

# **WINE IN THE BIBLE!**

## **A STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE: -**

● The majority of professed Christians drink alcohol in moderation, and they believe and teach that the Bible sanctions the moderate consumption of alcohol. Two of the major arguments put forward by these people for the so-called Biblical permission of drinking alcohol in moderation concern our Lord Jesus Christ: -

1. They claim that Jesus himself made alcoholic wine at the wedding feast at Cana; and,
2. They claim that Jesus himself claimed to be a wine drinker.

These people in further justification for their moderationist beliefs and practices put several other arguments forward: -

1. They claim that the words "wine" or "strong drink" in the Bible are only referring to fermented, alcoholic drinks. This is called the "one wine theory". Coupled with this argument is the following belief that,
2. They claim that the ancients did not have the knowledge or methods to be able to preserve grape or fruit juices in an unfermented state, so that the "wine" or "strong drink" mentioned in the Bible could only be fermented, alcoholic substances.
3. Therefore, they claim that the passages that unreservedly condemn "wine" or "strong drink" are condemning the excessive use or excessive quantity used of these substances, rather than condemning the alcoholic nature of these substances themselves.

In a nutshell, the above five points form the basis and foundation of the "moderationist" position held within Christendom.

In this STUDY DOCUMENT we shall specifically address each one of these five points in detail, and clearly provide abundant Biblical and historical evidence that demonstrates that each one of these five points is based upon an unwarranted assumption. In fact, the Bible teaches the very opposite concerning four of these five points, and by also using historical documentation we shall answer the one remaining point concerning the ancients who did indeed have the knowledge to prevent grape juice from fermenting.

We pray that the honest in heart reader will be enlightened to see the truth of the Bible concerning this vital subject, and to take their stand under the banner of "total abstinence", as being the Biblical imperative. May the Lord bless and guide the reader as they study his Word.

RICK HENWOOD. – 31 DECEMBER 2004.

Copyright 2016 - <http://lookingfortheLostTruthsofJesus.org>

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS: -**

- 1. THE SCIENTIFIC LAWS OF FERMENTATION RELATING TO THE PRODUCTION OF ALCOHOLIC WINE.**
- 2. DID THE ANCIENTS KNOW HOW TO PRESERVE GRAPE JUICE IN AN UNFERMENTED STATE?**
- 3. DID THE ANCIENTS RECOGNIZE THAT THERE WERE TWO DIFFERENT KINDS OF WINE WHEN THEY USED THE WORD “WINE”?**
- 4. ARE THERE TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF WINE IN THE BIBLE?**
- 5. WINE IN A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE.**
- 6. JESUS AND WINE.**
- 7. THE NEW TESTAMENT EXHORTS US TO BE SOBER.**
- 8. SOME MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS EXAMINED.**

# **1. THE SCIENTIFIC LAWS OF FERMENTATION RELATING TO THE PRODUCTION OF ALCOHOLIC WINE.**

● Many people assume that grape juice will naturally ferment and become a good quality, fermented alcoholic wine<sup>1</sup> automatically. Nothing is further from the truth. To produce a good quality, fermented alcoholic wine, the fermentation process has to be carefully controlled. Grape juice that is left to ferment in an uncontrolled environment will eventually go sour and become vinegar, which is **NOT** pleasant to drink.

There are four essential conditions that need to be controlled so that a good quality, fermented alcoholic wine will be produced: -

“1. There must be saccharine (sugar) matter and gluten (yeast).

2. The temperature should not be below 50° (i. e. 10° Celsius) nor above 70° (i. e. 21° Celsius) or 75° (i. e. 24° Celsius) <sup>2</sup>.

3. The juice must be of a certain consistence. *Thick syrup will not undergo vinous<sup>3</sup> fermentation. An excess of sugar is unfavorable to this process; and, on the other hand, too little sugar, or, which is the same thing, too much water, will be deficient in the necessary quantity of saccharine matter to produce a liquor that will keep, and for want of more spirit the vinous fermentation will almost instantly be followed by the acetous.<sup>4</sup>*

4. The quantity of gluten or ferment must also be well regulated. Too much or too little will impede and prevent fermentation.

... The indispensable conditions for vinous fermentation are the exact proportions of sugar, of gluten or yeast, and of water, with the temperature of the air ranging between 50° (i. e. 10° Celsius) and 75° (i. e. 24° Celsius).”<sup>5</sup>

● It is important to understand these four scientific laws concerning fermentation from the outset of this STUDY DOCUMENT. If any one of these four scientific laws are not met, fermentation will **NOT** occur. Keeping these laws in mind, we shall now turn to our next SECTION to consider the important issue, relating to if the ancients had the ability to prohibit any of these four laws from taking place, and thus being able to preserve grape juice in an unfermented state.

---

<sup>1</sup> In this discussion the expression “a good quality, fermented alcoholic wine” is **NOT** meant to apply that alcohol is a good quality substance. Rather, it is referring to the taste which alcoholic wine drinkers refer to as a good quality wine.

<sup>2</sup> All the original temperature figures quoted in these historical sources are referring to the old Fahrenheit scale of measurement.

<sup>3</sup> “Vinous – Of the nature of wine; having the qualities of wine; ...” – The Oxford Universal Dictionary Illustrated, Volume 2, page 2359. Vinous Fermentation must therefore be the fermentation that produces wine.

<sup>4</sup> “Acetous fermentation: The chemical reaction by which sugar or alcohol is changed into vinegar.” – IBID., Volume 1, page 15.

<sup>5</sup> Bible Wines or The Laws of Fermentation; by William Patton; pages 14 & 15.

## **2. DID THE ANCIENTS KNOW HOW TO PRESERVE GRAPE JUICE IN AN UNFERMENTED STATE?**

● Many Christians assume that the ancients did not possess the knowledge to be able to preserve grape juice in an unfermented state. And thus if this assumption is correct, there could only be one type of wine referred to in both secular ancient literature and in the Bible - fermented, alcoholic wine. If this assumption was correct, it would establish the “one wine theory” promoted by moderationists.

But as we shall now see, the ancients did indeed possess the knowledge to be able to prohibit the four laws of fermentation by various methods, and hence they were able to preserve grape juice in an unfermented, non-alcoholic state. This disproves the “one wine theory”.

Below we list three basic methods by which fermentation can be prevented: -

- “1. Grape-juice will not ferment when the air is completely excluded.
2. By boiling down the juice, or, in other words, evaporating the water, the substance becomes a syrup, which if very thick will not ferment.
3. If the juice be filtered and deprived of its gluten, or ferment, the production of alcohol will be impossible.”<sup>6</sup>

Also please observe that the following methods also can prevent fermentation from occurring: -

- “1. By those means which render the yeast inoperative, particularly by the oils that contain sulphur, as oil of mustard, as also by the sulphurous and sulphuric acids.
2. By the separation of the yeast, either by the filter or subsidence.
3. By lowering the temperature to 45° (i. e. 7° Celsius). If the fermenting mass becomes clear at this temperature and be drawn off from the subsided yeast, it will not ferment again, though it should be heated to the proper pitch.”<sup>7</sup>



**To Sum Up:** - All fermentation can be prevented by excluding the air, by boiling, by filtration, by subsidence, and by the use of sulphur fumigation. The fact that the Bible does not directly refer to any of these methods is simply because the Bible deals primarily with those aspects of life, that are related to salvation history.

### **DID THE ANCIENTS USE ANY OF THESE METHODS TO PRESERVE GRAPE JUICE IN AN UNFERMENTED, NON-ALCOHOLIC STATE? YES THEY DID!**

- **BOILING:** -

Boiling evaporates the water, thus leaving a large portion of sugar so as to prevent fermentation. It would also mean that this wine was very sweet to the taste.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> IBID., pages 21 & 22.

<sup>7</sup> IBID., page 22.

<sup>8</sup> Through out this Study Document when historical sources are referring to sweet wine they are referring to unfermented, non-alcoholic wine, as sweet fruit juices that are left to themselves in hot climates, immediately pass into the acetous fermentation process and become sour. So for a wine to be considered sweet by the ancients it means that it is describing an unfermented, non-alcoholic wine.

“The Lacedaemonians used to boil their wines upon the fire till the fifth part was consumed; then after four years were expired began to drink them. ... Columella and other writers who were contemporary with the apostles inform us that “in Italy and Greece it was common to boil their wines.”<sup>9</sup>

“The Mishna states that the Jews were in the habit of using boiled wine.”<sup>10</sup>

- **FILTRATION: -**

With filtration, the gluten or yeast is separated from the juice of the grape, thus prohibiting fermentation from occurring.

“Plutarch, born A. D. 60, in his Symposium, says: “Wine is rendered old or feeble in strength when it is frequently filtered. The strength or spirit being thus excluded, the wine neither inflames the brain nor infests the mind and the passions, and is much more pleasant to drink.”<sup>11</sup>

Pliny states, “The most useful wine has all its force or strength broken by the filter.”<sup>12</sup>

- **SUBSIDENCE: -**

The gluten may be effectually separated from the juice by subsidence as to prevent fermentation. One of the methods used was by storing the wine in cold water, the temperature would be kept under 45° (i. e. 7° Celsius), the gluten would settle to the bottom, and thus prohibit fermentation from taking place.

Pliny states concerning the production of wine that is called Aigleuces, that is always sweet, “They plunge the casks, immediately after they are filled from the vat, into water, until winter has passed away and the wine has acquired the habit of being cold.”<sup>13</sup>

“If you wish to keep grape juice through the whole year, put the grape juice in an amphora, seal the stopper with pitch, and sink in the pond. Take it out after thirty days; it will remain sweet the whole year.”<sup>14</sup>

- **SULPHUR FUMIGATION: -**

Sulphur fumigation displaces the oxygen of the air and thus it inhibits the growth of the yeast, which prevents fermentation from taking place.

“When the Mishna forbids smoked wines from being used in offerings, it has chiefly reference to the Roman practice of fumigating them with sulphur, the vapour of which absorbed the oxygen, and thus arrested the fermentation. The Jews carefully eschewed the wine and vinegar of the Gentiles.”<sup>15</sup>

● Clearly the ancients did indeed know how to preserve grape juice in an unfermented, non-alcoholic state, and it also appears to be a common and widespread practise throughout the ancient world. Therefore, the ancients would have recognized two different kinds of wine in their wine making, one fermented and one unfermented. In our next SECTION of the STUDY DOCUMENT, we shall indeed see that this was the case as we trace the meaning of the word “WINE” in ancient secular literature.

---

<sup>9</sup> IBID., page 24.

<sup>10</sup> Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature; by John Kittto: “Passover”.

<sup>11</sup> Patton, page 29.

<sup>12</sup> IDIB., page 30.

<sup>13</sup> IBID., page 32.

<sup>14</sup> “On Agriculture”; Marcus Cato (234 – 149 B. C.).

<sup>15</sup> Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature; by John Kittto: “Wine”.

### **3. DID THE ANCIENTS RECOGNIZE THAT THERE WERE TWO DIFFERENT KINDS OF WINE WHEN THEY USED THE WORD “WINE”?**

● Today when people think of the word “WINE”, they only think of fermented, alcoholic wine. And modern dictionaries reflect that understanding of the meaning of the word “WINE”. But in the ancient world, around the time of the Bible writers, this was **NOT** the case. Different races when using the word “WINE” were referring to **both** fermented, alcoholic wine, and unfermented, non-alcoholic wine. We shall now give our readers some of the historical evidence that supports this statement.

“Pliny says “some Roman wines were as thick as honey,” also that the “Albanian wine was very sweet or luscious, and that it took the third rank among all the wines.” He also tells of a Spanish wine in his day, called “Inerticulum” – that is, would not intoxicate – from “iners,” inert, without force or spirit, more properly termed “justicus sobriani,” sober wine, which would not inebriate. ...

According to Plautus, B. C. 200, even *mustum* signified both wine and sweet wine. ...

Columella says the Greeks called this unintoxicating wine “Amethyston,” from Alpha, negative, and methusis, intoxicate – that is, wine which would not intoxicate. ...

Aristotle says of sweet wine, glukus, that it would not intoxicate. ...

“The sweet, unfermented juice of the grape was termed *gleukos* by the Greeks and *mustum* by the Romans – the latter word being properly an adjective signifying new or fresh.” “A portion of the must was used at once, being drunk fresh.” “When it was desired to preserve a quantity in the sweet state, an amphora was taken and coated with pitch within and without, it was filled with mustum lixivium, and corked so as to be perfectly air-tight. It was then immersed in a tank of cold fresh water, or buried in wet sand, and allowed to remain for six weeks or two months. The contents, after this process, was found to remain unchanged for a year, and hence the name, aegleukos – that is, ‘semper mustum,’ always sweet.”<sup>16</sup>

As far as the Jews were concerned, we find that: -

“Fresh wine before fermenting was called ‘yayin mi-gat’ [wine of the vat]. The ordinary wine was of current vintage. The vintage of the previous year was called ‘yayin yashan’ [old wine]. The third years vintage was ‘yayin meyushshan’ [very old wine].”<sup>17</sup>

● Clearly, the ancients did understand the word “WINE” to refer to **both** fermented, alcoholic wine, and to unfermented, non-alcoholic wine. The question that now faces us, and which we shall address in our next SECTION, is did the Bible writers have the same understanding of the word “WINE” as the secular ancient writers did? Because if they did, then this gives us clear Biblical proof that there are two different types of wine in the Bible, which fact destroys the “one wine theory” held by moderationists.

---

<sup>16</sup> Patton, pages 35, 36 & 41.

<sup>17</sup> The Jewish Encyclopedia: “Wine” 1906 edition.

## **4. ARE THERE TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF WINE IN THE BIBLE?**

● As we have just established in our previous SECTION, the ancients did indeed consider that the word “WINE” applied to **both** fermented alcoholic wine, and to unfermented non-alcoholic wine. We shall now establish from the Scriptures, that the Bible writers also recognized this same distinction concerning the word “WINE” as it is used in the Scriptures. This truth destroys the “one wine theory”.

### **THE OLD TESTAMENT – THE HEBREW WORD “yayin”<sup>18</sup> CONSIDERED: -**

The Hebrew word that is most commonly translated in the Old Testament, as “wine” is the word: - **“yayin”** – See Strong’s Concordance: Hebrew, No. 3196. We shall now demonstrate that the inspired Bible writers used this Hebrew word to refer to **both** fermented, alcoholic wine; and to unfermented, non-alcoholic wine.

#### **“yayin” AS FERMENTED, ALCOHOLIC WINE: -**

- Noah planted a vineyard and drank wine - **“yayin”**, and he became drunk.  
Genesis 9:20 & 21: - “And Noah began [to be] an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: **And he drank of the wine {“yayin”}, and was drunken;** and he was uncovered within his tent.”
- Lot’s two surviving daughters made their father drunk with wine - {**“yayin”**}, so that he would not know when they laid with him, to preserve his offspring upon the earth. Clearly the whole purpose of Lot’s two daughters was to get their father intoxicated with wine **“yayin”**, so that he would not know who he was sleeping with.  
Genesis 19:31-36: - “And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father [is] old, and [there is] not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: **Come, let us make our father drink wine {“yayin”},** and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. **And they made their father drink wine {“yayin”} that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.** And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: **let us make him drink wine {“yayin”} this night also;** and go thou in, [and] lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. **And they made their father drink wine {“yayin”} that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.** Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.”
- Samuel’s mother Hannah prayed to the Lord moving her lips but without uttering her words audibly. The priest Eli observing this, assumed that she was drunken, and he rebuked her for being drunk with wine - **“yayin”**. She responded by stating that she had not touched wine {**“yayin”**} or strong drink.  
1 Samuel 1:9-15: - “So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD. And she [was] in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. **And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.** And Eli said unto her, **How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine {“yayin”} from thee.** And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I [am] a woman of a sorrowful spirit: **I have drunk neither wine {“yayin”} nor strong drink,** but have poured out my soul before the LORD.”
- Nabal held a feast in his house, and his heart was merry because he was very drunk with wine - **“yayin”**.  
1 Samuel 25:36 & 37: - “And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and **Nabal’s heart [was] merry within him, for he [was] very drunken:** wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light. But it came to pass in the morning, **when the wine {“yayin”} was gone out of Nabal,** and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became [as] a stone.”

---

<sup>18</sup> The Hebrew word that always refers exclusively to unfermented, non-alcoholic grape juice is the word **“tiyrosch”** – See Strong’s Concordance, Hebrew, No. 8492.

- The prophet Jeremiah likens himself to a drunken man, who has been overcome by wine - “**yayin**”.  
Jeremiah 23:9: - “Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; **I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine {“yayin”} hath overcome**, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness.”

● The previous passages clearly establish the truth that “**yayin**” does indeed refer to fermented, alcoholic wine in the Old Testament Scriptures.

### “yayin” AS UNFERMENTED, NON-ALCOHOLIC WINE: -

- Nehemiah saw men treading winepresses in Judah on the Sabbath day, and bringing it in and selling it on that day.  
Nehemiah 13:15: - “**In those days saw I in Judah [some] treading wine presses on the sabbath**, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; **as also wine {“yayin”}**, grapes, and figs, and all [manner of] burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified [against them] in the day wherein they sold victuals.”

- In God’s judgments upon Moab, it is promised that the treaders shall not tread out any wine - “**yayin**” from their winepresses. Clearly this wine - “**yayin**” is referring to what was trodden out of the winepress, **BEFORE** the fermentation process could start.  
Isaiah 16:10: - “And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: **the treaders shall tread out no wine {“yayin”} in [their] presses**; I have made [their vintage] shouting to cease.”

Jeremiah 48:33: - “And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab; **and I have caused wine {“yayin”} to fail from the winepresses**: none shall tread with shouting; [their] shouting [shall be] no shouting.”

- Gedaliah, the governor appointed by the Babylonians, tells the Jews who had not been taken captive by the Babylonians, to gather wine - “**yayin**”, summer fruits and oil, and then to store them in vessels. The Jews did this, and they gathered wine - “**yayin**” and summer fruits in great abundance. In this passage the word wine - “**yayin**” is applying to the fruit of the vine that was gathered to be stored by the Jews.

Jeremiah 40:10 & 12: - “As for me, behold, I will dwell at Mizpah, to serve the Chaldeans, which will come unto us: but ye, gather ye **wine {“yayin”}**, and summer fruits, and oil, and put [them] in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that ye have taken. ... Even all the Jews returned out of all places whither they were driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah, unto Mizpah, and gathered **wine {“yayin”}** and summer fruits very much.”

- During the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem, the children and suckling babes, asked their mothers for corn and wine - “**yayin**”. Would suckling babes and young children ask their mothers for fermented, alcoholic wine to drink, especially during a famine cause by the siege? **NO!** But they would ask their mothers for nutritious unfermented, non-alcoholic wine or grape juice to drink.  
Lamentations 2:11 & 12: - “Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people; **because the children and the sucklings** swoon in the streets of the city. **They say to their mothers, Where [is] corn and wine {“yayin”}?** when they swooned as the wounded in the streets of the city, when their soul was poured out into their mothers’ bosom.”

● These examples are sufficient to show that wine - “**yayin**” did indeed refer to unfermented grape juice. Thus clearly establishing the truth that the Bible writers did indeed refer to two types of wine in the Old Testament Scriptures.

### THE NEW TESTAMENT – THE GREEK WORD - “OINOS” CONSIDERED: -

The Greek word that is most commonly translated in the New Testament, as “wine” is the word: - **OINOS**” – See Strong’s Concordance: Greek, No. 3631. We shall now demonstrate that the inspired Bible writers used this Greek word in exactly the same way as the writers of the Old Testament did, to refer to **both** fermented, alcoholic wine; and to unfermented, non-alcoholic wine.

### “OINOS” AS FERMENTED, ALCOHOLIC WINE: -



- Paul exhorted the Ephesians not to be drunk with wine - “OINOS”, but rather to be filled with the Holy Spirit.  
Ephesians 5:18: - “**And be not drunk with wine {“OINOS”}**, wherein is excess (or dissipation)\*; but be filled with the Spirit.”  
**NB**: - \* For a detailed examination of this verse please turn to PAGE 12.
- In the book of Revelation, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with the Great Whore of Revelation 17, and the inhabitants of the earth, have been made drunk with the wine - “OINOS”, of her fornication.  
Revelation 17:1 & 2: - “And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, **and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine {“OINOS”} of her fornication.**”

● These examples are sufficient to show that wine - “OINOS” did indeed refer to fermented, alcoholic wine.

### “OINOS” AS UNFERMENTED, NON-ALCOHOLIC WINE: -

- Jesus taught that new wine - “OINOS NEOS” is not to be put into old wine bottles (which in reality were wine skins), otherwise the skins would burst, and the new wine - “OINOS NEOS” is wasted. Rather, new wine - “OINOS NEOS” is to be put into new wine bottles or skins, and both are going to be preserved.  
Matthew 9:17: - “Neither do men put **new wine {“OINOS NEOS”}** into **old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine {“OINOS”} runneth out, and the bottles perish:** but they put **new wine {“OINOS NEOS”}** into new bottles, and both are preserved.”

Mark 2:22: - “And no man putteth **new wine {“OINOS NEOS”}** into **old bottles: else the new wine {OINOS NEOS”} doth burst the bottles, and the wine {“OINOS”} is spilled, and the bottles will be marred:** but **new wine {“OINOS NEOS”}** must be put into new bottles.”

Luke 5:37 & 38: - “And no man putteth **new wine {“OINOS NEOS”}** into **old bottles; else the new wine {“OINOS NEOS”} will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.** But **new wine {“OINOS NEOS”}** must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.”

These three passages **CANNOT** be referring to wine that was going to undergo the process of fermentation for the following reasons: -

“it is impossible that the **must** [freshly-pressed grape juice] could ever have been put into skins to undergo the whole process of fermentation, as is usually stated, the action of the gas given off in the earlier stages of the process being much too violent for any skins to withstand.”<sup>19</sup>

Also consider the fact, that if old skins were used, some of the decayed albuminous matter would still be adhering to their sides which must, by the action of the air, have changed into a leavening or fermenting agent; or by long wear and heat, cracks or apertures admitting the air might exist undetected; and the wine, would thus be set fermenting, which would in time cause the skins to burst, and the wine would be lost. Unfermented grape juice however could be poured into new skins, and no cause of fermentation would exist to cause the skins to burst.

- Under the third Seal of the book of Revelation, John hears a voice speaking from among the four beasts, which exhorts that the oil and the wine - “OINOS” are not to be hurt. This warning against hurting the oil and the wine is referring to the solid fruit, to the olive and the grape. And the grape of course is in an unfermented state.  
Revelation 6:5 & 6: - “And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; **and [see] thou hurt not the oil and the wine {“OINOS”}.**”

● These examples are sufficient to show that wine - “OINOS” did indeed refer to unfermented, non-alcoholic wine as well.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> “Encyclopedia Biblica”; “Wine and Strong Drink”.

## **5. WINE IN A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE: -**

### **FERMENTED, ALCOHOLIC WINE IS FORBIDDEN: -**

- The priests of the Lord were **NOT** allowed to drink wine or strong drink when they went into the Tabernacle or Temple of the Lord, under the penalty of death. As the priests were required by the Lord to minister within the Sanctuary **EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR, AND ALSO SEVERAL TIMES THROUGHOUT EVERY DAY**, to offer all the various offerings for the congregation and for the individual Hebrew, this prohibition meant that the priests were commanded by the Lord to abstain from alcohol continually, so that they would have clear minds to discern between the holy and unholy, and between the clean and unclean, and so that they could teach Israel all the statutes of the Lord.

Leviticus 10:8-11: - "And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, **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.**"

Ezekiel 44:21: - "Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court."

On the other hand, the prophet Isaiah rebuked the priests and prophets of Israel, for erring in judgment, because of their use of wine and strong drink.

Isaiah 28:7: - "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.**"

- Like the ministers of the Lord in the Old Testament, the New Testament bishop or elder as an essential qualification for his office is **NOT** to be given to the use of wine.

1 Timothy 3:1-3: - "This [is] a true saying, **If a man desire the office of a bishop**, he desireth a good work. **A bishop then must be blameless**, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; **Not given to wine**, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous."

Titus 1:7: - "**For a bishop must be** blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, **not given to wine**, no striker, not given to filthy lucre."

- Wine is a mocker and strong drink is raging, whoever is deceived by them is not wise. This tells us that wine and strong drink are **deceptive** substances. A careful reading of this passage makes no mention of the quantity consumed. Rather it is the nature of these substances that is being condemned in this passage.

Proverbs 20:1: - "**Wine [is] a mocker, strong drink [is] raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.**"

- We are counseled not to be among winebibbers.

Proverbs 23:20: - "**Be not among winebibbers**; among riotous eaters of flesh."

- Woe, sorrow, contentions, babblings, wounds without cause and redness of the eyes belong to those who tarry long at wine. In fact, Solomon exhorts us **NOT** to even look upon the wine when it is red. He likens its final effect to being bitten by a serpent and being stung by an adder.

Proverbs 23:29-32: - "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? **They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, [when] it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.**"

---

<sup>20</sup> It is also significant to note, that the SEPTUAGINT (the Jewish made Greek translation of the Old Testament Scriptures which was used by the apostles of Christ in their writings), translated the Hebrew word for unfermented, grape juice, "**tiros**", by using the Greek word "**OINOS**" 35 times. For example in Psalms 4:7; Proverbs 3:10; Joel 1:10; 2:19 & 24. This is further evidence that the Greek word - "**OINOS**" did indeed refer to unfermented, non-alcoholic wine in the Biblical literature.

- Rulers and lawmakers and those who administer the laws are **NOT** to drink wine or strong drink, as it perverts their sense of justice.  
Proverbs 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.**”
- There is a **WOE** pronounced upon those who are mighty to drink wine and strong drink, and who justify the wicked and deal wrongly with the righteous. (In other words, this is referring to those who have perverted justice because of their use of alcohol.) Their fate is to be consumed as stubble.  
Isaiah 5:22-24: - **“Woe unto [them that are] mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!** Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, [so] their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.”
- Paul has exhorted us **NOT** to be drunk with wine in which is dissipation or debauchery. Clearly, it is the nature of fermented wine that leads to this sorry condition.  
Ephesians 5:18: - **“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is \*excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”**  
**NB:** - \*The Greek word that has been incorrectly translated in the KJV as “excess” is the word “*asotia*” – See Strong’s Concordance; Greek, No. 810. It is defined as “*debauchery, dissipation, profligacy.*”<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, other new translations of the Scriptures have also made the same mistake in their translation of this word as the KJV has, so as to protect the moderationist position.

In fact the phrase “wherein is excess”, in the Greek text reads as follows: - “*en ho estin asotia*”, which literally means, “***in which is dissipation***”. By focussing upon the word “drunk” rather than upon the noun “wine”, moderationists can translate this passage so as to allow moderate drinking, while condemning the excessive use of wine.

### **THE USE OF UNFERMENTED, NON-ALCOHOLIC WINE IS APPROVED: -**

- Isaac’s blessing to Jacob included the promise that God would give him plenty of wine – unfermented grape juice. (The Hebrew word that is used for “wine” in this verse is the word “*tiyrosh*”.)  
Genesis 27:28 & 37: - “Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, **and plenty of corn and wine:** ... And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; **and with corn and wine have I sustained him:** and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?”
- God promised to bless Israel’s wine – unfermented grape juice. (The Hebrew word that is used for “wine” in this verse is the word “*tiyrosh*”.)  
Deuteronomy 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**, 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.”
- God promised that the Promised Land would be a land of wine – unfermented grape juice. (The Hebrew word that is used for “wine” in this verse is the word “*tiyrosh*”.)  
Deuteronomy 33:28: - “Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: **the fountain of Jacob [shall be] upon a land of corn and wine;** also his heavens shall drop down dew.”
- Wine – unfermented grape juice cheers God and man. (The Hebrew word that is used for “wine” in this verse is the word “*tiyrosh*”.)  
Judges 9:13: - “And the vine said unto them, **Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man,** and go to be promoted over the trees?”
- God gives mankind wine that makes glad the heart of man. (The Hebrews word “*yayin*” is the word used for “wine” in this passage.)

<sup>21</sup> A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, by W. Bauer, Translated and revised by W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker; page 119. From now on in this STUDY DOCUMENT this Lexicon shall be referred to as BAGD.

Psalms 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 [that] maketh glad the heart of man**, [and] oil to make [his] face to shine, and bread [which] strengtheneth man's heart."

- New wine – unfermented grape juice is found in the cluster of the grapes, and it contains a blessing. (The Hebrew word that is used for "the new wine" in this verse is the word "tiyros".)

Isaiah 65:8: - "**Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and [one] saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing [is] in it:** so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all."

## **6. JESUS AND WINE: -**

### **● THE WEDDING AT CANA – JOHN 2:1-11 CONSIDERED: -**

John 2:1-11: - “And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted **wine** {“**OINOS**”}, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no **wine** {“**OINOS**”}. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do [it]. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare [it]. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine {“**OINOS**”}, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, 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** {“**TON KALON OINON**”} until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.”

It is commonly believed by many Christians, that the wine that Jesus made at the wedding feast, was fermented, alcoholic wine, and thus by this miracle of Christ, we have his approval for the moderate consumption of alcohol. But as we shall now demonstrate this popular belief rests upon five assumptions.

**ASSUMPTION 1: - WINE - “OINOS”** only refers to fermented, alcoholic wine: -

From what we have previously plainly documented from SECTIONS 2 - 4 of this STUDY DOCUMENT, this assumption rests upon an unsubstantiated basis, both from the meaning of this word in the ancient secular literature, and in the New Testament Scriptures. This first assumption is a classic case of **CIRCULAR REASONING** put forward by moderationists to justify their belief.

**ASSUMPTION 2: - THE WORD “OINOS” IS USED IN REFERENCE TO DESCRIBE THE WINE THAT RAN OUT, AND ALSO THE WINE THAT JESUS MADE; THEREFORE BOTH WINES MUST HAVE BEEN FERMENTED, ALCOHOLIC WINES: -**

This assumption is disproved by two facts. Firstly, as has been previously established, wine - “**OINOS**” does **NOT** always refer to fermented, alcoholic wine. But it can and often does refer to unfermented, grape juice. Secondly, the wine that Jesus provided is distinguished from the wine that ran out, and it is described as being “the good wine” - “**TON KALON OINON**”. This suggests that the two wines were **NOT** identical, and that in fact, Jesus’ wine was superior to the wine that ran out.

**ASSUMPTION 3: - As the Jews did not know how to preserve grape juice in an unfermented state, and as this wedding feast took place just before the spring Passover, which was six months after the grape harvest, this wine had ample time to ferment: -**

“The Mishna states that the Jews were in the habit of using boiled wine.”<sup>22</sup>

As this was the established habit of the Jews, the process of boiling the grape juice prevented fermentation from occurring. Therefore this assumption is completely invalid. It should also be mentioned that the good wine that Jesus made was drunk immediately, and therefore it had **NO** time to under go the process of fermentation.

**ASSUMPTION 4: - As the wine that Jesus made is called “the good wine”, this proves that it was a high quality alcoholic wine: -**

This assumption is based upon 21<sup>st</sup> century tastes, but it was **NOT** the case in the ancient world at the time this miracle occurred. In the Roman world, the best wines were those whose alcoholic potency had been removed by boiling and filtration.

Pliny states, “wines are most beneficial (utilissimum) when all their potency has been removed by the strainer.”<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature; by John Kittto; “Passover”.

<sup>23</sup> Natural History.

Plutarch states concerning wine, “is much more pleasant to drink when it neither inflames the brain nor infests the mind or passions, because its strength has been removed through frequent filtering.”<sup>24</sup>

“Rabbi Yehuda permits it [boiled wine as a heave-offering], because it improves it [its quality]. ... Such a wine was esteemed [among the Jews] the richest and best wine.”<sup>25</sup>

- **ASSUMPTION 5:** - The expression “well drunk” in John 2:10, indicates that the guests were intoxicated because they were drinking fermented, alcoholic wine: -

The form of the Greek verb that is translated as “well drunk” in the KJV is “methusthosi”, which is from the Greek verb “methusko” – See Strong’s Concordance, Greek, No. 3182<sup>26</sup>. It is defined as “cause to become intoxicated; ... drink freely.”<sup>27</sup> And it is in this last sense of this definition, that is, to drink to satiation is this word used in John 2:10.

One final point on this passage concerns the **quantity** of wine that Jesus provided for the wedding guests. Jesus told the servants to fill the six water pots full of water. The apostle John records the fact that each water pot had a capacity of two to three firkins. The Greek word that it translated as “firkins” in the KJV is the word “metretes” – See Strong’s Concordance; Greek, No. 3355. It is defined as “measure, a liquid measure ... containing 72 sextarii ... or pints = 39:39 litres, or about nine gallons.”<sup>28</sup>

If we therefore round out the figure to 39 litres for each “metretes, each water pot would have contained between **78 – 117 litres each**, multiplied by 6 pots, which gives us **a total of 468 – 702 litres** of wine produced by Jesus. Let us think about these figures for a moment. The most common wine cask sold today contains 4 litres of wine. If we work on the lowest figure of **468 litres**, Jesus produced the equivalent of **117 four litre wine casks**. If we were to work on the highest figure of **702 litres**, Jesus produced the equivalent of **175.5 four litre wine casks**. Whatever figure we work on, Jesus produced an enormous amount of wine for the guests, after they had been already drinking wine at the wedding feast, the supply of which had just been exhausted. When you work out the calculations of the quantity of wine produced by Jesus, if it was fermented, alcoholic wine that he produced, then Jesus is **NOT** aiding moderate drinking at all; he would be aiding outright drunkenness!

Putting all these facts together, we can see that Jesus provided unfermented, non-alcoholic wine at the wedding feast at Cana.

- **NEW WINE IN NEW WINESKINS – MATTHEW 9:17, MARK 2:22 & LUKE 5:37 & 38 CONSIDERED: -**

These passages have been examined under SECTION 4, PAGE 9 of this STUDY DOCUMENT and hence they do not need to be considered again here. We suggest that the reader turn to the above listed material to find the answer to these passages.

- **IS OLD WINE BETTER? LUKE 5:39 CONSIDERED: -**

Luke 5:39: - “No man also having drunk old [wine] straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.”

The context of this verse does favour the view that the “old wine” being referred to by Jesus is fermented, alcoholic wine, as Jesus uses the term to refer to the corrupted, old religious practices and teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Matthew 16:6 & 12: - “Then Jesus said unto them, **Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.** ... Then understood they how that he bade [them] not beware of the leaven of bread, **but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.**”

---

<sup>24</sup> Symposiac.

<sup>25</sup> Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature; by John Kittto; “Wine”.

<sup>26</sup> In the New Testament it only appears in its passive form “methuskomai”.

<sup>27</sup> BAGD., page 499.

<sup>28</sup> IBID., page 514.

Luke 12:1: - "In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, **Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.**"

Does it then follow, that Jesus is teaching that "old wine" is better than "new wine" – unfermented, non-alcoholic wine? **NO!** Jesus is **NOT** giving his own judgment here. But he is stating that the person who is accustomed to drinking the "old wine", does not immediately desire and relish the "new wine", and that persons states, "The old is better."

- **WAS JESUS A WINEBIBBER – MATTHEW 11:19 & LUKE 7:34 CONSIDERED: -**

Matthew 11:18 & 19: - "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. But wisdom is justified of her children."

Luke 7:33-35: - "For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; **and ye say, He hath a devil.** The Son of man is come eating and drinking; **and ye say,** Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! But wisdom is justified of all her children."

The moderationist uses these passages to "prove" that Jesus from his own lips testified that he was a drinking man. But this is a careless reading of these passages for a number of reasons.

We need to note that in both accounts, Jesus first quotes what his critics had falsely accused John the Baptist of having a devil. The simple question is, Was this statement concerning John the Baptist true? The answer is of course not! It was a false statement made by those who did not accept John's prophetic ministry.

Jesus himself stated that John was the greatest of all the prophets.

Luke 7:28: - "For I say unto you, **Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist:** but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

Then, in the context of Jesus' statement **HIS CRITICS** are the ones who are saying that Jesus was a glutton and a winebibber. Please observe the fact, that Jesus is **NOT** speaking about himself in this statement; **he is reporting what his critics said about him.** Note that Matthew records Jesus' words concerning as to who was making this assertion about Christ as follows, "**and they say**"; whereas Luke records it as, "**and ye say**"- the "ye" is referring to the Pharisees and the Doctors of the Law who are mentioned in Luke 7:30. These people were the bitterest enemies of Christ, who told lies about him. Remember that Jesus' enemies accused him of being a Samaritan and of having a devil, both accusations being barefaced lies!

John 8:48: - "Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, **Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?**"

We need to also remember that the word "wine" - "**OINOS**" does **NOT** appear with reference to Christ's eating or drinking habits at all, as is assumed by moderationists. Also, keep in mind that the moderationist not only **ASSUMES** that Jesus is referring to his drinking wine in these passages, they also **ASSUME** that the wine must be fermented, alcoholic wine.

We must also take note of Solomon's inspired exhortation concerning not to be among winebibbers. For Jesus to be an actual winebibber, he would be going contrary to the inspired statement in the Old Testament Scriptures. Such a course of action concerning Christ, is totally out of character with his life and ministry.

Proverbs 23:20: - "**Be not among winebibbers;** among riotous eaters of flesh."

Let us never forget that you cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit and be a winebibber at the same time. We have several examples testifying to this truth in the New Testament.

John the Baptist was a total abstainer from birth, yet he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Luke 1:15: - "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, **and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.**"

The disciples on the Day of Pentecost were filled with the Holy Spirit, but they were falsely accused of being drunk with new wine. The apostle Peter flatly denies this charge, stating that they were filled with the Spirit of God.

Acts 2:13-18: - **“Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all [ye] that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 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: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.”**

Paul contrasted as being **two mutually exclusive conditions**, either: -

- i.] One can be a drunkard or a winebibber; or,
- ii.] One can be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18: - **“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess (or dissipation)\*; but be filled with the Spirit.”**

**NB: - \*** For a detailed examination of this verse please turn to PAGE 12.

The point of highlighting this truth relating to this issue with Jesus supposedly being a winebibber is the fact that he was filled with the Holy Spirit during his public ministry, and hence he could **NOT** indulge in the use of fermented, alcoholic wine at all!

Luke 4:1: - **“And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.”**

Clearly the moderationist misuse of these passages is based upon a careless reading of the text, and upon a number of **assumptions**. Jesus clearly was **NOT** a winebibber at all!

- **THE LORD’S SUPPER – MATTHEW 26:26-29, MARK 14:22-25 & LUKE 22:14-20 CONSIDERED: -**

(We shall only list one of these passages here to avoid repetition, and we ask that the reader will read the other two passages in their own Bibles.)

Matthew 26:26-29: - **“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed [it], and brake [it], and gave [it] to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 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.”**

The “fruit of the vine” would have been unfermented, non-alcoholic wine for one very obvious reason: -  
Jesus himself obeyed and he taught others to obey the Laws of Moses.

Matthew 8:3 & 4: - **“And Jesus put forth [his] hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, **show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.**”**

John 5:45-47: - **“Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is [one] that accuseth you, [even] Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?”**

As the Last Supper occurred during the celebration of the Passover, when **NO** leaven or fermented products of any kind were to be consumed, or to be in the houses of the Jews at this festival, this drink would have been unfermented, non-alcoholic wine.

Exodus 12:8 & 15: - **“And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, **and unleavened bread**; [and] with bitter [herbs] they shall eat it. ... Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; **even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.**”**

Exodus 13:6 & 7: - **“Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day [shall be] a feast to the LORD. **Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.**”**

- Jesus by his own personal example and teachings did **NOT** sanction the use of fermented, alcoholic wine at all.



## **7. THE NEW TESTAMENT EXHORTS US TO BE SOBER.**

● In the following New Testament passages, the Greek word that is translated in the KJV as “sober” is the word **“nepho”** – See Strong’s Concordance; Greek, No. 3525. It is defined as “to drink no wine, to be sober, live soberly.”<sup>29</sup> “To be sober, not intoxicated;”<sup>30 31</sup>

- Paul exhorts those who await the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ to watch and to be sober - **“nepho”**, because they are “children of light”, and “children of the day”. He contrasts this group, with those who are of the night and who get drunk during the night. Clearly he is contrasting those who are sober – abstaining from wine with those who are drunk with wine in this passage.  
1 Thessalonians 5:2, 5-8: - “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. ... **Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day**: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as [do] others; **but let us watch and be sober {“nepho”}**. For they that sleep sleep in the night; **and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober {“nepho”}**, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.
- Following on from Paul’s above exhortation to be sober as we await the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ, Peter makes a similar exhortation for us to be sober - **“nepho”**, as we approach the day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus.  
1 Peter 1:13: - “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, **be sober {“nepho”}**, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you **at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**”

It is interesting to note, that Jesus himself warned his disciples concerning the approach of his 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming, that they were to watch and to avoid drunkenness amongst other sins of the flesh. How were they to avoid this sorry condition? Comparing the above exhortations from Jesus’ apostles, the answer should be obvious. By being sober - **“nepho”**, that is, by abstaining from wine.

Luke 21:34-36: - **“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.** For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. **Watch ye therefore,** and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

- In the battle with our Adversary – the devil, Peter exhorts us to be sober - **“nepho”** and to be vigilant.  
1 Peter 5:8: - **“Be sober {“nepho”}**, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”



It is interesting to note that in all of the above New Testament exhortations for believers to be sober - **“nepho”**, that is to abstain from wine, the exhortation to watch or to be vigilant is coupled with it.

- Clearly, the New Testament apostles of Christ have plainly exhorted believers to be sober - **“nepho”**, that is, to abstain from wine.

---

<sup>29</sup> Greek-English Lexicon: Liddell and Scott, abridged edition, page 465.

<sup>30</sup> A Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament, Thomas Sheldon Green, page 123.

<sup>31</sup> To help reinforce this definition of **“nepho”**, the related compound Greek verb – **“eknepho”** is defined as “become sober” - BAGD., page 243; and also, “to sleep off a drunken fit, become sober again.” - Liddell and Scott’s Lexicon, page 208. This verb is used in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament in Genesis 9:24, concerning Noah’s recovery from his bout of drunkenness; and in 1 Samuel 25:37, concerning Nabal’s recovery from his drunken state. They had both become sober again - **“eknepho”**.

## **8. SOME MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS EXAMINED.**

- **DEUTERONOMY 14:26 EXAMINED: -**

Deuteronomy 14:26: - “And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine {“**yayin**”}, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household.”

As we have repeatedly demonstrated throughout this STUDY DOCUMENT, wine - “**yayin**” can refer to both fermented and unfermented wine in the Old Testament, our focus concerning this verse needs not to be placed upon the wine that is referred to. Rather, we need to focus our attention upon the “strong drink” that is mentioned in this verse.

On the surface, this verse would seem to teach that strong drink – alcoholic drink was to be bought and drunk freely at the harvest festival, when all Israel brought their tithes to the Sanctuary of the Lord, to celebrate God’s bountiful harvest. But, there are four reasons why this is not the case.

1. The surrounding context of the verse, which calls upon the people of Israel to be “an holy people unto the LORD thy God,” – Deuteronomy 14:2, by abstaining from eating anything unclean (See Deuteronomy 14:3-21), precludes the free consumption of intoxicating drinks at a solemn harvest festival “before the LORD thy God,” – Deuteronomy 14:26.

2. The immediate context specifies that the tithe was to be paid with fresh harvest products (grain, unfermented grape juice - “**tiyros**h”, oil and newborn lambs and calves) by those who were living close to the Sanctuary. When consumed, the grain would be known as “bread” and the unfermented grape juice as “wine”. It is absurd to imagine that while the worshippers who lived in proximity to the Sanctuary celebrated the harvest festival by eating fresh produce, those who had come from distant places would be drinking fermented beverages.

Deuteronomy 14:23: - “And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy **wine** {“**tiyros**h”}, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always.”

3. The participation of the priestly Levites in the harvest festival as mentioned in the next verse, would preclude the consumption of alcoholic beverages, which were prohibited to the priests (see Leviticus 10:8-11 which is discussed in detail in SECTION 5, PAGE 11).

Deuteronomy 14:27: - “And the Levite that [is] within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.”

4. The Hebrew word that is translated as “strong drink” in this verse, is the word “**shekar**” – see Strong’s Concordance; Hebrew No. 7941. Like the Hebrew word for wine “**yayin**”, it is a word which can denote either a fermented or an unfermented drink.

“Shekar – Sweet drink [what satiates (i. e. fully satisfies – compiler) or intoxicates], shekar.”<sup>32</sup>

“Shekar is a generic term, including palm-wine and other saccharine beverages, except those prepared from wine. That shekar was made inebriating by being mingled with potent drugs, we have just seen.”<sup>33</sup>

- **PROVERBS 31:6 EXAMINED: -**

Proverbs 31:6: - “Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.”

---

<sup>32</sup> Analytical Concordance of the Bible; Robert Young.

<sup>33</sup> Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature; by John Kitto; “Wine”.

This verse does **NOT** sanction a moderate consumption of alcohol for the purpose of pleasure. Rather, in an ironical fashion (after VS. 4 & 5 plainly instruct kings and law-makers **NOT** to use wine and strong drink), it suggests that alcohol is fit only for someone who is dying and in great pain.

“Rabbi Ehisda has said, ‘To him who went forth to be executed there was given a little frankincense mixed with wine to deprive him of consciousness.’”<sup>34</sup>

We have an example of this practice concerning those prisoners who were sentenced to be executed, relating to the crucifixion of Jesus, who was offered wine mixed with myrrh to help deaden some of the pain as he was nailed to the cross.

Mark 15:23 & 24: - “**And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh**: but he received [it] not. And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.”

- **HOSEA 4:11 EXAMINED**: -

Hosea 4:11: - “Whoredom and **wine** {“**yayin**”} and **new wine** {“**tiyros**h”} take away the heart.”

Most moderationists appeal to this verse to defend their “one-wine theory”.

If {“**tiyros**h”} meant newly fermented wine as the moderationists would have us believe, what would this text prove? Moderation or total abstinence? **TOTAL ABSTINENCE!** This is because there is **NO** mention of the quantity consumed in this verse.

This verse is **NOT** dealing with intoxication, but with spiritual apostasy. (The prophet is speaking figuratively here and not literally.) Wine and unfermented grape juice are mentioned as being representative of the good gifts that God had given to the children of Israel, but which they had prostituted and perverted, thus leading them into idolatry.

- **1 TIMOTHY 3:8 EXAMINED**: -

1 Timothy 3:8: - “Likewise [must] the deacons [be] grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre.”

This text does **NOT** support the moderate use of fermented wine for a number of very good reasons.

1. If this text sanctioned the moderate use of alcohol for deacons, it would set up a double standard, as Paul had just written earlier in this same chapter, that bishops or elders were **NOT** to be given to the use of wine.

1 Timothy 3:1 & 3: - “This [is] a true saying, **If a man desire the office of a bishop**, he desireth a good work. ... **Not given to wine**, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous.”

2. The Greek word that is translated as “given to” in the KJV, is the word “**prosecho**” – See Strong’s Concordance; Greek, No. 4337. It is defined as “occupy oneself with, devote or apply oneself to ... be addicted to much wine 1 Ti 3:8”<sup>35</sup>

3. With the above understanding of the phrase in question, we can see that the primary function of this phrase is **NOT** to approve the moderate use of wine; but rather to exclude from the office of deacon, any person who was known to be addicted to the use of wine.

4. The law of implied consent does **NOT** mean that what is forbidden in much, is automatically approved of in a little. An example shall highlight this truth. If a preacher in our society today, told his congregation, “Don’t get high on cocaine”, would his listeners then have their minister’s approval to use cocaine in moderation? Of course **NOT!**

- **1 TIMOTHY 5:23 EXAMINED**: -

1 Timothy 5:23: - “Drink no longer water, but use a little **wine** {“**Oinos**”} for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.”

---

<sup>34</sup> Theological Dictionary of the New Testament; - Sanhedrin 43 a; “Oinos”.

<sup>35</sup> BAGD., page 714.

It should be pointed out, that up to this point in time, Timothy was **ONLY** drinking water. In other words he was a **TOTAL ABSTAINER**. This is an important point to note, because Timothy had been raised from a child in the teachings of the Holy Scriptures – the Old Testament writings, and yet he did **NOT** understand them as giving approval for the moderate consumption of alcohol, or teaching that alcohol in moderation is a blessing from God. Because if he had so understood the Holy Scriptures, he would have already been a wine drinker.

2 Timothy 3:15: - “**And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures**, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

Paul tells Timothy to use only a **LITTLE** wine, and he then gives the reason, because of Timothy's stomach and other health problems. This verse is **NOT** sanctioning the moderate consumption of alcohol for pleasure at all! It should also be remembered that “**OINOS**” refers to both fermented and unfermented wine. In Paul's day, unfermented, non-alcoholic wine was used for medicinal purposes.

“Let him take sweet wine, either mixed with water or warmed, especially that kind called protropos, the sweet Lesbian glukus, as being good for the stomach; for sweet wine [“**OINOS**”] does not make the head heavy.”<sup>36</sup>

“Ten quarts of white must and half that quantity of water are kept boiling till a considerable amount of water is boiled away. ... This drink is given to invalids [aegris – sick] for whom it is feared that wine may be harmful.”<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Banquet; by Athenaeus.

<sup>37</sup> Natural History; by Pliny.