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A QUARTERLY EXPOSING
UNBIBLICAL TEACHING & MOVEMENTS

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*"Hereby know we the spirit of truth
and the spirit of error" 1 John 4:6*

The Discerner

A Christian Apologetics & Counter-
Cult Ministry

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WITH THIS ISSUE

Our first article is by Tal Davis of Marketfaith Ministries. He has written an excellent overview and introduction to the Swedenborgian cult founded by Emanuel Swedenborg. This is a smaller cult that continues to maintain a hold on misled souls.

The topic of our second article is ‘The Miracle of Predictive Prophecy’ and how it demonstrates ‘The Divine Inspiration Of Scripture’.

The final article is part one of an examination regarding the biblical use of alcohol.

Our quiz is on New Testament Bible characters. How will you do?

As always, we thank you for your prayers and gifts that make our ministry of faith and truth possible.

Ephesians 6:14-15 [NIV] Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

Steve Lagoon,

President of Religion Analysis Service

SWEDENBORGIANISM: THE VISIONARY CULT OF A GENIUS

by Tal Davis

Ever wonder who was the smartest person who ever lived? Was it Plato? Confucius? Newton? Aquinas? Madam Curie? Einstein?

I'm sure we could add many other names to the list of highly intelligent people of history. Some human beings are simply born with an extraordinary level of native intellect. In modern times, scientists have published instruments that can supposedly measure a person's Intelligence Quotient (IQ). There is even a club, the Mensa Society, that only allows as members those with officially recorded IQs in the 98th percentile or above (50 percentile is the mean).

History

One of the most brilliant men in all of history, whose IQ was most likely far above even Mensa's requirements, was Swedish scientist, mathematician, cosmologist, and religious visionary Emanuel Swedenborg. Swedenborg was born in 1688 in Stockholm, the son of a Lutheran bishop. He graduated from Uppsala University in 1709. He then moved to London, England, to continue his scientific studies. In 1715 he returned to Sweden where he published numerous papers and books on various topics including engineering, mining, physiology, and geology. He was regarded as Sweden's, and one of the world's, greatest scientists.

Beginning about 1733, Swedenborg reported that he began having strange dreams and visions. In 1747, at age 59, he suddenly made a major change in his life. He left the world of science and mathematics to delve head-long into a lifetime investigation of the spiritual world. For more than twenty-five years he wrote dozens of books on theology and metaphysics. He felt God had called him to revive what he saw as a dying and lifeless church. His most famous religious works included *Arcana Coelestia* ("The Heavenly Knowledge"); *Heaven and Hell*; *The True Christian Religion*; *The Four Doctrines*; *The Divine Providence*; and *Miscellaneous Theological Works*.

Swedenborg claimed he had numerous communications with spirits of the dead and angels who told him the true understanding of the Bible. He even claimed to have talked to the spirit of Martin Luther who he convinced to recant the doctrine of 'salvation by faith alone'. He later wrote that, according to his spiritual sources, the Scriptures all must be understood in a three-fold sense. The first sense is for

this life (natural sense). The second is for the next life (spiritual sense). And the third is the sense for the angels (celestial sense). As a result of his visions and odd allegorical interpretations of Scripture, Swedenborg imagined bizarre descriptions of God, heaven and hell, and spiritual beings. Swedenborg died in 1772 in England at the age of 84.

Beliefs

Today the teachings of Swedenborg are the basis for the General Church of the New Jerusalem (or simply the New Church) and several other Swedenborgian sects. Its teachings are based on the interpretations of the Bible and the [supposed] divinely inspired visionary revelations of Emanuel Swedenborg. Today, the New Church and other Swedenborgian groups claim about 7,000 members in the United States.

Perhaps the most famous adherent of Swedenborgianism in America was Helen Keller. The website www.newchurch.org states this about his importance for understanding Scripture:

Emanuel Swedenborg, an eighteenth-century theologian and scientist, provided a framework for understanding the Bible's internal meaning, as well as writing many additional volumes which shed light on why we're here and how to develop a functional relationship with God.

Many Christians would respond by saying that no one, including a genius like Swedenborg, has any right to claim exclusive understanding of the Bible or to claim to have received new revelations equal to or superseding Scripture. *Such claims are indicative of all cults and sects.* The Bible alone is the uniquely inspired Word of God.

In Swedenborg's case, interpretations were supposedly transmitted to him by spirits and angels who he encountered in the spirit world during his visions. This is, of course, in direct contradiction to the Bible's warnings against engaging in occultic practices like spiritism, necromancy, divination, and false prophecy. As God told the Hebrews:

When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever does

these things is detestable to the Lord; and because of these detestable things the Lord your God will drive them out before you. You shall be blameless before the Lord your God. For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do so....But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. You may say in your heart, How will we know the word which the Lord has not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18:9–22)¹

It is an interesting fact that many of the major cults had their origins in the occultic activities of their founders. Joseph Smith, Jr. (Mormonism), Charles Taze Russell (Jehovah's Witnesses), Rev. Sun Myung Moon (Unification Church), and Mary Baker Eddy (Christian Science) all dabbled in one form of the occult or another before establishing their heretical movements. Swedenborg is another prime example.

The Trinity

As for the doctrine of God, Emanuel Swedenborg and the New Church can probably be regarded as having a Theistic Worldview. However, Swedenborg's greatest error was to reject the biblical concept of the Trinity as his spirit guides instructed him. The New Church's website states its theology about deity this way: "There are not three gods, nor three persons in one God, but rather one God with three aspects to His being. Just as we all have a soul, a body and the actions of our lives (and are one person), so it is with God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are names given for the soul, body and activity of the Lord God Jesus Christ."

Swedenborg's understanding of the incarnation of God in Christ is somewhat similar to the modalism² of Oneness Pentecostalism. Jesus is the one person who became man in order to unite man with God by overcoming evil as a man.

1 See also Leviticus 19:31 & 20:6, 27; 1 Samuel 28:1; Chronicles 10:13; Isaiah 8:19 & 19:3; and 2 Kings 23:24.

2 Modalism is the doctrine that the three persons of the Trinity represent only three modes or aspects of the divine revelation, *not distinct and coexisting persons* in the divine nature.

Swedenborg also taught that Jesus' resurrection was spiritual, not physical. Likewise, human life after death will be entirely spiritual.

In Swedenborg's system the Holy Spirit is not a person at all, but merely the divine energy of Jesus at work in the world (i.e. "The Holy Spirit corresponds to the Lord's activity in the world.") The Bible clearly teaches that the One Infinite and Eternal God exists eternally in Three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10; 44:6–8; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24, 17:3)

Salvation

As for salvation, the New Church teaches (quoted below) that it is available to all who sincerely seek God, not by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, but by repenting of sins and working to do good in the world.

The goal and purpose of Divine Providence is to create heaven from the human race and to allow each human being to live a life that leads towards heaven. Everything that the Lord does is in service of this goal. He leaves us in our freedom to make decisions that will either lead us closer to or further away from His love. This freedom is one of his greatest gifts to us, for it enables us to choose our own life-paths.

The Bible teaches that salvation is entirely by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation is received by repenting of sins and accepting His sacrificial death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. (Romans 3:20; 10:9–10; Ephesians 2:8–10)

Swedenborg and the New Church have a spiritualist perspective on life after death. "Death is merely a transition of the spirit between different states of being...The soul, that is to say, our true nature beyond our physical form, awakens in the world of spirits and continues the journey that was begun on earth...We are still ourselves, we're reunited with those we love, and we complete our personal development, choosing a home in the location most appropriate within the spiritual world."

Heaven and Hell

The New Church also has a form of belief (quoted below) regarding heaven and hell. The final destination depends on the way a person lives life now and in the spirit world.

The spiritual world is made up of three places: heaven, hell, and a transitional place between the two called 'the world of spirits'.

The New Church teaches that, besides being places, heaven and hell are essentially states of being. We construct our spiritual states according to the way we live. Leading a life of kindness and goodwill builds heaven in our hearts, whereas doing evil creates hell inside of us. The condition which predominates while we live on earth becomes the foundation for our eternal state.

Humans and Angels

According to Swedenborg, those righteous people who go to heaven will become angels. This belief is similar in some ways to Mormonism.

Once in heaven, people become angels. Angels are not a superior race of beings, but rather humans who have developed into their highest selves. Much like a caterpillar becomes a butterfly, the earthly state is a preparation for life as an angel in heaven. To become an angel, reject self-centered longings, do what is good, and love God.

The clear teaching of Jesus and the New Testament is that life after death is determined by whether or not someone has received salvation through faith in Christ, not by works. There will be eternal life in the presence of God for those who have trusted in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Matthew 5:12–30; 25:41; Revelation 20–22). Hell will be final state of those who have rejected Christ (Matthew 5:22; 10:28; 18:8, 9; 25:41–46; Mark 9: 47–48; 2 Thessalonians 1: 8, 9; Revelation 20:10).

There is no indication in Scripture that human beings ever become angels. The human race and angels are two different and distinct orders of created beings which never merge into one.

Conclusion

Emanuel Swedenborg certainly ranks as one of the most intelligent persons to ever have lived. His scientific writings and mathematical studies are among the world's greatest publications. Whether or not he became mentally deranged, was deceived by Satan, or was simply a fraud we cannot say. Nonetheless, we can say his spiritual visions and vast body of religious writings and the doctrines of The Church of the New Jerusalem or The New Church can only be regarded as unbiblical and false.

Witnessing to Swedenborgians

You may never have the chance to meet a member of the Church of the New Jerusalem or a follower of Emanuel Swedenborg. But if the

opportunity ever presents itself, here are some basic principles to keep in mind.

1. Have a clear understanding of your faith and the Bible. Know what you believe and why you believe it. Develop a sharp sense of discernment so that you can recognize unbiblical teaching because some movements may appear Christian on the surface but, when analyzed closer, are outside the bounds of historic Christianity.
2. Acquire a basic knowledge of Swedenborgian beliefs and practices. This article has presented a basic overview of some of its doctrines. Study it and other resources that explain the movement's errors.
3. Seek to build a personal and respectful relationship with the Swedenborgian. Take time to befriend them if you can. Try to engage them in friendly nonthreatening discussion. Start by asking them how they got involved in Swedenborgianism. Were they born into it, or did they join on their own?
4. Focus your discussion on the essential elements of the Christian faith. The primary, real issues are who is God, who is Jesus, and what is the way of salvation. Everything else is secondary.
5. Explain why you cannot regard the visions and writings of Emanuel Swedenborg as inspired by God. You may want to cite biblical passages that warn against occult revelations and trying to communicate with the dead (e.g. Deuteronomy 18: 9-13, 20-22; Leviticus 19:31; 20:6, 27; 1 Samuel 28; 1 Chronicles 10:13; Isaiah 8:19 & 19:3; 2 Kings 23:24).
6. Be prepared to cite (in context) and explain specific Bible passages supporting Christian doctrines; particularly, the biblical basis for the Trinity, the historic understanding of the nature and work of Christ, and salvation by grace through faith alone.
7. Share your personal testimony of God's grace and your faith in Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior.
8. Present the basic plan of salvation and encourage the Swedenborgian to receive Jesus Christ as his or her personal Lord and Savior.
9. Pray and trust the Holy Spirit to lead you as you share.

Tal Davis of Marketplace Ministries can be found on the web <http://marketfaith.org>.

MIRACLES OF PREDICTIVE PROPHECY AND THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

by Steve Lagoon

One of the reasons for accepting the veracity and divine origin of the Judeo-Christian Bible is the prophetic nature of the book(s). That is, within the pages of the Bible, there are prophetic statements purported to have been revealed by God.

These statements have had the effect of speaking truth to the generation that received them (forth telling), were predictive of future events (foretelling), or both.

Explained another way, some statements had an immediate application at the time the prophecy was first revealed—but they also have a further fulfillment in future history. This is true of many messianic prophecies. J. Dwight Pentecost explains the prophetic principle of the law of double-reference:

Few laws are more important to observe in the interpretation of prophetic Scriptures than the law of double reference. Two events, widely separated as to the time of their fulfillment, may be brought together into the scope of one prophecy. This was done because the prophet had a message for his own day as well as for a future time.¹

J. Edwin Hartill also explained:

Double Reference Principle . . . Definition. It is that peculiarity of the writings of the Holy Spirit, by which a passage applying primarily to a person or event near at hand, is used by Him at a later time as applying to the Person of Christ, or the affairs of His kingdom. Human writers may not have had this in mind, but the Spirit knew.²

Messianic Prophecies

Consider, for instance, Psalm 22, which had an initial application in the life of Israel's King David, and yet reads like an eyewitness report of Christ's crucifixion one thousand years later:

1 J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things To Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, Grand Rapids MI (Academic Books, 1958), 46.

2 J. Edwin Hartill, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, Grand Rapids MI (Zondervan Publishing House, 1947), 105.

But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. 'He trusts in the Lord,' they say, 'let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him'. . . Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. Roaring lions that tear their prey open their mouths wide against me. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me. My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment. (Psalm 22: 6–8, 12–18)

Likewise, the Servant Song of Isaiah 53 portends Christ's crucifixion which occurred seven hundred years later:

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord

will prosper in his hand. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (Isaiah Chapter 53)

Comparing these texts with the gospel accounts of Jesus' crucifixion provides striking evidence for God's inspiration of Scripture. Rather than debating whether these passages are absolute proof of supernatural revelation in the Bible, I ask only that readers keep an open mind and weigh the evidence. Is it not impressive that these two passages (there are many more like them) from the Old Testament, written 1000 years (Psalm 22) and 700 years (Isaiah 53) before the event, so accurately portray the circumstances of Christ's crucifixion?

Bugliosi's Candid Assessment

I appreciate the candid observation made by the otherwise skeptical Vincent Bugliosi concerning the striking passage of Isaiah 53 (above):

Interestingly, one of the Old Testament's greatest prophets, Isaiah, in Isaiah 53:1–12, predicts a servant of the Lord who 'grew up in the Lord's presence' and who after a trial was led 'as a lamb to the slaughter,' the people not realizing that 'he was dying for their sins,' that he was 'suffering their punishment.' This and other verses in Isaiah . . . describe someone who bears a stunning, eerie resemblance to Jesus of Nazareth . . . *Isaiah 53 has always been, to me, the single most powerful chapter (merely four paragraphs) in the entire Bible that supports Jesus as being the Son of God.*³

More Messianic Prophecies

Robert Boyd provided further examples of messianic prophecies. Each example gives a summary title followed by an Old Testament prophecy *concerning Christ* and concluding with its New Testament fulfillment:

- Born of a Virgin: Isaiah 7:14a / Matthew 1:22–23; Luke 1:30–33
- Born in Bethlehem: Micah 5:2 / Luke 2:11
- Adored by great persons: Psalm 72:10 / Matthew 2:1–12

³ Vincent Bugliosi, *Divinity of Doubt: The God Question*, New York (Vanguard Press, 2011), 234.

- Herod's slaughter of the innocents: Jeremiah 31:15 / Matthew 2:16–18
- Holy Family's flight into Egypt: Hosea 11:1 / Matthew 2:13–15
- Preparatory ministry of John the Baptist: Isaiah 40:3 / Matthew 3:3; Luke 1:76
- Galilee, place of public ministry: Isaiah 9:1–2 / Matthew 4:12–17
- Taking our infirmities: Isaiah 53:4 / Matthew 8:16–17
- Purification of the temple: Psalm 69:9 / Luke 19:45–46
- Riding into Jerusalem on an ass: Psalm 118:22–23 & Zechariah 9:9 / Mark 11:1–11
- Betrayal by a friend: Psalm 41:9 / Matthew 26:47–50; Luke 22:47–48
- Sold for thirty pieces of silver: Zechariah 11:13 / Matthew 26:14–16
- Disciples forsaking Him: Zechariah 13:7 / Matthew 26:31
- Opened not His mouth: Psalm 38:13 & Isaiah 53:7 / Matthew 27:13–14
- Smitten and visage marred: Isaiah 50:6 & Zechariah 13:7 / Mark 14:27
- Messiah cut off—hands and feet pierced: Isaiah 53:5–6, 10 / John 19:16–18
- Crucifixion: Psalm 22:16 / John 20:25–27
- Casting lots for His garment: Psalm 22:18 / Matthew 27:35 & John 19:23–24
- Stared at upon the cross: Psalm 22:17 / Luke 23:35a, 48
- Crucified between two thieves: Isaiah 53:12 / Matthew 27:45 & Mark 15:28
- Mocked by the crowd: Psalm 22:7–7; 109:25 / Matthew 27:39–43
- Forsaken by God: Psalm 22:1 / Matthew 27:46 & Mark 15:34
- Given vinegar to drink: Psalm 69:21 / Matthew 27:48; John 19:28–29

- Not a bone broken at Christ's crucifixion: Psalm 34:20 / John 19:31–34
- His side pierced: Zechariah 12:10 / John 19:34, 37
- His grave with the rich: Isaiah 53:9 / Matthew 27:57–61; John 19:38–42
- Jesus' prediction of three days in grave: Matthew 12:39–40 / Matthew 27:57–61
- The resurrection: Psalm 16:10 / Matthew 28:1–6; John 20:1–12⁴

I do not suggest that these messianic prophecies are something like irrefutable proof of divine origin. A skeptic can always find reasons to protest. But an open-minded observer can see that there is something going on here. That something, I suggest, is that a supernatural source is responsible for providing Old Testament prophets, hundreds of years beforehand, insights into the events of Christ's life.

Not Everyone Is Convinced By Biblical Prophetic Claims

The atheist David Eller criticized biblical prophecy: “At any rate, most ‘biblical prophecies’ are so vague as to have no real cognitive or predictive value.”⁵

His criticism would be quite on target for the quatrains of alleged prophets like Nostradamus, or the so-called sleeping-prophet Edgar Cayce, or for the daily newspaper horoscopes. But this is hardly a fair assessment of biblical prophecy, as the foregoing have shown.

Olivet Discourse And A.D. 70

Near the end of his public ministry, Jesus was teaching in the temple. While leaving the temple, Jesus' disciples were taken with the magnificence of the buildings.

Jesus gathered with his disciples on the Mount of Olives. Looking west across the Kidron Valley, they had a great view of the temple that was still being completed (started by King Herod in 9 B.C.). In response to His disciples' comments about the temple, Jesus began what has become known as the Olivet Discourse:

4 Adapted, abridged, and modified from original by Robert T. Boyd, *Boyd's Handbook of Practical Apologetics: Scientific Facts, Fulfilled Prophecies, and Archaeological Discoveries That Confirm the Bible*, Grand Rapids MI (Kregel Publications, 1997), 125–127.

5 David Eller, *Natural Atheism*, Cranford New Jersey (American Atheist Press, 2004), 38.

“Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God.” (Luke 21:5)

Jesus’ response must have surely startled His disciples, for He predicted the absolute destruction of the temple, something utterly inconceivable at that time:

“Do you see all these things?” he asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.” (Matthew 24:2)

This was no trivial prediction on Jesus’ part since these stones were substantial:

According to Josephus (*Antiquities*, 15.11.3), these ‘massive stones’ were white and some of them were 37 feet (11.3 m) high and 18 feet (5.5 m) wide.⁶

The disciples naturally wanted to know how and when these predicted events would occur:

“Teacher,” they asked, “when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?” (Luke 21:7)

Jesus’ answer provided a description of the coming destruction:

“When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” (Luke 21:20–24)

Jesus’ amazing prediction was precisely fulfilled in A. D. 70 when the Romans, under the future emperor Titus, destroyed the city and its temple. Everett Ferguson provides historical context for the Jewish revolt against Rome:

⁶ *NIV Archaeological Study Bible: An Illustrated Walk Through Biblical History and Culture*, Grand Rapids MI (Zondervan, 2005), 1652.

The seizure of seventeen talents from the temple treasury by the governor Florus, coming after a string of incidents in an atmosphere of seething unrest, precipitated the revolt of A. D. 66. The legate of Syria advanced on Jerusalem to put down the disturbance, but he was put to flight, and zealot leaders were convinced the hour of deliverance had come . . . Nero appointed Vespasian to put down the revolt. By the end of 67 Galilee was subdued. Its command had been held by Josephus, who has left a very detailed account of the progress of the war (*The Jewish War*) ...The year A.D. 69 was the year of the “four emperors” in Roman history. Out of the civil war Vespasian emerged victorious. In the meantime Vespasian had left his son Titus to lay siege to Jerusalem. The siege was pressed in earnest in A. D. 70...On the ninth day of the fifth month (August 5), the anniversary of the destruction of the first temple by the Babylonians, the sanctuary was set on fire by the invaders. A month later the whole city was in Titus’ hands.⁷

VanderKam adds:

In 70 CE Titus laid siege to Jerusalem with his four legions and several other contingents of troops...Titus and his forces systematically took each of Jerusalem’s three walls by smashing them with their battering rams. In this time of extreme peril, says Josephus, the fighting between Jewish groups in the city finally gave way to unity of purpose. As resistance continued, Titus ordered that a stone wall be raised around Jerusalem to prevent import of supplies to an already starving population. Once the Roman forces made their way into the city, the temple compound became the site of intense fighting. Josephus (who was in the Roman camp) says that in a Roman council of war, a decision was made to spare the temple itself. Nevertheless, in the course of the conflict the building was burned.⁸

It should not escape notice that the Romans had decided to spare the temple, contrary to Jesus’ prophecy of destruction. In the course of events, however, Jesus’ prediction proved true while the Roman plan disintegrated.

So complete was the destruction that Jesus’ prediction that “not one stone here will be left on another” was fulfilled in every detail:

7 Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, Grand Rapids MI (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1987), 335–336.

8 James C. VanderKam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism*, Grand Rapids MI (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 44.

This prophecy was fulfilled literally in A. D. 70, when the Romans under Titus completely destroyed Jerusalem and the temple buildings. Stones were even pried apart to collect the gold leaf that melted from the roof when the temple was set on fire. Excavations in 1968 uncovered large numbers of these stones, toppled from the walls by the invaders.⁹

In the fourth century, the Church historian Eusebius described the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, and Jesus' prediction of it:

These things happened in the second year of Vespasian's reign, in exact accordance with the prophetic predictions of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who by divine power had foreseen them as though already present, and wept and mourned over them, as we learn from the holy evangelists, who have set down His very words. On one occasion He said, as if to Jerusalem herself:

*'If only, even you, had known today the way of your peace! But now it is hidden from your sight. For a time will come upon you when your enemies will throw up an earthwork round you and encircle you and hem you in on every side, and bring to the ground both you and your children' . . . And again: 'When you see Jerusalem encircled by armies, then you may be sure that her desolation is near.'*¹⁰

Anyone who compares Our Savior's words with the rest of the historian's account of the whole war could not fail to be astonished, and to acknowledge as divine and utterly marvelous the foreknowledge revealed by Jesus' perfect prediction.

Critics Question Christ's Prophecy

It should be no surprise that skeptics have leveled their attacks against Christ's amazing prophecy. In typical fashion, liberal critics, unable to accept miracles, simply late-date the gospels, suggesting that Christ's prediction was nothing but a later fabrication.

Such after the fact "predictions" are called *Vaticinium ex eventu* by scholars. While it offers skeptics a simple alternative explanation for Christ's apparent prophetic knowledge (i.e. they were made after the fact), it simply does not square with the historical facts.

9 *NIV Archaeological Study Bible: An Illustrated Walk Through Biblical History and Culture*, Grand Rapids MI (Zondervan, 2005), 1605.

10 *Eusebius, The History of the Church From Christ to Constantine*, Translated with an Introduction by G. A. Williamson, New York (Dorset Press, 1965), 117–118 (Book 3.7). Scripture citations which Eusebius quoted are Luke 19:42–44 and Luke 21:20 (in italics).

Paul L. Maier shows a glaring weakness of the liberal evasion of Christ's prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem:

Many liberal scholars suggest that the Gospels were written after the destruction of Jerusalem. Why: Because Jesus makes such an accurate prediction on the way to the Cross that indeed, Jerusalem would be destroyed. That is called prophecy after the fact, shall we say...Now Matthew, as you know, delights in prophecy/fulfillment, prophecy/fulfillment—those couplets. So often Matthew says, 'This was accomplished by Jesus that it might be fulfilled what the prophet said,' and so on. Can you imagine that if the book of Matthew had been written after the fall of Jerusalem, wild horses couldn't have prevented Matthew from saying, 'And Jesus' prediction was fulfilled when Jerusalem was destroyed.' Yet He [Matthew] doesn't say that.¹¹

The Christian Flight To Pella

Another historical weakness of the critics' explanation is that shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, in light of Christ's prediction of the coming destruction of Jerusalem, Christians migrated *en masse* to Pella. This was in stark contrast to the migration of most Jews who were fleeing *to* Jerusalem for safety. Gary DeMar explained:

During the Jewish and Idumean revolts against Rome (A.D. 66–70), Pella, a rock fortress, hidden in the hill country approximately sixty miles northeast of Jerusalem, became a refuge for many Christians.¹²

DeMar quoted the statement of William Whiston in accord with this fact:

Affording the Jewish Christians in the city an opportunity to calling to mind the prediction and caution given them by Christ about thirty-three years and a half before...By complying with which those Jewish Christians fled to the mountains of Perea, and escaped destruction.¹³

DeMar concludes:

Forty years earlier Jesus had given the warning to flee to the mountains when the holy city was seen encompassed by armies.

11 D. James Kennedy with Jerry Newcombe, *Who is This Jesus: Is He Risen*, Fort Lauderdale FL (Coral Ridge Ministries, 2002), 60–61.

12 Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness: Obsession of the Modern Church*, Atlanta GA (American Vision, Inc. 1994), 96.

13 William Whiston, note b in Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, 2:19:6, 631–32, as quoted by Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness: Obsession of the Modern Church*, Atlanta GA (American Vision, Inc. 1994), 96–97.

Those who believed the prophecy and acted upon it escaped with their lives.¹⁴

The highly respected historian Philip Schaff described the flight to Pella:

The Christians of Jerusalem, remembering the Lord's admonition, forsook the doomed city in good time and fled to the town of Pella in the Decapolis, beyond the Jordan, in the north of Perea, where king Herod Agrippa II, before whom Paul once stood, opened to them safe asylum.¹⁵

We know of the Christian flight to Pella from two sources. The first is that of the early church historian Eusebius:

Furthermore, the members of the Jerusalem church, by means of an oracle given by revelation to acceptable persons there, were ordered to leave the City before the war began and settle in a town in Perea called Pella. To Pella those who believed in Christ migrated from Jerusalem.¹⁶

The second source for the Christian flight to Pella was the fourth-century apologist Epiphanius:

From there it took its beginning after the exodus from Jerusalem when all the disciples went to live in Pella because Christ had told them to leave Jerusalem and to go away since it would undergo a siege. Because of this advice they lived in Perea after having moved to that place, as I said.¹⁷

In another place, Epiphanius provided further details:

So Aquila, while he was in Jerusalem, also saw the disciples of the disciples of the apostles flourishing in the faith and working great signs, healings, and other miracles. For they were such as had come back from the city of Pella to Jerusalem and were living there and teaching. For when the city was about to be taken and destroyed by the Romans, it was revealed in advance to all the disciples by an angel of God that they should remove from the city, as it was going to be completely destroyed. They

14 Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness: Obsession of the Modern Church*, Atlanta GA (American Vision, Inc. 1994), 97.

15 Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Volume 1, Apostolic Christianity A. D. 1–100*, Grand Rapids MI (WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1910), 402.

16 Eusebius, *The History of the Church From Christ to Constantine*, Translated with an introduction by G. A. Williamson, New York (Dorset Press, 1965), 111 (Book 3.5, 3).

17 Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 29, 7, 7–8 as cited in the Wikipedia article http://wiki/Flight_to_Pella.

sojourned as emigrants in Pella, the city above mentioned in Transjordan. And this city is said to be of the Decapolis.¹⁸

So Eusebius and Epiphanius both confirm the revelation given to The Church shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem. Epiphanius also confirmed that Christians who fled to Pella before Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70 returned to Jerusalem after the consummation of the Jewish War.

The Warning of Jesus Of Ananus

Dr. Clyde Billington described a further prophetic pronouncement of another Jewish prophet named Jesus leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem:

At the Passover Feast in 70 A. D., there was also in attendance a strange Jew named Jesus the son of Ananus. He had first appeared in Jerusalem in 62 AD.—four years before the war began—and he had for the last 7 years wandered about the city only saying one thing: “Woe, woe to the city of Jerusalem, to the people, and to the holy temple.”¹⁹

Billington further describes how the “Jesus son of Ananus” message changed slightly before the final destruction of Jerusalem:

At the very start of the Roman siege of Jerusalem, Jesus the son of Ananus suddenly made a slight change in the message which he had been repeating for seven years. Now he said: “Woe, woe again to the city of Jerusalem, and to the people, and to the temple, and woe to me also.” As soon as he said the added phrase “woe to me also” a stone from a Roman catapult came flying over the wall and struck him and killed him instantly.²⁰

Into this highly-charged atmosphere, with multiple prophecies of doom filling the air, and the memory of Christ's own announcement of coming destruction, it is not surprising that the Christians fled the holy city for the safety of Pella.

Conclusion

The best explanation of all the facts is that Jesus Christ actually predicted the Roman 70 A. D. destruction of Jerusalem and its temple nearly a generation before it occurred.

¹⁸ Epiphanius, *On Weights and Measures*, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flight_to_Pella.

¹⁹ Clyde Billington, *New Testament Archaeology, Articles and Supplementary Readings, The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D.*, Part IV, p. 241.

²⁰ Clyde Billington, *New Testament Archaeology*, 242.

Skeptics attempt to discredit Christ's prediction by late-dating the biblical gospels. But there is not a shred of evidence that proves a post A. D. 70 composition of the synoptic gospels, and there are many able New Testament scholars that defend a pre-A.D. 70 date.

Likewise, those who call into question the historical reliability of the reports regarding the Christian's flight to Pella seem motivated more by their anti-supernatural bias than by any defects in the historical reports themselves. Indeed, many able historians defend the accuracy of the accounts by Eusebius and Epiphanius.²¹

A review of the historical record confirms the amazing accuracy of the biblical prophets, as well as Jesus' startling prediction concerning the total destruction of Jerusalem that was fulfilled within a generation. This provides strong support to the Christian claim that the Bible is a product of the divine inspiration of God.

21 See for example P.H.R. Van Houwelingen, *Fleeing Forward: The Departure of Christians from Jerusalem to Pella*, Westminster Theological Journal, 65, 2003, 181–200 at web address <https://web.archive.org/web/20150403123403/http://oud.tukampen.nl/uploads/documents/124.pdf>, and Jonathan Bourgel, *The Jewish-Christian's Move from Jerusalem as a Pragmatic Approach*, at https://www.academia.edu/4909339/THE_JEWISH_CHRISTIANS_MOVE_FROM_JERUSALEM_AS_A_PRAGMATIC_CHOICE.

THE BIBLE AND THE QUESTION OF ALCOHOL (PART 1)

By Steve Lagoon

One of the perennial debates among Christians concerns the biblical view of alcohol. That is, does the Bible allow for the moderate use of alcohol or does it call for total abstinence?

The Social Costs Of Alcohol Abuse

This is anything but a merely academic debate, and it is fraught with emotion when the deadly effects of alcohol are considered. There is no question that alcohol abuse and addiction has destroyed the lives of untold millions.

So there is no debate about the deleterious social costs that result from alcohol abuse. This is true not only of alcohol abusers themselves, but also family members, loved ones, and victims who all are part of the collateral damage wrought by alcoholism and alcohol abuse.

Our hearts cry out for the innocent and endless victims that have been killed by drunk drivers and the families left behind to mourn them.

Three Views on Alcohol Among Christians

There are three primary views among Christians concerning the use of alcohol. While all three groups agree that the Bible strictly forbids drunkenness, they differ in their interpretation of the Bible's view regarding consumption of alcohol for the Christian. The term *Teetotalers* usually refers to anyone that avoids the use of alcohol, and is used here throughout with respect.

Group One—Prohibitionists

The first group argues that the Bible calls for a total prohibition concerning alcohol and are therefore called *Prohibitionists*.

Prohibitionists emphasize the importance of being good witnesses for Christ, living holy lives, and avoiding or not causing other Christians (and/or unbelievers) to stumble by the use of alcohol. Prohibitionists often point to the negative health consequences of alcohol, including the possibility that alcohol irreversibly kills brain cells.

Some supporters of Prohibitionism include David Wilkerson (author of the book *Sipping Saints*), Dr. Jack Van Impe (author of *Alcohol: The Beloved Enemy*), Dr. Ernest Gordon (author of *The Apostles and Wine: An Exegetical Study*), and Dr. Moses Stuart and Stephen Reynolds (author of *The Biblical Approach to Alcohol*). Reynolds has even produced a translation of the New Testament (published in 2000) reflecting his prohibitionist views called *The Holy Bible: A Purified Translation*.¹

Group Two—Abstentionists

The second group acknowledges that the Bible technically allows for Christians to drink alcohol, but nevertheless argue that total abstinence from alcohol is the wisest and safest course. They are therefore often called *Abstentionists*.

This view is popular among historic Methodist churches. Supporters include the late evangelist Billy Graham, pastor John MacArthur, and the late apologist Norman Geisler.

Group Three—Moderationists

The third group argues that the Bible allows for the moderate use of alcohol among believers, and are therefore called *Moderationists*.

Moderationists emphasize the importance of Christian liberty and the example of the positive portrayal and use of alcohol throughout biblical times. They point to the evidence showing that the use of fermented wine was common among Jews and Christians during Bible times.

Supporters include G.I. Williamson (author of *Wine in the Bible and the Church*), Dr. Charles Hodge, Dr. Kenneth Gentry (author of *The Case for Moderation: The Bible on the Christian and Alcoholic Beverages*), and Daniel B. Wallace (author of *The Bible and Alcohol*).

Three Views On The Nature Of Wine During Biblical Times

There are also three typical views concerning the nature of wine during biblical times.

The first view is that “wine was wine,” that all wine in the Bible refers to wine containing at least some alcoholic and intoxicating content. This group is sometimes derisively referred to as “one-wine theorists” since they think all wine was fermented.

1 Stephen Reynolds, *The Holy Bible: A Purified Translation*, Wikipedia.

A second view argues that when the Bible refers to wine, it could refer to either fermented wine or to unfermented grape juice, and are therefore sometimes referred to as “two-wine theorists.” For instance, McClintock and Strong stated:

It may at once be conceded that the Hebrew terms translated ‘wine’ refer occasionally to an unfermented liquor.²

A third view acknowledges that believers in biblical times did drink wine, fermented wine, but argues that wine was so-watered down that its intoxicating effects were practically negligible. For instance, Robert Stein stated:

To consume the amount of alcohol that is in two martinis by drinking wine containing three parts water to one part wine, one would have to drink over twenty-two glasses. In other words, it is possible to become intoxicated from wine mixed with three parts of water, but one’s drinking would probably affect the bladder long before it affected the mind.³

Alcohol And The Christian Conscience

Before examining the biblical record concerning alcohol, we must acknowledge the role of the individual Christian conscience related to the question of alcohol.

It is the belief of this author that ultimately, the Bible does not strictly prohibit moderate use of alcohol. Therefore, each Christian must follow their conscience and their biblically-informed conviction(s). Such is the advice of the *apostle Paul*:

“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or *drink*, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day” (Colossians 2:16).

The question naturally arises then as to why there was controversy in the Early Church period concerning dietary laws and wine drinking, which made necessary Paul’s discussion of them in his epistles (i.e. Colossians 2:16; Romans 14; and 1 Corinthians 8 & 10).

It seems there were two primary reasons for this controversy.

2 John McClintock and James Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Volume 10, New York (Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1891), 1010.

3 Robert H. Stein, *Wine-drinking in New Testament Times*, from *Wine-Drinking in New Testament Times*: By Robert H. Stein (wordpress.com) accessed February 15, 2021.

The Problem Of Jewish Dietary Laws In The Early Church

The first reason resulted from the debate about the place of Jewish dietary laws in the Christian Church. The Church tackled this question at the Jerusalem Council described by Luke in Chapter 15 of the Book of Acts, where this apostolic council determined that Gentile Christians were not under any obligation to keep Jewish dietary laws. Yet, out of love and respect for their Jewish brethren, Gentile believers were called to be tolerant concerning several conscientious convictions of their Jewish brothers in Christ.

The Issue Of Food And Idolatry

Another controversy among early Christians was how to treat food and drink that had once been offered to a pagan idol. It was a regular practice for people in the cities of the Roman Empire to offer food and drink to their pagan deities. A portion was sacrificed to a god(s), and the remainder was sold in markets attached to or near pagan temples.

Some Christians refused to eat such meat or drink, feeling that it had been somehow stained or tainted by its idolatrous association(s). Other Christians felt free to both eat and drink such food in the knowledge that pagan idols were ultimately nothing. Paul's advice was that in such cases, each Christian must follow their own conscience as he explained in Chapter 14 of the Book of Romans:

“Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand....Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.” (Romans 14:1–4, 19–21)

So, in the case of wine, Christians in the Early Church were called to follow their own convictions. If they had no concern about wine that had been offered to an idol, they were free to drink. Yet, they were admonished to be careful about the exercise of their Christian

liberty, lest they cause another to stumble, whether an unbeliever or a brother in Christ.

On the other hand, if a Christian's convictions were against the use of alcohol, they too were to follow their conscience, only being careful not to judge others who did approve of alcohol.

This is the wisdom God gave to Paul about mutual toleration in The Church related to controversial issues such as the drinking of alcohol.

Alcohol In The Bible

There are several Hebrew and Greek words for alcohol in the Bible. *The NIV Archaeological Bible Commentary* offers this bit of wisdom when considering the specific meanings of biblical words related to wine:

Precise translations for the Hebrew words [for wine] are elusive since we do not know exactly how they differed from each other.⁴

With that caution in mind, let us examine *Easton's Bible Dictionary's* excellent overview of the specific biblical words related to wine and drink:

The common Hebrew word for wine is *yayin*, from a root meaning 'to boil up,' 'to be in a ferment.' Others derive it from a root meaning 'to tread out,' and hence the juice of the grape trodden out. The Greek word for wine is *oinos*, and the Latin *vinum*. But besides this common Hebrew word, there are several others which are thus rendered.

Ashishah (2 Samuel 6:19; 1 Chronicles 16:3; Canticles [Song of Solomon] 2:5; Hosea 3:1), which, however, rather denotes a solid cake of pressed grapes, or, as in the Revised Version, a cake of raisins.

'*Asis*, 'sweet wine,' or 'new wine,' the product of the same year (Canticles [Song of Solomon] 8:2; Isaiah 49:26; Joel 1:5; 3:18; Amos 9:13), from a root meaning 'to tread,' hence juice trodden out or pressed out, thus referring to the method by which the juice is obtained. The power of intoxication is ascribed to it.

Hometz. See VINEGAR .

⁴ *NIV Archaeological Study Bible: An Illustrated Walk Through Biblical History and Culture*, Grand Rapids MI (Zondervan, 2005), 2015.

Hemer, Deuteronomy 32:14 (rendered 'blood of the grape') Isaiah 27:2 ('red wine'), Ezra 6:9; 7:22; Daniel 5:1–4. This word conveys the idea of 'foaming,' as in the process of fermentation, or when poured out. It is derived from the root *hamar*, meaning 'to boil up,' and also 'to be red,' from the idea of boiling or becoming inflamed.

'Enabh, a grape (Deuteronomy 32:14). The last clause of this verse should be rendered as in the Revised Version, 'and of the blood of the grape *'enabh* thou drankest wine [*hemer*].' In Hosea 3:1 the phrase in Authorized Version, 'flagons of wine,' is in the Revised Version correctly 'cakes of raisins.' (Compare Genesis 49:11; Numbers 6:3; Deuteronomy 23:24, etc., where this Hebrew word is rendered in the plural 'grapes.')

Mesekh, properly a mixture of wine and water with spices that increase its stimulating properties (Isaiah 5:22). Psalms 75:8, 'The wine [*yayin*] is red; it is full of mixture [*mesekh*],' Proverbs 23:30, 'mixed wine,' Isaiah 65:11, 'drink offering' (RSV, 'mingled wine').

Tirosh, properly 'must,' translated 'wine' (Deuteronomy 28:51); 'new wine' (Proverbs 3:10); 'sweet wine' (Micah 6:15; RSV, 'vintage'). This Hebrew word has been traced to a root meaning 'to take possession of' and hence it is supposed that *tirosh* is so designated because in intoxicating it takes possession of the brain. Among the blessings promised to Esau (Genesis 27:28) mention is made of 'plenty of corn and *tirosh*.' Palestine is called 'a land of corn and *tirosh*' (Deuteronomy 33:28; Compare Isaiah 36:17). See also Deuteronomy 28:51; 2 Chr 32:28; Joel 2:19; Hosea 4:11, ('wine [*yayin*] and new wine [*tirosh*] take away the heart').

Sobhe (root meaning 'to drink to excess,' 'to suck up,' 'absorb'), found only in Isaiah 1:22, Hosea 4:18 ('their drink,' *Gesen.* and marg. of RSV, 'their carouse'), and Nahum 1:10 ('drunken as drunkards,' lit., 'soaked according to their drink,' RSV, 'drenched, as it were, in their drink,' i.e., according to their *sobhe*).

Shekar, 'strong drink,' any intoxicating liquor; from a root meaning 'to drink deeply,' 'to be drunken,' a generic term applied to all fermented liquors, however obtained. Numbers 28:7, strong wine (RSV, 'strong drink'). It is sometimes distinguished from wine, c.g., Leviticus 10:9, 'Do not drink wine [*yayin*] nor strong drink [*shekar*],' Numbers 6:3; Judges

13:4, Judges 13:7; Isaiah 28:7 (in all these places rendered 'strong drink'). Translated 'strong drink' also in Isaiah 5:11; 24:9; 29:9; 56:12; Proverbs 20:1; 31:6; Micah 2:11.

Yekebh (Deuteronomy 16:13, but in RSV correctly 'wine-press'), a vat into which the new wine flowed from the press. Joel 2:24, 'their vats,' 3:13, 'the fats,' Proverbs 3:10, 'Thy presses shall burst out with new wine [*tirosh*],' Haggai 2:16; Jeremiah 48:33, 'wine-presses,' 2 Kings 6:27; Job 24:11.

Shemarim (only in plural), 'lees' or 'dregs' of wine. In Isaiah 25:6 it is rendered 'wines on the lees,' i.e., wine that has been kept on the lees, and therefore old wine.

Mesek, 'a mixture,' mixed or spiced wine, not diluted with water, but mixed with drugs and spices to increase its strength, or, as some think, mingled with the lees by being shaken (Psalms 75:8; Proverbs 23:30).

In Acts 2:13 the word *gleukos*, rendered 'new wine,' denotes properly 'sweet wine.' It must have been intoxicating.

In addition to wine the Hebrews also made use of what they called *debash*, which was obtained by boiling down must to one-half or one-third of its original bulk. In Genesis 43:11 this word is rendered 'honey.' It was a kind of syrup, and is called by the Arabs at the present day dibs. This word occurs in the phrase 'a land flowing with milk and honey' (*debash*), Exodus 3:8 Exodus 3:17; 13:5; 33:3; Leviticus 20:24; Numbers 13: 27.”⁵

Easton explained that wine was forbidden in certain specific situations under Old Covenant law:

The Rechabites were forbidden the use of wine (Jeremiah 35). The Nazarites also were to abstain from its use during the period of their vow (Numbers 6:1–4); and those who were dedicated as Nazarites from their birth were perpetually to abstain from it (Judges 13:4; Judges 13:5; Luke 1:15; 7:33). The priests, too, were forbidden the use of wine and strong drink when engaged in their sacred functions (Leviticus 10:1; Leviticus 10:9–11).⁶

5 M. G. Easton, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Third Edition, Nashville (Thomas Nelson, 1897) from <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/eastons-bible-dictionary/wine.html> retrieved February 10, 2021. This article is in the public domain and invites those interested to freely copy.

6 M. G. Easton, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*.

Finally, Easton explained how wine was used in ceremonial acts of worship under the Old Covenant in Israel:

A drink-offering of wine was presented with the daily sacrifice (Exodus 29:40; Exodus 29:41), and also with the offering of the first-fruits (Leviticus 23:13), and with various other sacrifices (Numbers 15:5; Numbers 15:7; Numbers 15:10). Wine was used at the celebration of the Passover. And when the Lord's Supper was instituted, the wine and the unleavened bread then on the paschal table were by our Lord set apart as memorials of his body and blood.⁷

To be continued in a future Discerner

⁷ M. G. Easton, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*.

BIBLE QUIZ: NEW TESTAMENT CHARACTERS

1. Who was the first person to see the resurrected Christ?
 - a. Mary, the mother of Jesus
 - b. Mary Magdalene
 - c. The apostle Peter
 - d. The apostle John
2. Which New Testament character(s) was Jesus related to?
 - a. John the Baptist
 - b. James and John, the sons of Zebedee
 - c. Herod Antipas
 - d. Simon of Cyrene
3. Which of Jesus' twelve disciples was the brother of Simon Peter?

a. Judas Iscariot	b. John
c. Andrew	d. Bartholomew
4. Which of Jesus' twelve disciples had been a tax collector for the Romans?

a. Nathaniel	b. Thaddeus
c. Simon the Zealot	d. Matthew
5. Which disciple was not present when Jesus was transfigured on the mountain?

a. Andrew	b. Peter
c. James	d. John
6. Who had John the Baptist beheaded?
 - a. Pontus Pilate
 - b. The Roman Governor Felix
 - c. Herod the Great
 - d. Herod Antipas
7. Who was the secret disciple who came to Jesus by night, then later helped prepare Jesus' body for burial?
 - a. Joseph of Arimathea
 - b. Simon the Secret
 - c. Simon of Cyrene
 - d. Nicodemus

8. What friend of Jesus was raised from the dead?

- a. Matthias
- b. Justus
- c. Lazarus
- d. Martha

9. Which of Jesus' twelve disciples was the treasurer and handled the money?

- a. Peter
- b. Judas Iscariot
- c. Simon the Zealot
- d. Philip

10. Which of Jesus' disciples doubted the report that Jesus had risen from the dead?

- a. Philip
- b. Peter
- c. Thomas
- d. James

Answers:

1 c; 2 b; 3 c; 4 d; 5 a; 6 d; 7 d; 8 c; 9 b; 10 c.

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