

Holiday Cheer (What Kind?)

Joe Slater

Noah wasn't celebrating a holiday, but the account of his intoxication (Genesis 9:20-27) shows the danger and consequences of what some call holiday cheer. How ironic, that this man of faith became drunk! Men have made all sorts of excuses to minimize his sin, but they are useless. One mark of Biblical inspiration is that its heroes are presented "warts and all." It makes no attempt to hide the flaws of great people like Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. These men were not sinless; they needed God's grace. But in the overall sense, they were faithful.

Noah's episode of drunkenness had far-reaching consequences. While "sleeping it off", he let his nakedness become exposed in his tent. His son Ham, rather than respectfully covering his father, looked at him and then went and told his brothers. When Noah awakened, he pronounced a curse upon Ham's son, Canaan: "*a servant of servants he shall be to his brethren*" (9:25).

But why curse the son for the father's offense? Let us realize that the curse was not placed upon Canaan personally, but upon the nations that would descend from Ham through Canaan. Noah made this pronouncement by the spirit of prophecy. The Lord certainly knew what kind of people the Canaanites would become. By the time Moses wrote about this event, the Israelites were in the wilderness headed toward the promised land of Canaan. True to Noah's prediction, they largely exterminated or subjugated the Canaanites. No doubt this prophecy would have encouraged them as they came nearer to the time of conquest.

Our nation is drowning in beverage alcohol. Let this episode with Noah be a warning to us of the danger and consequences of consuming it! Happy Holidays!

Heaven Will Surely Be Worth It All

Thirty years ago, on a Sunday morning, I was in a 15-passenger van with a deacon of the local congregation picking up kids to bring them to Bible study. I remember it as if it were yesterday. The van was packed to the gills with children, and my job was crowd control. It must have been a full moon the night before and the kids must have had extra sugar in their cereal that morning, for they were rowdy and getting out of hand. As a fairly young and somewhat inexperienced Christian, I was doing the best I could, but I was losing the battle. Luther, who was driving the van and was a song leader as well as a deacon, turned to his vast repertoire of songs and said to me with a big smile on his face, "Remember, Edd, heaven will surely be worth it all."

I have taken the lesson learned that day with me all of my Christian life. There have been many times when things weren't going my way and I would hearken back to that day and those words: "Heaven will surely be worth it all."

When you have to deal with that difficult person again, remember: "Heaven will surely be worth it all." When you have that task to do that brings dread, remember: "Heaven will surely be worth it all." When that temptation comes that is difficult to deal with, remember: "Heaven will surely be worth it all." When hard times hit and hope seems far away, remember: "Heaven will surely be worth it all." When you want to give up, give in, or give out, don't! Just remember: "Heaven will surely be worth it all."

Read 1 Peter 1:3-9 very carefully. Soak it in. Let it give you the strength to keep you going no matter what happens. Trials? Tribulations? Turmoil? Hang in there, Christian – and even smile! You can make it through it, and: Heaven will surely be worth it all!

"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless" (2 Pet. 2:13-14)

--Edd Sterchi (Campbellsville, KY) via *Bulletin Gold*

WHAT ARE YOU WEARING?

"If then you were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1).

This week I received three catalogs full of sparkling holiday clothes for women. I shouldn't look at them, but I do. I shouldn't want the clothes I see inside, but I do. However, I don't buy them. I have holiday clothes. They aren't the latest fashion, but since I wear them only once or twice a year, they will do.

The Bible talks about some things we should put on the whole year through. Paul wrote, "*Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of kindness, compassion, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other. . . and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness*" (Colossians 3:12-14).

The holidays will soon be upon us. Stress increases as we rush to complete last-minute shopping, decorating, and cooking. Sometimes the slightest word or gesture from others is enough to make us snap. The driver who is in a hurry and cuts us off. The sales clerk who can't get it right. The co-worker who takes time off and leaves us to do the work. The family member who won't help when you need help. The list could go on and on.

If things like this happen, and they will, I hope to be able to step back and think of what Paul wrote. I want to be kind, compassionate, longsuffering, and forgiving. My relatives and friends will remember my acts of kindness and Christ-like attitude much longer than they remember what I wore. The beauty of my heart will make the holidays joyful for all.

--Donna Wittlif (Denver, CO)