

Defender

“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

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Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Prefatory Hints: To the Other Epistles

Alexander Campbell

These hints do not constitute anything like Prefaces to the Epistles; but in subordination to the principles suggested in the General Preface, may be of some use to the studious reader of this volume.

Paul's Two Letters to the Corinthians

1. In Acts 18 we have a history of the conversion of the Corinthians, and Paul's residence among them.

2. It appears from this history, and from the first letter, that the congregation in Corinth was composed of Jews and Gentiles, and that the greater number were Gentiles.

3. From the Epistle itself it may be learned, as well as from extrinsic sources of information, that the Corinthians paid great respect to the wisdom of the philosophers, and to the eloquence of the rhetoricians, and that, in their morals, they were a very dissolute and licentious people. Such was the common reputation of the Corinthians before their calling.

4. It is also evident, that there were schisms in that congregation, occasioned by one or more factious persons of Sadducean principles, and admirers of Pagan philosophy, who attempted to rival the Apostle, in the

affection and veneration of the members of this congregation.

5. That these factious leaders had succeeded in part: yet still there remained a number unmoved from their attachment to the Apostle, and confidence in him.

6. That a letter had been written by these to the Apostle, acquainting him with their situation, and soliciting information from him on certain topics.

From these *circumstances* of this congregation, and from the exhortations of the Apostle, it is very apparent, that his chief *design* in writing the first letter, was to support his own authority, dignity, and reputation; to vindicate himself from the aspersions and calumnies of the factious; and to diminish the credit and influence of those aspiring demagogues and leaders, by exhibiting their errors and miscarriages; and thus to withdraw from them the respect and admiration of the party they had formed. To these topics he confines himself to the end of the sixth chapter; and occasionally, when discussing other topics, he aims a blow at the factionists, to the close of the letter.

In managing this controversy he is very dexterous. He shows all that philosophy and rhetoric could achieve, from a fair statement of what they had achieved; and proves, beyond all doubt, that without a *verbal revelation* from God the philosopher and rhetorician must have continued in the dark, with regard to the knowledge of God. He takes their own reproachful terms uttered against him, his mission, and doctrine, and glories in them; in what they called the foolishness of proclaiming life through a crucified person. In this way he draws off the affections of the people, who had renounced Paganism, from those leaders who had extolled themselves, by exhibiting their attainments in the philosophy of the Greeks.

He then adverts to the disorders in this congregation, which he imputes to these leaders, and shows that the immoralities in members of this community were, in a certain way, chargeable to these factious persons; and proves, beyond all doubt, that a divided people are generally a corrupt people; or, at least, that vicious practices are either the result or concomitants of schisms and faction.

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Notes From The Editor

Michael
Hatcher

Email address:
mhatcher@gmail.com

Worship

In considering our worship of God, we learn that Yahweh is worthy of worship because of His nature. There are more passages speaking of Yahweh's holiness than any other part of His character. Thus, it is obvious we cannot discuss every one in this article; however, to simply mention a few. The Psalmist writes: "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name" (Psa. 111:9). God is intrinsically holy and thus He is to be revered. Later David would state, "The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works" (145:17).

A major teaching in Leviticus is the fact that God is holy: used 87 times in the book. Israel was to be a holy people to God (see Lev. 11, 19, 20). The only way they could be holy, since they were sinful, was by the shedding of blood (which is the way we can be holy but instead of the blood of bulls and goats it is by the blood of Christ). Peter would call upon this and state of Christians: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:15-16). This was a quotation from Leviticus pointing out God is holy.

Holy carries the basic idea of being separate or separated, as Vine puts it, "fundamentally signifies sep-

arated." While it is used of both things and man, when it is used of God it carries the idea of being separated from sin. This is the statement of John when he writes, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). *Darkness* represents sin; *light* would be the absence of sin. So, in saying "God is light," John is revealing that God's nature is without sin and there is absolutely no sin in Him. God's nature is not diluted in any way with evil, wickedness, iniquity, or sin. James uses the same figure, when he writes, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jam. 1:17). He is the Father of lights and there is no change or alteration with Him; there is no evil or sin whatsoever in Him.

Habakkuk recognized the holy nature of God, but it concerned him that God was going to use the Babylonians, who were more wicked than the Israelites, to punish them. Thus, he makes the statement regarding God and His nature as he asks his question of God: "*Thou art* of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth *the man that is more righteous than he?*" (Hab. 1:13). After the four living creatures go about saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come," we see the 24 elders falling down and worshipping (Rev. 4:8-10). Yahweh is to be worshipped because He is holy.

Another characteristic of God's nature is that of being righteous. In a passage we previously considered,

the sweet singer of Israel wrote, "The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works" (145:17). So, not only is Yahweh holy, David declares that He is righteous in all His ways. In a Psalm of gratitude for deliverance, it states about God, "Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful" (116:5). Ezra prays to Yahweh confessing Judah's faithlessness and contrasting His faithfulness and saying He is righteous: "O LORD God of Israel, thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this" (Ezra 9:15). The apostle John encourages us, "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous" (1 John 3:7).

Yahweh had determined to destroy Sodom, Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain primarily for their sin of homosexuality (Sodomy). After revealing that Abraham and Sarah would have a son, Moses writes, "And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" (Gen. 18:17). God reveals it to Abraham saying: "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know" (18:20-

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

21). Abraham, knowing his nephew lived in Sodom and being concerned about him, asks God, "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?... That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee (18:23, 25).

Abraham knew that God always did what was right or just. Being right or just is the basic root of *righteousness*. It applies itself to doing or acting in a right or just way. How-

ever, Abraham apparently could not reconcile in his mind God destroying the righteous with the wicked. That, to his mind, would not be right. Thus, he asks Yahweh, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (18:25). The answer to such a question is that God will always do right because He is righteous. Being righteous, Yahweh will reward good and will punish evil. The Sodomites were evil and it was right to punish them. Abraham did not have difficulty with God punishing them. However, what about those who

were not evil and were righteous before God? How could God be righteous and punish those who were righteous as this would be evil. So, Abraham asks God if He would spare the city for 50 righteous but finally lowers that to 10 righteous found there. The specific point here is that God will always do right because His nature is that of righteousness.

In our next installment, Lord willing, it is important to notice another aspect of God's nature that makes Him worthy of worship.

MH

Continued from Page 1

The principal items in the subsequent part of the first letter are so easily distinguished, and so different from each other, that, in the paragraphs in which they are presented in this version, they are marked with sufficient plainness. He treats, successively, on the incompatibility of lawsuits amongst Christians; on married and single life; on eating of meats offered to idols; on his call, mission, right, and authority as an Apostle. He lays before them the fate of the fathers of the nation, who, while they professed subordination to, and were participants of, the ordinances of that worship, were not upright in heart before God; but, in fact, rebels against his authority. He next censures their departure from the meaning and design of one of the Christian institutes, viz: the Lord's Supper; treats of spiritual gifts, disproves the Sadducean hypothesis, and removes objections adduced against the resurrection of the dead; and concludes with directions for collections for the poor saints in Jerusalem, with exhortations and salutations.

Having tested his *power* in Corinth by the first letter, and hearing of its success from Titus, he takes courage, writes a second letter, speaks more boldly of himself, and deals more severely and sharply with his opponents. In this he aims at the extermination of the faction, which he had attacked and weakened in his first letter. He makes good all his claims to the respect, veneration, and submission of the Corinthians; strips his antagonists of every pretext; and, by the most pathetic recital of his own history, and exhortations to unity and peace, closes his communications to this large and eminent congregation.

Galatians

The design of this letter is pretty similar to that of the epistle to the Romans; but directed more to a certain class of Judaizers, who aimed at bringing the congregations in Galatia under the law. It is not so comprehensive as the letter to the Romans; but much fuller on one or two topics engrossed in that epistle. Having been the founder of these congregations in Galatia, he adopts a style

quite different from that used in the epistle to the Romans, and speaks more in the style of a teacher to his own pupils. The gifts which the Holy Spirit conferred by his hands, the covenant with Abraham, the law at Sinai, the promise of Canaan, are the principal topics from which the Apostle Paul argues in this letter.

Ephesians

1. The account of the conversion and gathering of this congregation is recorded Acts 19th and 20th chapters.

2. Paul was a prisoner in Rome when he wrote this letter, and those to the Colossians and Philippians. He was imprisoned because of the truths he taught concerning the calling of the Gentiles, the abrogation of the Jewish constitution and law, or the development of that secret which was, in an especial manner, intrusted to him, as the Apostle to the Gentiles; which is summarily comprehended in one sentence, viz: Christ to the Gentiles, or proclaimed among them, THE HOPE OF GLORY.

3. In this letter he rather declares this grand secret, than attempts the

proof of it; and, in thanksgivings and prayers to God, extols the wisdom and goodness exhibited in this procedure.

He is very sublime in his thanksgivings to God for his goodness to the Gentiles, from the fact, that he had *before* the law, (yea, *before* the formation of the world,) determined to bless them under the reign of his Son, to call them to the honor of being *his* people, to give them the privilege of adoption, and to purify them for an inheritance in that world, of which Canaan was but a type. He declares that God's original design and plan, was not only to magnify his benevolence and favor, but also to reduce everything in heaven and earth under one head—viz: Jesus his Son. The proofs of the eternal purpose of calling the Gentiles, the Apostle lays before them in the statement of facts:

1. That the good tidings of salvation to the Gentiles, called *the gospel of their salvation*, had been confirmed by his own sufferings in proclaiming it, and by the miracles which he wrought in attestation of it.

2. That the Gentiles, who believed his message, were sealed by the same Holy Spirit which was promised by the Jewish Prophets; which was to them who did not believe, an evidence of the truth; and in them who believed, a confirmation that the Gentiles were now become the people of God.

3. That the former condition of the Gentile world, contrasted with the state, character, views, and feelings of those who had already believed, was a full proof to them of the riches of that favor, shown to them through the mere good pleasure of God.

4. From which he argues indirectly the abrogation of the Mosaic

rites and constitution, and then declares the fact.

5. He then declares the noble design of breaking down the wall of separation to be God's purpose, for making of both people a new, honorable, and happy society. This is the grand topic kept continually in view through this epistle; and from this the Apostle deduces numerous exhortations to the Gentiles and Jews to maintain unity and peace, and to cultivate that purity which comports with the character of the adopted sons of God. He sums up the reasons which should constrain the disciples in Ephesus to maintain unity and peace: for, whether Jews or Gentiles, Barbarians, Scythians, bondmen or freemen, they were but *one body* under Christ, the head; there was *one spirit* which animated this one body, *one hope* presented in the calling of both people, *one Lord* of both people, *one faith* which they mutually entertained and confessed, *one immersion* in which they mutually put on Christ, and renounced every other leader or chief, and *one God and Father* of all —Jews and Gentiles. Thus the main design of this letter is very apparent, and it all admirably comports with it, and can be easily understood, when viewed in this light; but on any other hypothesis, it is dark and unintelligible.

Colossians

This letter being written during the same imprisonment, for the same cause, and shortly after the preceding, is much in the same spirit, style, and design. Acts 19:10, shows how the gospel spread through Asia. Some of the Jews of Phrygia, in which the city of Colosse was, were present in Jerusalem on Pentecost. It is devoted to the development of the same secret, and designed to illus-

trate the purpose declared in the preceding epistle. It puts the Colossians, whether Jews or Greeks, on their guard against the attempts of the Judaizers, whether attacking them through the law, or through that philosophy by which both Jews and Greeks were so easily captivated: and which were altogether repugnant to the spirit and design of the Christian institution, and incompatible with the fullness of Christ, and their completeness in him.

Philippians

Acts 16 affords us some account of the introduction of the gospel into Philippi. Paul visited this place in his tour through Macedonia, Acts 20. After subtracting what was peculiar in the circumstances of the disciples at Philippi, the scope and design of this epistle are easily seen from a perusal of it, and already hinted in the foregoing observations on the two preceding epistles.

Thessalonians

Luke informs us in the Acts of Apostles, chapter 17, of the introduction of the good news of the Messiah into Thessalonica. The chief topics introduced in this letter, show that its design was to animate the Thessalonians with such considerations as might induce them boldly and constantly to persevere in the faith, which they had received and confessed amidst much persecution. Nothing could be better calculated to produce such an effect, than the method pursued by the Apostle. His exhortations naturally proceed from what he advances on the divine original of the Christian religion, which he demonstrates:

1. From the many and great miracles by which it was confirmed, chapter 1 verse 6.

2. From the character, behavior, and views of the first promulgators of the Christian faith.

3. From the purity of the doctrine and morality of the Christian religion.

4. From the resurrection of Jesus.

From these topics, and from the assurance he gives of the resurrection and glorification of the saints, and the rewards to be bestowed by the Author of the Christian faith, and Judge of the world, on the faithful, at his coming, he comforts the minds of the Thessalonians, and exhorts them to perseverance.

Either from the person who carried the first epistle, or from some other source, the Apostle had heard (2 The. 3:11) of the state of affairs in this congregation, and writes to them a second letter, predicated upon the information he had received. This letter is evidently designed to correct a mistake, which had been propagated by some false teachers, and under pretense of a letter from the Apostle Paul, purporting that the Apostle expected the end of the world or the day of judgment soon to arrive—before that generation passed away. In correcting this mistake, the Apostle delivered some prophecies to the Thessalonians, respecting events which must transpire before the termination of the world; particularly, he predicts the grand apostasy and defection from the Christian faith, which was to be of long continuance.

He also heard of some disorders in this congregation. Some had given up their calling or employment, and neglected to labor for their own maintenance. These he sharply reproves, and exhorts to industry in their business. With these designs, this letter appears to have been written

Timothy

Timothy was left in Ephesus by the Apostle Paul, for certain purposes, which Paul declares in the commencement of his first letter to him; and now he writes to him for the purpose of instructing him how he should proceed in Ephesus, to answer the design he had in leaving him there. In what character Timothy was left in Ephesus, and Titus in Crete, may be easily learned from the letters inscribed to them. That they were to act as agents for the Apostle is very apparent; and, that they were not ordained, as elders of bishops were usually ordained in other congregations, requires no other evidence than a superficial perusal of these letters. Timothy and Titus were to perform all those duties which the Apostle Paul would have performed, or was commissioned to perform in his own person. The directions to Timothy in the first epistle, are of a peculiar character, and suggest much useful information to Christians of every age:

1. Timothy was to *teach* those who were already teachers in Eph-

esus, not to teach differently from the Apostles. He was to charge them to desist from teaching some things which they were teaching and countenancing in this congregation, and particularly those who were desiring to be teachers of the law.

2. Timothy was to carry on a good warfare against all who taught differently from the Apostles.

3. He gives directions concerning the manner in which Timothy was to have some part of the worship and edification of the congregation conducted.

4. He instructs him in the qualifications which bishops and deacons should possess.

5. He forewarns him of a great apostasy from the truth, and characterizes those who should take the lead in it.

6. He gives directions how old and young men, old and young females, widows and elders should be treated in the congregation, and by him: how servants and masters should act toward each other; and concludes with the most solemn injunctions on Timothy, to keep that which was intrusted to him.

In his second and last letter to Timothy, he touches almost all the same topics; on some of which he enlarges, and particularizes some things to which Timothy was to attend; but the leading design of both letters is the same.

Decease

Die for a Lie?

Dennis (Skip) Francis

In the field known as Christian Apologetics most experts will tell you that the reactions of those who died back in the first century is one of the greatest proofs for the validity of the

Bible. Part of that discussion includes the fact that people simply will not go to their deaths so they can continue to believe a lie. The Apostles and others in their association went through a

radical change immediately following the resurrection of Jesus Christ. While many would try to suggest that the resurrection is simply a story told to foster acceptance among their follow-

ers, the fact that men like the Apostles, who were eyewitnesses of the resurrection, immediately changed their behavior upon each one's encounter with the resurrected Lord is itself significant.

When Jesus was arrested in the Garden, after a brief objection from His disciples, each and every one fled the scene in fear. "Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.' Then they all forsook Him and fled" (Mark 14:48-50). After Jesus began to appear alive from the tomb a very pronounced change came over the disciples, starting with their bravery in preaching the Gospel in public and continued to defend the Gospel for the rest of their natural lives. These men all died still defending and contending for the faith, even under threat of death. Even the forms their demises took were designed to utilize their natural fear by virtue of the level of pain and horror in front of them.

History reveals that all the Apostles save one, John, as well as various other prominent men of the church, like James the Lord's brother, died in horrible and painful ways, yet each and every one of them still professed their faith in the Lord. The threats of boiling in oil, crucifixion (even upside down, as with Peter), being stoned to death, drawn and quartered, and flayed, did nothing to dissuade them or cause them to give up their faith. Psychologists tell us that people simply will not go to their deaths for that which they know is a lie. This raises another question for those of us who are not eyewitnesses and live centuries later than the resurrection day; would you lose your own soul believing that

which is a lie? Will you believe a false doctrine for your own convenience to hold on to elements of the world and continue in sinful practices "for a season"? This proposes another difficulty regarding one element of the world that many brethren will believe they can continue in and will stretch and twist the Scriptures to justify their practice—the consumption of **beverage alcohol**.

I became a Christian just as I began my second term of service in the United States Air Force. Unfortunately, in 1972, the military had a culture that included several vices of which beverage alcohol was extremely common. Largely out of an effort to "fit in," I would regularly participate in the social occasions where beverage alcohol was common. Upon my conversion to Christ, it became my goal to be as righteous as possible which included eschewing things like beverage alcohol, tobacco use, and foul language that were all common attributes of military life.

Shortly after my conversion, I was invited to dinner at another Christian couple's home and alcoholic wine was served as though this was a common situation within the body of Christ, though they did acknowledge that all Christians were not united on the subject. I was also subsequently introduced to other brethren who believed alcohol to not be a problem "in moderation." Had I continued down that road it could easily have led to a return to my former lifestyle. After many years of study of the Word of God, I have come to realize that any amount of beverage alcohol consumption is sin.

I have read many different attempts to justify the consumption of beverage alcohol over the years and every one of them has proven themselves to be spurious at best. Whether

it is concluded that Jesus made up to 180 gallons of alcoholic wine to give to the already drunk celebrants at the wedding in Cana (John 2:1-10), or the notion that Paul admonishing Timothy to "use a little wine" for the sake of his stomach and "oft infirmities" also justifies the drinking of beverage alcohol for the Christian in social settings, such arguments ignore various problems of context and word translations. While these arguments continue to be commonly used, only recently have I heard the idea that Jesus Himself drank alcohol based on false charges, lies that were laid upon Him by the scribes and Pharisees. The argument that is made goes like this:

1. "Jesus drank alcohol.
2. Jesus never sinned.
3. Drinking alcohol cannot be sinful."

If any part of this argument can be proven to be false, the entire argument falls. This raises the most important part of this question: Did Jesus drink alcohol?

This discussion begins with a depiction of who John the Baptist was from the Gospel of Luke. Zacharias was a priest and would become the father of John the Baptist. He is described as being "stricken in years" and his wife, Elizabeth, was barren. An angel appeared to Zacharias while he was serving in the Temple and described to him how he and his wife were soon to have a child and described this child, John the Baptist, in terms similar to those that had taken the Nazarite vow. "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15). According to proponents of the doctrine in question, the connection between "wine" (*oinos*) and "strong drink" (*sikera*)

proves that alcohol is intended to describe both terms every time these terms are used together. Since the Koine Greek word *oinos* can refer to any product of the grape, including the “new wine” that is freshly pressed and has not fermented, it is context that must control whether or not alcohol is intended. In fact, the Nazarites were forbidden from taking any part of the grape. “he shall separate himself from wine and *similar* drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from *similar* drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins” (Num. 6:3). What stands out in this verse is that *wine* and *strong drink* are both used in the same context. [Editor’s note: in the LXX “wine” is from *oinos* and “strong drink” is from *sikera*.] Further examination of the intent of the verse demonstrates that *wine* included *vinegar*, *moist grapes*, and *dried grapes*, thus showing that putting *wine* alongside of *strong drink* does not prove that the only definition of *wine* that can be meant is alcohol only. Yet, this is what is argued by the proponents of Jesus drinking alcohol. In fact, the writer says so in the most forceful terms: “We absolutely know that ‘wine’ is alcoholic when in the same context as ‘strong drink’”. In fact, as shown by its inclusion in Numbers 6:3, that is something we absolutely do not know since the definition goes so much further in its depiction of what *wine* is meant.

The basic argument stems from the message that John the Baptist sent to Jesus as recorded in Matthew 11 and Luke 7, asking Him, in effect, “Are You the Coming One” or “should we look for another”? After Jesus responded in the positive and John’s disciples departed, Jesus began to berate the Pharisees and lawyers present saying the following: “For John the Bap-

tist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’” (Luke 7:33-34). The assumption is made by the writer that the response of Christ about Himself is true, and Jesus was drinking beverage alcohol. The key problem with this view concerns the validity of both conclusions. Was John the Baptist truly demon possessed? The conclusion is rather obvious that such cannot be true. Further, Christ is accused of more than one charge. Was Jesus a **glutton**? If He were a glutton, He would already have a sin problem because more is at stake here than alcohol consumption.

Is gluttony a sin? While this question cannot be answered in a direct way, there certainly are Scriptures that address the matter. “Hear, my son, and be wise; And guide your heart in the way. Do not mix with winebibbers, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat; For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags” (Pro. 23:19-21). The fact that Jesus was charged with this demonstrates it was considered sinful in the first century, yet the charge of gluttony is not valid or true in the case with Jesus. If Christ was not a glutton, what about His being a winebibber? Was Jesus a drinker of beverage alcohol?

The problem we are left with begins and ends with the validity or truth of the charges made against both Jesus and John the Baptist. If John was not possessed of a demon, and Christ was not a glutton, how can we conclude that He drank beverage alcohol? Jesus obviously ate and He obviously drank but can we conclude from this that He was a winebibber? As stated previously, the Greek word

for “wine” (*oinos*) refers to any juice produced by the grape. We have separated the terms in the English language but not so with the Greek. Jesus came drinking “wine,” but proof has not been provided that the wine involved was fermented. The fact is that if Jesus had been drinking alcoholic wine, He would have sinned and would not be the fit candidate to be the “Lamb of God” who must remain spotless.

Looking back at the three conclusions: 1. Jesus did **not** drink alcohol, 2. Jesus did not sin, and 3. Drinking beverage alcohol **is** a sin!

With all the hermeneutical gymnastics that have been used to try to allow any drinking of beverage alcohol cannot set aside the specific instructions given by God to abstain from alcohol. *Sober* is found nine times in the New Testament though it actually involves two different words. The Greek word *sophron* is used to depict being “sober minded.” “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2). *Sophron* differs in meaning from *nepho* (sober) which actually refers to “abstain from wine,” “be temperate,” or “free from intoxicants.” There simply is no getting around the fact all the verbal gymnastics in the world cannot set aside the fact that God’s Word given by divine inspiration, tells the Christian **five** times in the New Testament to “**be sober.**”

Jesus quoted two lies made concerning Him and one about John the Baptist. Men try to use those lies to somehow prove that beverage alcohol is not sinful. The question remains: “Are you willing to wager your eternal soul on that which stems from a lie?” “Would **you** die for a lie?”

Liberal, KS

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