

Should Christian's Drink Alcohol? - Part 2

by Keith Malcomson

The sermon addresses the biblical perspective on alcohol consumption, emphasizing the importance of holiness and the influence of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life.

Scripture: Proverbs 31:4

Topics: "Church Leadership", "Spiritual Discipline"

Description

Keith Malcomson preaches about the importance of forgiveness and restoration in the church, emphasizing the need to embrace repentant brothers with Christian love, as shown in 2 Corinthians 2:7-8. He also delves into the qualifications for leaders in the Bible, particularly addressing the issue of alcohol and its hindrance to fulfilling one's duties faithfully, as seen in Proverbs, Leviticus, and Isaiah. Malcomson highlights the clear instructions in the New Testament regarding leaders' relationship with alcohol, emphasizing the importance of being filled with the Spirit rather than being influenced by alcohol, as stated in Ephesians 5:18.

Transcript

If and when a brother who has fallen into drunkenness repents with great sorrow over his sin and returns again to Christ, the church ought to embrace him in Christian love. "...ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him." II Cor.2:7-8. Be careful that such sorrow for his sin or the consequences of his sin does not hinder him in moving on with God. "...forgive him...comfort him...love him." Make sure that he is welcomed back with great warmth in a manner that will make him function as a vital part of the body and act in such a manner to aid him from falling into such a lifestyle again.

6. Leadership and Alcohol

In both the Old and New Testament's qualifications were laid down for those in leadership. We could say very much about this but we want to concentrate on the issue of alcohol in relation to qualifying or disqualifying leadership.

In Proverbs 31 we read the words taught to King Lemuel by his mother. Prov.31:4-5, "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted." In the previous verse we read that such a thing is "that

which destroyeth kings."

Please note that there is a very logical reason why kings should not drink wine or strong drink. It will result in them forgetting God's Word and also will impair their ability to judge issues which will greatly affect people who are in trouble. Alcohol will interfere with the task of a king and his ability to faithfully fulfil his duty.

When God was establishing the spiritual ministry of the priesthood in Israel He commanded Aaron saying,

Lev.10:9-11, "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses."

Again the wisdom of God is revealed in this for wine and strong drink will not aid or help this ministry but only hinder an individual in accomplishing it. But more than this ministry under such an influence is not at all acceptable to God.

The Lord warns that if they approach ministry with any influence upon them which impairs or alters their faculties He would kill them. If you read carefully this happened to both of Aaron's sons, they dared to approach ministry in such a state and God killed them.

Isaiah the prophet had to deal with drunkenness in the lives of the priests and prophets amongst God's people. He said,

Isa.28:7-8, "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean."

Again Isaiah speaks in ch.56 of the shepherds who were called to be watchmen of God's people. He says they had become blind, ignorant, dumb, greedy, and slothful lacking any understanding. Then in verse 12 he says, "Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." These shepherds and watchmen actively encouraged the drinking of alcohol to the point of drunkenness. This had become a part of their message.

We are only skimming over a few verses here, there are many others but let's look at the New Testament Church. Again Paul lays out very clear qualifications for eldership or leadership in the local church in 1 Timothy ch.3. In the midst of these qualifications he mentions "...apt to teach; Not given to wine..."

Again in verse 8 he gives the same instruction to the deacons who had a practical ministry not a spiritual leadership position, "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine..."

When writing to Titus in ch.1:7 he says "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine..." then in ch.2:3 "The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;"

The Greek word translated "not given to wine" is the word *paroinos* which literally means: staying near wine, that is, tippling. This does not just mean to 'not get drunk' but means to not even linger in the

atmosphere of such an environment. It means one who does not even hang around in an atmosphere of social drinking.

This is as important as the ability to teach in qualifying true leadership. Be sure that when Church leadership relax on this one issue it will affect many other issues and in turn affect the whole church. God nowhere commends leaders who practice social drinking or who allow themselves to get tipsy through means of alcohol. No. He utterly condemns it at every turn.

The only reason we have a problem with social drinking and drunkenness in the church today is because leaders are setting the standard by their example.

By social drinking we generally mean Christians who drink alcoholic wine or beer but who do not get drunk in a manner that causes them to sway when they walk or slur when they speak. Many today think that by stopping short of intoxication or drunkenness, they have the full backing and support of God and of the Bible.

But do they? That is our next question.

7. Social Drinking by God's People

Does God's Word encourage or even allow Christians to drink alcohol? In recent decades the practice of social drinking has swept the church. Alongside this we have seen Biblical standards fall on all fronts. Dress code, separation from the world, purity in the pulpit, the centrality of Christ, His Word, the Blood, the Cross and a host of foundational truths have been sidelined. Truth has been sacrificed for carnal desires.

The fact that there has been a mass turning amongst the churches towards social drinking is a symptom of something far worse. It has always been a symptom of a departure from God and the ancient paths of truth.

A backslidden people will be sent prophets who will begin to prophesy that they should drink wine and a backslidden people will receive such a message and messenger. Micah 2:11, "If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people."

Such a turning from God happened in Amos' day. He was a pure young man whom God called and gifted to be a prophet to a backslidden religious system. In ch.2:8 he says that they "drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god." The same wine which was condemning godless men to hell for drunkenness was being drunken by these so-called leaders and followers of the true God.

Amos says that their church was the house of "their god." It was "their house" and their god was no god at all.

This same religious system was enjoying great financial prosperity and forsaking any teaching of coming judgment. They believed that they were in the midst of one of the greatest of revivals. It was a worship revival in which they talked much about personal anointing but sidelined any talk of affliction. They rebuked leaders who dealt with sin and commanded true prophets to stop prophesying.

But that is not all. In 2:12 they "gave the Nazarites wine to drink." Holy young men who wanted to separate themselves from every influence of this world and to yield themselves totally to God were given wine to

drink by this new revival. It was an hour when leaders made fun of those who sought separation from wine in order to walk with God.

In 4:1 he says "Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria...which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink." This so-called revival was filled with the world, living in the world like the world. The people were so carnal that they called unto their leaders to bring them drink. In 6:6, we read that even a part of their gathering together was for the purpose to "drink wine in bowls."

This demand for drink is preached as a liberty, an allowance and a 'right' by the backslidden.

This is only one incident of the drinking of alcohol becoming popular in the midst of God's people who think they are in revival yet remain intact living like the world. No wonder there is great numerical growth at such times.

Young Amos prophesied against this thirst, lust and desire for wine and strong drink as did every true Old Testament Prophet.

Only false prophets prophesy to the church that they can drink wine and strong drink yet please God and walk with Him!

An emphasis of drinking alcoholic wine only arose in ancient Israel when she was backslidden. No good fruit ever came from this practice. Search out every righteous man in the Old Testament who indulged in this sin and you read of terrible consequences even though they repented and returned to God.

8. A Spirit-Filled Life

Eph.5:18 "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"

God's answer to an alcohol influenced life is for a man to be saved, sanctified and Spirit-filled.

In Ephesians chapter 5 it is clearly stated that the wine mentioned has as its very nature and intrinsic character "excess". The Greek term *asotia* which is used here is literally set as the opposite of the term *sozo* which is widely used in the NT for the act of salvation or deliverance when a person is brought into Christ. So mark carefully that the effect of salvation is set in opposition to the effect of drunkenness. It is literally saying that the character of an alcoholic drink is in opposition to the character and nature of salvation.

Barnes explains excess as meaning "...that which is unsafe, not to be recovered; lost beyond recovery...that which is abandoned to sensuality and lust; dissoluteness, debauchery, revelry." This is confirmed when the other references where it is used are studied, Titus 1:6; I Pet.4:4; Lk.15:13.

More specifically it is saying that built into the nature of alcoholic wine is the tendency to be carried into a lifestyle of conduct and actions which are contrary to a life of salvation in Christ. Paul here makes a clear statement "be not drunk with wine." He then sets forth an alternative filling for the NT Christian: "be filled with the Spirit."

Just as the command is clear - "be not drunk" it is also a clear command to "be filled with the Holy Spirit." These two things are compared and contrasted. When filled with alcohol the influence is manifest in the speech, the walk, the attitude, in fact in all things. It speaks of an influence upon the whole life.

This is comparable to the Spirit-filled life. When a man is truly filled with the Holy Spirit every area of his life is affected and influenced by the Holy Spirit. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to come under the influence or effect of the Holy Spirit. The smallest influence of the work of the Holy Ghost in a life will have a manifest result.

It is of interest to note two incidents of people wrongly accused of drunkenness. The first is Hannah in I Samuel ch.1 who was marked out as a righteous lady who poured forth prayers and intercessions unto God for a man-child, a prophet, but in verse 13 we are told "Eli thought she had been drunken." Here is a woman who is in the hand of God, under the work of the Holy Spirit but is misinterpreted as being drunk by a leader!

She responded "I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink...Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial:" Hannah was clear in understanding that only children of Belial would come under the influence of alcohol. It is worth noting that "the sons of Eli were sons of Belial;" Not only did Eli misjudge a prayerful lady for a drunken lady, he also allowed his immoral sons to continue in ministry.

The second incident is on the day of Pentecost when the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost. Some accused, "These men are full of new wine." It was very obvious that these disciples had come under the strong influence of something which was affecting everything about them.

But Peter responded "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:"

Please note that drunkenness would have left these disciples incoherent in coordination, speech and action but instead they were bold, calm, eloquent and convincing. A filling with the true Holy Ghost made them to shake off fear and to stand up publicly to preach a powerful and convicting message.

Paul draws a very distinct line between the influence of alcohol and the influence of the Spirit to the believers in Ephesus. These two things are set in contrast and opposition to each other. It would be an utter contradiction to think of a Spirit-filled believer coming under the influence of alcohol in any degree.

A truly Spirit-filled believer ought not to come under any other influence. It is an issue of influence, effect and control. What influence should be upon the Christian's life to lead and direct him? Only that of the Holy Ghost.

Jude tells us in 1:19 "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." These were people who had mixed with the church calling themselves Christians and making much of the fact that they had the Spirit and were led by the Spirit. In reality however by their actions of separating from true believers they revealed that they did not have the true Holy Spirit.

The same goes for those who continually indulge in coming under the influence of alcohol; by such actions they reveal that they are not Spirit-filled. They may claim a profound experience of the Holy Ghost but the Holy Spirit will not indwell and fill a life that will not yield to Him, obey Him and come under His influence and control alone.

The true Holy Spirit will not share His temple with the influence of alcohol.

The remedy for remaining free from the influence of alcohol or any other moulding influence of the world is to "be filled with the Spirit." When filled with Him there is no room for other influences. When filled with Him there will be no desire to seek for joy, peace, solitude or deliverance in alcohol.

In Galatians 5 Paul draws out a picture for us of the conflict between the Spirit and the flesh. He exhorts believers to "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." He goes on to reveal the manifestation of the flesh having its way in a life and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit having His way in a life. Just one manifestation of the flesh is drunkenness whereas one manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit is temperance which is defined as self-control or the ability to control the appetites, lusts and desires of the flesh.

Just before this command, Paul says to them, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." (Eph 5:15-17). This is all part of walking circumspectly in a wicked world and so he calls upon them to have spiritual wisdom that they might "understand what the will of the Lord is." He then gives the command "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." This is the will of God for all who are wise. We must not be entangled with anything that will hinder us in this life.

Let me finish with a word to those who have played carnal games with social drinking or tipsiness: "be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;" This is a command to you. It is not one without the other, you must obey both commands. If you truly want a NT experience of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost and a continued experience of being refilled then separate yourself from these worldly influences.

Today what is called being filled with the Spirit is no baptism at all. It produces no holiness, no changed life, no fruit, no separation, no obedience to the written Scriptures, no power and no satisfaction. Today's so called Spirit-filled Churches practice, promote and protect the drinking of alcoholic wine while mocking and ridiculing those who abstain from it by calling them religious, legalistic or old fashioned.

Finally, take good note that a very primary and noticable thing concerning times of local and national revival is the devastating affect it has upon the the trade of alcohol. Let revival come to a community and the pubs close. They are empty because men are filled with God and so have no desire for social drinking. Let's be sure and fully persuaded that in the next Holy Ghost revival this issue shall be dealt with in the hearts of those who make up the true Church of Jesus christ.

9. Questions and Answers

Q. In the Old Testament the priests were told that they were not to drink wine when ministering to God in the Temple. Does this mean that we as New Testament believers/priests should not drink when attending church gatherings but are allowed to when at home?

A. It most certainly does not. If it is wrong in church then it is still wrong at home. If we take this Old Testament type and bring it over to the New Testament believer we see that we are now the temple. We are told in I Cor.3:16, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" And again in 6:19, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" And Paul gives a serious warning to those who disregard this fact "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is

holy, which temple ye are." (3:17). If the standard for the OT temple building was such how much more for our bodies under the New Covenant?

Q. Is it not very clear that wine was widely used in the Bible both in the Old and New Testaments and that it did have some level of alcoholic content even if it was small?

A. No not at all. In fact as already stated the term wine in the Bible can either mean alcoholic or non-alcoholic wine. The standard drink was grape juice, unfermented, which was not alcoholic and from which no one could get drunk. It is also true that from the days of Noah alcoholic wine was known and produced by most ancient cultures.

Those who just take for granted that every time they read the word wine in the Bible that it means an alcoholic drink will make a grave mistake. Those who are too lazy to study God's Word and who do not care anyway will carry on justifying that every mention of wine in the Bible is alcoholic. This shows great ignorance but a greater lack of reverence to God and His Word. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." II Tim. 2:15. Those who continue to believe that the early church drank alcoholic wine as justification for them also doing so are greatly mistaken.

Q. I want to ask about Jesus turning the water into wine at the marriage feast at Canaan of Galilee in John 2:1-11. It seems that according to the custom of the day it was normal for a marriage ceremony and celebration to last for a week. In these Scriptures we read that when He came to the wedding His mother Mary informed Him that there was no more wine and showed every sign of encouraging Him to do something to provide wine for the guests. We are then told that after Jesus turned the water to wine, the servants took it to the governor of the feast who tasted it and then said to the bridegroom "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now." John 2:10. The term used here "...when men have well drunk..." is the Greek word methu■ which means to drink to the point of intoxication, to get drunk or be drunk. The seven times this word is used in the New Testament it means a state of drunkenness as a result of alcoholic intake. Surely the governor here means that the tradition at weddings was to wait until people were happy, tipsy or drunk through the wine and then to serve a poor quality wine whereas in this particular case tradition was broken by Jesus serving better wine than what the guests had already drunk? If so then does this not mean that Jesus miraculously turned water into alcoholic wine?

A. First of all in answering this let's look at what this would mean if you are correct. It would mean that Jesus not only encouraged the social drinking of alcohol at such times but also encouraged and aided drunken parties. If this is so then Jesus was here contradicting other statements that He makes about the sin and danger of drunkenness but also He would be contradicting the clear teaching of the Prophets of the Old Testament and the Apostles of the New Testament. That is very serious. Straight after this we are told in verses 14-17, that Jesus was eaten up with zeal for His Father's House when seeing that religion had become merchandise In the Temple so He made a whip and chased the sellers out of the Temple. Would the Son of God go from promoting drunkenness in Canaan to punishing covetousness in the Temple? No not at all.

Furthermore, the governor at the wedding did not say that the people at this wedding were "drunk." He was saying that it was the custom of many at such occasions to be methu■. This word can also mean when men have "well drunk" or drunk to the full. That is why Wycliffe, Coverdale and many other

translators of the Bible who were fluent in Greek translated it with these words. The Greek version of the Old Testament uses this same word in numbers of places to refer to having eaten to the point of being satisfied and full as well as to drink to such a point. I do not at all believe that Jesus produced alcoholic wine or encouraged drunkenness. He made new wine and in the Old Testament new wine was always non-alcoholic. Also the bridegroom had obviously invited Mary, Jesus and His disciples because he was in sympathy with this new prophet of righteousness. No doubt it was a godly upright wedding celebration.

Q. But does it not also say in I Cor.11:21 in reference to the church at Corinth who gathered to partake of the Lord's supper, that "For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken." Here we have a clear statement saying that there were those who were drunk at the Lord's Table. Does this not show that alcoholic wine was drunk at Church gatherings in Corinth?

A. In this chapter mentioned we see the practice of the agape meal or love supper which was common in the early church. They would gather and bring their own food to eat supper together and then break bread together in remembrance of the Lord's death. In this particular verse the context is "eating...supper." Resulting from this came two problems. First, some did not have much or bring much with them, and so remained hungry at the meal. Second, others were "drunk" or fully satisfied after eating their plenteous meal. This makes full sense then, 'one was hungry and the other was full.' Paul uses the word "hungry" as the opposite of being "drunk." If he had meant the person was intoxicated he would have contrasted him with a sober man.

What is Paul's response to all this? In the following verse he says "What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" and then later in v33-34, "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come." So he nowhere here rebukes the sin of drunkenness, which he of course would have if that was the problem. No, the issue was dealt with by his advice to eat and drink at home and he most certainly was not saying for them to go home in order that they may get drunk.

Paul would not contradict what he had said earlier in this same letter in chapter 5 and 6, which was to have no fellowship with a Brother who was intoxicated through too much wine but to rebuke him. But here in chapter 11 Paul teaches that the man concerned, who had eaten and drunken fully to his own satisfaction while others went hungry, should go home to eat eat and drink, not in the church.

Q. If Jesus did not drink alcoholic wine why is there no clear statement from Him denouncing the social and cultural drinking of alcoholic wine?

A. Jesus could not be any more clear in His warning in Luke 21:34 "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." Again a few verses later He says, "But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." (45-46) Jesus gives a clear and serious warning to people who follow Him but by their life they do those things which will finally cause Him to reject them eternally. Jesus never tolerated drunkenness by His actions or in His preaching.

Q. But in Matthew 11:16-19 and Luke 7:31-34 the Pharisees accused Jesus of being a "wine-bibber" which means a tippler or lover of wine. It was a term used in that day of someone who could finish their

cup in one downing. It says "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." Does this not show that Jesus was drinking alcoholic wine in an environment of sinners? And if this is so is it not ok for us to do the same as a means of evangelism?

A. The Pharisees also accused Jesus in these verses of being a gluttonous man, one who overate. We of course know this is not true. They took hold of the fact that he ate meat and made him a glutton. But He most certainly was not. They also took hold of the fact that He drank wine - unfermented - and made Him a winebibber. This was another false accusation.

Jesus here in these verses is condemning the Pharisees for accusing John of having a devil because he was strict in not drinking unfermented wine or eating meat and for calling Jesus a glutton and drunkard for eating and drinking such. I think today Jesus would also condemn those who mock teetotallers like John or who make Jesus a supporter of drunkenness! He has not changed.

Q. In I Tim.5:23 Paul writes to Timothy "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." Here is a clear command for a Christian to drink wine. I have frequently heard that a little alcoholic wine is good for the stomach. Is Paul not saying here that taking just a little alcoholic wine for a stomach complaint is ok? Surely this is one good reason?

A. First of all let's notice that before this instruction Timothy drank neither non-alcoholic wine nor alcoholic wine. He abstained from both. Paul literally says here 'stop being only a water drinker.' The reason he gives for this advice is for the sake of Timothy's stomach. He was having some problem with his stomach and as a result it caused frequent feebleness. The cure was to take a little wine as opposed to only water.

Notice he said "a little" which can mean for a short period of time - just as a course of medicine is prescribed for a short period of time. Of course people laugh and joke about this scripture as an encouragement to drink whenever it is clear it was for a stomach problem as well as for just a short time or to take a little amount.

But lastly and very importantly you are right, many people do say that a little alcoholic wine is good for the stomach, but they are wrong. It is true the medical profession say that a little alcoholic wine is good for the heart. The ingredient in wine which is beneficial to the heart is called resveratrol but there is a higher content of it in non-alcoholic wine than there is in alcoholic wine. However alcoholic wine is not advised by the medical profession for stomach problems, in fact quite the opposite, it would tend to aggravate any stomach problems by inflaming the tissue of the stomach. Paul could only have meant grape juice as it would settle the stomach.

Q. Is unfermented grape juice good for your health?

A. It most certainly is. Just read the following comment from Expert Doctor, John D. Folts, Ph.D., who is the director of the Coronary Thrombosis Research Laboratory at the University of Wisconsin Medical School USA. He is an internationally recognised researcher specialising in the effect of diet in relation to coronary artery disease.

"Concord grape juice has more than three times the naturally occurring antioxidants of orange, grapefruit, apple or tomato juice, and twice as much per serving as the 42 other tested fruits and vegetables...in well-designed preliminary clinical research, drinking Concord grape juice reduced the tendency of platelets

in the blood to clump together, helping to maintain the free flow of blood in the arteries...Wine and Concord grape juice appear to be significant platelet inhibitors, meaning they make the platelets in the blood less likely to clot."

H•E•A•R•T UK, a leading cholesterol charity, has officially recognised Welch's Purple Grape Juice for its abundant antioxidant properties and role in promoting heart health. It is the first time a 100% pure and unsweetened juice has received the coveted H•E•A•R•T UK approval. These are just the beginnings of recent medical and scientific discoveries concerning non-alcoholic wine.

It is no wonder then that the Bible promotes wine (grape juice) more than any other drink but warns and condemns the drinking of alcoholic drinks. The Bible is simply backed up and confirmed by recent medical and scientific research.

Q. In order to reach people in the world I believe I must go into their homes, pub's, discos or wherever and have a casual drink with them in order to win them over to Jesus. We must identify with today's young culture. Jesus would have done the same. The world thinks we are different and that is why they do not come to Church. We must be relevant, innovative and progressive in our methods and style. Of course we present the same unchanging message but to reach the world you must be like the world. If that means drinking a beer, turning the church into a pub or turning worship into a disco then it is ok as long as our motive is to win people to Jesus. Surely that is ok?

A. Paul says in Rom.12:2 "And be not conformed to this world:" The word "conformed" means to be fashioned like it; to conform to its pattern; to be pressed into its image. The common teaching of today's church is the command 'Be conformed to this world.' This is confusion and disobedience to the Word of God.

I Pet.4:2-4, speaks of this very thing and instructs that if a true Christian separates himself from his previous worldly desires of drinking, partying, carousing and the like, that those of this world will "think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:"

Again Paul speaks of those in the world in Eph.5:7-8 "Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:" And in 5:11 "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." All through the Bible we have no good profitable example of followers of the Lord following the ways or practices of the world in order to win them over to God. It never has happened.

When you see church youth or leadership groups meeting in pubs, churches rebuilt to look like pubs, and a general conformity to the looks, sounds and actions of the world you can be sure that the world has succeeded in evangelizing the church with its gospel of 'eat, drink and be happy'!

Q. In the Parable of the Wineskin told by Jesus in Matthew 9, Mark 2 and Luke 5 we read of new wine being put into new wineskins in order to ferment. This shows that Jesus understood the process of fermenting wine and used it as an example of making alcoholic wine when teaching God's Word to people. If the wine was put into an old wineskin to ferment it would burst, but if put in a new wineskin it will expand to hold it safely. Surely this must show that He approved of making alcoholic wine and was maybe involved in such a process at some stage?

A. First, from what you say then it must be very obvious that the term "new wine" must mean unfermented or non-alcoholic wine. That is what the term new wine clearly means in the Bible. This simply proves that wine was a term used for unfermented grape juice even though many teach otherwise today.

Then you mention that new wine was placed in a new wineskin in order to ferment and that this process was revealed by the expanding of the wineskin. But I am afraid that is not correct. Job says in 32:19 "Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles." Fermenting wine put in a new wineskin would burst. It must have a vent or a means of releasing the carbonic gas. Such a process would expand the wine to 40 times more than its original size.

Job reveals here that new wine put in a new wineskin to ferment would burst. But if new wine was put in a new wineskin in order to preserve unfermented wine then it would simply mould the shape of the skin but not burst.

Q. When Paul in I Timothy ch.3 mentions "Not given to wine" and again in Titus in ch.1:7 as the qualifications for eldership but then speaks to the deacons in I Timothy 3 and the older woman in Titus 2 to be "not given to much wine" does it mean there is a difference in expectation here and that Paul will allow deacons and the older woman to drink as long as they do not drink too much?

A. When the qualifications for deacons are also given as not being "doubletongued" and for the older ladies as "not false accusers" it does not mean that the rank and file believers can participate in these sins or are given greater liberty in them. Sin is sin. So also those requirements laid upon elders are expected of the deacons and of the whole body of Christ. The Church is one temple for the Holy Spirit. So also those instructions given to deacons and older women apply to all.

Remember that elders, bishops, deacons and all believers were allowed to drink non-alcoholic wine, there was no restriction. But like the use of honey which is very good for all, a little instruction is given in Proverbs 25:27 which say's "It is not good to eat much honey." Here we have a warning against self indulgence and over indulgence.

I believe the warning to elders was an instruction concerning alcoholic wine. As already said the Greek word paroinos literally means staying near wine and tippling. It means don't even linger in such an atmosphere. But the instruction to the deacons was a warning to not over indulge in a good thing. As they carried out their practical ministry they were not to overindulge in drinking non-alcoholic grape juice. Both of these instructions apply to both elders and deacons.

Q. Tradition and history teaches us that alcoholic or fermented wine was used at the Passover by Israel and that the early Church carried on this practice by using fermented wine at the Lord's Table. This means that Jesus and the disciples at least drank fermented wine at the Passover. What is your answer to this?

A. If so, they would have complied with the practice of each man taking four cups of wine. This would mean that Jesus and the disciples took four cups of alcoholic wine each at this feast meal. Although each man would have a different capacity, if true, I am sure this would make at least one of them very tipsy.

The Jews not only used unleavened bread for the Passover, they also used unleavened wine. The fermenting process that makes wine alcoholic is a leavening process. Yeast is leaven. One Hebrew scholar commented "Leaven applied to the wine as well as the bread." The word "wine" is never used in connection with the Lord's Supper but "fruit of the vine" is and also the statement that Jesus "took the

cup."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/keith-malcomson/should-christians-drink-alcohol-part-2/>

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