

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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What kind of wine did jesus make?

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The New Testament is clear: Jesus turned water into wine (Jn. 2:1-11). Some see the first of Jesus' miracles as proving that Jesus Himself condones moderate drinking of wine or other intoxicating drinks. Since Jesus provided wine for the social occasion of a wedding, then surely the temperate use of wine or intoxicating drinks is not sinful.

One of the fallacies in this line of reasoning is that it takes a modern connotation of the word “wine” and connects it with the word as it appears in Jesus' Scripture. When we read or hear the word “wine”, we automatically think of an intoxicating drink. But to automatically thrust such a meaning on the text describing Jesus' first miracle is not being fare with the facts of how the word was used in the first century.

The Greek word translated “wine” is OINOS. It is generic in the sense that it can refer to wine that can cause intoxication or drunkenness, and it can denote the fresh juice of the grape. One must examine the context of the word to determine what kind of wine it is.

In the Greek translation of the Old Testament the word “oinos” is used in connection with Noah. “He drank the wine (oinos), and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent” (Gen. 9:21). In the New Testament, the Christian is warned, “be not drunken with wine (oinos), wherein is riot...” (Eph. 5:18). No doubt “oinos” is denoting intoxicating wine in these passages. The context clearly bears it out.

But we must also acknowledge that when Isaiah prophesies of “...no treader shall tread out wine (oinos) in the presses; I have made the vintage shout to cease” (Isaiah 16:10), the word “oinos” is referring to the fresh pressed juice of the grape. The same is true when Jesus speaks of putting “new wine” into old wine skins (Matt. 9:17). If new wine (oinos) is placed into old stiff containers, the new wine which will subsequently ferment will tear and all will be lost. It is clear from the context that the “new wine” has not fermented yet when Jesus says put it into new wine skins so both the new wine and skins can be preserved. Again, the context must determine if the word “wine” in the Bible is referring to an in-

toxicating drink or fresh grape juice.

What conclusions concerning the kind of wine must we make from the context of Jesus miracle in Cana. Whatever kind of wine Jesus provided, he provided between 120 and 180 gallons of it.— six waterpots each containing two to three firkins filled to the brim (Jn. 2:6-7). The steward of the feast after tasting of the wine, is able to recognize its quality as “good”, and seems to equate the situation at the wedding feast with people who have “drunk freely” (Jn. 2:10).

Since “oinos” can refer to the fresh juice of the grape, the kind of wine Jesus provided was probably not fermented. Seeing people who had already drunk freely so as to deplete the original provisions of wine, Our Lord surely would not have provided such an abundance of intoxicating wine putting souls in danger of committing the sin of drunkenness. Would Jesus put such a stumbling block before others? Remember, our connotation of the word “wine” is not necessarily what Jesus produced.