

# Kings And Priests And Intoxicating Drinks

The Old Testament includes two passages prohibiting specific people from consuming intoxicating drinks.

Proverbs contains an admonition against kings drinking wine and intoxicating drinks. These are the words spoken to King Lemuel by his mother: "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted" (Proverbs 31:4-5).

The Law of Moses prohibited the priests from drinking wine and intoxicating drinks (Leviticus 10:8-10): "Then the Lord spoke to Aaron, saying: 'Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them by the hand of Moses.'"

The reason for this prohibition is very clear. Those who served as kings and priests were in important positions. They had incredible responsibilities to both God and man. They had to be able to make good judgments. Kings had to remember the law and execute justice according to the law. Priests had to be able to distinguish between what was holy and unholy. They also had to be able to teach all the statutes of the Lord to the people. As we all know, alcohol impairs one's judgment, rendering him unable to fulfill such responsibilities in a proper manner. These individuals were not allowed to enjoy intoxicants - not even in moderation. They were advised (in the case of King Lemuel) and commanded (in the case of the priests) not to touch any of it.

According to the New Testament, all Christians are kings and priests. "And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 1:5-6). If it was unfitting for kings and priests to consume intoxicating drinks under the Old Law, why wouldn't God have the same expectations for His kings and priests under the New Covenant? Aren't we expected to know the law and make righteous judgments (Ephesians 5:17; John 7:24)? Don't we need to distinguish between what is holy and clean and what is unholy and unclean (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1)? Aren't we commanded to live soberly (1 Thessalonians 5:6-8; 1 Peter 1:13, 5:8)? Intoxicating drinks have no place in a Christian's life, not even in moderation.

We are coming upon the time of year when Christians will face temptations regarding alcohol. Holiday parties, office parties, family gatherings, and New Year's celebrations will place the stumbling block of intoxicating drinks before some of us. Christian, please remember who you are and what God expects of you. You are a king and a priest!

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