

SERPENT: CURSE OR BLESSING?

Resurrection Sunday Message

Introduction – Who in the Bible does the “Serpent” generally represent? You probably said, “Satan”, and you are certainly right. Why then does the Gospel of John refer to an Old Testament story where a snake was hung on a pole (Numbers 21:4-9) as being a picture of Jesus hanging on the cross? Understanding this may very well determine whether you walk under blessings, rather than curses.

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John 3:14-15 – “Just as Moses **lifted up the snake** in the desert, so **the Son of Man must be lifted up**, that everyone who believe in Him may have eternal life.”

Numbers 21:5-9 – “They spoke against God and against Moses, and said, ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread? There is no water? And we detest this miserable food? Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, ‘We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us.’ So Moses prayed for the people. The Lord said to Moses, ‘**Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.**’ So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.”

Galatians 3:13-14 – “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.’ He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.”

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*THE GREAT EXCHANGE: BLESSINGS INSTEAD OF CURSES...

1. SIN > RIGHTEOUS

2 Cor 5:21 – “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”

*Discussion:

1. What does God require for any of us to get to heaven?
2. How then can any of us be saved?

2. SEPARATED > UNITED

Mt 27:50-51a – “And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He gave up His spirit. At that moment the curtain on the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.”

*Discussion:

1. What did the curtain in the temple do?
2. How does the lifting the bride’s veil picture what happened when this veil in the temple was split in two?
3. What is the significance of it being split from top to bottom? When was it split in two?

3. JUDGMENT > MERCY

Romans 5:9 – “Since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, He will certainly save us from God’s judgment.”

*Discussion:

1. What O.T. story powerfully shows how the blood will protect us from God’s judgment?
2. He’s not only removed our guilt, but along with that, He’s removed our what?

4. **SICKNESS > HEALED**

1 Peter 2:24c – “...by His wounds (stripes) you have been healed.”

***Discussion:**

1. What did Pastor Rich say about the “exceptions to healing” found in the Bible?
2. Why is it important for us to know this blessing?

5. **POOR > RICH**

2 Cor 8:9 – “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”

***Discussion:**

1. What is the context surrounding this passage?
2. What definition did Pastor give for “prosperity” and what O.T. story vividly describes this?

6. **FORSAKEN > NEVER FORSAKEN**

Heb 13:5b – “God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you’”

***Discussion:**

1. How did Jesus experience being forsaken during His hour of greatest need?
2. What does it mean to you to never be forsaken by God?

7. **DEATH > LIFE**

8. **DEATH > VICTORY**

Rom 8:11 – “If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you.”
1 Cor 15:54c-57 – “’Death has been swallowed up in victory.’ ‘Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

***Discussion:**

1. What are some of the fears that death brings?
2. How did Jesus resurrection dispel those fears?

Conclusion:

- **Eight curses turned to eight blessings. Significant because the number “8” in the Bible represents: New Beginning!**
- **What He died to purchase, He lives to provide!**
- **How? – “Behold I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with Him” (Jesus, Rev 3:20)**