

Booze, Baptists & the Bible

Part 1

Text: Eph. 5:18

Introduction:

1. The relevance of this sermon: Social drinking is very widespread in Christendom today and the issue cannot be ignored by Bible believers. There are popular, contemporary preachers who proclaim that part of Christian liberty is the freedom to drink alcoholic wine. For example:
 - **Mark Driscoll** in his book *Radical Reformation*, published in 2004 states the following:

“After I entered the ministry as a man of legal drinking age, the drum was again repeatedly beaten for me by well-meaning older pastors. So I never drank alcohol until I was thirty years of age. About that time, I was studying the Scriptures for a sermon about Jesus’ first miracle of turning water into wine, as reported in John’s Gospel, a miracle that Jesus performed when he was about my age. My Bible study convicted me of my sin of abstinence from alcohol. So in repentance I drank a hard cider over lunch with our worship pastor.”
 - **Jim West** in the last page of his book entitled “Drinking with Calvin and Luther, he offers a new contemporary pledge for those have adopted social drinking. One line states: “I acknowledge my sin and my uninstructed conscience, as well as my pharisaic attitude towards those who drink wine and beer to the glory of God.”
2. The aim of this sermon: To present what the Bible teaches on this hotly debated and contentious issue. Remember, the Word of God is the final authority for faith and practice so we must lay aside personal opinion and bias and submit ourselves to where the Scriptures lead on this issue.
3. We will consider this topic under four headings as follows:
 - Some Preliminary Definitions from Scripture
 - Some Plain Prohibitions of Scripture
 - Some Powerful Exhortations from Scripture
 - Some Pertinent Illustrations from Scripture

Consider firstly...

I. PRELIMINARY DEFINITIONS FROM SCRIPTURE

A. The Word ‘wine’ is a Generic Term in the Bible

1. The word ‘wine’ is a generic term in the Bible. By ‘generic’ we mean a term that is general. Oxford Dictionary defines ‘generic’ as “Characteristic of or relating to a class or group of things; not

specific.”¹ Therefore, for those who read the word ‘wine’ in the Bible and automatically assume that it refers to a glass of red are very much mistaken.

2. Keith Malcomson writes, “The word wine is a broad, generic term which includes two different and specific beverages. The first is grape juice, which is non-alcoholic or unfermented, and the second is an alcoholic or fermented drink, which can intoxicate or make a person drunk.”
3. He goes on to state, “no less than thirteen different Hebrew and Greek words are used for our one English word wine in the Bible. These can be broken down into three groupings.”
 - a. Those which mean only fermented drink like ‘shekar’.
 - b. Those which only mean unfermented drink like ‘tiros’h’.
 - c. Those words which can be used for both like ‘yayin’.
4. Other examples of ‘generic’ words in the Bible that could be misunderstood:
 - a. The word ‘man’ can refer to mankind in general or it can refer to men as in males. (E.g., Rom. 5:12).
 - b. The word ‘meat’ in old English was a word for food in general whereas now it strictly refers to the flesh of an animal. For example, we are told the ‘meat’ of John the Baptist was “locusts and wile honey” (Matt. 3:4) and the leftovers of the bread and fish gathered after Christ’s miracles was also called ‘meat’ (Matt. 15:37).
 - c. Note: This highlights that word definitions can change over time. It is therefore important not to superimpose a modern definition of a word on an ancient text like our Beloved KJV. Check out what the word meant when the Bible was being translated.
 - d. “It may be easily proved that from the 17th to the 19th centuries, secular lexicons and dictionaries defined the word ‘wine’ correctly – as a broad term. However, from the mid-20th Century onward, alteration of the definition has dominated secular and Christian dictionaries. This has had the regrettable result of confusing many genuine believers who believe that the word ‘wine’ in the Bible always, and only, means a fermented drink. This most basic fact is fundamental in leading multitudes to misunderstand and misrepresent the teaching of the Bible in relation to alcohol.” (Malcomson)
 - e. For example, the current Oxford Dictionary defines ‘wine’ as “An alcoholic drink made from fermented grape juice.” To apply this definition to every occurrence of the word ‘wine’ in the Bible would be a grave mistake.

B. Some Key Words in the Old & New Testaments

¹ <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/generic> Viewed 30/4/21

Let's consider four key words relevant to this study:

1. Old Testament: "**Yayin**" – "In the Old Testament 'yayin' is the most popular term for wine, being used 141 times. It is used in 31 of the 39 books of the Old Testament and is used throughout the written history of God's people from the days of Noah and to the days of Nehemiah. The word is used in a great variety of ways to mean anything from "grapes hanging on a tree, to wine in a cup."
(Malcomson)
 - a. Sometimes 'yayin' refers to good, unfermented wine and is commended by Scripture as a blessing. For example: Psalm 104:14-15 "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; And **wine (yayin)** that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make *his* face to shine, and bread *which* strengtheneth man's heart."
 - b. Sometimes 'yayin' refers to fermented wine and it is strongly warned against. For example:
 - i. Prov. 20:1 "**Wine (yayin)** is a mocker, strong drink *is* raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."
 - ii. Prov. 23:31 "Look not thou upon the **wine (yayin)** when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright."
 - iii. Robert P. Teachout in his thorough word study says: "Half of the times *yayin* occurs in the Old Testament (71 times) the text is talking about grape juice; in the other half of the 141 references, scripture is talking about wine."
2. Old Testament: '**Tirosh**' – "The second most commonly used word for 'wine' in the Old Testament. "It is found 38 times, of which 26 times it is translated as 'wine', eleven times as "new wine" and one time as "sweet wine." It is always spoken of as a blessing and never warned against. It is given as a good, pure, wholesome gift from God." (Malcomson) For example:
 - a. Prov. 3:9-10 "Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with **new wine** (Tirosh)."
 - b. Deut. 7:13 "And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy **wine** (Tirosh), and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee."
3. Old Testament: '**Shekar**' – This is the word translated "strong drink" in the Old Testament. The word is mentioned 23 times out of which 21 times it is translated as "strong drink", once as "strong wine", and once as "drunkards". Interestingly, in 209 of these mentions, wine (yayin) is mentioned in tandem with it and usually appears before it.

Strong drink is condemned outright and only spoken of in a positive light once in relation to religious offerings at festivals (Deut. 14:26). (Malcomson) For example:

- a. Lev 10:8-10 “And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink **wine** (yayin) nor **strong drink** (shekar), 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: **And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;**”
 - b. Prov. 20:1 “**Wine** (yayin) *is* a mocker, **strong drink** (shekar) *is* raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”
 - c. Isaiah 5:11 “Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, *that* they may follow **strong drink** (shekar); that continue until night, *till* **wine** (yayin) inflame them!”
 - d. Isaiah 28:7 “But they also have erred through **wine (yayin)**, and through **strong drink** (shekar) are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through **strong drink** (shekar), they are swallowed up of **wine** (yayin), they are out of the way through **strong drink** (shekar); they err in vision, they stumble *in* judgment.”
4. New Testament: ‘**Oinos**’ – the most prominent Greek word in the New Testament for ‘wine’. It is used 33 times and is translated ‘wine’ each time in our King James Bible. Like the Hebrew word ‘yayin’, the word can refer to either fermented or non-fermented wine. For example:
- a. Matt. 9:17 “**Neither do men put new wine (oinos) into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine (oinos) into new bottles, and both are preserved.**” This is clearly a reference to fresh grape juice. The word ‘new’ implies that which has been freshly pressed (See Prov. 3:10).
 - b. Eph. 5:18 “And be not drunk with **wine** (oinos), wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;”

C. The Context is Key to Determine which Wine is in View

1. Since the word ‘wine’ is generic, the context becomes all important in the process of identifying which kind of wine is in view.
2. Remember, words travel in meaning according to context.

D. The Principle of Comparing Scripture with Scripture Vital

1. Like with formulating any other position in the Christian life, start with the clearest, plainest statements on the subject. Don’t start with a more obscure verse and then twist it to try and support an ungodly practice like drinking wine.
2. Sometimes it can be hard to determine which wine is in view. At such times, keep in mind other clear Scriptures on the subject.

Consider secondly...

II. PLAIN PROHIBITIONS OF SCRIPTURE

Why should we totally avoid intoxicating liquor? Because of the plain

warnings and prohibitions of Scripture. Let's consider several of these:

A. Don't Be Deceived by It (Prov. 20:1)

Intoxicating wine is deceptive by its very nature. It draws the individual in with promises of joy and pleasure. Multitudes fall for the lie that it will enrich and benefit their lives when in reality it brings damage and ruin.

1. It produces shame and disgrace – “wine is a mocker”
 - a. ‘mocker’ = same word translated as ‘scorn’. Wine makes a mockery of those who are deceived by it.
 - b. Think of all the senseless stupidity alcohol produces in those under its influence.
2. It produces unrest and disquiet – “strong drink is raging”
 - a. The word ‘raging’ means “to make a loud sound; by implication to be in great commotion or tumult, to rage, war, moan clamour.” (Strong's)
 - b. The same Hebrew word is translated ‘uproar’ (1 Kings 1:41), ‘disquiet’ (Ps. 39:6, 42:5, 11; 43:5), “cry aloud” (Psalm 55:17), “make a noise” (Ps. 59:6, 14), ‘troubled’ (Ps. 77:3), “make a tumult” (Ps. 83:2), ‘clamorous’ (Prov. 9:13) and ‘roar’ (Jer. 5:22).
 - c. Illustration: Party across the road from our house (swearing and shouting).

B. Don't Even Look at It (Prov 23:29-35)

1. The Category of this Wine (Vs. 31)
 - a. This is a clear description of fermented wine. The word ‘when’ is key. It is when wine is fermented that it becomes unsafe and must be strictly avoided.
 - b. “when it is red” = Rod Phillips (A Short History of Wine) states: “Actual grape juice is always light-coloured, no matter what the colour of the skin or flesh of the grape, and red wine is given its colour in the fermentation process, when the red or black grape skins remain in the fermentation process, in contact with the juice. It is the duration of this contact that largely determines the colour of the finished wine.”
 - c. “when it moveth itself aright” = the term “moveth itself” is the Hebrew word ‘halak’ meaning to ‘walk’. The word ‘aright’ means in a straight or upright manner. This was a very ancient practice in discerning the alcoholic content of the wine. The wine is swirled in the glass and as the wine runs down the inside surface of the glass it forms what is called “legs”. Legs are used to discern the alcoholic content of the wine. The slower it moves down or walks down the glass the higher the alcoholic content. (Malcomson)
2. The Command concerning this Wine (Vs. 31)
 - a. The command is not to “Look” upon this wine. The word means “to fix your eyes upon it, to gaze at it, to consider or take heed to it.” (Malcomson)
 - b. Illustration: Mrs Lot looked back when fleeing Sodom and was destroyed. The idea is not that she merely glanced back but rather she turned and indulged in a lingering gaze back at Sodom. As a result, she lost her life!
 - c. The warning is that a lingering look at wine is a dangerous first

step to falling under its deceptive spell. We dare not gaze upon it lest we find ourselves getting drawn in by its seductive power. How often temptation starts with the eye gate!

- d. Alexander Maclaren: "The writer thinks that the only way of sure escape from the danger is to turn away even the eyes from the temptation. He is not contented with saying 'taste not,' but he goes the whole length of 'look not'; and that because the very sparkle and colour may attract... The advice given is to keep entirely away from the temptation. 'Look not' is safe policy in regard of many of the snares for young lives that abound in our modern society. It is not at all needful to 'see life,' or to know the secrets of wickedness, in order to be wise and good. 'Simple concerning evil' is a happier state than to have eaten the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Many a young man has been ruined, body and soul, by a prurient curiosity to know what sort of life dissipated men and women led, or what sort of books they were against which he was warned, or what kind of a place a theatre was, and so on. Eyes are greedy, and there is a very quick telephone from them to the desires. 'The lust of the eye' soon fans the 'lust of the flesh' into a glow. There are plenty of depths of Satan gaping for young feet; and on the whole, it is safer and happier not to know them, and so not to have defiling memories, nor run the risk of falling into fatal sins."
3. The Consequences of this Wine (Vs. 29, 32-35)
Observe at least 10 dire effects of alcohol in these verses:
 - a. Heartache and Misery – "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow"?
 - b. Strife and Violence – "who hath contentions?" The word 'contentions' means 'brawlings'.
 - c. Incoherent Speech – "who hath babbling?"
 - d. Needless Injuries – "who hath wounds without cause?" (Also Vs. 35)
 - e. Bloodshot Eyes – "who hath redness of eyes?"
 - f. Danger and Destruction – "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." (Vs. 32) "The serpent's lithe gracefulness and painted skin hide a fatal poison; and so the attractive wine-cup is sure to ruin those who look on it." (Maclaren)
 - g. Lust and Immorality – "Thine eyes shall behold strange women" (Vs. 33). It is significant to note the section just before this warning against intoxicating liquor has to do with the danger of the strange woman (Vs. 26-28). A tremendous amount of immorality is committed under the influence of alcohol as well as a large percentage of crimes such as rape and child abuse.
 - h. Vulgar Speech – "and thine heart shall utter perverse things". The heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9). Intoxicating liquor has the effect of removing restraints and inhibitions in an individual, allowing the sewer of their depraved hearts to flow out to the contamination of others around them. Illustration: Party over the road from our place and the horrific language.

- i. Loss of Control (Vs. 34) “The point of the verse seems to be the drunken man’s utter loss of sense of fitness, and complete incapacity to take care of himself. He cannot estimate dangers. The very instinct of self-preservation has forsaken him. There he lies, though as sure to be drowned as if he were in the depth of the sea, though on as uncomfortable a bed as if he were rocking on a masthead, where he could not balance himself.” (Maclaren)
- j. Addiction – “when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.” The sad reality of one around whom the serpent of drink is coiled. Drink never satisfies, brings destruction and misery to the one deceived by it and yet it also creates a desire for more of the same.

To be continued...

Conclusion:

1. D. Chaney Testimony.
2. Will you take a stand on this issue in your personal life?

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Part 2

Text: Eph. 5:18

Introduction:

1. The aim of this sermon: To present what the Bible teaches on this hotly debated and contentious issue. Remember, the Word of God is the final authority for faith and practice so we must lay aside personal opinion and bias and submit ourselves to where the Scriptures lead on this issue.
2. We are considering this topic under four headings as follows:
 - Some Preliminary Definitions from Scripture.
 - Some Plain Prohibitions of Scripture.
 - Some Powerful Exhortations from Scripture.
 - Some Pertinent Illustrations from Scripture.
 - Some Objections misusing Scripture.
3. We will briefly review what we covered in last lesson and continue with our outline from there.

I. PRELIMINARY DEFINITIONS FROM SCRIPTURE

- A. The Word 'wine' is a Generic Term in the Bible**
- B. Some Key Words in the Old & New Testaments**
- C. The Context is Key to Determine which Wine is in View**
- D. The Principle of Comparing Scripture with Scripture Vital**

II. PLAIN PROHIBITIONS OF SCRIPTURE

Why should we totally avoid intoxicating liquor? Because of the plain warnings and prohibitions of Scripture. It is of interest how many of these are found in the Book of Proverbs which is the Bible's manual on godly wisdom.

- A. Don't Be Deceived by It (Prov. 20:1)**
- B. Don't Even Look at It (Prov 23:29-35)**
- C. Don't Lower Yourself to It (Prov. 31:4-7)**

1. Who Wine is NOT for (Vs. 4-5)
 - a. **F.B. Meyer:** "In these words of King Lemuel, we notice a mother's influence in the education of her son. A woman is never more nobly occupied than in warning her son against the seductions of pleasure and in giving him a high sense of that which is right. The sins of the flesh have been the peculiar snare of royal personages, preventing them from pleading the cause of the desolate and ministering judgment to the poor and needy. What a contrast to the glory of the sovereignty of Jesus!"
 - b. These verses contain another clear warning to those in leadership concerning the danger of intoxicating wine.

- c. “Lest they drink, and forget the law” = wine has the potential to cause one to forget the commandments of God’s Word.
 - d. “pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted” = wine has the potential to cause one to make serious errors in judgment.
 - e. Lev. 10:8-10 – God’s command to Aaron and his sons.
 - f. Note: As New Testament saints, we have been made kings and priests unto God. Therefore, intoxicating liquor should have no part in our lives.
 - i. 1 Peter 2:9 “But ye *are* a chosen generation, **a royal priesthood**, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:”
 - ii. Rev. 1:5-6 “And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, **And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father**; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”
2. Who Wine IS for (Vs. 6-7)
- a. “him that is ready to perish” = this would be for the purposes of deadening the pain and suffering associated with dying. The “strong drink” would function like an ancient pain killer.
 - b. “wine unto those that be of heavy hearts” = remember context. Wine is **not** for kings or princes. Therefore, the picture is of wine being given to those beneath that position. As kings and priests in Christ (New Testament Saints), we do not fall into this category!

D. Don’t Be Amongst It (Prov. 23:20-21)

- 1. The word ‘winebibber’ is made up of two words ‘wine’ and ‘bibber’ which means “A tippler; a man given to drinking; chiefly used in composition, as winebibber.” (Webster) So very simply, we are not to be in the company of those who are wine drinkers.
- 2. Note: It is interesting to note that gluttony is linked here with the practice of wine drinking.
- 3. Practically speaking this means avoiding the end of year Christmas parties, the work outings to the pub, wedding receptions where alcohol is served and compromised family functions where alcohol will be present. Avoiding these scenes is a part of our separation from the world as believers.

E. Don’t Be Intoxicated with It (Eph. 5:18)

The Bible warns repeatedly and unambiguously on the sin of drunkenness. For example:

- 1. Drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God – 1 Cor. 6:9-10 “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor **drunkards**, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” Make no mistake about it. The bottle has the power to take a man all the way to hell fire except he repent!

2. Drunkenness is a cause for church discipline – 1 Cor. 5:11 “But now I have written unto you not to keep company, 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.”
3. Drunkenness has a Divine Woe pronounced against it - Isaiah 5:11-12, 22 “Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, *that* they may follow **strong drink**; that continue until night, *till* **wine inflame them!** (12) And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and **wine**, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands. (22) Woe unto *them that are mighty to drink wine*, and men of strength to **mingle strong drink:**” Isaiah 28:1 “Woe to the crown of pride, to **the drunkards of Ephraim**, whose glorious beauty *is* a fading flower, which *are* on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!”
4. Drunkenness is to have **no part** in the believer’s conduct – Rom. 13:13 “Let us walk **honestly**, as in the day; not in rioting and **drunkenness**, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.”
5. Drunkenness is a work of the flesh, not the Spirit – Gal. 5:19-21 “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, **drunkenness, revellings** (partying, carousing), and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things **shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**” In contrast to walking after the flesh, we are to:
 - a. Walk in the Spirit – Gal. 5:16 “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”
 - b. Bear fruit in the Spirit – “Gal. 5:22-23” But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, **temperance**: against such there is no law.”
6. Objection: “I drink but don’t get drunk so I am ok.”
 - a. Challenge: Modern research on the effects of even small amounts of alcohol refute this argument.
 - i. Keith Malcomson notes, “The pathway to drunkenness begins with one drink and the effect is almost immediate with the very first intake. This is true even if the effect is totally unnoticed by all. **Medical science tells us that the effect of alcohol reaches the brain within one minute of consumption...**When taken, alcohol passes from the stomach into the small intestine, where it is rapidly absorbed into the blood. As a result, it can be detected in the blood within three minutes of the first intake.”
 - ii. The Australian Government Department of Health confirms that alcohol only takes “a few minutes to reach

- the brain in an average, healthy person.”¹ (See screenshot)
- iii. Secular research outlines several stages of intoxication² (Refer screenshots).
 - iv. Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia Paper on BAC and legal limits.³
 - “One standard drink per hour will raise your BAC by approximately 0.01–0.03g%.”
 - How alcohol affects driving and similar skills (refer PowerPoint).
 - Laws on BAC in South Australia (refer PowerPoint).
 - v. Illustration: “Research has proven that there is a 5 to 15% decrease in response time after drinking just minimal amounts of alcohol (0.03% alcohol in bloodstream). This is indeed serious when we take note that the legal limit in the United States and the United Kingdom is 0.08% (80mg), in Germany and France is 0.05% (50mg), and in Norway and Sweden is 0.02% (20mg). This means that in most countries you can drive within the legal limit yet with a greatly lowered response time. This has also been repeatedly confirmed by various researchers who have recorded this kind of decrease in response time. One such test was carried out on young trainee doctors. They took two separate medical tests but before one of them they drank one glass of wine. All of them thought they had performed better on that particular test but all of them had in fact done far worse. The same happened in the rate of accuracy by typists after just one drink, and young drivers in their reaction/reflex time. All of these tests revealed a dramatic drop in the normal skills of individuals who were not at all aware of it after just one drink.” (Malcomson)
 - vi. There is an interesting study published by “The Lancet” Vol 392, September 22, 2018 entitled “No level of alcohol consumption improves health” where they cite “the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study (GBD) 2016 for 195 countries and territories, 1990–2016” They claim that it “is the most comprehensive estimate of the global burden of alcohol use to date.” They state: “The conclusions of the study are clear and unambiguous: alcohol is a colossal global health issue

¹ <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/alcohol/about-alcohol/what-are-the-effects-of-alcohol> Viewed 6/5/21.

² <https://www.nm.org/healthbeat/healthy-tips/alcohol-and-the-brain> Viewed 6/5/21.

³ <https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au> Viewed 6/5/21.

and small reductions in health-related harms at low levels of alcohol intake are outweighed by the increased risk of other health-related harms, including cancer. There is strong support here for the guideline published by the Chief Medical Officer of the UK who found that there is “no safe level of alcohol consumption.”⁴

- b. Challenge: Are you puffed up in pride? David Wilkerson in his book “Sipping Saints” warns, “I see in all these sipping saints a kind of condescending pride...They look down from their high place of “responsible moderation” on those...poor weaklings who were “alcohol prone.” They seem to be saying, “The stuff in my glass is different. My drink doesn’t have any habituating power in it. I’m master over my glass – it will never hook me!” It is almost as if they think Jesus turned their wine into water. Every time a Christian lifts the glass to his lips, he is saying, “Millions have been destroyed by this! The world is filled with terror and destruction it has caused! Men die on the streets, held by its power! But it can never touch me! I’m too responsible! I’m too strong! I’m too much in control! Millions of others were weak and fell under its power – but me? – never!” What pride! What arrogance to set oneself above the human frailties of multiplied millions!”
- c. Challenge: The Bible warns not only against sin but against embarking on the path that leads to it.
 - i. Prov. 4:14 “Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil *men*. **Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.**”
 - ii. We pray “And **lead us not** into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Matt. 6:13). Even a glass or two well and truly starts you places you in the grips of temptation. That is why we are exhorted to “Look not...upon the wine” (Prov. 23:31). We are not to even lust after it with our eyes, let alone indulge in a glass or two!
 - iii. Illustration: The young man void of understanding (Prov. 7:6-23) – “And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, **Passing through the street near her corner**; and **he went the way to her house**, In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night:” (Vs. 7-9)
 - iv. Wilkerson: “The regular, moderate drinker is constantly kindling a small flame that can break forth at any time into

⁴ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)31571-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)31571-X/fulltext). Viewed 2/5/21.

a raging river of desire. At any moment, the tippler can be touched by the hand of terror and the habituating process can be accelerated. Alcoholism is never more than just one more drink away.”

- d. Challenge: How drunk do you have to be before you have crossed the line? Wilkerson asks some searching questions on this point: “The questions that really hound me are these: At what point will the church condemn drinking? At what point does it become sinful for Christians to drink? Where is the line between responsible and irresponsible drinking? Does one first have to stagger down the street like a maniac? Is it between light-headedness and silliness? Is it all right if it causes one to be talkative and loose, but wrong if it goes a step further and turns to violence and cursing? Is drinking good if it causes a depressed person to relax, but wrong if it causes him to gossip? Is it right or wrong only by the way a person reacts to its power? Can two men sit side by side, drinking the same amount of alcohol – react differently – and one be right, the other wrong? One man becomes happy and kind – the other, mean and violent. Do we justify the kind drinker and condemn the violent one? Is a Christian justified in drinking to the point he is able to handle it with dignity? Does it suddenly become sinful at the point he makes a fool of himself? Is he a responsible drinker if he can hold down three or four cocktails, irresponsible if he vomits?”
- e. Illustration: Daniel a godly example of a total abstainer (Dan. 1:8). If the ‘wine’ was just grape juice, there would not have been any O.T. law prohibiting Daniel and his friends drinking it. Clearly it was intoxicating, hence why Daniel and his friends abstained from it. Interestingly, Daniel and his three friends ended up being intellectually superior to the other students (Vs. 19-20). Could it be that their minds were clearer and sharper than the other students who indulged in Babylon’s Booze?

III. POWERFUL EXHORTATIONS OF SCRIPTURE

There are other Scriptural principles that have a bearing on this subject. While these verses may not make a direct reference to alcoholic wine and the believer, they certainly apply to the issue.

A. The Exhortation to Sobriety (1 Peter 1:13)

1. There are at least 12 references to the believer and sobriety in the New Testament (2 Cor. 5:13; 1 Thess. 5:6, 8; 1 Tim. 3:2, 11; Titus 1:8, 2:2, 4, 6; 1 Peter 1:13, 4:7, 5:8).
2. Definition of the word ‘sober’. It literally means ‘wineless’, not under the influence of intoxicating liquor. Vines Expository dictionary defines the Greek word ‘nepho’ (sober) as follows: “signifies to be

- free from the influence of intoxicants.”
3. Everyone in the church is exhorted to soberness.
 - a. Pastors are exhorted to be sober (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)
 - b. Deacons’ wives are exhorted to be sober (1 Tim. 3:11)
 - c. Older men are exhorted to be sober (Titus 2:2)
 - d. Older women are exhorted to teach the younger women to be sober (Titus 2:3-4)
 - e. Young men are exhorted to be sober (Titus 2:6)
 4. Other exhortations to soberness
 - a. 1 Thess. 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be **sober**.
 - b. 1 Thess. 5:8 But let us, who are of the day, be **sober**, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.
 - c. 1 Peter 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be **sober**, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
 - d. 1 Peter 4:7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore **sober**, and watch unto prayer.
 - a. 1 Peter 5:8 Be **sober**, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:
 5. Challenge: How can you as a believer be obedient to the command of God’s Word to be sober with a glass of mind-altering alcoholic beverage in your hand? The only way to obey this command properly is to abstain from it entirely.
- B. The Exhortation to Watchfulness (1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Pet. 4:7)**
1. 1 Thess. 5:6 “Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us **watch** and be **sober**.”
 2. 1 Peter 4:7 “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore **sober**, and **watch** unto prayer.”
 3. The believer is called upon to be awake and alert spiritually and mentally. To have my mind brought under the influence of intoxicating liquor, even in the early stages of intoxication, is surely inconsistent with the sober, vigilant and watchful mindset I am called to as a believer.

Conclusion: Ryan McGrath Testimony

Booze, Baptists & the Bible

Part 3

Text: Eph. 5:18

Introduction:

1. The aim of this sermon: To present what the Bible teaches on this hotly debated and contentious issue. Remember, the Word of God is the final authority for faith and practice so we must lay aside personal opinion and bias and submit ourselves to where the Scriptures lead on this issue.
2. We are considering this topic under four headings as follows:
 - Some Preliminary Definitions from Scripture.
 - Some Plain Prohibitions of Scripture.
 - Some Powerful Exhortations from Scripture.
 - Some Pertinent Illustrations from Scripture.
 - Some Objections misusing Scripture.
3. We will briefly review what we covered in last lesson and continue with our outline from there.

I. PRELIMINARY DEFINITIONS FROM SCRIPTURE

- A. The Word 'wine' is a Generic Term in the Bible**
- B. The Context is Key to Determine which Wine is in View**

II. PLAIN PROHIBITIONS OF SCRIPTURE

Why should we totally avoid intoxicating liquor? Because of the plain warnings and prohibitions of Scripture. It is of interest how many of these are found in the Book of Proverbs which is the Bible's manual on godly wisdom.

- A. Don't Be Deceived by It (Prov. 20:1)**
- B. Don't Even Look at It (Prov 23:29-35)**
- C. Don't Lower Yourself to It (Prov. 31:4-7)**
- D. Don't Be Amongst It (Prov. 23:20-21)**
- E. Don't Be Intoxicated with It (Eph. 5:18)**

III. POWERFUL EXHORTATIONS OF SCRIPTURE

There are other Scriptural principles that have a bearing on this subject. While these verses may not make a direct reference to alcoholic wine and the believer, they certainly apply to the issue.

- A. The Exhortation to Soberness (1 Peter 1:13)**
- B. The Exhortation to Watchfulness (1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Pet. 4:7)**

IV. PERTINENT ILLUSTRATIONS FROM SCRIPTURE

The Bible makes plain the Divine perspective on alcoholic wine and strong drink by its plain denunciations of it (e.g., Prov. 23) and also by the clear illustrations of the evil effects of intoxicating liquor upon those who drink it. We will survey 10 such examples from Scripture:

A. Wine and Noah's Nakedness (Gen. 9:20-26)

1. The Context of Noah's Drunkenness.
 - a. This is the first occurrence of the Word wine in the Bible. The Holy Spirit is issuing a clear warning early in the Word of God concerning the dangers of fermented wine.
 - b. Noah has been a faithful preacher of righteousness up to this point. He had faithfully built the ark for the greater part of 100 years and gone through the events of the flood. Noah's drunkenness is a sober reminder that a man of God who has had a godly reputation for many years can still act foolishly and dishonour the Lord and discredit his testimony.
 - c. Henry Morris: "The first time 'wine' is mentioned in the Bible occurs here in connection with the drunkenness and shame of Noah. Undoubtedly the nature of wine was well known to the antediluvians, and there is no intimation in Scripture that Noah was not fully cognizant of what he was doing when he made and drank his wine. Scripture does not hesitate to call attention to the failures of even the most saintly of men. Noah, having stood strong against the attacks of evil men for hundreds of years, remaining steadfast in the face of such opposition and discouragement as few men have ever faced, now let down his guard, as it were, when it seemed that all would be peace and victory from now on. After everything he had been through, what harm could there be in a little relaxation and a little provision for the comforts of the flesh? Satan had been unable to corrupt the family of Noah before the Flood, although he had succeeded with all other families; and he now seized his opportunity. The formation of intoxicating wine from the pure, healthful juice of grapes is a perfect symbol of corruption and decay. The process of fermentation is a decay process and the effect of drinking the alcoholic product of this decay is likewise, in several respects, a "breaking down," both physically and morally."
2. The Consequences of Noah's Drunkenness
What were the sad effects of Noah's drunkenness?
 - a. Noah became naked (Vs. 21)
 - i. The Bible draws a direct link between alcoholic wine and nakedness.
 - ii. Hab. 2:15 "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to *him*, and makest *him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!*"
 - iii. Lam. 4:21 "...the cup also shall pass through unto thee: **thou shalt be drunken, and shalt make thyself naked.**"
 - iv. Alcohol removes the normal restraints and inhibitions that God has given us. Malcomson writes, "Alcohol is not a stimulant but a depressant. Alcohol depresses the brain

and slows down its ability to control the body as well as all its various normal functions. This is why alcohol can be so dangerous. Alcohol acts like a sedative on the brain and as a result slows down muscle coordination, reflexes, movement and speech. Within the alcohol is the power and ability to undermine the natural God-given abilities of thought and action. The alcohol's first target is the front lobe of the brain which is the area that controls every form of wise judgement and social interaction. Even a small amount of alcohol immediately begins to alter the function of the mind."

- v. Illustration: "Research has proven that there is a 5 to 15% decrease in response time after drinking just minimal amounts of alcohol (0.03% alcohol in bloodstream) ...This has also been repeatedly confirmed by various researchers who have recorded this kind of decrease in response time. One such test was carried out on young trainee doctors. They took two separate medical tests but before one of them they drank one glass of wine. All of them thought they had performed better on that particular test but all of them had in fact done far worse. The same happened in the rate of accuracy by typists after just one drink, and young drivers in their reaction/reflex time. All of these tests revealed a dramatic drop in the normal skills of individuals who were not at all aware of it after just one drink." (Malcomson)
- b. Ham became perverted (Vs. 22)
 - i. The word 'saw' in this context implies "gazed at" (Morris).
 - ii. The behaviour of Shem and Japheth stands in direct contrast to that of Ham.
 - iii. Appears that Ham drew some form of mocking pleasure in seeing his father naked. It reveals that Ham was a rebel at heart and probably resented his father's godliness.
- c. Canaan was cursed (Vs. 24-25)
- d. Summary: From this account we can see that intoxicating wine produces the following:
 - i. Nakedness and indecency.
 - ii. Perversion and uncleanness.
 - iii. Division and heartache.

B. Wine and Lot's Immorality (Gen. 19:30-38)

What were the sad effects of Lot's drunkenness?

1. The Wine affected his Mental Powers
 - a. Vs. 33 "and **he perceived not** when she lay down, nor when she arose."
 - b. Vs. 35 "and **he perceived not** when she lay down, nor when she arose."
2. The Wine affected his Moral Principles

3. Biblical Illustrator: "The worst effect of the vice of drunkenness is its degrading influence on the conduct and character of men. It robs its victims of self-respect and manliness and sends them to wallow in the mire with swinish obscenity. What they would not dream of stooping to in their sober moments they revel in with shameless ostentation when their brains are clouded with intoxicating drink. It is no excuse to plead that a drunkard is a madman unaccountable for his actions; he is accountable for having put himself in his degraded condition. The man who has been foolish enough to launch his boat on the rapids cannot divert its course when he is startled by the thunder of the falls he is approaching; but he should have thought of that before leaving the safety of the shore." (*W. F. Adeney, M. A.*)
4. Summary: From this account we can see that intoxicating wine produces the following:
 - a. Loss of mental and moral restraint.
 - b. Perversion and immorality.

C. Wine and Nabal's Death (1 Sam. 25:36-38)

What effect did alcoholic wine have on Nabal?

1. It produced a false happiness – "and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken" (Vs. 36).
2. It contributed to his death (Vs. 37).
3. It brought the judgment of God upon him (Vs. 38).

D. Wine and David's Attempted Cover up (2 Sam. 11:13)

What do we learn about intoxicating wine from this account?

1. Wine was used in an attempt to hide David's sin of immorality with Uriah's wife. David hoped that by making Uriah drunk, he would give up on his disciplined stance not to return home to his wife. Wine is often connected to moral scandals.
2. Wine made Uriah drunk.

E. Wine and Amnon's Murder (2. Sam. 13:28-29)

What do we learn about intoxicating wine from this account?

1. Wine was involved in a sinister plot to murder a man.
2. Wine gave Amnon a false sense of security and mirth so that he didn't discern the danger of the assassin's knife that was about to strike him dead.
3. Biblical Illustrator: "Suppose there were two lines of railroad; on one of them was an accident regularly once a week, sometimes on one day, and sometimes on another; and on the other there never had been an accident. Suppose your only son wanted to go the journey traversed by the respective lines, and he were to come to you saying, "Which road shall I take, father?" would you dare to tell him to take that upon which the accidents were so frequent, because it was the most fashionable? You would say at once, "Take the safe road, my boy." And that is just what we temperance folks say." (*John B. Gough.*)

F. Wine and King Elah's Assassination (1 Kings 16:8-10)

What do we learn about intoxicating wine from this account?

1. Wine made King Elah vulnerable to attack.
2. Wine directly contributed to his murder at the hands of Zimri.

G. Wine and Benhadad's Defeat (1 Kings 20:12-21)

What do we learn about alcoholic wine from this account?

1. Wine influenced Benhadad to act foolishly and rashly (Vs. 12). It affected his decision-making ability.
2. Wine induced Benhadad to drunkenness which in turn led to their speedy defeat in battle (Vs. 16).

H. Wine and Ahasuerus' Divorce (Esther 1:5-22)

What can we learn about the destructive influence of alcoholic wine from this account?

1. Wine was connected to the unrestrained indulgence of fleshly appetites (Vs. 7-8).
2. Wine drinking inflamed lustful passions which led to an indecent request and the subsequent break up of the marriage between the king and his queen (Vs. 10-11).
 - a. John Butler: "Ahasuerus wanted Vashti to show off her beautiful body to the lustful, drunken men at his feast. Some Jewish scholars believe...Ahasuerus' demand meant that Vashti was to come nude with only her royal crown on her."
 - b. William Macdonald: "Since Persian modesty required women to be veiled in public, it appears that the king was asking her to degrade herself to satisfy his drunken whim."
3. F.B. Meyer: "Whenever men are overcome with wine, there is grave peril for women. Coarseness, indelicacy, and impurity troop in at the door, which has been unlocked by the excess of wine. Who can tell the anguish which has been caused to women, children, and the dumb creation through the intemperance of man! Here is given a glimpse of a noble woman, who respected herself too highly to yield to a demand, wholly foreign to the customs of the time, which forbade women to appear in public."
4. Parker: "When a man's heart is merry with wine, all that is most sacred in humanity goes out of him."
5. According to Malcomson, "Twice as many marriages end in divorce due to the effects of alcohol as adultery."

I. Wine and the Perversity of Priest and Prophet (Isaiah 28:1-3; 7-8)

What evil influence did wine and strong drink have upon the spiritual leaders of Isaiah's day? Notice that the word 'erred' or 'err' occurs 3 times and the phrase "out of the way" occurs twice.

1. Direction (Vs. 7a)
2. Vision – "they err in vision" (Vs. 7b).
3. Decision – "they stumble in judgment" (Vs. 7c)
4. Further, the vile effects of intoxicating liquor are again highlighted in Verse 8 where it describes the tables being "full of vomit and filthiness".

J. Wine and Belshazzar's Blasphemy (Dan. 5:1-4; 22-23)

Intoxicating substances (i.e., wine and spirits) are central to the world's parties. "Alcohol has been at the heart of man's sinful activities since the fall." (Cloud) This should not be amongst God's blood-washed people! What do we learn about the evil effects of wine in this account?

1. It led to Blasphemy (Vs. 2a; 4)

- a. The command to bring in the sacred vessels came “while he tasted the wine”. Under the influence of the wine, the king gave this wicked command to profane the vessels of the temple of the living God.
 - b. Wine is not just a beverage, it comes with an anti-God, rebellious spirit. Think of the countless curses and blasphemies that are hurled at the Lord of glory while men are under the influence of intoxicating liquor.
 - c. Belshazzar’s underlying motivation and purpose for using the temple vessels becomes clear. It was an act of willful rebellion and unbelief against the One True God of Israel.
 - d. The primary desire was not to use these vessels so they could feel they were “drinking in style” from vessels that were precious and valuable. It was to despise and degrade the God of Israel and to elevate and honor the pagan deities. He was trying to demonstrate that his pagan gods were superior to Israel’s God.
2. It encouraged Indecency (Vs. 2b-3)
- a. The presence of women highlights the immoral activities connected with this feast. In Oriental custom, usually only men were present at such feasts.
 - b. Wine dampens the conscience and releases those who drink it from moral inhibitions. People do things under the influence of drink that they would not normally do!

K. Summary: What evils are clearly linked to alcoholic wine in the passages we have just studied?

- 1. Nakedness and dishonourable behaviour.
- 2. Family breakdown and division.
- 3. Incestuous immorality.
- 4. Loss of mental and moral restraints.
- 5. Premature death and God’s displeasure.
- 6. Murder plots, sinister conspiracies and assassinations.
- 7. Poor, unwise decision making.
- 8. Immoral, lustful demands.
- 9. Marriage breakdown and divorce.
- 10. Deviation from the path of truth into error.
- 11. Blasphemy and sensuality.

L. Peter Masters describes alcohol as, “Satan’s fermented river of false hopes, false consolation, false happiness, false courage and it is his way of binding millions to the world.”

M. Strauss on the demon of drink: “The demon of drink has continued to dig at all the foundations of civilization, destroying the moral fiber of nations. People outdo themselves in wickedness when they are overpowered by a pseudo boldness and the absence of restraint produced by the alcohol demon. One of the perils of strong drink is that

it too often carries away the drinker to do and say foolish and fatal things, the hidden depths of iniquity being stirred up within him.”

- N.** We have catalogued some of the evil effects of wine in the above Scriptures. The effects of alcohol on society today are no different.
1. According to Pastor Denis Lyle alcohol is:
 - a. The main factor in the death of one thousand children each year.
 - b. The main factor in the death of half of drivers under twenty-five who are killed.
 - c. Implicated in half of all recorded crimes including half of all murders.
 - d. Implicated in half of all child abuse cases.
 - e. Implicated in half of all wife battering.
 2. Some Australian Statistics¹
 - a. Each week, on average, more than 100 Australians die and more than 3,000 are hospitalised as a result of excessive alcohol consumption.¹²
 - b. Every year more than 70,000 Australians are the victims of alcohol-related assaults of which 24,000 are victims of domestic violence. In addition, almost 20,000 children across Australia experience substantiated alcohol-related child abuse.¹³
 - c. The total cost to society of alcohol-related problems in 2010 was estimated to be \$14.352b.¹⁴
 - d. The estimated cost of alcohol's negative impacts on others was estimated at \$6.807b.¹⁵ The same year, the Australian Government received an estimated \$7.075b in total alcohol tax revenue.¹⁶
 3. Keith Malcomson writes, “If the Church is not alarmed at the facts, how do we ever expect the world to be woken up from its drunken party which is taking it rapidly to an eternal Hell? Multitudes are pouring into Hell aided and speeded on their way by alcohol. They leave this life in a happy stupor only to wake in the next utterly sober realising it is fearfully and eternally too late! While Satan uses this deadly poison to destroy millions and to aid his work in sending nations to Hell, the Church raises her voice and puts forth her efforts to defend her right and liberty to socially drink alcohol.” (Pg. 42)
- O.** Challenge: When you see bottles of wine and spirits, what do you see? Sadly, many Christians see a symbol of their warped concept of Christian liberty; a pleasure to be indulged in in the name of “Christian moderation” so called. But when I see a wine bottle, I see...
- A teenager pregnant, labouring in a birth suite without the support of a

¹ <https://www.surgeons.org/en/about-racs/position-papers/alcohol-related-harm-2016#> Viewed 11/5/21.

- responsible husband.
- A man lying in his own vomit in the gutter.
 - Stupidity and foolishness of every kind.
 - The faces of hungry children whose daddy has spent his earnings on liquor.
 - The tears and sobs of a broken-hearted wife or husband whose spouse has committed adultery under the influence of alcohol.
 - I see a man brutally beating his wife; I see her face lined with fear and terror and hear her screams and pleas for mercy as blow after blow rains down upon her delicate frame.
 - I see an intoxicated wretch abusing an innocent child as it cries and screams in terror.
 - I see the murderer's knife cruelly stabbing and lacerating and hear the terrified screams of the perishing victim.
 - I see a car smashed up against a tree with battered, bleeding and dead bodies inside.
 - I see the murderer's knife and the assassin's bullet.
 - I see broken hearts, broken marriages and the divorce courts.
 - I see the tears of a child over broken promises and parental irresponsibility.
 - I see the unrepentant drunkard engulfed in the flames of hell, weeping and gnashing his teeth.

Conclusion:

Booze, Baptists & the Bible

Part 4

Text: Eph. 5:18

Introduction:

1. Brief review of Eph. 5:18.
 - a. “be not drunk” = lit. “to be being made drunk.” “Paul prohibits them from a course of action.” (Hoehner) The word translated "drunk" is the verb, "Methusko". It is related to the verb "Methuo," which, according to W.E. Vine, "signifies to be drunk with wine". In contrast, "Methusko" "signifies to make drunk, or to **grow drunk** (an inceptive verb, marking **the process of the state** expressed in No.1, Methuo (Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words)
 - b. The verb is in the present tense and the passive voice. The present tense views the action as currently taking place in time. The passive voice indicates that the subject is the recipient of the action. “Here the Holy Ghost forbids, not only the final state of drunkenness, but also **the process that leads to that state**. The believer is forbidden to place himself in the passive state where he allows alcohol to lead him to intoxication.” (I.W., Jan 2021)
2. Profiles of the sort of people you can expect to encounter in this debate:
 - a. The unbeliever – their primary need will be to hear the Gospel. That said, a godly and gracious stand on the issue of alcohol is an important part of your testimony to them. Illustration: The men I worked with and their perspective on drinking Christians (e.g., exclusive brethren).
 - b. The untaught believer who has just picked up mainstream ideas without examining them properly from the Scriptures. Such individuals may be open to being helped if they are shown God’s mind on the issue in a loving manner.
 - c. The compromised, stubborn believer who has already hardened their heart and mind on the issue and who when presented with sound, irrefutable arguments from Scripture will simply keep manufacturing more questions and arguments in a sinful ploy to hang on to their habit of drinking. Prayer essential for dealing with such individuals. They may not be open now but the Lord can work down the track (e.g., Bro. Ryan’s testimony).
3. We will briefly review what we covered in last lesson and continue with our outline from there.

I. PRELIMINARY DEFINITIONS FROM SCRIPTURE

A. The Word ‘wine’ is a Generic Term in the Bible

B. The Context is Key to Determine which Wine is in View

II. PLAIN PROHIBITIONS OF SCRIPTURE

Why should we totally avoid intoxicating liquor? Because of the plain warnings and prohibitions of Scripture. It is of interest how many of these are found in the Book of Proverbs which is the Bible's manual on godly wisdom.

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- B. Wine and Lot's Immorality (Gen. 19:30-38)**
- C. Wine and Nabal's Death (1 Sam. 25:36-38)**
- D. Wine and David's Attempted Cover up (2 Sam. 11:13)**
- E. Wine and Amnon's Murder (2. Sam. 13:28-29)**
- F. Wine and King Elah's Assassination (1 Kings 16:8-10)**
- G. Wine and Benhadad's Defeat (1 Kings 20:12-21)**
- H. Wine and Ahasuerus' Divorce (Esther 1:5-22)**
- I. Wine and the Perversity of Priest and Prophet (Isaiah 28:1-3; 7-8)**
- J. Wine and Belshazzar's Blasphemy (Dan. 5:1-4; 22-23)**
- K. Summary:** What evils are clearly linked to alcoholic wine in the above passages?

1. Nakedness and dishonourable behaviour.
2. Family breakdown and division.
3. Incestuous immorality.
4. Loss of mental and moral restraints.
5. Premature death and God's displeasure.
6. Murder plots, sinister conspiracies and assassinations.
7. Poor, unwise decision making.
8. Immoral, lustful demands.
9. Marriage breakdown and divorce.
10. Deviation from the path of truth into error.
11. Blasphemy and sensuality.

V. POPULAR OBJECTIONS MISUSING SCRIPTURE

A. Objection 1: “Jesus turned water into wine!” (John 2:1-11)

1. This would have to be the most popular argument used by pro-drinking Christians. They throw it out as a one liner as if it settles the issue and there is not further room for consideration of other Scriptures or debate. Keith Malcomson observes, “One of the most commonly repeated, promoted and pressed comments by those seeking to justify social drinking, or the moderate drinking of alcohol is that “Christ turned water into wine.” Sinner and Saint alike use this simple comment to justify their love of alcohol. It has become a motto, national anthem, unquestioned statement of faith, and an unanswerable proclamation – or so they think.”
2. Question: In light of what we have studied about the word ‘wine’ in the Bible, what is the big assumption the individual using this argument has made? Answer: They are clearly assuming that the wine Christ created was alcoholic! They have not taken into account the fact that as previously studied, the word ‘wine’ in the Bible has a broad spectrum of meaning and often refers to non-alcoholic grape juice, the pure fruit of the vine.
3. Question: With your knowledge of the Holy character of Christ and what we have studied in the Scriptures on this issue so far, which option sounds right to you.
 - a. That Christ turned water into alcoholic wine?
 - b. That Christ turned water into non-alcoholic wine (grape juice)?
4. Consider the following 3 reasons why Christ did **NOT** turn water into intoxicating wine:
 - a. Because of Christ’s purpose in the miracle (Vs. 11)
 - i. Sadly, for many Christians, they seem to think that the primary purpose of this miracle was to teach us that social drinking is ok! How tragic that Christ’s first public miracle has become the banner for the pro-alcohol crowd! However, we need to remind ourselves of what the purpose of the miracle actually was.
 - ii. Vs. 11 “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and **manifested forth his glory**; and his disciples believed on him.”
 - iii. The purpose of this miracle was not to get people feeling merry with alcoholic wine. Nor was it to teach some warped concept of Christian liberty. It was to reveal the glory of Christ as the incarnate Son of God that men might believe.
 - iv. Question: Do you really think turning water into intoxicating liquor and getting people drunk would be a

manifestation of the pure, heavenly glory of the Son of God?

- b. Because of the Holy, Righteous Nature of Christ (Heb. 7:26)
 - i. Consider this illustration. “The word ‘cider’ may mean an alcoholic beverage, or plain apple juice. Suppose we lived during the 1920s, prohibition days, and were approached by two people offering us a drink of cider. One of the persons, we knew to be one of the holiest men in town, faithful to the house of God, separated from the world, diligent in prayers, always witnessing to others; the other was a known liquor dealer. If each one offered us a drink of “his very own cider,” we would assume that the holy person’s was no more than apple juice, but there would be no doubt about our opinion regarding the liquor dealer’s cider! Obviously, the character of a person influences what that one does. Since the Lord Jesus Christ was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” we may safely assume that He would not make that which is called in Scripture a mocker and deceiver of man, causing untold misery.”
 - ii. Think of the implications to the character of Christ of arguing that Christ turned water into alcoholic wine! There were somewhere in the order of 9-13 gallons of water in each of the six pots according to reputable commentators (e.g., John Gill, Vincent, Clarke. William Patton in his excellent book *Bible Wines* poses some searching questions on the pro-drink interpretation of this miracle, “The moral influence of the miracle will be determined by the character of the wine. It is pertinent to ask, is it not derogatory to the character of Christ and the teachings of the Bible to suppose that he exerted his miraculous power to produce, according to Alvord and according to Smith, at least 60 gallons¹ of intoxicating wine? – wine which inspiration had denounced as “a mocker”, as “biting like a serpent,” and “stinging like an adder,” as “the poison of dragons,” “the cruel venom of asps”, and which the Holy Ghost had selected as the emblem of the wrath of God Almighty? Is it probably that he gave that to the guests after they had used the wine provided by the host, and which, it is claimed, was intoxicating?”

¹ Approximately 227 litres. That would be wine equivalent to around 302 bottles of wine today (750ml). Or to put it another way, that would be almost 5 kegs of beer (based on a 50 litre keg).

- c. Because as the **Living Word**, Christ would never do or say anything to contradict or cast doubt upon the **Written Word**.
- i. John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (See also Vs. 14)
 - ii. Jesus Himself stated that “the scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35).
 - iii. Christ also clearly said, “Think not that I am come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Matt. 5:17-18)
 - iv. Remember that God has exalted His Word even above all His Name (Ps. 138:12).
 - v. For Christ to produce somewhere in the order of 60 gallons of intoxicating wine for a wedding feast that had already been drinking wine for approximately 3 days would put Him completely at odds with the plain statements of Scripture such as Prov. 20:1, 23:31. It would make Christ guilty of the sin of giving his neighbor drink (Hab. 2:15). It would make Christ a transgressor of the command not to be among “winebibbers” (Prov. 23:20). To claim that Christ turned water into wine is pure blasphemy!
 - vi. Wilkerson: “Can you not picture Solomon and the prophets coming down from eternity to watch Jesus turn water into wine, just as Moses and Elijah appeared on the Mount? Suppose the wine was alcoholic. Solomon would have had to tap our Lord on the shoulder and whisper, “Master, don’t You know wine is a mocker? Have You not read that it is raging? The law declares that those deceived by it are not wise. Master, look not on the wine when it is read; it will bite and sting that wedding crowd like a serpent” (see Proverbs 20:1; 23:31, 32). The prophet Habakkuk would have had to remind Him, “Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink...” (Hab. 2:15). How in any conceivable way, could Jesus give His neighbors fermented wine without setting the New Testament against the Old? Without mocking the prophets who cried out against its evils? Without mocking the Lord’s own prayer that pleads, “...lead us not into temptation...” (Luke 11:4)?

B. Objection 2: “Didn’t Jesus drink wine at the last supper?”

1. Many churches use alcoholic wine for their communion celebrations based on the myth that Christ and His disciples drank alcoholic

wine on Passover night. Illustration: Communion wine made in South Australia for Catholic Church.²

2. In all the Gospel accounts of the last supper, the word 'wine' is not mentioned once. This is the same in the key Pauline passage on the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor. 11:25-28. In fact, the wording is very specific as follows:
 - a. Matthew 26:27-29 – “And he took **the cup**, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this **fruit of the vine**, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.”
 - b. Mark 14:25 “...**the fruit of the vine**...”
 - c. Luke 22:18 “...**the fruit of the vine**...”
 - d. 1 Cor. 11:25 “After the same manner also he took **the cup**...”
 - e. Malcomson: “In these Scriptures the fruit of the vine is mentioned **three times** and the cup that held it is mentioned **ten times**. Why did Christ and the apostles not use the word 'oinos' (wine)? The term “fruit of the vine” expresses what 'oinos' does not. *Oinos* is a broad generic term which can mean either fermented or unfermented wine. This word for “wine” could have been misunderstood but the term “fruit of the vine” clearly explains what Christ wanted to convey. The drink in the cup which was to represent His blood was pure grape juice.”
3. Leaven is always a type of sin and corruption in the Bible (e.g., 1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9). In fact, in the Old Testament, the lamb and its blood were to be offered without leaven: “**Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven**; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the Passover be left unto the morning.” (Ex. 34:25) This pointed forward to Christ the Perfect Lamb of God who would be totally sinless. Leavened wine therefore could not be used as an emblem of the sinless blood of Christ.
4. If Christ used alcoholic wine at the last supper, that has serious implications.
 - a. Firstly, we learn from early Jewish writings (the Mishna) that it was the common practice to drink four cups of wine at the Passover meal. That means that each person would end up drinking around three pints of wine during the Passover meal. If Christ and the disciples followed this practice using alcoholic wine, then by the end of the Supper both Christ and the

² <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/rnfirstbite/clare-valley-winery-sevenhill-cellars-produces-a-heavenly-drop/5381562> Viewed 21/5/21

disciples would have been heavily under the influence of the alcohol.

- b. Secondly, it is blasphemous to suggest that Christ would use intoxicating liquor to represent His pure, sinless blood. Malcomson issues some challenging questions on this point, “Would Christ use an intoxicating drink to represent His precious redeeming blood instead of fresh grape juice? Would He use a drink which Moses warned was “poison of dragons” and the “cruel venom of asps”,³ which Solomon said “biteh like a serpent” and “stingeth like an adder”? Would Christ say “drink ye all of it” and contradict Solomon who said, “Look not thou upon wine when” it is fermented? Are we to believe that Christ insisted on drinking fermented wine at the Passover and that He then went on to institute it in the public, regular practice of the Church when the Apostles in their later writings utterly forbade its use?”

C. Objection 3: “Didn’t Paul command Timothy to drink a little wine?” (1 Tim. 5:23) Let’s analyze the verse and seek to arrive at a faithful understanding of what it really means:

1. Timothy’s Condition

- a. Timothy’s medical problems are indicated by the following two phrases:
 - i. “thy stomach’s sake”
 - ii. “thine often infirmities”
- b. Paul was obviously concerned about Timothy’s **health** and offered some practical advice. It is important that a pastor look after his health and it is not wrong to use the means we have available to that end.

2. Paul’s Prescription

- a. “drink no longer water” = obviously Paul has Timothy’s fluid intake in mind. He wants him not to drink water exclusively. Water contamination would have been a common problem in the ancient world as it still is in many parts of the world today.
- b. D Cloud: “Pure wine, also called the fruit of the vine (Matt. 26:29), is healthy and is not contaminated as water often is. This principle applies to life in “third world” countries today. The water is commonly unhealthy unless it has been boiled or filtered, and it is wise to drink other types of beverages, such as fruit juices, to avoid stomach problems.”
- c. Bruce Lackey: “Many insist that here the Bible gives the privilege, if not a command, of using alcoholic wine as a medicine. However, this cannot possibly be referring to alcoholic

³ Deuteronomy 32:33 “Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.”

wine, because he specifically says that it is to be taken for Timothy's stomach. He obviously had some kind of stomach disease and any doctor will tell you that such a person must abstain from alcoholic beverage. This author has had much stomach trouble through the years and has consulted various doctors, observing various dietary restrictions. In every case, they warned against drinking any alcoholic beverage whatsoever. If we know that today, surely the Holy Spirit of God knew that when He inspired this verse! We do not know what Timothy's specific infirmities were, nor do we know what kind of healing properties there were in grape juice. Maybe Paul was saying that Timothy should not drink the water, since in many parts of the world it is not pure and would cause a healthy person to have trouble from amoebas etc. One who already had stomach problems would only multiply them by drinking impure water. Paul might have been recommending that Timothy drink grape juice only. In any case, we can be positive that he was not telling him to put alcohol in a bad stomach!"

- d. K. Malcomson: "Please note that alcoholic wine is not advised by the medical profession for stomach problems, in fact quite the opposite. Alcohol would tend to aggravate any stomach problems by inflaming the tissue of the stomach. Inflammation of the stomach tissue is not uncommon in moderate drinkers. Paul could only have been suggesting that Timothy drink grape juice, as it would settle the stomach."
- e. Note: Remember Paul is writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who had perfect understanding of the human body long before the discoveries of modern medicine.

D. Objection 4: "Doesn't the Bible say to do all things in moderation?"

1. Question? Where is the verse that says "do all things in moderation"? Answer: The simple answer is **NOWHERE!** There is no verse in the Bible that says "do all things in moderation".
2. The English word 'moderation' is only found once in the New Testament in Philippians 4:5 "Let your **moderation** (επιεικῆς), be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."
3. The word 'moderation' means "the avoidance of excess or extremes, especially in one's behaviour" (Lexico). It means "the state of being moderate, or of keeping a due mean between extremes or excess of violence." (Webster)
4. We get a good sense for the meaning of the word within the biblical context by studying how the same Greek word is translated elsewhere in the New Testament.

- a. 1 Timothy 3:3 “Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but **patient** (επιεικης), not a brawler, not covetous;”
 - b. Titus 3:2 “To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but gentle* (επιεικης), shewing all meekness unto all men.”
 - c. James 3:17 “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, **gentle** (επιεικης), *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”
 - d. 1 Peter 2:18 “Servants, *be* subject to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and **gentle** (επιεικης), but also to the froward.”
 - e. Adam Clarke: “The word means mildness, patience, yieldingness, gentleness, clemency, moderation, unwillingness to litigate or contend. “Moderation”, says Dr. Macknight, “means meekness under provocation, readiness to forgive injuries, equity in the management of business, candour in judging of the characters and actions of others, sweetness of disposition, and the entire government of the passions.”
5. Think about the implications of the “do all things in moderation” mantra. If that were true, does that mean we can swear in moderation, be immoral in moderation, get angry in moderation, be violent in moderation etc...?”

E. Objection 5: “Total Abstainers are Legalistic”

1. What is legalism? The strict definition of legalism is reliance upon law works for salvation. This is even reflected in secular dictionaries such as the Oxford dictionary of English which defines it as follows: “*Theology* Dependence on moral law rather than on personal religious faith.” Legalism can also be an approach to sanctification which often involves strict adherence to man made commandments or a legal approach to sanctification rather than sanctification through the Word, the walk of faith and reliance upon the inner workings of the Holy Spirit. A Spirit-filled zeal for holiness and a passion to please God by submitting to the authority of God’s Word however is **NOT** legalism. 1 Peter 1:15 “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in **all manner of conversation;**”
2. Some object and say, “But what about grace?” See Titus 2:11-12 & Romans 6:12-15
3. Some object and say, “But what about love?” See John 14:15, 21 & 1 John 5:2
4. Some object and say, “But what about liberty?” See Gal. 5:13
5. Remember: Liberty in Christ means freedom **from** sin not freedom **to** sin!

F. Objection 6: “Alcoholic wine is natural so it must be God-given”

1. Decay and fermentation is actually a result of the curse. Alcoholic wine could not have been produced in Eden prior to the fall.
2. The making of alcoholic beverages is not a strictly natural process. Bruce Lackey writes, “Years ago I took for granted that if you took the juice of a grape and let it alone, not refrigerating it, it would automatically, in time, turn into alcoholic wine. There are several reasons why this is not true. It takes more than time to make wine. Sometimes people try to defend its use by saying that it must be good because God made it. But the fact is, God did not make it. Man has learned how to make alcoholic liquors through processes that he has invented. Wine-makers know that one must have the correct amount of water, sugar, and temperature to make wine.”
3. William Patton in his book *Bible Wines* concurs, pointing out that the making of alcoholic wine requires input from man. It requires the addition of certain additives (though it might be something as simple as sugar) and the control of temperature, etc. The natural processes alone will produce fermentation under certain conditions, but these natural processes, if unaided by man, rapidly move to a vinegar state. The alcoholic beverages industry is very much a man-made thing. Natural processes are perverted by man. (Way of Life Encyclopedia)
4. Note: Alcohol has some positive uses as a chemical in things like cleaning agents or as an ingredient in certain medications. These uses are distinct from using alcohol as a beverage.

G. Objection 7: “Wine is good for your health”

1. Even if this was true, it would not invalidate the commands and principles of Scripture but in reality, this is not a true statement.
2. Malcomson writes, “Even the medical profession say that a little alcoholic wine is good for the heart but the truth is that the ‘good’ ingredient in wine which is beneficial for the heart, called *resveratrol*⁴, is higher in the content of purple grape juice than in fermented wine. Also, for the heart to gain any benefit from fermented wine, it would need to be drunk in such an amount that it would take the consumer passed the safe line of sobriety professed by social-drinkers. It would also have to be drunk in such an amount that the damaging side effects of the alcohol would damage other parts of the body. In other words, the disadvantages outweigh the advantages.”

Conclusion: Testimony by S. Vanson

⁴ “A compound found in red grapes, mulberries, peanuts, and certain plants, used medicinally as an antioxidant and anti-inflammatory.” (dictionary.com)

No level of alcohol consumption improves health

By use of methodological enhancements of previous iterations,¹ the systematic analysis from the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study (GBD) 2016 for 195 countries and territories, 1990–2016,² is the most comprehensive estimate of the global burden of alcohol use to date. The GBD 2016 Alcohol Collaborators clearly demonstrate the substantial, and larger than previously estimated, contribution of alcohol to death, disability, and ill health, globally. In 2016, alcohol use was the seventh leading risk factor for both deaths and disability-adjusted life-years (DALYs), accounting for 2.2% (95% uncertainty interval [UI] 1.5–3.0) of female deaths and 6.8% (5.8–8.0) of male deaths. The burden is particularly borne among those aged 15–49 years, for whom alcohol ranks as the leading cause of DALYs. In this population, alcohol use was the leading risk factor globally in 2016, with 3.8% (3.2–4.3) of female deaths and 12.2% (10.8–13.6) of male deaths attributable to alcohol use.

The study considers the extent to which moderate levels of consumption are protective for some health conditions.^{3,4} A paucity of estimates from meta-analyses identifying appropriate reference categories, adequately accounting for survival bias and other confounders, has meant previous assessments of the harm of alcohol have been potentially inaccurate.^{5–7} However, the emerging literature can account for some of these issues, enabling more reliable estimates of the disease burden attributable to alcohol.^{8,9} By implementing a novel method to establish a counterfactual level of exposure across varied relative risks that does not need to assume zero exposure, the authors present tangible evidence for low-risk drinking recommendations. The level of consumption that minimises an individual's risk is 0 g of ethanol per week, largely driven by the fact that the estimated protective effects for ischaemic heart disease and diabetes in women are offset by monotonic associations with cancer.

This latest GBD analysis applies state-of-the-art epidemiology to produce a definitive understanding of alcohol-related harm. More work remains to be done in calculating the impact of unrecorded alcohol consumption and the importance of patterns of drinking and binge drinking, particularly on young people. Furthermore, the harmful impact of alcohol extends beyond health into families, crime and disorder, and

the workplace.¹⁰ Evidence demonstrating the range and magnitude of the harm of alcohol to those other than the drinker is increasingly emerging.^{11,12} This additional array of harms is a necessary consideration at both national and local levels, when aiming to understand the full range of alcohol-related harm and ensuring adequate provision of public health policy with a wider impact than on health alone.

The conclusions of the study are clear and unambiguous: alcohol is a colossal global health issue and small reductions in health-related harms at low levels of alcohol intake are outweighed by the increased risk of other health-related harms, including cancer. There is strong support here for the guideline published by the Chief Medical Officer of the UK who found that there is “no safe level of alcohol consumption”.¹³ The findings have further ramifications for public health policy, and suggest that policies that operate by decreasing population-level consumption should be prioritised.

The most effective and cost-effective means to reduce alcohol-related harms are to reduce affordability through taxation or price regulation, including setting a minimum price per unit (MUP), closely followed by marketing regulation, and restrictions on the physical availability of alcohol.¹⁰ These approaches should come as no surprise because these are also the most effective measures for curbing tobacco-related harms, another commercially mediated disease, with an increasing body of evidence showing that controlling obesity will require the same measures.¹⁴ These diseases of unhealthy behaviours, facilitated by unhealthy environments and fuelled by commercial interests putting shareholder value ahead of the tragic human consequences, are the dominant health issue of the 21st century. The solutions are straightforward: increasing taxation creates income for hard-pressed health ministries, and reducing the exposure of children and adolescents to alcohol marketing has no downsides. The outlook is promising: the UK has just embarked on a huge controlled natural experiment with a progressive evidence-based alcohol strategy in place in Scotland, and with similar measures planned in Northern Ireland and Wales, with England as the placebo control. MUP in Scotland was introduced in May, 2018, without so much as a whisper of complaint from the media, the public, and politicians. Mortality and morbidity rates



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might be expected to diverge dramatically within just a few years, and pressures to extend these measures across Europe and elsewhere will start to rise.

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Aspirin for primary prevention of cardiovascular disease



The benefit of aspirin for patients with established cardiovascular disease outweighs the risk of bleeding, but the role of aspirin for individuals with no overt cardiovascular disease is more controversial.^{1,2} In a meta-analysis^{3,4} of 118 445 individuals from 11 trials of aspirin for primary cardiovascular disease prevention, aspirin reduced the relative risk of non-fatal myocardial infarction by 22% and death by 6%, at the cost of a 59% increase in gastrointestinal bleeding and a 33% increase in haemorrhagic stroke. This compromise in bleeding complications has called into question the level of baseline cardiovascular disease risk for which use of aspirin in primary prevention is clinically acceptable. Indeed, in patients at low cardiovascular disease risk, the relative benefit of aspirin translates into marginal absolute benefit, making its use largely unjustifiable. To better define the net benefit of aspirin for primary

prevention, four more trials were designed to include individuals at higher cardiovascular disease risk: two of patients with diabetes (ASCEND and ACCEPT-D), one of patients of advanced age (ASPREE), and one of patients at moderate cardiovascular disease risk (ARRIVE; appendix).² J Michael Gaziano and colleagues⁵ now report the results of ARRIVE in *The Lancet*.

In ARRIVE, 12 546 patients were randomly assigned to receive either low-dose (100 mg) aspirin or placebo tablets once daily, at 501 sites in seven countries. Inclusion criteria included several major cardiovascular disease risk factors, to target a final population at moderate (ie, 20–30%) risk of 10-year cardiovascular disease. Patients with a history of a vascular event or diabetes were excluded. The primary endpoint was a composite outcome of time to first occurrence of cardiovascular death, myocardial infarction, stroke, unstable angina, or transient ischaemic attack, with