

Text:

Proverbs 31:6-7 (NKJV)

*“Give strong drink to him who is perishing,
And wine to those who are bitter of heart.
Let him drink and forget his poverty,
And remember his misery no more.”*

At first reading, this verse may appear to suggest that God approves of using alcohol to cope with pain or hardship. But when we examine it in the context of the whole Bible, we see something much deeper.

1. The Old Covenant Allowed Temporary Measures

The Old Covenant was largely **physical and external**. It dealt with the outward life and often permitted temporary measures to handle human weakness.

- **Marriage & Divorce:**

When asked about divorce, Jesus explained that Moses only allowed it

“because of the hardness of your hearts, but from the beginning it was not so” (Matthew 19:8, NKJV).

This shows that some Old Covenant practices were temporary concessions, not God’s eternal plan.

- **Polygamy:**

King David had many wives and concubines, yet still fell into adultery with Bathsheba (2 *Samuel 11*). Having many wives did not remove the sinful desire—it only revealed the insufficiency of man’s solutions.

- **Strong Drink for Sorrow:**

Similarly, in times of grief, people were given alcohol to temporarily dull their pain. For example, Job’s friends sat with him in deep mourning (*Job 2:13*), and in that culture, offering wine was a way to comfort the sorrowful. But the relief was fleeting—when the drink wore off, the grief returned.

This illustrates that human attempts to deal with sin, sorrow, and brokenness through outward means always fall short. The law could regulate behavior, but it could not transform the heart (*Romans 8:3*).

2. The New Covenant Brings the True Solution

In the fullness of time, God revealed His perfect plan in Christ. Instead of temporary outward fixes, He gave us the **indwelling Holy Spirit**, the Comforter, who brings lasting peace and joy.

- **Jesus Offers Living Water:**

John 7:37-39 (NKJV)

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

(But this He spoke concerning the Spirit...)

Unlike alcohol, which only numbs pain for a moment, the Holy Spirit satisfies the soul permanently. He quenches the inner thirst that nothing else can fill.

- **Pentecost Joy Misunderstood:**

On the Day of Pentecost, the disciples were filled with the Spirit, and observers thought they were drunk. Peter explained:

Acts 2:15-17 (NKJV)

“These are not drunk, as you suppose... But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days... I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh.’”

This shows that the **Spirit replaces the role that wine once played**—bringing joy, freedom, and courage, but without corruption.

The New Covenant is **internal and spiritual**. God writes His law on our hearts (*Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10*), and the Spirit Himself becomes our comfort and strength. What alcohol symbolized in the Old Testament, the Spirit fulfills in the New.

3. Why Believers Must Avoid Alcohol

The New Testament gives clear instruction about alcohol:

Ephesians 5:18 (NKJV)

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.”

- Alcohol leads to loss of self-control, sin, and brokenness.
- The Holy Spirit leads to holiness, joy, and lasting peace.

Therefore, Proverbs 31:6-7 is not an invitation for believers to drink. It reflects how sorrow was handled under the Old Covenant. But under the New Covenant, we have something far greater—the Holy Spirit, who truly heals the heart.

4. Conclusion

- In the **Old Covenant**, strong drink was allowed as a temporary relief for those in sorrow or distress.
- In the **New Covenant**, God provides the real and eternal solution—the Holy Spirit.
- As Christians, we are not to seek relief in alcohol but to be filled continually with the Spirit, who brings true comfort and strength.

The true message of Proverbs 31:6-7 is this:

Human remedies may dull pain for a moment, but only God's Spirit can heal the heart forever.

Amen.

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