

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

- Week of January 1, 2023 -

Sunday Morning Service	-----	21
Sunday Evening Service	-----	16
Wednesday Eve., 01/04/23 Service	-----	13

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

- Week of January 1, 2023 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	-----	\$ 2,122.48
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 01/01/23:	\$	2,122.48

- Week of December 25, 2022 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	-----	\$ 2,685.00
Love Offering, Pastor & Family	-----	\$ 350.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 12/25/22:	\$	3,035.00

- Week of December 18, 2022 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	-----	\$ 1,037.22
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 12/18/22:	\$	1,037.22

- Week of December 11, 2022 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	-----	\$ 4,742.90
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 12/11/22:	\$	4,742.90

- Week of December 4, 2022 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	-----	\$ 1,849.22
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 12/04/22:	\$	1,849.22

Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed for church operating expenses EACH WEEK, as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00



LISTEN TO -



ABIDINGRADIO.COM

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. Admit that you are a sinner.
2. Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.
3. Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.
4. You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).
5. By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, Who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.



THANK YOU For Your Continued Faithfulness In Giving!

During the early part this pandemic, we were unable to meet in the church-house. But - that did not mean that the expenses of having a church-house were suspended. We still had bills to pay - electricity, gas, water, trash pickup, phone, internet, facility insurance, copier lease, office supplies, etc., and, praise the Lord, His people kept praying, watching online, & supporting their church with their giving.

Sadly, some people only give when they are in attendance at church - sort of like paying for "services rendered" - but the truth is that they are robbing **THEMSELVES** of God's blessings when they withhold their tithes and offerings and only give when they are here (see Malachi 3:10). Thankfully, most of our people have remained faithful, in so many ways, during this crisis, including financially.

WE HAVE 3 WAYS YOU CAN GIVE:

1. **By mail** - 23 East Wells Blvd., Sapulpa, OK 74066
2. **Drop it off** - call the Church Office to arrange it. 224-1924
3. **Online** - Go to the link below and give electronically:

<https://tithe.ly/give?c=433047>

**WE ARE GLAD WE CAN NOW GATHER TOGETHER TO PRAISE GOD & STUDY HIS WORD TOGETHER IN THE CHURCH-HOUSE!
YOUR FAITHFUL AND GENEROUS GIFTS WILL HELP US KEEP UP WITH THE BILLS AND CONTINUE OUR RENEWED OUTREACH EFFORTS!**

Church Directory

Todd W. White	-----	Pastor
Debra Carlton	-----	Pianist
Mickie Shatwell	-----	Evening Pianist
Derek Quinnelly	-----	Greeter
Larry & Mary Byars	-----	Outreach
Bertha Segebart	-----	Custodian
GinaMarie Shufelt	-----	Flowers
Seth White	-----	Sound/Video
Larry Byars, David Smith, Derek Quinnelly	-----	Trustees

SOUTH HEIGHTS BAPTIST'S WEEKLY REMINDER

Volume XXIX

January 8, 2023

Number 2



Christian Drinking Is a Bellwether Issue

by Evangelist David Cloud

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

The rapid change in attitude toward drinking among "Bible believing" Christians is a major sign of the times.

Baptist pastor Charles Spurgeon said, "Next to the preaching of the Gospel, the most necessary thing to be done in England is to induce our people to become abstainers" (1882), and, "Those beer shops are the curse of this country - no good ever can come of them, and the evil they do no tongue can tell ... the beer shops are a pest ... the sooner their licenses are taken away, the better" (1884).

When the 18th Amendment, which "prohibited the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors," was ratified in America in January 1919, the Southern Baptist Convention called it "**the greatest victory for moral reform in America since the Declaration of Independence**" ("**Prohibition and Baptists 100 Years Later**", Baptist Press, Jan. 17, 2019). Beginning in the 1880s, Southern Baptists led state and national campaigns for prohibition. In 1896, the SBC said that "**no person should be retained in the fellowship of a Baptist church who engages in the manufacture or sale of alcoholic liquors.**" Southern Baptists "**believed you would be hard pressed to identify any other single factor that caused so much widespread suffering, injury and damage as the widespread abuse of alcohol.**" After the 18th Amendment was repealed in 1933, the SBC reaffirmed "**its unchanging devotion to the principle of total abstinence from all alcoholic beverages as the only safe and sane course of conduct for the individual.**"

Baptist historian Gregory Wills says that since at least the mid-1800s Baptists have held "**that a minister who drank alcoholic beverages was disqualified to preach**" (*The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 1859-2009*).

Historian Leroy Fitts says, "**The use of alcohol as a beverage was deemed a moral wrong, and total abstinence was a moral position of the Baptist church**" (*A History of Black Churches*, p. 244).

In 1869, the Consolidated American Baptist Convention, a convention of black churches, adopted this resolution: "**That the use of intoxicating drinks is injurious and most destructive to morals, and we recommend all, over whom we have influence, to immediately abandon their use**" (Leroy Fitts, *A History of Black Baptists*, p. 243).

In 1870, the Religious Herald, the official paper of Virginia Baptists, said that "**total abstinence from intoxicating liquors, with certain limitations, is commended by expediency, the experience of multitudes, the opinion of many wise and good men, and by a fair application of certain scriptural principles**" (Aug. 18, 1870).

In 1872, the Consolidated American Baptist Convention made an even stronger statement: "**Whereas the sale and use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, including wine, beer, and everything that produces intoxication, is of itself a gross immorality and sin against God and humanity ... Resolved, That the members of this Convention, the pastors and deacons of our Churches, the superintendents of Sabbath Schools, teachers, and parents, are requested to totally abstain from the use of those articles, and use their influence against this great curse among our people**" (Fitts, p. 243).

When I was a kid growing up in a Southern Baptist church, evangelicals and Baptists in America did not drink and did not go to bars. Exceptions were rare. Schools such as Wheaton and Baylor had rules against drinking.

By the 1960s, due to the influence of the loose, anti-separatist New Evangelical philosophy, evangelicals were beginning to accept "social drinking."

In 1978, Richard Quebedeux documented the dramatic changes that were occurring within evangelicalism a mere thirty years after
(continued inside)

the onslaught of the spirit of “Newism.” He observed that *“the wider culture has had a profound impact on the evangelical movement as a whole”* (*The Worldly Evangelicals*, 1978, p. 115). Though Quebedeaux didn’t make the connection, this is a direct result of the repudiation of separation. He said:

“In the course of establishing their respectability in the eyes of the wider society, the evangelicals have become harder and harder to distinguish from other people. Upward social mobility has made the old revivalistic taboos dysfunctional. ...the COCKTAILS became increasingly difficult to refuse. Evangelical young people LEARNED HOW TO DANCE AND OPENLY ‘GROOVED’ ON ROCK MUSIC. ... And evangelical magazines and newspapers began REVIEWING PLAYS AND MOVIES.

...The Gallup Poll is correct in asserting that born-again Christians ‘believe in a strict moral code.’ BUT THAT STRICTNESS HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLY MODIFIED DURING THE LAST FEW YEARS ...Many younger evangelicals occasionally use PROFANITY in their speech and writing . . . Some of the recent evangelical sex-technique books assume that their readers peruse and view PORNOGRAPHY on occasion, and they do.

...It is profoundly significant that evangelicals, even the more conservative among them, have ACCEPTED THE ROCK MODE. This acceptance, obviously, indicates a further chapter in the death of self-denial and world rejection among them. ... When young people were converted in the Jesus movement, many of them simply did not give up their former habits, practices, and cultural attitudes - DRINKING, SMOKING, AND CHARACTERISTIC DRESS AND LANGUAGE. ...Young evangelicals DRINK, but so do conservative evangelicals like Hal Lindsey and John Warwick Montgomery (who is a member of the International Wine and Food Society). ...But EVEN MARIJUANA, now virtually legal in some areas of the United States, is not as forbidden among young evangelicals as it once was. A few of them, particularly the intellectuals, do smoke it on occasion...” (*The Worldly Evangelicals*, pp. 14, 16, 17, 118, 119).

In the 1980s and 1990s Contemporary Christian Music continued to push the boundaries of moral corruption and worldliness. In 1993, Michael W. Smith, one of the most prominent voices in CCM, complained in an interview, “... *you’re always going to have those very, very conservative people. They say you can’t do this; you can’t do that ... you can’t DRINK, you can’t smoke. ... It’s a pretty bizarre way of thinking*” (*The Birmingham News*, Feb. 1993, p. 1B).

By the turn of the 21st century, many evangelicals were embracing drinking with enthusiasm.

The book *Listening to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches: Five Perspectives* contains probably a dozen references to the joys of drinking. The contributors are Karen Ward, Mark Driscoll, John Burke, Dan Kimball, and Doug Pagitt. They meet in bars and taverns for theological discussions. They exchange beer-making techniques. Driscoll’s **Mars Hill Church** in Seattle, in its megachurch days, set up a “champagne bar” at their New Year’s Eve parties and attendees were reminded to bring their IDs so

they could enjoy the bubbly.

Riverview Community Church in Holt, Michigan, has a RiverBrew night featuring home brewed beer and religious discussion (“*Holt Ministry Celebrates Its Love of God and Beer*”, Lansing State Journal, Feb. 29, 2008).

The Journey in St. Louis, Missouri, hosts a “Theology at the Bottleworks” where participants *“grab a beer and discuss political or spiritual topics”* (“*Brewing Battle Missouri Baptists frown on beer as evangelistic hook*”, Christianity Today, June 29, 2007).

Worship at the Water meets on Sundays at the Flora-Bama Lounge, Package and Oyster Bar in Perdido Key, Florida, a bar infamous for its bikini contests and bar brawls. The people come in their swimsuits and enjoy the Bible study with a Bloody Mary or whiskey. Jack de Jarnette, a pastor of **Perdido Bay United Methodist Church**, says that if Jesus returned to earth, he’d probably kick back at the Flora-Bama (“*Florida Church Mixes Bibles and Booze*”, The Blaze, Aug. 15, 2012).

Christ Church in Oxford, Connecticut hosts a weekly “*Beer, Bible and Brotherhood*” gathering in a local bar. The pastor, John Donnelly, drinks a Samuel Adams Boston Lager while leading the study (“*Pastor Drinks Beer in the Name of Jesus*”, Charisma News, Oct. 11, 2013).

In 2016, **Apologia Church in Phoenix, Arizona** held a “Booze and Tattoo” event.

In 2020, a “*Beer and Hymns*” event was announced for Cookeville, Tennessee, co-sponsored by Jig Head Brewing Company.

In 2003, **Wheaton College** announced that it had changed its rules to **ALLOW** drinking, smoking, and dancing for graduate students and faculty members (*Chicago Sun-Times*, Feb. 20, 2003). School spokeswoman Pat Swindle said that “*drinking and tobacco use are none of the college’s business.*” Lisa Nudd, editor-in-chief of the college newspaper, said, “*We pretty much think it’s a good change, something that was long overdue.*”

In 2007, a Lifeway Research survey found that 29% of Southern Baptist “laity” drank alcohol (“*Baptists & Alcohol*”, Baptist Press, Nov. 2, 2018).

In 2013, **Moody Bible Institute** dropped its 127-year ban against alcohol and tobacco use by faculty and staff. The new emphasis is toward the creation of a “*high trust environment that emphasizes values, not rules*” (“*Moody Bible Institute Drops*”, Christianity Today, Sept. 20, 2013).

In 2014, **Dallas Theological Seminary** dropped its ban against alcohol.

In 2016, *Hymns & Hops* was founded in Greenville, South Carolina, once a bastion of fundamentalism because of the presence of Bob Jones University. Hymns & Hops first gathering drew 80 drinkers, but by 2020, the crowds increased to over **1,000**. Hymns & Hops “*creates the space for families and people to celebrate the Gospel through community, song, and drink.*” The motto that is featured prominently on its web site is “*Sing loud, die happy.*” One of the testimonials says, “*There is nothing*

like worship at a brewery.”

Evan Lenow, an ethics professor at **Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary** says, “*I believe we are seeing a change from total abstinence to a trend of acceptance of alcohol among Southern Baptists. The emphasis has moved from warnings about alcohol to highlighting Christian freedom*” (“*Baptists & Alcohol*”, Baptist Press, Nov. 2, 2018).

For the Following Reasons We Believe That the Bible Teaches That the New Testament Christian Should Abstain from Alcoholic Drinks, and Even More Especially in this Present Time:

It is fundamental to understand that the word **wine** in the Bible is a generic term like cider. Sometimes it means grape juice; sometimes it means alcoholic wine. The word wine often refers to alcoholic wine, but not always.

The Hebrew *yayin*, the main word for “wine,” is a generic word. It is used for *alcoholic wine* (Noah - Ge. 9:21; Lot - 19:32; Lev. 10:9; I Sam. 1:14; Prov. 20:1; 23:20; 31:6; Isa. 5:11; Hosea 4:11; Hab. 2:5). ***Yayin is also used for grape juice.*** In Isa. 16:10 and Jer. 48:33, *yayin* refers to the fresh juice that comes from the grape during the pressing process. **The context determines the meaning.** In the New Testament, non-alcoholic wine is called “the fruit of the vine” (Matt. 26:29).

Dr. Bruce Lackey said, “The context will always show when ‘wine’ refers to alcoholic beverages. In such cases, God discusses the bad effects of it and warns against it. An example would be Genesis 9, which describes Noah’s experience after the Flood. Verse 21, ‘and he drank of the wine, and was drunken,’ clearly refers to alcoholic beverage.”

1. The Bible Warns That Wine Is a Mocker and Deceives Men (Proverbs 20:1).

To say that alcoholic beverages can be consumed in moderation **sounds** reasonable, but very few drunks have ever set out to become drunks. It is an irrefutable fact that a man that does not drink **at all** will never get drunk and will never become a drunk.

As Bruce Lackey said, “How is alcoholic wine deceptive? In the very way that people are advocating today, by saying that drinking a little bit will not hurt. Everyone admits that drinking too much is bad. Even the liquor companies tell us not to drink and drive, but they insist that a small amount is all right. However, that is the very thing that is deceptive. Who knows how little to drink? Experts tell us that each person is different. It takes an ounce to affect one, while more is necessary for another. The same person will react to alcohol differently in different situations, depending on the amount of food he has had, among other things. So the idea that ‘a little bit won’t hurt’ is deceptive, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise!”

I doubt Noah planned to get drunk and to cause so much trouble for his grandson, trouble that has abiding consequences to this day - but wine is a mocker.

My maternal grandfather came from a long line of drunks, and before my grandmother married him she made him promise

that he would never touch a drop of liquor, and that is a promise that he made. But one day he and another carpenter were working on a house and the other fellow talked my grandfather into having just a sip “to cool the tongue.” They both got rip roaring drunk and ended up in jail, and my granddad was a deacon in a Baptist church! He was deeply repentant and was restored and never drank another drop as far as anyone knows, but it was a powerful reminder that wine is a mocker.

The Roman Catholic Church uses alcoholic wine in the mass, but only the priests drink it. I have seen priests drinking large quantities from large cups. It is no wonder that the Roman Catholic Church has to operate alcoholic rehab centers for “alcoholic” priests!

Alcohol has the ability to deceive and corrupt. One can never know if he will control it or it will control him. The instruction in Proverbs 20:1 tells me that the wise man leaves it entirely alone.

The following is a wise statement from John G. Paton: Missionary to the New Hebrides, 1891:

“From observation, at an early age I became convinced that mere Temperance Societies were a failure, and that Total Abstinence, by the grace of God, was the only sure preventive as well as remedy. What was temperance in one man was drunkenness in another; and all the drunkards came, not from those who practised total abstinence, but from those who practised or tried to practise temperance. I had seen temperance men drinking wine in the presence of others who drank to excess, and never could see how they felt themselves clear of blame; and I had known Ministers and others, once strong temperance advocates, fall through this so-called moderation, and become drunkards. Therefore it has all my life appeared to me beyond dispute, in reference to intoxicants of every kind, that the only rational temperance is Total Abstinence from them as beverages, and the use of them exclusively as drugs, and then only with extreme caution, as they are deceptive and deleterious poisons of the most debasing and demoralizing kind.”

Consider the testimony of Pastor Robby Gallaty, Long Hollow Baptist Church, Hendersonville, Tennessee.

“Tennessee Pastor Robby Gallaty urges believers to hold the traditional Baptist line. He wishes he had earlier in life. Gallaty was raised in New Orleans in a culture where drinking was part of life. He started drinking alcohol at 15, became an alcoholic and was in his second attempt at treatment before he found sobriety - and Jesus. Now sober for 16 years, Gallaty said he discusses alcohol in his preaching ‘all the time.’ He said, ‘I used to think I could drink in moderation ... The problem is the line between buzzed drinking and drunkenness is a blurry line, and so I abstain completely from alcohol.’ He added, ‘I’ve never met a person drinking who becomes more holy as a result of it. I have seen people destroy their lives because of it though’” (“*Baptists & Alcohol*” Baptist Press, Nov. 2, 2018).

Even emerging church people admit that the Bible forbids

drunkenness, but can they *guarantee* that they and their drinking buddies will never get drunk? Can they *guarantee* that they will not become addicted to drink? Can they *guarantee* that they will not tempt someone to become an “alcoholic,” or tempt a former “alcoholic” to get “off the wagon” and destroy himself? No, they cannot, because “wine is a mocker.”

Some prominent emerging church leaders have fallen into drunkenness and disgrace, which would never have happened had they not supported drinking in “moderation.”

An example is Perry Noble, who in 2016 was fired after 16 years at New Spring Church in Anderson, South Carolina, because of “alcohol abuse.”

Another example is Jesse Campbell, pastor of Highlands Community Church in Renton, Washington, who had to resign in December 2020 after he was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Another example is Brian Houston, formerly senior pastor of Hills Christian Life Centre in Sydney, Australia, and head of the international *Hillsong* association of churches. In March 2022, he was exposed by his own church for “inappropriate behavior” with women. The letter cited a case in 2013 and another one in 2019. In the latter case, Houston spent time privately in the hotel room of a woman he had met at a church conference after he had been drinking that night (“*Hillsong Founder Breached Code of Conduct*”, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Mar. 18, 2022). When caught, he had taken three months off and promised to abstain from alcohol, but “he didn’t abide by that,” according to the church’s letter.

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Prov. 20:1).

“Who hath woe? 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. ... Thine eyes shall behold strange women...” (Prov. 23:29, 33).

In 2016, **Apologia Church** in Phoenix, Arizona, held a ReformCon conference that included a time of “talking theology over beer” at a local pub. “Attendees could participate in a beer flight, which is a sampling of various beers.” Speakers included Reformed apologist **James White**. The same year, Apologia Church sponsored a *Booze and Tattoos* event and published a promotional video online. One of the men featured in the video is the son-in-law of James White. He subsequently “fell off the wagon, committed adultery, and ended up in rehab and divorced” (*Pulpit and Pen*, Feb. 17, 2020).

Alcohol has the ability to deceive and corrupt. One can never know if he will control it or it will control him. The instruction in Proverbs 20:1 tells me that the wise man leaves it entirely alone.

2. Alcoholic Drink Should Be Avoided Because it Is Associated With Many Evils and Dangers (Proverbs 23:19-23, 29-35).

This passage begins with the father urging his son to

hearken to his parents and to buy the truth and sell it not (Prov. 23:22-23). The father exhorts his son to “buy the truth” by bending his whole heart and strength and life to it and to “sell it not” for any of the devil’s shallow, deceptive enticements. This is what will protect the person from the enticement of worldly activities and places that promote “social drinking,” such as dance parties, bars, nightclubs, and taverns.

Evangelist John R. Rice warned, *“A trail of poverty, broken homes, fornication, accidents, and crime follow drinking. So the Christian sins who, claiming liberty, sets a bad example and leads others to ruin.”*

The winebibber has **POVERTY** (Prov. 23:19-21). Proverbs counsels the young man to avoid the company of winebibbers and gluttons, because they are associated with poverty. It is certain that they produce spiritual poverty, and they often produce financial poverty as well.

The winebibber has **WOE, SORROW, CONTENTIONS** (Prov. 23:29). Many of the woes in society are caused by drinking. Examples are broken marriages, lost friendships, fall from social standing, loss of finances, car and air crashes, disease, crime, stabbings, shootings, child delinquency, teenage pregnancy, bankruptcy, and suicide. One of my great uncles was a wealthy man who owned two bars and was a heavy drinker, and one day he drove up to a funeral home in his Cadillac, put a gun to his head, and killed himself.

The winebibber has **BABBLING** (Prov. 23:29). The drunk speaks nonsense and foolishness.

The winebibber has **WOUNDS WITHOUT CAUSE** (Prov. 23:29). The drunkard can’t remember where he was or what he did and he doesn’t know how he got his wounds. He doesn’t remember the fight or the crash or the fall. My wife’s father crashed his car one night in Alaska when he missed a sharp turn after he had gone over a bridge. He was found staggering along the road and didn’t even know what had happened.

The winebibber has **REDNESS OF EYES** (Prov. 23:29). He is affected in his body. His eyes are affected; his kidneys are affected; his liver is affected; his heart is affected; his brain is affected. There are great health risks. A new study by the Institute for Health Metrics at the University of Washington found that any benefits from drinking are outweighed by the harm. Dr. Max Griswold, lead researcher, says, *“We have found that the combined health risks associated with alcohol increase with any amount of alcohol”* (“*Study shows women in Ireland have three alcoholic drinks a day*”, RTE, Ireland’s national public service broadcaster, Aug. 24, 2018). “The scientists pooled together data from 592 studies with a total of 28 million participants to assess the global health risks associated with alcohol.” “Each year, 2.2% of women and 6.8% of men die from alcohol-related health problems including cancer, tuberculosis and liver disease. Other harmful consequences from drinking alcohol included accidents and violence. Worldwide, drinking alcohol was the seventh leading risk factor for overall premature death and disease in 2016, the study found.”

The winebibber’s **EYES BEHOLD STRANGE WOMEN** (Prov. 23:33). This is a description of the immorality that is intimately associated with drinking. The winebibber’s moral inhibitions are weakened and he is attracted to loose women. It has been said that “wine is the oil of the fire of lust.”

The winebibber’s **HEART UTTERS PERVERSE THINGS** (Prov. 23:33), such as cursing and bitterness and blasphemy and filthy jokes.

The winebibber is **CARELESS AND FOOLISHLY FEARLESS** (Prov. 23:34). He would lie down and sleep while floating in the midst of the sea or while lying on the top of the mast of a sailing ship far above the deck. The main mast of a large ship could be 200 feet high. The drunkard drives cars and flies airplanes when he is intoxicated; he staggers along on a busy highway; he enters rowdy bars he would otherwise avoid; he challenges fierce men to a fight. In July 2010 a drunk Australian broke into a wildlife park and tried to ride a 15-foot saltwater crocodile, miraculously surviving with only a leg bite. The winebibber is careless in spending money. He is careless in morals. He is careless in running with the wrong crowd. He is careless in throwing away priceless relationships and precious friendships.

The winebibber **DOESN’T FEEL PAIN** (“*They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not,*” **Prov. 23:35**). The drunkard is oblivious to the pain caused by his drunken folly until he wakes up from his stupor.

The winebibber **IS STRANGELY ENSLAVED** (“*...when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again,*” **Prov. 23:35**). Before one drunken episode is barely finished he wants to seek it yet again. Even when drink has ruined his health and destroyed his marriage and thrown away his career, he usually does not quit. *“It is like a deep ditch and a narrow pit, which it is almost impossible to get out of; and therefore it is wisdom to keep far from the brink of it. Take heed of making any approaches towards this sin, because it is so hard to make a retreat from it, conscience, which should head the retreat, being debauched by it, and divine grace forfeited”* - *Matthew Henry*.

3. The Bible Commands the Believer Not to Give Offense in Anything (I Corinthians 10:32-33).

I quit smoking a few months after I was saved and it was not because I thought it was inherently wrong or because I was concerned about my health. A 23-year-old young man is not overly concerned about health. I quit because I knew that it could offend others. I wanted my testimony to be pure of offence so that God would use me. I didn’t want to be witnessing to someone and have them possibly ignore me or be distracted because they saw a pack of cigarettes in my pocket.

If that is true for smoking, and it is, then it is even truer for drinking alcoholic beverages. It is a fact that many unbelievers think that a believer should not drink. They have higher standards for Christians than some Christians have for themselves. Consider Utah, where even Mormons believe it is wrong to drink alcoholic

beverages! How would Mormons look upon non-Mormon Christians who drink?

Even the possibility that someone would be offended because of his drinking should be sufficient for the believer to put it out of his life, and that possibility is very great in modern society. Paul was willing to stop eating meat entirely in this present world if he thought someone would be offended and his testimony hurt (I Cor. 8:13), and eating meat is a perfectly legitimate activity. How much more should a believer be willing to give up alcoholic beverages, which are highly questionable at best and have the potential in themselves to cause harm (which meat does not)!

David Pratte issues the following important challenge in his report “The Bible and Use of Alcoholic Beverages” -

If you drink, consider your influence on the following kinds of people:

- * Influence on young people; most start drinking because of peers and parents.
- * Influence on former addicts; if they drink at all, they will be ‘addicted’ again.
- * Influence on people to whom we seek to teach the gospel; how can we convert drunkards or people who know Christians should not drink?
- * Influence on all people; 1 out of 10 of people who drink will become alcoholics and far more will get drunk.

4. The Bible Commands the Believer to Abstain from All Appearance of Evil (I Thessalonians 5:22).

That is a far-reaching exhortation. Alcoholic beverages are a great evil and curse in modern society. Consider the automobile wrecks, the ruined health and early graves, the adulteries, the lewdness, the divorces, the neglected children, the abused wives, the sexual abuse, the waste of money, the gambling, the blasphemy, the pure foolishness. Look at the beer and liquor ads, how they invariably flaunt sensuality and irresponsibility.

In January 2005, the Royal College of Physicians in England warned that Britain is suffering from an epidemic of alcohol-related problems that is fueling violence and illness throughout the country (*The Telegraph*, Jan. 3, 2005). The same epidemic is raging throughout the world. According to an April 2010 report, vodka consumption in Russia is an epidemic. The average Russian drinks from 15 to 18 liters of hard liquor annually, which reduces the average life expectancy by a decade. For Russian men, the life expectancy is just 61.8 years. In 2014, the World Health Organization reported that 3.3 million people die each year because of alcohol. That’s more than die of AIDS, tuberculosis, and violence combined. *“Including drunk driving, alcohol-induced violence and abuse, and a multitude of diseases and disorders, alcohol causes one in 20 deaths globally every year.”* That’s one death every 10 seconds. Another study found that alcohol use is responsible for 1 in 10 deaths among working-age adults. That adds up to 88,000 deaths between 2006 and 2010, and the lives of those who died were shortened by

about 30 years (“*Drinking Behind 1 in 10 Deaths of Working-age Adults*”, USA Today, June 26, 2014).

If anything has the appearance of evil today, it is alcoholic beverages, and the Bible does not suggest that we abstain from all appearance of evil; it commands us to do so!

5. There Is a Difference Between the Alcoholic Content of Wine Today and That of Bible Times. Alcoholic Wine in Bible Times Was Often Weak. It Was Not Uncommon to Mix One Part Wine with Two or Three Parts Water. Unmixed Wine Was the Strong Wine with High Alcoholic Content (Rev. 14:10).

☛ “Many wine-drinking Christians today mistakenly assume that what the New Testament meant by wine is identical to wine used today. This, however, is false. In fact, today’s wine is by biblical definition strong drink, and hence is forbidden in the Bible. ... Even ancient pagans did not drink what some Christians drink today” (Norman Geisler, *Focus in Missions*, Sept. 1986).

☛ “To consume the amount of alcohol that is in two martinis today, by drinking wine containing three parts water to one part wine (the biblical ratio) a person would have to drink over twenty-two glasses” (Robert Stein, *Ibid.*).

☛ “A one-ounce ‘shot’ of whiskey (50% alcohol) contains as much alcohol as one glass of modern wine (10-23% alcohol) or as one can or bottle of beer (4-6% alcohol). Should a Christian drink a shot of whiskey? If not, why would it be acceptable to drink a glass of wine or a can of beer?” (“*The Bible and Use of Alcoholic Beverages*,” GospelWay.com).

6. The New Testament Believer Is a King and Priest (Revelation 1:6; 5:10), and as Such He Is Forbidden to Drink. See Leviticus 10:8-11; Proverbs 31:4-5.

Kelly Whiting comments:

“Both Old Testament passages focus on the responsibility of priests and kings not to pervert the Law of God and the passages identify the use of alcohol as running that risk and THEREFORE, it is entirely banned by God from their use. As New Testament believers, we are made, by the decree of God, ‘kings and priests.’ Old time Baptists were strong on the priesthood of the Believer, though modern Baptists almost never mention it. But priests we are, both by the declaration of God in Revelation 1:6 and by our calling to bring sinners to God by leading them to Jesus Christ and praying for them. That requires the same care in the use of the Law (Scripture) that Old Testament kings and priests were required to show. No other argument is as convincing to me because this one relies on the plain language of Scripture when compared in context. It doesn’t ask me to be ‘prudent’ or ‘cautious,’ not that those aren’t good qualities. ... It simply says, God declares that I am a king and priest and neither are allowed to drink alcohol. It’s a simple command of God.”

7. We Believe That the Wine Jesus Made at the Wedding in John 2 Was Non-alcoholic. It was the pure juice of the grape. Following are the reasons why we believe that Jesus did **not** make alcoholic wine that day:

- a. It was unlawful for kings and priests to drink alcoholic wine, and Jesus was both (Prov. 31:4; Lev. 10:8-11).
- b. It is forbidden to give wine to others to make them drunk (Hab. 2:15).
- c. It is unwise for men to drink alcoholic wine (Proverbs 20:1), and we know that Jesus, Wisdom incarnate, would not do anything unwise.
- d. Alcoholic wine is a deceiver (Prov. 20:1), and we know that Christ did not come to deceive people.
- e. Had Jesus given the people alcoholic wine at that juncture in the wedding, He and they would have been breaking God’s commandment not to tarry long at the wine (Prov. 23:29-30).
- f. Christ did not come to cause people to stumble (Romans 14:21). The late Bruce Lackey observes, “Everyone who has studied the problem of alcoholism has learned that some people cannot handle any amount of alcohol, while others may drink one or two ‘social’ drinks and stop. Experts do not know why this is true; various theories have been propounded. Some say it is chemical; others insist that it must be psychological. The fact is, we do not know for certain. In any given group of people, there would be several potential alcoholics. What a shame it would be for a person, who is a potential slave to it, to get his first taste at the Lord’s table in church, then proceed down the road of misery to an alcoholic’s grave! I certainly would not want my children to get their first taste of alcohol at the family meal, nor would I want them to get it at church. One or more of them could well be potential alcoholics. As evidence that this is possible, we should consider that some denominations which serve alcoholic wine in their religious services also operate homes for alcoholic priests! But we can be absolutely sure that Christ did not come to cause others to stumble!”
- g. The fact that the people at the wedding recognized Jesus’ wine as superior to the earlier wine shows that they were not drunken (Jn. 2:10). Had they been drunken, they would not have noticed that the wine that Jesus made was better.
- h. This miracle glorified Jesus as the Messiah (John 2:11). Had He made and distributed alcoholic wine to make the people further drunk, this would not have glorified Him as the holy, righteous Messiah. “Had Christ made alcoholic wine and had the people been drinking alcoholic wine prior to that, He would have made drunk people drunker, or almost-drunken people completely drunk! Such a deed would certainly not have manifested any glory to Him” (Bruce Lackey).
- i. We know that the Spirit of God would not have put anything in the Bible to encourage drunks, to cause men to offend in sin (Rom. 14:21; I Cor. 10:31-33), but the idea that Jesus made alcoholic wine for distribution at a wedding has done exactly that. Any lush who

knows anything whatsoever about the Bible, believes that Jesus made alcoholic wine and uses that to justify his sin.

CONCLUSION:

1. While it *is* true that the Israelites were allowed to drink alcoholic wine and strong drink on occasions (e.g., Deut. 14:26), this does **not** mean that it is God’s will for His people to do so today. The New Testament believer has a higher standard of living. The law of Moses made provision for polygamy, for example, but the New Testament nowhere makes such a provision.

2. There is **no need** for a Christian to drink alcoholic beverages. It adds nothing of value to his life.

3. We live in a world filled with spiritual and moral danger (I Peter 5:8). We have great spiritual enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is wise to avoid anything that would produce spiritual weakness and put us in harm’s way.

4. We live an hour of great apostasy (II Timothy 4:3-4). The reason the emerging church loves to drink is that they boast of liberty and live according to their own lusts in fulfillment of Paul’s prophecy. It is foolish to follow this example.

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (II Timothy 4:3-4).



NEWS OF INTEREST TO CHRISTIANS

☐ **OVER 40% OF YOUNG ADULTS DON'T BELIEVE, DON'T KNOW, OR DON'T CARE THAT GOD EXISTS** - Just 26% of Gen X and 16% of millennials believe that when they die, they will go to Heaven only because they confessed their sins and accepted Jesus as their savior, compared to nearly half of the generation before them, a new study has found.

The American Worldview Inventory 2021, a survey of the philosophy of life on American adults from Arizona Christian University, assessed the worldviews of four generations: **millennials** (born 1984-2002), **Gen X** (1965-1983), **baby boomers** (1946-1964) and **builders** (1927-1945).

Researchers found that among other recent generations, **millennials** have gone farther in cutting ties with traditional Christian views and normative biblical teaching. For example, nearly **half** of all boomers believe that when they die, they will go to Heaven only because they confessed their sins and accepted Jesus as their Saviour, compared to only **26%** of Gen X and **16%** of millennials. A staggering **90%** of builders believe you treat others as you want them to treat you, while less than half of millennials agree.

Additionally, 43% of millennials stated they either don't know, don't care or don't believe God exists compared to 28% of boomers, and 44% of millennials believe Satan is a real and influential, compared to 64% of boomers.

The study also found that overall, younger Americans are significantly more likely than the two previous generations to embrace horoscopes as a guide and Karma as a life principle, to see “getting even” with others as defensible, to accept evolution over creation, and to view owning property as fostering economic injustice.

On spiritual matters, Americans younger than 55 are far more likely to distrust the Bible and to believe God is uninvolved in people’s lives. Interestingly, a majority of Americans call themselves Christian, ranging from 57% of millennials to 83% of builders.

Researchers warn that the beliefs and behaviors of younger Americans, especially millennials, “threaten to reshape the nation’s religious parameters beyond recognition.”

“In fact, this radical spiritual revolution has created a generation seeking a reimagined world without God, the Bible, or churches,” they wrote.

Additionally, 31% of teens and young adults “strongly agree” that what is “morally right and wrong changes over time, based on society,” compared to just 25% in 2018.

Recent survey data released by Gallup found that one in six Gen Z adults identify as LGBT — the highest percentage of any generation in history — and that number is likely to continue to increase.

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