

ALCOHOLIC WINE AND THE CHRISTIAN



Dennis H. Helton

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AND
THE CHRISTIAN**

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Alcoholic Wine and the Christian

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DEDICATION

SAMPLE PAGES

PREFACE

The title of this book, *Alcoholic Wine and the Christian* may seem strange to some. However, it defines an issue that permeates Christianity today because the word, “wine,” is found often in the preserved Words of the Bible. The word “wine” is a polysemic word. That is, (1) it has different meanings depending upon its context, (2) its definition and exegesis is derived from the many words underlying the translation from the original languages of Hebrew and Greek given by God, and (3) its cultural use.

Brother Helton’s book, *Alcoholic Wine and the Christian*, is so needed in these last days because alcohol has become a scourge upon humanity, not in America only, but throughout the world. The scourge, which has accelerated iniquity worldwide, has occurred for several reasons. (1) overt sin (drunkenness), (2) a misunderstanding of the Bible, (3) the corruption of the clear statements in Scripture by uneducated, misinformed preachers, teachers, missionaries, laymen, and authors (4) the pressures brought upon societies from the “so-called” SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, (5) humanistic culture that abounds because of “*the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ.*” (Colossians 2:8), (6) The false advertising of the liquor industry (e.g., alcohol is good for your heart and prevents cancer), (7) the self-indulgent culture of affluent nations, and (8) the promotion by the entertainment, TV, and social media industry.

God said to the nation Israel, after it had been blessed by God (just as America has been blessed by God, but her people do not recognize their benefactor) in Ezekiel 16:49: *Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.* Note the 3 causes of iniquity: (1) pride, (2)

fulness of bread (wealth), (3) idleness. Idleness has been brought on in this country partly by the government's indiscriminate payments to idle, lazy individuals.

Here are some statistics for you to ponder concerning alcoholism or alcohol abuse:

- Alcohol sales increased by 54% in the week ending 21 March 2020 due to stay-at-home orders.
- Alcohol-related deaths rose by 43% between 2006 and 2018.
- 86.4% of adults admit to drinking alcohol at least once in their lifetimes.
- 80% of college students consume alcohol.
- 15.1 million adults in the US aged 18 and older have an alcohol use disorder.
- Over 10% of kids in the US live with a parent that has alcohol issues.
- 33.1% of 15-year-olds report having had at least one drink so far in their lifetime.
- Drinking and driving accounts for over 30% of all driving deaths a year.
- More than 65 million Americans reported binge drinking within a month of being surveyed.

(from “35 Sobering Alcoholism Statistics and Facts for 2021 disturbmenot.co,” <http://disturbmenot.co/alcoholism-statistics/>)

Social drinkers, who claim they are not causing harm because they are not involved in intemperate drinking and therefore are “OK” with God because they drink responsibly (moderately), need to be aware of their

influence on (1) children, (2) “babes” in Christ, and (3) the “carnal” Christian.

God says: **1 Thessalonians 5:22** *“Abstain from all appearance of evil.”* That is a command, not a choice.

Drinking Alcohol and everything associated with it is evil. Brother Helton has done an excellent job bringing out the precepts associated with the issue of alcohol.

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SAMPLE PAGES

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ALCOHOLIC WINE AND THE CHRISTIAN

Comments by Robert Sumner

The following is an edited review of Dr. Jaeggli's book *THE CHRISTIAN AND DRINKING: A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON MODERATION AND ABSTINENCE* by Randy Jaeggli; BJU Press, Greenville, SC by Robert Sumner, editor of the *Biblical Evangelist* newspaper, which was published in the July-August 2009 issue.

This is a new release in the “BJU-Press Biblical Discernment for Difficult Issues,” all written by the school’s seminary faculty, although this is the first one we’ve seen. It is subtitled “*A Biblical Perspective on Moderation and Abstinence*,” and it is billed on the cover as “A Bob Jones University Seminary Publication,” which certainly gives it prestige in the eyes of Christians. The author writes as a concerned Christian who wants to do right and be faithful to Christ and His Word. That is all well and Good, BUT:

The Books Opening

The book opens with a hypothetical question and answer dialogue between a pastor and a potential new member about the church’s position on alcohol. When the prospect learns the church’s covenant forbids the use of alcohol, even though he really likes the church – “the preaching, the teaching, the fellowship” – he determines “to look somewhere else.”

If someone puts his love of booze above his love for a church, we don’t think the latter, the church, lost much. And it is certainly easy today to move on and quickly find a church where he can feel comfortable in his

sin. The pastor will probably join him in imbibing, and they can enjoy the “shared pleasure” that all booze sellers advertise.

Jaeggli’s Introduction

In the introduction, Jaeggli talks about some of the dangers of alcohol and what often happens under the influence of it. It is such strong stuff we would think that any normal person, after reading this section, would say, “I don’t need to read the rest of the book and saying or thinking, “I’m going to be an abstainer. Alcoholic Russian roulette is not for me!” Alas, it doesn’t work that way, especially if someone is looking for an excuse to ‘snort’ anyway!

The Warning about Intemperance

However, and this is good, Jaeggli repeatedly warns of “intemperance,” which is overindulgence, greed, self-indulgence, hedonism, gluttony, but so does every other promoter of social drinking, sacred or secular – no rational person would argue for *intemperance*. Even the town drunks advocate “moderation” in drinking. The ads of Coors, Miller, Budweiser and even the makers of the ‘hard stuff’ plead (sincerely or insincerely, you decide) moderation. They know such pious talk about intemperance and moderation will not hurt their sales one bit. So that kind of advertising or speech or writing does not impress us much.

There is no way around it; this book by Dr. Jaeggli is advocating social drinking, “in moderation.” However, Dr. Andrew Ivy, a prominent scientist in his lifetime and a vice-president of the University of Illinois, put it like this:

“Drinking in moderation is not scientific. The only factual or scientific

guarantee against alcoholism...is *total abstinence*."

There is no way to discover an alcoholic *until he is an alcoholic*" (emphasis added). As another expressed it, "Neither science nor Seagrams can tell him that." Or as a writer in our local paper put it last Sunday, "...alcohol has become part of relationships – and not everyone is equipped to handle it." In short, many social drinkers end up as alcoholics!

The author tells you where he is headed right off the start:

"As our survey of the biblical data will show, it is difficult to conclude that biblical wine was unfermented."

21 Hebrew and Greek Words Translated Wine

This is both true and false. Since there are 21 Hebrew and Greek words translated "wine" in the Bible, it depends on which word is used as to what it means. Some reference unfermented, some do not, and some can relate to both. We have a chapter on this in our huge book exposing *Armstrongism* (this cult was very much in favor of "social drinking"; the Armstrongs would have loved Jaeggli's work).

Noah

He starts by noting several Bible characters who got drunk, starting with Noah. We don't know how 'cricket' it is using Noah, however, since he had just entered a new environment after the flood and may not have had any idea what the grape juice he had made was going to do to him – it is the first time wine is mentioned in Scripture. There is not word of him ever getting drunk again (nor having gotten drunk before). He next used Lot, saying, "we know that Lot was a righteous man"; true, but we also know he

didn't always live righteously (for example, getting drunk on wine and committing incest with his daughters).

Works That Attack Alcohol

Christian readers who are used to strong attacks on booze by works such as: *The Devil's Juice* by Byron Glaze, *The Deceitfulness of Wine and Strong Drink* by the late Theodore Epp of "Back to the Bible" fame, *The Woe of the Wine Cup* by Sam Morris, *The Double Curse of Booze* by John R. Rice, and even *A Snake in the Bottle* by an author unknown to me, are in for a big shock if they read this book.

In fact, Jaeggli argues that *all* wine has some fermentation since the process commences immediately. (Apparently, even if the one in the wine press stomping on the grapes bends down to drink some of the juice, he would be gulping wine already partly fermented. This, alas, is not scientific at all.)

While he mentions *Bible Wines (or) Laws of Fermentation and Wines of the Ancients*, by William Patton, **a tremendous book**, which he considers "very outdated," if he mentioned what we **consider the best on the subject**, *The Bible and its Wines* by Charles Wesley Ewing, we missed it; Nor did we note him referencing the excellent book by Ernest B. Gordon (son of A. J. Gordon), *Christ, the Apostles and Wine*.

Biblical Context

Jaeggli's look at biblical content and context is very weak. Jaeggli starts in his opening chapter with the Hebrew word *yayin*, one of the major words in any study on this subject (others in the OT are *tirosh*, *asis* – both of which always mean fresh, unfermented juice – and *shekar* from which our English words sugar and cider are derived).

Ewing calls translating *shekar* as “strong drink” in Deuteronomy 14:26 and other places where it is used,

“one of the worst translation errors that we have in our English versions.”

Hebrew תִּירוֹשׁ = Tirosh

As for *tirosh* (also spelled *tiyrosch*, *tiyrowsh*, *thirosch*, *teerosehe*, *teerosh*) no less than the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, surely a significant authority, says it “includes all kinds of sweet juices and must and does not include fermented wine.” Note: it **does not** include fermented wine! (You would think everyone would acknowledge as usually factual the *Jewish Encyclopedia* in matters Jewish, especially word definitions and would pay close attention to what it said.) Ewing also quotes in support of this definition of *tirosh*, *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*; Heinrich Friedrich Wilhelm Gesenius (the *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* calls him “the most outstanding Hebraist of his generation”) in his *Hebrew German Lexicon*; and others.

Greek Οἶνος = Oinos

In his second chapter, Jaeggli looks at the Greek *oinos* and *gleukos* (the latter used only once in the NT). Unfortunately, most, but not all of the words he uses in his book are generic terms (polysemic terms meaning the coexistence of many possible meanings for a word or phrase) and reference different products in the Word of God, making interpretation more difficult. We were disappointed that he did not *really* examine the main ones, but merely gave an illustration or two of how they were used, which is a *very* insufficient approach for one trying to be scholarly on a *serious* subject, in our judgment. The back cover says he “examines these passages in the light of

thorough research,” but we strongly disagree with the idea of thorough research (at least in this book). And we think he sadly missed the point of “drunk” and “filled” in Ephesians 5:18, trying to explain why Paul used the two together.

The “Wine” at the Wedding Feast

Jaeggli says the wine that Jesus made at the wedding feast *was alcoholic*! He wants readers to believe that Jesus made between 108 and 162 gallons of intoxicating wine for folks after they had “well drunk” (John 2:10), something that seems incredible to us.

The “Wine” at the Lord’s Supper

He argues folks in Christ’s day diluted their fermented wine with water, but admits it was still capable of getting them drunk. He insists the ‘wine’ in the Lord’s Supper (although *never once* called “wine” in the Word of God) was fermented (meaning rotten, corrupted), but diluted with water. Since the cup represents Christ’s blood, it therefore would picture *rotten, corrupted, diluted, watered-down* blood (again something too hard for us to swallow). In fact, I find that impossible to believe, even reprehensible,

Jaeggli does not mention that when Jesus introduced the Lord’s Supper to His disciples, since they were observing the Passover – a time when anything fermented was not even allowed in the house to say nothing of on the table – it had to be unfermented.

Luther’s Drinking

He mentions Luther’s drinking (and the fact that Martin boasted about it), but he doesn’t reveal it was beer, the “hard stuff” in the “Bible (strong drink), that the founder of Lutheranism loved to lap up. He also mentions