

# THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

March 4

2018

## Wine in the Bible -- How Fermentation Was Prevented

Wine in the bible is spoken of as a blessing in its unfermented state and as an intoxicant in its fermented state. Many do not realize that those living in biblical days were able to keep their wine from fermenting and in fact did so regularly. How did they accomplish this in an age without refrigerators? There were 3 primary methods:

First, they boiled their wine down to thick syrup. Boiling grape juice causes the water to evaporate leaving behind a concentrate with such a high level of sugar that fermentation was impossible. Syrup in this state could be preserved for years. Whenever they wanted to drink this unfermented wine, they would mix a small amount of this syrup with water much like we do with our Kool-Aid. Different ratios were used depending on the type of grape, the age of the syrup, the temperature of the water, and even the season.

Proverbs 9:1-5 – “Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars; she has prepared her food, she has mixed her wine; she has also set her table; she has sent out her maidens, she calls from the tops of the heights of the city: ‘Whoever is naive, let him turn in here!’ To him who lacks understanding she says, ‘Come, eat of my food and drink of the wine I have mixed.’”

The above verse refers to the mixing of wine as “wisdom” whereas Proverbs 20:1 refers to a person intoxicated by wine as not being wise. The contrast is clear. Boiling grape juice to prevent it

from fermenting and then mixing with water to enjoy as a beverage is incumbent of wisdom and was a blessing from God.

Aristotle – “The wine of Arcadia was so thick that it was necessary to scrape it from the skin bottles in which it was contained and to dissolve the scrapings in water.”

Horace – “There is no wine sweeter to drink than that of Lesbos; it was like nectar . . . and would not produce intoxication.”

Second, those living in biblical times had developed methods to filter wine and remove its strength. While pressing out the grape, they would use a bag called a “sacco” that captured the fermentable substances, allowed the juice from the pulp to flow through, and then collected it in a vase below the bag. Several historians mention this method as in use during biblical times as well as the fact that one of primary reasons they did this is because unfermented wine tastes better.

Pliny The Younger – “The most useful wine has all its force or strength broken by the filter.”

Plutarch – “Wine is rendered feeble in strength when it is frequently filtered. The strength or spirit thus being excluded, the wine neither inflames the brain nor infests the mind and passions, and is much more pleasant to drink.”

This is the testimony of two non-Christian Gentiles confirming that filtration causes wine to taste better because its strength is removed. But they are merely confirming what we already know. Beverages like grape juice begin fermenting when they are going bad, not when they are getting better. Alcoholic beverages are an “acquired taste” purely for the effects produced in the body by the alcohol and not because it tastes good.

Third, they were able to refrigerate and seal wine. Grape juice kept at 45° or less cannot ferment. If it is kept cool long enough, the gluten settles at the bottom and the juice can be skimmed off of the top where it can never ferment even if warmed. We know from archeology that they stored this kind of wine in caves, under water, and in the ground where it was cooler. So even without refrigerators, they still had the means to keep wine cool. They also kept their

containers air tight by corking the bottle and then sealing it with pitch. The Jews also poured olive oil on top to seal the juice from the air. In the 1960s, a sunken ship was discovered at the bottom of the Mediterranean that had containers of wine dating back to the Roman Empire. The containers were sealed so well that water from the sea had not penetrated them.

With multiple ways of preventing fermentation, this is further proof that wine of biblical times was not necessarily alcoholic, but could easily be preserved and enjoyed as a refreshing alternative to water and a blessing from God that provided joy and not intoxication.

✍️ Ryan Hasty



**Editor's Note:** The following article was written by a man that had a great influence on my life in the early days of my preaching. When so many were endorsing liberalism, modernism and institutionalism, brother Grider stood firm in defense of the truth. Many (even some who said they agreed with him) were critical of the way he defended the truth. I remember one incident when someone was being critical of brother Grider for the manner in which he was exposing error. The person said, "There's more than one way to skin a cat." Brother Grider's quick reply was, "Yeah, but the cat doesn't like any of them." That was his way of saying the false teacher doesn't like any form of rebuke. I am so thankful for men like A. C. Grider and I am glad he was a major influence in my life. (JH)



## "He Hath Not God"

The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is given to us as a guide from earth to heaven. It serves as something of a "road map" or a "way bill" to glory. We should be at least as careful in an attempt to follow it as we would be a road map to some place on this earth. Couldn't you imagine the confusion and frustration of a man trying to follow a road map to some place that was not on the map? What about a man starting from some place that he could not find on the map? He starts out and finally hits a little stretch of highway that he can find, and then suddenly he is again traveling a

road which the map does not show.

The picture above, when we make a spiritual application of it, exactly describes a member of a denomination. Think with me a minute, if you will. A man does something he cannot read in the New Testament to be saved (as he imagines). Then he joins a denomination, which is something else he cannot find in God's word. He finds in the New Testament that he should sing. He sings, but adds mechanical music to his singing. He reads that he should eat the Lord's Supper and he does, but not every first day of the week, but when he wants to do so. He prays, but may have women leading public prayer and he teaches an alien sinner that he should pray for salvation. He gives of his means but he may do so through pie suppers, raffles, etc. He does missionary work but does it through some missionary society. He has a good benevolent program but most of the work is done by human societies. In fact, he does NOTHING as the Bible teaches.

It can be seen that the man I am describing is not following the Bible. He has transgressed the doctrine of Christ on every point. He has gone onward and has not abided in the doctrine. He hath not God! It is a pity but it is so. We cannot help this man by ignoring him or by ignoring the fact that he is transgressing God's word. Let's tell him. We may save his soul. We will at least, deliver our own soul.

✍️ A. C. Grider

### Belleville church of Christ

5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258

[www.bellevillechurch.net](http://www.bellevillechurch.net)

#### Schedule of Services

|                                  |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| Sunday Bible Study . . . . .     | 9:30 a.m.  |
| Sunday Morning Worship . . . . . | 10:30 a.m. |
| Sunday Evening Worship . . . . . | 5:00 p.m.  |
| Wednesday Bible Study . . . . .  | 7:00 p.m.  |

#### Evangelist

James Hahn . . . . . (317) 745-1507