

Proverbs 23:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

Analysis

Wine that appears smooth and attractive (v. 31) ultimately 'biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.' Initial pleasure transforms to pain and poison. The serpent imagery evokes both danger and satanic deception—what appears harmless proves deadly. Drunkenness may begin pleasantly but ends in addiction, impaired judgment, health destruction, and spiritual death. The principle extends to all sin: momentary pleasure conceals lasting harm. Satan still deceives through attractive packaging on poison. Believers must look at sin through gospel lenses, seeing its true nature as rebellion against God and destroyer of souls. Don't be deceived by smooth beginnings; remember serpentine endings.

Historical Context

Ancient world knew venomous serpents' danger. The comparison would have been vivid and frightening, emphasizing drunkenness's deadly nature despite its pleasant beginning.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What sins are you tolerating because they seem harmless initially?
2. How can you remember the 'serpent bite' outcome when tempted by sin's smooth appearance?

Interlinear Text

אַ חֲרִיתוֹ	כְּנֹךְ שׁ	יִשָּׁךְ	וְצִפְעֹנִי	יִפְרֹשׁ:
At the last	like a serpent	it biteth	like an adder	and stingeth
H319	H5175	H5391	H6848	H6567

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