

In Season and Out

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching (2 Timothy 4:2).

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Why Did Paul Tell Timothy to Drink Wine?

by: Ryan Hasty

In 1 Tim 5:23, Paul informs Timothy to, “No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.” This verse has been used by some Christians to justify the recreational consumption of modern day alcoholic beverages.

It is obvious from the text that Timothy was suffering from a stomach ailment, though the nature of the ailment is not known. However, Paul appears to suggest that the water is the culprit for his illness. Since the days of Hippocrates, it has been known that the water of the ancient world contained harmful bacteria that could produce illness. When Paul writes this letter, Timothy is in Ephesus. Ephesus was an ancient, decaying city whose harbor was silting up and creating sewage problems that poisoned underground water supplies (Williams, Paul’s Metaphors, p. 101). It is very likely that this was the cause of Timothy’s stomach ailment.

Fermented wine of ancient, biblical times was often used as a remedy for such illnesses as the alcohol would prevent dysentery by destroying the bacteria and harmful pathogens of the water. This remedy was widely recognized by the Talmudists, Plutarch, Pliny, and as far back as the writings of Hippocrates himself (Fee, New International Biblical Commentary, p. 135).

Therefore, Paul’s instruction to Timothy was in no way an endorsement of the recreational and social conception of alcoholic beverages, but advised purely for medicinal purposes.

This passage also reveals a lot about Timothy’s character. Regardless of the legitimacy of his need to consume fermented wine for medicinal purposes, it is reasonable to conclude that he had abstained from it for the sake of his own sobriety and personal influence. Such was not expedient as his personal service to Christ was far more important than the potential damage inflicted by

misguided critics, hence the need for Paul's exhortation.

This passage cannot provide support or comfort for those desiring to engage in the pleasurable consumption of modern day alcoholic beverages. First, imbibers rarely drink just a "little" as was Paul's instruction to Timothy. Second, imbibers do not dilute their wine with water as was practiced in ancient times. Third, fermented wines, as drunk in ancient times, were nowhere near as potent as today's distilled fortified wines.

Deacons are not to be Addicted to Much Wine

by: Ryan Hasty

In 1 Tim 3, Paul gives Timothy the qualifications of both elders and deacons. In vs. 3, part of the qualifications for elders is that they not be "addicted to wine." However, when the qualifications for deacons are considered, vs. 8 tells us that they are not to be "addicted to much wine." Since the language appears to indicate that deacons can engage in modern day alcoholic beverages, this leads some to believe that all Christians can engage in modern day alcoholic beverages.

First, there are several passages in scripture that condemn an excessive action without implying that the same action is permissible in lesser amounts. By considering these passages, we can see that the logic does not work across the board. For example:

Eccl 7:17a – "Do not be excessively wicked...." Does forbidding one from being excessively wicked imply that it is acceptable to be a little wicked?

1 Pet 4:4 – "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you" – Did Peter mean moderate rioting was appropriate? What about just a little bit of rioting?

Prov 23:22 – "Despise not thy mother when she is old." Does this imply that it's alright to despise her when she is young or middle aged? God forbid.

This argument is not proof alone for why Christians should not consume modern day alcoholic beverages, but it does show the fallacy of trying to use this passage

to prove its acceptance.

Second, while we don't know why the Holy Spirit chose to use the wording that He did in 1 Tim 3:8, it would be careless to use this passage to cancel out every other passage in scripture that gives very specific and easily understood warnings against strong drink. Heb 5:14 – “But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.” This passage teaches us that mature Christians have their senses trained to discern between good and evil. Discerning involves learning how to practically apply bible passages (1 Cor 10:11; Rom 15:4), rightfully divide them (2 Tim 2:15), and make inferences when applicable (Matt 22:31-32; Act 10:9-16, 28; 16:9-10). This is an approach incumbent of spiritual maturity and must be sought after with all diligence because every bad argument provides fodder for another to potentially commit sin and then die in that ignorance.

The Briar Patch

by: Trevor Bowen

The other day at work I mentioned to a co-worker that he was caught up in a “tar baby.” It never occurred to me that he, being from Pakistan, had never heard of Uncle Remus, Brer Bear, Brer Fox, Brer Rabbit, the briar patch, or even the “tar baby.” Well, after a little education on the finer points of Southern culture, he came to realize that he was in a whopper of a predicament.

Just like Brer Rabbit, most folks today don't realize what kind of mess they've gotten themselves into, until it's too late. But unlike Brer Rabbit, the briar patch is not our hope of salvation. Instead, it represents what may be our undoing. Please recall the following Old Testament illustration:

Upon entering the land of Canaan, the Lord commanded the Israelites to drive out the idolatrous inhabitants of their new land. God even promised to help them, but they were still ultimately responsible for the initiative (Exodus 23:27-33). He even warned them that if they failed to complete their task, then “those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell” (Numbers 33:55). However, their punishment would exceed this, for He added, “Moreover it shall be that I will do to you as I thought to do to them” (Numbers 33:56). You would

think with that kind of promise and warning that the Israelites would have been highly motivated to follow through on their mission. Unfortunately, that is not how history unfolded. After dominating most of Canaan, the book of Judges records multiple unfinished “loose ends” (Judges 1:17-36). Following the recitation of these remaining inhabitants, Judges records this message from God:

“I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you. And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? Therefore I also said, ‘I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.’” (Judges 2:1-3)

Although the Israelites were initially zealous, when met with resistance, their zeal waned, and they tried to become comfortable in the “briar patch.” Instead of peace, they found constant irritation, but possibly even more detrimental, they made themselves vulnerable to temptation:

“Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods. So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs.” (Judges 3:5-7)

Not unlike the Israelites, we have found ourselves in the “briar patch” of the world. But, it is not a place of security. If we cozy up too close, we may find ourselves like the seed that sprang up, but was choked out by the briars, thorns, thistles, cares, worries, and love of this world (Matthew 13:22; I John 2:15-17). The question for us is, “Are we gonna’ get caught up in this her’ tar baby?” Or, are we going to instead, “lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and ... run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1; II Timothy 2:3-4)? If we fail to do so, we should not be surprised when the briar patch entangles and overcomes us, just like it did the Israelites (II Peter 2:20-22).

Study Opportunities

Sunday Bible Study: 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship Assembly: 11:00 AM
Wednesday: 7:30 PM

Meeting Location:

74 Perrywinkle Lane
Huntington, WV

email: contact@inseasonandout.com
phone: 304-208-5996

Everyone Welcome!

Baptism and How We Read

by: Doy Moyer

Think about these two statements:

Baptism has nothing to do with salvation.

Baptism now saves you.

Which is true? I was studying with some who were adamant in their opposition to thinking that baptism was connected in any way to salvation: “baptism has nothing to do with salvation,” they insisted. I clarified to make sure of what they were saying; I didn’t want to misunderstand. They stressed it: “Nothing” to do with salvation. I wrote it down on a piece of paper, and they agreed. Then I wrote down a second statement: “baptism now saves you.” They denied that statement in favor of the first. They were quite clear about it.

I asked them to open up 1 Peter 3 and read. They read out loud. *“Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you— not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience —through the resurrection of Jesus Christ...”* (v. 21).

You could tell there was some discomfort here. I asked, “Now which of these two statements is true?” I was seeking explanation, some way to reconcile the ideas. They doubled down on their position, and without hesitation, affirmed what is not said in Scripture to deny what is said: “The first one. Baptism has nothing to do with salvation.” Though I figured that’s what they would do, there is, still, always a little bit of disbelief when those who claim to believe Scripture so plainly deny it. They had no explanation at all for 1 Peter 3:21. They didn’t try to explain it. They simply denied it.

“How can you say that?” I asked, perhaps a little impatiently. What disturbed me, even more, was the answer they gave here: “Because Ephesians 2:8-9 overrides 1 Peter 3:21.” Yes, overrides! In other words, grace was opposed to baptism, and since we are saved by grace, not works, baptism has nothing to do with salvation. Since Ephesians 2 affirms grace, then it must override what Peter said. There was no attempt to harmonize. No attempt to explain or exegete. One passage just ruled out the other. End of story.

Never is there a need to pit God’s grace against a command that He has given. Baptism is not magical, and Peter said as much (*“not the removal of dirt from the*

flesh). We do need to understand baptism in conjunction with Christ's death, just as Paul indicates in Romans 6 (*"baptized into His death"*). We also need to understand baptism in conjunction with God's grace, for there is no way any of us are earning salvation. Baptism is an exercise of faith, not in our own works, but in the working of God (Col 2:11-14). After all, the revelation of baptism is God's plan, not ours.

Yet there is something else going on here that we ought to consider, something bigger that impacts the way we read the Bible as a whole. How do we read and study the Scriptures? A question like this cannot be answered adequately in a short article, but I'm asking the question, not in order to provide the answers, but rather to encourage us to think about how we might personally answer it.

When we start coming with up arguments that essentially negate some Scripture because it doesn't fit our current view, or because we have a favored position that requires us to deny a passage, then we are no longer seeking to understand the truth. Rather, we are looking to rubber stamp what we already think. If we are uncomfortable stating exactly and quoting what the text says, we might be having some trust issues with the Lord.

Think about the lawyer who asked Jesus the question, *"Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"* Jesus responded, *"What is written in the Law? How do you read it?"* Good question. What does the text say? Of course, we have to know this before we can understand or explain what a text means. The lawyer answered correctly, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."* Jesus told him, *"You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."* (Luke 10:25-28)

What happened next reflects the problem we are addressing. The lawyer asked, *"Who is my neighbor?"* This, apparently, was supposed to show that even though the Scriptures said, *"Love your neighbor as yourself"* (Lev 19:18), the practicality of carrying that out was in question. The lawyer knew what it said, but he was essentially negating it because he didn't see how it could be applied. One can read a text and, due to self-blindness, not see the importance or application of it.

People do it with baptism. People do it with grace. We may see what we want to see and, with a proverbial swipe of the hand, negate what Scripture teaches when it doesn't fit our other assumptions. Let's all be careful, then, to read Scripture in order to see what God wants us to see. *"Not my will, but Yours be done."*

Repent: God is Ready to Forgive

by: Stacy Crim

The visions Isaiah the prophet received were messages from God to Judah and Jerusalem. The first chapter reveals that God's people in the south had rebelled against Him (verse 2). The people were weighed down with sin (verse 4). They were guilty of forsaking the Lord (verse 4) and their worship had been corrupted (verses 10-15).

What does God expect of His people when they are no longer following Him? Repentance! God expects one to change. Change their directions, change their thoughts, change their behavior. Notice how this change and return to God (repentance) is described in verses sixteen and seventeen.

- *Wash Yourselfs, make yourself clean – sin is described as making one unclean so the instruction is to wash it off metaphorically.*
- *Put Away the Evil – What one is doing wrong must be removed from one's life.*
- *Cease to do Evil – Stop doing what is wrong.*
- *Learn to Do Well – Doing what is right is learned. Become accustomed to doing what is right.*
- *Seek Judgment – Fairness and justice must always be sought after.*
- *Relieve the Oppressed – God expects His people to stand up for and correct that which is wrong*
- *Defend the Fatherless – God expects His people to aid or defend those who are helpless*
- *Plead of the Widow – God expects His people to be the voice for those unable to defend themselves.*

Isaiah 1:18 (NKJV)

“Come now, and let us reason together;” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool...”

Thankfully we serve a loving God who is ready to forgive when we repent. “...Though you sins are like scarlet, they Shall be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (verse 18).

Daily Bible Reading

October 2019

October 1	Genesis 1-3	October 17	Genesis 29-30
October 2	Genesis 4-5	October 18	Genesis 31
October 3	Genesis 6:1-8:19	October 21	Genesis 32-33
October 4	Genesis 8:20-10:32	October 22	Genesis 34-35
October 7	Genesis 11-13	October 23	Genesis 36-37
October 8	Genesis 14-16	October 24	Genesis 38-40
October 9	Genesis 17-18	October 25	Genesis 41
October 10	Genesis 19:1-21:21	October 28	Genesis 42-43
October 11	Genesis 21:22-23:20	October 29	Genesis 44-45
October 14	Genesis 24	October 30	Genesis 46-47
October 15	Genesis 25-26	October 31	Genesis 48-50
October 16	Genesis 27-28		

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