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# **Wine is Wine! or is it?**

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How does the Bible's use the term "wine", and what does it say about our use of it today?

# The Moderationist Argument: The Bible Supports Moderate Drinking

## ▪ Argument:

- ❑ Wine Defined: the alcoholic fermented juice of fresh grapes used as a beverage (Merriem-Webster) Like today's English, the Bible only refers to one kind of drink, alcoholic wine.
- ❑ The Bible says, "Go, eat your bread with joy, And drink your wine with a merry heart; For God has already accepted your works." (Ecc 9:7 NKJV)
- ❑ The Bible also says, "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit," (Eph 5:18 NKJV)

## ▪ Conclusion:

- ❑ Drinking alcohol is not sinful. The Bible celebrates wine as a divine blessing (Deut 12:17, Jd 9:13, Jer. 31:12-14, Ecc. 10:19, Joel 3:18). The sin is in its excess use to the point of drunkenness.

# The Moderationist Argument: A Problem in the Premise

Like today's English, the Bible only refers to one kind of wine, alcoholic.

- This entire argument is based on the premise that “wine is wine”. In other words, the Bible means fermented wine every time it is mentioned in the scriptures. The same way it is defined today is the same way it was viewed thousands of years ago. The assumption is that wine in the history of language, has always meant fermented wine.

# **Is There Only One Wine Mentioned in History and the Bible?**

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# The Moderationist Argument Refuted: Words Change Overtime

- Did you know that nice did not always mean pleasant?
  - It used to mean silly, foolish or simply.
- Did you know that silly did not always mean foolish?
  - It used to refer to something happy or blessed.
- Did you know that awful did not always mean something unpleasant?
  - It used to refer to something worthy of respect.
- Did you know that gay did not primarily mean homosexual?
  - It used to refer to someone who is lighthearted or happy.

# The Moderationist Argument Refuted: The History of the English Word Wine

Did you know that wine did not primarily mean fermented or alcoholic drink?

- Funk & Wagnalls New “Standard” Dictionary of the English Language (1955):
  - The fermented juice of the grape: in loose language the juice of the grape whether fermented or not.”
- Webster’s Dictionary (1828):
  - “Must” is defined as “new wine – wine pressed from the grape, but not fermented.”
- Chambers Cyclopedia (1750):
  - “Sweet wine is that which has not yet fermented.”

# The Moderationist Argument Refuted: The History of the English Word Wine

Did you know that wine did not primarily mean fermented or alcoholic drink?

- Benjamin Marin’s *Lingua Britannica Reformata or A New English Dictionary* (1748):
  1. “the juice of the grape.”
  2. “a liquor extracted from other fruits besides the grape.”
- Littleton’s *Latin Dictionary* (1678):
  - “Gleukos is new wine. Must is new wine; close shut up and not permitted to work.”

Could it be that at a time when there was duality to the word wine, that the writers of the King James Version Bible (1605-1611), had this same understanding that the word did not always and only mean fermented/alcoholic wine?

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# The Moderationist Argument Refuted: Primary uses of Wine in the OT Bible

- *Yayin* (140 times)
  - “from an unused root meaning to effervesce” (BDB 406)
- *Tirosh* (38 Times)
  - “must, fresh or new wine” (BDB 440)
- *Shekar* (23 Times)
  - “strong drink” (BDB 1016)

# The Moderationist Argument Refuted: A Survey of *Yayin*

- *In the Bible, Yayin was used to refer to both fermented and unfermented wine.*
- *Jewish Encyclopedia*
  - *Fresh wine before fermenting was called 'yayin mi-gat' (wine of the vat; sanh 70a)*

# The Moderationist Argument Refuted: A Survey of *Yayin*: Examine Jeremiah 40:10

- As for me, I will indeed dwell at Mizpah and serve the Chaldeans who come to us. But you, gather wine (*yayin*) and summer fruit and oil, put *them* in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that you have taken.” (NKJV)

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- Is it possible to gather fermented wine immediately from the vine?

# **The Moderationist Argument Refuted: A Survey of *Yayin*: Examine Isaiah 16:10**

- Gladness is taken away,  
And joy from the plentiful field;  
In the vineyards there will be no singing,  
Nor will there be shouting;  
No treaders will tread out wine (*yayin*) in the presses;  
I have made their shouting cease.

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I have made their shouting cease.
- Is it possible to crush grapes to immediately get wine?

# The Moderationist Argument Refuted: A Survey of *Yayin*: Examine Lamentation 2:11-12

- <sup>11</sup>My eyes fail with tears,  
My heart is troubled;  
My bile is poured on the ground  
Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people,  
Because the children and the infants  
Faint in the streets of the city.
- <sup>12</sup> They say to their mothers,  
“Where *is* grain and wine (*yayin*)?”  
As they swoon like the wounded  
In the streets of the city,  
As their life is poured out  
In their mothers’ bosom.

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Are the children asking for  
fermented/alcoholic wine?



# The Moderationist Argument Refuted: Primary uses of Wine in the NT Bible

- *Oinos*
  - Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *yayin*
- *Sikera*
  - Greek equivalent of *shekar* - strong drink (Luke 1:15)
- *Gleuchos vinos*
  - (sweet wine, *asis*) - wine in the early stages of fermentation (Acts 2:13)
- *Oxos*
  - Sour wine/vinegar mixed with water. Used as a cheap pain killer (see. Jn 19:29,30)

# The Moderationist Argument Refuted: A Survey of Oinos: Greek Culture

- *In the History and Bible, Yayin was used to refer to both fermented and unfermented wine.*
- *Aristotle the Greek Philosopher*
  - *In his book Meterologica, Aristotle refers to a sweet grape beverage (glukus) which “though called wine [oinos], it has not the effect of wine, for it does taste like wine and does not intoxicate like ordinary wine.”*
- *Athenaeus the Grammarian*
  - *In Deipnosophistai , he writes “the Mityleneans have a sweet wine [glukon oionon], what they called prodromos, and others call it protropos.”*
  - *In Deipnosophistai , he writes “Let him take sweet wine, either mixed with water or warmed, especially that kind called protropos, the sweet Lesbian glukus, as being good for the stomach; for sweet wine [oinos] does not make the head heavy.” (1 Tim 5:23)*

# The Moderationist Argument Refuted: A Survey of Oinos: Septuagint

- *The Septuagint is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew Bible. In other words, it is the Greek version of the Old Testament. It is very likely that the Jews of Jesus' day used the Septuagint as their Bible*
- *On the Septuagint, Author Ernest Gordon "In the Septuagint, the Hebrew word for grape-juice, tirosh, is translated at least 33 times by the Greek word oinos, wine, and the adjective 'new' is not present. Oinos without qualification, then, can easily mean unfermented wine in the New Testament."*

# The Moderationist Argument Refuted: A Survey of Oinos: Matthew 9:16-17

- No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. <sup>17</sup> Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

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# The Moderationist Argument Refuted: A Survey of Oinos: Matthew 9:16-17

- Traditional Thought: Old wine skins cannot hold new wine because it would burst under pressure. The belief is that this new wine was in a state of active fermentation and could be housed by new wineskin.
- The Encyclopedia Biblica rightly observes that “it is impossible that the must could ever have been put into skins to undergo the whole process of fermentation, as is usually stated, the action of the gas given off in the earlier stages of the process being much too violent for any skins to withstand.”

# The Moderationist Argument Refuted: A Survey of Oinos: Matthew 9:16-17

- Alexander B. Bruce points out, “Jesus was not thinking at all of fermented, intoxicating wine, but of ‘must,’ a non-intoxicating beverage, which could be kept safely in new leather bottles, but not in old skins which had previously contained ordinary wine, because particles of albuminoid matter adhering to the skin would set up fermentation and develop gas with an enormous pressure.”

# The Prohibitionist Argument: Conclusion

- The bible uses the term wine to mean either fermented or unfermented wine.
- The context (both historical and Biblical) helps with our understanding of the terms.
- The Bible does not advocate the moderation of drinking alcohol, but strongly encourages us to remain sober a vigilant in all things, avoiding even the appearance of evil.