

Wine – Should Believers Drink it?

There is much controversy, especially in the Churches, whether Wine in the New Testament was fermented or not. Since the Greek word “oinos” is derived from the Hebrew word for wine “Yayin”, let’s review the words and how they were used.

We see many references to wine in scripture. Here is Noah in his tent drinking wine and becoming drunk.

Gen 9:21 And he drank⁸³⁵⁴ of⁴⁴⁸⁰ the wine,³¹⁹⁶ and was drunken;⁷⁹³⁷ and he was uncovered¹⁵⁴⁰ within⁸⁴³² his tent.¹⁶⁸

We also have Melchizedek bringing forth wine for Abraham.

Gen 14:18 And Melchizedek⁴⁴⁴² king⁴⁴²⁸ of Salem⁸⁰⁰⁴ brought forth³³¹⁸ bread³⁸⁹⁹ and wine:³¹⁹⁶ and he¹⁹³¹ was the priest³⁵⁴⁸ of the most high⁵⁹⁴⁵ God.⁴¹⁰

This was fermented wine as per Strong’s definition.

H3196

יַיִן

yayin

yah'-yin

From an unused root meaning to *effervesce*; wine (as fermented); by implication intoxication: - banqueting, wine, wine [-bibber].

This is another example of drinking fermented wine.

Gen 27:24 And he said,⁵⁵⁹ Art thou⁸⁵⁹ my very²⁰⁸⁸ son¹¹²¹ Esau?⁶²¹⁵ And he said,⁵⁵⁹ I⁵⁸⁹ am.
Gen 27:25 And he said,⁵⁵⁹ Bring *it* near⁵⁰⁶⁶ to me, and I will eat³⁹⁸ of my son's¹¹²¹ venison,^{4480, 6718} that⁴⁶¹⁶ my soul⁵³¹⁵ may bless¹²⁸⁸ thee. And he brought *it* near⁵⁰⁶⁶ to him, and he did eat:³⁹⁸ and he brought⁹³⁵ him wine,³¹⁹⁶ and he drank.⁸³⁵⁴

Aaron and his sons were forbidden to drink fermented wine when they ministered in the tabernacle. And of course, the Nazarite was forbidden to drink fermented wine and strong drink at any time.

Lev 10:9 Do not⁴⁰⁸ drink⁸³⁵⁴ wine³¹⁹⁶ nor strong drink,⁷⁹⁴¹ thou,⁸⁵⁹ nor thy sons¹¹²¹ with⁸⁵⁴ thee, when ye go⁹³⁵ into⁴¹³ the tabernacle¹⁶⁸ of the congregation,⁴¹⁵⁰ lest³⁸⁰⁸ ye die.⁴¹⁹¹ *it shall be* a statute²⁷⁰⁸ forever⁵⁷⁶⁹ throughout your generations:¹⁷⁵⁵

During the Feast of Tabernacles, we may drink fermented wine or strong drink and purchase it with a portion of our tithe.

Deu 14:26 And thou shalt bestow⁵⁴¹⁴ that money³⁷⁰¹ for whatsoever^{3605, 834} thy soul⁵³¹⁵ lusteth after,¹⁸³ for oxen,¹²⁴¹ or for sheep,⁶⁶²⁹ **or for wine,³¹⁹⁶ or for strong drink,⁷⁹⁴¹** or for whatsoever^{3605, 834} thy soul⁵³¹⁵ desireth:⁷⁵⁹² and thou shalt eat³⁹⁸ there⁸⁰³³ before⁶⁴⁴⁰ YHWH³⁰⁶⁸ thy Elohim,⁴³⁰ and thou shalt rejoice,⁸⁰⁵⁵ thou,⁸⁵⁹ and thine household,¹⁰⁰⁴

Psa 104:15 And wine³¹⁹⁶ *that* maketh glad⁸⁰⁵⁵ the heart³⁸²⁴ of man,⁵⁸² *and* oil^{4480, 8081} to make *his* face⁶⁴⁴⁰ to shine,⁶⁶⁷⁰ and bread³⁸⁹⁹ *which* strengtheneth⁵⁵⁸² man's⁵⁸² heart.³⁸²⁴

Num 28:7 And the drink offering⁵²⁶² thereof *shall be* the fourth⁷²⁴³ *part* of a hin¹⁹⁶⁹ for the one²⁵⁹ lamb:³⁵³² in the holy⁶⁹⁴⁴ *place* shalt thou cause **the strong wine⁷⁹⁴¹** to be poured⁵²⁵⁸ unto YHWH³⁰⁶⁸ *for* a drink offering.⁵²⁶²

The definition of this follows:

H7941

שכר

shêkâr

shay-kawr'

From H7937; an *intoxicant*, that is, intensely alcoholic *liquor*: - strong drink, + drunkard, strong wine.

Not all wine is fermented and is expressed with a different word.

Gen 27:37 And Isaac³³²⁷ answered⁶⁰³⁰ and said⁵⁵⁹ unto Esau,⁶²¹⁵ Behold,²⁰⁰⁵ I have made⁷⁷⁶⁰ him thy lord,¹³⁷⁶ and all³⁶⁰⁵ his brethren²⁵¹ have I given⁵⁴¹⁴ to him for servants;⁵⁶⁵⁰ and with corn¹⁷¹⁵ and **wine⁸⁴⁹²** have I sustained⁵⁵⁶⁴ him: and what⁴¹⁰⁰ shall I do⁶²¹³ now⁶⁴⁵ unto thee, my son?¹¹²¹

H8492

תירוש תירוש

tîyrôsh tîyrôsh

tee-roshe', tee-roshe'

From H3423 in the sense of *expulsion*; *must* or fresh grape juice (as just *squeezed* out); by implication (rarely) fermented *wine*: - (new, sweet) wine.

H6071

עִסִּי

ʿâsiys

aw-sees'

From H6072; *must* or fresh grape juice (as just trodden out): - juice, new (sweet) wine.

We see fermented wine used many times as a drink offering to YHWH.

Exo 29:40 And with the one²⁵⁹ lamb³⁵³² a tenth deal⁶²⁴¹ of flour⁵⁵⁶⁰ mingled¹¹⁰¹ with the fourth part⁷²⁵³ of a hin¹⁹⁶⁹ of beaten³⁷⁹⁵ oil;⁸⁰⁸¹ and the fourth part⁷²⁴³ of a hin¹⁹⁶⁹ of **wine**³¹⁹⁶ for a drink offering.⁵²⁶²

Exo 29:41 And the other⁸¹⁴⁵ lamb³⁵³² thou shalt offer⁶²¹³ at⁹⁹⁶ even,⁶¹⁵³ and shalt do⁶²¹³ thereto according to the meat offering⁴⁵⁰³ of the morning,¹²⁴² and according to the drink offering⁵²⁶² thereof, for a sweet⁵²⁰⁷ savor,⁷³⁸¹ an offering made by fire⁸⁰¹ unto YHWH.³⁰⁶⁸

There are numerous references to fermented wine offered as a drink offering to YHWH.

What about NT references? The Greek word for wine is “oinos”. It is used whether the wine is fermented or not.

G3631

οἶνος

oinos

oy'-nos

A primary word (or perhaps of Hebrew origin [H3196]); “wine” (literally or figuratively): - wine.

The Hebrew word, of course, is Yayin. It's easy to see how the word was transliterated since the Greek language has no “Y” sound. The English word “wine” and the French “Vin” is also derived from Yayin.

Mat 9:17 Neither³⁷⁶¹ do men put⁹⁰⁶ new³⁵⁰¹ wine³⁶³¹ into¹⁵¹⁹ old³⁸²⁰ bottles:⁷⁷⁹ else¹⁴⁹⁰ the³⁵⁸⁸ bottles⁷⁷⁹ break,⁴⁴⁸⁶ and²⁵³² the³⁵⁸⁸ wine³⁶³¹ runneth out,¹⁶³² and²⁵³² the³⁵⁸⁸ bottles⁷⁷⁹ perish:⁶²² but²³⁵ they put⁹⁰⁶ new³⁵⁰¹ wine³⁶³¹ into¹⁵¹⁹ new²⁵³⁷ bottles,⁷⁷⁹ and²⁵³² both²⁹⁷ are preserved.⁴⁹³³

Why would they worry about putting new wine into old bottles if it was not going to ferment and expand breaking the bottles? If it ferments and breaks the bottle, it is no longer “new wine”, but fermented. Notice also, the wine that runs out is not called “new”. This wording is also true in the other gospels.

Mar 15:23 And²⁵³² they gave¹³²⁵ him⁸⁴⁶ to drink⁴⁰⁹⁵ wine³⁶³¹ mingled with myrrh:⁴⁶⁶⁹ but¹¹⁶¹ he³⁵⁸⁸ received²⁹⁸³ it not.³⁷⁵⁶

He that goes to be executed they mix for him, בכוס של יין קורט של לבונה, "a grain of frankincense in a cup of wine", that his mind may be disturbed, or not sensible; as it is said, Pro 31:6, "give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine to the bitter in soul"(Barnes)

The word above is Yayin. The oinos that was offered to Yahshua on the cross was yayin, a fermented wine mixed with myrrh, a bitter narcotic. When he tasted the bitter myrrh, he refused it. But later, he drank the sour wine (vinegar) without the myrrh. John 19:30.

Luk 10:33 But¹¹⁶¹ a certain⁵¹⁰⁰ Samaritan,⁴⁵⁴¹ as he journeyed,³⁵⁹³ came²⁰⁶⁴ where he was:^{2596, 846} and²⁵³² when he saw¹⁴⁹² him,⁸⁴⁶ he had compassion⁴⁶⁹⁷ on him,

Luk 10:34 And²⁵³² went⁴³³⁴ to him, and bound up²⁶¹¹ his⁸⁴⁶ wounds,⁵¹³⁴ pouring in²⁰²² oil¹⁶³⁷ and²⁵³² wine,³⁶³¹ and¹¹⁶¹ set¹⁹¹³ him⁸⁴⁶ on¹⁹⁰⁹ his own²³⁹⁸ beast,²⁹³⁴ and brought⁷¹ him⁸⁴⁶ to¹⁵¹⁹ an inn,³⁸²⁹ and²⁵³² took care¹⁹⁵⁹ of him.⁸⁴⁶

The good Samaritan treated the wounds of the injured man with fermented wine (oinos) because of the alcohol's germ killing effect.

What did Yahshua do in his first recorded miracle? He turned water into wine. Fermented? Let's see.

Joh 2:1 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Yahshua was there:

Joh 2:2 And both Yahshua was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

Joh 2:3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Yahshua saith unto him, They have no wine.

I'm sure they wouldn't be celebrating with "grape juice". They wanted their hearts to be gay and merry.

Joh 2:4 Yahshua saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

Joh 2:5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do *it*.

Joh 2:6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

Joh 2:7 Yahshua saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

Joh 2:8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare *it*.

Joh 2:9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

Joh 2:10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good wine until now.

Obviously, normally after drinking good fermented wine for awhile, the cheaper wine would be brought out. Their taste buds would have been numbed at this point and they wouldn't know the difference. It wouldn't make any sense to make the comparison if the

wine was not fermented. Grape juice is grape juice, but aged wine has different qualities and the difference is noticeable.

Luk 5:39 No man³⁷⁶² also²⁵³² having drunk⁴⁰⁹⁵ old³⁸²⁰ wine straightway²¹¹² desireth²³⁰⁹ new:³⁵⁰¹ for¹⁰⁶³ he saith,³⁰⁰⁴ The³⁵⁸⁸ old³⁸²⁰ is²⁰⁷⁶ better.⁵⁵⁴³

Should it be any different at this marriage party?

To continue with narrative of the wedding in Cana....

Joh 2:11 This beginning of miracles did Yahshua in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

Joh 2:12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

Joh 2:13 And the **Jews' passover was at hand**, and Yahshua went up to Jerusalem,

This tells us that the wedding in Cana was in the spring of the year. The harvest season for grapes in Israel is June through September. There would not likely be any new wine at that time. Grape juice begins to ferment rapidly and without refrigeration, it becomes either wine or vinegar.

You might ask, "Couldn't Yahshua have made new wine?" Yes, but it certainly would have been a shock to the guests to be served new wine two months before the earliest grape harvest.

Only one place in the NT uses a different word for fermented wine. That is in Acts 2:13 where the word gleukos is used to describe the men filled with the Ruach HaKodesh on Pentecost.

Act 2:13 ⁽¹¹⁶¹⁾ Others²⁰⁸⁷ mocking⁵⁵¹² said,³⁰⁰⁴ These men are¹⁵²⁶ full³³²⁵ of new wine.¹⁰⁹⁸

G1098

γλεῦκος

gleukos

glyoo'-kos

Akin to G1099; *sweet* wine, that is, (properly) *must* (fresh juice), but used of the more saccharine (and therefore highly inebriating) fermented *wine*: - new wine.

Conclusion:

The drinking of fermented wine was a part of life in Hebrew culture for thousands of years. Because of natural yeasts in the air, grape juice will begin fermentation within hours of being extracted from the grapes. There were ways used by the ancients to preserve grape juice, but due to the evidence above, I doubt this was the case in most instances. Most instances of the drinking of wine in the scriptures involved a fermented drink. Grape juice doesn't make ones heart merry. Neither does it lead to drunkenness. Guests at a wedding are not going to be crying out for grape juice, they want something intoxicating to make the celebration a joy. They wanted to enjoy themselves.

There were some admonitions in the NT about drinking too much wine because of placing a stumbling block before a brother. Getting drunk does not present a very good witness to others. However, the drinking of a moderate amount of wine with meals or at celebrations is not wrong. Scripture tells us we can even use a portion of our tithe to buy wine and strong drink for our enjoyment of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Some will correctly argue that the words “oinos” and “Yayin” are used to describe both fermented and unfermented grape juice. The Greek usually prefaces “oinos” with the word “new” to distinguish from “old” fermented wine. However, it can be seen in the usage that the qualifier “new” is left off when it is fermented wine. In almost all instances where the word “Yayin” is used, it is indicating fermentation.

To investigate the meaning of the Hebrew word “Yayin”, let’s look at the Hebrew roots of the word.

Yayin comes from the root yayan which means to ferment. It is used 142 times in scripture.

יָיִן Yayin looking at the Ancient Paleo Hebrew roots shows two arms and hands vigorously working or pressing out the fruit of the grape. It doesn’t give a hint as to fermentation, so we have to look at usage in scripture and bear in mind the meaning of the root word. Strong’s definition of the word is that it comes from an unused root meaning to effervesce which strongly implies fermentation.

However, when an unfermented grape juice is specified, the words tiyrosch תִּירוֹשׁ which is rarely used to indicate fermentation and עֲסִיס Asiys meaning freshly trodden out grape juice, are used.

There is no scriptural prohibition against drinking wine. The only caution is drinking to excess or drunkenness. A small glass of wine every day or so is not going to hurt and is, in fact, beneficial to your heart and overall health.

Do as Paul said:

1Ti 5:23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

Sounds good to me.

Brick Parrish 2-2009