

# CHRISTIANS AND ALCOHOL



By Daniel Cox

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## INTRODUCTION

I suppose being born at the end of the 1930's and before the second world war commenced, must make me at least elderly, if not the old, that my title "Old Age Pensioner" would suggest! One thing is certain, in the approaching seventy years that one has dwelt on planet earth, manifold changes have been witnessed. Among my childhood memories, some treasured, some less so, was the Saturday night bath ritual. It was a tin bath in front of the fire and being the youngest meant I was always last in. Also recalled was the weekly dustbin collection and the gigantic carthorse that pulled the bin men's cart. Pocket money was augmented by touring the houses collecting newspapers sold to the scrap merchants for one old penny a pound; rags sold for two pence. These were assiduously sorted out and if we struck lucky anything woollen (before the days of nylon) sold for the princely sum of one shilling and sixpence, again per pound.

At an early age familiarity came with the local "pub" which went by the name of the "Hare and Hounds". As the youngest, it was my daily duty to take a large bagful of large empty lemonade bottles to the "bottle and jug" for them to be filled with my dad's "medicine". I think it's true name was "mild & bitter". I well remember the sounds of inviting conviviality coming from the adjacent "snug". I say sounds because I was too small to see over the counter and witness the sights of darts, dominoes and drink. All this took place before my father's dramatic encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ. For him conversion meant really that, for it was truly from deepest darkness to brightest light, but more of that later. I was witness to the devastating effect of alcohol upon a human being. Twenty years

of life as a soldier taught dad many things and not just how to be the best shot in the battalion. I never heard a man swear like my father when he was "in drink", his violent rages were terrifying to behold for if a hair was found in his dinner both plate and contents would be flung against the wall. Amazingly, and make of it what you will, there seemed to be only one antidote and bringer of peace. My elder sister and brother would fetch me from my little bedroom, bring me downstairs and stand me before my father. The sight of me brought instant peace and relief from the effects of "demon drink". The rages would depart and utter tranquillity would reign. A humbling mystery is recounted, how the sight of a little child, who was a son beloved, could, as with David and Saul cause a troubled and demon afflicted soul to be refreshed and the evil spirit to depart. There was no harp, just a loving presence. (1 SAM 16 v 14 - 23). So, although I have never used alcohol, first hand knowledge of its effects were early mine and very close to home.

My conversion was into what could be described as "Pentecostal Holiness", as far removed from "Charismatic Worldliness" as night is removed from day. It was the 1950's and I did not know of a single wine, spirits or beer drinker among a representative and quite wide circle of the evangelical church. I was soon serving the Lord in preaching and personal ministry. Battles, supporting new converts into victory over the drugs, nicotine and alcohol were commonplace. Other "user" drugs were virtually unknown then, this side of the Atlantic. Total abstinence was the norm for Christians, anything less was never considered. Your author has not changed, and by the grace of God, he never will, but

my, oh my, how the church of Jesus Christ has metamorphosed beyond all recognition. So, by now, my readers must have gleaned more than a clue as to my posture in relation to alcohol. But please read on, for what follows will certainly be thought provoking at the very least and who knows, may bring blessing to your eternal soul.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **USE A LITTLE WINE FOR YOUR STOMACH'S SAKE**

#### **A CONSIDERATION OF SCRIPTURE THAT SUPPOSEDLY SUPPORTS THE USE OF ALCOHOL BY CHRISTIANS**

The full text from which our chapter heading is taken is both enlightening and revealing.

*"Drink no longer water, but USE a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities"* (1 TIM 5 v 23).

Ten happy years were spent taking seminars for pastors and elders in a number of East and Central African countries. The number one instruction to the European Seminar leaders was always the same and always repeated with considerable emphasis "DON'T DRINK THE WATER". Failure to observe this maxim would have its inevitable result. Sickness, diarrhoea and much else if you were lucky, life long "African tummy", for the less fortunate. Teeth were cleaned with dribble and it was always "no ice" with our "sodas". Obviously, poor Timothy suffered with a similar condition to those we have described and it was chronic. To Timothy, Paul's instruction was identical "DON'T DRINK THE WATER". This counsel was followed by an instructive advice that is so often misquoted. It was not to "drink wine", in fact, far from it. It was that Timothy should "USE" a little wine, purely as a medicinal and curative agent. In fact, it was just as an alternative to the infirmity producing dirty water which was the cause of his chronic malady. So USE a little wine is a very flimsy peg for the "Christian" wine drinking, beer swilling fraternity to hang

their compromising hats on. DON'T DRINK THE WATER – USE A LITTLE WINE, means exactly what it says. Where the water is pernicious avoid it. Drink an alternative. In the West and many other places tap water is harmless. In the places where the water cannot be drunk, alternatives abound. Even in the remotest parts of the African bush where our seminars were frequently held, some African entrepreneur would sell necessities from his house, salt, sugar, blue band etc., and always the ubiquitous “soda”, which could be Coke, Fanta and the like. So we never, never had to “USE” a little wine for our stomach’s sake.

When consideration is given to the great volume and weight of the scriptures that condemn the drinking of alcohol, and which graphically portray its spiritual, physical and social consequences, it has to be incredible that any Christian would ever go near the drug. Surely the forsaking of the “Christian norm” of total abstinence for the believer and the corresponding widespread move to the drug we call alcohol can only be the result of one of the “doctrines of devils” (*doctrines that demons teach A.N.T.*) referred to in (1 TIM 4 v 1). There are a couple of other flimsy pegs that the “christian” alcohol fraternity hang their hats on that we will refer to later and a couple that we must refer to now. As with Paul’s advice to Timothy, they are blatant examples of *handling the word of God deceitfully* (2 COR 4 v 2).

We now turn to Paul’s advice with reference to Bishops and Deacons. This wise counsel is taken from Paul’s pastoral epistles written to Timothy and Titus. They are pastorals as they are mainly directed at Pastors not churches, as was more usually the case. To the Bishops the advice is unequivocal “NOT GIVEN TO



*WINE*", the verse continues, "*no striker*", which has nothing to do with picket lines or trade unions. It seems strange counsel for one who is to be under consideration as a senior elder or bishop. The marginal rendering of "no striker" enlightens us, "*ready to quarrel and offer wrong as one in wine*". This says it all, does it not? In drink a person becomes another person. Violence and drink are bedfellows, and as we shall see in more detail later, a compromising alcohol using pastor or elder has fogged faculties, especially in the realm of spiritual discernment or "*discerning of spirits*" (1 COR 12 v 10). As always, one compromise will always open the door to others. A word of advice; always view the discernment and advice of an alcohol using pastor or elder with extreme caution, for they often see "men like trees walking", because their vision and discernment is befuddled by alcohol. In a parallel advice to Titus, who had to ordain elders in every recently established church, we see an identical counsel. A senior elder or bishop must "*NOT BE GIVEN TO WINE*" (TIT 1 v 5 and 7). So, where is the drug called alcohol's hat hung? Paul continues with the elders qualifications in his pastoral advices to Timothy, moving from the senior bishops to the junior deacons. He inserts a little adjective "much" before the word "wine". With delight, the christian alcohol consuming fraternity say we can drink as long as it is not to excess or "much". Ridiculous! Senior elders, no wine, junior elders, not much. The thrust has to be the same to both groups and is KEEP AWAY FROM ALCOHOL! This advice to all in the ministry, even to the "*royal priesthood*" (1 PET 2 v 9) that is every true believer, has its exact Old Testament parallel. Again it categorically states the paralyzing and

stupefying effects of wine and spirits and their influence on the administrative abilities of its users. This is especially so in the realms of wisdom, knowledge and discernment. The scripture is plain and capable of only one interpretation. It is directed to Kings, princes and by extension to all in authority which must include every one in the royal priesthood, every true disciple-believer. We quote the scripture in full. *"IT IS NOT FOR KINGS,...IT IS NOT FOR KINGS TO DRINK WINE; NOR FOR PRINCES STRONG DRINK, LEST THEY DRINK, AND FORGET THE LAW AND PERVERT THE JUDGEMENT...(PROV 31 v 4 - 5).*

A similar sort of deceitful handling of the word of God by the alcohol drinking fraternity exists in their interpretation of (EPH 5 v 18) which reads *"be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit"*. "Provided we don't drink to excess or total drunkenness, then drinking wine, swilling beer or sucking cocktails is fine", the drinkers say. Paul was encouraging and setting patterns for all spiritual worship including singing, emphasising the need to be "filled with the spirit". He preceded this by a solemn warning concerning one of the most harmful of drugs, namely alcohol, as among the most serious of excesses. Far from an encouragement it is a dire warning. I trust we have satisfactorily exploded another deceitful myth. So, now to Chapter Two which is the other side of the coin.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **WINE MOCKS, STRONG DRINK RAGES**

#### **BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE FACT THAT THE ONLY CONCEIVABLE POSITION FOR THE BELIEVER IS ONE OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE**

May we begin this solemn chapter with an Old Testament scripture?

*"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" (LEV 10 v 9).*

Our beloved brother Paul, forcibly reminds the Corinthian believers, that their bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost and that temple is not their own but has been bought with the highest of prices (1 COR 6 v 19 – 20). If it could be possible, Paul goes even further with the challenge that *"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are"* (1 COR 3 v 17). The Levitical scripture that began this chapter, pronounces death to the wine or spirit drinker who enters the tabernacle and by extension, the temple. A similar end or destruction is pronounced upon any who defile the human temple of God, which is the christian believer. For every moment of every day of the believer's life, they are the temple of God through His Spirit. So let us emphasise again, wine or strong drink defiled the temple in the old order and disobedience brought death. Wine or strong drink (among the most harmful of drugs as we shall soon see) defiles the living temple in the new order. I have long held a certain conviction and in passing feel to mention it.

These Levitical warnings with reference to wine and strong drink in relation to tabernacle worship and offerings, immediately follow the account of the destruction of Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons, by judgement fire, following their stupid and illogical offering of false fire. Was their death bringing folly the result of drunkenness? If the first eleven verses of Leviticus Ten are read in context and as a whole, it would seem so. The fact that the commands concerning wine and strong drink specifically mention Aaron's sons, supports this. How many tragedies come hard on the heels of the befuddled stupidity that always comes with drink?

We continue presenting our evidence with another scripture.

*"WOE UNTO HIM THAT GIVETH HIS NEIGHBOUR DRINK, THAT PUTTEST THY BOTTLE TO HIM, AND MAKEST HIM DRUNKEN ALSO, THAT THOU MAYEST LOOK ON THEIR NAKEDNESS!" (HAB 2 V 15).*

The christian alcohol drinker may say, "I have never done that", but if you are into alcohol, that is the world you are in. We now go on to note a number of deeply relevant factors in the reading of this verse and also the one that follows. Each individual scripture that we comment upon offers a far weightier argument in favour of total abstinence when set against the entire total of the flimsy protests coming from the christian believers who use the drug called alcohol. Indeed, any one of these solemn warnings should be enough and there are many, many, many! Our chapter heading text begins with a WOE. Having read again the almost one hundred woes in the word of God, we are on very serious ground indeed. The woe is directed at the host who encourages the drinker.

The occasions begin with convivial social pleasantries. The descent is rapid and typical, for that sexual impurity and alcohol are bedfellows, and is as undeniably true as violence and alcohol are similarly twins. It is universally accepted that a person undergoes a personality change even after using a little alcohol. With a quantity, even before drunkenness sets in, the change becomes a transformation. The coward becomes brave, "Dutch" courage they call it. The shy and timorous become outgoing and the virgin becomes promiscuous. How many maidens have had their "nakedness discovered", when alcohol has weaved its bewitching, seducing net, living to bitterly regret the "so much" that was lost in drink, in the cold light of a sober morning. With almost every scripture we consider in relation to alcohol drinking, there is a judgement in connection with it. Here there is no exception for in the very next verse we read, *"the cup of the LORD'S right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory"* (HAB 2 v 16). I sincerely hope that no christian believer who reads these lines has ever come as far as the commonplace "shameful spewing", but if you are a user of the drug called alcohol, that's your world. But back to the judgement cup of the Lord's right hand. The full horror of this cup is seen in the book of Revelation, wherein its ultimate it is poured out upon the anti-christ worshippers who experience *"the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation"* (REV 14 v 10). Whereas it is appreciated that this wine cup of judgement indignation is the ultimate and followed by *"torment with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb (same verse),* the pattern is clear and the warning salutary.

We continue our deliberations with words from the lips of the Lord Jesus Himself.

*"WHAT SHALL BE THE SIGN OF THY COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD? JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO THEM, TAKE HEED THAT NO MAN DECEIVE YOU" (MATT 24 v 2 - 4).*

The Lord Jesus begins this fullest and clearest of accounts describing the end days with the most grave and repeated warnings concerning the prevalence and increasing influence of deceits and deceiving spirits upon and amongst His people. It is our firmly held conviction that the change in the stance of many "Christians" from abstinence to alcohol, embracing, is one such deceit and a major one at that. At the conclusion of the end-time overview portion of this second sermon on the Mount of Olives which compasses all of Matthew twenty four and twenty five, our beloved Lord Jesus makes promises of indescribable rewards to the overcoming faithful servants. He also makes some solemn warnings which must form part of this Chapter Two. We must never forget that the Lord is ministering to servants not worldlings. They are words to His own people. Sadly, there are a group of servants who have left the way of watchfulness and sobriety, even to the extent of being described as evil. Two matters are mentioned directly and a third by implication. The first is gluttony and then is wine bibbing. So alcohol is again referred to in a way that could not be more negative. The implied darkness is the association of the christian with the world. This vital distinction is now fudged to such an extent to make the church and the world almost indistinguishable. The world is pictured by a blanket descriptive word - "drunken", which says it all. It gets even

more solemn for the Lord warns that the outcome could not be more serious for the fallen unfaithful servant who has "*his portion appointed with the hypocrites and there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*" (MATT 24 v 51), at the thought of what could have and should have been. There are many other scriptures that present a similar challenge and warning. To comment on them all would turn a booklet into a book and such repetition would defeat our object, which is to present to our believer friends, the impossibility of true saints of God who desire to live in true christian devotedness to the Lord Jesus, using the drug alcohol in any shape or form. So we leave our readers with the foregoing challenges from the wise words from Leviticus, the grave warnings of prophet Habakkuk and the loving but solemn words of our Lord Jesus Himself.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **ALCOHOL AND ETERNAL DESTINY**

#### **A CONSIDERATION OF THE IMPACT THAT THE USE OF THE DRUG ALCOHOL HAS UPON THE ETERNAL ISSUES OF SALVATION AND KINGDOM REWARDS**

We begin our chapter with a scripture, which although self-explanatory, has such a profound and far reaching effect, it demands serious consideration.

*"I HAVE TOLD YOU IN TIMES PAST, THAT THEY WHICH DO SUCH THINGS SHALL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD" (GAL 5 v 21)*

It is categoric. It is fundamental. It could not be of more consequence. We refer, of course, to inheriting the Kingdom and the rewards of that glorious place. First things first. Before ETERNAL REWARDS, must come ETERNAL DESTINY. There is a very categoric question. Will using the drug alcohol affect our eternal salvation? The Apostles doctrine is unambiguous. *"By grace are ye saved through faith, not of works"*. This follows the *"repent and be baptised every one...for the remission of sins"* and also the *"repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out"* (EPH 2 v 8, ACTS 2 v 38, ACTS 4 v 19). That settles the question of the soul's ETERNAL DESTINY, for works either good or bad do not determine salvation. Salvation is by faith in the finished work of the cross, wrought by our beloved Lord Jesus. That is His part. Our part is repentance and baptism which brings total conversion and the remission of sins. I think my readers realise that I refer to the true, biblical salvation, not to the multiplied pseudo versions so prevalent today that leave the



duped recipient twofold more a child of hell than before.

However, ETERNAL REWARDS are another matter. The scripture that begins this chapter makes it plain that involvement in the "works of the flesh" would cause the believer to forfeit his right to and his inheritance in the Kingdom of God. There are various realms mentioned in Paul's description of the works of the flesh, involvement in any of which would result in Kingdom inheritance being forfeited. The list begins with the entire gamut of sexual sins, followed by the shady world of the occult. Next are the realms of anger, violence and murder (surely including murder by abortion). The list continues, but mention must be made of the ever-present heretical deceits and false doctrines. It matters so much what we both teach and believe. As we would expect, the world of alcohol also rates a mention in this catalogue of doom. It has to be acknowledged that it is mentioned in its excessive use. Thus it is biblically incontrovertible that indulgence in the works of the flesh must mean *"that they that do such things shall NOT inherit the Kingdom of God"* (GAL 5 v 21). The warnings to God's servants go further *"if God's servant says in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming...and eats and drinks with the drunken, he will have his portion appointed with the unbelievers"* (LUKE 12 v 45 and 46). Never forget, dear reader. *"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin"* (JAS 4 v 17).

The chapter was to end here but there seemed to be a lack, an incompleteness, so I trust my readers will be patient and consider a little more. We looked at the scripture *"Be not drunk with wine"* (EPH 5 v

18). A little earlier Paul said, when introducing this challenge, *"have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness"*. That is the reason why we advocate, "total abstinence". The Lord's twin goals for the believer-saint are sanctification, *"For this is the will of God even your sanctification"* (1 THESS 4 v 3), and also a fruitfulness in service. Make no mistake, the true christian is in a war zone. The enemy in this war, where there is no discharge until death or rapture, also has twin goals. They are to cause the sanctification process to be interrupted and the witness to be rendered ineffective. We now describe a progression that is tragically all familiar. A believer becomes a user of the drug alcohol, not to excess of course, but a drug user nevertheless. It is a drug and as with all drugs, it can become habit forming. As often happens with such habits, the desire becomes a craving and then a dependency. One feature of any drug dependency that is universally common is the "denial" that invariably accompanies it. It is not until the life seriously begins to unravel, that anyone who is drug dependent, whether it is alcohol, cocaine, heroin or whatever, will acknowledge the fact. Thank God that most of my alcohol using readers are not at the end of the chain described. But do you, as a christian believer, as a blood bought saint, want to be anywhere at all, along that alcohol road we have described.

Finally, we have described a habit that becomes a bondage. Who is the author of bondages, whether physical or spiritual? Luke tells of a woman *"whom satan hath bound with a spirit"* (LUKE 13 v 16 and 11). The Greek word for bondage is "doulou", its meaning is clear and unambiguous, it is slavery. And it gets worse, as anyone who

has been involved in the attempted reclamation of addicts, whether bound (in slavery) to alcohol or other drugs sadly know. Drug addiction does not come on its own! A believer experiences the cleansing power of God. He is swept and garnished. However, if by wrong choices, that believer opens up himself to the unclean spirit again, that returning spirit does not come alone but brings seven other, even more wicked spirits with him (MATT 12 v 43 – 45). This is a perfect picture of the alcohol or other drug addict. The bondage (slavery) to the drug is bad enough, but what accompanies it makes it even worse. Drugs cost money. In the insatiable craving for the drug and the money that feeds it, one has witnessed, robbery, violence, prostitution (Male and female) and much else. We describe here some of the seven wicked spirits that accompany drug addiction. One has mourned with an elderly christian mother, whose two beloved offspring lay dying in the same hospital ward from alcohol related illness, and die they did.

Thank God few of my readers will have to come to such extremes, but I ask you, do you want to be part of that spiritual and physical death-dealing world of alcohol in any shape or form? Do you want to be journeying on that alcohol road at all, even if you are only at its very beginnings? How well has our subject been described as "demon drink". It is certain that myriads of demons with the name "alcohol" exist, oppress and in the ultimate, possess. What ought my alcohol drug using believer brothers and sisters do in the light of all this? Surely there can be only one answer!

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **AM I MY BROTHERS KEEPER?**

#### **THE DAMAGING EXAMPLE SET BY CHRISTIAN ALCOHOL USERS TO THEIR WEAKER BRETHERN**

We begin this chapter with a true story. No doubt it is repeated many times with many tragic variations. We begin our account with the stock protest of the drug alcohol using christians, who are the villains of this piece. "I don't drink to excess, you have never seen me legless". Yet one, dearly beloved and in desperate circumstances through the curse of alcohol, when remonstrated with, made this telling reply which says it all. "But brother and sister "X" drink alcohol and they are christian ministers". Where does it leave their protests of "no drinking to excess" in the light of this true story?

How careful Paul was in this matter of example. When we witness how easy it is to cause weaker brethren to stumble by using the drug known as alcohol, is it not a mystery how christian believers can persist on a course that could be the cause of pushing the reclaimed back into alcoholism. Perhaps even worse, it could embolden someone to start down the road of alcohol drug use that could lead almost anywhere and certainly nowhere good. Is the following "woe" from the lips of the Lord Jesus, too strong or inappropriate? My readers can decide.

*"But who so shall offend one of these little (surely also "little" in faith and mature experience) ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged around his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea".*

Paul leaves us in no doubt that such pernicious "christian" examples are not

merely thoughtless, but utterly disobedient when all the scriptures that are relevant to the matter are considered. Almost all of Romans chapter fourteen impacts on our deliberations, but one verse sums up the main thrust of Paul's argument.

*"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak"* (ROM 14 v 21).

Paul uses even stronger language in his letter to Corinth which concludes with his following testimony. Although referring to meat, as we have seen from the previous verse, the spiritual application is identical in relation to wine.

*"Wherefore if meat [wine] makes my brother to offend, I will eat not flesh [drink no wine] while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend"* (1 COR 8 v 13) [matter in square brackets is mine].

Another matter for my readers to ponder. Wine is never mentioned either in relation to the last supper or the new covenant breaking of bread at communion service. The expression used is the fruit of the vine or what is commonly known as grape-juice. Recently, in a sound biblically based fellowship, the only element on offer in the communion service was an alcoholic wine. There was no fruit of vine, no grape-juice. Sadly, even though there was a deep longing to break bread with fellow believers, that cup had to be passed by, as neither your author or his wife use the drug alcohol and certainly not at the table of the Lord.

Although guilty of first-degree murder, Cain made this impious protest that forms the title of our chapter. *"AM I MY BROTHERS KEEPER"* (GEN 4 v 9 - 10). It drew this reply from the lips of the Lord Himself. *"The*

*voice of thy brothers blood crieth unto me from the ground*" and the whole earth and its inhabitants still bear the burden of the curse that was pronounced on Cain until this day. We are encouraged, even commanded to "*Bear one anothers burden and so fulfil the law of Christ*" (GAL 6 v 12). Whose law do we fulfil when, by our thoughtless disobedience, in pursuing fleeting pleasure by drug alcohol consumption, we place burdens on weaker fellow believer brethren, that cause them to stumble and even fall into the excesses of alcohol abuse, to the damage of their eternal souls? It could conceivably be that from such stumbled and offended souls, there is spiritual blood crying to the Lord and that blood could be on your hands my alcohol using fellow pilgrim. In the day when the secrets of all men's hearts are revealed, do you really want to carry such a guilt?

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CHRIST OUR PERFECT EXEMPLAR**

#### **A CONSIDERATION OF THE EXAMPLE SET BY THE LORD JESUS FOR THE ENTIRETY OF THE CHURCH AGE**

*"AND HE SAITH UNTO THEM 'FOLLOW ME' AND I WILL MAKE YOU FISHERS OF MEN, AND THEY FORSOOK ALL AND FOLLOWED HIM" (MATT 4 v 19, LUKE 5 v 11).*

Our beloved Lord and Saviour is our perfect pattern. He is the best of all examples. As our chapter heading declares, He is our "perfect exemplar". Before we consider the example that He set us, we share a few thoughts on "wine" in the context of our studies. There are more than a dozen words in Hebrew and Greek that are translated wine in our Old and New Testaments. One of them, "tirosh", the first pressing or the "new wine", is considered by many not to be fermented or alcoholic at all. We will discuss this possibility and its extensions in our next chapter entitled "The New Wine of the Kingdom".

There is one thing of which we can be absolutely sure. There are a dozen or more Hebrew and Greek words for wine or fruit of the vine and none of the beverages they represent would be drunk by the Lord Jesus during the entire church age. From the Last Supper to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, no wine, no fruit of vine, nothing that contained alcohol or even non alcoholic grape juice, would pass the lips of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, our perfect exemplar. We can be sure of this fact from these amazing words taken from (LUKE 22 v 15 - 20).

*"FOR I SAY UNTO YOU I WILL NOT DRINK OF THE FRUIT OF THE VINE UNTIL THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHALL COME".*

Jesus, our great example, has set us a pattern. If He is totally uninvolved with the drug alcohol during the church age, should we, can we, do differently? Our commencing scripture calls all who wish to be disciples to follow Him. Should we not follow Him in the matter of alcohol as in everything else? Your author, for one, has determined never to drink alcohol while the world standeth. When the King comes back to receive His Kingdom, I look forward with anticipation and delight to drinking with Him the "new wine of the Kingdom of God". The nature and composition of this new wine will form the basis of our next chapter.



## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **THE KINGDOM WILL HAVE NEW WINE**

#### **A CONSIDERATION OF THE NATURE AND COMPOSITION OF THE "NEW WINE" THAT WILL BE DRUNK BY ALL IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

In the Millennium or thousand year Kingdom, Jesus will reign with His true church alongside Him as His bride and consort. God's historic people, the Jews, will be fully restored to their promised land of Greater Israel which will extend from the Nile to the Euphrates rivers as her northern and southern boundaries and from the Great Sea (Mediterranean) to the Jordan river. It will almost certainly extend to the other side of Jordan into the land settled by the two and a half tribes generally known as Gilead. Jerusalem will be the joy of the whole earth and the seat of the throne of the King of Kings. The earth will be renewed as befitting such a monarch and will be totally unrecognisable from the sin bedevilled planet we now inhabit. Let us consider some of the changes that will be incorporated into the millennial Kingdom, when Eden's paradise will be restored.

#### **A. NO MORE WAR**

The armament industry will cease overnight. Swords will become tools of agriculture and military service will be no more (IS 2 v 4, MIC 4 v 3 etc.,) The change will be colossal and complete. The human death machine and its motivation will vanish. How will this impossibility become reality? How will the corrupt, murderous hearts of men be changed? A full answer will need a booklet in itself. One factor concerns us in our deliberations and it is that all

venom, all poison, all hatred will be removed from the hearts of men and all the defiling ingredients that are such a defiling factor will, as we shall see, also be removed.

## B. A TRANSFORMED ANIMAL KINGDOM

Just as man's desire and capacity to slaughter will be over, the change will utterly transform the animal Kingdom. How can this be? By the same miraculous event. As the venom has been drawn from the hearts of men, it will likewise be extracted from the collective "psyche" of the animal Kingdom for *"they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea"* (IS 11 v 9). This verse is remarkable. Perhaps equally so are the glorious millennial promises that precede it. They tell of wolves dwelling with lambs and leopards lying down with kids. There are even descriptions of calves, young lions and fatlings united and wonder of wonders, all being led by a little child. There is more of the same culminating in the depiction of a little child, still breast fed, playing on the hole of Cleopatra's suicide choice, the asp, and the weaned child putting his hand in total safety on the cockatrice or adder's den. (IS 11 v 6 - 8). It is a total transformation that completely reverses the natural instincts, that make predators destroy and their prey live with a constant fear that is their only protection. All these destroying forces have totally vanished because all nature is changed. It has become vocal and sings with a paean of praise to their creator. Just as the defiling venom is removed from the

hearts of men, it disappears from the instinctive nature of the animal Kingdom also.

### C. A GLORIOUS KINGDOM IN WHICH THERE IS NOTHING THAT DEFILES

I am now going to make an assertion that may well appal my wine-drinking "christian" friends. It has to be inconceivable that this glorious millennial Kingdom, from which all the cursed, venomous poison has been extracted, will still be awash, or even have the very existence of the alcohol which is one of the most venomous and destructive drugs known to man. We have discussed at length the transformation within the animal Kingdom, emphasising how the serpents and adders will be de-fanged and have their poison sacks removed. Further, how there will be a complete reversal of their predatory instincts. We have just asserted that the venomous poisons will cease to exist in the millennial Kingdom, including and especially the destructive drug we call alcohol. At this juncture, would our readers look at a confirmation scripture found in (PROVERBS 23 v 29 – 33). It begins with a WOE (v29), gives a graphic and frightening account of wine's activity (30 – 31) and ends with the often repeated link between alcohol and sexual impurity (v33). Just one verse is set out here (v32), which confirms all.

*"WINE...AT THE LAST IS BITTETH LIKE A SERPENT AND STINGETH LIKE AN ADDER".*

Consider my thoughtful readers. Can it even be conceivable that the drug we know as alcohol, that biteth like a serpent and

stingeth like an adder could be on tap in Christ's Millennial Kingdom, where none and nothing will hurt or destroy?

Of course, there will be the fruit of the vine that our beloved Lord Jesus will drink "NEW" in the Kingdom, but there can be no doubt that it cannot possibly contain the destructive drug alcohol. The "NEW" wine, the sweet wine, the juice of the grapes, the fruit of the vine, the Hebrew "tirosh" has to be drug free. It must be so. Through fifty years of ministry your author has witnessed the curse of drug alcohol. He has battled to help the helpless from the vice like grip of "demon drink". By very necessity, anyone involved in these rescue endeavours, would have to be totally drug alcohol free themselves. They would have to be New Testament Nazarites, (more on this later) who had given to life the propulsion of a sacred vow, not to defile their bodies or souls with that cursed drug alcohol. Consider for a moment. Can it be conceivable that those believers who, through the centuries, have purposed in their hearts like Daniel of old, not to defile themselves with the portion of the wine drunk by the Kings (and paupers) of this world, would drink alcohol in the Kingdom? Your author for one, for conscience sake, would not do it. Consider for a moment. Can it be conceivable that at the marriage supper of the Lamb, where the "NEW" wine of the Kingdom is probably drunk for the first time, that there would be a large group of non conformists who would for conscience sake refuse to imbibe the drug alcohol? You may think that no one would refuse for fear of giving offence. The Lord is my beloved and I am His. By His grace I would do nothing on earth to cause Him offence. However, there is always the offence of the cross. That is why your

author refuses to sit at table with wine drinking "christians". By the same token, it is why the communion cup is passed by, if tainted with alcohol. If it is done now, it will be done then and your author would not be alone in it. But you can be assured that such a scenario will never be for the "NEW" wine of the Kingdom will not have a trace of the drug that has blighted the earth from earliest times. Like the miraculous wine at the Cane of Galilee first miracle, which was surely alcohol free, all will proclaim with one accord.

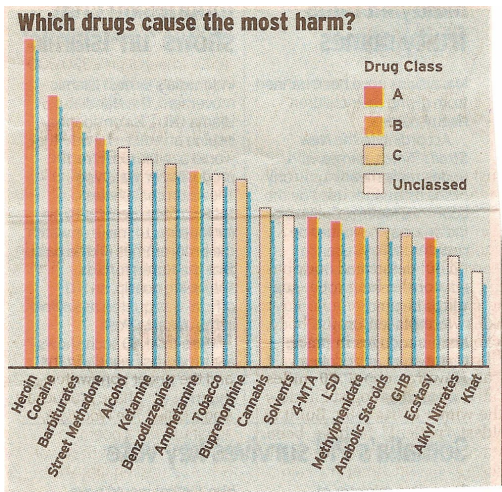
*"BELOVED LORD JESUS YOU HAVE KEPT THE GOOD WINE UNTIL NOW".*

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **ALCOHOL, ALMOST TOP OF THE DAMAGING DRUG LEAGUE**

#### **A CONSIDERATION OF THE UNDOUBTED PLACE THAT ALCOHOL HAS AMONG THE MOST DAMAGING AND HARMFUL OF DRUGS USED BY MAN**

Books galore have been written about the place that alcohol has among the most damaging and harmful of drugs used by man. Our booklet is written from the biblical standpoint, so our references to the evidences from the secular world will be brief. However, as the damage and harm in the medical and social realms is so extensive, some reference must be made. As a basis we are presenting evidence from a panel of drug experts as quoted in the Daily Telegraph 31.07.06. As our readers can see there is a league table of the most harmful and damaging of drugs in common use. The reports are too lengthy to quote in full but the following brief extracts tell an amazing story.



1. THE REPORT CONCLUDED THAT ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO ARE MORE DANGEROUS THAN ECSTASY, LSD AND CANNABIS.
2. THE SURPRISES COME THICK AND FAST. THE MOST PERNICIOUS ARE WHAT WE WOULD EXPECT, BEING HEROIN AND COCAINE, BOTH "CLASS A" DRUGS. AMAZINGLY, NUMBER ELEVEN IS CANNABIS, A "CLASS C" DRUG. NUMBER FOURTEEN IS LSD AND NUMBER EIGHTEEN IS ECSTASY, WHICH ARE BOTH "CLASS A" DRUGS.
3. NOW TO THE MAJOR SHOCKS: WHERE DO WE FIND THE DRUG NOW COMMONLY USED BY MANY CHRISTIANS IN THE HARMFUL AND DAMAGING LEAGUE? ALCOHOL, INCREDIBLY UNCLASSIFIED, IS NUMBER FIVE. SURELY, BECAUSE OF THE DEVASTATIONS IT WREAKS, IT SHOULD BE "CLASS A". IT IS EVEN FOUR PLACES AHEAD OF TOBACCO.
4. ALCOHOL IS INVOLVED IN MORE THAN HALF OF ALL VISITS TO ACCIDENT

AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND ORTHOPAEDIC ADMISSIONS.

5. ALCOHOL IS AT THE ROOT OF MUCH VIOLENCE AND IS A FREQUENT CAUSE OF CAR ACCIDENTS.

If it was suggested to the drug alcohol using "christian" who is a regular user and that weakly protests, "I'm only a social drinker", that they smoked "pot", only socially, of course, they would be appalled and horrified, yet the drug they habitually use is infinitely more damaging.

In a recently read article on a "Biblical Perspective on the use of Alcohol", the following damaging effects were listed: -

HEART DISEASE

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

IMPOTENCE

NERVE AND BRAIN DAMAGE

INSOMNIA

CANCER

RENAL AND STOMACH DAMAGE

Under FOETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME were included: -

SKELETAL DEFORMITY

MENTAL RETARDATION

GROWTH STUNTING

MAJOR ORGAN MALFUNCTION

In a brief chapter of less than five hundred words enough evidence has been presented concerning the damage and harm caused by the drug alcohol, both on the personal and social level that would both appal



and stagger any impartial reader. How any "christian" could thoughtfully consider what has been presented in this chapter alone, and still use the drug called alcohol is totally bewildering.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **NOT SO MUCH AS A RAISIN**

#### **A CONSIDERATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT NAZARITE AND THE NEW TESTAMENT DISCIPLE EQUIVALENT**

The Lord has always had His V.I.P's. Enoch, the seventh from Adam walked with God for three hundred years, in an intimate fellowship, that had never been dreamed of, in the generations that preceded him. By the time that he "was not" for God took him, almost one thousand years had passed by since Adam and Eden's garden. In those glorious centuries of "walking with God", much was shared with this precious saint, even to the revelation of the second coming of the Lord Jesus, for he said, "*Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints*" (JUDE 14), for he was also a prophet and very special indeed to his beloved Lord. Although rare, he was not unique, for the Lord had, all through the ages, His beloved ones, set apart for the Lord Himself. He had Psalmists, prophets and godly Kings, not forgetting humble, unnamed saints, all of whom were precious in their own unique way. There is one particular group that deeply interests us in the context of our studies concerning "Christians and Alcohol". They were known as "Nazarites". The meaning of their name says it all, for it is "separated". They were those, who had given to life, the propulsion of a sacred vow. We read about them and the vow that they had taken in Numbers Chapter Six. There were Nazarites who made their solemn vow for a period of their lives only. There were also Nazarites who had that vow upon them from the womb, in fact, life long (JUDGES 13 v 5). All had one thing in common, whether male or female, they would make the vow of the Nazarite to

separate themselves unto the Lord. Also had in common and without which none could be deemed to be a Nazarite, was this striking and revealing command.

*“THE NAZARITE SHALL SEPARATE HIMSELF FROM WINE AND STRONG DRINK...NEITHER SHALL HE DRINK ANY LIQUOR OF GRAPES, NOR EAT MOIST GRAPES OR DRIED” (LEV 6 v 3).*

So, for the Nazarite it was absolutely nothing in the realm of alcohol, in fact, “NOT SO MUCH AS A RAISIN”, which is the title of this chapter. May we never forget that this deep separation was under the old covenant. How much more complete should be our separation in the new covenant. As with everything, spiritual and godly, it is contested and, as is invariably the case, by those who should know better. Jeremiah the weeping prophet lamented over Israel’s demise and destruction. They should have been “whiter than snow”, but in truth they became “blacker than coal” (LAM 4 v 7 – 8). How true of the pressures exerted upon those in the Laodecean days in which we live. Amos depicts so graphically the eerie forces, set to bear, on God’s new covenant Nazarites and prophets of today. His message is timeless.

*“AND I RAISED UP YOUR SONS FOR PROPHETS AND YOUR YOUNG MEN FOR NAZARITES...BUT YE GAVE THE NAZARITES WINE TO DRINK, AND COMMANDED THE PROPHETS, SAYING PROPHECY NOT” (AMOS 2 v 11 – 12).*

As in the old order or covenant, God has His special ones, His separated ones, so in the new covenant. There is a most beautiful hymn, written by one of the “Pentecostal Holiness” pioneers. He was “aged” and coming to the end of his “Bible School” teaching ministry, when your author came

into contact with him, at the end of the 1950's. Space forbids more than the first verse of E. C. W. Boulton's lovely hymn.

          CALLED TO SEPARATION,  
          WITH THE CRUCIFIED,  
          TEMPLES OF THE SPIRIT,  
          SAVED AND SANCTIFIED,  
          SET APART FOR SERVICE,  
          BY GOD'S HAND ORDAINED,  
          WE THE CROSS HAVE TAKEN,  
          BY HIS LOVE CONSTRAINED.

These words describe perfectly the "separated one" of the New Testament church, the disciple, in the true meaning of the word. We could call such the "NAZARITE" of the New Testament, but with a separation and surrender that must transcend that, of even the most devoted, of the old order. Our beloved brother Paul, at his most eloquent, pleads for such. They were rare in his day; in ours they are almost extinct. Let us ponder his heartfelt longing in the context of our deliberations.

*"I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (ROM 12 v 1).*

If we have it in our hearts to present our entire beings to our precious Lord, surely, those bodies should not be defiled by one of the most harmful substances commonly used by man, that is the drug alcohol. Alcohol is a drug, not just a drug, but among the most harmful and destructive of drugs known to man, yet in common use. Alcohol is an arch-defiler. Read and ponder upon these words in the context of our studies. *"Know ye not ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in*

*you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are”* (1 COR 3 v 16 – 17). The old order Nazarite avoided the arch-defiler by command, surely the new testament surrendered and separated disciple/saint should avoid the arch-defiler, not by constraint, but as part of his willing, glad surrender, not to be defiled, so he can be totally separated to his beloved Lord.

We close this chapter with a brief consideration of Noah who was known as the epitome of righteousness, perhaps we could dub him a pre-Nazarite Nazarite! The aspect of Noah’s life that occupies our thinking is only a brief story although tragedy would perhaps be a more apt description. *“Noah was a preacher of righteousness* (2 PET 2 v 5) *Noah, was a just man and perfect and Noah walked with God”* (GEN 6 v 9). Yet this epitome of righteousness, this paragon of piety, this prince among men became prey to the devastating effects of the “demon drink”, the curse of alcohol most certainly came upon him. His naked drunkenness brought deep defilement upon himself and a curse upon a large portion of humankind through Ham’s wickedness, the effects of which, continue right up until our present day. (Read the entire account of his life in (GEN Chs 6, 7, 8 and 9)).

So we have completed the eighth and last chapter of our booklet. All that remains is our conclusion, beginning with the completed account of my beloved “dad’s” gospel transforming experience which changed him from a drink bound wretch to a most beautiful and precious saint.

## CONCLUSION

In our introduction we left my father as a troubled and demon alcohol affected soul, seemingly only to be pacified by the sight of a little boy, his son, who was so dearly loved. A dozen years or so have passed by. That same son, your author, had experienced many things. A fine Grammar School education, a glorious conversion and a call to the ministry and although at seventeen and "flying crazy" even to being the youngest licensed pilot in the UK, that ministry call drove any thoughts of an aviation career clean away. So at the age of twenty, "Bible School" beckoned and mum and dad waved as the train passed by from the footbridge adjacent to our home. Dad retraced his few steps to our little cottage, climbed the stairs to my tiny bedroom, sat on my bed and pondered.

He thought of his childhood, beginning with his being bereaved of his mother at the age of two. He recalled beatings and hunger until, still a boy, he ran away from home and was found and reared by gypsies, until he joined the army as a "boy" soldier. During the next fourteen years, in different corners of the empire in the days of the "Raj" he learnt many things and not just how to be one of the best shots in the British Army. All this and more he mused upon, comparing his early years with mine. He reflected on my best of education, plenty to eat and inspite of the drunken rampages, lots of love. He reached the conclusion that he had been a good dad. Surely the good outweighs the bad? But suddenly that little bedroom became "the door of heaven". The Spirit of God swept in and the first recalled sin that brought conviction was, that inspite of the material good in all your author's young life, "dad" had never pointed him to God. Thus in the

sight of heaven, he was an abject failure. Now the floodgates were opened and the Spirit of God portrayed the whole of his life like a panorama presented on a screen. Every sin was depicted (for God forgets nothing), from gypsy days and all the soldiers sins and much, much more.

Repentance was deep and utterly sincere as dad confessed his sins and wept his way to the cross of Jesus. He rose from his knees an utterly new creation in Christ Jesus, as transformed as Saul on the road to Damascus. Life was totally different. He never swore from that day forward and never once lost his temper. He was ever after known as "the man with the shining face". During your author's first pastorate, "dad" was the deacon at the door and his loving welcomes and farewells were a benediction in themselves. Your author had the honour to preach his funeral sermon and knew a precious saint was laid to rest, and that we would meet again. Of course, it goes without saying that from the moment of his conversion, to the day of his death, not one drop of that drug called alcohol, that had been such a curse to him and his house, ever passed his lips. My conclusion is that for the reasons set out, in all that has gone before and by the grace of God, not one drop of alcohol will pass my lips either. I leave my beloved readers to pen their own conclusion in their hearts.

## **MORE RECENT THOUGHTS ON DRUG ALCOHOL**

Since our little book was completed, a lot of thought has been given to the subject of "CHRISTIANS AND ALCOHOL". More than ever before, your writer is convinced that the damaging, corrupting drug alcohol is an absolute no, no, for any serious Christian. Further conclusions have been reached, which we now present to our readers.

### **CONCLUSION ONE; JESUS OUR PERFECT EXEMPLAR**

Our beloved Lord Jesus, who is the LIVING WORD, would never have used the drug alcohol which, in the WRITTEN WORD, is described like this:

*PROVERBS 20 v 1 - Wine is a mocker and strong drink is raging.*

*PROVERBS 23 v 32 - ...Wine at last biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder.*

Can any student of the Word of God seriously believe that the Lord Jesus would, via the WRITTEN WORD which he inspired, pronounce a "WOE", one of the most serious of Divine judgements upon Himself, for we read in:

*HABAKKUK 2 v 15 - "WOE" unto him that giveth his neighbour drink and putteth his bottle to him, and maketh him drunk.*

And, by extension, it is irrefutably obvious that the wine that the Lord Jesus miraculously turned from water at Cana of



Galilee (*JOHN CH 2*), could not possibly be an alcoholic drug. Those at the celebration had already well drunk. Would our beloved Lord Jesus bring them to this state? *ISAIAH 19 v 14 – as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit.*

## **CONCLUSION TWO;**

### **NO CONTRADICTIONS IN GOD'S HOLY WORD**

There are numerous scriptures that make plain 'wine' is a curse. Paradoxically there are also scriptures that indicate 'wine' is a blessing. However, when we examine the various words for wine in the Bible, all becomes plain and the possibility of a Biblical contradiction disappears.

1. TIROSH – The first pressing, new wine, fruit of the vine (as used in the last supper (1 CORINTHIAN II) and communion, unfermented NON ALCOHOLIC.
2. YAYIN – Fermented wine needs additives, anything from your cheap plonk to £5,000 per bottle, and probably your fortified Port and Sherry.
3. SHEKAR – Strong drink, gins, whiskies, vodkas etc.,

A last question. Is the world of alcohol your world? It is not mine now, nor ever will be in this life, nor in the world to come, including the MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB. Maranatha!

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