

The Controversy: Wine or Grape Juice for Passover?

The beginning of the annual Sabbaths starts with Passover which is that special time of the year wherein we observe the memorial of the impalement of the Savior, Yahshua. Passover has been mistakenly called “the L-rd’s Supper,” and erroneously kept more than once a year. The true body of Messiah properly observes this ceremony once a year, in the spring. The drink is not specifically mentioned, but simply referred to by Yahshua as “the cup” or “the fruit of the vine” and is understood to represent the shed blood of the Savior.

This raises the question, which is the proper emblem to represent the blood of Yahshua our Savior? The original Passover account of Exodus 12 specifies no drink to be taken at all. Only the flesh of the lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs made up the meal. The blood of the lamb was smeared on the doorposts and the lintels of Israel’s houses.

It was only later the custom of drinking the fruit of the vine at the Passover was added to the Passover observance. The fruit of the vine for Passover was not commanded by Yahweh, but was introduced by the Jews, most likely after their return from Babylon. Only bread that is unleavened (contains no yeast or leavening) is to be eaten during this occasion and the following seven days:

In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening, is Yahweh's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread to Yahweh; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, Leviticus 23:5-6 RSV.

The four evangels relate that Yahshua and the disciples had “the fruit of the vine” at the Passover table. From the account we are given, the cup was not used until Yahshua offered it to the disciples. There is nothing in the Old Testament which tells us anything about wine in the “drink offerings” or any custom which was developed in connection with or being used at Passover. This is a human tradition.

The First Passover

Anciently, Israel was freed from slavery when Pharaoh’s urgent edict told Moses to take his people and leave Egypt. Pharaoh feared they would all be dead as were the firstborn following the destroying angel’s visitation. Passover gave Israelites their freedom:

So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls being bound up in their mantles on their shoulders, Exodus 12:34 RSV.

For the next seven days the two or three million Israelites were on the move toward the Promised Land and had no time to stop and allow their bread to be leavened. In commemoration of this time, Yahweh’s people continue to eat only unleavened bread for the seven days of the feast.

Unleavened bread is made without yeast (leaven). The flour is mixed with water or milk and perhaps olive oil and baked before it is allowed to ferment into “sourdough” bread. It is known as “unleavened” because no leaven or “starter” of leavening was added. Usually bread is allowed to ferment which makes it rise and then is baked which stops the fermenting process. Leavened bread is sweeter and softer to chew. Even though baking would halt the fermenting process, the

bread would still be considered as leavened. Most breads are leavened with yeast in our culture, and during the days of unleavened bread we avoid anything containing yeast, baking powder, etc. including cakes, cookies, and breads.

Leaven is interpreted by some to stand for sin, wickedness and corruption. However, Yahshua compared leaven equivalent to a doctrine or teaching which could lead one to sin in His dissertation with His disciples. Notice that Yahshua referred to the Kingdom as leaven! Certainly, the Kingdom could not have sin, wickedness and corruption! He then explains later that He meant teaching or doctrine. Other parables spoke He unto them:

The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened, Matthew 13:33 KJ21. **The 21st Century King James Version** (KJ21) of the Holy Bible is an updating of the 1611 **King James Version** (KJV). Used throughout unless otherwise noted.

How is it that you fail to perceive that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees, Matthew 16:11-12 RSV.

The days of Unleavened Bread, then, are a time to examine our doctrine and seek the assurance that our beliefs are based on the Bible. Partaking of the Passover meal with brethren of like faith joins our hearts and goals with others who are also seeking the Kingdom. However, we want to make certain that we are doing everything properly and according to Yahweh's word. Which brings us to the question, what is the contents of the cup, is it wine or grape juice?

Wine in Four Languages

The four words which are used most frequently are in the English *wine*, Hebrew, *yayin*; Greek; *oinos*; and Latin *vinum*. All four related words are used to refer to the juice of grapes, either fermented or unfermented. For example, a winepress brings forth grape juice, not wine. A cider press brings forth apple juice, not cider; yet both wine and cider presses refer to the ultimate product, wine and cider. Fermentation takes place later.

Some Misconceptions

The argument is made by some that fermentation of the grape juice purifies it as it kills or allegedly takes out the leaven which is in the grape. This fermentation changes the sugars to alcohol which supposedly makes wine the acceptable symbol for Yahshua's blood.

Ripe grapes carry albumen which is located in the lining of the skin and in the envelope of the seeds of the grape. Fermentation can be prevented by separating the albumen which contains the fermenting agents known as ferments or yeast. By careful procedures, the juice of the grapes can be separated from the fermenting pulp. This was done anciently by either filtration or gentle pressing.

Contrary to popular belief, ripe grapes left in the sun and on the vine in the warm sun do not ferment. They simply dry up and become raisins. It is common to find California grapes are cut and stacked into a long windrow between the rows of grape vines. The hot weather during the day and cool nights do no harm, for the grapes do not ferment. They shrivel and dry up, becoming raisins.

Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 2, page 32 under Food comments, ‘The best grapes were dried in the sun into raisins which were compressed into *zimmuk* or cakes (Abigail brought 100 such cakes to David 1 Sam. 25:18) ... A portion of the grape-harvest is used in making artificial honey or dibs, the juice expressed from the grape being boiled into a syrup.

“The surfaces of ripe grapes are covered with large numbers of yeasts, molds, and bacteria, including the true wine yeast. Grape juice would ferment with the aid of the wild yeasts, but it is usually inoculated with a selected strain of wine yeasts after adding sulphur dioxide to suppress the other organisms,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1963 edition volume 23, page 666.

Some yeast cells are in the grape, but mostly outside, on the skins. How did they get there? From the air, and they are in greater concentration in the summer. Washing in cold water does not remove all the yeast cells, and exposure to air continually adds more. Thus, fermentation of grapes can be controlled by several processes.

Wine is Leavened Grape Juice

The leavening process in breads depends upon the yeasts’ working with sugar to produce alcohol and carbon dioxide. The “fizz” of the carbon dioxide is what makes the bread rise. In the fermentation process of grape juice, the yeast (may have been added or come from the outside of the grape) works with grape sugar to produce alcohol and carbon dioxide. During alcoholic fermentation, the sugars of the grapes are converted to alcohol and carbon dioxide.

In many regions the grapes are in such good condition and contain such an adequate microflora of their own yeasts, that neither antiseptics nor yeast cultures are required. This was probably the situation at Yahshua’s time when pollutants were low. In the finished product, the carbon dioxide (a gas) escapes, but the alcohol remains. The resulting wine is leavened grape juice.

The Action of Yeast

Yeast cells are living plant organisms and when in contact with sugar and moisture, will grow. The yeast cells obtain their nourishment from the sugar which allows them to grow and multiply. Waste products are given off by living plants, which here are alcohol and carbon dioxide. The carbon dioxide is given off as a gas in a bubbling action. When the concentration of alcohol reaches 15% it kills the yeast cells, which stops the fermentation process.

The yeast feeds upon the nourishing grape sugar which is a good food. Neither of the waste products (alcohol and carbon dioxide) is a food. In the college textbook, *Health for Effective Living*, by Johns, Sutton and Webster (McGraw Hill, 1966 ed.) page 378 states: “Because beverage alcohol is oxidized and energy is liberated, it is sometimes classified as a food. It is, however, a mistake to classify alcohol with such important foods as proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals salts... It cannot create new tissue, nor can it repair injured tissue. It has no protective or regulating functions as have vitamins and minerals. Hence, alcohol should never be recommended as a food.”

Certainly, the Passover emblems should represent the positive aspect of the Savior’s body and blood. Yahshua told us: *For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me, and I in him*, John 6:55-56.

Yahshua tells us His flesh is meat indeed and His blood is drink indeed. He added that unless one eats of His body and drinks of His blood, there is no life in us. His blood should be represented by the emblem that is nourishing and has life. Alcohol does not measure up as it is not considered a nourishing food.

Virtues of Grape Juice

Grapes are recognized as a good food and the juice of the grape is a healthful drink. The sugars from the grape are packed with energy and carry a distinguished taste. Grape juice contains vitamins which stimulate all the life-giving processes in the human body. Scripture tells us the life of the flesh is in the blood:

*For **the life of the flesh is in the blood**, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul, Leviticus 17:11.*

*Only be sure that thou eat not the blood; **for the blood is the life**, and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh, Deuteronomy 12:23.*

Passover a Solemn Time

In the Passover Memorial, the cup assuredly represents the saving life-blood of the Savior. It represents the new life we have in the Messiah and raises the question of the proper symbol of the blood of Messiah. Should not the contents of the cup be that which sustains life? The grape juice also represents the blood of the wicked people in Revelation 14:19-20. Yet, the Passover looks forward to the new life we are promised in the Savior. In both instances only a fluid that has life could properly represent the blood.

Grape juice has ingredients that support and sustain life, fermented wine has no food in it for alcohol cannot sustain life. We are told to keep Passover in commemoration of the death of Yahshua.

In the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, saying, "This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show Yahshua's death until He come, 1 Corinthians 11:25-26.

It is the shedding of Yahshua's blood that paid for our sins that are past, and now we are to walk in newness of life. Passover is a very solemn occasion. It is a time we remind ourselves of Israel's redemption from Egyptian slavery at the visitation of the destroying angel over Egypt where thousands of the firstborn of Egyptians and animals were killed.

In this same time frame many years later the Savior was seized, put on trial, beaten and impaled for the sins of the world. Both events took place on Passover. In no way is this a joyous time. With death in the air, it was a woeful, distressing, gloomy time, as we realize it is our sins that brought on Yahshua's death.

Wine for Joyful Celebrating

According to Bible events, wine indicates a time of merriment, a time of joy and high spirits. A time for celebration and rejoicing. Note in the account of Abraham's successful recapture of the women and retrieval of stolen goods from Chedorlaomer, Abraham was honored with a victory

dinner by King Melchizedek. There were no sacrifices, (but Abram tithed to Melchizedek). This was a victory celebration and had nothing to do with Passover!

Notice the Hebrew word for wine is *YAYIN*, Fermented wine, known as *OINOS* in Greek: #3196 *yayin* from an unused root meaning to effervesce; wine (as fermented); by implication intoxication:—banqueting, wine, wine(bibber).

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine (yayin); and he was the priest of the Most High El Elyon. And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of the Most High El Elyon, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the Most High El Elyon, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand." And he gave him tithes of all, Genesis 14:18-20.

Yayin for Joy and Merriment

- *Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine (Heb. yayin) unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let them drink and forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more, Proverbs 31:6-7.*
- *And wine (Heb. yayin) that makes glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengthens man's heart, Psalms 104:15.*
- *Wine (Heb. yayin) is a mocker, strong drink is enraging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise, Proverbs 20:1.*
- *Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, "Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine (Heb. yayin)," 2 Samuel 13:28.*
- *And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after: for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine (Heb. yayin), or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth; and thou shalt eat there before Yahweh thy Elohim, and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thine household, Deuteronomy 14:26.*

The above examples show that wine is a drink which promotes merriment and is a joyful celebration. This begs the question, is Passover a time of joy and merriment, or is it a solemn gathering?

Fermentation of Grapes

There is an erroneous teaching that grape juice is purified by fermentation and is purified when turned to wine. We are told the fermentation process kills or takes out the natural leaven which is said to be in the grape. The fermentation gets rid of the leaven, and thereby makes wine an acceptable symbol of the blood of the Savior. The entire concept is not true!

Grape growers know they can leave ripe grapes on the vine in the warm sun and they do not ferment. They simply dry up and become raisins. It is a common practice to cut and stack the bunches in long piles much like a windrow of hay. These windrows are between the rows of grape vines. The weather may be hot in the day, usually warm all night, but the grapes do not ferment. They just shrivel and dry and become raisins.

It is true that if the grapes are crushed, the exposed juice will ferment without the addition of any yeast. Most shoppers are careful not to squash the grapes they might purchase at the market lest the grape skins are broken and fermentation takes place.

The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1963 edition, volume 23, page 666, tells us: “The surfaces of ripe grapes are covered with large numbers of yeasts, molds, and bacteria, including the true wine yeast...Grape juice would ferment with the aid of wild yeasts, but it is usually inoculated with a selected strain of wine yeast after adding sulphur dioxide to suppress the other organisms.”

The *Britannica* says the yeast cells are on the grape skin. How did they get there? From the air, as there are always some yeast cells in the air, and they are in greater concentration in the summer. Washing in cold water does not remove all the yeast cells, and exposure to air continually adds more.

In leavening bread, yeast acts with sugar to produce alcohol and carbon dioxide. The baking removes both, but the bread is then called leavened. In the fermentation process in grape juice, the yeast (or ferment) works with grape sugar to produce alcohol and carbon dioxide. In the finished product, the carbon dioxide escapes, but the alcohol remains. The resulting wine is leavened grape juice.

Old Testament Pattern

As already observed, the Old Testament never mentions wine or grape juice in connection with the Passover ceremony, first described in Exodus 12. At the time of the Exodus and afterward, the Passover lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs were the only symbols mentioned in the Old Testament. The Bible mentions no drink with the Old Testament Passover meal.

Opinions vary, but most scholars contend the cup was added after the Jews returned from Babylon. It is assumed the Savior picked up on this tradition and instituted the cup the same night He was betrayed. A perusal of the word “wine” in the Old Testament reveals there are ten words that are translated wine from the Hebrew, and only two from the Greek New Testament. The Hebrew words are as follows under Strong’s numbering system:

YAYIN is the most common word for wine along with *shekar* (strong drink). These terms are frequently used together, and they are employed irrespective of whether the writer is commending wine and strong drink as desirable or warning against its dangers. *Yayin* is used 83 of the 138 times for wine, and is generally presumed to be fermented grape juice and intoxicating:

- 3196-*Yayin*: To effervesce (**Strong’s**); what is pressed out (**Young’s Analytical Concordance**); that which yields wine; (**Smith’s Bible Dictionary**).
- 8492-*Tirosh*, must or fresh grape juice; just squeezed out, (new or sweet).
- 7941-*Shekar*, intensely alcoholic, made from grapes, grain, dates-beer?
- 3342-*Yekeb*, wine-vat.
- 2562-(Chaldee) *chamar*, corresp. to 2561 wine.
- 1660-*Gath*, wine-press for holding grapes.
- 5435-*Sobeh*, drink, drunken.
- 2561-*Chemer*, from 2560, wine as fermenting. *Chamar*, thick sticky (mixed) syrup, **Smith’s Bible Dictionary** says the pure blood of the grape, red wine.
- 6071-*Asis* must, fresh grape-juice, new, sweet wine, that which flows from the vat before treading begins.
- 6025-*Enab*, to bear fruit.

It is readily apparent no clear conclusion can be assumed from the various words translated wine in the Old Testament. There is no clear agreement on the exact meaning of fermented or unfermented from the Hebrew words. The context and usage of the word in Scripture must be relied upon.

Except for the Hebrew *yayin* and *shekar*, the other words could easily be understood as unfermented or reconstituted grape juice. *Shekar* is said to be from either grapes or grains like wheat and barley and probably represents an alcoholic drink such as beer.

Both *tirosh* or *asis* are probably the most likely words equivalent to our English “must.” Must is the fresh juice squeezed from the grape as it first flows from the vat before the treading begins. *Chamar* could also indicate a sweet syrup made from grapes and unfermented.

When we read in some commentary or history alleging that upon their return from Babylon, the Jews added wine to the observance of Passover, we must wonder what Hebrew word was used for the drink. With the exception of *yayin* and *shekar*, all of the words we have examined could possibly refer to unfermented grape juice.

New Testament Words for Wine

There are two words in the New Testament which must be examined and properly understood. The first is found only once as wine, on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came and caused much excitement. Each one heard the evangel in his own tongue:

Cretans and Arabians—we hear them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of Yahweh. And they were all amazed and were in doubt, saying one to another, "What meaneth this?" Others mocking said, "These men are full of new wine (Greek, gleukos)," Acts 2:11-13.

1098-*Gleukos*, must, new wine. This is the only place where *gleukos* appears as wine in the **King James Bible**. It apparently can be an inebriating drink, although it is considered freshly squeezed juice of the grape.

3631-*Oinos*, equivalent to the Hebrew, *yayin*. **Unger's Bible Dictionary** says, “Comprehending every sort of wine.” **Young's** says, “wine, grape juice.” **Smith's Bible Dictionary** simply says, “wine.” From these and other sources, *oinos* can be a generic term and mean either grape juice or fermented wine depending upon the context. Mathew 9:17 clearly implies grape juice when used with the word “new” in the following:

Neither do men put new wine (oinos) into old wineskins, else the wineskins burst and the wine runneth out and the skins perish. But they put new wine (oinos) into new wineskins, and both are preserved, Matthew 9:17. See also Mark 2:22 and Luke 5:37-38.

Examples of *oinos* as fermented wine is found in the following: *And be not drunk with wine (oinos), wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit,* Ephesians 5:18. *Likewise must the deacons be serious, not double-tongued, not given to much wine (oinos), not greedy for filthy lucre,* 1 Timothy 3:8.

Yahshua's Example

Perhaps the best guide we have in learning what should be used for the Passover is to study the Savior's actions and see what we can learn from His example. Surely, He would show us the proper way we are to remember His death:

- *And as they were eating, Yahshua took bread and blessed it and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." And He took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that Day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom,"* Matthew 26:26-29.
- *And as they ate, Yahshua took bread, and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And He said unto them, "This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of Yahweh,"* Mark 14:22-25.
- *And when the hour had come, He sat down and the twelve apostles with Him. And He said unto them, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I will not anymore eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of Yahweh." And He took the cup, and gave thanks and said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of Yahweh shall come." And He took bread, and gave thanks and broke it and gave it unto them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me." Likewise also He took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you,* Luke 22:14-20.

Note that in every instance when making reference to the cup Yahshua did not use the word for wine *oinos*. Nor did He say the cup held *gleukos*. Instead we read His words were “fruit of the vine,” which in the Greek is *gennema*, **Strong’s** 1081; from 1080; offspring; by analogy produce: fruit, generation.

***Oinos* (degraded: *oxos*) Versus Fruit of the Vine**

An interesting study which may help to determine what was in the Passover cup is to answer the question whether Yahshua did indeed drink either of wine or “fruit of the vine” before His death. He said He would not “drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of Yahweh shall come” (Matt. 26:29b). Did He drink either of the two before He died? The one He did NOT drink of would logically be in the cup used at Passover:

1. First He was offered *oinon* and myrrh, (Mark 15:22-23);
2. He was offered vinegar, *oxos* and gall (Matt. 27:33);
3. He was then offered sour wine, *oxos* (Luke 23:36); sour wine, *oxos* (Matt. 27:48).
4. In John 19:30 we read, *When Yahshua therefore had received the vinegar, He said, "It is finished;" and He bowed His head and expired.* He thirsted (v. 28) and received the vinegar (*oxos*).

After drinking the vinegar (sour wine), Yahshua passed from the land of the living. There is no record that Yahshua drank of the “fruit of the vine” while impaled. He finally accepted the vinegar. Both sour wine and vinegar are from the Greek *oxos* which is a cheap fermented wine

which was usually drunk by the soldiers. Thus, we see that the Savior drank the intoxicating wine *oinos* just before He died. He did not drink of the “fruit of the vine” which we conclude was in the Passover cup. He said He would drink of the “fruit of the vine” in the Kingdom! (Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25).

To drink the fruit of the vine is obviously an expression used in the Old Testament in referring to drinking the juice of the grape. The butler tells his dream to Joseph:

And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand, Genesis 40:11.

Symbols of Blood in Scripture

The Bible recognizes grape juice as blood in the following verse:

Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine, he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes, Genesis 49:11.

The blessings given to Judah are so great that the hills will be covered with grapevines and so plentiful that animals can be tethered to them. The garments and clothing of the grape gatherers will be spattered by the juice of the grapes spurting out, their garments stained the color of blood. Notice how Yahweh blessed Israel by providing: *Butter of cows and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape,* Deuteronomy 32:14.

The pure juice of the grape was given to the priest in the tithes and offerings: *And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the maw. The firstfruit also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him,* Deuteronomy 18:3-4.

The word wine is from the Hebrew *tirosh* which is the freshly pressed juice from the winepress. *Tirosh* is also used in the offerings of firstfruits in the following: 2 Chronicles 31:4-5; Nehemiah 10:37-39, 13:5, 12.

The juice of the grape is pictured often in both Old and New Testaments as blood, both of the righteous and otherwise:

- *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this that is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Why art thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine vat? "I have trodden the wine press alone; and of the people there was none with Me. For I will tread them in Mine anger and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment,"* Isaiah 63:1-3.
- *And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, "Thrust in thy sickle and reap; for the time has come for thee to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in Heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in thy sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe."*

And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine press of the wrath of Elohim. And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out of the wine press, even unto the horse bridles, for the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs, Revelation 14:15-20.

- *And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword with which He shall smite the nations, and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and He treadeth the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty Elohim, Revelation 19:15.*

Wine...

Wine is given as an example of being driven or led of a spirit of the basest of carnal human nature. The world will be under the sway of the great whore of Revelation which the Bible implies are the effects of drunkenness from wine:

- *Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment upon the great whore who sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication, Revelation 17:1-2.*
- *For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication; and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies [pleasures], Revelation 18:3.*
- *And there followed another angel, saying, "Babylon is fallen! Fallen is that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication," Revelation 14:8.*
- *Babylon hath been a golden cup in Yahweh's hand, that made all the earth drunken; the nations have drunk of her wine; therefore the nations are mad, Jeremiah 51:7.*

Yahweh's wrath is also likened to wine which is poured out in His full fury:

- *The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of Elohim, which is poured out unmixed into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb, Revelation 14:10.*
- *And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and great Babylon came to remembrance before Elohim, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath, Revelation 16:19.*

Drink Offering

The drink offering was a part of a hin of wine which was offered with other offerings, but was not drunk by neither the offeror or the priests:

- *And with the one lamb a tenth part of flour mingled with a fourth part of a hin of beaten oil, and a fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink offering, Exodus 29:40.*
- *And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenths part of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto Yahweh for a sweet savor; and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, a fourth part of a hin, Leviticus 23:13.*
- *And a fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink offering shalt thou prepare with the burnt offering or sacrifice, for one lamb, Numbers 15:5.*

- *And for a drink offering thou shalt offer a third part of a hin of wine for a sweet savor unto Yahweh, Numbers 15:7.*

Paul's Corinthian Letter

In rehearsing the importance of the Passover observance, Paul does not say what was in the cup except that it was the symbol of Yahshua's blood:

In the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, saying, "This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Master's death until He come," 1 Corinthians 11:25-26.

Paul chastises the people at Corinth who come together to eat the Passover who do so as if it were a festive occasion; a festival or celebration of pagan gaiety and joy instead of a solemn occasion. He scolds them for selfishly consuming the food before all can gather together. This means some are left hungry and another "drunken." This latter adjective is assumed to prove that alcoholic wine was served at their gatherings:

When ye therefore come together into one place, this is not to eat the Master's Supper. For in eating, every one taketh his own supper ahead of another; and one is hungry and another is drunken, 1 Corinthians 11:20-21.

The fallacy behind such reasoning is to say the Greek word *methuo* means only "to be drunk." However, the word is used comparing fullness of drink to fullness of food. The sense is better fitted to mean satiated, rather than drunken. The overfilled man is compared to the underfilled man.

Adam Clarke's Commentary points out: "The people came together, and it appears brought their provisions with them; some had much, others had less; some ate to excess, others had scarcely enough to suffice nature. 'One was hungry, and the other was drunken, *methuei*, was filled to the full;' this is the sense of the word in many places of Scripture."

Commentators have pointed out that Paul is very careful about not stating wine was in the cup in his dissertation from 1 Corinthians 11:18-34. Not once in 16 verses does he mention wine was in the cup, nor does he state exactly it was. Yahshua said it was juice of the grape.

Preserving Grape Juice

There is an erroneous, but prevailing opinion, that grape juice cannot be kept from the fall of the year until the next spring. Several years ago, a study was made by a Sacred Name group to determine whether grape juice could be preserved from the fall until the following spring. It was an unbiased study, but most were predisposed to settle on wine as the drink for Passover.

Questionnaires were sent to both wine and grape juice suppliers asking the following:

1. If the juice of grapes were properly sealed in an airtight container, would it ever ferment and turn to wine or vinegar through natural enzymes? If so, how much time would elapse?
2. If it is possible today to avert fermentation, would it have been possible 2,000 years ago in Palestine?

3. We are informed grape juice could have been preserved for a period of nine or so months by placing the freshly squeezed juice in wineskins, sealing them with beeswax. Could this be possible?

As might be expected the responses were evenly divided; grape juice suppliers were positive in replying grape juice could be preserved for prolonged periods. Wine manufacturers were skeptical. A grape juice supplier added it would be very possible to preserve grape juice in Palestine 2,000 years ago for the grapes were a very sweet variety, over 35 Brix. Also, air pollution was much less than today. Airborne spores and dust were less, with minimal contamination likely even with their primitive methods. This reply was from a Jewish company. Many tombs of the Egyptian Pharaohs have been opened to reveal a great deal of preserved food still palatable in that torrid climate. Israel grew up in Egypt and would be familiar with food preservation.

Those favoring wine would be skeptical of the above report if that were all we could offer; one might not be convinced. There are a few more facts we must add to the occasion. If one is personally opposed to drinking wine for any purpose, he/she has no right to instill that opinion as the final conclusion to a Biblical answer. Yahweh's Word must prevail.

Preservation Anciently

"Unfermented grape juice is a very difficult thing to keep without the aid of modern antiseptic precautions, and its preservation in the warm and not over-cleanly conditions of ancient Palestine was impossible," so reads the *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 5, page 3086. Many people believe this is a true statement without ever checking into the facts. The entire concept is wrong! Note the following account by Josephus tells of the preservation of fruit and grain by the Jews at the fortress Masada:

"Here was laid up corn in large quantities, and such as would subsist men for a longtime; here was also wine and oil in abundance, with all kinds of pulse and dates heaped up together; all which Eleazar found there, when he and His Sicarii got possession of the fortress by treachery.

"These **fruits were also fresh and full ripe, and not inferior to such fruits newly laid in**, although they were little short of a hundred years from the laying (of) these provisions (by Herod), till the place was taken by the Romans; nay, indeed, when the Romans got possession of those fruits that were left, they found them not corrupted all that while; nor should we be mistaken if we supposed that the air was here the cause of their enduring so long." Josephus, Jewish Wars 7,8,4, William Whiston, *Josephus Complete Works*, p. 599.

Bad Wine

A general misconception is that ancient peoples had no problem preserving fermented wine as compared to unfermented grape juice. The truth is fermented wines are subject to a number of infections which allow them to become acid, malodorous and moldy, or turn into vinegar. *Pliny's Natural History*, p. 14, 26, states, "it is a peculiarity of wine among liquids to go moldy or else to turn into vinegar, and whole volumes of instructions how to remedy this have been published." The discovery of pasteurization has changed all this.

Marcus Cato (234-150 B.C.E.) cautioned wine-buyers to test the wine in jars within three days to assure it was neither musty nor sour. This shows how quickly wine is subject to turn sour or musty. To new wine, boiled-down must from untrod grapes, or salt or marble dust, resin was to be used to help preserve wine. Other authors suggest preservatives such as lime, sulphur fumes, or crushed iris. The use of all these ingredients shows that preservation of wine was more complex than many assume.

Preservation of Fruit of the Vine

As already mentioned, grape juice contains two leading ingredients, glucose or grape sugar and albumen, both of which favor the fermentation process. The decaying of the albumen, which is found in the lining of the skin and in the envelope of the seed of the grape, affords conditions for the multiplication of yeast germs which mix with those already present in the air and release a chemical enzyme capable of breaking down the grape sugar into two forms ethyl alcohol, and carbon dioxide gas. Four major methods are used to preserve grape juice fresh and unfermented:

1. Boiling the juice down to a syrup
2. Separation of the fermentable pulp by filtration
3. Cold storage such as a pool of water
4. Sulphur fumigation before sealing

Sulphur fumigation is widely used to prevent fermentation. Jars are nearly filled with unfermented grape juice, then burning sulphur dioxide in the empty portion, and sealing the jars quickly while the sulphur fumes are present. One can also pour the juice into jars heavily treated with sulphur fumes, then seal jars.

Columella, *On Agriculture*, 120, 1. describes the cold storage, "Before the grape-skins are put under the press, take from the vat some of the freshest possible must and put it in a new wine-jar; then daub it over and cover it carefully with pitch, that no water may enter in. Then sink whole flagon in a pool of cold, fresh water so that no part of it is above the surface. Then after 40 days take it out of the water. The must will then keep sweet for as much as a year." He adds, "for as long as it is properly cold, so long will it remain in good condition."

A widely publicized formula for keeping the must or first juice to be collected from the grape is often quoted in other biblical sources by Cato: "If you wish to keep grape juice through the whole year, put the grape juice in an amphora, seal the stopper with pitch, and sink in the pond. Take it out after thirty days; it will remain sweet the whole year."

More Proofs of Grape Juice

Note the influence of the Roman Catholics in the following admission from *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. 1904 edition, s, v, "J-sus," vol 5, p. 165:

"According to the synoptic Gospels, it would appear that on the Thursday [?] evening of the last week of his life J-sus with his disciples entered Jerusalem in order to eat the Passover meal with them in the sacred city; if so the wafer and wine of the mass or the communion service then instituted by Him as a memorial would be the unleavened bread and the unfermented wine of the Seder service."

Christian groups admit the proper ingredient in the cup is unfermented juice of the grape:

The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, 1978), vol. 8a, pp.532-533

A heavenly voice instructs the local Bishop Plato, saying: “Read the Gospel and bring as an offering the holy bread; and having pressed three clusters from the vine into a cup, communicate with me as the [Sovereign Master Yahshua] showed us how to offer up when He rose from the dead on the third day.” Acts and Martyrdom of St. Matthew the Apostle.

The use of unfermented wine is well-documented especially among such Eastern Churches as the Abyssinian Church, the Nestorian Church of Western Asia, the Christians of St. Thomas in India, the Coptic monasteries in Egypt, and the Christians of St. John in Persia, all of which celebrated the [Master’s] Supper with unfermented wine made either with fresh or dried grapes. ***J-sus and Wine***, Samuele Bacchiocchi, pp. 50. We also recommend Samuele’s book called ***Wine in The Bible***, which covers this subject in more detail.

Summary of "Wine or Grape Juice for Passover"

- A cup or drink is a man-made addition for the Old Testament Passover.
- The drink offering was never consumed by the priest.
- Both fermented wine and unfermented Grape Juice need special attention to be preserved.
- Wine can turn to vinegar, as can grape juice.
- Nowhere in the New Testament do we find the cup contained *oinos*.
- “Fruit” is the produce, “wine” is a by-product.
- Grape juice is a symbol of blood and is so stated in Scripture.
- Would not the “days” of “unleavened” include both bread and drink?

While this study shows the unfermented juice of the grape should be the contents of the Passover cup, in general, we are not against drinking fermented wine (Duet. 14:26; 1 Tim 5:23). But we are warned by Scripture against drunkenness (Gal. 5:21; 1 Cor. 6:10). Neither should we flaunt drinking strong drink before others who may be offended (Matt. 18:6-7; 1 Thess. 5:22).

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