

# THE INTERCONTINENTAL CHURCH OF GOD

## SPECIFIC BIBLE STUDIES - BIBLE FOODS - GRAPES, WINE

**SUBJECT:** Bible Foods - Grapes, Wine

"When they came to the torrent valley of Eshcol, they then proceeded to cut down from there a shoot with one cluster of grapes. And they went carrying it with a bar on two of the men. "(Num 13; 23)

That must have been some gigantic cluster of grapes! But such abundance was not unusual in the vineyards that were so important to the people of the Bible. Grapes were the first thing Noah planted after the flood.

Grapes were eaten fresh, or dried and eaten as raisins, just as they are today. Most of the crop of the vineyards was made into juice, wine and vinegar, although grapes were also pressed into cakes. A cup of raw grapes for example, contain only 58 calories; a minuscule 0.3 grams of fat; zero cholesterol, and vitamins A, B and C The minerals in addition to boron include calcium, potassium and zinc. Grapes fight tooth decay, stop viruses in their tracks and are rich in other ingredients that many researchers believe can head off cancer. According to genesis, one of the first things Noah did after the flood subsided was plant a vineyard so he could make wine. Now, Noah started off as a farmer and proceeded to plant a vineyard. (Genesis 9:20)

The grapes tannins can survive digestion and quickly circulate through the blood, perhaps attacking viruses Grape juice also kills bacteria and dramatically restricts tooth decay. Researchers are now rediscovering what the physicians of the bible knew centuries ago. That wine -in moderation may have a profound impact on our health and healing

One of the earliest recommendations on record comes from Paul who wrote: " Stop drinking water only, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and for your frequent cases of sickness".(1 Timothy5;23)

"And wine that makes the heart of mortal man rejoice" (Psalms 104; 15)

In the Holy land, wine was used for more than celebrating. When mixed with myrrh; it was an early form of anesthetic on the battlefield, for surgical operations and during childbirth.

Heart disease: Wine may also be just the thing for heading off heart problems. A study at the University of Ottawa in Canada recently concluded there is a clear link between wine consumption and lower rates of heart disease. In areas of high wine consumption, the number of fatal heart attacks was found to be dramatically lower than elsewhere. Countries where better than 90 percent of alcohol is consumed in the form of wine have the lowest rate of heart disease deaths.

There is little question that alcohol does seem to boost levels of the good HDL cholesterol. A British study of 100 men and women discovered that a single glass of wine or sherry every day notably increased the HDL count. When the group abstained from drinking their daily tot, the HDL level actually decreased.

Cancer: - Wine, particularly red wine, also seems to strengthen the body's defense against cancer, just as it does against heart disease.

Beware: Wine can be a two-edged sword. In elderly people who have trouble enough of the right foods to maintain good health, a glass of wine can be a wonderful appetite stimulant. However it does the same for people who are dieting, so if you are trying to lose those extra pounds it might be best to pass on the wine.

Current research indicates there are a lot of health benefits to drinking a glass of wine a day. However, the advice given in the bible, thousands of years ago, still apply:

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess..."(Ephesians 5; 18)

Grapes have extraordinarily high levels of something called caffeic acid, which has been shown to be a strong anti-cancer substance. Raisins, which are dried grapes, were definitely associated with the reduced rate of cancer deaths among one group of American senior citizens.

### Grapes

Grapes, along with the wine and raisins that are made from them, are mentioned throughout The Bible, all the way from Genesis to Revelation. Along with The Olive Tree and The Fig Tree, grape vines were often used as symbols of the fertility of the Promised Land of Israel.

Noah is the first recorded human to grow grapes (Genesis 9:20). In a temporary lapse of his otherwise highly righteous character (Genesis 6:9), he is also the first recorded human to become drunk (some believe that it was not intentional, but that he had simply misjudged the alcohol content), from the wine that he made from his vineyard (Genesis 9:21).

Existing vineyards awaited the Israelites when they crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land. The scouts sent out by Moses returned from the Valley of Eshcol with huge clusters of grapes (Numbers 13:23).

Raisins, which are simply dried grapes, were widely used, often stored or carried as pressed cakes e.g. 1 Samuel 25:18 and 30:12, 2 Samuel 16:1, 1 Chronicles 12:40.

A drink offering of wine was presented (see Levites) with the daily sacrifice (Exodus 29:40-41), with the offering of the firstfruits (Leviticus 23:13), and with various other sacrifices (Numbers 15:5,7,10). Wine was used at the Passover, and Jesus Christ used it with unleavened bread at the Lord's Supper as symbols of His body and blood. (Matthew 26:26-29). He then said that, "I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matthew 26:29 RSV) (see The Kingdom of God)

The first recorded miracle of Jesus Christ, as encouraged by His mother Mary, was the turning of water into wine at a wedding in Cana in Galilee. (John 2:1-11)

Jesus Christ used the grape vine in His teachings about the church: "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If a man does not abide in Me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples." (John 15:1-8 RSV)