

Numbers 6:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried.

Analysis

Abstinence from wine and strong drink marked the Nazirite's separation from common pleasures. Wine in Scripture often symbolizes joy and celebration, yet the Nazirite's greater joy was found in devotion to God alone. This self-denial wasn't asceticism but focused consecration, prioritizing spiritual discipline over temporal pleasure.

Historical Context

In ancient Near Eastern culture, wine was a staple beverage and symbol of prosperity. The Nazirite's abstinence was therefore a visible, countercultural statement of devotion that would have been immediately recognizable to observers.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What legitimate pleasures might God call you to temporarily set aside for deeper devotion?
2. How does self-denial in one area create space for growth in another?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵלֹא	שָׁקַר	וְאֵלֹא	מִזְבֵּחַ	וְאֵלֹא
himself from wine	and strong drink	He shall separate	no vinegar	himself from wine
H3196	H7941	H5144	H2558	H3196
וְאֵלֹא	שָׁקַר	וְאֵלֹא	מִשְׁבֵּחַ תִּשְׂתַּחַת	וְאֵלֹא
no vinegar	and strong drink	H3808	and shall drink	H3605
H2558	H7941	H8354	H3808	H4952
וְאֵלֹא	שָׁקַר	וְאֵלֹא	מִשְׁבֵּחַ יְמִינְךָ	וְאֵלֹא
and shall drink	grapes	moist	any liquor	grapes
H3808	H8354	H3892	H3002	H6025
וְאֵלֹא:	לֹא	וְיִבְשֵׁה	יְמִינְךָ	וְאֵלֹא:
and shall drink	grapes	moist	or dried	nor eat
H3808	H6025	H3892	H3002	H398

Additional Cross-References

Luke 1:15 (Parallel theme): For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

1 Timothy 5:23 (Parallel theme): Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

Ephesians 5:18 (Parallel theme): And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Amos 2:12 (Parallel theme): But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not.

Leviticus 10:9 (Parallel theme): Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations:

Judges 13:14 (Parallel theme): She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe.

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