

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's day Prophecy Message Eighteen : Christ as typified by the bronze serpent

I. Overview:

When the children of Israel sinned against God, they were bitten by serpents; God told Moses to lift up a bronze serpent on a pole on their behalf for God's judgment so that by looking upon that serpent all might live. The Lord as the Son of Man was lifted up in the form of the serpent on the cross to bear the judgment for the serpent-poisoned people. Now whoever believes into Christ as the One who was lifted up to be condemned in our place has eternal life. John 3 reveals that because we were bitten by the old serpent, we became the increase of Satan; through Christ as the bronze serpent lifted up on the cross, we as the Satan's increase may become the corporate bride for Christ's increase. Today, the serpentine people are becoming the universal increase of the unlimited Christ by the immeasurable Spirit with the eternal life.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

- A. Give a brief description of what happened in Numbers 21:4-9. Here we see that the children of Israel complained and were rebellious. As a result, the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people. Then the people came to Moses and confessed that they had sinned. When Moses prayed for the people, Jehovah said to him, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." Here the word "looked at" may also be rendered "looked intently at".
- B. Explain we as descendants of Adam having been bitten by the old serpent, the devil. In the sight of God, the entire fallen human race consists of poisonous serpents. We, however, actually are children of the old serpent, the devil. For this reason, the Lord Jesus called the Pharisees the "offspring of vipers." The devil is the old serpent and sinners also are serpents, the offspring of vipers. Therefore, in the sight of God, in our fallen nature we are not merely sinful but also we are serpentine.

Day 2 —

- A. Expound "not the children of Israel wanting to sin but the serpent in them causing them to sin." In judging the children of Israel, God actually was judging the serpent; therefore, the one hung on the pole was actually the serpent. Man sinned, but the serpent received the judgment. This shows that the one who sinned was actually the serpent in man, that is, the devil. In God's eyes the serpent and the children of Israel were one. Therefore, God's judging the serpent on the pole was also His judging of the children of Israel.
- B. How is the way for us to partake of the incarnated God for our enjoyment? We must realize that we are such serpentine beings. We must also realize that Christ was made sin for us and died on the cross as a bronze serpent so that the serpentine nature within us might be judged. It is when we admit that we are serpentine that we are qualified to experience eternal life and enjoy Him. This is the way for us to partake of the incarnated God for our enjoyment.

Day 3 —

- A. Explain that John 3:16 is the issue of 3:14. Christian today appreciate John 3:16 very much; however, 3:16 is the issue of 3:14; that is, the receiving of eternal life is the issue of the uplifting of the bronze serpent. The Lord was telling Nicodemus that if he realized that he was serpentine and believed in the Lord Jesus as the bronze serpent lifted up as his Substitute, he would have eternal life.
- B. Expound what is the meaning of in John 3, "we have not only the serpent but also the bride." In verse 29 John the Baptist said, "He who has the bride is the bridegroom." The totality of all those who have been regenerated is the bride of Christ, and this bride is His increase. This means that in this chapter regeneration is not only to bring the divine life into the believers but is also to make them the corporate bride for Christ's increase.

Day 4 —

- A. Discourse that God is greater, higher, and wiser than the serpent.

In Genesis 3 the serpent visited the bride and succeeded in capturing her. Then through the woman he also gained the man. But God is greater, higher, and wiser than the serpent. In His judgment upon the serpent, God indicated that the woman would bring forth a seed to bruise the serpent's head. The seed of the woman would not only bruise the head of the serpent but also become righteousness to the very ones who were poisoned by him. These coats of skin typify Christ.

B, How have we become a part of the increase of Christ from the increase of Satan?

The Lord Jesus came to be the bronze serpent, this means that He became sin for us. When Christ became a man in flesh, He was made sin on our behalf to be judged by God. Now we believe into Him through His redemption that He imparted Himself into us to make us His increase. In this way we who were once the increase of Satan have become the increase of Christ.

Day 5 —

A. Why is that in our experience if we are short of the living water, then we are contending serpents?

When Adam was bitten by the serpent, we all became serpents. Christ has come to be our replacement, and we have believed into Him. In our experience, if we are drinking of the living water, then we are no longer serpents. But if we are short of the living water, then we are contending serpents. In the church life we may be either contending serpents or life-giving-Spirit drinkers. May we all be those who drink of the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit!

B. Expound that morality is good, but it is not life.

In our actual daily living we may be a good, moral, ethical, religious, God-fearing "Nicodemus." But we may not live, walk, behave, and have our being in the Spirit; instead of living by the Spirit, we may live by ethics or religion. With the tree of knowledge in the garden of Eden there was not only the knowledge of evil but also the knowledge of good. But with the tree of life there is nothing but life. We should not think that morality is a matter of life. Morality is good, but it is not life.

Day 6 —

A. Explain that the unlimited Christ who comes from the heavens is above all.

First, the unlimited Christ is from above, that is, from the heavens. The unlimited Christ not only comes from above but also is above all. Even though He was on earth, under the heavens, yet He was above all. Because Christ is all-inclusive, unlimited, and universal, He is above all. While He was on earth, He was still in the heavens.

B. Explain how we become the universal increase of the unlimited Christ.

John 3:34 says of the unlimited Christ, "He gives the Spirit not by measure." He gives us the Spirit by speaking the word of God. If we handle the Word of God rightly and digest it in our spirit, we will be filled with the Spirit of God. The unique way for us to become the universal increase of the unlimited Christ is to receive the Spirit and be filled with the Spirit.

III. Conclusion:

When the children of Israel complained and were rebellious, the Lord sent fiery serpents to bite them that many people died. As Moses prayed for the people, Jehovah said to him, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live". As descendants of Adam, we all have been "bitten" by the old serpent, the devil; therefore, in the sight of God, the entire fallen human race consists of serpentine beings with the poison of the old serpent in their fallen nature. As we repent and admit that we are serpentine, that means we turn to Christ and believe into Him as the One who was lifted up to be condemned in our place, we are qualified to experience Christ as the eternal life and enjoy Him. Through regeneration, we who were once the increase of Satan have become the increase of the bride, who will be married to the Lord Jesus as the Bridegroom. After the wedding, this universal couple will fight against Satan; who will be bound and cast into the abyss, where he will be imprisoned for a thousand years.