



The Voice Of Truth

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What Would You Ask Him?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

If you could have the complete fulfillment of one desire, hope, or longing, what would it be? Would you ask for happiness? Would you ask for physical health? Such a question opens so wide a field for thought that the imagination is staggered.

Has a person of history grappled with this question? Yes! David, the "man after God's own heart," not only grappled with it, but also dared to make reply. He said: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple," (Psalm 27:4). David, desiring "one thing" of the Lord, shows he was not a man of divided aims or allegiance. David longed to ascribe praise and honor and glory unto God. He loved to go to the place of public worship and praise his God. He loved to worship God. How needed this attribute is today!

Every child of God on earth today should make David's goal the end and aim of his life. But, sadly they don't. Too many professed Christians are spiritually dead. They are too religious to commit themselves to the world and too worldly to commit themselves to the Lord. They are seeking to serve two masters, but Jesus said: "No man can serve two masters ..." (Matthew 6:24). If a person loves the world, he becomes an

enemy of God (James 4:4). So many lukewarm Christians are "halt" as were those of old "between two opinions," (1 Kings 18:21).

The true servant of the Master is characterized by absolute commitment. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly ...," (1 Thessalonians 5:23). To sanctify is to set something apart for sacred or holy uses. The very meaning of the term "sanctification," is used to describe the follower of Christ. It is an absolute commitment, dedication, consecration to reverence the Lord in our heart. Since Christians have been set apart for God's purpose, they are to continue to live consecrated, holy and pure lives before God and the world.

Do we live as God's sanctified people? Are we truly demonstrating actions that we are "set apart" for God's service?

Wine or Grape Juice in Communion?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

It was the night before the crucifixion that Jesus bowed his head blessing the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. This event in the life of Christ

was to be the memorial of his life, death, and resurrection. Therefore, the seriousness of this memorial is one that must not be overlooked. This institution of this memorial was done at the Passover feast (Mark 14:12-25; Luke 22:1-20). When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He naturally used the elements that were used during the Passover meal (Matthew 26:17-19). All leaven was to be removed from the houses (Exodus 12:19).

Strong notes that both Hebrew words translated "leaven" include the idea of fermentation. Leaven is a substance used to produce fermentation in dough and make it rise (Exodus 12:15,19-20). In Bible times leaven was usually a piece of fermented dough retained from a previous baking that was placed in the new dough to cause it to rise. During the Exodus, the Israelites had eaten unleavened bread because of their hasty departure from Egypt (Exodus 12:34, 39). The practice of this first Passover was continued in all subsequent observances of the Passover. At the beginning of the Passover season every year, all leaven was expelled from the house (Exodus 12:15) and was kept from the house for seven days (Exodus 12:19). These days, called the "Day of Unleavened Bread" (Acts 12:3), commemorated the eating of unleavened bread at the time of departure from Egypt. So when Moses commanded that no "leaven" should be found in the houses this must have included that which is fermented! In the same manner there is to be no leavening in our observance of the Lord's Supper. The bread must be unleavened to properly observe this part of worship. Likewise, the fruit of the vine must be unleavened in order to be obedient to God's command. Unleavened fruit of the vine is that which is unfermented. Therefore Jesus could not have used fermented drink when He instituted the Lord's Supper.

Notice further that no leaven was to be used in blood sacrifices (Exodus 23:18; 34:25). If leaven (fermentation) was not to be used in sacrifices, which was just a type of our real Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7), what makes us believe that

Jesus would use fermented wine to remember the blood He shed (Matthew 26:28)?

That Jesus used unfermented juice of the grape is made clear in that He specifically referred to this juice "fruit of the vine" (Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18). If Jesus had left it up to us to choose the type of juice, we would use the Greek word "oinos" which includes the juice of the grape in all its stages. Bacchiocchi notes that "The noun fruit (gennema) denotes that which is produced in a natural state, just as it is gathered. Fermented wine is not the natural fruit of the vine but the unnatural fruit of fermentation and decay". (Wine In The Bible, p. 49). Count Chaptal, the eminent French chemist says: "Nature never forms spirituous liquors; she rots the grape on the branch, but it is an art which converts the juice into (alcoholic) wine. (William Patton, Bible Wines, p. 16). Josephus, a historian living during the time of the apostles, confirms that the "fruit of the vine" refers to "freshly squeezed grapes", not fermented wine. He says, "... he saw three clusters of grapes ... and that he squeezed them into a cup ... he let him know that God bestows the fruit of the vine upon men for good" (The Antiquities Of The Jews 2, 5, 2, 64-66). Thus history proves that "fruit of the vine" refers to unfermented grape juice, not fermented wine as some has affirmed.

People, we can know that intoxicating wine was not used in the Lord's Supper based on clear Bible teaching. If Jesus had given an alcoholic beverage to His disciples He would have stood condemned under the Law of Moses. The prophet states, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor strong drink" (Habakkuk 2:15). Would not Jesus have been guilty of giving His neighbor strong drink if He had given wine to His disciples? ABSOLUTELY! How can an elder not be given to wine (1 Timothy 3:3) and yet partake of alcoholic wine on the first day of every week? How can we abstain from every form of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22) and turn around and partake of a substance that causes death, divorce, and destruction? How can we "be not drunk with wine" when one drink is the first step towards drunkenness (Ephesians 5:18)?

Simply put, there is no possible way Jesus authorized us to use fermented wine in partaking of the Lord's Supper.