



## **"Noah vs. The Bottle"**

**Genesis 9:18-29**

(A sermon by Rev. David Busker)

**"How should drunk drivers be treated?"**

[Adapted from an Ann Landers Column, Nov, 1986, News Group, Chicago]

The Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association put out some interesting facts. It tells how drunken drivers are dealt with in other countries. Here they are:

Australia: The names of convicted drunken drivers are published in the local newspaper under the heading: "DRUNK AND IN JAIL".

South Africa: A drunken driver is given a 10-year prison term, a fine of \$10,000 or both, depending upon the circumstances.

Turkey: Drunken drivers are taken 20 miles out of town by the police and forced to walk back under escort.

Malaya: The drunken driver is jailed. If he is married, his wife is jailed too.

Norway: Three weeks in jail at hard labor and the driver loses his license for one year. A second offense in five years and the driving license is revoked permanently.

Finland and Sweden: Automatic jail sentence for one year at hard labor.

Russia: Driver's license is revoked for life.

Bulgaria: A second conviction of drunken driving is the last. The punishment is execution.

El Salvador: Drunken drivers for the first offense are executed by a firing squad.

These sentences may seem extremely harsh but I'll bet they don't have many second offenders. Maybe if we cracked down harder on drunk drivers who jeopardize the lives of innocent people every day, we wouldn't have so many DUI [Driving under the influence] tragedies.

We have to deal with alcohol and its affects in our world today. Alcohol is often a staple in many families and the United States has seen a 25% increase in the amount of alcohol consumed in the past 20 years. Young people are not excluded from this group as they consume 1.1 billion cans of beer a year. Alcohol and drunkenness is part of life.

We are faced with drunkenness quite early in Scripture when we read about Noah in Genesis 9.

## I. NOAH'S FAMILY AND HIS EMPLOYMENT

Our place for this story takes place after the Flood. The names of his sons are mentioned again because it is their descendants that are spreading out all over the earth. Ham, Shem, and Japheth were in the business of having children and building their lives again. Noah was no different.

He began to rebuild his life as well. After the floodwaters died down and after he built a new house for his family, Noah went back to his occupation. Noah was a farmer and most specifically this passage says that he planted a vineyard.

Noah planted a vineyard and when he had gathered his crop, he most likely appointed a day of celebration and feasting for his family. This makes great sense. What better reason for a celebration than the first harvest after the flood! They celebrated God's blessings and the increase of his house as well as in the increase of his vineyard.

At this feast, Noah drank from his crop and enjoyed himself. But he drank too liberally, more than his head at his age could bear, for he was drunk. We have reason to think he was never drunk before nor after because we observe how he was sorrowful and overtaken in his fault.

## II. NOAH AND HIS BOUT WITH THE BOTTLE

Noah became drunk and it had more effect on him than I think he bargained for. The interaction between Noah and his sons has always puzzled me.

First, we have the nobler sons. Shem and Japheth took a garment and hid their father from prying eyes. They had their father's well-being in mind and wanted only to love him. They did not even look at his drunkenness, but helped cover his shame.

Second, we have the son whom Noah cursed... Ham. It seems to me that verse 22 describes a man who not only saw the shame of his father, but saw to it that everyone else did as well. It was he told his two brothers and I am sure that he proceeded to tell everyone he met. He enlarged the shame of his father.

When Noah awoke, he blessed Shem and Japheth and cursed Ham. It seems to me that Noah got himself in this situation and two of his sons helped him, one did not. I again see this happening to Noah only once. He was not treated as a drunk, but was treated with respect and compassion.

### III. LESSONS FROM NOAH

1. Noah was not perfect. We sort of get the idea that Noah was a man with no faults. Yet, Scripture clearly shows us that Noah's record has blots and mistakes. It was said of Noah that he was perfect in his generations (Genesis 6:9), but this shows that it is meant of sincerity, not a sinless perfection.

2. Be watchful. Sometimes those who, with watchfulness and resolution have kept their integrity in the midst of temptation have been surprised into sin. Even those who are careful to keep themselves pure and noble, sometimes fall into sin.

Noah was a man who had weathered the storm (literally and figuratively) and had done so with righteousness and holiness. But now, Noah who had kept sober in drunken company, is now drunk in sober company. We should always be watchful and aware of temptation.

3. The Bible does not condemn drinking but it does condemn excess. We need to be very careful that we not misuse what God has given us.

The consequence of Noah's sin was shame. This was a consequence of the fruit of the vine that Noah did not think of. Many who drink to excess feel that sense of shame.

A member of Alcoholics Anonymous once sent columnist Ann Landers the following:

We drank for happiness and became unhappy.  
We drank for joy and became miserable.  
We drank for sociability and became argumentative.  
We drank for sophistication and became obnoxious.  
We drank for friendship and made enemies.  
We drank for sleep and awakened without rest.  
We drank for strength and felt weak.  
We drank "medicinally" and acquired health problems.  
We drank for relaxation and got the shakes.  
We drank for bravery and became afraid.  
We drank for confidence and became doubtful.  
We drank to make conversation easier and slurred our speech.  
We drank to feel heavenly and ended up feeling like hell.  
We drank to forget and were forever haunted.  
We drank for freedom and became slaves.  
We drank to erase problems and saw them multiply.  
We drank to cope with life and invited death.

Noah was a person of God but he made mistakes. We need to make sure that we live out our faith and not rely on artificial stimulants to help us through life. We need to depend on God and live out that faith every day and in every situation.