

THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

"...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel..." (Amos 7:8)

MODERATE DRINKING

Occasionally someone who is a member of the church will assert that while the Bible prohibits drunkenness, there is nothing wrong with enjoying a drink socially now and then, or with having a cold beer after mowing the lawn—as long as a person does not drink to excess. If you have leaned toward that view in the past, this article is designed to respectfully help you rethink the matter and change your mind.

There are four reasons God's people ought to totally avoid the drinking of beverage alcohol. They are these:

1. **Drunkenness.** In Galatians 5:19-21 the Bible condemns drunkenness and intoxication. Have you ever considered just how drunk one must be to violate God's will as taught in this passage? Staggering? Giddy? Just a bit tipsy? State Troopers have tests by which they determine when a driver is legally drunk, but interestingly, that blood-alcohol level standard varies from state to state. What is considered drunk in one part of the country is considered sober in another.

The point is this: There is only one completely safe definition of drunken. Only one. One is drunk when his mind, to some degree, has been affected by the drink. Since that occurs with one drink (i.e., "A drink before heading home relaxes me," "A drink with a client helps break the ice for the sale"), when a person takes that first drink he is one drink drunk. It may not show much, but he has been affected.

One more thing—I have never talked with a person who advocates "moderate drinking" who wouldn't admit that he has crossed the line into being drunk sometime in the past.

Galatians 5:21 ends by warning that they which do such things will not enter heaven.

2. **Endorsement.** One who drinks, even moderately, must still buy the beverage alcohol. When the dollars are laid down for such a purchase the customer has just willingly offered support to a product which in its natural use has destroyed more homes, broken more hearts, created more murderers, thieves, and child abusers than anything else. The man who buys it must realize that he has endorsed such an industry.

One more thing—everything good belongs to God. He lets us use that money, but expects us to be good stewards of those material blessings. He never intended for that money with which He blessed you to be used to buy beverage alcohol. Such is a spiritual misappropriation of funds.

3. **Influence.** A member of the church who is known to drink, even occasionally, will be identified by unbelievers as either a non-believer or as a hypocrite. There are some sins of which non-members would be completely unfamiliar. Yet there have always been some activities, which even reprobates recognize as "un-Christian." Most any non-Christian when asked, "What are some things which devoted Christians don't do?" would answer, "They don't lie, steal, drink, or cuss."

Furthermore, one who drinks "moderately" must wrestle with his influence on young people. He may be totally convinced that drinking only small amounts doesn't displease God, so he does so. Yet what of teenagers who learn of this and are influenced to his way of thinking? Will they have the same ability to drink only small amounts?

One more thing—Jesus said we are to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-14). One simply cannot do that with an alcoholic beverage in his hand.

4. **Suffering.** One who drinks risks every plague ever associated with beverage alcohol. Read Proverbs 23:29-35 and see what some of them are. By risk we mean this: no

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WHAT NAHUM KNEW

Text: _____

I. The Lord is Good in His _____

Notes:

II. The Lord is Good in His _____

Notes:

III. The Lord is Good in His _____

Notes:

TRUE BIBLE BELIEF

Text: _____

I. Faith _____

Notes:

II. Faith _____

Notes:

III. Faith _____

Notes:

one who ever took his first drink did so while expecting to suffer grievous misery in the future as a result of alcohol. If people did they would never drink at all. But people will continue to start suffering each year from drinking. The car accidents will continue to occur, so will the adultery and divorces, so will the violence, so will the shame. But I can promise that you will never suffer as a result of drinking beverage alcohol if you never take the first drink.

Do yourself a favor in view of this life and the next one. Don't drink beverage alcohol at all. If you have, repent of it and never do so again.

-Glenn Colley

A MEMBER OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS ONCE SENT COLUMNIST ANN LANDERS THE FOLLOWING:

- We drank for happiness and became unhappy.
- We drank for joy and became miserable.
- We drank for sociability and became argumentative.
- We drank for sophistication and became obnoxious.
- We drank for friendship and made enemies.
- We drank for sleep and awakened without rest.
- We drank for strength and felt weak.
- We drank "medicinally" and acquired health problems.
- We drank for relaxation and got the shakes.
- We drank for bravery and became afraid.
- We drank for confidence and became doubtful.
- We drank to make conversation easier and slurred our speech.
- We drank to feel heavenly and ended up feeling like hell.
- We drank to forget and were forever haunted.
- We drank for freedom and became slaves.
- We drank to erase our problems and saw them multiply.
- We drank to cope with life and invited death.

CREATE A THIRST

A young salesman was disappointed about losing a big sale. He lamented with his sales manager: "I guess it just proves you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." The manager replied, "Son, take my advice; your job is not to make him drink. Your job is to make him thirsty." So it is with evangelism (cf. Matthew 5:13). Let's so fill our lives with Christ that they create a thirst for the Gospel!

THE CITIES OF REFUGE – A TYPE OF THE CHURCH—1

God has always been fair in His dealings with man. Nowhere in the Bible can even a single example be provided where God acted “off the cuff” or “without reason” with any individual or group of people. In fact, the evidence would prove that God has always been far more merciful toward mankind than he has deserved. If ever that has been true it was true with regard to the Israelites of old. The law itself, and everything contained in that law, was an outgrowth of God’s infinite love for those people and His desire for them to have the proper structure by which they could be governed. The law was very stringent, but stringency is necessary to provide the proper protection for both the body and the soul. Some of the laws were specifically given with the well-being of individuals in mind while others were given for the good of the whole nation. The consequences of some were very lenient while some were much more harsh. But in the middle of it all is seen a picture perfect example of God’s fairness. God had explicitly stated that any act of cold, calculated, and premeditated murder was to be immediately recompensed by the death of the guilty. But what about the case of an accidental death?

“But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him anything without laying of wait, or with any stone, wherewith a man may die, seeing him not, and cast it upon him, that he die, and was not his enemy, neither sought his harm: then the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with holy oil” (Numbers 35:22-25).

Earlier in the same chapter Moses had mentioned that of the forty-eight cities provided for the habitation of the Levites in Canaan, six were to be set aside as cities of refuge, three on the east of the Jordan and three on the west. As seen above, “these cities were appointed so that in the event anyone killed a person unwittingly, he could flee to one of these cities and not be put to death by the avenger of blood” (Roy, pg. 98). It was in that city that he was to remain until he received a fair trial, and if found innocent he would be returned there to live until such time as he could return home. The cities of refuge were places of safety. They were places where danger was averted temporarily until it could be averted permanently. And it was in these ways, and more, that they served as a type of the church of Christ.

Type/antitype pictures have served a valuable purpose as God used people, places, things, and events from the Old Testament to enlighten truths in the New. What greater truth could be illuminated than the protective and saving nature of the church for which Jesus came, suffered, and died to establish? And it is that very blood that serves as the protective nature of the church, blood that continues to flow to cover sins of which man is penitent. What, though, are some other truths revealed about these cities of refuge that enlightens our understanding of the only church of which the Bible speaks?

The cities of refuge were for all. God has never been a discriminatory God. All the blessings He has ever offered He has offered to all. This is especially true as it applies to the cities of refuge. Of them Moses recorded: “These six cities shall be a refuge, both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither” (Numbers 35:15). There was no one under heaven that did not have the offer of protection extended to them. How true is this of the church? There is no soul under heaven restricted from entrance if they will only submit. Along this line Paul would write, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). As our children often sing, “red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in His sight.” The gospel, and salvation in the church by the gospel, truly is for all, just as were the cities of refuge.

-Andy Brewer

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-to be continued