

A Woman Who Fears The LORD . . .

(A Study on Proverbs 31)



Warns Against Intoxicating Drink

INTRODUCTION

Intoxicating drink has always been a controversial issue for Christians. However, the Word of God is very clear concerning drinking wine or any strong drink. The queen mother, in Proverbs 31, had a God-fearing understanding of what the Scriptures teach when she instructed her son the king: *It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted. 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. Open your mouth for the speechless, in the cause of all who are appointed to die. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy* (Proverbs 31:4-9).

THEME SCRIPTURE

It is not for kings, O Lemuel,¹ it is not for kings to drink wine . . . (Proverbs 31:4).

MEMORY VERSE

Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation;² but be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

¹ *Lemuel*: belonging to God, unto God, dedicated to God. Solomon was called Jedidiah, beloved of the LORD, from infancy; a symbolic name of Solomon.

² *dissipation*: excess, riot, in abandon.

I. THE QUEEN'S WARNING

READ Proverbs 31:4-9.

1. What does the queen mother warn her son the king to avoid (v. 4)? _____
_____ ³

Why (v. 5)? _____

2. How does she emphasize her point against strong drink and wine (vv. 6, 7)? _____

3. A king must have a clear sound mind. Why (vv. 8, 9)? _____

We also have God-given responsibilities that require us to maintain a clear mind and sound judgment.

PERSONAL

SHARE what you have observed in the behavior of a person who has been under the influence of intoxicating drink or drugs.

³ intoxicating drink: strong drink; intoxicating liquor made from barley or distilled from honey or dates; intensely alcoholic liquor.

II. WINE IN THE BIBLE

The common use of ancient wine⁴ is recorded in stories throughout the Old and New Testament.

1. NOAH GETS DRUNK

After the flood had subsided, Noah and his family descended from the ark and began a new life in a new world.

READ Genesis 9:18-28.

Who went out of the ark with Noah (vv. 18, 19)? _____

What was Noah's new occupation (v. 20)? _____

What unfortunate situation resulted from the vineyard he planted (v. 21)? _____⁵

Because of Noah's intoxication what shameful thing occurred (vv. 22, 23)? _____

How did each son react to Noah's shameful state? _____

⁴ ancient wine: unlike wine today, according to the Jewish Talmud (Law), Biblical wine was fermented but diluted three parts water to one part wine. Even pagans would often use a ratio of 8 to 20 parts water to 1 part wine. They considered it to be barbaric to consume a mixture of half water and half wine.

⁵ drunk (v. 21): to become tipsy; in a qualified sense to sedate with a stimulating drink or influence; filled with drink abundantly; be intoxicated.

When Noah woke up from his drunken stupor, he realized that he had been dishonored by his youngest son, Ham. What curse did Noah pronounce on Ham's son, Canaan, and Canaan's descendants? What blessing did Noah pronounce on his sons Shem and Japheth (vv. 25-27)?

What was the last account of Noah's life (vv. 28, 29)? _____

After demonstrating his great faith in God to his wife, sons, and daughters-in-law, this incident in Noah's life shows us how our lives have a direct effect on our families and those around us, for good or for evil.

PERSONAL

What in your life could be a stumbling block or a blessing to your family and those God has placed in your life?

CHALLENGE

The following are additional stories for you to examine regarding the use of wine in the Old Testament: Melchizedek blesses Abraham, Genesis 14:18-20; Lot is made to get drunk, Genesis 19:30-38⁶; Laws of grain, wine and oil offerings, Deuteronomy 14:22, 23.⁷

2. JESUS TURNS WATER INTO WINE

READ John 2:1-10.

This is the first miracle Jesus performed at the beginning of His ministry.

Who was invited to the marriage in Cana of Galilee (vv. 1, 2)? _____

What did Jesus' mother bring to His attention (vv. 3-5)? _____

What was Jesus' response? _____

What did she instruct the servants? _____

DESCRIBE how Jesus performed His first miracle (vv. 6-8). _____

What did the master of the feast notice about the wine that Jesus miraculously produced (vv. 9-11)?

What quality of wine did Jesus bring forth? _____ ⁸

⁶ Moabites and Ammonites (vv. 37, 38): the descendants of Lot's daughters whom they conceived through drunken incest with their father who became the enemies of God's people.

⁷ new wine: freshly pressed wine; grape juice.

⁸ good wine (v. 10): excellent, choice, valuable.

The first miracle that Jesus performed was to bless a bride and groom at their wedding.

PERSONAL

How has Jesus brought blessings into your life unexpectedly? _____

III. WARNINGS AGAINST INTOXICATING DRINK

What exhortations, warnings and consequences are listed regarding drunkenness?

Proverbs 20:1 _____

Proverbs 23:19-21 _____

Proverbs 23:29-35 _____

Isaiah 5:11, 12 _____

Isaiah 5:22-24 _____

Isaiah 28:7 _____

Hosea 4:11 _____

Habakkuk 2:5 _____

Habakkuk 2:15 _____

Galatians 5:19-21 _____

Ephesians 5:17-21 _____

Romans 13:13, 14 _____

Romans 14:21 _____

I Corinthians 6:9-11 _____

I Timothy 3:1-3 _____

*For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking,
but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

Romans 14:17

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