

# THE CHRISTIAN AND INTOXICATING BEVERAGES

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# Some upfront points to remember...

- There are many verses in the Bible applicable to the topic of drinking.
- The Bible clearly has more to say than “don’t get drunk”.
- We can not simply assume that wine described in the bible is always fresh squeezed juice nor was it the same as the table wines of today.
- This morning we’ll examine the scriptural instructions and the facts concerning the use of wine and strong drink by 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians and how it applies to the alcoholic beverages of our day.

# The Negative Effects of Alcohol Consumption are Undisputable...

## 1) *Alcohol is Responsible for:*

- **50 percent of all auto fatalities**
- **80 percent of all home violence**
- **33 percent of all suicides**
- **80 percent of all child abuse**
- **70 percent of all drownings**

## 2) *Children and Alcohol*

- **6.6M children under 18 live with at least one alcoholic parent**
- **80% of HS seniors have used alcohol**
- **51.7% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders have used alcohol**
- **62.3% of HS seniors have been drunk**
- **25.1% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders have been drunk**

## 3) *Statistics Are Overwhelming*

- Over 70% of the people in this country drink.
- 31.4 million American adults are know alcoholics.
- **One out of seven who take their first drink becomes an alcoholic.**

# Proverbs 23:29-31

<sup>29</sup> Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?  
<sup>30</sup> Those who linger long over wine, Those who go to taste mixed wine. <sup>31</sup> Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it goes down smoothly;



## Proverbs 23:32-35

<sup>32</sup> At the last it bites like a serpent and stings like a viper. <sup>33</sup> Your eyes will see strange things and your mind will utter perverse things. <sup>34</sup> And you will be like one who lies down in the middle of the sea, Or like one who lies down on the top of a mast. <sup>35</sup> “They struck me, *but* I did not become ill; They beat me, *but* I did not know *it*. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink.”



# Proverbs 23:29-35

Unmistakably clear warnings concerning the dangers of intoxicating beverages:

- Deceptive – goes down smooth but bites like a serpent and stings like a viper
- Wounds of unknown origin
- See strange things
- Say evil things
- Tossed about as if on the top of a ship's mast
- Feel no pain
- Addictive – even after all of this a desire for more

# Proverbs 20:1

<sup>20</sup> Wine *is* a mocker, Strong drink *is* a brwler,  
And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

New King James Version (NKJV)

- Wine treats one with contempt, ridicule and scorn
- Strong drink is quarrelsome and wrangles
- The unwise are led astray by it
- **When is one lead astray?**

# Proverbs 4:14-15

**14 Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evildoers. 15 Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way.**

New International Version (NIV)

- When is one lead astray?
  - When we **set foot on the path leading to wickedness** or **walk in the way of evildoers**
- Instead what are we to do?
  - **Avoid it, do not travel on it, turn from it an go on your way**



## And Yet...

- Some in the church today claim to justify the consumption of beer, wine and mixed drinks from the scriptures
- They are concluding, in their own words, that **“all one must do is to avoid sin, ie. drunkenness”**
- How are they attempting to reach this conclusion?

## Assertions allegedly authorizing the consumption of intoxicating beverages...

- “Wine drinking in the scriptures is shown in both a positive and negative light.”
- “There is no “don’t drink” passage in the scriptures.”
- “The only prohibition in scriptures is the sin of drunkenness.”
- “Christ himself made wine for consumption at the wedding in Cana of Galilee.”
- “Deacons were instructed to not drink “much” wine, so moderate drinking is ok.”

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Are we seeking to answer  
the right question?

# Let's first look for the BEST question to be answered...

- **Can a Christian drink intoxicating beverages?**

“If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God.” I Peter 4:11

Determining one's authority to participate is a **VERY GOOD** question.

- **Should a Christian drink intoxicating beverages?**

“But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.” Mark 9:42

Also considering impacts beyond oneself is an even **BETTER** question.

- **Where did Jesus set the bar for the attitude, behavior and conduct of a Christian regarding intoxicating beverages?**

“**But I say unto you...**” Matt 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39 & 44

Determining how we should follow the life and instruction of our Savior as laid out in the scriptures is the **VERY BEST** approach.

## Jesus laid out clear examples of His “higher standard” in the Kingdom of God in Matthew 5

<sup>21</sup> ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’

<sup>22</sup> **But I say to you** that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court;

<sup>27</sup> ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’;

<sup>28</sup> **But I say to you** that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

<sup>31</sup> ‘WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE’;

<sup>32</sup> **But I say to you** that everyone who divorces his wife, except for *the* reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

# Where did Jesus (The Word) set the bar for consuming intoxicating beverages?

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No drunkenness

- I Cor 6:10, Gal 5:19-21

# 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

<sup>9</sup> Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, <sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, **nor drunkards**, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

## Galatians 5:19-21

<sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, <sup>21</sup> envying, **drunkenness**, carousing, **and things like these**, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.



“But James, I’m just going to have a beer or two with my friends. I’m not drinking any of the hard stuff.”

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# One Drink



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One 12 oz.

**beer**

(5% alcohol)

One 5 oz.

**glass of wine**

(12% alcohol)

1.5 oz. of

**distilled spirits**

(40% or 80 proof)

# Where did Jesus (The Word) set the bar for consuming intoxicating beverages?

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No carousing and drinking parties

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No drunkenness

- I Pet 4:3

- I Cor 6:10, Gal 5:19-21

# 1 Peter 4:3

<sup>3</sup> For the time already past is sufficient *for you* to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, **carousing**, **drinking parties** and abominable idolatries.

- The drinking session, the symposium, not of necessity excessive, which gives opportunity for excess (Synonyms of the NT, French)

# Where did Jesus (The Word) set the bar for consuming intoxicating beverages?

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Not a hint of/provision for it

No carousing and drinking parties

No drunkenness

- Eph 5:3; Rom 13:13-14

- I Pet 4:3

- I Cor 6:10, Gal 5:19-21

## Ephesians 5:3-4

<sup>3</sup> But among you there **must not be even a hint of** sexual immorality, or of **any kind of impurity**, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

- Hint – a slight indication of the existence of something

## Romans 13:13-14

<sup>13</sup> Let us behave properly as in the day, **not in carousing and drunkenness**, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts.**

- Provision – to provide easy opportunity to fulfill the lusts of the flesh

“But James, Jesus made wine for consumption at the wedding of Cana of Galilee.”

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# Alcohol in the New Testament and Today

	<u>ABV%</u>
• Non-alcoholic Wine Today	0.1-0.5%
• Oinos – common “wine” drink of the day	0.1-2.3% <sup>1</sup>
• Sikera – strong drink (literal “intoxicant”) <sup>4</sup>	7-10% <sup>2</sup>
• Table Wine Today	9-14% <sup>3</sup>

## Notes:

- 1 20 - 3 to 1 water to wine mix
- 2 Waltke (2005)
- 3 [www.alcoholcontents.com](http://www.alcoholcontents.com)
- 4 Only found in Luke 1:15 “and (John the Baptist) shall not drink wine nor strong drink”

# Medicinal Properties of Ethyl Alcohol

- **Antiseptic** – disinfects and sterilizes
- **Anesthetic** – dulls the sense of pain
- **Depressant** – slows down brain functioning

## 1 Timothy 5:23 (NASB)

<sup>23</sup> No longer drink water *exclusively*, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.

# Where did Jesus (The Word) set the bar for consuming intoxicating beverages?

Lay aside encumbrances

Not a hint of/provision for it

No carousing and drinking parties

No drunkenness

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- Heb 12:1-2
- Eph 5:3; Rom 13:13-14
- I Pet 4:3
- I Cor 6:10, Gal 5:19-21

## Hebrews 12:1-3

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also **lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us**, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

# Does Alcohol Encumber and Easily Entangle?

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## 3) *Statistics Are Overwhelming*

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- **One out of seven who take their first drink becomes an alcoholic.**

## Where did Jesus (The Word) set the bar for consuming intoxicating beverages?

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Not cause stumbling or offense in a brother

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Lay aside encumbrances

Not a hint of/provision for it

No carousing and drinking parties

No drunkenness

- Rom 14:21

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- Heb 12:1-2

- Eph 5:3; Rom 13:13-14

- I Pet 4:3

- I Cor 6:10, Gal 5:19-21

## Romans 14:21

<sup>21</sup> **It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles.**

- Stumble – to offend or cause to fall
- Some in the church have had struggles or are struggling with alcohol
- Some in the church already deal with loneliness, insecurity, worry, problems and are very susceptible to problems with alcohol

## Where did Jesus (The Word) set the bar for consuming intoxicating beverages?

Sound judgment, sober minded and self-control

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Not cause stumbling or offense in a brother

Lay aside encumbrances

Not a hint of/provision for it

No carousing and drinking parties

No drunkenness

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- I Pet 4:7; 5:8; Gal 5:23
- Rom 14:21
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- Heb 12:1-2
- Eph 5:3; Rom 13:13-14
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# 1 Peter 4:7

<sup>7</sup> The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer.

# 1 Peter 5:8

<sup>8</sup> Be of **sober spirit**, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

## Galatians 5:22-24

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, **self-control**; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

## ALCOHOL IMPAIRMENT CHART *FEMALES*

APPROXIMATE BLOOD ALCOHOL PERCENTAGE										
Drinks *	BODY WEIGHT IN POUNDS									EFFECT ON PERSON
	90	100	120	140	160	180	200	220	240	
<b>0</b>	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	<b>ONLY SAFE DRIVING LIMIT</b>
<b>1</b>	.05	.05	.04	.03	.03	.03	.02	.02	.02	<b>IMPAIRMENT BEGINS.</b>
<b>2</b>	.10	.09	.08	.07	.06	.05	.05	.04	.04	<b>DRIVING SKILLS SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED.</b>
<b>3</b>	.15	.14	.11	.11	.09	.08	.07	.06	.06	<b>LEGALLY INTOXICATED.  CRIMINAL PENALTIES IN ALL STATES **</b>
<b>4</b>	.20	.18	.15	.13	.11	.10	.09	.08	.08	
<b>5</b>	.25	.23	.19	.16	.14	.13	.11	.10	.09	
<b>6</b>	.30	.27	.23	.19	.17	.15	.14	.12	.11	
<b>7</b>	.35	.32	.27	.23	.20	.18	.16	.14	.13	
<b>8</b>	.40	.36	.30	.26	.23	.20	.18	.17	.15	
<b>9</b>	.45	.41	.34	.29	.26	.23	.20	.19	.17	
<b>10</b>	.51	.45	.38	.32	.28	.25	.23	.21	.19	

Subtract .01% for each 40 minutes of drinking.

\* One drink is equal to 1¼ oz. of 80-proof liquor, 12 oz. of beer, or 4 oz. of table wine.

\*\* *ALL states have a .08 BAC per se law*

*—The final one took effect in August of 2005. (Updated: Sept. 3rd, 2005)*

## ALCOHOL IMPAIRMENT CHART

# MALES

APPROXIMATE BLOOD ALCOHOL PERCENTAGE									
Drinks *	BODY WEIGHT IN POUNDS								EFFECT ON PERSON
	100	120	140	160	180	200	220	240	
0	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	ONLY SAFE DRIVING LIMIT
1	.04	.03	.03	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02	IMPAIRMENT BEGINS.
2	.08	.06	.05	.05	.04	.04	.03	.03	
3	.11	.09	.08	.07	.06	.06	.05	.05	DRIVING SKILLS SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED.
4	.15	.12	.11	.09	.08	.08	.07	.06	LEGALLY INTOXICATED.  CRIMINAL PENALTIES IN ALL STATES **
5	.19	.16	.13	.12	.11	.09	.09	.08	
6	.23	.19	.16	.14	.13	.11	.10	.09	
7	.26	.22	.19	.16	.15	.13	.12	.11	
8	.30	.25	.21	.19	.17	.15	.14	.13	
9	.34	.28	.24	.21	.19	.17	.15	.14	
10	.38	.31	.27	.23	.21	.19	.17	.16	

Subtract .01% for each 40 minutes of drinking.

\* One drink is equal to 1¼ oz. of 80-proof liquor, 12 oz. of beer, or 4 oz. of table wine.

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The effects of alcohol intoxication are greatly influenced by individual variations among users. Some users may become intoxicated at a much lower Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) level than is shown.

- 0.02-0.03 BAC: No loss of coordination, slight euphoria and loss of shyness. Depressant effects are not apparent.
- 0.04-0.06 BAC: Feeling of well-being, relaxation, lower inhibitions, sensation of warmth. Euphoria. Some minor impairment of reasoning and memory, lowering of caution.
- 0.07-0.09 BAC: Slight impairment of balance, speech, vision, reaction time, and hearing. Euphoria. Judgement and self- control are reduced, and caution, reason and memory are impaired.
- 0.10-0.125 BAC: Significant impairment of motor coordination and loss of good judgement. Speech may be slurred; balance, vision, reaction time and hearing will be impaired. Euphoria. It is illegal to operate a motor vehicle at this level of intoxication.
- 0.13-0.15 BAC: Gross motor impairment and lack of physical control. Blurred vision and major loss of balance. Euphoria is reduced and dysphoria is beginning to appear.
- 0.16-0.20 BAC: Dysphoria (anxiety, restlessness) predominates, nausea may appear. The drinker has the appearance of a "sloppy drunk."
- 0.25 BAC: Needs assistance in walking; total mental confusion. Dysphoria with nausea and some vomiting.
- 0.30 BAC: Loss of consciousness.
- 0.40 BAC and up: Onset of coma, possible death due to respiratory arrest.

## How does one...

- Maintain self-control when the first serving lessens self-control
- Use caution to control the amount of drinking when drinking lowers inhibitions and caution?
- Stay on the alert for our adversary the devil when reasoning and judgment are impaired?

## Where did Jesus (The Word) set the bar for consuming intoxicating beverages?

Press on to the mark of the  
high calling of Jesus Christ

Sound judgment, sober  
minded and self-control

Not cause stumbling or  
offense in a brother

Lay aside encumbrances

Not a hint of/provision for it

No carousing and drinking  
parties

No drunkenness

- Philippians 3:13-14
- I Pet 4:7; 5:8; Gal 5:23
- Rom 14:21
- 
- Heb 12:1-2
- Eph 5:3; Rom 13:13-14
- I Pet 4:3
- I Cor 6:10, Gal 5:19-21



## Philippians 3:13-15

<sup>13</sup> Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, <sup>14</sup> **I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.** <sup>15</sup> Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

King James Version (KJV)

## Where did Jesus (The Word) set the bar for consuming intoxicating beverages?

Press on to the mark of the high calling of Jesus Christ

Sound judgment, sober minded and self-control

Not cause stumbling or offense in a brother

Lay aside encumbrances

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- Philippians 3:13-14
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“But James, abstaining from alcoholic beverages is just your personal hedge to prevent the sin of drunkenness. Hedges are not necessary to prevent a sin”

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Didn't Jesus lay out clear examples of necessary "hedges" stopping short of ultimate sins in Matthew 5?

21 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.'

22 **But I say to you** that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court;

27 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY';

28 **But I say to you** that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

What did the wisest man of all time direct as the necessary hedge regarding intoxicating beverages?

Proverbs 23:31

<sup>31</sup> **Do not look on the wine** when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly;

Proverbs 4:14-15

14 **Do not set foot on the path** of the wicked or walk in the way of evildoers. 15 **Avoid it**, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way.

# Conclusion:

Although we may not find an explicit, verbatim “don’t drink” statement in the scriptures...

- Multiple scriptures set out a much higher standard of attitude, behavior and conduct for a Christian
  - “Do not look on the wine”, “avoid the path of the wicked”, “sound judgement”, “sober minded”, “self control”, “no stumbling block”, “lay aside every encumbrance that so easily entangle”, “make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts”

## Conclusion:

- The clear choice for a Christian to meet this standard in the scriptures is to abstain from intoxicating beverages of today (beer, wine & mixed drinks) (non-medicinal)
- Considering the facts and Jesus' instruction regarding His higher standard, why would a Christian **demand** a “don't drink” statement in order to abstain?