



The Voice of Truth

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“Wine”

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Brethren, a couple of days ago I was asked to comment on a blog called, “Grape Juice Evangelicalism.” What was first in this blog was this: “Grape juice Evangelicalism teaches that Christ’s first miracle was not turning jars of water into wine at the wedding banquet he attended, but instead turning those jars of water into grape juice.” Again it is said: “Grape juice Evangelicalism has twisted this very thing and claims that Christ gave his disciples grape juice . . . So they have substituted grape juice for real wine, and leavened bread for unleavened bread.”

In the Bible, “wine” is a generic term and it can denote either fresh juice or a fermented beverage; the context must determine which. Where is the contextual evidence in **John 2:1-11** that even remotely suggests that the Son of God provided between 120 and 180 gallons of alcoholic beverage for the wedding feast of Cana? Let me ask you some questions; if it is a fermented, intoxicating drink, you have a number of problems in your doctrine:

1. Did the sinless Christ (**1 Peter 2:22**) do that which was strictly forbidden in the Law, look upon fermented wine (**Prov. 23:31**)?
2. Did Jesus give His neighbor drink, in defiance of **Hab. 2:15**? Why would the Word made flesh violate the word of God?
3. Did Jesus provide a beverage as to make hundreds drink in defiance of dozens of passages that condemn drunkenness?

The answer to all is no! Jesus could not have been sinless (**Heb. 4:15**), and given intoxicating wine to the patrons of the feast in Cana. The truth of the matter is that the context indicates that the wine used on this occasion was not fermented. Read **John 2:10**, “When the men drunk freely” (ASV). This does not mean that they were intoxicated; it means when they have drunk sufficient. In the context “good wine” means good, or the best wine, which was harmless or innocent. The wine referred to here was the pure juice of the grape.

When Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper, He naturally used the elements that were used during the Passover meal (**Matt. 26:17-19**). All leaven was to be removed from the houses (**Exo. 12:19**). Strong notes that both Hebrew words translated “leaven” include the idea of fermentation. So when Moses commanded that no “leaven” should be found in the houses this must have included that which is fermented! Therefore Jesus could not have used fermented drink or leaven when He instituted the Lord’s Supper.

Notice further that no leaven was to be used in blood sacrifices (**Exo. 23:18; 34:25**); if leaven (fermentation) was not to be used in blood sacrifices, which was just a type of our real Passover (**1 Cor. 5:7**), what makes you believe that Jesus would have us to use fermented wine to remember the blood HE shed (**Matt. 26:28**)?

This man continues to write, “Wine by itself is not deceptive. Neither is wine a mocker or strong drink raging by itself. As this verse indicates (**Prov 20:1**), wine is only deceptive when

CONTINUED INSIDE...

it is used excessively and causes a man to disgrace himself or fall into a drunken rage. However, if wine is drunk in moderation, a man will not be mocked or shamed by his conduct, nor will he fall into a rage.”

Do see his argument? The Bible says wine is a mocker and strong drink raging, but this man says only when it is excessively used; he adds his own opinion, the Bible doesn't say only when used excessively. Let's use his arguments on another passage: “Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (**Matt. 5:27-28**). Lusting after a woman in this passage is not adultery in the heart as this verse indicates, adultery in the heart is only lusting when it is used excessively. How about another, “Thou shalt not steal” (**Rom. 13:9**); but this man's doctrine is it's not sin if stealing is not done excessively. This man's argument is that the use of intoxicants is alright, but the abuse of them is wrong. The Bible doesn't make that distinction.

This man keeps on preaching moderation; drinking wine or strong drink is alright as long as it is not used excessively and causes a man to disgrace himself or fall into a drunken rage.

Notice again his arguments: He goes on quotes **Leviticus 10:8-10** and says, “Notice that the LORD did not say NEVER drink wine or strong drink! That's the same argument Satan used in the Garden of Eden with Eve: “But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die” (**Gen. 3:3-4**). Do you see the connection? Satan added the word NOT and this man adds the word NEVER. It is extremely dangerous to add to God's Word, and the eternal curse rests upon all who do so (**Revelation 22:18, 19**).

Let us use this argument of this man and practice it on other passages. First, he quotes **Leviticus 10:9**: “Drink no wine nor strong drink.” Again notice what he says, “Notice that the LORD did not say NEVER drink wine or strong drink!” Okay, let's use this same argument on other passages, how about **Exodus 20:3**, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Now listen here is his argument: Notice that the LORD did not say NEVER have other gods before me. So by this man's argument it's alright to have other gods and be pleasing to the Lord? Let's do again in **Exodus 34:14**, “For thou shalt worship no other god: for Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” Again, notice this man's argument: Notice that the LORD did not say NEVER worship another god. So by this man's argument it is pleasing to God to worship other gods.

He uses the same argument in **Titus 1:7**, “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.” Again notice how he adds to God's Word: “I believe not given to wine here would mean not that he doesn't drink it, but that he doesn't get intoxicated (given) with wine!” I don't know about you, but if God says “not given to wine; or “tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, or Thou shalt not commit adultery, He means NOT! “Add thou not unto his words, Lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (**Prov. 30:6**). One wonders in that same context of **Titus 1:7** that this false teacher believes “Not selfwilled” or “not given to filthy lucre” means that you can keep on doing these things, but only in moderation?

I want you to notice this passage: “Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, When it sparkleth in the cup, When it goeth down smoothly” (**Proverbs 23:31**). This verse is a commandment to keep away from wine, to avoid even the temptation to drink, to avoid drinking wine the verse says, “Don't even look upon it.” The only way to keep out of any bad habit is to stay as far from it as one can while depending upon God to help him. But this man says “But nowhere in Scripture is the drinking of wine ever prohibited.” God says don't look at it.

If it is wrong to allow oneself to be lured into drinking of it, it is certainly wrong to drink it!

There is an interesting word found in the Greek New Testament which is translated "sober." The word is "*nepho*" It is found in **1 Thessalonians 5:6, 8; 1 Peter 1:13; 4:7; and 5:8**. Concerning this word, Strong writes, "*abstain from wine (keep sober), be discreet; be sober, watch.*" Arndt and Gingrich write on page 538, "*be free from every form of mental and spiritual 'drunkenness,' from excess, passion, rashness, confusion, etc.*" W.E. Vine says, "*Signifies to be free from the influence of intoxicants.*" Are Christians commanded to be sober? Yes! Is sober the opposite of drunk? Yes! Now, if I take one drink of alcohol am I obeying the command to be sober? No! By taking one drink I am heading towards drunkenness, not being sober. One is either sober or drunk. Most people surely understand this point. If he takes an intoxicant into his system, he is thereby intoxicated (regardless of the fact that he may not be in drunkenness), just as when he takes medicine into his system he can be said to be medicated (even though the full effect of the medicine is not yet experienced). But this man says, "The Lord did command us to be sober, but of course this commands [sic] did not mean to be intoxicated." Being sober means free from intoxicants!

Man must understand alcohol is not a food, but a narcotic, poison, and depressant. It passes directly from the stomach into the blood stream, dangerously affecting the brain and liver. It has been scientifically proven that any amount of alcohol on the brain impairs efficiency, and it is sin!

May a Christian Engage in Social Drinking?

By W. R. Jones

Drunkenness is strongly condemned in God's word. Paul wrote, "Let us walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying..." (**Romans 13:13**). "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these...drunkenness, revellings." Paul further says, "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (**Galatians 5:19-21**). Here we find but two of the many passages where God gives attention to drunkenness. Are these references not enough to make any Christian avoid even the slightest connection with the great mocker, alcohol? Indeed, in this matter, every Christian has a responsibility to keep, not only himself circumspect, but to refrain from influencing others toward evil and its potentials.

But what about "social drinking" for the Christian? Let us observe the statements of Peter: "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, banquetings, and abominable idolatries" (**1 Peter 4:3**). Please observe that Peter uses two different expressions, "excess of wine" and "banquetings." I believe that Peter is showing that not only drunkenness is sinful, but also drinking parties. In fact, it is interesting to note in the NASV, the Greek word *patios* (which is translated, "banquetings" in the KJV) is translated "drinking parties." So what does Peter say about those who engage in these parties of "social drinking?" He says the Christian should "no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lust of men, but to the will of God" (**1 Peter 4:2**). Social drinking of alcohol is living in "the flesh to the lust of men."

Christians have no business engaging in "social drinking." Christians have no business endorsing and upholding a practice that will destroy others. Some years ago, I was invited to speak at an AA meeting. At the end of the program, I was allowed to ask questions of the hundred or more in the audience. This was my question to those alcoholics: "How did you get started with alcohol?"

I was astounded by the answer. The resounding answer was, "through social drinking!"

"Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things. Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying: "They have struck me, but I was not hurt; they have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?" (**Proverbs 23:29-35**)

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Belief is a Work of Faith

By David Riggs

"Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.'" (John 6:29)

To believe that Jesus is the Christ is the "work of God." Some argue that if "works" were necessary, it would nullify salvation by grace. However, they fail to understand the difference between meritorious works devised by men from those commanded by God. Salvation is not by "grace alone" or "faith alone," but by "grace through faith" (**Ephesians 2:8**), and by "faith which works through love" (**Galatians 5:6**). Whenever one obeys the "works" which God ordained, it does not nullify grace, but complements it. Grace teaches us to obey (**Titus 2:11-14**). Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (**Hebrews 5:8-9**).

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17