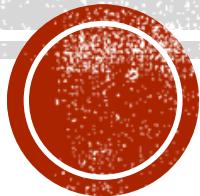


ALCOHOL AND THE BIBLE

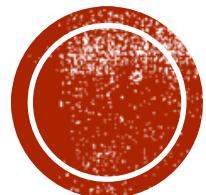


INTRODUCTION

- Were wine and other drinks less alcoholic in Bible times?
- Yes, but...
 - “Wine” was NOT non-alcoholic grape juice
 - It was likely slightly less alcoholic than today’s wine, and also often further diluted with water
 - Fermentation begins within hours of making grape juice
 - The ancients simply did not have any interest in stopping fermentation – it was difficult and costly for no perceived benefit
 - Nor was “Strong drink” like today’s hard liquor
 - Distillation is a very modern invention
 - There was no way back then to get alcohol as strong as today’s whiskey or vodka

INTRODUCTION

- There are many different words for wine or “strong drink” in Hebrew and Greek
 - They do (can) imply degrees of alcohol content
 - But none of them mean “this is not alcoholic”
 - Wine is what you think – from grapes
 - Strong drink is from fruit or barley
 - It is thought that the common Bible pairing of “wine or strong drink” is meant to convey “any kind of alcohol, no matter how potent”
 - **Proverbs 31:4**, “It is not for kings to drink wine, Or for rulers to desire strong drink”



DANGERS OF ALCOHOL

Alcohol and the Bible

Scripture quotations from NASB, unless otherwise specified

DANGERS

■ Health

- In 2020-2021, Excessive alcohol use “Caused about 178,000 deaths each year
 - CDC; <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/facts-stats/index.html>; retrieved Jan 22, 2026

■ Driving

- 12,429 killed in alcohol-related vehicle accidents in 2023 in USA
 - About one every 45 minutes (on average)

■ Lives of others

- “62% of people who died in crashes involving alcohol-impaired drivers in 2020 were the alcohol-impaired drivers themselves; 38% were passengers of the alcohol-impaired drivers, drivers or passengers of another vehicle, or nonoccupants (such as a pedestrian)”

- CDC; <https://www.cdc.gov/impaired-driving/facts/index.html>; retrieved Jan 22, 2026

ANY AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL WILL IMPAIR YOU

		BLOOD ALCOHOL CONTENT (BAC) Table for Male (M) / Female (F)								Driving Condition	
Number of Drinks	M	Body Weight in Pounds								Driving Condition	
		100	120	140	160	180	200	220	240		
0	M	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	Only Safe Driving Limit	
	F	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00		
1	M	.06	.05	.04	.04	.03	.03	.03	.02	Driving Skills Impaired	
	F	.07	.06	.05	.04	.04	.03	.03	.03		
2	M	.12	.10	.09	.07	.07	.06	.05	.05		
	F	.13	.11	.09	.08	.07	.07	.06	.06		
3	M	.18	.15	.13	.11	.10	.09	.08	.07		
	F	.20	.17	.14	.12	.11	.10	.09	.08	Legally Intoxicated	
4	M	.24	.20	.17	.15	.13	.12	.11	.10		
	F	.26	.22	.19	.17	.15	.13	.12	.11		
5	M	.30	.25	.21	.19	.17	.15	.14	.12		
	F	.33	.28	.24	.21	.18	.17	.15	.14		
Subtract .01% for each 40 minutes that lapse between drinks. 1 drink = 1.5 oz. 80 proof liquor, 12 oz. 5% beer, or 5 oz. 12% wine.											
Fewer than 5 persons out of 100 will exceed these values.											

<https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/handbook/california-driver-handbook/alcohol-and-drugs/>

STORIES IN SCRIPTURE

- Noah (**Genesis 9:20-25**)
 - *Something* happened
- Lot (**Genesis 19:30-38**)
 - Two daughters
- Nadab & Abihu (**Leviticus 10:1-11**)
 - Implies alcohol was part of their decision-making

SCRIPTURE'S VIEW OF DRUNKENNESS

■ **Proverbs 20:1**

- “Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.”

■ **Romans 13:13**

- “Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness”

■ **1 Corinthians 6:10**

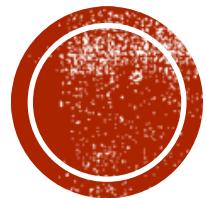
- “nor thieves, nor *the covetous*, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom”

■ **Ephesians 5:18**

- “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit of God.”

WARNINGS FROM PROVERBS

- **23:20-21**, “Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine...”
- **23:29-35**, “Do not look on the wine when it is red,
When it sparkles in the cup...
Your eyes will see strange things
And your mind will utter perverse things.”



WINE IS A BLESSING FROM GOD

Alcohol and the Bible

Scripture quotations from NASB, unless otherwise specified

WINE IS A BLESSING FROM GOD

■ Psalm 104:14-15

- This entire psalm is about God's blessings
- Verses 14-15 are about agriculture
- Oil, bread, and wine are blessings from God, by the hand of man
- The wine is not grape juice, if it "gladdens" a man

14 You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth
15 and **wine to gladden the heart of man**, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart. (ESV)

■ What do we make of this passage?

PSALM 104

OUTLINE

- No hidden message here
- God does good
- And we can harness that
 - God is great **vs. 1-2**
 - God controls the big things (air and water)
 - God controls the air **vs. 3-5**
 - God controlled the flood **vs. 6-9**
 - God directs the rivers **vs. 10-13**
 - God's land blessings bless others
 - People are blessed by agriculture **vs. 14-15**
 - Birds are blessed by the trees **vs. 16-17**
 - Animals are blessed by the rocks **v. 18**
 - God controls the big things (time and space)
 - God controls time (Biological rhythms) **vs. 19-23**
 - God controls life (creation and abundance) **vs. 24-30**
 - God controls tectonic activity (!!!) **vs. 31-32**
 - I will praise the LORD **vs. 33-35**

WINE IS A BLESSING FROM GOD

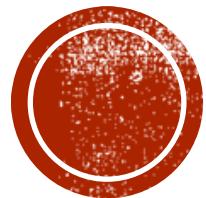
■ **Proverbs 31:4-7**

- **Again, definitely not grape juice**
- The uses of these are not ambiguous – they are meant to make pain and sadness go away
- But to be clear, the advice is not for all people – kings are told to abstain in vs. 4-5

6 Give strong drink to him who is perishing,
And wine to him whose life is bitter.
7 Let him drink and forget his poverty
And remember his trouble no more.

MEDICINAL USES OF ALCOHOL

- **1 Timothy 5:23**
 - “...use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments”
 - Very plainly says wine is medicinal
- Quite possibly the point of **Proverbs 31:6-7**
 - “Give strong drink to him who is perishing”
- Yes, there are antioxidants in wine
 - And apples, and dark chocolate and many other things – you do not *need* wine
- Cough medicine dose is only 1 oz (30 mL)
 - Concentration about same as wine (10%)
 - You do not need much.



THE LORD'S SUPPER AND WINE

Alcohol and the Bible

Scripture quotations from NASB, unless otherwise specified

THE LORD'S SUPPER

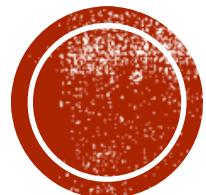
- **EVERY SINGLE DESCRIPTION** of the Lord's Supper avoids the word “wine”
 - Gospels say “*fruit of the vine*”
 - 1 Corinthians 11 says “*drink the cup*”
 - Was it *likely* to have been wine?
 - Yes, of course!
 - But **how very odd** that the *word* “wine” was not used
 - The opposite is also true – “Fruit of the vine” is not used in any other circumstance

THE LORD'S SUPPER

- Fruit of the vine
 - Authorizes us to use grape juice
 - We KNOW that the bread was unleavened (it was a *command*), so we follow that
 - But wine (nor grape juice) was not commanded for the Passover, so we do not need to deduce what was used; we only go by what is stated, and that's a beverage made of grapes.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

- On the other hand
 - I cannot suggest we *demand* all churches to use grape juice for the Lord's Supper
 - "Fruit of the vine" sure allows for wine, too
 - Early churches likely used wine out of necessity
 - It's implied in **1 Corinthians 11:21**; if wine was the problem, why didn't Paul condemn it?
 - Remote regions today may still not have reasonable access to grape juice
 - Should you ask when you visit another church?



CULTURE TODAY

Alcohol and the Bible

Scripture quotations from NASB, unless otherwise specified

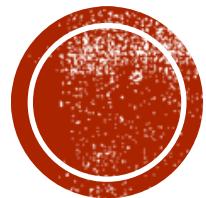
IT'S EVERYWHERE

- This is a **randomly-generated** list of 2000's country songs

#	Title
17	 When You Say Nothing At All Alison Krauss & Union Station
18	 Whiskey Lullaby (feat. Alison Krauss) Brad Paisley, Alison Krauss
19	 Bye-Bye Jo Dee Messina
20	 Drinkin' Problem Midland
21	 Beer For My Horses Toby Keith, Willie Nelson
22	 I Hope You Dance Lee Ann Womack
23	 Brand New Man Brooks & Dunn
24	 Somebody Like You Keith Urban
25	 Piece of My Heart Faith Hill
26	 Colder Weather Zac Brown Band
27	 Two Dozen Roses Shenandoah
28	 I Love This Bar Toby Keith

IT IS VERY POPULAR FOR SONGS TO BLEND ALCOHOL AND CHRISTIAN FAITH

- Red Dirt Road (Brooks & Dunn)
 - “It's where I drank my *first* beer / It's where I found Jesus”
- She's everything (Brad Paisley)
 - “She's a Saturday out on the town / And a church girl on Sunday
... glass of wine ...feeling kinda tipsy”
- Boondocks (Little Big Town)
 - “Five card poker on Saturday night / Church on Sunday morning”
- This is not medicinal alcohol nor moderation
- But it is love of drunkenness unashamedly paired with supposed Christianity



SOBERNESS

Alcohol and the Bible

Scripture quotations from NASB, unless otherwise specified

THE BIBLE CALLS US TO BE SOBER

■ 1 Corinthians 15:32-34

- “If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE. Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals.’ **Become sober-minded** as you ought, and stop sinning...”

■ 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8

- “those who get drunk get drunk at night. But since we are of *the day*, **let us be sober**, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.”

■ 1 Peter 5:8

- “**Be sober**, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil...” (KJV)

■ 2 Timothy 4:5

- “But you, **be sober in all things**, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry”

SOBERNESS IS ALERT AND READY

- Not “taking the edge off”
- Watching for the devil takes all our wits
 - He is not unable to exploit our weakness if we are intoxicated
- Do not think “*What is permissible?*”
 - Think “How can I serve God the best I can?”
 - **1 Corinthians 6:12**
- We need men who are “above reproach”
(1 Timothy 3:2)
 - Not “I guess what he did was OK”