

What the Bible Teaches about Drinking Alcohol

“Not Given To Much Wine”

Introduction:

1. Lesson 1 gave an overview of the Bible's condemnation of drinking alcohol and the resulting drunkenness.
2. Lesson 2 focused on the principles of sobriety and the meaning of drunkenness in the Bible.
3. Lesson 3 showed the generic nature of the words “wine” and “strong drink,” emphasizing the importance of context when studying passages using these words.
4. Lesson 4 discussed passages that seem to describe alcohol being used as medicine.
5. Still, many will seek to justify “social” drinking by appealing to the words of Scripture and even the example of Jesus...

I. Not Addicted to Much Wine (1 Timothy 3:8)

- A. In giving the qualifications for one to serve as an elder in the Lord's church, Paul declared that he must be vigilant, sober, and not given to wine (1 Timothy 3:1-7).
 1. The Greek word for 'vigilant' means, “One who abstains, *especially from wine*; thus, sober or temperate.”
 - a. This same word is used for the wives of deacons (1 Timothy 3:11) and aged men (Titus 2:2).
 - b. Clearly, Timothy applied it to himself as well (1 Timothy 5:23).
 2. The Greek word for 'sober' means, “Of a sound mind; curbing one's desires and impulses; thus, self-controlled” (cf. Titus 2:2, 5).
 3. The Greek word for 'given to wine' means, “To be near, by, or at wine.”
 - a. This indicates abstinence from consuming alcohol.
 - b. Furthermore, it requires separation from “drinking parties.”
 - i. To protect one's own sobriety
 - ii. To guard one's influence
 - c. The Christian is to have no fellowship with sin (Ephesians 5:11).
- B. In giving the qualifications for one to serve as a deacon in the Lord's church, Paul declared that he must be “not given to much wine” (1 Timothy 3:8-13).
 1. This phrase translated literally reads: “not wine much occupied with.”
 2. The Greek word for 'given' means, “To hold the mind towards; to be attentive to; to bring near; to be addicted.”
- C. Strangely, some think that this means that it is acceptable for deacons to drink a little wine, so long as they do not drink much or become addicted to it.
- D. In fact, the language does not suggest this at all.
 1. The same Greek word for 'given' is used to refer to those who “give heed” to “Jewish fables” (1 Timothy 1:4; Titus 1:14).
 2. This does not mean that one can give some attention to those myths so long as it is not too much attention or too many myths.
 3. When Solomon wrote, “Be not over much wicked,” he was not teaching that God approves of man being a little wicked (Ecclesiastes 7:17).
 4. When Peter condemned an “excess of riot,” he did not mean that a moderate amount of rioting is allowed (1 Peter 4:4).
 5. When James condemned an overflowing of naughtiness, he did not mean that a little wickedness is acceptable (James 1:21).
 6. “It is not affirmed that it would be proper for the deacon, any more than the bishop, to indulge in the use of wine in small quantities, but it is

What the Bible Teaches about Drinking Alcohol

affirmed that a man who is much given to the use of wine ought not, on any consideration, to be a deacon. ...The way in which the apostle mentions the subject here would lead us fairly to suppose that he did not mean to commend its use in any sense" (Albert Barnes).

- E. It is also possible that this wording was simply a form of speech.
 - 1. Example: "Three days and three nights" (Jonah 1:17; Matthew 12:40)
 - 2. To interpret this statement to mean that God sanctions the drinking of alcohol by deacons results in glaring contradictions.
 - 3. Remember the specifics of Paul's instruction to Timothy (1 Timothy 5:23) – completely unnecessary if moderate drinking is allowed.
 - 4. Consider instructions to other groups – elders, deacons, wives, aged men, and aged women (1 Timothy 3:2-3, 8; 3:11; Titus 2:2-3).
- F. It is also possible that the wine being considered is not alcoholic.
- G. God does not want leaders in the church – nor any Christian – to be given to wine, whether much or little.

II. Water that Was Made Wine (John 2:1-11)

- A. Unbelievably, in spite of these facts, many still proclaim that Jesus turned water into fermented, alcoholic, intoxicating wine!
- B. Consider the natural process of water becoming wine:
 - 1. Water falls as rain and is then absorbed by the roots of the grape vine.
 - 2. The vine transports the water, in the form of sap, to the grape where it becomes juice or wine (cf. Isaiah 65:8).
- C. Jesus performed a miracle by overpowering the laws of nature and turning water into wine immediately, without the use of the natural process.
- D. Consider the circumstances of this miracle:
 - 1. They had run out of wine because they had "well drunk" (vs. 3, 10).
 - 2. Jesus produced an abundance of wine (vs. 6-7).
 - a. A 'firkin' is estimated to be about nine gallons.
 - b. Thus, each pot would hold 18 – 27 gallons of liquid.
 - c. In total, Jesus produced between 108 and 162 gallons of wine.
 - 3. Upon tasting it, the master of the feast declared it to be "good wine" (vs. 9-10).
 - 4. This miracle manifested Jesus' glory (vs. 11).
- E. This was not the production of a little wine to be enjoyed as "social" drinking.
- F. Had Jesus created intoxicating wine He would have violated numerous passages of Scripture (Habakkuk 2:15; Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; Luke 12:45; 21:34; Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:10; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Peter 4:3-4).
- G. Instead, this miracle demonstrated the deity of Jesus by manifesting His power, provision, and perfection (cf. Mark 7:37; Luke 23:41; Acts 10:38; Hebrews 7:26; 5:8-9; 1 Peter 2:21-22; John 10:10).
- H. Because Jesus always does what is best, one will never be disappointed in Him!

Conclusion: Abstinence is the answer (1 Peter 2:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:22)!