***The Bible Doctrine of Wine
RO178-01***

**© Berean Memorial Church of Irving, Texas, Inc. (1977)**

Please open your Bibles once more to Romans 14:13-23. Our subject is "Christian Consideration," and this is segment number four.

We find that the New Testament gives some very specific directions concerning the way Christians are to treat each other in Satan's world. Our concern, on the one hand, as Christians, is to preserve the privacy to live our lives before God as we choose. On the other hand, we also seek to live in a way that would not cause another Christian to sin against God.

**The Weak Christian**

So, balancing these two legitimate concerns requires that the strong Christian, on some occasion, indeed set apart some of his freedoms in Christ. A spiritually immature Christian may have some self-created hang-ups on matters of appropriate personal conduct. The spiritually mature Christian knows that these inhibitions have no basis in Scripture, and are thus no issue with God. The weak Christian, however, feels that these are matters of conscience, and he does not feel free to do them. In such a case, until the weak Christian comes to a better understanding spiritually in these matters, the strong Christian should not offend him nor encourage him to do anything against his conscience. That is the basic line of instruction that Paul has been giving us here in this section of Romans 14.

A Christian who does violate his conscience, Paul has pointed out, is actually guilty of sinning. The mature Christian should not bring spiritual ruin to the immature Christian, who Jesus Christ loved to the extent of dying for him. The Christian life, Paul says, is more than your right to eat and to drink what you want. But it consists indeed of the privilege of edifying others through righteousness, peace, and joy. The Christian who lives on that basis, Paul tells us, is acceptable to God, and people respectfully approve what he does.

**Foods**

So, the basic goal of the Christian life and Christian conduct is to create a climate of peace and spiritual edification. Paul has been using the illustration of foods because, in New Testament times, some Christians had differences over eating certain meats. The Jews who had become Christians did not like to eat meats that had been declared unclean under the Mosaic Law; and, the gentiles who became Christians did not like to eat meat that was once used as an offering to an idol, and then transferred to the local butcher shop to be sold.

So, while Paul says that all foods that God has created are morally clean in the age of the church, it is a sin for you to eat something that would cause spiritual injury to another believer. No meat should be consumed, Paul says. No wine one should be drunk which causes a weak Christian to be hurt spiritually, and indeed to be encouraged to do something sinful as the result of your influence.

**Meat**

In verse 21, the apostle Paul has said, "Therefore, it is good neither to eat meat." And this is the Greek word "kreas." This word now is not just the general word for food, which he's been using up to this point. It actually deals with flesh of various creatures. Here, it is specifically either unclean meat by the Mosaic Law, or meat that had been offered to idols. Christians with legalisms about the Old Testament Law, or those who were offended by contaminated idol association, are the people that Paul has in mind. Paul's advice is: don't eat this kind of meat in their presence.

**Wine**

Also, he says, "Don't drink wine." This is the general word for "wine" in the New Testament. The word is "oinos." Drinking alcoholic wine is an offense to some Christians.

**Alcoholic Wine**

Now this statement at this point raises a very serious area that we need to inquire about. It raises the question, for example, of whether Jesus Christ and the apostles ever drank alcoholic wine. It raises the question of: what kind of wine was made at the miracle at Cana at the wedding feast? It raises the question as to what kind of wine should be used in the commemoration of the Lord's Supper. It raises the question: what kind of wine was drunk with the Passover meal, which was the wine that was then used in the Lord's Supper? It raises the issue, in fact, of the propriety of a Christian today drinking alcohol in any form whatsoever with its attendant evils and dangers. This indeed should concern every Christian, and particularly those who are spiritually mature in terms of their influence on the well-being of their Christian brethren.

So, we're going to do some research beginning in this session on the business of alcoholic drinks from the point of view of Scripture. And when we're through, as always, you may do what you please with the information that you are given. You are to live your own life as your own priest before God. And you may follow any pattern that you choose. But what we are doing is presenting you with facts from the Bible that you should know.

So verse 21 says that it's not good to eat flesh, and it's not good to drink alcoholic wine, or to do anything else. Here he's talking about anything which a mature Christian feels free to do, but which causes injury to the spiritual well-being of a brother. The Greek word is "adelphos," which indicates that he's talking about those who are fellow members in the family of God. The unsaved world is not specifically in mind here, although indeed Christians do have a testimony to unbelievers as well. He is specifically talking about how you do things, and how what you do affects another believer.

What he says that we should not do is cause that fellow Christian "to stumble." The Greek word is "proskopto." This refers here to falling into sin. You should not eat any meat, and you should not drink any alcoholic beverages that would cause a brother in Christ, by what you do, and by your influence, and by observing you, to fall into sin, in following your example and your thinking in this matter. You should not do anything to cause another Christian to fall into sin. Protecting the well-being of our brethren in Christ is more important, Paul says than exercising our freedoms under grace.

This biblical concept that Paul is dealing with, he summarized in 1 Corinthians 10:31-32, when he said, "Whether, therefore, you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense." And then he lists the three categories of humanity – the three categories into which humanity is divided in the eyes of God: Give no offense to the Jews; to the gentiles; nor, to the church of God." Don't do anything that offends or injures the Jewish people; the unsaved gentiles; or, your fellow Christians in the body of Christ. Paul urges caution in regulating one's conduct so as to avoid creating a stumbling block spiritually, or an occasion for a weaker Christian to sin. You may indeed cause a brother in Christ to eat or to drink something that ruins him spiritually. How will you feel about that? How will you look back upon that from eternity, if that's what happens, because of your influence, you have ruined somebody spiritually because you insisted on your freedoms to eat or to drink something in his sight that offended him, and that caused him to let down his guard, and to violate his own conscience?

It's no fun to see your influence on a child or on an adult that creates attitudes in him as he grows up or moves down through the years – your influence that causes him to do things that lead him away from the will of God, and then messes up his life. And some of the most stupid people in this respect are parents themselves, who carelessly impose and portray, and paraded before young people, attitudes and outlooks, and permit kids to do things that move them in a direction that messes up their lives. And then you look back upon it. And what satisfaction is that to you, because you stood up for your rights?

This is serious business that the apostle Paul is pointing out, and he's trying to save Christians from having the regrets of what cannot be changed. The arrogance of demanding one's rights as a Christian will bear bitter fruit for all eternity in some lives.

**The Bible Doctrine of Wine**

That now brings us to the subject of the Bible doctrine of wine. I told you last time that this was going to be booze Sunday. So, we hope that you will be inspired accordingly – not to booze it up, but to know what you're dealing with. First of all, anybody who has read the Bible becomes aware, sooner or later, that there are two kinds of references to wine in the Bible: two distinct kinds of references to wine in the Bible. As a matter of fact, if you go through a concordance, and look up everywhere where the word "wine" is used, you will discover that wine falls into two distinct categories. There is wine, which is described, on the one hand, as a great blessing from God. It is placed in the category of nutritious foods, and this wine is said to symbolize the spiritual and eternal blessings of God.

**Wine is a Spiritual Blessing from God**

So, you read about wine in the Bible, and it is associated with great blessing from God. It is associated with being physically nutritious and good, and it indicates that it's a symbol for spiritual blessing from God. Notice, for example, Deuteronomy 7:13. We're going to be looking up a lot of passages of Scripture. And you will need a Bible to be able to follow this, so I hope you have one, because what we need to establish has to be done on the basis of the Word of God. Deuteronomy 7:13: "And he (God) will love you (speaking to the Jewish people), and bless you, and multiply you. He will also bless the fruit of your womb, and the fruit of your land, and your grain, and your wine, and your oil, and the increase of your cattle, and the flocks of your sheep, and the land which He swore unto your fathers to give you."

Here, clearly, wine is associated with a lot of good, valuable things that God says that He's going to do for the people of God when they've come into their land. And He describes these things as blessings. So, here we have wine very clearly declared, and associated in the Bible, with the idea of blessing.

This is reinforced, for example, in Psalm 104:15, which says, "And wine that makes the heart of man glad, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengthens man's heart." Here again, wine is associated with good, valuable, nutritious things.

**Wine is a Good Thing**

In the New Testament, in Matthew 26:27-28, wine again is presented as a good thing. Here wine is used in the Lord's Supper: "And He took the cup (this very same wine which had just been used in the Passover meal), and He gave thanks (Jesus is giving thanks for the wine), and gave it to them, and said, 'Drink all of it, for this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'" Here wine is declared to be so good that it is a picture of the very blood of Christ shed in the atonement for the sins of mankind.

So, there are many passages in the Bible that present wine as a blessing from God, and a blessing to man, and a most desirable beverage to consume.

**Wine Causes Human Misery**

But you will also find that there are many passages where wine falls into a second category. In this category, wine is described as the cause of human misery, and it is used to symbolize divine wrath and eternal punishment. Look, for example, in Deuteronomy 32:32-33: "For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah." Here the vines of these people, in rebellion against God, are being described by the gross association with the homosexual cities of Sodom and Gomorrah which God destroyed. Their vine is the vine of Sodom, and the fields of Gomorrah. The grapes are grapes of Gaul. Their clusters are bitter. Their wine is the poison of serpents, and the cruel venom of cobras. This is a very distinct, different category of wine. Here is a wine that is described as the venom of serpents. It is described as poison. It is described as something that is destructive, and indeed is no longer being viewed as something that is sweet to the palate. But it is distinctively described as something that is bitter. Don't forget that. We have a wine that is sweet, and a wine that is bitter.

Notice Proverbs 23:29-35 in this second category of wine. "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has babbling? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine. They that go to seek mixed wine. Look not upon the wine when it is red; when it gives its color in the cup; or, when it moves itself aright. At the last, it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder (like a cobra). Your eyes shall behold strange things. Your heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, you shall be as he that lies down in the midst of the sea, or has he that lies upon the top of a mast. 'They have stricken me,' you shall say, and I was not sick. They have beaten me, and I did not feel it. When shall I wake? I will seek it yet again."

**Drunkenness**

Now here is a wine that obviously describes a very bitter and horrible consequence – the consequence of drunkenness. It is somebody who is babbling. It is somebody who is silly. It is somebody whose eyes are red. It is somebody who is staggering around. It is somebody who is taking poison into his system. It is somebody who can be beaten up, and doesn't even know that somebody is doing it to him, until he wakes up and sees the bruises on him. It is somebody who is addicted so that when he sobers up, he goes back to it again.

Jeremiah 25:15-16: "For thus said the Lord God of Israel unto me. Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations to whom I send you to drink it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them." Here the prophet is told to deliver a cup of wine to the nations of the world (to the leaders of the world) which is, in fact, the very wrath of God against them. So, here is a wine which is not described as the blessing of God, but as the anger, the judgment, and the wrath of God that is being poured upon nations which will simply go mad after they have drunk this kind of wine.

**Good Wine and Bad Wine**

So, there is in Scripture, a clear division into what we may call "good wine" and "bad wine." And I've just shown you a few. Get your own concordance out. It'll take you a long time to go through it, and find which category each falls into. But there are many, many verses, and they'll all fall into these categories: good wine; or, bad wine. Good wine causes comfort, strength, peace, and godliness, and is associated with God's blessing. Bad wine causes intoxication, violence, suffering, ungodliness, self-destruction, and God's wrath. The good wine is used in the Bible to symbolize eternal life in heaven, while the bad wine is used to symbolize eternal damnation in the lake of fire. There are such definite good and bad results.

**Grape Juice and Alcohol**

Here's the conclusion. Such definite good and bad results cannot be the product of the same kind of wine. And I've taken you through this in order to help prepare you for the fact that we use the word "wine" in our common language, and when we use it, we automatically think of an alcoholic beverage. When you come to into the Bible, there are obviously two kinds of wine. These two different kinds of results could not come from the same kind of beverage. The destructive element, as you know, in grape juice is the alcoholic content. Grape juice minus alcohol is nondestructive and is most nutritious.

**"Wine" is a Generic Word**

So, the Bible uses the word "wine" to refer to both nonalcoholic and alcoholic grape juice. We have established that the word "wine," as it's used in the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, is a generic word. It is a general category word, like "hardware" and "groceries." And then you have to look into the category to see what the specifics are.

So, when the Bible says, "Wine," in any passage, you must ask yourself: is this alcoholic wine, or nonalcoholic wine? Is this fermented grape juice, or non-fermented grape juice? It is not automatically one or the other. It has to be indicated by the context. It is not automatically alcoholic wine. It can be also nonalcoholic, and the Bible still calls it "wine."

When the Bible speaks of wine as a blessing and good food, it is obviously referring to unfermented grape juice. It so refers to it in Isaiah 65:8: "Thus says the Lord God, 'As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one says, 'Do not destroy it; for a blessing is in it. So will I do for my servants' sake, that I may not destroy them all.''" Here the juice that is found in the cluster of the grapes is called "a new wine," and that refers to nonalcoholic beverage. And God says, "That is good wine, and you should drink it."

In Judges 9:13, you have "good wine" again in terms of unfermented grape juice: "And the vine said unto them, 'Should I leave my wine which cheers God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" Here is a poetic application in this context, but the important thing is "My wine which cheers God and man." This is wine that brings happiness to God and man. Obviously, this is not an alcoholic beverage, because alcoholic wine brings cheer and happiness to neither God nor man.

When the Bible, on the other hand, speaks of wine as causing drunkenness, immorality, self-destruction, and that it is a curse, it is referring to fermented grape juice. We have such a reference in Proverbs 4:17: "For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence." Unfermented grape juice does not cause you to become a violent person. If the Bible speaks about the wine of violence, it is obviously clear that this is fermented grape juice. This is alcoholic wine, and that's why it causes a person to become violent.

Isaiah 5:22-23 speak about this kind of destructive alcoholic wine: "Woe unto them who are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength: heroes to mix strong drink." Now there is your manliness. I told you about the kids buying the tobacco at the store so that they could be men, with their long hair, and their little pearl in their earring in their ear. Now here is being manly. The prophet here is almost sarcastic as the Holy Spirit leads him to say, "Woe unto you: you who are mighty to drink; you who are proud of being able to drink everybody under the table; you who are heroes who know how to drink; and, you know how to mix strong drink." You know what a Mai Tai is. You know what a Shirley Temple is. You know what all those bad ones are that I don't want to mention so you won't know about them. And you're real heroes.

Verse 23: "Who justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him." Oh, you're a hero. You're very manly. What you do is justifying wickedness, because it gives you a financial return, and you are willing to take righteousness away from a righteous person by leading him astray.

So, as you know, we're going to talk about the Bible – what God thinks. God is not a babbler in unknown, unintelligible language. He speaks in terms of specific words. So, we begin today (we've given you an introduction) with the Hebrew words for "wine." These are important for you to know. They are most illuminative.

**"Yayin"**

The first one looks like this in the Hebrew Bible. It's the Hebrew word "yayin." This is the basic word for "wine" in the Old Testament. It's used 141 times. "Yayin" is used only of wine from the juice of grapes. There are other words for "wine" in the Hebrew which refer to juice of other fruits, but "yayin" refers only to juice made from grapes. It is used, as I've already shown you, in the Old Testament, of both alcoholic and nonalcoholic wine. Thus we say that it is a generic word.

Let's show you again, very specifically. The word "yayin" is used in Genesis 9:21, and it is very clear that it is speaking about alcoholic wine: "He (referring to Noah) drank of the wine (drank of the 'yayin'), and became drunk, and he was uncovered within his tent. The vines that Noah grew, and that he took the juice from, he also fermented, and changed into alcoholic wine. And this is described by the word "yayin."

Another example of this word referring to alcoholic wine is in Genesis 19:32-36, which describes the incest of Lot's daughters with their father after they were cast out of Sodom and Gomorrah to save them from destruction with the cities: "The firstborn daughter said to her younger sister: 'Come and let us make our father drink wine (drink 'yayin'), and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.' And they made their father drink 'yayin' that night, and the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not perceive when she lay down, nor when she arose." He was stone drunk. "And it came to pass on the next day that the firstborn said unto the younger, 'Behold, I lay last night with my father. Let us make him drink 'yayin' this night also, and you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.' And they made their father drink 'yayin' (alcoholic wine) that night also, and the younger arose, and lay with him, and he did not perceive when she lay down, nor when she arose. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father."

This was to bring enormous consequences of destruction upon the Jewish people in the future. For the children that were born to these two daughters, through this incestuous relationship, instigated through the use of alcoholic wine, brought upon the Jewish people some of their greatest enemies that have plagued them to this very day – the descendants of these two daughters.

So, here we have the Hebrew word clearly used in an alcoholic way. But this same word "yayin" is used in a nonalcoholic way – in non-fermented sense, as a good thing. 2 Samuel 16:2: "And the king said unto Ziba, 'What do you mean by these?' And Ziba said, 'These donkeys are for the king's household to ride on, and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine that such as are faint in the wilderness may drink."

Here is a situation where a man is bringing nutritious food, and included is "yayin" for those who need to be refreshed. They're out here in the wilderness. They're out here in the desert. They are thirsty. What do they drink? Here is a drink – a nonalcoholic grape juice is what he's talking about. And they can drink it to their heart's content, and it's associated with good food. They will not get drunk on it.

This is also used in 1 Chronicles 12:40 in this sense: "Moreover, they who were near them, even unto Issachar and Zebulon and Naphtali brought bread on donkeys, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen, and meat; meal; cakes of figs; and bunches of raisin; and wine; and oil; and oxen; and sheep abundantly. For there was joy in Israel." They have made David king. They are celebrating. And noticed what they celebrate with – all good things. Wouldn't it be odd that all this good food: the meat; the meal; the oxen; the cakes; the figs; the raisins; the oil; and, the meat that's there – the sheep, and interjected in all that should be a poison – a destructive element like alcoholic wine? It is clear that this is "yayin" in the sense of unfermented grape juice.

**"Shakar"**

There is a second word in the Hebrew, and this word looks like this. It's the Hebrew word "shakar." The word "shakar" is an intensely alcoholic wine. It's used 23 times in the Old Testament. The root of this Hebrew word is the word in the Hebrew language for "drunk;" "drunkenness;" and "drunkard." So, this word is associated with alcoholic beverage, and it is translated as "strong drink" on occasion.

In Isaiah 5, we have this very word used in association with "yayin," the word we just had, indicating that "yayin" is used in an alcoholic sense. And we know that "shakar" is always intensely alcoholic. Isaiah 5:11: "Woe unto them who rise up early in the morning that they may follow 'shakar' (strong drink)." You get up in the morning, and you hit the alcoholic grape juice: "Who continue until night, till 'yayin.'" Now he uses the other word here in the Hebrew: "Wine inflames them."

Notice verse 22: "Woe unto them who are mighty to drink 'yayin' (alcoholic wine), and men of strength to mix strong drink ('shakar')" – intensely alcoholic grape juice. Here it is very clear that God pronounces a woe upon those who drink this kind of beverage, and it's always bad.

**"Tirosh"**

There's a third Hebrew word. It looks like this in the Hebrew Bible. It's the Hebrew word "tirosh." "Tirosh" is used 31 times in the Old Testament, and it refers only to unfermented wine. It's the opposite of "shakar." "Shakar" is always intensely alcoholic wine. "Tirosh" is always unfermented grape juice. Therefore, it is translated, fittingly, on occasion, as "new wine" or "sweet wine." You find this word used in Isaiah 62:8-9, for example: "And the Lord has sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of His strength: 'Surely I will no more give your grain to be food for your enemies, and the sons of the foreigners shall not drink your wine for which you have labored. But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the Lord. And they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of My Holiness.'" "Your wine" here is "your 'tirosh'" – your unfermented grape juice. Now here you have a clear use of the word "wine" in the Hebrew, referring to an unfermented drink.

Notice Proverbs 3:10: "So shall your barns be filled with plenty (that's good), and your presses shall burst out with 'tirosh'" (new wine): Your precious are going to break out with nonalcoholic grape juice.

In Micah 6:15, this word is also used: "You shall sow, but you shall not reap. You shall tread the olives, but you shall not anoint yourself with oil and sweet wine ('tirosh'), but you shall not drink wine." The Jews were told in judgment, "You're not going to be able to enjoy their unfermented, nonalcoholic grape juice."

So, it is clear in the Bible, with these three words: "yayin" can be alcoholic or nonalcoholic; "shakar" is intensely alcoholic; and, "tirosh" is nonalcoholic grape juice. You have two kinds of wine in the Old Testament Hebrew, and that is very clear.

One interesting passage is in Hosea 4:11. . . Notice what it says: "Harlotry, and wine, and new wine take away the heart." The prophet is saying, "Here is what will lead you away from God – three things: harlotry; wine; and, new wine." Now there has to be some difference between "wine" and "new wine." Otherwise, this doesn't make any sense. Here are three different things that will take you away from God.

So, we go back to the Hebrew, and we see what's in the Hebrew text. In Hebrew, harlotry (the first thing that will take you away from God) is illicit sex. The second thing, he says is wine, which in Hebrew is the word "yayin." And here, by context, as you will see, it is alcoholic. So, booze will take you away from God. And the third thing (new wine) is our word "tirosh" – the nonalcoholic grape juice, in contrast to the alcoholic grape juice. So, the third thing that will take your heart away from God is luxuries and pleasures, which is what nonalcoholic grape juice is associated with. It's a pleasure. It's a blessing. It's a great thing to have. It's a marvelous thing to drink.

There are seven lesser Hebrew words in the Old Testament for "wine" that don't have any particular bearing, but that fall in this same general category. So, I hope we have established for you that you cannot just say "wine" in the Old Testament without identifying whether it's alcoholic or nonalcoholic. Both kinds use the word "wine."

**"Oinos"**

Coming to the New Testament, we have some Greek words for wine. One is the one we've already shown you. It's "oinos." This is the basic New Testament word for "wine." It's used over 30 times. It refers again (like "yayin" in the Hebrew) to the juice of grapes, whether fermented or not. In the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew, every time the Hebrew came to the word "yayin," which was fermented and unfermented grape juice, this is the word that was used in that Greek translation: "oinos." So, "oinos" is a generic word in the New Testament, unlike the way we use the word "wine." When we speak about wine, we always mean alcoholic. That was not the way it was in New Testament Greek. Both refer to the same concept of alcoholic and nonalcoholic.

**"Gleukos"**

There was a second Greek word for "wine," and that is the Greek word "gleukos." "Gleukos" was a word that referred only to sweet, new wine – unfermented wine. And that's why it's translated as sweet one. Fermented wine is not sweet. Fermented wine is harsh. Fermented wine has a bitterness to it. It's like I asked a bartender recently, "What is it that makes whiskey attractive to people? I mean, even if you get a medicine from a doctor, it doesn't taste nice. It's unpleasant." And you see the little boy whose mother is going to give him this medicine, and he says, "Is it sweet?" She could say, "Yes, it has no alcohol in it." Once you put the alcohol in it, it's going to be unpleasant to the taste. And I asked this bartender, "What is attractive about it, that people would want to drink an alcoholic beverage, because it's unpleasant?" It's not natural. People from infancy on, by nature, love to taste sweet things. You have to develop a taste for alcohol because it is unnatural and offensive. His answer was, "It's not the taste, because it does taste bad. It's the effects upon them that they look for." It is the effects that alcohol has upon them. That's why they drink it, along with other reasons.

**The Day of Pentecost**

This word is used only in Acts 2:13. I should point this out to you, because some of you are going to be smart enough to look it up. Acts 2:13 is where this word "gleukos" is used (only once), and it is used in an odd way. In Acts 2:13, on the day of Pentecost, the disciples are suddenly speaking in foreign languages that they have not known. They're Galileans, and they certainly don't know all these languages from around the Mediterranean world, of these people who had gathered for the celebration of the feast of unleavened bread and the Passover feast in Jerusalem. The scoffers were listening to them speaking these languages. And verse 13 says, "Others said, mocking, 'These men are full of 'gleukos.' (They're full of new wine)." Well, the irrationality here is evident. Here's a word that describes a wine that you can't get drunk on, because glucose was always nonalcoholic.

Now, I suppose that maybe they implied that the wine went bad on them. Any sweet wine can go bad under certain conditions. And perhaps that's what they're implying. But they're even implying something more illogical, and that was that, by drinking fermented wine, you can learn to speak foreign languages. That's very tempting to do. I don't want to try that. If you've experimented with that, I'd like to know your results. But here, if you drink booze, you learn to speak German. Well, from experience, we know that people who do drink alcoholic beverages become talkative. They become silly, and they become offensive, but they do it all in their native language. Here's an irrational attempt on people who didn't like what they were seeing and hearing, or were so amazed that they couldn't figure out what was going on here on this day of Pentecost, such that they actually were saying something that was just completely ridiculous.

Peter pointed out to them that it was 9 o'clock in the morning, and even if they were hitting the bottle, they wouldn't have done it that early in the morning. And if they were drinking "gleukos" indeed, that type of wine is nonalcoholic. So, I don't know entirely how to explain their language in the words that they used, but it was totally ridiculous.

**The Lord Jesus Christ**

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself, as you know, was accused of being a glutton and a drunkard. Notice Matthew 11:18:19. We are interested to know: did Jesus Christ drink alcoholic wine? Did He drink "oinos," or only "gleukos?" Matthew 11:18-19: "'For John came,'" Jesus says, "'neither eating nor drinking, and they said, 'He has a demon.''" People looked at Jesus' cousin, who preceded him, John the Baptizer. He was a Nazirite in his lifestyle. Therefore, he drank no alcoholic beverages, and neither did he attend scrumptious feasts. He did not wear designer clothing, as you know. He didn't go in for any luxuries, as a matter of fact. And the people dismissed him as a demon-possessed person. Jesus says, "On the other hand," describing Himself in verse 19, "the Son of Man came eating and drinking." Jesus engaged in social affairs. He attended parties. He attended wedding festivals, and so on: "And they say, 'Behold, a man gluttonous and a drunkard – a friend of tax collectors and sinners.'" And then Jesus said, "But wisdom is justified of her children." That means that kids just don't know what they're talking about, and these people don't either.

If you look back up in verses 16-17, you will get the connection of what Jesus means when He says that these people are children, and only children can understand this kind of lack of logic: "But whereunto shall I liken this generation?" He is referring to Jewish people. Jesus said, "It is like unto children sitting in a marketplace, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, 'We have piped unto you, and you have not danced. We have mourned unto you, and you've not lamented." And this passage is just saying that here these kids don't know what they want, as is often true children. They don't want to dance, and they don't want to mourn. They don't know what they want to do, because they can't follow through with some kind of a decision.

Here these people were making ridiculous decisions, and accusing Jesus Christ of being guilty of drunkenness and of gluttony. Was that true? Well, clearly, Jesus was not guilty of the sin of drunkenness, nor was he guilty of the sin of gluttony. And their accusations of Him didn't make that so. The accusation, as a matter of fact, I must point out to you, does not even prove that Jesus drank alcoholic wine at all. But they didn't care whether He did or not. You must understand that because they accused Him of being a drunkard, that does not indicate that He was drinking alcoholic wine.

On another occasion, Jesus was accused of being indwelt by a demon. The accusation didn't make it so, nor was there any reason to imply that, He was indwelt by God the Holy Spirit, and the fact that that was said against him, in John 8:48-49, did not in any way suggest that there was any basis of truth. So, just because they said that Jesus was a drunkard, that had no basis in the truth (in the suggestion) that He used alcoholic beverages. That is an improper conclusion for you to draw.

What these people wanted to do was simply to discredit Jesus as a Man of God in the eyes of the people Whom he was teaching spiritual things, and things which were in conflict with the religious authorities and the establishment. As a matter of fact, no one could challenge the similar sinlessness of the Lord Jesus Christ. He had no hesitancy of standing up before crowd, and saying, "Any of you that can accuse Me of sin, do it now." John 8:46: "Which of you convicts Me of sin? So, if I say the truth, why don't you believe Me?" And nobody suggested anywhere that He was guilty of sin.

**Jesus Never Drank Alcoholic Beverages**

There's no suggestion anywhere in the Scriptures that Jesus drank alcoholic wine. That is a pure assumption. I think, as we get into this further, you will see that it is an assumption that is both illogical, not only unfounded in Scripture, but would be in serious conflict with everything else that is true of the Son of God. Jesus never drink alcoholic beverages.

However, what about that 120 gallons of wine that He made at the Cana of Galilee wedding feast? Was that alcoholic? The people that were sitting at the feast said, "This wine (this 'oinos') is the best of the evening. You should have brought this out first, and then, later in the evening, brought the second-rate stuff that didn't taste quite so good, and didn't flow so smoothly, and wasn't so tasty and sweet." What kind of wine was that? What kind of wine would have been served on an occasion like that? What was the standard beverage that people drank in that day?

Well, tune in next time, at the same time and on this channel, and we will give you the answer to that, as well as then to move in on the Lord's Supper, and what we're dealing with there. Is it right for so many denominations to serve alcoholic wine at the Lord's Supper? Perhaps you've heard enough in this session to begin to give you a clue. Well, we're going to have to go back into the Old Testament, and we're going to have to deal with the issue of the fermentation of leaven, and then I think you'll have a perspective to make a decision that can really stand the test of the attacks of those who are in favor of alcohol consumption.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

[**Back to the Romans index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/romans.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)