

# Alcohol, Wine and Strong Drink

The purpose of this study is to truly find out what Scripture says about wine, and alcohol, because of the drinking problem in America today and our responsibility toward it.

Many believe that scripture offers contradictory advice on this subject. Some teach that drinking wine and alcohol of any kind is forbidden, even to the extent of making it a major doctrinal issue. But others either remain neutral or teach that it is acceptable in **Yahuah's** eyes. But so much for what men say. Let's look instead at what Scripture says. After all, we must be careful to obey **Yahuah** rather than men (**Acts 5:29**) and to not become so caught up in the doctrines of men that we miss **Yahuah's** views (**Matthew 15:8-9, Mark 7:7-9, Titus 1:14**).

One of the greatest difficulties in studying **Yahuah's** stance on drinking is the bias that translators have brought to the meaning of words in Scripture. We will see in the Old Testament that "wine" did not always mean an intoxicating drink made from grape juice.

1. When the context clearly showed the liquid was intoxicating, it was either condemned or used for purposes that did not require consumption (sanitize drinking water to avoid sickness due to pathogenic organisms, used as sedatives, antiseptics and a vehicle for other medicines.

2. When the context clearly showed it was not intoxicating, it was always approved.

This same difficulty carries over into the New Testament

1. The most common word translated as "wine" **isoinos** which is a direct equivalent of the Hebrew word **yayin**. The word refers to all products of grape juice and only the context can determine to which is being referred.

2. The Greek word **sikera** is equivalent to the Hebrew word **shekar** which refers to strong drinks made from juice or grains. It is only found in **Luke 1:15** where John's parents are instructed to keep John away from wine and strong drinks.

3. The Greek word **gleukos** is equivalent to the Hebrew word **tirosh**. It literally means sweet or new, as in grape juice. It is only seen in **Acts 2:13** when the Apostles are accused of getting drunk on grape juice.

Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: 10 And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;" (**Leviticus 10:9,10**) According to this scripture unfermented "wine" or grape juice is "Holy" or "clean" while fermented wine is "unholy" and "unclean." All alcoholic beverages are unholy and unclean!

The Bible also calls **Yahuah's** children "Kings" (**Revelation 1:5,6**) and says, "Wine is not for Kings, nor for princes intoxicating drink; Lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted" (**Proverbs 31:4**)

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." **Proverbs 20:1**.

Everybody today believes that wine is the fermented juice of grapes! This is because most of

today's English dictionaries define "wine" as "fermented grape juice" or "the fermented juice of grapes," making no allowance for unfermented grape juice to be called "wine."

The universally accepted definition of "wine" as "fermented grape juice" explains why many Bible believing Christians have come to believe that the "wine" mentioned in the Bible is all alcoholic or fermented. This assumption has greatly influenced the study of the Biblical teachings on the use of alcoholic beverages by many sincere believers that **Yahuah** approves the moderate use of fermented, intoxicating wine or alcoholic drinks. The reasoning can best be illustrated, as follows:

1. The Bible, like today's English language, knows only of alcoholic wine.
2. Wine is praised in the Bible as a gracious divine blessing.
3. Therefore, the Bible approves the moderate consumption of alcoholic beverages.

The problem with this teaching is that its first premise is very wrong. As this study will show, the Bible teaches two distinctly different grape beverages: the first, unfermented, refreshing and lawful; the second, fermented, intoxicating and unlawful.

## **SECULAR USAGE OF THE WORD "WINE"**

The Meaning of "Wine" in English

**Current Usage of "Wine."** Most people assume today that the word "wine" can refer only to fermented, intoxicating grape juice, or to the fermented juice of any fruit used as beverage. The basis for this assumption is the current definition given to the word by most modern dictionaries. For example, the seventh edition of the Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines "wine" as follows: "1: fermented grape juice containing varying percentages of alcohol together with ethers and esters that give it bouquet and flavor. 2: the usu. fermented juice of a plant product (as a fruit) used as a beverage. 3: something that invigorates or intoxicates."

**Note:** that no mention at all is made in this current definition of unfermented grape juice as one of the possible meanings of "wine." It is not surprising that people who read a definition such as this, common to most dictionaries, would naturally assume that "wine" can only mean a fermented juice.

**Past Usage of "Wine."** This restrictive meaning of "wine" represents, however, a departure from the more classical dual meaning of the word as a designation for both fermented or unfermented grape juice. To verify this fact one needs only to consult some older dictionaries. For example, the 1955 Funk & Wagnalls New "Standard" Dictionary of the English Language defines "wine" as follows: ". The fermented juice of the grape: in loose language the juice of the grape whether fermented or not." This definition shows that fifty six (56) years ago the loose usage of "wine" referred to "the juice of the grape whether fermented or not." It is noteworthy that even the more recent New Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language (1971) defines "must" as "Wine or juice pressed from the grapes but not fermented." This definition clearly equates "wine" with grape juice.

The 1896 Webster's International Dictionary of the English Language which defines "wine" as "the expressed juice of grapes, especially when fermented, a beverage prepared from grapes by squeezing out their juice, and (usually) allowing it to ferment." This definition is historically accurate, since it recognizes that the basic meaning of "wine" is "the expressed juice of grapes," which is usually, but not always, allowed to ferment.

People have taken the common meaning of the word (whether in Hebrew, Greek, Latin or English) as an intoxicating beverage and have made it the only definition of the word. It is inaccurate both biblically and secularly, and it is inaccurate in the English language historically."

**Older English Dictionaries.** The inaccuracy in the English language becomes even more evident when we look at older English dictionaries. For example, the 1828 Webster's Dictionary defines the word as "new wine—wine pressed from the grape, but not fermented." **Note:** that the unfermented grape juice here explicitly called "new wine."

The 1759 Nathan Bailey's New Universal English Dictionary of Words and of Arts and Sciences offers the following definition for "wine": "Natural wine is such as it comes from the grape, without any mixture or sophistication. Adulterated wine is that wherein some drug is added to give it strength, fineness, flavor, briskness, or some other qualification." **Note:** that in this definition Bailey does not use the word "fermented," though it is implied in some of the wines he describes.

Other eighteenth-century lexicographers define the word "wine" very similarly. John Kersey's Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum, or A General English Dictionary, published in London in 1708, says: "Wine, a liquor made of the juice of grapes or other fruits. Liquor or Liqueur, anything that is liquid; Drink, Juice, etc. Must, sweet wine, newly pressed from the grape." In this definition "wine" explicitly includes, sweet wine, newly pressed from the grape."

A clear example of the use of the term "wine" to refer to unfermented grape juice is provided by William Whiston's translation of Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews, first published in 1737. Referring to Joseph's interpretation of the cup bearer's dream, Josephus writes: "He therefore said that in his sleep he saw three clusters of grapes hanging upon three branches of a vine, large already, and ripe for gathering; and that he squeezed them into a cup which the king held in his hand and when he had strained the wine, he gave it to the king to drink . . . Thou sayest that thou didst squeeze this wine from three clusters of grapes with thine hands and that the king received it: know, therefore, that the vision is for thy good."

In this translation Whiston uses "wine" as a proper rendering for fresh, unfermented grape juice (**gleukos**), obviously because in this time "wine" meant either fermented or unfermented grape juice. Josephus' statement offers another significant insight, namely, that it was customary long before Israel became a nation to squeeze the juice from grapes and drink it immediately in its fresh, unfermented state. This is what Josephus called **gleukos**, the term which our English translators render "wine" or "new wine" in **Acts 2:13**. Does not this translation support the conclusion that unfermented grape juice was called "wine" in older English usage?

## **FERMENTATION, PRESERVATION, AND ALCOHOL CONTENT**

Naturally (no additives) fermented wine has a low alcoholic content. Until the advent of widely available granulated sugar, strongly alcoholic wine was rare. To make wine strongly alcoholic like what we have today (10%-15%) you must add a lot of sugar and yeast. These are the two key components to fermentation, and they are not present in large enough quantities naturally to create the strong wine we have today. Alcoholic wine during biblical times, which was much weaker than the wine of today, was often watered down for drinking. They basically only had water and wine. Wine was consumed by adults and children alike as a tasty substitute for water. Watering down wine was something they did and they drank it this way regularly. Also,

boiling it down to a syrup was frequently done for preservation. This boiling killed the yeast that would cause fermentation. The syrup could easily be reconstituted later for drinking purposes. A third form of preservation was by straining out the yeast to prevent fermentation.

Nature Never forms alcoholic liquors. The fruit (grape) may rot and turn sour but it takes a process to convert juice to alcohol. The indispensable conditions for vinous fermentation are exact proportions of sugar, yeast or gluten and water with air temperature between 50 and 75 degrees. When heat exceeds 75 degrees and assures vinegar as the outcome. Since the Middle East is well above that even at night most of the year, something had to be done to preserve the juice (wine) for the year, or else it would all turn to vinegar! To assume it was all turned to alcoholic wine is a ridiculous assertion and is in contradiction of historical fact. Josephus, famous Jewish historian declares that he has seen provisions at the Jewish fortress Massada including grapes and fruits, kept fresh to last for 100 years!!!! Pliny the Roman historian confirms this. Don't let anyone tell you that grapes have to be kept by making alcoholic wine so they can last the year!

So we see that the portrayal that grape juice was only preserved by fermentation is utterly false. Unfermented wine was the most common wine in biblical times. It was not what we know as wine today which is always alcoholic. You cannot defend wine drinking today on the basis of biblical times because the two are totally different.

## **PASSOVER USAGE**

Some will still say that **Yahusha** indeed drank alcoholic wine and we know this by the passover (which was the last supper - **Mark 14:14-17**). Since there is a difference of seven months between the harvest and passover. They will say "they didn't have refrigerators, so to keep the grapes from souring, they were fermented". As we have shown above, the seven month time span would not have been a problem due to the multitude of frequently used preservation methods, all of which are easier than fermentation during this time period of history.

Furthermore, in **Matthew 26:29** it was "the fruit of the vine" they drank. This is also in **Mark 14, Luke 22, and 1 Corinthians 11**. The "fruit of the vine" would be grapes, and when the grapes are crushed they do not make alcoholic wine. **Yahuah** calls it wine while the juice is still in the grape don't you?

Thus saith **Yahuah**, As the new wine is found in the cluster (Hebrew "**Tirosh**"), **Isaiah 65:8**

## **"WINE" NEVER USED FOR CUP**

Both **Yahusha** and Paul referred to the Passover beverage simply as "cup" or "fruit of the vine." They NEVER used "wine" in referring to the cup.

Fermented wine is the Greek "**oinos**," used 32 times in the New Testament, but NEVER for the contents of the Passover cup.

What we can conclude, is that "fruit of the Vine" properly represents His blood (**Luke 22:20**). But is that fruit of the vine fermented, or is it the pure, unadulterated juice of the grape?

Is there a reason they did not use "wine" the Greek "**oinos**", when speaking of the Passover cup?

## **WINE: CHEMICALLY ALTERED AND LEAVENED**

Wine is not a firstfruit of the grape. It is a byproduct. Wine is produced when yeast, a leavening agent, acts on the sugar molecule of fruit juice to produce ethyl alcohol and carbon dioxide. Wine, then, is juice that has been chemically changed into something different. It is not the original, pure fruit of the vine, but a secondary byproduct. As a symbol for the pure, uncorrupted, sinless blood of Yahusha, a modified substance like wine would be inadequate.

More importantly, wine has been leavened in the same way bread is leavened by yeast. The Passover was to be eaten only with unleavened bread, **Exodus 12:8**. Nothing leavened was to be used at the Passover Memorial.

Unleavened bread represents **Yahusha** body unchanged by the corruption of sin, **Mark 14:22**. Similarly, the cup represents His pure blood, untainted by outside influences of the sinful world. Would a chemically altered drink like wine best represent His pure, unadulterated blood, or would the virgin juice from the grape?

## **YAHUSHA AS FIRSTFRUIT**

**Yahusha** is the firstfruit sacrifice for mankind, **1 Corinthians 15:20**. The people were to offer the firstfruits of their produce to the priests, **Deuteronomy 18:4** "...the firstfruit also of your corn, of your wine..." "Wine" here is "**tirosh**" meaning freshly pressed juice.

"New wine" signifies the best, the juice which squeezes out of the grapes in the wine press, before the treading. Thus, it is the firstfruits of the grape batch.

**Yahusha** is called the firstfruit of the dead, and the true vine. This pure firstfruit can only equate with the first of the freshly squeezed grape juice, not a wine, adulterated through chemical change.

Pure, unadulterated juice is the only proper symbol of the pure, saving blood of **Yahusha** the Messiah in the Passover. Grape juice is the only symbol that fits all the criteria and offers the only symbolism that is unique to His pure, precious blood.

Paul tells us that the Savior represents the first of the harvest: "But now is the Messiah risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (**1 Corinthians 15:20**).

Firstfruits offerings were commanded of Israel in **Deuteronomy 18:4**: "The firstfruit also of your corn, of your wine, and of your oil..." "Wine" here is the Hebrew "**tirosh**," meaning freshly pressed juice. Similarly in **Isaiah 65:8** we read of the "new wine [**tirosh**," fresh grape juice] found in the cluster" (see **2 Chronicles 31:4-5**; **Nehemiah 10:37-39**; **13:5, 12**).

**Yahusha** is actually the first of the firstfruits, **1 Corinthians 15:23**, and the true vine, **John 15:1**. This pure Firstfruit can only equate with the first of the freshly squeezed grape juice, not with the byproduct known as wine, which has been mixed with yeast spores and changed through aging and chemical action.

## YAHUSHA TURNING WATER INTO WINE

The wine **Yahusha** provided was pronounced "the good wine" (**John 2:10**) by the master of the banquet, because it was high in alcoholic content. Such an assumption is based on twentieth-century interpretations.

Albert Barnes, a well-known New Testament scholar and commentator, warns in his comment on **John 2:10** not to "be deceived by the phrase 'good wine.'" The reason, he explains, is that "We use the phrase to denote that it is good in proportion to its strength, and its power to intoxicate. But no such sense is to be attached to the word here.

In the Roman and Jewish world of New Testament times, the best wines were those whose alcoholic potency had been removed by boiling or filtration. Pliny, for example, says that "wines are most beneficial (**utilissimum**) when all their potency has been removed by the strainer. Similarly, Plutarch points out that wine is "much more pleasant to drink" when it "neither inflames the brain nor infests the mind or passions, because its strength has been removed through frequent filtering.

Referring to some of the same ancient authors, Barnes says: "Pliny, Plutarch and Horace describe wine as good, or mention that as the best wine which was harmless or innocent—*poculis vini innocentis*. The most useful wine—**utilissimum vinum**—was that which had little strength; and the most wholesome wine—**saluberrimum vinum**—was that which had not been adulterated by 'the addition of anything to the must or juice.' Pliny expressly says that a 'good wine' was one that was destitute of spirit. It should not be assumed, therefore, that the 'good wine' was stronger than the other. It is rather to be presumed that it was milder. That would be the best wine certainly. The wine referred to here was such as was commonly drunk in Biblical times which was the pure juice of the grape. It was not brandied wine; nor drugged wine; nor wine compounded of various substances such as we drink today.

The wine **Yahusha** made was of high quality, not because of its alcohol content, but because, it was "new wine, freshly created! It was not old fermented wine, as it would have to be if it were intoxicating. There was no time for the fermentation process to break down the sugars into alcohols. It was a fitting representation of His glory and was appropriate to serve as the first of His great miracles.

## RABBINICAL WITNESS

The rabbinical witness on the nature of wine is not unanimous. Rabbi Isidore Koplowitz points out in his introduction to his collection of rabbinical statements on wine and strong drink that "it is true that some Talmudic doctors have sanctioned, aye, even recommended the moderate use of wine. But it is equally true that many Talmudic Rabbi's have in vigorous words condemned the drinking of wine and strong drinks. Some Rabbi's have even ascribed the downfall of Israel to wine. An example of disapproval is the statement, often repeated with minor variations by different rabbis, which says: "When wine enters into the system of a person, out goes sense, wherever there is wine there is no understanding.

This awareness of the harmful effect of alcoholic wine explains why some rabbis recommended the use of boiled wine. Speaking of the latter, the Mishna says: "Rabbi Yehuda permits it [boiled wine as heave-offering], because it improves it [its quality]. Such a wine," notes Kitto's *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, "was esteemed [among the Jews] the richest and best wine. Elsewhere the Talmud indicates that drinking was forbidden to the accompaniment of musical instruments in festive occasions such as wedding.

In the light of these testimonies and considerations we would conclude that the wine provided by **Yahusha** was described as "the good wine" because it was not intoxicating.

## MORAL IMPLICATIONS

Another reason leading us to reject the assumption that "the good wine" produced by Yahusha was high in alcoholic content is the negative reflection such an assumption casts upon the wisdom of the Son of **Yahuah**. If, in addition to the considerable quantity of alleged alcoholic wine already consumed, Christ miraculously produced between 120 and 160 gallons of intoxicating wine for the use of men, women and children gathered together at the wedding feast, then He must be held morally responsible for prolonging and increasing their intoxication. His miracle would only serve to sanction the excessive drinking of alcoholic beverages. If this conclusion is true, it destroys the sinlessness of **Yahusha's** nature and teachings and would mean he disobeyed **Leviticus 10:9-10** by "creating" alcoholic wine to be consumed against His Father's will. He created unfermented "wine" or high quality grape juice.

The large amount of wine miraculously produced by **Yahusha** towards the end of a wedding feast proves either: "1. Excessive [alcoholic] drinking was allowable, or 2. The **oinos** in this case was grape juice. In the light of the whole Old Testament condemnation of wine, it certainly would appear that the beverage was grape juice."

It is against the principle of Scriptural and moral analogy to suppose that **Yahusha**, the Creator of good things (**Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25; Col 1:16**), would exert His supernatural energy to bring into existence an intoxicating wine which Scripture condemns as "a mocker" and "a brawler" (**Proverbs 20:1**) and which the Ruach ha Kodesh has chosen as the symbol of divine wrath.

The Bible is full of prohibitions about using alcoholic wine. It was forbidden for priests and for those who took the Nazarite vow. It was forbidden for kings and princes (**Proverbs 31:4-6**) and pronounced woe upon anyone who provided his neighbor alcoholic wine and made him drunk (**Habakkuk 2:15**). It would be inconsistent for the Bible to speak against alcoholic wine and then have Jesus ignore it.

The wine which **Yahusha** provided for the feast, and that which He gave to the disciples as a symbol of His own blood, was the pure juice of the grape. To this the prophet Isaiah refers when he speaks of the new wine 'in the cluster,' and says, 'Destroy it not: for a blessing is in it' . . .

To insist that the wine used at the feast was alcoholic and that **Yahusha** also provided alcoholic wine, though of a better quality, are driven to the conclusion that **Yahusha** provided a large additional quantity of intoxicating wine so that the wedding party could continue its reckless indulgence. Such a conclusion destroys the moral integrity of **Yahusha's** character.

There is clear evidence in the Scriptures that believers should not drink alcoholic beverages one example is, **Proverbs 23:31-32** Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly; 32 At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper.. In this Study, we will show good reasons why believers should not drink alcoholic beverages. However, before we do that, we are going to look at the words translated wine, drink or drinking.

There are 637 references to wine, drink and drinking in the King James Version of the Bible.



Most people think in today's terms, that when wine is mentioned it refers to alcoholic wine. Actually, that is not necessarily true. Thirteen different words are translated "wine" in the King James Version of the Bible. The word wine has a wide range of meaning in the Bible, covering everything from grape juice, to concentrated grape syrup to alcoholic wine. To understand what the Bible has to say about drinking, we need to look at several of these words.

## HEBREW AND GREEK WORDS TRANSLATED AS WINE

- Yayin** Strong's Number: 3196, Generic term for the "juice of the grape", either fermented or unfermented; meaning "what is pressed out".
- Tirosh** Strong's Number: 8492, "Freshly expressed grape-juice in its natural condition". Translated in the Authorized Version (A.V.) as "new wine" eleven times; "wine" twenty-six times; "sweet wine" once; and "vintage" three times. Always translated as "new wine" in the Revised Version (R.V.). Not used for fermented wine.
- Strong's Number: 08492, This word is translated "wine" in the KJV and "new wine" in some newer versions. It refers to the initial squeezing of juice from the grape, and is rarely used of fermented wine. Its newness is confirmed by its application as part of the first fruits dedicated to **Yahuah (Deuteronomy 14:23)** and by its grouping with agricultural products as a victim of drought (**Haggai 1:1**).
- Tiyrowsh** The term itself suggests something non-alcoholic. Only one verse suggests that it may have alcohol, and as we shall see below, this is a toss-up. (It is therefore cited improperly by some critics as "advocating indulgence" of alcohol) "**shekar**" -- It is the word for strong drink, unmixed wine. The 1901 edition of THE JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA says, "**Yakin and Tiyrowsh, wine, is to be distinguished from Shekar, or strong drink. The former is diluted with water; the later is undiluted.**" **Shekar was not diluted with water.**" (see **Numbers 28:7**)
- Shekar** Strong's Number: 7941, Hebrew: "What satiates, intoxicates". A saccharine drink rendered as "strong drink" (21x), and "strong wine" (1x). Described as a liquor made from dates, barley, etc. and always as a curse. In the Greek Old Testament (LXX) rendered as '**sikera**', or sometimes as '**methusma**' or '**methé**'; and once as '**oinos**'. Occurs only once in the New Testament (N.T.).
- Asis** Strong's Number: 6071, "Anything pressed on or trodden out". Rendered as "juice" (1x), "new wine" (2x), and "sweet wine" (2x). Not necessarily unfermented; not to be confused with "**tirosh**" (**ISAIAH 49:26; JOEL 1:5; JOEL 3:18; AMOS 9:13**).
- Ashishah** Denotes "a cake of raisins". Rendered wrongly in A.V. as "flagons", but corrected in the Revised Versions.
- Chemer** Strong's Number: 2561, "A thick, sticky syrup; foaming juice". Indicates all kinds of wine (**ISAIAH 27:2**).
- Chamar** Strong's Number: 2560, The Aramaic form, used in **EZRA 6:9** and **DANIEL**



**5:1-4**, literally means "foaming", to boil up and denotes fermented wine.

**Sobe** Strong's Number: 5435, "Anything sucked in or up". Probably indicated inspissated or boiled wines. lit. "soakers of wine", drink, drunken, wine. Non-intoxicating beverage. '**Sobe-yayin**'

**Shemer** Strong's Number: 8105, "What is preserved; the sediment". Rendered as "dregs", "lees", or "wine in the lees" (See **ISAIAH 25:6**).

**Nasek** "Drink offering". Lit. "that which is poured out; a libation".

**Mimsak** "Anything mixed". Rendered "drink-offering", or "mixed wine" (**ISAIAH 65:11**).

**Yegeb** Originally a vat or trough; then used as a wine-press or wine-vat. Occurs 16 times (e.g. **NUMBERS 18:27**).

**Enab** Ripe or round grape, or grape-cake (**HOSEA 3:1**).

**Chomets** Vinegar, sour or unripe grapes (Greek: '**oxos**')

**Misteh** General term for beverage, especially wine (**EZRA 3:7; DANIEL 1:10**).

### Greek words for drinking in the New Testament

**Oinos** Strong's Number: 3631, Generic term for all kinds of wine except '**shekar**'. Also occurs in N.T. (Greek) 32 times.

**Sikera** Strong's Number: 4608, It is the word for strong drink, an intoxicating beverage, different from wine; it was a artificial product, made of a mixture of sweet ingredients, whether derived from grain and vegetables, or from the juice of fruits (dates), or a decoction of honey. (**Luke 1:15**) Strong concordance: **4608 sikera** (a transliteration of the Hebrew 7941/**shēkhār**, "alcoholic drink") – any fermented, intoxicating drink (sometimes made from grapes); "strong drink, fermented from fruits, grain, dates or honey, i.e. not distilled alcoholic beverages "such as whiskey, gin, and vodka, which were not known in the ancient world"

**Gleukos** Strong's Number: 1098, Is the counterpart to the Old Testament word **tirosh**. Dr. Paul Dixon says "It refers to fresh wine, a new wine" or freshly squeezed grape juice. The unfermented juice of grapes; hence: sweet new wine. (**Acts 2:13**)

**Methuo** Strong's Number: 3184, To be "drunk", or "filled to the full" (Greek). Can refer to a drunkard who is full of alcohol (**Romans 13:13; I Corinthians 5:11; 6:9-10; Ephesians 5:18**) or to someone has had their fill of food or drink and no longer desires more. (**John 2:10; I Corinthians 11:20-22; Psalms 23:5**)

**Naphalios, nepho** Strong's Number: 3524, "not drink." Often translated sober or temperate (**I Thessalonians 5:4-8; Luke 12:45; I Peter 1:13, 4:7, 5:8**)

**Katapino** "drink down." Translated devour (**I Peter 5:8**)

**Sophron** “safe mind.” Someone who is rational, in the sense of being intellectually sound. (I Timothy 3:2,11; Titus 2:2, I Peter 4:7)

**Oinophlugia** “excess of wine.” A down-and-out drunk, an alcoholic. (I Peter 4:3)

**Komos** Letting loose in riotous processions and feasts. Partying with heavy drinking (Romans 13:11; Galatians 5:21; I Peter 4:3)

**Potos** A social gathering with light drinking. A cocktail party or social drinking. (I Peter 4:3)

## REFERENCES TO WINES AS USED IN SCRIPTURE

**Favourable to use:** **Yayin**:- GENESIS 49:11, GENESIS 49:12; PROVERBS 9:2, PROVERBS 9:5; SONG OF SOLOMON 7:9; ISAIAH 55:1; HOSEA 14:7; ZECHARIAH 10:7. **Chemer**:- ISAIAH 27:2 (some manuscripts (M.S.S.) use 'Chemed', meaning pleasant). **Tirosh**:- JOEL 2:19. **Oinos**:- REVELATION 6:6.

**Unfavourable to use or character:** **Yayin**:- DEUTERONOMY 32:33; PSALM 60:3; PSALM 75:3; PSALM 78:65; PROVERBS 4:17; ISAIAH 29:9; ISAIAH 51:21; ZECHARIAH 9:15. **Shekar**:- ISAIAH 29:9. **Asis**:- ISAIAH 49:26; JEREMIAH 48:11; ZEPHANIAH 1:12. **Shemer**:- JEREMIAH 48:12; ZEPHANIAH 1:12. **Oinos**:- REVELATION 14:8; REVELATION 14:10; REVELATION 16:19; REVELATION 17:2; REVELATION 18:3; REVELATION 19:15.

**Specifically as a blessing:** **Yayin**:- PSALM 104:15; AMOS 9:14. **Asis**:- JOEL 3:18; AMOS 9:13. **Chemer**:- DEUTERONOMY 32:14. **Shemer**:- ISAIAH 25:6. **Tirosh**:- GENESIS 27:28; NUMBERS 18:12; DEUTERONOMY 7:13; DEUTERONOMY 11:14; PROVERBS 3:10; ISAIAH 65:8; JEREMIAH 31:12; HOSEA 2:8-9; JOEL 2:19; ZECHARIAH 9:17.

**Definitely bad:** **Yayin**:- LEVITICUS 10:9; PROVERBS 20:1. **Shekar**:- PROVERBS 20:1.

**Associated with food:** **Yayin**:- GENESIS 14:18; GENESIS 27:25; JUDGES 19:19; 1 SAMUEL 10:3; 1 SAMUEL 16:20; 1 SAMUEL 25:18; 2 SAMUEL 16:1-2; 1 CHRONICLES 12:40; 2 CHRONICLES 2:10; 2 CHRONICLES 2:15; 2 CHRONICLES 11:11; NEHEMIAH 5:15; NEHEMIAH 13:15; JOB 1:13, JOB 1:18; ECCLESIASTES 9:7; ISAIAH 22:13; JEREMIAH 40:10, JEREMIAH 40:12; DANIEL 1:5, DANIEL 1:8, DANIEL 1:16; DANIEL 10:3. **Yegev**:- DEUTERONOMY 16:13; DEUTERONOMY 15:14; NUMBERS 18:27, NUMBERS 18:30. **Tirosh**:- GENESIS 27:28, GENESIS 27:37; NUMBERS 18:12; DEUTERONOMY 7:13; DEUTERONOMY 11:14; DEUTERONOMY 12:17; DEUTERONOMY 14:23; DEUTERONOMY 18:4; DEUTERONOMY 28:51; DEUTERONOMY 33:28; 2 KINGS 18:32; 2 CHRONICLES 31:5; 2 CHRONICLES 32:28; NEHEMIAH 5:11; NEHEMIAH 10:37, NEHEMIAH 10:39; NEHEMIAH 13:5, NEHEMIAH 13:12; PSALM 4:7; ISAIAH 36:17; ISAIAH 62:8; JEREMIAH 31:12; HOSEA 2:8-9; HOSEA 2:22; HOSEA 7:14; JOEL 2:19, JOEL 2:24; ZECHARIAH 9:17; MICAH 6:15; HAGGAI 1:11; JOEL 1:10.

**Consequences bad:** **Yayin**:- GENESIS 19:32-35; 1 SAMUEL 1:14-15; 1 SAMUEL 25:37; 2 SAMUEL 13:28; ESTHER 1:7, ESTHER 1:10; PROVERBS 23:30; PROVERBS 31:4, PROVERBS 31:6; ISAIAH 5:11-12; ISAIAH 5:22. **Oinos**:- 1 PETER 4:3.

**Exhortation to drink:** **Yayin**:- SONG OF SOLOMON 5:1. **Shekar**:- SONG OF SOLOMON 5:1 (translates as 'methuo'). **Oinos**:- 1 TIMOTHY 5:23.

**Wine forbidden:** **Yayin**:- PROVERBS 20:1; PROVERBS 23:31; NUMBERS 6:3-4; JUDGES 13:4, JUDGES 13:7, JUDGES 13:14. **Shekar**:- NUMBERS 6:3; JUDGES 13:4; JUDGES 13:7; LUKE 1:15 (**sikera**). **Oinos**:- 1 TIMOTHY 3:3; EPHESIANS 5:18.

**Forbidden to Priests:** **Yayin**:- LEVITICUS 10:9; JEREMIAH 35:6, JEREMIAH 35:8, JEREMIAH 35:14; PROVERBS 23:20; EZEKIEL 44:21. **Shekar**:- LEVITICUS 10:9. **Oinos**:- TITUS 1:7.

**Inferences of different kinds of wine:** Be-kahl yayin:- NEHEMIAH 5:18; SONG OF SOLOMON 8:2.

**Used for a drink-offering:** **Yayin**:- EXODUS 29:40; LEVITICUS 23:13; NUMBERS 15:5, NUMBERS 15:7, NUMBERS 15:10; NUMBERS 28:14; DEUTERONOMY 32:38; 1 SAMUEL 1:24; HOSEA 9:4. **Shekar**:- NUMBERS 28:7. **Chamar**:- EZRA 6:9; EZRA 7:22.

**Unspecified nature:** **Yayin**:- DEUTERONOMY 29:6; JOSHUA 9:4, JOSHUA 9:13; 1 CHRONICLES 27:27; NEHEMIAH 2:1; ESTHER 5:6; ESTHER 7:2, ESTHER 7:7-8; JOB 32:19; PROVERBS 21:17; ECCLESIASTES 2:3; ECCLESIASTES 10:19; SONG OF SOLOMON 1:2, SONG OF SOLOMON 1:4; SONG OF SOLOMON 4:10; ISAIAH 56:12; JEREMIAH 35:2, JEREMIAH 35:5; EZEKIEL 27:18; AMOS 2:8, AMOS 2:12; AMOS 6:6; HOSEA 4:11; MICAH 2:11; HAGGAI 2:12. **Shekar**:- DEUTERONOMY 29:6; ISAIAH 56:12; MICAH 2:11. **Yegeb** - NUMBERS 18:27; NUMBERS 18:30; DEUTERONOMY 15:14; JUDGES 7:25; 2 KINGS 6:27; JOB 24:11; ISAIAH 5:2; JEREMIAH 48:33; HOSEA 9:2; ZECHARIAH 14:10. **Ashishah**:- HOSEA 3:1. **Asis**:- ISAIAH 49:26. **Sobe**:- HOSEA 4:18; ISAIAH 1:22. **Tirosh**:- HOSEA 4:11. **Oinos**:- MATTHEW 9:17; MARK 2:22; LUKE 5:37-38; LUKE 7:33; LUKE 10:34; JOHN 2:3, JOHN 2:9-10; JOHN 4:46; ROMANS 14:21; 1 TIMOTHY 5:23.

## NEW WINE IN FRESH WINE SKINS

A possible use of **oinos** in the New Testament as a reference to unfermented wine, is found in **Matthew 9:17** where **Yahusha** says: "Neither is new wine put into old wine skins; if it is, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wine skins, and so both are preserved." From this verse we learn that it was customary in **Yahusha's** time to put new wine into new wine skins in order to preserve both the wine and its wine skins.

The Encyclopedia Biblica states that "it is impossible that the "must" ("Wine or juice pressed from the grapes but not fermented.") could ever have been put into skins to undergo the whole process of fermentation, as is usually stated, the action of the gas given off in the earlier stages of the process being much too violent for any skins to withstand."

## UNFERMENTED GRAPE JUICE

In the light of this information, **Yahusha's** saying about "new wine" being placed in "fresh wine skins" can best be understood as referring to wine fresh from the press which was strained and possibly boiled, and then placed immediately into new wine skins made air-tight, possibly by a film of oil on the opening of the wineskin. **Yahusha's** words suggest that "new wine" was placed into fresh wine skins to insure the absence of any fermentation-causing substance.

if unfermented new wine was poured into new wine skins, no cause of fermentation would be

present. Thus, the wine would be preserved from fermentation and the wine skins from rupture. If this interpretation is correct, then **Yahusha's** reference to "new wine" (**oinos neos**) would constitute another example of the use of **oinos** in the New Testament to describe unfermented grape juice.

## **WHY BELIEVERS SHOULD ABSTAIN FROM DRINKING...**

1. DRINKING LEADS TO DRUNKENNESS
2. DRUNKENNESS IS CONDEMNED IN THE BIBLE

**Isaiah 5:11**-- "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!"

**Proverbs 23:20**-- "Be not among wine bibbers;" The word means to drink so much that you become tipsy or drunk.

**Romans 13:13** -- "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting (drunken partying) and drunkenness (general drunken-ness)..."

**Galatians 5:19a & 21** -- "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these...drunkenness..."

**Ephesians 5:18** -- "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;" 1.The argument is that Paul condemns the misuse of wine, but not the moderate use of alcohol.

Two states are being contrasted, being filled with wine and being filled with the Spirit. The point of the contrast is that you cannot have both at once, they are mutually exclusive. You cannot be partially filled with spirits and partially filled with the Spirit.

For he will be great in the sight of **Yahuah** , and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Ruach ha Kodesh even from his mother's womb. **Luke 1:15**

These men were filled with the Ruach (Spirit), so they could not be drunk. **Acts 2:4, 15**

## **The indwelling of the Spirit is connected with the abstinence of liquor.**

"Let Believers when about to indulge in a glass of wine, think of this admonition And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

**Ephesians 5:18**. Let them remember that their bodies should be the temple of the Holy Ghost rather than a receptacle for intoxicating drinks.

## **DRUNKARDS ARE AMONG THE LIST OF THOSE WHO WILL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF YAHUAH.**

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of **Yahuah**? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of **Yahuah**." **1 Corinthians 6:9-10**

You cant get around it, and in fact, the Bible condemns drunkenness. Drunkenness is a

serious matter.

## **THE BIBLE CONDEMNS STRONG DRINK**

**Proverbs 20:1** "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

**NOTE:** "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow **strong drink**; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!" **Isaiah 5:11**

"Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? (30) They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.(a mixture of wine and spices) (31) Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright." **Proverbs 23:29-31**

## **WHAT WAS "STRONG DRINK" IN BIBLE TIMES?**

Distillation was not discovered until about 1500 A.D. Strong drink and unmixed wine in Bible times was from 3% to 11% alcohol. Anybody in biblical times who drank unmixed wine (9-11% alcohol) was definitely considered a barbarian, then we don't even need to discuss whether a Believers should drink hard liquor--that is apparent!

## **BELIEVERS SHOULD NOT DRINK STRONG DRINK!**

Today's wine is by Biblical definition strong drink, and hence forbidden by the Bible, Therefore, believers ought not to drink wine, beer, or other alcoholic beverages because they are actually strong drink forbidden in Scripture. What the Bible frequently meant by wine was basically purified water," sanitized by adding some alcoholic wine.

The least ratio of water to wine mixture used in Bible times was 3 parts water to 1 wine. That produced a sub-alcoholic drink that was 2.5% to 2.75% alcohol. Normally, the ratio was even higher, up to 20 to 1. Priests and church Leaders of that day were cautioned to steer around even the sub-alcoholic stuff (**I Timothy 3:3 & 8**).

Since wine has 9 to 11% alcohol and even up to 20% alcohol content you should not drink it. Brandy contains 15 to 20% alcohol, so that's out! Hard liquor has 40 to 50% alcohol (80 to 100 proof), and that is obviously excluded!

Someone will say, "since beer is only 4% alcohol, it's OK for a believer to drink beer? The answer is NO! Here is why...In Bible times what believers drank was sub-alcohol, basically purified water.

Remember the Hebrew word "**yayin**" and the Greek word "**oinos**" that we looked at earlier? These were the companion words for wine whether fermented or unfermented. In fact, whether fermented or not, it was mixed with water.

It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.." **Romans 14:21**

The Bible clearly defines drinking as an activity that is to be foregone because it causes others to stumble and makes them weak (fall into sin).

## THE GREEK ADJECTIVE NEPHALIOS AND THE VERB NEPHO

1. It is the joining of two words ne “not” and piein “drink”

2. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, “The concept which underlies the verb **nepho** ‘to be sober’ and the whole word group is formally negative. It is the opposite of intoxication both in the literal sense of intoxication with wine and in the figurative sense of states of intoxication attributable to other causes.”

3. The Jewish philosopher Philo illustrates this definition: “So too soberness [**nephein**] and drunkenness are opposites.”

4. Liddel and Scott defines it as “to be sober, to drink no wine.”

5. Clement of Alexandria once said, “I therefore admire those who have adopted an austere [**nephalion**] life, and who are fond of water, the medicine of temperance, and flee as far as possible from wine, shunning it as they would the danger of fire.”

B. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. **I Thessalonians 5:4-8**

**Nephomen** is translated as sober in both verse 6 and 8.

Notice the contrasts: Light-Darkness, Awake-Sleeping, Sober-Drunk

It is apparent that Paul desires the Thessalonians to be “alert,” mentally watchful, and “sober,” physically abstinence.

Alertness is often connected with abstinence of intoxicating beverages - But if that servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk **Luke 12:45**

It is physical abstinence because it is contrasted with being drunk

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of **Yahusha** the Messiah **I Peter 1:13**

Here again mental vigilance is correlated to physical abstinence.

You can see the translators’ bias in the NASB when they added “in spirit” even though the word is the opposite of drunkenness.

What is interesting is just after **nepho** is the word **teleios** which is an adverb meaning fully. Grammatically it can modify the “sober” before it or the “fix your hope” that comes after it.

Most translators attach it to the “fix your hope” because they believe the Bible teaches moderation instead of total abstinence.

Interestingly, older translations, such as the Latin Vulgate, attach the word “completely” to the word “sober,” causing it to read “perfectly sober” or “being wholly abstinent.”

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. **I Peter 5:8**



Again physical abstinence is joined with mental vigilance. Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. **I Thessalonians 5:6**

“The Greek word (**paroinos**) occurs in the New Testament only here [not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; **I Timothy 3:3**] and in **Titus 1:7** For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of **Yahuah**, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money.

The way in which the apostle mentions the subject here would lead us fairly to suppose that he did not mean to commend its use in any sense; that he regarded it as dangerous and that he would wish the ministers of religion to avoid it altogether.”

Obviously, the case for drinking cannot be made from the New Testament. Instead of supporting light drinking, the passages give clear warning against all drinking of intoxicants.