

Elephants in the Church

“Alcohol”

(Proverbs 20:1)



- Introduction:
1. If the consumption of alcohol as a beverage is an action that is Scriptural, I don't want to “spy out the liberty” of other Christians (Galatians 2:4).
 2. But if on the other hand, the consumption of alcohol as a beverage is unscriptural, I want to resolutely speak out against it.
 3. I want to make clear that I'm discussing the use of alcohol as a beverage.
 - a. Not as a medicine or remedy. Surely, all would agree that the remedial or therapeutic use of a substance does not argue for its recreational use.
 - b. Nor am I talking about trace amounts that have nothing to do with intent.

I. Preliminary Thoughts

- A. We often get defensive when we engage in a practice someone else condemns.
 1. I'll admit it - I have a bias.
 2. You see, after 33 years of preaching, I've seen first hand, the toll alcohol has had on people.
 3. I believe it would be an unenviable position if I found myself defending what God calls “a mocker” (Prov.20:1), what the spiritually mature are commanded to stay away from (1 Tim. 3:3), and what God warned has the ability to keep one out of heaven (Gal. 5:21).
- B. That said, I ask that as you listen, you do as I did in my preparation, and let let reason and revelation rule the day, and make sure you are attempting to justify God and his word and not your desires and actions.

II. Addressing Common Misconceptions About The Bible & Alcohol

- A. When the word, “wine” is mentioned in the Bible, it is always intoxicating.
 1. There are at least 19 Hebrew and Greek words that are translated, “wine” in the Bible.
 - a. Some always refer to an intoxicating drink.
 - b. Some always refer to fresh juice from the grape.
 - c. Some can refer to both.
 2. Therefore context must sometimes determine whether a passage is dealing with an intoxicating beverage or a non-intoxicating beverage.
 3. “Oinos” is the term most frequently used in the New Testament and is the word that is involved in the passages we will examine tonight.
 - a. This word is a generic word and can refer to both an intoxicating (Ephesians 5:18) beverage and it can be fresh juice from the grape (Matthew 9:17).
- B. The Ancients Had No Way To Prevent Fermentation.
 1. This is also an unfounded belief.
 2. The people who lived in Bible times did have, and employed methods to prevent fermentation (i.e. Boiling, Filtration, Temperature Reduction, Sulfer Fumigation, Air Exclusion).

III. Addressing Several Scriptures

- A. (John 2:1-10).
 - 1. Jesus turned water to wine.
 - 2. The phrase, “well drunk” (methusthosin) denotes the quantity, not the quality of the liquid (Psalm 23:5).
- B. (Luke 7:31-35).
 - 1. Jesus was accused of being a winebibber.
 - 2. Remember, these are enemies who are making this charge...was he also a glutton?
- C. (Acts 2:13).
 - 1. They accused the apostles of drunkenness
 - 2. In response, Peter did not argue that they were sober upon the basis that they didn’t drink alcoholic beverages, but he argued that it was too early in the morning to be drunk.
 - 3. However, giving “a” reason doesn’t exclude other reasons.
- D. (1 Timothy 3:8; Titus 2:3).
 - 1. It is argued that since deacons and older women are not to be given to “much” wine, they may imbibe in moderate amounts.
 - 2. The only difference is that one is condemned in the superlative (e.g. Ecc. 7:17; James 1:21; 1 Peter 4:4)
- E. (1 Timothy 5:23).
 - 1. Paul told Timothy to drink a little wine.
 - 2. This is clearly medicinal in nature.

IV. Positive Prohibitions Against The Consumption Of Alcohol As A Beverage

- A. The Bible condemns drunkenness.
 - 1. (Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:21; Proverbs 23:31)
 - 2. What is the definition between drunkenness (which is forbidden) and moderation (which some argue is permissible)?
 - 3. If one cannot give a precise distinction, then one would be foolish to drink! Realism.
 - 1. I have yet to talk to someone who claims to be a social drinker who hasn’t, at some point in their drinking life, admitted to getting a “buzz.”
 - 2. I am forced to wonder if the social drinker who never gets drunk is not a mirage. Does such a person really exist?

- Conclusion:
- 1. The fruits of alcohol betray it.
 - 2. As a drug, it has a use.
 - 3. Alcohol as a beverage, it deceives, destroys.
 - 4. “Alcohol has man defenders, but no defense” –Abraham Lincoln.
 - 5. Before you place yourself in the camp of those who would defend its use, remember of God’s word says (Proverbs 20:1).