

Personal Questions that the Bible Answers

Did Jesus drink wine, or alcoholic beverages, or grape juice?

Before we search the Scriptures for the answer to that question, we'll first realize an important fact found in the Old Testament. It's in the book of Numbers.

Here's the truth: There's only one group of people to whom the Bible explicitly said, "Never drink wine/alcohol!" **Q.** Do you know the name of that group? (Hint: People in this group vowed to "separate themselves" and be holy unto God by never eating or drinking anything from the grapevine. They also didn't cut their hair.) . . . **A.** They're called Nazirites (Read: [Numbers 6:1–4](#)).

Q. Which two famous people, in the Bible, were Nazirites?

A. Samson, . . . and . . . Hannah's son, Samuel. What do you remember about Samson's Nazirite characteristics? . . .

Q. What do you remember about the covenant that Hanna and Father God had shared? Do you recall Samuel's Nazirite characteristics?

Q. Was Jesus also a **Nazirite**? **A.** No, he wasn't a Nazirite. He was . . . a "Nazarene." A Nazarene is a native of the town of Nazareth, Israel ([Luke 18:37](#)). Jesus *never* took the Nazirite vow.

Q. Can you recall from John's gospel which miracle Jesus first performed? . . . **Q.** And, in which town did he perform it? . . .

A. Christ's first miracle was his **turning water into wine** at a wedding festival at Cana in Galilee. You might have seen that miracle performed on TV's *The Chosen* series, yes?

Q. In that episode, did you see Jesus actually drink wine? . . .

Jesus converted water to a fermented beverage: wine. According to Jewish wedding tradition, *fermented* wine was *always* served at weddings; if Jesus had provided only grape juice, the master of the feast would have protested. Instead, the master said that Jesus' new wine was better than what had been served earlier; it was apparently a "fine" wine. Read it here: [John 2:10–11](#).)

Of course, just because Jesus turned water into wine doesn't prove that he actually drank wine at the wedding. But, it would have been normal and acceptable for him to do so.

Q. So, does his turning water into wine for that big wedding reception prove anything? **A.** It proves that Jesus doesn't condemn fermented wine or the occasional drinking of it.

In **John 2:10**, the Greek word for the adjective “drunk” is *methuo*, meaning “to be drunken” or “intoxicated.” The master of the feast said that the wine Christ produced was able to intoxicate.

Methuo is the same word used in Luke's book: Acts of the Apostles. It was during the start of Pentecost. Many disciples from a variety of nations could understand what each other was saying in their own language; . . . everyone was amazed and delighted, jumping around *blissfully*. Nonbelievers who saw them accused those disciples of being *methuo* that morning: drunk. In the text, Peter was defending the apostles against accusations of being *methuo* or drunken. Read Peter's retort here: **Acts 2:8–15**.

Sinful people typically abuse what's essentially sinful. Bread and wine are not sinful, **but *gluttony and drunkenness* are** (Gluttony: read **Proverb 23:2**; Drunkenness: read **Ephesians 5:18**).

It's time to read a passage about how Jesus actually ate and drank: **Luke 7:33–34**. In both verses, Jesus compared John the Baptizer with himself, saying, “*For John the Baptist came, neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man [Jesus] came eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’*” In v. 33, Jesus contrasts John the Baptist's drinking no wine to his own drinking practice. He goes on to say that the religious leaders falsely accused him of “being a drunkard.”

Q. Does the Bible say that Jesus drank or ate too much?

A. The Bible acclaims that Jesus was never a drunkard, any more than he was a glutton who ate beyond his fill.

Q. Did Jesus ever commit a single sin? **A.** No! He lived a completely sinless life (Read [1 Peter 2:22](#)). Nevertheless, **Luke 7:33–34** strongly suggests that Jesus indeed partook of *alcoholic wine*. After all, in Jesus' own words (v. 34), "*The Son of Man came eating and drinking.*" As a result, he said, "People called me a drunkard." He didn't specify what he'd drunk, but, if he drank only water, no one would have called him a drunkard!

Out of his own mouth, Jesus said that *he did* drink wine or another fermented beverage. We've got to read each word of the following gospel accounts to remove doubt.

Perhaps the most obvious documentation of Jesus drinking *alcoholic wine* is found in three gospel accounts of his Last Supper. That final Passover celebration would have commonly included fermented wine. And, Christ participated in drinking from the Passover cup. These Scriptures use the term "fruit of the vine": [Matthew 26:27–29](#); [Mark 14:23–25](#); [Luke 22:17–18](#).

Look specifically at **Matt. 26:29**: "*I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.*" The key word is "again" (Greek: *palin*), meaning that he'd previously drunk fermented wine.

All Christians would agree that drunkenness is sinful. What's more, Christ himself warned against drunkenness when he told his disciples the [Parable of the Rich Fool](#) ([Luke 12:13–21](#)) who highlights to himself the carefree drive to "*drink and be merry.*"

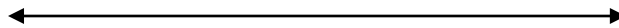
Note: There's a *positive* account in the biblical view of wine: God provides wine as something to delight in ([Psalm 104:14–15](#)).

There are plenty of warnings in God's words against alcohol abuse, such as the text of [Proverb 20:1](#), which says that sinful people are more likely to *abuse* wine, as opposed to using it *moderately*.

And, those who attempt to highlight Jesus' use of wine, so they can excuse their drunkenness, are in for a **big** surprise. They had better heed the warning Lord Jesus gave to his disciples in [Luke 12:45–46](#). That sobering warning comes from Jesus' [Parable of the Watchful Servants](#) [Read Warren's commentary on it [here](#).]

Enjoying a glass of wine or an alcoholic beverage is permissible for Christians and for Jesus. But, assuming you intend to keep to a biblical standard, all drinking should be done in moderation and never for the purpose of *methuo* or drunkenness.

Truly, what you believe about Jesus drinking — whether wine or grape juice — can affect your personal view of alcohol in general... but does it really matter what Jesus drank?



Question:

Did Jesus drink wine, or alcoholic beverages, or grape juice?
More importantly: Does it really matter?

Answer:

Yes. . . Jesus *probably* drank wine; “probably” because there isn't direct text that tells us conclusively that the wine Jesus drank was *alcoholic*. More than likely, it was alcoholic.

Christians who want to keep a biblical view of drinking wine should do as Jesus had done: drink alcohol when it's appropriate, in moderation; never drink into drunkenness, which is a sin. Jesus saw nothing wrong with drinking a little wine now and then. . . And, if he saw nothing wrong with its moderate use, we too should see nothing wrong with doing so.

* Open and print Warren's "[Primary and Secondary Theologies](#)."