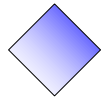


The Voice of Truth



June 30, 2013

“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 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

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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 and 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 "nephō" 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! ♦

**THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STUMBLING BLOCKS
AND STEPPING STONES ARE THE WAY WE USE THEM. ♦**

Keep the Feast

By Jeff Belknap

The Bible is filled with types and antitypes: physical representations in the Old Testament, which lay the foundation for understanding the spiritual truths revealed in the New Testament. Although there are many other examples of these parallels, this article focuses on the feast of the unleavened bread, as it relates to the exercise of marking and avoiding.

The institution of the Passover, revealed in **Exodus 12**, was a seven-day feast in which the children of Israel were to eat “unleavened bread” after having “put away leaven” from their houses (**v. 15**). Moreover, **verse 19** says, “Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel....” During this feast, if the Israelites had tolerated any leaven whatsoever within their homes, they would have been severed from God and His people!

In the New Testament, not many years after the local church had been established at Corinth, the spiritual leaven of fornication entered in among them (**1 Cor. 5:1**). Paul’s ensuing words of admonition were, “...*Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*” Then in **verse 11**, Paul specified some (though not all) leavening agents, including, “*if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one, no, not to eat.*” After identifying various leavens, he concludes the list with the words “such an one.” This would include other, similar leavening influences which were not expressly mentioned in the text (cf. **Mark 7:8, 13; Gal. 5:21**),

but which are recognized as sin, or leaven, elsewhere in the apostles’ writings.

The antitype of unleavened bread for our spiritual “feast” today is “the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” Our acknowledgement of both of these elements is imperative if we are to please the Lord (**Matt. 4:4**)! If “sincerity” and “truth” are the “unleavened bread,” then all insincerity and untruth are leavening agents that we must “purge out.” Case in point: false doctrine is also revealed in the gospel as leaven (cf. **Matt. 16:6-12** and **Mark 8:18**). Although heresy may be taught in all sincerity, it is still “untruth” and regarded as the leaven of “wickedness” [see The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon, pg. 48, anomia (# 458)]. In **Romans 16:17**, the apostle Paul commanded all Christians to “...*mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*” No exceptions are revealed or implied (cf. **Titus 3:10**)!

There are many who advocate that **Romans 14** authorizes us to keep fellowship with those who teach and practice error on doctrinal matters of considerable importance, such as marriage, divorce and remarriage. Some have said that the reason they are not required to separate from “such” teachers is that they, themselves, truly believe the doctrine which they advocate. The end result is the same (**Matt. 15:13-14**), whether the instructor of erroneous doctrine is sincere or not: all doctrinal error (even a little, **1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9**) corrupts the souls of many (**1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Tim. 2:16-18**). “*The wages of sin is death*” (**Rom. 6:23**).

Will we tolerate and accept the fatal leaven of sin and error, or “keep the feast” with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth? Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦

POINTS TO PONDER...

Today, well lived, makes every yesterday a dream of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope.

This time, like all other times, is a good one if we but know what to do with it.

It is one of the most compensations of life: that no man can help another without helping himself.

Each of us is a noble creation! Let us not fail to exhibit it in action and good deeds. ♦

A pint of example is worth a barrel full of advice. ♦

Enemy Or Ally? By Jarrod Jacobs

God expects us to make a distinction between truth and error. Unfortunately, many people are not making the distinction. Whether it is due to friendships, or other associations, we find many trying to stay "allies" with all and "enemies" to none.

Jesus said this is not possible to be allies to all and enemies to none. In fact, even the world knows this is not possible. Christ said, *"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you"* (Jn. 15:18-19). If we are living as Christ would have us live, we can not be friends with the world.

The apostle Paul knew that Christians should *"be separate"* from the world. He asked, *"What partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has*

light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God" (II Cor. 6:14-16).

Who are our enemies? Who are our allies? The Bible shows us that choosing in one category automatically decides the other category! James made this distinction clear when he wrote, *"Friendship with the world is enmity with God Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God"* (Jas. 4:4). In like manner, Jesus told His followers, *"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other...."* (Matt. 6:24). Therefore, our enemies are determined by who we choose as allies, and vice versa. So, what is YOUR choice? Choose wisely, as some choices we may only get to make once! *Credit: The Old Paths - 7/29/12 ♦*

"OUR GOD IS ABLE"

TO SUBJECT ALL (Phil. 3:21)
 TO SAVE & DESTROY (James 4:12; Matt. 10:28)
 RAISE THE DEAD (Heb. 11:19)
 PERFORM PROMISES (Rom. 4:21)
 AID THOSE TEMPTED (Heb. 2:18)
 MAKE GRACE ABOUND (2 Cor. 9:8)
 KEEP THAT COMMITTED TO HIM (2 Tim. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:9)
 DO MORE THAN WE ASK OR THINK (Eph. 3:20-21; Mark 9:23)
 SAVE ALL WHO COME TO HIM THROUGH CHRIST (Heb. 7:25) ♦

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

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
 Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
 Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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