

Snakes

There aren't many who enjoy the company of snakes, in part because, it being a snake, it's liable to bite you. With a venom of neurotoxins or hemotoxins that produce negative results ranging from a serious "ouchie" to a "you're dead" condition, the venomous persuasion of these reptilian creatures are not commonly kept as house pets and are, more frequently, avoided like the plague. And, that bite! Why, the poison in that bite can create all kinds of problems in a human body: vomiting, inflammation, severe pain, necrosis and even death, *i.e.*, nothing good.

It is fitting that our human history's first exposure to such a creature contained a lethality fitting its reputation. When Satan chose to approach Adam and Eve, it wasn't in the form of a fuzzy bunny or puppy dog or any other of a multitude of cute critters. No, it was a snake! And, with just one bite, the Devil's deadly venom poisoned humanity, resulting in their being cast out of the Garden of Eden, separated from the tree of life and destined to a physical corruption that ended in death. Indeed, that Snake did his deadly damage (Genesis 3:1ff).

So, how should you handle a snake? Well, to begin with, ya' steer clear! When you see a snake, you know it's a snake, you know the damage it can do and it is just "plum dumb" to saunter up and sit down beside it with a "How **you** doin'." A snake will be a snake, and you will get bit and be forced to endure the effects of its poison. Furthermore, if you get bit by a snake, you don't dally about, biding your time, just to see how things go; you know what that poison is going to do. You seek medical attention immediately! Finally, if the poison is allowed to do its deadly damage, you will most certainly lose a patch of skin, or a finger or a limb; and, hopefully, you are able to excise the rotten part before the poison spreads and kills the whole body.

Of course, this article is not intended to be instruction on how to avoid a snake bite. No, it is an illustration to remind us of how poisonous gossip can be (Exodus 23:1). Odd, I think, how enticing and exhilarating a good salacious story can be, especially when the victim can be dirtied and destroyed. In fact, any objective research into the actual facts of some scabby scuttlebutt is rarely sought because of the numbing effect of the euphoria of nasty news and it's leverage against a good name; and we all know, misery loves company.

The wise man of old gave advice on how to squelch gossip. "*The north wind driveth away rain; so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue*" (Proverbs 25:23). A Christian will avoid the poison of

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Satan like the plague and “*put away the evil from among you*” (read Deuteronomy 19:16-21). Invite it in, and it will kill the body!

JDS