

Drinking - What John R. Rice Wrote About It

by John R. Rice

The curse of God is on the drunkard, but there is mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Proverbs 23:21, Isaiah 28:1, Habakkuk 2:15, John 3:16, Romans 3:22

Topics: "Alcohol Abuse", "Salvation Through Christ"

Description

John R. Rice preaches about the curses of alcoholism, emphasizing the woes pronounced on the crown of pride and the drunkards of Ephraim in the Bible. He highlights the detrimental effects of alcohol on individuals, families, and society, pointing out the poverty, shame, and brokenness it brings. Rice stresses the importance of turning to Jesus Christ for forgiveness and salvation, underscoring the need for a new heart and being born again to overcome the bondage of sin and find eternal life in Christ.

Transcript

"Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!" Isaiah 28:1

"The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet." Isaiah 28:3

"But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean." Isaiah 28:7,8

"Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the LORD'S right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory." Hab. 2:15,16

Notice the woe to the crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim. Woe to the drunkard! A curse is on the drunkard, says the Word of God. There is a curse on the man who drinks, on the woman who drinks.

There is another curse: "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!" There is a curse on the person who serves, who sells, who gives liquor.

By way of introduction, let me say this: in Bible times they did not have distilled whisky as we have it now. However, they did have several kinds of wine. But wine in the New Testament very often means simply grapejuice. In fact, there was not in Bible times a different word for wine and for grapejuice as we have. When the juice was first squeezed out of the grapes, it was called wine, as you see from Proverbs 3:10: "So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." So grapejuice is wine, in the Bible sense. Later when the grapejuice ferments, it is still wine in the Bible sense.

There is no reason to suppose that the wine which Jesus made at the wedding in John, chapter 2, was intoxicating wine. There is no reason to supposed that the which was used a t the last supper and which New Testament churches used for the Lord's Supper was intoxicating wine. In fact, the Scripture takes particular pains not to call it wine, but instead calls it "the cup," and "the fruit of the vine." Sot he Lord seems to have specially guarded against being misunderstood on this point. However, if He had used the word wine it might have meant unfermented wine, that is, simply grapejuice.

I call your attention to the double curse of God on booze.

First, there is a curse on the drunkard. Who is a drunkard? When is a man a drunk? Many a man, after he has been arrested for killing somebody with his car, or after a fatal accident, says to the judge, "Why, Judge, I only had two or three beers. I wasn't drunk." He couldn't drive well, couldn't see well. He couldn't get his foot on the brake as quickly as he ought to; he was not as reliable a driver under the influence of liquor. But he said he wasn't drunk. Because he wasn't unconscious or wasn't in a stupor, he thinks he wasn't drunk.

When is a man drunk? When a man has drunk, he is drunk. Anybody who drinks beverage alcohol in any degree is somewhat affected by it, and so he is drunk to that degree. A man can get more drunk than he already is. He can drink until he is unconscious and can't drink any more. A man can drink until a certain percentage of alcohol gets into the blood and stops the motor responses so that he quits breathing and dies. Now, that is a little more drunk than he was while he was breathing. Yet he is still drunk.

You know that the word drunk is part of the word drink, drank, drunk; or, drink, drank, drunken. A drunkard is a man who drinks. Anybody who drinks any alcoholic liquor is under the influence of it, is affected by it, and to that degree is drunk.

If it takes eight glasses of beer to make a man drunk (it takes less than that for some people) then the man who has one glass is one-eighth drunk. The man who has two glasses is one-fourth drunk. And no man on-fourth drunk is safe as an engineer of a passenger train, safe to drive an automobile down the road, or safe to handle a steam shovel or a drill press, or a welding torch. No girl who is one-fourth drunk is safe in the presence of sex temptation. The man who would not gamble without drinking, will gamble when he is one-fourth drunk. And the man who never intended to take more than two glasses of beer can be tempted to take more when he is already one-fourth drunk!

Now what are some of the curses of God on the drunkard? Listen to Proverbs 23:21: "For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags."

What is the curse on the drunkard? Poverty. I need not prove that. How many of you ever knew somebody who was poor because of liquor?

In the second grade at school I had my first love affair! I fell in love with Miss Mabel Blossom, my second grade teacher! One day Miss Mabel said to the class, "All you children but Sammy will have to stay in today. Sammy, you have been a good boy. You may go home on time. Get your lunch bucket, your cap and coat, and go on home. Good-by, Sammy. I am going to keep the rest of the class in."

Sammy left. When the door was closed, Miss Mabel got off her rostrum, walked down near us, stood there with tears in her eyes as she said, "Children, some of you haven't been very nice to Sammy. You don't like to play with him. You have nice lunch baskets, while he brings his lunch--if he has anything at all--in a lard pail. Your Mother fixes your hair nice. You little girls have nice starched dresses; you little boys have white blouses and clean pants, but little Sammy only wears dirty old patched overalls." She said, "Children, I want to tell you something. Sammy is not to blame. His father is a drunkard, and Sammy's mother does the best she can. They don't have money a lot of the time. Sammy can't bring any lunch some days. So don't you be mean to Sammy. He can't help it if his father drinks."

I have never gotten away from that. Here is a little boy who didn't have lunches like the rest of us. Our family was very poor, but we always had clothes enough, and they were always clean. We came with our hair combed and looked nice. We were well cared for. But Sammy, with a drinking father, couldn't have nice clothes; he didn't have enough to eat, and he went barefoot in the winter-time. I was impressed then with the thing I have wept over I guess a thousand times since--the poverty of wives and little children who suffer because of a husband or daddy who is a drunkard.

Some of you are against the liquor business, yet you will eat where it is served or trade where it is sold, even if there is a good restaurant close by that does not serve it, and a grocery store not far away that does not sell it. You say you don't drink it--no; but you patronize the one who does, because you can save a few cents on a can of coffee or a pound of sugar or a gallon of milk. Shame on you! God is displeased when you have a choice and choose to trade with the liquor crowd.

Now there are some occasions in this day and age when we have no choice. I fly on airlines that serve the stuff. If there were airlines that didn't, I would make my choice to fly with those lines. Would you? Or does it not matter to you? God help us!

Don't you see that when you go into places where beer or liquor is served, you are backing up those who are in the dirty business of damning souls. Your presence there says to your children, "It doesn't matter. Such places are all right for decent people." But that is not true, and you know it. To do so puts your money and influence back of those who are breaking down morals, who are turning our girls into drunkards and prostitutes, and making our boys into profligates and drunkards.

When you patronize these places, you are putting your money into the kind of thing, and your friendship and your good name behind the kind of thing, that has God's curse on it. Don't do it! give your testimony by where you trade and where you eat.

I remind you again that the curse of God is on anyone who gives his neighbor drink, or helps others give their neighbor drink, or puts his influence behind people who give their neighbor drink.

JESUS IS READY TO FORGIVE AND SAVE YOU NOW

Now listen to me. Drink leads to ruin, to Hell. But, thank God, there is mercy, if you will turn to Jesus Christ. No matter how far you have gone, God loves you still. There is not anywhere God will not follow

you. There is not anywhere He cannot help you. There is not anywhere He cannot clean you up. But Jesus will have to do it. Break with the old crowd. Break with the ways of sin. Get out of the hogpen! Prodigal, come on back to the Father's house! God has mercy and forgiveness for you.

I will tell you what all of us need. What you need if you are a drunkard and what you need if you are not a drunkard is Jesus Christ. You need a new heart, need to be born again.

You say, "I will turn over a new leaf." But the new leaf will soon be as dirty as the old leaf. "But," you say, "I'll make up my mind with all my willpower . . ." Listen, sin takes more than willpower; it takes the grace of God.

You say, "But Brother Rice, I'll change my habits." Even though you may change your habits, you cannot change your heart. Even if you quit your drinking now--if you do, and I hope you will--but if you quit your drinking now, unless you turn to Jesus and repent of your sins and trust Him, you are still a poor, lost soul going to Hell. Don't you see that the only chance for a sinner is to put his trust in Jesus, depend on Him? Let Jesus come into your heart and save your soul.

We have been talking about liquor; now I am turning to a far more important subject than that. What you need is your poor, black heart made white. As clean as you may be you have a black heart and if you do not get born again, you will go to Hell.

In Romans 3:22, 23 the Scripture says: "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" There is not any difference, God says. All are sinners alike. The drunkard is a sinner; the man who does not drink is a sinner, too! Harlots are sinners; modest, virtuous women are sinners, too--lost sinners, condemned sinners, Hellbound sinners if they are unconverted, if they be not born again, saved by personal trust in Christ.

You can't lick sin without Jesus. You cannot trust your own righteousness. Only the blood of Jesus Christ can save. What you need is a new heart, a new nature. You need to let Jesus come into your heart, forgive your sins, and save your soul today.

And He is ready to do it, too. He said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). So I beg you to trust Jesus right now to save you. Turn your heart to Him! Repent of your sin. Depend on Him just now to save your soul, by His great mercy! He will do it!

If you are ready to accept Christ as your Saviour then pray this prayer. Realizing that I am a poor lost sinner, I today turn from my sin to trust Christ and take Him as my Saviour forever. I believe He is willing to save me, willing to take me, however sinful I have been. I believe He is able to help me do right, able to keep my soul. Here and now I claim Jesus Christ as my Saviour and give Him my heart. I will honestly try to serve Him the rest of my life.

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