

## **PROTESTANT TRANSUBSTANTIATION Part 1: Thesis; Biblical Witness**

**by Keith A. Mathison**

I've often heard Christians lament in connection with various disputed doctrines and practices, "If only the New Testament had simply taught this or that in one clear verse, we would believe it or do it." Or they will say, "There is so much confusion surrounding this doctrine or practice historically, we may never come to a consensus. If there had been universal consent throughout history, we could believe it." I would like to believe that these Christians are telling the truth. But there is one nagging problem.

Suppose you were informed that there was a doctrine or a practice that had abundantly clear support in Scripture – not just one verse or two, but several. Suppose you were also informed that this doctrine or practice had been the universal belief or practice of the church for over 1800 years. It had enjoyed universal consent without any trace of disagreement. Suppose you discovered that it had been agreed upon by every branch of orthodox Christianity. You might think the conditions so many Christians cry out for had been met in at least one area, and that at least on this one issue all Christians would joyfully concur without disputing.

Suppose you were informed that you were wrong to come to this conclusion, and that there were Christians today who openly and adamantly rejected this doctrine or practice. Suppose you discovered that the rejection of this doctrine or practice was, for the most part, limited to the United States and the last 150 years of church history. What would you conclude about their rejection of this doctrine or practice? Would your conclusion be any different if you discovered that the Christian group who rejects this doctrine or practice is primarily American Evangelicalism? What would you do if this doctrine or practice were rejected by your church? Would you demand that it be taught or practiced according to the clear teaching of the New Testament, and the universal teaching of the historic Church? Of course you would, if Scripture is your authority for faith and practice.

Would your conclusion change if you were informed that the particular doctrine or practice was the use of wine in the Lord's Supper?

### **THESIS**

The use of wine in the New Testament descriptions of, and prescriptions for, the Lord's Supper is unambiguously clear. It simply isn't a point of dispute

between competent biblical scholars. The use of wine in the Lord's Supper was also an undisputed practice for over 1800 years of church history. It was agreed upon by Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestants. Among Protestants it was agreed upon by Anglicans, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Baptists, and others. But today, in the United States, most Evangelical churches have, without any good reason for doing so, substituted grape juice for the biblically mandated and historically accepted element of wine. Surprisingly, this is common even among churches whose confessional standards clearly state that bread and wine are the elements to be used in the observation of the Lord's Supper. The substitution of grape juice for wine cannot be justified on any legitimate grounds. It cannot be justified biblically, and it cannot be justified historically. It can only be justified by the arbitrary setting aside of Scripture and centuries of church history in favor of an ascetic fundamentalism which sets itself up as a higher standard of purity and holiness than God's own word.

Rome teaches that when the bread and wine are consecrated by the priest, the elements are mysteriously transubstantiated or changed into the actual body and blood of Jesus. Many American Protestants teach that when the crackers and grape juice are blessed by the pastor, they are mysteriously transubstantiated into the proper elements of the Lord's Supper. In neither case is the sacrament properly administered. As the following pages will show, those churches which have replaced wine with grape juice in the Lord's Supper have done so despite the clear command of Scripture, the overwhelming testimony of church history, and the fact that the reasons they offer for doing so are inconsistent, arbitrary and unbiblical. The biblical duty of those churches is to renounce the man-made innovations to the Lord's Supper and immediately re-institute the biblically mandated elements of bread and wine.

## **BIBLICAL WITNESS**

We begin this inquiry by turning first to God's inspired, inerrant and authoritative Word. It is a well-known fact that one of the most commonly heard objections in many American churches to the use of wine in the Lord's Supper is that all alcoholic beverages are inherently evil and that any use of an alcoholic beverages is sinful. Because this assumption underlies many other suggested reasons for rejecting wine in the Lord's Supper, it must be proven conclusively from Scripture to be false. In the following paragraphs, it will be repeatedly shown that the Bible, while everywhere condemning the abuse of alcoholic beverages, nowhere states that the use of alcohol itself is evil. It will be proven that, in contradiction to the claims of these churches, Scripture itself declares that wine is a good gift from God meant to be thankfully enjoyed in moderation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr. *The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986) for a thorough biblical refutation of the prohibitionist arguments.

It will also be demonstrated that Jesus Himself not only made wine and drank wine, but that he instituted the sacrament of the Lord's Supper with wine.

## OLD TESTAMENT

1. Godly men give wine (*yayin*) as a gift:

“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, ‘Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.’ And he gave him a tenth of all” (Gen. 14:18-20).

2. God commands wine and strong drink to be brought as an offering to himself:

“Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two one year old lambs each day, continuously ... and there shall be one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine for a libation with one lamb” (Exod. 29:38,40).

“Its grain offering shall then be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire to the Lord for a soothing aroma, with its libation, a fourth of a hin of wine” (Lev. 23:13).

“And you shall prepare wine for the libation, one-fourth of a hin, with the burnt offering or for the sacrifice, for each lamb ... and for the libation you shall offer one-third of a hin of wine as a soothing aroma to the Lord ... and you shall offer as the libation one-half a hin of wine as an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the Lord” (Num. 15:5,7,10).

“Then the libation with it shall be a fourth of a hin for each lamb, in the holy place you shall pour out a libation of strong drink to the Lord” (Num. 28:7).

### Comment

God always and everywhere commands that only the best be offered to him as a sacrifice. Nothing unclean or unholy is ever to be offered to him. Yet God commands that wine be offered as a sacrifice. Therefore it is impossible that wine is inherently unclean or unholy.

### 3. Wine is a gracious blessing from God.

“Now may God give you of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and an abundance of grain and new wine” (Gen. 27:28).

“Then it shall come about, because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them, that the Lord your God will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your forefathers. And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you” (Deut. 7:12-13).

“And it shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil” (Deut. 11:13-14).

“You shall surely tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes out of the field every year. And you shall eat in the presence of the Lord your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the first-born of your herd and your flock, in order that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always. And if the distance is so great for you that you are not able to bring the tithe, since the place where the Lord your God chooses to set His name is too far away from you when the Lord your God blesses you, then you shall exchange it for money, and bind the money in your hand and go to the place which the Lord your God chooses. And you may spend the money for whatever your heart desires, for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the Lord your God and rejoice, you and your household” (Deut. 14:22-26).

“But the vine said to them, “Shall I leave my new wine, which cheers God and men, and go to wave over the trees?” (Judg. 9:13).

“He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the labor of man, so that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine which makes man’s heart glad, so that he may make his face glisten with oil, and food which sustains man’s heart” (Ps. 104:14-15).

“Honor the Lord from your wealth, and from the first of all your produce; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine” (Prov. 3:9-10).

“Behold the days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when the plowman will overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; when the mountains will drip sweet wine, and all the hills will be dissolved. Also I will restore the captivity of my people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them, they will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, and make gardens and eat their fruit” (Amos 9:13-14).

#### Comment

An abundance of wine is one of the covenant blessings graciously promised by God throughout Scripture if the people are obedient. It is inconceivable that God would tell his people that wine is one of the blessings of the covenant, if in fact it were actually a curse.

#### 4. Wine was enjoyed at David’s coronation banquet.

“All these, being men of war, who could draw up in battle formation, came to Hebron with a perfect heart, to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest also of Israel were of one mind to make David king. And they were there with David three days eating and drinking; for their kinsmen had prepared for them. Moreover those who were near to them, even as far as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, brought food on donkeys, camels, mules, and on oxen, great quantities of flour cakes, fig cakes and bunches of raisins, wine, oil, oxen and sheep. There was joy indeed in Israel” (1Chron. 12:38-40).

#### Comment

In the presence of at least one-third of a million people, an enormous coronation banquet is prepared for David. For three days, a huge assembly of people ate and drank joyfully in the presence of God celebrating the enthronement of their king. This feast may typify the future Messianic feast which God promises to prepare for his people (Isa. 25:6).

#### 5. Wine is a symbol of the gospel.

Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost (Isa. 55:1).

6. Wine is a part of the great eschatological feast.

“And the Lord of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; a banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, and refined aged wine” (Isa. 25:6).

Comment

One wonders, when reading passages such as these, if the prohibitionist Christians will even want to come to this glorious banquet prepared by the Lord God himself.

7. The beauty of marital love is regularly compared to wine in the Song of Solomon.

“Draw me after you and let us run together! The king has brought me into his chambers. We will rejoice in you and be glad; we will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you” (1:4).

“How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much better is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your oils than all kinds of spices” (4:10).

“How beautiful and how delightful you are, My love, with all your charms! Your stature is like a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters ... And your mouth like the best wine! It goes down smoothly for my beloved, flowing gently through the lips of those who fall asleep” (7:6-9).

“I would lead you and bring you into the house of my mother, who used to instruct me; I would give you spiced wine to drink from the juice of my pomegranates” (8:2).

8. The removal of wine is part of the curse of God.

“But it shall come about, if you will not obey the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you ... You shall plant and cultivate vineyards, but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes, for the worm shall devour them” (Deut. 28:15,39).

“The Lord has sworn by His right hand and by His strong arm, ‘I will never again give your grain as food for your enemies; nor will foreigners drink your new wine, for which you have labored’ (Isa. 62:8).

### Comment

Just as God promises an abundance of wine in the covenant blessings, he promises the removal of wine in the covenant curses. In Scripture, Prohibition is a curse, the result of covenant disobedience. Those who object to the use of wine on the grounds that it is inherently evil, and that its use is sinful, should pause to consider the fact that they are declaring to be a curse that which God has declared to be a blessing, and a blessing that which God has declared to be a curse.

9. The abuse of wine (drunkenness), never its use, is condemned as sin.

“They grope in darkness with no light, and He makes them stagger like a drunken man” (Job 12:25).

“They reeled and staggered like a drunken man, and were at their wits’ end” (Ps. 107:27).

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise” (Prov. 20:1).

Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, or with gluttonous eaters of meat; for the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe a man with rags” (Prov. 23:20-21).

“Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long over wine, those who go to taste mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your mind will utter perverse things” (Prov. 23:29-33).

“Woe to those who rise early in the morning that they may pursue strong drink; who stay up late in the evening that wine may inflame them!” (Isa. 5:11).

“Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink” (Isa. 5:22).

“And these also reel with wine and stagger from strong drink: the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, they are confused by wine, they stagger

from strong drink; they reel while having visions, they totter when rendering judgment. For all the tables are full of filthy vomit” (Isa. 28:7-8).

### Comment

Throughout the Old Testament, we see that God takes seriously the abuse of His good gifts. Drunkenness is everywhere explicitly and implicitly condemned as a serious sin.

## **NEW TESTAMENT**

### 1. Jesus himself drank wine.

“For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine; and you say, ‘He has a demon!’ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking; and you say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man, and a drunkard, a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners!’ (Luke 7:33-34).

### Comment

Jesus draws a parallel between himself and John the Baptist. John was condemned for not eating bread and for not drinking wine. Jesus was condemned for the exact opposite: eating bread and drinking wine. It is utterly absurd to suggest that he could have been accused of being a drunkard if in fact he had only been drinking grape juice.

### 2. Jesus miraculously changed water into fine wine at Cana.

“Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each. Jesus said to them, ‘Fill the waterpots with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, ‘Draw some out now, and take it to the headwaiter.’ And they took it to him. And when the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, and said to him, ‘Every man serves the good wine first, and when men have drunk freely, then that which is poorer; you have kept the good wine until now.’ This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him (John 2:1-11).

## Comment

The word used throughout this passage is *oinos*, which means the fermented juice of the grape, or wine.<sup>2</sup> There is absolutely no evidence that the word *oinos* as used in the Bible meant unfermented grape juice.<sup>3</sup> When grape juice is referred to in the Bible (cf. Gen. 40:10-11), it is not called wine. Jesus created this wine in order for the guests to continue to enjoy the feast and rejoice in the goodness of God. And not only did he create wine, he created good wine. Perhaps it was another reminder of the glorious banquet which God has promised to prepare for his people (Isa. 25:6).

3. The abuse of wine (drunkenness), not its use, is explicitly and implicitly condemned.

“Be on guard, that your hearts may not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day come on you suddenly like a trap” (Luke 21:34).

“Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy” (Rom. 13:13).

“But actually I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler – not even to eat with such a one” (1 Cor. 5:11).

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

“Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19-21).

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<sup>2</sup> Bauer, Walter. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Second Edition. Eds. William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 562.

<sup>3</sup> See Pierard, R.V. “Alcohol, Drinking of” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Edited by Walter Elwell. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 28; and “Wine” in *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*. Edited by Allen C. Myers (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 1058.

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18).

“An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money” (1 Tim. 3:2-3).

“Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience” (1 Tim. 3:8).

“Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good” (Tit. 2:3).

“For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries” (1 Pet. 4:3).

### Comment

As in the Old Testament, the New Testament condemns the sinful abuse of wine, not its rightful use.

## **THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD’S SUPPER**

“And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom’” (Matt. 26:27-29; cf. Mark 14:23-25; Luke 22:15-20).

The institution of the Lord’s Supper is recorded in all three of the synoptic Gospels. It is in the preparation for this Supper that Jesus initiates a sequence of events that culminates in his death, burial and resurrection. Several times in the context, we are reminded that this meal that is being prepared is the Passover meal (Matt. 26:17-19). It will be Jesus’ reinterpretation of the meaning of this meal that will begin the fateful events leading to the cross.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> It is beyond the scope of this work to go into all of the details surrounding the full course of a normal Passover meal. For such details see the standard work by Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*. (London: SCM Press, 1966), 84-88.

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread and after giving thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body which is broken for you, do this in remembrance of me." Then after supper, he took the cup and said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." In the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), Jesus identifies the contents of the cup as the "fruit of the vine." As the following selection of standard references and commentaries will indicate, the phrase "the fruit of the vine" is, in this context, the functional equivalent of "wine."

**Philip Schaff**, ed. *A Religious Encyclopedia of Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal and Practical Theology*, 1887.

"The expression the "fruit of the vine" is employed by our Savior in the synoptical Gospels to denote the element contained in the cup of the Holy Supper. The fruit of the vine is literally the grape. But the Jews from time immemorial have used this phrase to designate the wine partaken of on sacred occasions, as at the Passover and on the evening of the Sabbath. The Mishna (*De. Bened*, cap. 6, pars I) expressly states, that, in pronouncing blessings, "the fruit of the vine" is the consecrated expression for *yayin*... The Christian Fathers, as well as the Jewish rabbis, have understood "the fruit of the vine" to mean wine in the proper sense. Our Lord, in instituting the Supper after the Passover, availed himself of the expression invariably employed by his countrymen in speaking of the wine of the Passover. On other occasions, when employing the language of common life, he calls wine by its ordinary name" (p. 2537-2538).<sup>5</sup>

**John D. Davis**. *Illustrated Davis Dictionary of the Bible*, 1973.

"Fruit of the vine, the designation used by Jesus at the institution of the Lord's Supper ... is the expression employed by the Jews from time immemorial for the wine partaken of on sacred occasions, as at the passover and on the evening of the Sabbath (Mishna, *Berakoth*, vi. 1). The Greeks also used the term as a synonym of wine which was capable of producing intoxication (Herod i. 211, 212)" (p. 868).

**Gerhard Kittel**, ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1967

"It is obvious ... that according to custom Jesus was proffering wine in the cup over which He pronounced the blessing; this may be seen especially from the solemn *genema tes ampelou* [fruit of the vine] ... which was borrowed from Judaism" (Vol. V, p. 164).

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<sup>5</sup> As quoted in Gentry, *Ibid.*, p. 55.

**T.K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black.** *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, 1903.

“In the Gospels we find wine designated ‘the fruit of the vine’... a periphrasis doubtless already current in Jewish speech, since it is found in the time-honoured benediction over the wine-cup in *Berakh* 6.1...” (p. 5309).

**Joachim Jeremias.** *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 1966.

“Jesus and his disciples *drink wine* at the Last Supper ... the annual festivals provided an occasion for the drinking of wine, especially the three pilgrimage festivals (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles); the drinking of wine was prescribed as part of the ritual of Passover” (pp. 50-51).

“*to genema tes ampelou* (‘the fruit of the vine’) for ‘wine’ is in the Judaism of the time of Jesus a set liturgical formula at the blessing of the cup, both before and after the meal” (p. 183).

**Leon Morris.** *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 1992.

“Jesus *took a cup*, and though Matthew does not mention the contents specifically ... the meaning is a cup containing wine” (p. 660).

“Jesus speaks of ‘*this fruit of the vine*,’ which clearly means ‘wine’” (p. 661- 662).

**William Hendriksen.** *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1973.

“By speaking of ‘the fruit of the vine’ Jesus undoubtedly refers to wine. Note close relation between ‘vine’ and ‘wine’ in Isa. 24:7. See also Num. 6:4; Hab. 3:17. At this time of the year (April), and under conditions then prevailing in Judea, it is hard to think of anything but fermented grape juice, that is, *wine*, the kind of wine used at Passover; hence, diluted or paschal wine” (p. 911).

**D.A. Carson.** *Matthew*, (The Expositor’s Bible Commentary), 1984.

“The wine was not grape juice, though it was customary to cut the wine with a double or triple quantity of water” (Vol. 8, p. 536).

“The ‘fruit of the vine’ is a common Jewish way of referring in prayers to wine (cf. *M Berakoth* 6:1)” (Vol. 8, p. 539).

**Craig L. Blomberg.** *Matthew*, (The New American Commentary), 1992.

“In vv. 27-28 Jesus turns from the bread to the cup. This is the third of four cups of wine drunk at various stages throughout the evening festivities. It was probably a common cup passed around for all to drink. ‘Offered’ is the same verb as ‘gave’ in v. 27 and does not imply that drinking was optional. Each of the four cups was linked to one line of Exod 6:6-7a. This one tied in with God’s promise, ‘I will redeem you,’ in v. 6c and hence specifically to his original liberation of the Israelites from Egypt (*m. Pesah.* 10:6-7). But again Jesus adds new meaning. As they all drink (the ‘all’ refers to all the disciples, not to all of the wine!), he proclaims that the cup stands for his blood about to be shed in his death on the cross. The ‘blood of the covenant’ harks back to Exod 24:8. The use of ‘cup’ rather than ‘wine’ links this passage with 20:22-23 and 26:39. ‘Fruit of the vine’ (v. 29) was a stock phrase used in thanksgiving prayers for the wine (*m. Ber.* 6:1) and therefore does not refer to unfermented beverage, though it was customary to cut the wine with a double or triple quantity of water” (pp. 390-391).

**William Lane.** *The Gospel According to Mark*, (New International Commentary on the New Testament), 1974.

“By his prophetic action in interpreting these familiar parts of the ancient paschal liturgy Jesus instituted something new in which the bread and wine of table-fellowship become the pledge of his saving presence throughout the period of time prior to the parousia and the establishment of the Kingdom of God in its fulness” (pp. 507-508).

“The cup from which Jesus abstained was the fourth, which ordinarily concluded the Passover fellowship. The significance of this can be appreciated from the fact that the four cups of wine were interpreted in terms of the four-fold promise of redemption set forth in Exod. 6:6-7: ‘I will bring you out ... I will rid you of their bondage ... I will redeem you ... I will take you for my people and I will be your God’ (TJ *Pesachim* X. 37b). Jesus had used the third cup, associated with the promise of redemption, to refer to his atoning death on behalf of the elect community. The cup which he refused was the cup of consummation, associated with the promise that God will take his people to be with him. This is the cup which Jesus will drink with his own in the messianic banquet which inaugurates the saving age to come. The cup of redemption (verse 24), strengthened by the vow of abstinence (verse 25), constitutes the solemn pledge that the fourth cup will be extended and the unfinished meal

completed in the consummation, when Messiah eats with redeemed sinners in the Kingdom of God (cf. Lk. 14:15; Rev. 3:20f.; 19:6-9)” (pp508-509).

**Norval Geldenhuys.** *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, (New International Commentary on the New Testament), 1951.

“All that is taught in Matthew, Mark, and I Corinthians xi in the original Greek is that on the occasion of the Passover the Saviour instituted the Holy Communion by giving bread and also by giving wine” (p. 554).

**R. C. H. Lenski.** *The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel*, 1946.

“The efforts that are put forth to read wine out of this account are unavailing. Because *oinos*, the word for ‘wine,’ does not occur, the presence of wine is at least gravely questioned, which means practically denied. Luke’s ‘the fruit of the vine’ ... the lovely liturgical term for the wine that was used in the Passover ritual, which Matthew makes even more specific by writing ‘*this* fruit of the vine,’ the one that was regularly used in the Passover and was used at this Passover by Jesus, is misunderstood by these commentators, for they assert that grape juice fits this phrase better than does wine – although such a thing as grape juice was an impossibility in April in the Holy Land of Christ’s time. It could be had only when grapes were freshly pressed out, before the juice started to ferment in an hour or two” (pp. 1043-1044).

### Summary

The “fruit of the vine” that Jesus used was, without any doubt, the same wine which was used in the Passover. Our Lord Jesus chose wine to symbolize his precious blood. It cannot, therefore, be evil. Jesus and the disciples ate bread and drank wine at this first Lord’s Supper, and Jesus commanded them and us to continue to “do this” in remembrance of him (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

### Conclusion

We have seen that Scripture declares wine to be a good gift of God, a part of his good creation to be received with thankful hearts and used in moderation. This directly contradicts the idea that wine and all other alcoholic beverages are inherently evil and not to be used at all. Thus, we have seen that Scripture refutes the idea that wine should not be used in the Lord’s Supper because all use of wine or alcohol is inherently sinful.

We have also seen that Scripture repeatedly declares that moral creatures must take the responsibility for their own sin. Unfortunately, in a move which is ironically very similar to that of liberals who place the responsibility for sin in the environment, Christian Prohibition declares that alcohol is responsible for much sin. Both liberalism and Prohibition deny Scripture by removing the responsibility of sin from the sinner and placing it on something external.

We have seen that Scripture nowhere prohibits the moderate use of alcohol, and that Jesus himself drank wine. This ought to be a strong example to those Christian Prohibitionists who condemn all use of alcohol. Like the Pharisees, they implicitly claim to have a higher standard of righteousness than God himself has. If we carry their logic through consistently, their substitution of man-made laws for the holy law of God actually indicts the Lord Jesus Christ of contributing to and participating in sin. Our examination of Scripture forces us to conclude that Jesus used wine in the Lord's Supper. We have no legitimate biblical grounds for arbitrarily substituting grape juice or any other substance for the wine. So, wine is the proper element to be used in this sacrament until he returns.