

## "IT BITES LIKE A SERPENT"

### Int.

1. Aim: To show the evils of strong drink and how we must avoid it.
2. **Prov. 23:29-35** NKJV
3. If you have ever seen a drunken man and heard him talk you know that this description by Solomon is accurate.
  - a. "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?" Pro. 23:29
    - i. Solomon asked a series of question about strong drink
    - ii. God does not want man to be unhappy - but happiness is conditional on obeying God's commands.
    - iii. He has wounds without cause - he hurts himself by falling. He is wounded by other drunken men with whom he fights when there was no cause for a fight - except they were drunken
    - iv. He has redness of eyes and also of nose. Bloodshot eyes.
  - b. "Those who linger long at the wine, Those who go in search of mixed wine." Pr.23:30
    - i. This is the answer to the question in v. 29
    - ii. Those who drink strong drink.
  - c. "Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly;" Pro. 23:31
    - i. Do not even place yourself in the position of looking at strong drink
    - ii. Total abstinence is the only way to avoid the evils of alcohol

d. "At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper." Pro. 23:32

- i. It Bites
- ii. And it stings
- iii. It is like the venom of a deadly snake

e. "Your eyes will see strange things, And your heart will utter perverse things."

Pro.23:33

- i. He sees strange women - he is lascivious and lustful and imagines himself in carnal embrace when he is not actually in such connection with sinful women.
- ii. His heart utters perverse things - he utters vile and obscene language. He talks of the most perverted and unnatural deeds and often commits them.

f. "Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, Or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying:" Pro. 23:34

- i. He is like one who lieth down in the midst of the sea. He utterly disregards danger.
- ii. He often actually does lie down on a railroad track and in other places where his life is endangered.

g. "'They have struck me, but I was not hurt; They have beaten me, but I did not feel it.

When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?'"

- i. He sobers up and discovers that he was beaten and bruised, but he knew not when it happened.
- ii. He is such a victim of the drink habit that he resolves to get drunk again at the first opportunity.

4. These symptoms are familiar and scientifically accurate.

5. The serpent and viper simile is also remarkably accurate from a scientific standpoint.

## Discussion

### I. SIMILE OF SERPENT and ADDER

- A. Two classes of poisonous snakes - they have to do with the matter of biting and as to the nature of the venom.
1. These two types are called serpents and vipers
  2. The word adder in the text is the same as viper or cockatrice
- B. Serpents
1. The cobra of India is an example
  2. The cottonmouth moccasin is an example here in America
  3. These serpents bite their victims, they insert the fangs and chew the tissue as the venom is being injected. So the expression "Bites like a serpent"
  4. Venom from these serpents is deadly and a person can be dead in a matter of 20 minutes. It depends on the amount of dosage, which depends on the size of the serpent and how long it had been since he had bitten something else.
  5. The venom of these serpents is a poison of the nerve tissue, and is classed as a neurotoxin.
- C. The Viper - adder
1. These kind of snakes do not bite.
  2. They strike and drive their fangs into the victim like the sting of a wasp, inject the venom, and withdraw the fangs in a fraction of a second.
  3. So the expression is "stings like an viper"
  4. The rattlesnake is an example of a viper.

5. The fangs of the viper fold back, like the blade of a pocketknife, against the snake's upper jaw, but when he strikes they spring out to right angles with the jaw and are driven into the flesh of the victim like a hypodermic needle.
  6. The venom is in a sac or pouch at the root of the fang, and by the pressure of the upper jaw this venom is shot through the fang into the blood of the victim.
    - a. This venom of the viper class of snakes is a poison of the blood and blood vessels
    - b. It is classed as a hematoxin - a poison of the blood.
    - c. It destroys the blood cells and alters the blood-vessel walls, therefore poisons all the tissues of the body.
  7. The area around the sting of the victim swells, turns dark or black, and is very painful.
- D. The analogy between the biting of a serpent and the stinging of an adder and alcoholic poison is perfect.
1. The serpent bites and the adder stings. Alcohol does both.
  2. The venom
    - a. The serpent is a neurotoxin = [attacks the nerves]
    - b. And the venom of the adder is a hematoxin [a poison of the blood].
  3. Alcohol is both - it attacks and destroys the nerves and poisons the blood

**II. AT THE LAST** - Pro. 23:32 = in the end

A. The final result of drinking strong drink

1. No thinking person would ever start drinking if he considered the end of it.
2. The booze companies don't tell him how it will end.
3. The fellows who offer him his first drink and will laugh at him if he doesn't take it aren't thinking of drink's bitter end.
4. Indeed wine "bites like a serpent", and it "stings like a viper"

B. It Bites like a serpent

1. The drunkard is a mental or nervous wreck
2. Alcohol as a neurotoxin has ruined his nerves
  - a. He sees imaginary reptiles and other vile images
  - b. He raves in wild delirium and fights a million devils that haunt his couch
  - c. It is not uncommon for a drunkard to think he is riding a pink elephant.
3. Delirium tremens is a term to describe what happens when a person is having withdrawal symptoms from alcohol addiction
  - a. Delirium tremens (the DTs) is a disorder caused by the body's reaction to not having alcohol.
  - b. It is a serious medical disorder that includes extreme confusion, agitation, hallucinations, and other symptoms of severe alcohol withdrawal.
  - c. Delirium tremens usually starts 24 to 72 hours after a chronic alcoholic either stops or severely limits his or her drinking of alcohol.
  - d. Delirium tremens is potentially fatal.

- e. How does it occur?
  - (1) Chronic drinking changes the biochemical functioning of the body and brain.
  - (2) When you start drinking less or completely stop drinking, your body and brain chemistry change again.
  - (3) While you are going through these changes, you suffer severe reactions.
  - (4) This is an example of how at the last alcohol bites like a serpent
- 4. Drunken drivers cause a large number of deaths and injuries each year.
  - a. Why? They are not able to control the car because their minds and bodies are under the influence of the alcohol.
  - b. Thousands of people are killed
  - c. Georgia - In 2006 = total deaths 1,688, Alcohol related 539, 32%
  - d. Illustration - If a Boeing 747 crashed today killing 304 people, that would indeed be a tragedy. But if another plane crashed next week killing another 304 people, and the next week another airplane accident caused the death of another 304 people, our country would be in an emotional uproar. The result would be that aircraft would be grounded. Investigations would ensue, charges and allegations would fly and airplanes wouldn't. Fortunately, that isn't happening. But with far too little notice, alcohol is doing just that--killing 304 people each and every week in alcohol related car deaths.
  - e. 2006 - 15,829 killed in Alcohol related deaths
  - f. Bites like a serpent - is an apt description of the drunkard and what happens at the last !

C. Stings like an viper

1. Alcohol as a hematoxin has wrecked his whole body.
2. He suffers many physical problems
  - a. Cirrhosis of the liver is one of the problems of drinkers:
  - b. Chronic nephritis or ruined kidneys
  - c. It has produced stomach ulcers and subsequent malignancy - stomach cancer
  - d. It produces high blood pressure and may cause strokes
  - e. One medical journal classes sixty diseases as directly or indirectly traceable to drinking of alcohol
3. Cirrhosis of the liver or hardening of the liver is a very serious health problem
  - a. The blood from the gastrointestinal tract is prevented from flowing freely through the hardened liver.
  - b. As a result of the back pressure in the veins, the lower parts of the body become badly swollen and the abdomen is distended with fluid and the person can hardly breathe.
  - c. Alcohol stings like an viper or adder!!!
4. Drinking causes nausea and headaches - a hangover
  - a. Many people like to celebrate arrival of the new year by drinking !
  - b. The next day they suffer with severe nausea and headaches and feeling terrible !
  - c. Another example of how alcohol stings like an viper.

## Conclusion

1. Alcohol Bites and Stings
2. Jonathan Swift wrote an article entitled "Thoughts on Various Subjects,". He said:  
"Elephants are always drawn smaller than life, but a flea always larger."
  - a. This would have to be true.
  - b. What could you do with the picture of an elephant as large as the elephant really is.
3. Just so it is in drawing the pictures of the evils of alcohol. We cannot draw the picture full size. It is impossible to reckon the ruin wrought by strong drink.
4. "**At the last it bites like a serpent and stings like a viper.**" Pro. 23:32
5. Rm. 12:1 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."
  - a. Our bodies are sacred because they are God-given.
  - b. We serve God through our Bodies
  - c. Therefore we should keep our bodies morally clean and healthy.
6. Alcohol is condemned as an evil beverage!
7. You cannot do what God says and drink!!!
8. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."  
Pro. 20:1
9. It bites like a serpent and stings like an a viper! It destroys your brain, your body, and your soul !
10. Alcohol bites like a serpent and stings like a viper.
11. "Drunkenness is nothing else but voluntary madness." - Senca

Sermon by Arthur Pigman - Sunday morning April 6, 2008  
Evans Church of Christ  
515 Gibbs Road  
Evans, Ga. 30809  
706-855-1249  
evanscoc@bellsouth.net  
[www.evansgachurchofchrist.org](http://www.evansgachurchofchrist.org)