

**John 19:28**

> “After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.”
His humanity declared what His deity demanded.

Psalms 22:14-15

“14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws: and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.”

Without a doubt, Jesus was very thirsty during His crucifixion. Three of the four Gospels declare that when Jesus was on the cross He was offered vinegar. The fourth Gospel uses the word “wine.”

“The Hebrew word translated "vinegar" was applied to a beverage consisting generally of wine or strong drink turned sour, but sometimes artificially made by an admixture of barley and wine, and thus liable to fermentation. It was acid even to a proverb, Proverbs 10:26 and by itself formed an unpleasant draught, Psalms 49:21 but was used by laborers. Ruth 2:14 Similar was the acetum of the Romans—a thin, sour wine, consumed by soldiers. xxxiv

Smith’s Bible Dictionary states they believe Jesus drank the sour wine only moments before He died. Let’s look at all four of Gospel accounts of this subject before we form an opinion on this.

Matthew 27:48

“And straightway one of them ran, and took a spunge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.”

Mark 15:22-23

“22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.”
Luke 23:36-37
“36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, 37 And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.”

John 19:28-30
“28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. 29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a spunge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. 30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”

Matthew said they “gave him to drink.”  
Mark said that “he received it not.”  
Luke said the soldiers offered  
“him vinegar.”  
John said “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he died.”
These four accounts are an accurate portrayal of exactly what took place the day Jesus died. To believe any less is to doubt God’s Word!

If we believe we have the divinely inspired Word of God without error, then we must take God’s Word as our final authority. God’s record is true, and Christ would have never acted in any way that would discredit Him or dishonor His Heavenly Father.

When we read most of the modern commentaries, they claim that Jesus must have drunk this concoction of sour wine. Some say because His throat was parched, He would not have been able to speak the last statement from the cross had He not. Some say that He needed the wine to help Him bear the pain of the cross. It is thought that the sour wine contained analgesic properties that would have been very beneficial to Him. I do not believe for a moment that He drank the sour wine.

**Luke 23:36**

“And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,”

The Roman soldiers offered Him the sour wine. They mocked Him, laughing and making their shameful comments to the darling Son of God. Now, notice the record found in the Gospel of Matthew:

**Matthew 27:48**

“And straightway one of them ran, and took a spunge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.”

The vinegar was placed before Him. Christ was suffering as no man has ever suffered. His thirst was as great as it could be because of the lack of moisture in His body. He had lost a large amount of blood, and would shed it completely before He died. He was offered the vinegar, but the Scripture does not say He drank it.
Mark 15:23

“And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.”

This is a key verse that must be discussed and not disregarded. There are some who claim that this is a separate event from the other three Gospel accounts. However, the Bible does not say that it is. In fact it, mentions no such division.

Jesus did not receive this wine mingled with myrrh. In fact the phase “mingled with myrrh” means “embittered (as a narcotic).” Christ was our perfect sacrifice and would not have used anything that would have blemished His perfection. To have received a medicine or drug that relieved His suffering would have been the humane thing to do, but it was not God’s requirement. He paid the price completely by dying without the aid of drugs or alcohol!

The fourth account of these events is found in the book of John. There are many people who believe that this verse proves that Christ drank the sour wine. But how can we believe that Christ drank alcohol, when the Gospel of Mark declares that He did not drink it? Is this an error in our Bible?

John 19:30

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”

If we believe the Bible, then we must also take Mark’s account into consideration as we rightly divide the Word of Truth. At the last hour of His earthly life, Jesus was greatly in need of water. The sponge was placed on a reed, and soaked with the sour wine, which was also mixed with myrrh. The sponge was then placed to the lips of the Savior, perhaps even touching them. He refused it. In other words, the vinegar was received and rejected all in one moment.
In this chapter we are studying the New Testament teaching concerning the use of alcoholic beverages. As in all of the Bible, the central figure of the New Testament is Christ Jesus.

Another aspect of ministry of Jesus Christ is the office of the Great High Priest.

In the Old Testament, God revealed the proper method of worship to His people, the Jews. In both the “tabernacle in the wilderness” and the “Temple” in Jerusalem the office, regulations, and duties of the priesthood were preformed. One passage found in the Old Testament plainly forbids the priest of the tabernacle to drink any form of alcohol.

**Leviticus 10:8-11**

“8. And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying,

9 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:

10 And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;

11 And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.”
Jesus did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill the Old Testament law. After all, it was God who gave the law to Moses. In Leviticus 10, God spoke to Aaron, who had been appointed as the priest, along with his sons and descendants to follow him. The priests were not to partake of any alcoholic beverage while performing the office of the priesthood. The penalty for disobeying this command would be death.

The teaching in Hebrews chapter 10 refers to the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ on the cross. As we study the Bible it is evident that God at times uses earthly things to teach us about Heavenly things.

**Hebrews 10:1**

“1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.”

This verse contains at least two powerful thoughts. First, the law was like a shadow, which is only an image of something else. The Old Testament priesthood was a shadow of something greater! Secondly, the sacrifices that were offered each and every year were only temporary. In other words, their sacrifice had to be renewed each and every year.

**Hebrews 10:11-14**

“11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

The Bible declares that Christ, through His sacrifice, has perfected those who have been born again through His blood once and for all! Some may think, “What has this to do with alcohol?” Bear with me for a moment, and let’s read some more from the Bible.
Hebrews 4:14-16

“14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldy unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

CHRIST IS DECLARED TO BE “OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST.”

The office of the earthly high priest involved entering yearly into the Holy of Holies on the great Day of Atonement. The priest would sprinkle the blood of the sin offering on the mercy seat for the sins of the people. This was the place behind the veil, where the Ark of the Covenant was kept and where the presence of God dwelt. After his ascension, Christ took His blood and placed it on the altar in Heaven! Once and forever!

Hebrews 2:17

“17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”

We have a faithful high priest in Christ. Christ Jesus is also a sinless high priest according to Hebrews 4:15. He could not have consumed alcoholic beverages and performed the duties of our high priest scripturally.

What you conclude on this matter depends on your perception of the Bible. Is it the infallible, divinely inspired, preserved Word of God? Or, is it a book of life lessons that can’t be taken literally? I am convinced we do have God’s preserved Word, and that it is without error. I am sure Christ Jesus, the Savior, never drank alcoholic wine in any fashion or form. He kept the offices God entrusted to Him completely and perfectly. Jesus never gave permission for anyone to consume alcoholic beverages.
OTHER NEW TESTAMENT VERSES THAT USE THE WORD WINE
AND VERSES THAT SURROUND THEM FOR CLARITY OF CONTEXT.

Romans 14:19-23 ( v-21)

19 Let us therefore follow after the things which
make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed
are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine,
nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth,
or is offended, or is made weak.

22 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.
Happy is he that condemneth not himself
in that thing which he alloweth.

23 And he that doubteth is damned
if he eat, because he eateth not of faith:
for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”

As we examine the context of Romans 14 verses 19-23, the subject is the
edification of others in the faith. The phrase found in verse 19, “wherewith one
may edify,” means to build up. It is an architectural term. Paul’s instruction is to
build up those around us who may be weaker or easily offended. Drinking wine is
something that could cause another to stumble, cause offense, or make another
person weak. It is not good.
Ephesians 5

In Ephesians chapter 5, the Apostle Paul teaches to have no fellowship with the works of darkness. He said they are works of unfruitfulness. Paul said we should reprove the works of darkness. He says that we should walk not as foolish people, but as wise. In verse 16 of Ephesians 5, Paul admonishes us to redeem the time. We should be using our time for the glory of God, doing the work of the Lord. He uses terms to provoke our thinking that we might know the will of God for our lives.

Ephesians 5:18

“18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;”

Paul the Apostle compares a negative filling with a positive filling. He says that we are not supposed to be drunk with wine. One commentary on the book of Ephesians said referring to verse 18:

“This is an example of folly, a lack of sense, especially inconsistent with the intelligence of the true believer. The person who has correct discernment will not seek refreshment of excitement from wine, but from the Holy Spirit.”

The word “excess” used here in verse 18 has a significant meaning, and is crucial to understand what Paul means about the use of alcoholic beverages. Excess is translated from the Greek word “asotia”. This word is defined properly as “unsavedness that is (by implication) profligacy, excess, and riot.” So, by the Apostle’s pen, we are warned of the wrong kind of filling, which is being filled of alcoholic wine.

Paul then explains the right kind of filling. Only a saved person can know of being filled with the Holy Spirit of God. Contextually, this is what Paul wants us to understand. In making his point, he also warns us of the harmful effects of being filled with alcoholic beverages.
The Qualifications of a Bishop: The Overseer of the Church

1 Timothy 3:1-9

“1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;”

Although these qualifications for an overseer/pastor are applicable today, in many churches they are not considered important. Paul very plainly defines the qualifications for any person who desires the work and office of bishop. Our current study is on the Christian and alcohol, not on the qualifications of pastors. Therefore, we will skip the first seven of these qualifications to consider the subject at hand.

The phrase in 1 Timothy 3:3 says “Not given to wine.” The word “not” is important in understanding this phrase. The word “not” means “no more, not at all, not neither.” Perhaps you remember as a child your parent saying, “You better not,” before you were going to do something that you would be in trouble for. That is what “not” means. It is a conjunction or adjective used in speech.

Paul says that the bishop is “not given to wine”. The phrase, “given to wine,” is the English translation of the Greek word “paroinos.” It means “staying near wine, that is tippling.” The word “tippling” is a form of the word “tipple,” which is defined as “drink.” Some of the synonyms of tipple are “booze, grog, liquor, guzzle, bolt, to absorb, consume, partake of, sip, slurp, swallow.”

As we examine the words and their meanings, we must conclude that a bishop must be a man who, among other qualifications, abstains from the use of alcoholic beverages. Titus 1:7 also agrees with 1 Timothy 3.
Qualifications of The Deacon

The Apostle Paul writes of the qualifications of a Scriptural deacon. Deacons are servant leaders to the pastor/overseer and the body of the church. Paul lists their qualifications in 1 Timothy. We will deal only with the specifics of our current study.

1 Timothy 3:8-9

“8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;
9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.”

Many interpret these verses to say that Paul is giving his approval for deacons to consume alcoholic beverages. The word “not” was previously defined in the section on the bishop, and will not be defined here again.

Let’s focus on the phrase “not given to much wine.” Consider what we have learned from the previous quote from Dr. J William Kanoy:

“It should be taken in mind when reading in the Bible concerning “Wine, we are seldom dealing with the strongly intoxicating and loaded liquors...These were harmless and sober as our own teas, coffees, and cocoas.”

The consistency of fermented wine in Bible days was like syrup. It was then diluted by water to form a beverage. Before being diluted, its alcohol content was only 4-5% at the most. The percentage of alcohol was much less after being mixed with water to form a beverage. A person could not drink enough of this beverage to become intoxicated.

Modern alcoholic wines have a much higher alcohol content. Most modern wines range in alcohol content from 10-20%. When we compare wine of the Bible days with modern wine, we must conclude that the modern wine must be considered a strong drink that the Bible warns of.
Wine For Medicinal Purposes

1 Timothy 5:21-23

“21 I charge *thee* before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure.

23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities."

We realize that in Bible times medical treatment was very limited. We have much to be thankful for when it comes to the modern advances in treatment of our health conditions.

Paul gives Timothy very wise council when he advises him not to drink the water. Worldwide, unclean water is a major cause of stomach illness and intestinal diseases.

The properties of medicinal wine in Paul and Timothy’s day would have been beneficial to them. Remember, the wine of the time was very low in alcohol content. Paul told Timothy to use a little wine, not to become a regular user of strong drink.

There are many health risks to consider when a person becomes a regular consumer of alcohol. We will examine some of the health related problems of alcohol in Chapter 6.
Peter Teaches We Should No Longer Live The Old Life

1 Peter 4:1-3

“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

2. That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

3. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banqueting, and abominable idolatries:”

We should be Christ minded.

The Apostle Peter exhorts us to equip ourselves with the mind of Christ. Being Christ minded involves submitting our fleshly will and desire to that of our Heavenly Father. If you are saved, you are no longer your own. You are bought with a great price. A saved person should always remember the price of their salvation, and that they are a new creature.

Peter reminds us of our past desires beginning in verse three of 1 Peter chapter 4. He plainly speaks against the wrongs that were a large part of the past life of sin. We should put on Christ and put off the carnality of our earthly desires.

Scripture of the New Testament is not in conflict with Scripture of the Old Testament when it comes to the study of alcoholic beverages. If we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us, we will conclude that a New Testament Christian should not partake of alcoholic beverages.
Chapter 5

The Saved and Alcohol

Is God’s Word Pure and Preserved?

Today, there are many who attend churches who feel that an occasional social drink is not harmful. It is sad to see good people deceived by such a notion. This ideology is based on a non-literal interpretation of the Bible.

A poll taken in 2007 reveals that “about one-third of the American adult population believes the Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally word for word. This percentage is slightly lower than several decades ago. The majority of those Americans who don’t believe that the Bible is literally true believe that it is the inspired word of God but that not everything it in should be taken literally. About one in five Americans believes the Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by man.”

Liberal thinkers of our day claim that the Bible cannot be inerrant. They often scoff at those who adhere strongly to their belief that the Scripture is the final authority in all matters. Human thinking does not change the Word of God!

2 Timothy 3:16

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

If there is a verse in the Bible that complements 2 Timothy 3:16, it would have to be John 17:17! Christ was praying for his disciples and for us before He went to Calvary. Jesus said:

John 17:17

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”
The authority of the Bible is described in the doctrine of “Verbal Plenary Inspiration.”

The word “verbal” means that every word of the Bible is given by the Lord God of Heaven. In other words, each and every word in our Bible is there because God wanted it to be there.

The word “plenary” means that the Bible is equal in all its parts. In other words consider the Bible to be the complete Word of God, not to be taken as bits and pieces. Each portion of the Bible is authoritative.

The word “inspiration” can Biblically be defined as “God breathed.” God guided the authors to write the exact words He wanted to be penned down. The Bible is the final authority. It is God’s Word that is forever settled. Everything we need to know about the issues of life is found within the pages of the King James Bible. The question posed to every person is whether or not to believe the Bible is the final authority. Many people have different opinions on the subject, but it does not matter what you or I think, only what God has said.

There’s a great illustration about aviation that can help us comprehend the importance of precision. Aviation must be a precise operation in every aspect. There is grave danger when a pilot flies off course, even to the slightest degree.

When people are off course, they usually think it’s only a little and that a little is really not too bad. A person who thinks we cannot take the Bible literally is much like a pilot who thinks that being off course two degrees is not problematic. However, if you were two degrees off course (assuming no wind conditions), you would be 2 miles off course at 60 miles out, 4 miles off course at 120 miles out, etc. If you flew 1000 miles you would be over 33 miles off course.
If we boarded a plane in Anchorage, Alaska planning to fly to Mazatlan, Mexico and we were off course only two degrees, we would miss Mazatlan by over 115 miles. Two degrees off is not so bad, or is it?

A striking realization comes to mind as I realize that a small error becomes a much larger error the longer we travel along the same path. It is evident by our imaginary flight of 3300 miles that the longer we stay off course, the further we end up from our destination.

The longer we continue to travel when we are off course even just slightly, the greater the error of missing the mark at the end of the flight.

The English Poet Alexander Pope declared “To err is human; to forgive divine.”

One mistake that we can’t afford to make is the discrediting of the authority of the Word of God.
“6. The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.
7. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”

The Lord has declared His Word to be pure and preserved perpetually. It is His to keep, and keep it He shall. If God can’t keep His Word, then our salvation is in jeopardy. If God can’t keep His Word, then our hope is built on unsteady ground. But God can keep His Word, and He has kept it for us!

Let me clarify by citing the previous illustration of traveling while off course. Many preachers have said sin can be defined as “missing the mark.” It could also be thought of as being off course, even if just a fraction of a degree. Rejecting the declaration of the Word of God as being pure and preserved eternally is sin. The further we go in our sin, the further we miss the mark.

We have God’s Word which plainly teaches against the consumption of alcohol. We must also consider our personal witness. Our testimony as a Christian must be protected from even the accusation of partaking of alcoholic beverages.
In the book of Genesis, we find the true origin of mankind. God created man in perfection which is without any flaws.

The Book of Psalms 139:14
“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.”

The effects of alcohol are far reaching. Alcohol abuse is very dangerous. The medical side effects can be devastating to an individual. Dr. W.R. Spence says alcohol is “The most dangerous drug on earth. There is one drug more dangerous than heroin, cocaine, or amphetamines. It kills more people, wrecks more lives, breaks up more families, waists more money, and causes more diseases than all other drugs put together.”
The following lists of diseases are linked to consumption of alcohol.

**Gastrointestinal Diseases**

There are several different gastrointestinal disease linked to alcohol abuse. Gastritis, an inflammation of the lining of the stomach wall, is often caused by heavy intake of alcohol. Those who suffer with this disease often have nausea, vomiting, headaches and severe stomach pain. They may have bleeding that accompanies vomiting.

Other gastrointestinal diseases that can develop from ingestion of alcohol are gastric ulcers, duodenal ulcers, and pancreatitis.

**Liver Damage**

“The liver is the largest glandular organ in the body, stretching across the upper abdomen for approximately eight inches from right to left.” The liver is the organ that metabolizes alcohol. Alcohol is detoxified in the liver. Liver disease is one of the most common problems associated with heavy alcohol abuse. Most have heard the term “cirrhosis of the liver.” Alcohol is the leading cause of this problem.

**Cardiovascular Disease**

“Most research studies show that drinking large amounts of alcohol on a regular basis is linked to high blood pressure and can lead to hypertension. No one knows exactly how alcohol works in the body to cause high blood pressure. However, some researchers believe that the chemicals in alcohol may have an effect on the blood vessels and arteries, causing them to tighten and close. This raises blood pressure because it means that blood has to force its way through." WebMD is a medical advice website. In researching the link between heart disease and alcohol, I went to this web site and read their report. It seems that WebMD wants to straddle the fence when it comes to the subject of alcoholic beverages. Part of the report says that alcohol is very beneficial to its partaker. The other part of their report warns of the risks of indulging in alcoholic beverages.
In Dr. Spence’s report, he states that “weak hearts are common among heavy drinkers, and as few as two drinks per day may impair muscular function of an abnormal heart.” He also shows a picture of an enlarged heart taken from a middle-aged man who died from alcoholism. His report is from the late 1980’s. Today it seems that many medical professionals have taken the same approach as many of the churches of our time concerning alcohol: alcohol is ok in moderation. Sadly, many people who take the first drink think they can control it, and very quickly it controls them.

WebMD closes their report on alcohol with the following statement: “The American Heart Association cautions people to not start drinking if they do not already drink alcohol. Many of the benefits listed above can be achieved through diet and exercise. Talk to your doctor about the benefits and risks of drinking alcohol.” The beneficial effects can be gained by other means without ever taking the first drink of alcohol. It would be very wise to seek the other means and leave the alcohol alone.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Women who abuse alcohol while pregnant risk the health of their unborn child. Low birth weight, failure to thrive, mental retardation, and many different birth defects are some of the sad effects of alcohol abuse on the baby.

Alcohol can have many other side affects including but not limited to the following: malnutrition, brain Damage, accidental death, homicidal and suicidal ideation, cancers, and drug interactions.
The Statistics of Alcohol Abuse

There is a wealth of resources available when studying the dangers of alcohol abuse. Alcohol abuse has impacted the United States of America in a negative fashion for many years. We also find that alcohol abuse has few boundaries. It does not stop at city limits, but is spread throughout the nation. We must also recognize its debasing effects upon other nations.

It is a reasonable assumption that the level to which any country partakes of alcohol, will also directly parallels the level of harm caused by such drinking. For example, the more people within a nation who are drinking alcohol, the more problems that nation will experience because of the consumption of alcohol.

America is not alone in the deep problems brought about by alcohol.

The United Kingdom is one of the top ten alcohol consuming populations in the World.

“Alcohol abuse, as a cause of death in the UK, has; been estimated at 8,000 – 40,000 annually, according to the IAS. The lower figure constitutes deaths caused by alcohol defined causes such as chronic liver disease. The upper figure is an estimate of all other deaths in which alcohol has contributed but is not alcohol defined, such as falls, suicide and motor vehicle accidents.

Alcohol misuse within the UK is highest in Scotland. Whilst the population in England drink more frequently, the Scottish population are more likely to exceed recommended daily limits of alcohol with males consuming more than double female alcohol intake.

A quarter of women and two in five men in Scotland exceed their daily limit. There were 41,651 alcohol related discharges from hospitals in Scotland alone in 2006/7 which is an increase from the previous year’s statistic of 39,061.
According to the Chief Executive of the national charity Alcohol Focus Scotland, ‘the number of people in Scotland hospitalized through drink has soared by 270% in only 15 years.’

Whether in the U.S. or the U.K., alcohol is a huge problem that causes great damage to all people who allow it to become a part of their society.

The following statistics is from the web site Alcohol-Information.com.

- An estimated 6.6 million children under 18 live in households with at least one alcoholic parent.
- By the time they are high school seniors, 80% have used alcohol and 62% have been drunk.
- In the United States, roughly 50,000 cases of alcohol poisoning are reported each year, and approximately once every week, someone dies from this preventable condition.
- Classical alcoholism takes about 15 years to develop, but it can happen much quicker in adolescents and young adults.
- In the United States, almost three times as many men (9.8 million) as women (3.9 million) abuse alcohol or are alcohol-dependent.
- 56% of students in grades 5 through 12 say that alcohol advertising encourages them to drink.
- Children who are drinking alcohol by 7th grade are more likely to report academic problems, substance use, and delinquent behavior in both middle school and high school.
- Alcoholics spend four times the amount of time in a hospital as non-drinkers, mostly from drinking-related injuries.
- It is estimated that over 3 million teens between the ages of 14 and 17 in the United States today are alcoholics.
- Approximately 14 million Americans — about 7.4 percent of the adult population — meet the diagnostic criteria for alcohol abuse or alcoholism.
• More than seven percent of the population ages 18 years and older -- nearly 13.8 million Americans -- have problems with drinking, including 8.1 million people who suffer from alcoholism.

• The cost of untreated drug and alcohol abuse in the U.S. in a year is estimated at $276 Billion in lost productivity, law enforcement costs, health care and welfare programs.

• Drunk drivers are responsible for 50% of highway fatalities.

• 95% of alcoholics die from their disease and die approximately 26 years earlier than their normal life expectancy.

• More than one-half of American adults have a close family member who has or has had alcoholism.

• Alcohol is a factor in nearly half of America's murders, suicides and accidental deaths.

• Twenty one percent of workers reported being injured or put in danger, having to re-do work or to cover for a co-worker or needing to work harder due to others’ drinking.

• Up to 40% of industrial fatalities and 47% of injuries in the workplace are linked to alcohol consumption and alcoholism.

• Non-alcoholic members of alcoholic's families use 10 times as much sick leave as families where alcohol is not a problem. 80% of these family members report their ability to perform work is impaired as a result of living with an alcohol abuser.

• Absenteeism among alcoholics or problem drinkers is 3.8 to 8.3 times greater than normal.

• More than three fourths of female victims of nonfatal, domestic violence reported that their assailant had been drinking or using drugs.

• Underage drinking costs Americans nearly $53 billion annually. If this cost were shared equally by each congressional district, the amount would total more than $120 million per district.

• Individuals in stable marriages have the lowest incidence of lifetime prevalence of alcoholism (8.9%) as opposed to co-habiting adults who have never been married (29.2%).
• More than one third of pedestrians killed by automobiles were legally drunk.

• Low to moderate doses of alcohol can increase the incidence of a variety of aggressive acts, including domestic violence and child abuse.

• About half of state prison inmates and 40% of federal prisoners incarcerated for committing violent crimes report they were under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of their offense.

• Research indicates that adolescents who abuse alcohol may remember 10% less of what they have learned than those who don’t drink.\textsuperscript{xlviii}

\textbf{According to statistics on alcohol abuse and alcoholism statistics and facts, about 43% of U.S. adults, namely, 76 million individuals, have been exposed to alcoholism in the family. That is, these people grew up with or married an alcoholic or a problem drinker or had a blood relative who was an alcoholic or problem drinker.}\textsuperscript{xlix}
Conclusion

The Summation of Alcohol

We have come to the closing chapter of this study on alcohol. The evidence is clearly convincing concerning alcohol and Christians. It is not God’s will for His children to consume intoxicating beverages for any reason. However, I do believe there are many good people who are deceived about alcohol. Many people in churches across America and other places in the world have never been taught of the dangers of consuming alcohol. There are many pastors who are content to remain silent about this evil that has poisoned our society.

The world had many pitfalls placed by Satan. One such pitfall is alcohol. It is a terribly dangerous drug. Alcohol has destroyed millions of lives. It has ruined countless testimonies though the years. You might think you can handle it, but millions can’t. What makes you so sure you can? I know there are countless lives that are impacted by alcohol abuse. There are homes destroyed and families ripped apart by divorce because of the devastating effects of alcohol. Every year there are multiple cases of spousal and child abuse that are directly related to alcohol and its wicked effects. It is sad to know that somewhere today someone is taking their very first drink of alcohol. With that first sip, their life will be altered completely.

Personally, I have experienced what it is like to have family members who were alcoholics. My father’s two brothers were both alcoholics, as well as my father. My dad was a good man that loved his family, but for many years alcohol ruled his life. My mother married him with the thought that she could change him. She was very wrong! Only God can change people. My dad was a drunkard. I am the son of a drunkard. But thanks be unto God my father was saved! When Christ came into his life he was delivered from the bondage of alcohol. My life changed because my dad’s life changed. He was miraculously delivered from alcohol and never drank again. God is able to do the same for others today!
Today, you have a choice to make. Could you have the wrong understanding of this subject of alcohol and its use? It is very possible. Perhaps you should ask yourself: “What can I do to have the right attitude concerning the subject of alcohol?” There are many things you can do, but here are three simple things:

First, recognize that God’s Word is the final authority in every area of your life.

Second, be willing submit yourself to the authority of God’s Word.

Third, ask God to help you apply His truth to your individual life.

God’s Word has been given to all men. The Bible clearly warns us to abstain from the use of alcohol as a beverage. Many Christians refuse to accept the plain truth of the Bible. Certainly if you are saved, alcohol has no place in your life. Christians should live their lives as the example of godliness before the world. I challenge you to study in greater detail the Scriptures, which we have only briefly examined here in this study.

I ask you to consider the following question today. Is it a sin to consume alcohol? The Bible clearly teaches it is against God’s will for your life. James 4:17 says

“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

According to the Bible it is a sin for any person, saved or lost to consume alcohol. What should a saved person do if they are guilty of this sin? The Scripture says we should confess our sins to God. You can live a life free from the use of alcohol!

1John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
Finally, I can’t close without asking you the most important question in the entire world: Have you ever been born again? I am not referring to church membership, or baptism. I am speaking to you today about being ready to stand before God at the judgment. Our life here on earth is precious, fragile, and very limited. There is no one who can say for certain that they will live to see the next sunrise. Have you made peace with God? Are you 100% sure that if you were to die today that you would go to heaven. If your answer is yes, then may I ask you how do you know? If any person depends on anyone or anything other than a personal relationship with Jesus Christ they will never enter into Heavens splendor! Jesus Christ is the only way for any person to go to heaven.

**John 14:6**

Jesus saith unto him, *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

If you have never received Christ you need to be saved.

Please consider the following steps to salvation

**Recognize yourself a sinner.**

Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”

*You and I have all sinned. Yes, I have told lies before. That makes me a liar, which breaks one of God’s commandments found in Exodus 20. How about you?*

*I have taken things that did not belong to me. That makes me a thief. According to the Ten Commandments, I am guilty. How about you?*

*The Bible declares that all liars and other sinners will have their part in the lake of fire for all eternity according to the book of Revelation chapter 21:*

8 “*But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”*
You must be saved to avoid this fate. In fact, God’s desire is for you to be saved. It is not His will that you die in your sins. God gave His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for all. Christ was God’s perfect sacrifice, and He died on a Roman made cross for everyone.

**Repent of Your Sins.**

Luke 13:5 “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

To repent means to turn from your sins and to turn to God.

Jesus preached repentance.

Repentance is absolutely necessary to be saved and I am not adding works to salvation! You and I must turn from our sin by turning to the Savior! You can’t continue going toward hell and ever reach heaven, you must turn from sin and trust in the Savior!

**Receive the Savior.**

Romans 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Ask Christ to forgive you of your sins. Ask Christ to save you. Then trust Christ by faith that He will do what He promised for you. Romans 10:9-13 is a promise of God! You must trust in God’s Word!

Rom 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Pray to God for forgiveness!
Believe that God will save you!
Confess Christ as Your Savior!

Find a Bible preaching Baptist Church.
Attend regularly, that you might grow in the faith.
Free Clip Art.¹ http://www.cksinfo.com

Note: All Scripture Quotes are taken from The Authorized King James Version 1769. (e-Sword Electronic Bible Study)

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