



The Caller

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Confidence Corner John F. Board

In this week's *Confidence Corner* we will examine the question "What is the big deal with alcohol?" I ask us to consider the following thoughts regarding this danger against which God provides strong

warning.

People see themselves using alcohol in four different ways. (1) Some people do not drink at all. (2) Some experiment with it—experimental drinkers. (3) Others are social drinkers, and (4) some are dependent or problem users. Some may move from one category to another in sequence, but others jump directly from nonusers to abusers.

That alcohol is a drug is not up for debate. Its toxic effects are well-known and cause permanent damage to the body. Large doses can result in immediate death, and prolonged usage can also hasten or cause death.

Unfortunately, those who think the Bible permits them to drink socially think they will never slip into the category of problem or dependent users of alcohol, and they have convinced themselves that they will never become alcoholics. They think that happens only to others. Yet, if twelve people drink over the course of ten years, one will become an alcoholic and three others will become problem drinkers. People do shift from one category to another, sometimes without realizing it.

After cancer and heart disease, alcohol is the third leading cause of death in this country. Alcohol is responsible for thousands of suicides and drowning deaths. Drunk drivers are responsible for about one-half of the fatal automobile accidents each year. In 1989 it was estimated that there were close to twenty million alcoholics in America. It has proved to be a dangerous drug.

So what is the big deal about alcohol? If we look to God and Scripture, the answer is clear. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1).

jfb

UNDERDOGS

We have seen it more than once...the desire to root for the underdog. Whether it is in football, basketball, gymnastics, or an academic competition many people are excited when an underdog pulls out the unexpected. Sometimes in a job situation or even in politics the underdog pulls out the win.

Well, there was One that we know, because of what is revealed in Scripture, was not really an underdog—though the world in which He lived did not think He was anything special. Of course, I am thinking of Jesus.

From a worldly perspective, He was an underdog. He was viewed by those who knew Him (including his own brethren) as the earthly born child of Joseph and Mary who was like all the other people around Him. He was from the area of Nazareth (Remember what was said of Him: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"). He was a King who was put to death by crucifixion rather than be raised to sit on an earthly throne. He was placed in a tomb. Well, from all earthly perspective that was it—we go a fishing.

Yet we know that Jesus was no underdog. There was more than simply an earthly perspective. Jesus was the champion determined before the world was even created! The underdog from the earthly perspective was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world Who would raise to reign on a heavenly throne.

Yes, we know Jesus was no underdog! We are actually the ones whom it appeared had no hope! There was no way we could win! But the victory is ours because of Christ!

jfb

Sunday's Sermons:

**A.M. — Walk in Love, Ephesians 5:1-2
Guest Speaker, Noah Wallace**

**P.M. — Passing the Torch
Titus 1:1-4**

The Accounts of the Gospel: The Whole Truth and Nothing But The Truth

Muslims contend that the Christian Gospels contain only fragments of truth, much of which has been corrupted over time. Therefore, this article will attempt to show that the four accounts of the Gospel in existence today (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) are, in fact, the original "Gospel" and the true teachings of Jesus by demonstrating that the arguments the Muslims employ are not valid arguments.

Often, Muslims hold that the non-canonical Gospels, especially the Gospel of Barnabas, are the true accounts of the Gospel. However, these texts have serious problems. For example, the Gospel of Barnabas is typically mistaken for the early manuscript of the Epistle of Barnabas (ca. 70–90). It has over thirty historical, social, geographical, and religious errors, and it contradicts the four canonical accounts of the Gospel as well as the Quran twenty times.

Another accusation lobbied by Muslims is that the original Gospel was different or is lost. Ibn Abdullah says that few of the 24,000 copies of the New Testament date back to the fourth century after Christ. However, this is not a true statement for several reasons. Most of the copies he is referring to are in Syriac, Coptic, Arabic, and Latin—not the original Greek. Of the 5,686 Greek manuscripts, many date back to very close to the time of Jesus. Gospel fragments such as a fragment of Mark found in the Dead Sea Scrolls date back to A.D. 50.

John records for us the truth--Jesus did many things that are not written in the four accounts of the Gospel. But the things that are included are those items that Jesus, after His resurrection and ascension back to Heaven, sent the Holy Spirit to guide the writers to include (John 14-16). The reason they were written was for our belief (John 20:30-31). Though not the purpose of this article, I assure you the evidence is overwhelming that what we have as the four accounts of the Gospel don't just include or contain truth...all of the words are truth!

*John F. Board
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