

THE INTERCONTINENTAL CHURCH OF GOD

SPECIFIC BIBLE STUDIES - BIBLE FOODS - VINEGAR

SUBJECT: Bible Foods - Vinegar

(vin'-e-ger) (chomets; oxos): Vinegar, whose use as a condiment (Ruth 2:14) needs no comment, is formed when a saccharine fluid passes through a fermentation that produces acetic acid. In the ancient world vinegar was usually made of wine, although any fruit juice can be utilized in its manufacture, and "vinegar of strong drink" (palm juice?) is mentioned in Num 6:3.

Undiluted vinegar is of course undrinkable, and to offer it to a thirsty man is mockery (Ps 69:21), but a mixture of water and vinegar makes a beverage that was very popular among the poor (Greek oxos, oxukraton, Latin posca-names applied also to diluted sour wine). It is mentioned in Num 6:3 (forbidden to the Nazirite) and again in the Gospels in the account of the Crucifixion. The executioners had brought it in a vessel (John 19:29) for their own use and at first "offered" it to Christ, while keeping it out of reach (Luke 23:36). But at the end the drink was given Him on a sponge (Mark 15:36; Matt 27:48; John 19:29-30). In addition, the King James Version, following Textus Receptus of the New Testament, has "vinegar mingled with gall" in Matt 27:34, but this rests on a false reading, probably due to Ps 69:21, and the Revised Version (British and American) rightly has "wine."

Vinegar, like all acids, is injurious to the teeth (Prov 10:26); and when it is combined with niter an effervescence is produced (Prov 25:20). The appropriateness of the last figure, however, is obscure, and Septuagint reads "as vinegar on a wound," causing pain.

(from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia)