

## WINE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In his speech in 2018, the Professor set forth his premise that intoxicating wine was not evil within itself, or else God would not have authorized its use in the worship of the priests where sacrifices were offered. He also based God's approval of wine from Deut. 14:26, which reads:

*"And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires, you shall eat there before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household."* (NKJV)

The word for "wine" in this passage is the Hebrew word yayin, which can or cannot mean an "intoxicating" drink. Many scholars **do** believe it is intoxicating, but even the Professor admits that it is not always true, and admitted in his lecture that yayin as used in Isa. 16:10 means "unfermented grape juice." In many respects, it is like the word oinos (used for wine in the New Testament) has to be understood **in each context in which it is found**. Yet, the Professor continues to attempt to justify alcoholic wine as being basically approved of God (except in passages where it is specifically condemned, however).

The Professor admits that yayin which Noah drank (Gen. 9:21) and which Solomon condemned as sinful (Prov. 20:1 and 23:29-33) should be heeded. Again, the context shows its **use** to be sinful, for it is "intoxicating." So it is with the Hebrew word shekhar. Both of these Hebrew words are found in Lev. 10:9-10, which forbade the priests from using either when they came into the tent of meeting. The Professor says that both words here refer to intoxicants, and the priests were forbidden to use either **when they came into the tent of meeting**, which implied that they COULD drink such when **not** in the tent of meeting, and that without sin.

A simple illustration here might be helpful. A mother tells her son to stay out of the mud, and says, "You had better not have mud on your feet when you come into the house." This does not mean that it is okay to have mud on his feet when he is outside, but be sure it is not there when he comes into the house. She means, "Stay out of the mud."

Both "wine" and "strong drink" are condemned in Isa. 5:11, 22. A woe is pronounced upon the one who "gives" his neighbor drink, and who also "drinks" (Hab. 2:15-16). The Professor argues that shekhar is a drink that is allowable, as long as one does not abuse it by getting intoxicated. Even though the word is generally translated "strong drink," it is not always the case. *"It is distinguished from 'wine' and the meaning is not quite certain. The tr. For 'strong drink' is unfortunate, for it suggests 'distilled liquor' which is unfortunate."* (ISBE, IV, p. 3086).

*"Shakar (sometimes written shechar) signifies 'sweet drink' expressed from fruits other than the grape, and drunk in an unfermented or fermented state. It occurs in the Old Testament twenty-three times—Bible Commentary, p. 418, Kitto's Cyclopaedia says, 'Shakar is a general term, including palm-wine and other saccharine beverages, except those prepared from the vine.'" (William Patton, THE BIBLE AND WINE, p. 46).*

Patton goes on to say, *"The Hebrew name is shakar, which is usually translated strong drink in the Old Testament and in the New. The mere reader, of course, invariably*

*gets from this translation a wrong idea of the real meaning of the original Hebrew. He attaches to it the idea which the English phrase now conveys among us, viz, that of a strong intoxicating drink, like our distilled liquors. As to distillation, by which alcoholic liquors are not principally obtained, it was utterly unknown to the Hebrews, and indeed to all the world in ancient times....They may be kept and used in unfermented state; when of course, no quantity that a man could drink of them would intoxicate him in any perceptible degree.” (PATTON, p. 46)*

So, obviously, the Bible word for “strong drink” did **not** always indicate the divine approval of one enjoying such in the Old Testament. The result of the drink of Deut. 14:26 was that of “rejoicing”, or being glad, to shine, etc., and does not describe the state of one who is intoxicated with alcohol.

Now, as to the use of “wine in worship” in the Old Testament justifying the approval of God in the New Testament age, this too is a vain argument. Both the words “wine” and animal “sacrifices” are connected in the Old Testament, but in the sacrifices themselves, neither are spoken of as being **humanly consumed**. **IS IT POSSIBLE** that the association of **animals** and fermented **wine** are used together to typify or foretell the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, as His “body” was “destroyed” (killed), and His “blood” was poured out, but HIS was “pure blood”, and would not be memorialized with intoxicating wine today in the time of divine fulfillment??? The “wine” was **faulty**, just as the old covenant was faulty, and the pure fruit of the vine is better. Something like this **HAS** to be the answer. In Heb. 10:1, it is said that those “sacrifices” (plural, and not just ONE sacrifice of the atonement) were a “shadow” of things that were to come. So, in this description, we see HOW they pointed to the sacrifice of our Lord. HOW CAN ONE HELP BUT SEE THIS?

There was an obvious use for the wine (alcoholic in nature) in connection with the sacrifices—not to be humanly consumed, but to be poured out with the fire burning the sacrifices. Gasoline is used today for burning, but not for drinking. So with the wine in connection with the sacrifices. What **better** fuel for burning the sacrifices than the wine being “poured out” ON the sacrifices to be burned?? If the wine was **in** the tent of meeting, and the priest could not drink it, how does that give any support for our drinking it today?

To argue that because wine was used in worship doesn’t mean it is good for man to drink it today. The priests were not allowed to drink the wine when it was being offered, but it’s use was something different. It was **poured out**. The priests were to avoid drinking, even with all that alcohol around, that they might properly differentiate between the holy and the profane.

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