

## Wine in the Bible – Alcoholic or Non-Alcoholic?

Prepared for Grand Advent SDA Collegiate Sabbath School, Feb 6, 2016

### **Definitions/Use/Root Words**

1. *oinos/yayin* - The most common word translated as “wine” is *oinos* which is a direct equivalent of the Hebrew word *yayin*. The word refers to all products of grape juice and only the context can determine to which is being referred.
2. *sikera/shekar* - The Greek word *sikera* is equivalent to the Hebrew word *shekar* which refers to strong drinks made from juice or grains. It is only found in [Luke 1:15](#) where John’s parents are instructed to keep John away from wine and strong drinks.
3. *gleukos/tirosh* - The Greek word *gleukos* is equivalent to the Hebrew word *tirosh*. It literally means sweet or new, as in grape juice. It is only seen in [Acts 2:13](#) when the Apostles are accused of getting drunk on grape juice (a mocking of their behavior).

### **Verses**

A. Wine= fruit of the vine.

Deut. 11:4; 2 Chr. 31:5; Neh. 13:15; Pr. 3:10; Isa. 16:10, 65:8;

1 Tim 5:23 (grape juice as a stomach aid, research shows this as true)

B. Wine= alcoholic drinks.

Proverbs 20:1; Proverbs 23:29-32; Proverbs 31:4-5; Isa. 5:11; Isa. 28:7, 8

C. Drunk = sin

1 Cor. 6:9-10; [I Corinthians 5:11, 6:10](#); [Ephesians 5:18](#)

D. Sober

[I Thessalonians 5:4-8](#); [I Peter 1:13](#); [I Peter 5:8](#); [I Timothy 3:2](#); [Titus 2:2](#)

E. Not Given to Wine

[I Timothy 3:3](#); [Titus 1:7](#)

### **Potentially Confusing Passages**

#### [I Corinthians 11:20-22](#)

1. The argument here is that the Corinthians were abusing the Lord’s Supper by turning it into a common meal that wasn’t being shared. Some were overeating and getting drunk, which was unacceptable behavior for Christians in a worship service so Paul tells them to take their meals and drinking home.
  - a. The implication is that Paul is saying “If you want to overindulge, do it at home.”
  - b. Therefore, the Paul is permitting them to drink at home.
2. The key word is the one translated “drunk”. It comes from the Greek word *methuo*, which literally means “filled to the full.”
  - a. It can mean someone who has their fill of an alcoholic drink, but it can also mean someone who has their fill of any drink and no longer desires more.

b. Example, in [John 2:10](#), the governor is not saying everyone is in a drunken stupor, but that they had enough to drink before the good drink was brought out.

c. In the Septuagint, this Greek word is used in [Psalms 23:5](#) when it says “My cup overflows”.

d. Notice that *methuo* in [I Corinthians 11:21](#) is contrasted to the word *hunger* (*peina*). What is the opposite of being hungry? Why, being full. This then should have been the correct translation.

e. Leon C. Field, “Methuei, in this case, is plainly contrasted with *peina* which is correctly rendered as ‘hungry.’ The antithesis, therefore, requires the former to be understood in the generic sense of ‘surfeited,’ not in the narrow sense of ‘drunken.’ The overfilled man is compared to the under filled man. This is the interpretation adopted by the great body of expositors, ancient and modern.”

f. Paul’s point is that people were coming at different times. While some had the satisfaction of partaking of the Lord’s Supper, others were missing out completely.

3. Besides, why would Paul condemn drunkenness in [I Corinthians 5:11](#) and [6:10](#) (same Greek word) and then in [I Corinthians 11:22](#) tell them to do their drinking at home?

a. The only sensible thing is to realize that the word is being used in two different senses.

b. Finally, the admonition to eat at home ([I Corinthians 11:33-34](#)) shows the problem Paul is address is overindulgence and not drunkenness.

### [John 2:1-10](#)

1. Jesus approved of drinking by turning water to wine. Remember that the Bible is very clear in its condemnation of drunkenness

2. Jesus had 6 jars, each holding 20 to 30 gallons, filled with wine

3. 120 to 180 gallons of alcoholic wine would make a large number of people drunk, especially after already drinking

4. “But the governor of the feast said it was good wine”

a. The argument assume that the higher the alcoholic content of the wine, the better it tastes

b. Such is not the case in general, and in a society that lacked refrigeration, fresh juice was prized over vinegary or fermented juice.

c. At best the governor’s statement does not *prove* the *oinos* was alcoholic.

5. “The governor mentioned that everyone was already drunk”

a. Drunkenness was condemned in Jewish society, just as it is condemned in Christian society

b. One of the duties of a governor was to prevent drunkenness, so the argument would saying that the governor admitted to failing his job.

c. As mentioned before “drunk” (*methuo*) means filled to the full.

d. More in keeping is that the governor was saying that everyone had already had their fill of *oinos*.

<http://lavistachurchofchrist.org/LVSermons/DrinkingInTheNewTestament.htm>

<http://bible.doc.8m.com/godbible/alcohol.htm>

<http://www.stopthestomachflu.com/Home/does-cranberry-juice-or-grape-juice-ward-off-the-stomach-flu>