

DID JESUS DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES?

I'm still in a state of shock to learn that a once conservative Bible scholar would speak publicly in defense of drinking alcohol privately as long as he does not "abuse" such by getting intoxicated. I have a copy of his entire speech, and all of our correspondence on the subject. I wrote an article on "He sinned when he Has taken the first drink" that was lifted from his writing, in which he preceded this statement that he would **not**. (<http://www.selfpublishinginnovations.com/don-tarbet1.html>)

We agreed that the full correspondence would not be made public, though I besought him to do so, once it was completed, as I would love to see what I wrote set forth for examination, in contrast with what the Professor wrote to me. Near the end of our going back and forth on the issue, I presented ten (10) major points that I absolutely **insisted** he answer. He agreed that he would if I would first answer **his** argument about Jesus Himself being a user of wine. I responded, and he did not like my answer, so declared that the correspondence was over, and he would write me no more.

Before getting into many of the arguments he presented, and my response to him, I shall deal in this article **only** the matter of Jesus' own use of alcoholic beverages. I will not give full quotations from The Professor, but generally what he said, but will show the statements to anyone who doubts the accuracy of any point made. In this writing, we shall consider only the accusation of Jesus being a "winebibber."

First, The Professor contends that Jesus indeed was a user of wine during His personal ministry. Luke 7:34 states, "*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!*" The Professor says the inference is that Jesus acknowledged that He drank wine, or was a winebibber. My response is that does not follow. If Jesus **did** drink wine, it could have been the "unfermented" kind. Note that the Lord spoke of how these enemies would "say" John came eating and drinking, and then they would "say" he had a devil because He came eating and drinking. Was Jesus acknowledging that John was a "devil" because some would **say** such about him? Certainly not! One time some **said** to Jesus, "*Thou hast a devil*" (John 7:20) Were they right in saying such??

The word "winebibber" is found only 2 times in the Old Testament, and it is **joined** to the word "glutton" in some form. First, Deut. 21:20, which reads, "*And they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.'*" Second, Prov. 23:20, which reads, "*Do not be with a heavy drinker of wine, or with the gluttonous eaters of meat. For the heavy drinkers and the gluttonous will come to poverty.*" Then, the New Testament uses them together Matt. 11:19 and Luke 7:34, which is the **equivalent of the Old Testament term**. So, IF Jesus was really a "winebibber" (heavy drinker of wine), then He was also a "glutton". The word glutton does not refer to one who happens to eat a few bites too much once in awhile (as we so often use the word), but to one engaged in drunken feasts, indulging and drinking. Note the following statement about the word "winebibber."

"From '*oinnopotyes*, of habitual wine-drinkers. The accusation was falsely brought against Jesus of being a 'gluttonous man and a winebibber,' because unlike John, He ate and drank with others." (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, p. 3088)

Enough said! Jesus was **not** a drinker of wine. How dare the Professor accuse Him of such. Obviously, the use of *oinos* in the word shows that it sometimes refers to intoxicated juice of the grape, as it does in this passage, but not always as we can observe. Our next writing will concentrate on the use of “wine” by Jesus when He was upon the cross.” Did Jesus “abuse” or even use alcoholic drink in His life? The scripture does not so teach.

Don Tarbet