



# Seek The Old Paths

*“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”*  
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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## A STUDY OF BIBLICAL WINE

*Jon Gary Williams*

**B**efore discussing the word wine, let's first take a look at the subject of alcoholism. Alcoholism involves addiction, an addiction of the worse kind. No alcoholic ever set out to be an alcoholic. No one has ever reasoned, “You know, some day I want to become an alcoholic.” Then why does this happen? Why is it that so many become alcoholics?

Most do not realize that on average, it takes ten to fifteen years to become an alcoholic. This is why alcoholism is so deceptive. Many begin drinking in their late teen years. This means they may be in their late twenties or even early thirties before that point is reached. During those years a person who drinks alcohol on a somewhat regular basis (even moderately), may never detect an addiction problem. So, through the twenties a person may reason, “Oh, I can take it or leave it. It's no problem for me.”

But, then, this person reaches the “point of no return!” And when this happens, there is no reversal! Once becoming an alcoholic one will die an alcoholic! There is no cure! The best one can hope for is to become a “non-drinking alcoholic” — from then on it's one day at a time!

But, how can people know if they can be alcoholic? They can't. There is no test to take. There is only one way to find out — just start drinking and drink long enough, even moderately. Alcoholics Anonymous estimates that, as many as one out of every six people who start drinking and drink long enough will become alcoholic. Suppose there is a stream containing a dangerous

chemical, and it is known that one out of every six people (16.7%) who drink from it will die. No one would go near it!

Every week thousands of alcoholics are added to society. It is truly epidemic. This point alone should make one avoid drinking alcohol.

### NOW TO THE WORD “WINE”

The word “wine” in both Old and New Testaments is a broad, generic term. It can refer to: the grape vine, the grape before it is squeezed, the grape juice just squeezed, unfermented grape juice or fermented grape juice. Therefore, the context will determine how the word “wine” is used.

The “best” wine was the sweetest wine, free from alcohol. This was regarded the most sought after and preferred “wine.” In fermentation the sugar of the grape is converted to alcohol. Hence, the greater the alcoholic content, less the sweet (and the more bitter) was the wine. Keeping grape juice free from fermentation was “wine” in its best state.

In the scriptures, since the word “wine” can refer to either pure juice or alcoholic juice, how can we know which way it is being used in any given text? “Wine” in the form of the **sweet, pure juice** of the grape is one thing, whereas, “wine” in the form of **alcohol** is another. The scriptures make a clear distinction. The consumption of one is **approved**, while the consumption of the other is **condemned**. When it is approved, the **pure juice** is meant. When it is condemned, **fermented juice** is meant. There is no exception to this principle.

The scriptures do not approve the social use of alcohol in one place and condemn it in another. Simply put, the social use of alcohol is an evil.

An important question: “**Can something that is evil be justified in moderation?**” This is what some try to maintain (claim) regarding the use of alcohol. It is often expressed like this: “The Bible does not condemn drinking alcohol, it only condemns drunkenness.” One of the characteristics of evil is to parade itself as something good. This is what often happens regarding the drinking of alcohol. People who drink alcohol “socially” deceive themselves into thinking they are only drinking in “moderation.”

Those who drink alcohol, regardless of the amount, deceive themselves into thinking that it is an evil only to the extent they drink. (And no one ever thinks they drink to excess!) Actually, only the acknowledged alcoholic will admit he drinks to excess. To argue that moderation in the use of alcohol is acceptable to God is, to say the least, unwise. No one ever became an alcoholic who did not take the first drink. Here's how it works: The first drink ... then moderate drinking ... then social drinking ... then heavy drinking ... then heaver drinking.

Another question: “**To what degree can a person drink and still maintain he is not drunk?**” How can this be determined? In order to discover how many drinks one can have before becoming drunk, would he

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**Biblical Wine...**



Editorial...

## THE BIBLE ON BOOZE

**Alcohol and its partakers are deceitful.** *“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Prov. 20:1).*

**Alcohol leads to poverty and rags.** *“Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags” (Prov. 23:20-21).*

**Alcohol brings woe, sorrow, contentions, babbling, wounds, and inflamed eyes.** *“Who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine” (Prov. 23:29-30).*

**Intoxicating wine may at first be pleasing, but in the end is as poison as a rattlesnake!** *“Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder” (Prov. 23:31-32).*

**Alcohol inflames lust, deadens judgment, and enslaves the will.** *“Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again” (Prov. 23:33-35).*

**The drunkard is dangerous to himself as well as to others.** *“As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools” (Prov. 26:9).*

**Alcohol corrupts courts and governments, brings national destruction.** *“It is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted” (Prov. 31:4-5). “Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and*

*men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel” (Isa. 5:22-24).*

**Alcohol makes men forget God.** *“Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands” (Isa. 5:11-12).*

**The curse of God is on the drunkard.** *“Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine! Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet” (Isa. 28:1-3).*

**The curse of God is on every man, every business, every government that gives or sells intoxicating beverage.** *“Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the LORD’S right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory” (Habakkuk 2:15-16).*

**Moderate drinking leads to drunkenness, nakedness, and a curse on the drunkard’s children.**

*“And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father’s nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren” (Gen. 9:20-25).*

**Drunkenness leads to adultery, incest, and children of fornication.** *“And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father” (Gen. 19:30-36).*

**Christians are not to associate with drunkards.** *“But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat” (1 Cor. 5:11).*

**Christ can save drunkards.** *“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves*

with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:9-11). “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as

wool” (Isa. 1:18).

**The Lord made a way of salvation for drunkards and all other sinners.** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “...Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord,

and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway” (Acts 16:30-33).

**Believe** in Christ (John 8:24), **Repent** of sins (Acts 2:38), **Confess** faith in Christ (Romans 10:10), **be Baptized** for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16), **Live faithful** to Christ unto death (1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10).

## DID JESUS SIN WHEN HE TURNED WATER INTO WINE?

Robert Oliver

**W**e know Jesus lived under the “old law” (and we know it was taken away when he was nailed to the cross; Col. 2:14; Heb. 10:9). Therefore, to be the sinless sacrifice, he had to live according to the old law absolutely perfect. One of the commands Jesus was required to keep is found in Habakkuk 2:15, “Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also...”

The question is, did Jesus violate the text in Habakkuk? Did he make about 120 gallons of alcoholic wine at the wedding feast after the men had already consumed a large quantity of wine?

Read these words of John 2:6-10, “*And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.*”

Some believe that since Jesus created “good” wine, it must have been alcoholic. Their argument is that the Greek word *oinos* always means alcoholic wine. If that argument holds true, then Jesus sinned against that which was written and could not be a perfect sacrifice.

Let us examine the Greek word *oinos*. It is used in Matthew 9:17, “*Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into*

new bottles, and both are preserved.”

The entire concept of this text indicates that you do not put freshly pressed grape juice into old bottles (which were animal skins), for the old bottles had already been stretched out, and, as the freshly pressed grapes fermented, they would expand and destroy the bottles, thus leaking out the juice. In that case *oinos* had to be non-alcoholic. It was fresh grape juice.

Another way to show that *oinos* can refer to freshly made grape juice and not alcoholic wine is that Jesus quoted from the Septuagint in Mark 7:6-7. That version translates the Hebrew word *tiros* to *oinos*. That Hebrew word always means non-alcoholic wine, or what we would call “grape juice.” That being true, Jesus did not create alcoholic wine and did not sin by violating Habakkuk 2:15.

Therefore, the following Biblical accounts are accurate. First Peter 2:22, “*Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*” Hebrews 4:15, “*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*”

Jesus did not sin at Cana of Galilee nor did he tempt others to sin. James 1:13 affirms: “*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.*”

Finally, if anyone attempts to prove that drinking an alcoholic beverage today is justified because Jesus turned water into wine, he must understand that by taking that position, he is denying the perfection of Christ, and we are all dead in our sins.

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# MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN 2024

Marvin L. Weir

**W**e who are alive have been blessed to enter into another year. None of us know whether or not it will be our last year upon this earth. Neither do we know the opportunities that will be uniquely ours to be of service in the kingdom. May we be wise enough to recognize situations where we can make a difference for the cause of Christ! Let us meditate upon some ways we can be useful for the Master during the year of 2024.

**First, Determine You Will Choose To Travel The Path That Leads To Eternal Life.** The warning Jeremiah sounded so long ago should not be taken lightly. The prophet stated, *“Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death”* (Jer. 21:8). Apostate Jews who remained in Jerusalem would die by the sword. Chaldean captivity, even though a cruel fate, was the only hope God gave His people if they wanted to live and have the opportunity to repent. Before all people today, God has set the “broad way” that leads to destruction and the “straitened way” that leads to life (Matt. 7:13-14). One must choose wisely the narrow gate and then resolve to *“walk in the light as he is in the light”* (cf. 1 John 1:7). Such is the only way we will ever have *true fellowship* with God and those of *“like precious faith”* (2 Peter 1:1)!

**Second, Resolve To Be An Asset To The Lord’s Church.** Far too many brethren are nothing more than a liability to the cause of Christ! Their influence is bad instead of good. Their habits are “stumbling stones” to those who might otherwise be interested in the church of Christ. Their education and abilities are used and admired by many in the business world while God is dismayed that they remain so ignorant and unwilling to work in the kingdom. Instead of being a shining light to others, they have placed their lamp under a bushel (cf. Matt. 5:15).

**Third, Have A Burning Desire To Use Whatever Ability You May Have To The Glory Of God!** All cannot be preachers, song leaders, teachers, elders or deacons. But each child of God can do *something* that

will benefit the church and glorify the Father! Do not forget the teaching of the apostle Paul: *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular”* (1 Cor. 12:13-27).

**Fourth, Possess A Genuine Love For The Lord’s Church.** It amazes me to see some brethren become fighting mad because one has slandered a member of their physical family but then show absolutely no emotion or concern when one shows disrespect and disdain for the precious body (church) of Christ! Could it be that many *do not* love the church as they should? Such is surely the case for a valiant soldier of the cross to rise up in righteous indignation at the mockery many today make of the

blood-bought body (John 7:24; Matt. 21:12-13; Acts 20:28).

**Fifth, Choose Wisely Who You Will Serve.** Fathers need to be like Joshua so that their families will receive an inheritance that will exist forever. *“Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD”* (Joshua 24:14-15).

**Sixth, Remember That Your Purpose In Life Is To Glorify The Creator** (Isa. 43:7). God wants man that He has created in His image (Gen. 1:27) to humble himself before Him. Let us keep in mind this admonition of old: *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land”* (2 Chron. 7:14).

**Seventh, Be Faithful To The Lord And His Cause As Long As You Are Privileged To Live In The World.** The book of James reminds us that our faith is worthless unless it is put into action (James 2:14-17). *“Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works”* (James 2:18). If one is not faithful in *living* for Christ, how can he convince himself and others that he will *die* “in” Christ (cf. Rev. 2:10)?

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**SEND US YOUR  
CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

# MAYBE YOU DON'T REALLY KNOW GOD

Jason Patrick Hilburn

Just because someone thinks he knows God, that does not mean he really does. God can be known through His Word (John 17:3; 1 Cor. 2:9-13; 1 John 2:3-6), but God is who He says He is, not who someone may imagine He is. God said, *“Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee”* (Psa. 50:21). Let us not be quick to assume anything about God, based on our own feelings or experiences, for God says, *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts”* (Isa. 55:8-9; cf. 2 Kings 5:10-12). With that in mind, please consider the following regarding some controversial topics:

If you think God will usher homosexuals into Heaven without penitent obedience, you do not know God. (Acts 2:38; 17:30-31; 26:20; Matt. 7:21; Rom. 1:26-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Heb. 5:9; Jude 7)

If you think God approves of people staying in unauthorized marriages because “they love one another,” you do not know God. (Matt. 19:3-12; cf. Ezra 10:11,19,44; Neh. 13:27)

If you think God is simply “love” and has no severe aspect to His nature, you do not know God. (Matt. 23; Luke 12:5; Rom. 11:22; Heb. 10:23-31; 12:28-29)

If you think God is pleased by all the religious divisions known as denominations, you do not know God. (John 17:17-23; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Tim. 1:3; 2 John 9-11)

If you think God would never require you to choose Him first before family, you do not know God. (Matt.

8:21-22; 10:34-39; 12:47-50)

If you think God would not condemn anyone for refusing to assemble faithfully with a local congregation of Christians, you do not know God. (Heb. 10:23-31; cf. Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2)

If you think God would not condemn anyone for breaking the civil law, you do not know God. (Rom. 13:1-2)

If you think God approves of women preaching with authority over men or serving as “pastors,” you do not know God. (1 Tim. 2:11-15; 3:1-12; 1 Cor. 14:34-35)

If you think God would not condemn someone for just one sin, you do not know God. (Gen. 3; Matt. 26:14-15; Acts 5:1-11; 8:18-24; Gal. 5:2-4; 2 Tim. 2:15-18)

If you think God will accept worship from everyone in every way, if they are sincere, you do not know God. (Lev. 10:1-3; Prov. 28:9; Matt. 15:9; John 4:23-24; Col. 3:16-17; Heb. 11:4; 1 John 3:12)

If you think God would not require water baptism for salvation, you do not know God. (Mark 16:15-16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-6,16-18; Col. 2:11-13; 1 Peter 3:20-21; cf. 2 Kings 5:10-14)

If you think God will allow you to enter Heaven just because you “feel saved,” you do not know God. (Prov. 14:12; 16:25; Jer. 17:9; Matt. 7:21-23; Gal. 6:7; Col. 3:25; James 1:22; 1 John 2:3-6)

If you think God would never command withdrawal of fellowship from erring children of God, you do not know God. (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Thess. 3:6,14,15)

If you think God would never send anyone to Hell, you do not know God.

(Matt. 25:41,46; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; 1 Peter 4:17)

If you think God will allow most people to go to Heaven, when most are not faithful to Him, you do not know God. (Matt. 7:13-14, 21-27; Heb. 5:9; 1 Peter 3:20)

If you think God could never forgive you, even if you repented and obeyed Him, you do not know God. (1 Tim. 1:12-16; 2:3-4)

If you think God wants you to go to Hell, you do not know God. (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8-10; 1 Tim. 2:3-4; Heb. 2:9; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 4:9-10)

God does love us, even more than we can understand, but the same God who loves us so dearly, also, absolutely abhors sin (Heb. 1:9; cf. Psa. 7:11; 119:104, 128; Rev. 2:6,15). The same Jesus who healed the sick also wielded a whip, overturned tables, and gave scathing rebukes! (Matt. 23; John 2:13-17; Rev. 3:19). If one cannot understand or relate to this side of Jesus, spiritual growth is desperately needed before kneeling before Him on Judgment Day.

Man must allow God's Word to shape his understanding of God, taking heed when God explains Himself or His Law. Man must allow his mind to be changed by God's Word, rather than changing God's Word to match man's mind (Rom. 10:17; 12:1-2). Man should certainly listen with great care when God has given His conditions to enter Heaven and avoid Hell.

Friends, do not simply assume you know God — study His Word to make sure you know Him and are accepted by Him! (Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 8:16; 2 Cor. 13:5; 1 Thess. 5:21; 2 Peter 1:10; 1 John 1:6 2:6)

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## Biblical Wine...

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not have to experiment? After all, how else could one find out?

Another question: **“What degree of drunkenness does the Bible condemn?”** Is it not true that the Bible condemns any degree of drunkenness?

The Bible teaches that consuming alcohol for the purpose of intoxication is wrong. However, the drinking of alcohol in so-called moderation is just a lesser degree of intoxication and would, therefore, fall under the same condemnation.

In Biblical times there was no variety of alcoholic drinks that we have today. It is a mistake to equate the use

of fermented wine in the Bible with what people are exposed to today. The impression is sometimes left that in the Bible, drinking alcoholic wine was the standard, and that whenever the word wine is used it automatically refers to alcoholic wine.

And, of course, there is *the matter of influence*. Those who want to live in a way that pleases God will engage in

no practice that harms one's influence. Hardly anything can have as much negative effect on one's influence as much as drinking alcohol.

#### WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TELL US?

Proverbs 23:31,32, "...look not thou upon the wine...it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder..." It is clear the Bible condemns that which can lead to drunkenness. "Don't even look on it!" "Don't expose yourself to it!" Question: Does this text imply that one can experiment with alcohol, as long as he is not overcome by it? Absolutely not! Rather, it teaches that even the exposure to alcohol is to be avoided.

I Thessalonians 5:6,8, "Therefore, let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be **sober**...but let us, who

are of the day, be **sober**..." The Greek word for "sober" is *nepho*, which signifies, "to be free from intoxicants" (Analytical Greek Lexicon). Paul, in admonishing Christians to be of sound mind and life, uses a term that specifically relates to not being given to intoxicants. The same word is used elsewhere by Paul and also by Peter (1 Tim. 4:5; 1 Peter 1:13; 4:7; 5:8).

#### JESUS AND WINE

In John 2:2-10 is the occasion of the wedding feast when Jesus turned water into wine. It is assumed by some that since the wine referred to here is called the "best" wine, it must have been alcoholic. However, this is not at all the case. To the contrary, the "best" wine (as noted earlier) refers to the best tasting, or "sweetest," wine, meaning

that it had greater sugar content and, hence, was lacking in alcohol.

It is even argued that some of the people at the wedding had become drunk and that Jesus made more, even stronger, intoxicating wine to be served to them. This, then, would mean that the Lord made intoxicating wine so drunk people would become even drunker.

Question: Would Jesus have made strong, alcoholic wine of which the groom would also partake, thus sending him away drunk on his wedding night? Such foolishness. Also, based on the argument that Jesus made intoxicating wine, any Christian could operate his own wine distillery with the approval of God.

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## HOLY DAYS

James W. Boyd

This lesson is not presented as a sermon but simply a collection of information regarding days some have declared to be "holy days" which magnify the false doctrines that are in the world. These days are of Catholic origin and many times imitated by Protestants. Christians observe the Lord's Supper every first day of the week as the New Testament teaches. They do not observe these "holy days" that have come from the minds of men.

Galatians 4:9-11, "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, wherunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain."

Paul was teaching that we are not under the Mosaic Law which called for observances of days, etc. but under Christ. Some were turning back to the ways of Judaism and observing unauthorized "holy days." Paul was showing them that such was to turn away from the truth. Since it was improper for the early Christians to turn to observing such days, why is it not improper for those who profess to serve Christ today to do similar things? It is wrong. We must avoid it.

Below we shall list a number of these "holy days" that some observe without much comment about them but only remind us that such is not found in Scripture.

**MARDI GRAS** — the last day of feasting, revelry, nudity, drunkenness and rioting before LENT.

**ASH WEDNESDAY** — when ashes are placed on the forehead the first day of LENT to indicate penitence.

**LENT** — a period of 40 days of sacrifice, denying yourself things that are usually commonplace otherwise.

**HOLY WEEK** — the last week of LENT.

**LAZARUS SUNDAY** — commemoration of the raising of Lazarus.

**PALM SUNDAY** — commemoration of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

**MAUNDY THURSDAY** — the day of the Last Supper.

**GOOD FRIDAY, HOLY FRIDAY, BLACK FRIDAY** — the day of the crucifixion of Christ.

**EASTER** — the day of His resurrection.

**DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY** — the Sunday after Easter when the pope forgives sins that have been confessed and the removal of temporal punishment for those sins, accompanied by reception of communion. "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"

(Matt. 15:9). There are other celebrations.

**ANNUNCIATION DAY** — the day Gabriel announced to Mary of the coming birth of Jesus.

**ADVENT** — leading up to Christmas; the visit by the wise men, etc.

**CHRISTMAS** — the birthday of Jesus.

**ALL SAINTS DAY** — celebration of martyrs.

**A DAY TO CELEBRATE THE TRANSFIGURATION** —

**HOLY CROSS DAY** — Remembering the masons who erect a cross on church buildings.

**TRINITY SUNDAY** — to celebrate the Trinity.

**EPIPHANY** — celebrate the baptism of Jesus.

There are others but this must suffice. None of these days have Biblical authority. They have resulted from the doctrines of men. Christians realize and recognize them as relics of apostasy. Many "Protestant" churches have borrowed such things from the Catholics. Their religions are overrunning with rituals, ceremonies, pious displays and showmanship of human religions.

But I suppose it is all right for those who do not have respect for the Word of God anyway.

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# LORD, HELP ME TO HAVE A SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE

Roger D. Campbell

It is scriptural to remind faithful saints of God about their obligations before him. It also is biblical to encourage those same faithful people to grow in their service to the Lord. It is proper, too, to inform slackers that they need to make improvements. When it comes to our own personal spiritual development, the Bible makes it plain that: 1) it is possible for us to grow in that fashion; and, 2) the Lord expects us to do just that.

A personal question: How are you doing when it comes to sacrificing? Do you make sacrifices? To sacrifice means to give up something (or live without something) which we value for the sake of something else which we deem to be more important. In general, why do people give up things which they enjoy or from which they get satisfaction? For some, their sacrifices are made for health reasons. For others, it may be for financial reasons, to improve their relationship with another person, to obtain a particular job, or to stay out of prison. Or, on the spiritual side, it may be that a person makes sacrifices to please God.

One who carefully considers the Bible’s message learns that sacrificing is part of serving the Lord. It is God’s will for each Christian to present his body as a living sacrifice to Him (Rom. 12:1). The Master calls on all who follow Him to deny themselves and take up their cross each day (Luke 9:23). He even said that those who do not forsake everything cannot be his disciple (Luke 14:33). So, sacrifice is not optional, but “comes with the territory” of following Jesus.

Who are some Bible characters who made sacrifices in order to serve the God of heaven? Abraham left his homeland (Gen. 12) and was willing to sacrifice his son (Gen. 22). When a man offered to give David the animals and wood needed for a burnt sacrifice, the king’s response was, “No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing” (2 Samuel 24:24).

Four fishermen “forsook all” in or-

der to become fishers of men (Luke 5:11; Mark 1:17-20). A poor widow cast all of her money into the treasury (Mark 12:41-44). Early disciples willingly sold material possessions and gave the money to the apostles for the work of the church (Acts 4:34-37). Faithful first-century saints “risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 15:26). The churches of Macedonia gave liberally, despite facing “a great trial of affliction” and living in “deep poverty” (2 Cor. 8:1,2). We are fascinated to read about a brother by the name of Epaphroditus, about whom it is written that “for the work of Christ he came close to death” (Phil. 2:30). The sacrificial spirit shown by the early saints stands as a great example for us.

The spirit of sacrifice continues in the lives of many modern-day Christians. We know of cases where people became Christians and were forsaken by their family as a result. Still, they remained faithful to the Lord. We have seen members of the church do without material items in order to give sacrificially to help others or support a church project. We know men who have given up high-paying jobs in order to become Gospel preachers. Other disciples have forsaken activities from which they received great enjoyment, in some cases doing so because those activities were sinful, and in other instances letting go of them because they feared those activities were a hindrance to their influence on others.

It may be that a big portion of what we call “sacrifice” in our lives does not really constitute much of a sacrifice at all. In the big picture of things, how great of a sacrifice is it to give up soft drinks, coffee, or tea? How much of a sacrifice is it to give up eating pizza or reducing the number of meals we eat-out in a restaurant? What about giving up satellite/cable TV or air conditioning? Some of us old-timers can recall the earlier days

(Continued on page 16)

**Spirit of Sacrifice...**

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## Spirit of Sacrifice...

(Continued from page 15)

of our lives when drinking soft drinks was a rarity. If we ate pizza at all our moms made it. There was no satellite TV available and we survived without air conditioning in our homes. When I read my Bible and see the sacrifices that our brothers and sisters made in the first century, I see a vast difference in what they gave up compared to giving up what we sometimes label as “creature comforts.”

You may or may not be aware of it, and you may have no desire to hear it, but today in a number of areas in the world, we have faithful brothers and sisters who have minimal material stuff, yet they have a heart devoted to the Christ and a sacrificial spirit. The key thought is not to count material objects and earthly activities, but to have a heart that is willing to sacrifice.

The Godhead’s sacrifices on our behalf ought to move us! God gave his only begotten Son for you and me (John 3:16). The Christ gave up his rich estate in heaven to become poor.

Why? So we might be rich through his poverty (2 Cor. 8:9).

When Peter reminded Jesus that he and the other apostles had left all to follow Him, He told them that there will be rewards for those who make sacrifices for Him. Some will come in this life. The greatest reward will be eternal life in the age to come (Mark 10:30).

Lord, help us not to whine about what we lack. Rather, lead us to have a spirit of sacrifice for You.

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## SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“Keep up the very good work and God bless it” ...**Robert Schultz, Bruton, MI**. “I enjoy and appreciate the good articles in *Seek The Old Paths*. Thanks” ...**Earl Sutton, Woodbury, TN**. “I learned about STOP through church family. I would love to read them”

...**Suzanne Roberts, Greendale, WI**. “Thank you for your works. I would like to receive this publication along with the Dec/23 issue” ...**Curtis Davis, Buford, GA**. “We wait anxiously every month for our copy of STOP. Thank you” ...**Frank & Aileen Segato, Ontario, Canada**. “I enjoy STOP” ...**Gallipolis, OH**. “Thank you for all your great work for the Lord in 2023. We enjoy receiving STOP each month!” ...**Broadway C/C, Rockford, IL**. “It’s truly amazing how timely, scriptural and well written your articles in your publication is. God bless you and may this continue and expand greatly. Thank you so much” ...**Ruth & Eldon Davis, Tuxford Saskatchewan, Canada**. “What a Great Joy today to open a letter from the State Prison in Macon, GA — one of the inmates said the article in *Seek The Old Paths* concerning the correct understanding of John 3:16. He wants a correspondence Bible course” ...**Carl O. Cooper, Lewisville, NC**. “A new year. Looking forward to it. We pray for the Gospel to be spread far and wide” ...**Allen & Irene Tate, Cache, OK**. “Excellent paper! What an honor to be able to support such a sound Gospel effort” ...**Brant & Charity Stubblefield, Lindsay, OK**. “We do enjoy your excellent publication. Look forward to it every month” ...**J. E. Williams, Sapulpa, OK**. “I thank you for the good work you’re doing. I look forward to receiving my copy of *Seek The Old Paths*. I pray God will continue to bless you in this work. Thank you” ...**Dale Boren, Florence, AL**. “I receive STOP and I would like to receive some of the free books you are giving out. They are great teaching tools for our new converts class. I really appreciate it and thanks in advance. God bless you” ...**Elouise Thomas Berwick, LA**. “This is our last contribution. We closed our doors at Mt. Ararat C/C in Liberty, TN, for good. We would still like to get your paper. Thanks” ...**Bobby & Sue Hale, Liberty, TN**. “Thank you for the good work that you do” ...**Jerry Harris, Crossville, TN**. “Our thanks to you for sending us *Seek The Old Paths*. We enjoy it. Keep up the great work” ...**Don Turnmire, Glade Spring C/C, Glade Spring, VA**. “Thank you” ...**Nadine Roth, Lamar, MO**. “Thanks for sending this wonderful publication. All the very best” ...**Michael Winborn, Raiford, FL**. “Hope this finds you and the family well, and

hope the best for you in 2024. Nicki and I really appreciate *Seek The Old Paths* and look forward to retrieving them from our mailbox every month. The articles are informative and very well written by knowledgeable people in an organized manner which can easily be understood by readers. It is our prayer that all people will seek God’s truth by clinging to the old paths as set forth in God’s Word, the Bible. Enclosed is a donation in support of publishing STOP in efforts to continue spreading the Gospel. Thank you and the staff for the publishing of a much needed Christian publication such as STOP” ...**Jim Reaser, Grafton, WV**.

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