

## “‘WINE’ IN THE O.T. AND CHRISTIANS DRINKING ALCOHOL”

In our communication with the “Professor” at one of our Christian universities, we encountered the idea that the use of alcoholic wine in the the Old Testament justifies **our** use of wine or any alcoholic beverages today, if we are thirsty, and as long as we don’t “abuse” it by getting intoxicated. We are made to wonder **how** one can put a **toxicant** in the body without then being **intoxicated!!** The Professor even admitted that alcohol is “the intoxicating principle” of various liquids. The Professor spent most of his time laboring to justify our use of alcohol in the Christian age, based on the concept that since God allowed the priests in the O.T. to “use” alcoholic wine in worship, meant that alcohol in itself is not evil, and we can use it if don’t abuse it. We well remember that God created everything that was good in the garden of Eden, which surely included grapes, and the juice that came from grapes. However, it was **man** who took grape juice (good) and made it intoxicating (evil, when used for human consumption). Noah became drunk or intoxicated with wine, but that does not mean we can do the same thing without engaging in sin. It is the “use” of alcohol in drinking that is evil.

The Professor argued he did not write from the idea that he was trying to “justify” it’s use today because it was used in the O. T., but he stated that he was merely looking at the “background” use of alcohol, to explain that we can use it today as a drink, even though he personally would advise anyone not to use it, because it might “lead” to something dangerous or sinful. At the same time, he sought to “justify” the use of it, which reminds us of something Paul wrote in Gal. 5:4, which reads, *“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are **justified** by the law; **ye are fallen from grace.**”*

Just for the sake of argument, let’s assume that God DID approve of the Jews drinking alcoholic beverages in moderation, what does that prove? They were living in the “moonlight age” and there were some things they did practice that are forbidden today. For instance, God tolerated or allowed them to have more than one wife upon various occasions, even though He had originally declared that it was to be one woman for one man. God’s laws have changed, just as the priesthood changed (Heb. 7:12). Instrumental music was authorized in some instances in worship under the O. T., but such is not allowed today in the gospel age. Can we scripturally use “pianos” in worship just because harps were used in the Old Testament? Or, can we too offer animal sacrifices in Christian worship because the Jews were to offer animal sacrifices in the O. T.? Surely not!! To argue and practice such is to “fall from grace” in a vain attempt to justify it because it was allowed in the O. T.. Are we allowed to “use” harps in worship as long as we don’t “abuse” them? Strange logic!

The Professor would be **more** “logical” and “consistent” to argue that we can drink alcoholic wine in “worship” because it indeed **was** used in the worship under the law, as it was poured out in connection with the animal sacrifices. However, it was **not consumed** by the priests who poured it out, for they were specifically forbidden to use it while in the tabernacle. So, apparently no one drank it, so just **how** does that justify it’s use in any form today? If anything, it would come nearer justifying our “pouring it out” in some way, rather than the drinking of it.

It is true that what was “written” (in the O. T.) was written for our learning (Rom. 15:4), but does not mean that we are authorized to **do** everything they did in those days. In 1 Cor. 10, Paul lists several things that were done in O. T. times, and declares that they were recorded or written for “ensamples” (1 Cor. 10:11) that we should “not” **do** as they did, which referred to their idolatry, fornication and murmuring. A lot of folks might like to justify fornication on the basis that the Jews did it, but such “justification” is invalid. Jesus once said that some things that men seek to “*justify*” themselves in doing, is abomination in the sight of God (Luke 16:15).

Clearly, the O. T. spoke against the practice of drinking strong drink. Solomon said that such is a mocker, and one is not wise to use it (Prov. 20:1). He also said that one was not to look upon wine in its allurements (Prov. 23:29-33). Habakkuk places a woe upon the one drinking strong drink, and upon the one who gives it to him, and drinks with him (See Hab. 2:15-16). The New Testament clearly teaches that we are to “*abstain*” (avoid completely) those things that appeal to the lust of the flesh that war against the soul. See 1 Pet. 2:11. What wars against the soul more than the drinking of alcohol?? Is such not a work of darkness? See Eph. 5:11. Did not the inspired apostle Paul say that we to “*make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof?*” (Rom. 13:14). Just think how alcohol is used many times to break down the moral objection to sex outside of marriage, and then to easily persuade, or even rape the other party. Alcohol is used in virtually all dancing activities between men and women. The world loves its alcohol, while John writes that such things are of the “world”, and not from God (1 John 2:15-17). Did not Paul also say that we are not to be “*conformed to the world*” (Rom. 12:1-2)? If priests and judges were forbidden to drink alcohol in the O. T. because it would keep them from distinguishing between good and evil, what makes some think we can drink any alcohol and still distinguish between right and wrong?

In our next articles, we shall look at the fruits of the use of alcohol, and examine the passages that are used to “justify” its use today.

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