

#18 Christ as Typified by the Bronze Serpent

(Crystallization-Study of Numbers 2) 2019/9/23-29

I. 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:

Num. 21:8-9 Then Jehovah said to Moses, Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live. And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the pole; and if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

A. The bronze serpent typifies Christ, and the pole typifies the cross; in typology, bronze signifies judgment; the bronze serpent had the form of a serpent but not the poisonous nature of a serpent.

B. In the same way, Christ was lifted up on the cross in the likeness of the flesh of sin, without participating in any way in the poisonous sin of the flesh.

C. In Genesis 3 Satan, the serpent, injected his nature into man's flesh; 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: **1.** In John 8:44 the Lord Jesus revealed that the devil is the father of sinners; thus, in our fallen nature we are children of the old serpent, the devil. **2.** In Matthew 12:34 the Lord Jesus called the Pharisees the "offspring of vipers"; in 23:33 He called them "Serpents! Brood of vipers!" **3.** The devil is the ancient serpent, and sinners are serpents, the offspring of vipers; in our fallen nature we are not merely sinful—we are serpentine. **4.** Romans 7 says that Satan as personified sin is in our flesh; sin can deceive and kill people, and it can dwell in people and cause them to do things against their will; it is quite alive and exceedingly active, so it must be the evil nature of Satan, the evil one, dwelling, acting, and working in fallen mankind. **Mon**

D. 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; He was lifted up on the cross for the casting out of the old serpent, Satan, the ruler of the world.

E. Hence, the Lord, as the Son of Man lifted up, can deliver the serpent-poisoned people from sin, the serpent's poison; also, by His being lifted up, He would destroy Satan and draw all men to Himself.

F. Now whoever believes into Christ as the One who was lifted up to be condemned in our place has eternal life; we need a "bronze serpent" to be our Substitute to bear God's judgment for us, to redeem us, and to release His saving, divine life into our being.

John 3:14-15 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, That every one who believes into Him may have eternal life.

G. When we repent and admit that we are serpentine, we are qualified to experience Christ as the eternal life and enjoy Him: **1.** The Greek word for repentance means to have a change of mind, issuing in regret, to have a turn in purpose; also, man's repentance is his turning from all things to God Himself. **2.** In our experience, this is not a once-for-all matter but a daily experience; John the Baptist preached repentance, and in the seven epistles to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, the Lord Jesus tells us again and again to repent.

H. It is a great blessing for us to know that, as the fulfillment of the type of the bronze serpent, Christ came in the likeness of the flesh of sin to die on the cross as our Replacement and Substitute in order for us to be regenerated and have eternal life. **Tue**

II. John 3 speaks of the serpent and the bride:

A. John 3:16 is the issue of verses 14 and 15; that is, the receiving of the divine, eternal life is the issue of the uplifting of Christ on the cross as the bronze serpent, the real sin offering: **John 3:16** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that every one who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.

1. The Lord Jesus was lifted up as our Substitute to bear God's judgment for us so that we may look at Him (believe into Him) and have eternal life. **2.** Because in Adam we were bitten by the old serpent, we were dead, but now through Christ as the bronze serpent lifted up on the cross, we may receive eternal life, the life of God; this is the real manifestation of God's love to the world.

B. For the serpent to "bite" us means that he imparts the poison of his nature into us to make us his increase; through the fall the entire human race has become the increase of Satan.

C. John 3 reveals that regeneration is not only to bring the divine life into the believers but also to make them the corporate bride for Christ's increase; as Adam was increased in Eve, so Christ is increased in His bride.

John 3:29-30 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.

Gen. 2:22 And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. (The Word of Thursday)

D. By Christ being lifted up on the cross as the bronze serpent, Satan's increase has become Christ's increase, His bride; we who were once the increase of Satan have become the increase of Christ.

E. All regenerated persons are components of the bride, who will be married to the Lord Jesus as the Bridegroom; regeneration means that our serpentine being is annulled and that we receive the divine life in order to become a new being so that we may be a part of the bride; by this we can see that regeneration is for producing the bride of Christ.

F. The intention of John 3 is to show that the unlimited Christ must have a universal increase and that He is in the process of gaining this increase today; the immeasurable Spirit produces a universal increase for the unlimited Christ.

G. We may say that, considered as a whole, the Bible unveils the matter of the serpent and the bride: **Wed**

1. God used Adam's rib to bring forth Eve, the increase of Adam, but in Genesis 3:1-6 the serpent visited the bride and succeeded in capturing her; however, God is greater, higher, and wiser than the serpent. **2.** In His judgment upon the serpent, God indicated that the woman would bring forth a seed (Christ) to bruise the serpent's head; furthermore, the seed of the woman would also become righteousness to the very ones who were poisoned by the serpent.

Gen. 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman And between your seed and her seed; He will bruise you on the head, But you will bruise him on the heel.

3. Paul was concerned that the serpent who had come to bite Eve would come to bite the believers at Corinth; once again, this is the story of the serpent and the bride.

4. The book of Revelation provides the final word on the serpent and the bride: **a.** Chapter 19 reveals that the bride is ready for the wedding of the Lamb. **b.** Immediately after the wedding, this universal couple will fight against Satan and his followers, the beast and the false prophet; then Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss, where he will be imprisoned for a thousand years. **c.** Following that, Satan will rebel once more and will ultimately be cast into the lake

of fire. **d.** Then the universe will be thoroughly cleared up, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth; for eternity there will be a universal couple: Christ as the Husband and the church as the bride. **Thu**

III . The serpentine people are becoming the universal increase of the unlimited Christ by the immeasurable Spirit with the eternal life:

A. In our experience we need to realize that we can be contending serpents who are apart from Christ as the life-giving Spirit; in the church life we can either be contending serpents or life-giving-Spirit drinkers.

John 7:37-39 Jesus... cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. But this He said concerning the Spirit...

B. John 3:30 refers to the increase of Christ, which is the bride of Christ in verse 29: **1.** According to our natural birth, all of us automatically live by our serpentine being; this is to live according to the principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **2.** Our natural life and living are not part of the increase of Christ; only the regenerated part of our being, our regenerated spirit, is Christ's increase. **3.** In a real and practical way, Christ should be our life and our person; we live Him and are one spirit with Him; we abide in Him, and He abides in us; therefore, He and we have one life and one living—this is the serpentine people becoming the bride of Christ. **4.** When we have this kind of living, then in reality we are serpentine beings in the process of transformation into the bride of Christ, the increase of Christ; the ultimate consummation of this bride will be the New Jerusalem as the tabernacle of God and the wife of the Lamb. **5.** May the Lord have mercy on us that we may learn to live by our regenerated being. **Fi**

C. In John 3 we can see at least nine aspects of the unlimited Christ: **1.** The unlimited Christ is from above, that is, from the heavens. **John 3:31** He who comes from above is above all; he who is from the earth is of the earth and speaks out of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. **2.** The unlimited Christ is above all; because Christ is all-inclusive, unlimited, and universal, while He was on earth, He was still in the heavens. **3.** The unlimited Christ is loved by the Father; only in Christ can we enjoy the love of God the Father. **John 3:35** The Father loves the Son and has given all into His hand. **4.** The unlimited Christ has been given all things; the Father has given all things, including us, into the Son's hand. **5.** The unlimited Christ was sent by God. **6.** The unlimited Christ speaks the words of God. **7.** The unlimited Christ gives the Spirit not by measure. **8.** The unlimited Christ gives eternal life to His believers. **9.** The unlimited Christ has the bride as His universal increase. **John 3:30-31** He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all; he who is from the earth is of the earth and speaks out of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.

D. The immeasurable Spirit is the all-inclusive compound Spirit typified by the compound ointment: **1.** The immeasurable Spirit is the life-giving Spirit. **1 Cor. 15:45** ...the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit. (The Word of Friday) **2.** The immeasurable Spirit is also the pneumatic Christ; the term pneumatic Christ refers to Christ as the Spirit.

E. The eternal life is mentioned three times in John 3: **1.** Eternal life is the divine life, the life of the eternal God; this life is eternal in time, space, essence, function, and power.

2. Eternal life is the essence of the Triune God becoming the element of the church, the bride; and the bride is the universal increase of Christ for the corporate expression of the Triune God. **Sat**

Crucial Point(1): Knowing that the flesh is the serpent, learn not to trust the flesh but live according to the mingled spirit

OL1: The bronze serpent typifies Christ, and the pole typifies the cross; in typology, bronze signifies judgment; the bronze serpent had the form of a serpent but not the poisonous nature of a serpent.

OL2: In Genesis 3 Satan, the serpent, injected his nature into man's flesh; 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:

OL3: Romans 7 says that Satan as personified sin is in our flesh; sin can deceive and kill people, and it can dwell in people and cause them to do things against their will; it is quite alive and exceedingly active, so it must be the evil nature of Satan, the evil one, dwelling, acting, and working in fallen mankind.

Num.21:8-9 Then Jehovah said to Moses, Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live. And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the pole; and if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

John 3:14-15 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.

According to John 3:14, Christ became a bronze serpent.... He was a serpent in form, but He did not have the poisonous nature of a serpent. We, however, actually are serpentine, for in our fallen nature we are children of the old serpent, the devil.

It was not that the children of Israel wanted to sin, but rather, the serpent in them caused 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.

The Greek word for repentance means to have a change of mind issuing in regret, to have a turn in purpose. Therefore, to repent, as taught in the Bible, is to have a change of mind. It is not to improve or reform oneself nor to forsake the evil and turn to the good, as people generally believe.

At the time the Lord Jesus spoke this word [in John 3:14] to Nicodemus, it is not likely that he understood it. Nicodemus surely did not regard himself as a serpent but as an ethical gentleman who came to the Lord Jesus for the purpose of receiving teachings about his behavior. However, in His word concerning the bronze serpent, the Lord Jesus appeared to be saying to Nicodemus, "You should not consider yourself a gentleman but realize instead that you are a serpent.... As your replacement, I will be lifted up in the form of a serpent." It is a great blessing for us to know that, as the fulfillment of the type

of the bronze serpent, Christ came in the likeness of the flesh of sin to die on the cross as our replacement and substitute.

Application to the new ones

You believed into the Lord and your spirit was regenerated and you got saved. However, in your flesh, the sin, who is Satan, is still dwelling in your flesh. After you get saved, the Lord's life spreads from your spirit to your soul in the church life. Then when the Lord comes back again, to the believers whose souls are transformed enough, the Lord's life will saturate even in their bodies and they will get glorified. At that moment, the sin in the flesh will be removed completely. So in the present church life, the problems of sin will not be disappeared. What you need is not to live according to the flesh, but to exercise yourself to live according to the spirit.

Newly saved brothers and sisters, please recognize clearly that our flesh is totally unreliable. The flesh is just a serpent. Due to the fall of Adam, we, the descendent of Adam not only commit sins but also are constituted as sinners and we are the increase of the Serpent. In your flesh, there are not only the evil, sinful aspect but also it includes the good and religious aspect. But although it seems nice apparently, the flesh is still a serpent. It doesn't trust God, never requires to pray. You might be a good student or a business person. And you have been doing all things by trusting yourself and your flesh before. However no matter how nice you were, your inside was full of rivalry, envy, anger, panic and anxiety. Now you got saved and have the mingled spirit. Please enjoy the Word of the Lord, pray to the Lord and study or work diligently by trusting the Lord. Those who trust the Lord can get the wonderful blessing. To gain this blessing, please realize that you are a serpent in your flesh and look to the Lord who is the bronze serpent and learn to live according to the spirit.

Prayer: "Oh Lord Jesus, although I got saved, I still have flesh in me and realize that the flesh is just a serpent. The flesh seems nice apparently but actually it is fallen inside and is filled with the corrupted things. Because the flesh will be with me until the Lord comes back again, I will take heed to the flesh, not trusting it, and learn to live according to the mingled spirit. Amen!"

Crucial Point(2): The increase of Serpent becoming the increase of Christ, the bride of Christ

OL1: For the serpent to "bite" us means that he imparts the poison of his nature into us to make us his increase; through the fall the entire human race has become the increase of Satan.

OL2: John 3 reveals that regeneration is not only to bring the divine life into the believers but also to make them the corporate bride for Christ's increase; as Adam was increased in Eve, so Christ is increased in His bride.

OL3: By Christ being lifted up on the cross as the bronze serpent, Satan's increase has become Christ's increase, His bride; we who were once the increase of Satan have become the increase of Christ.

In Adam, the old serpent gained us for himself by biting us. Do you know what it means for the serpent to bite us? It means that he imparts the poison of his nature into us to make us his increase. Through the fall, the entire human race

has become the increase of Satan. Do you know what you were before you were saved? You were a part of Satan's increase. No matter what kind of person we were before we were saved, we were all part of the increase of that evil one. When the serpent bit Adam in the garden of Eden, he gained the entire human race, and all mankind became his increase. No doubt, after he had bitten man in Genesis 3, Satan, the old serpent, was happy. He may have laughed and said to himself, "I have gained man for myself. The man created by God has now become my increase."

But the Lord Jesus came to be the bronze serpent. This means that He became sin for us. **Second Corinthians 5:21** says, "Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf." Sin came from Satan, entered into man, and made man not only a sinner but sin itself under God's judgment. Hence, when Christ became a man in flesh, He was made sin (not sinful) on our behalf to be judged by God.

Christ's death on the cross opened the way for us sinners to believe into Him and receive Him. Now we can receive His life. It was 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. In the past we were part of Satan's increase, but we praise the Lord that we have become part of the increase of Christ.

This story continues until we come to the end of the Bible. In the book of Revelation we have the final word concerning the serpent and the bride. In chapter 19 we see that the bride is ready for the marriage of the Lamb. Immediately after the marriage dinner, this universal couple will fight against Satan and his followers, the beast and the false prophet. Then Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss, where he will be imprisoned for a thousand years. Following that, Satan will rebel once more and ultimately will be cast into the lake of fire. Then the universe will be thoroughly cleared up, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth. For eternity there will be a universal couple: Christ as the Husband and the church as His bride.

Application to the young people and college students

You were a part of the increase of the serpent. After you got saved, your spirit was regenerated and you became the child of God, the member of the Body of Christ, a part of the increase of Christ. You will grow in the church life and become the bride of Christ. Hallelujah! Those who were a part of the increase of Satan can become the increase of Christ. What a wonderful salvation this is! Do not be discouraged by looking at your degraded flesh only. Yes, your flesh is degraded, and it is a serpent in the eyes of God and it has no value. However your spirit was regenerated. And you are growing to be formed into an army corporately and becoming a bridal army. It is the bridal army who ends the church age and turns the age to the kingdom age. Today on one hand, the bridal army would open to the Lord, look at the Lord only and love the Lord fervently. On the other hand, they are against Satan and fight the spiritual warfare in the Lord and in the coordination of the Body. This will bring in the Lord's second coming and

brings in the kingdom of God to the earth.

Prayer: "Oh Lord Jesus! Thank You for such a salvation which can make those who were the increase of Serpent into Your increase, even Your bride! I turn to the spirit, hear from You, look at You only, love You fervently and would not listen to Satan by living according to the flesh Let me grow day by day, make me your bridal army to bring the kingdom of God on earth!"

Crucial Point(3): Pray-read the Word, pray, and receive the unlimited supply from the Spirit to become the universal increase of the unlimited Christ

OL1: The serpentine people are becoming the universal increase of the unlimited Christ by the immeasurable Spirit with the eternal life.

OL2: In our experience we need to realize that we can be contending serpents who are apart from Christ as the life-giving Spirit; in the church life we can either be contending serpents or life-giving-Spirit drinkers.

OL3: The unlimited Christ speaks the words of God. The unlimited Christ gives the Spirit not by measure.

John 3:34 For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for He gives the Spirit not by measure.

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. The more we have of the Spirit, the more we will be Christ's increase. This increase begins with our regeneration, and it consummates with our being filled with the immeasurable Spirit.

We need to learn not merely to read the Word or study it but also to eat it. We must learn to receive the Word of God into our spirit and digest it there. This is to enjoy the Word of God in our spirit. Through the Word we receive the Spirit, and when we have the Spirit, we have eternal life....The unlimited Christ is the One who gives eternal life to His believers.

The unlimited Christ has the bride as His universal increase. This universal increase, Christ's bride, is the aggregate of all those who have been regenerated. It is a living composition of all regenerated human beings. This is the bride as the universal increase of the unlimited Christ. This is possible only as we receive the rhema of God so that we may be filled with the life-giving Spirit. If we receive the word and are filled with the Spirit, we will enjoy eternal life. The result is that we become the bride, the universal increase of the unlimited Christ.

Application to the young working saints and graduate students

As a regenerated person, you need to touch the life-giving spirit in the Word every day by pray-reading the Word and fellowshiping with the Lord using the Word. Without experiencing the life-giving spirit, you are nothing more than a serpent.

When you have a fellowship with the Lord personally using the Word, you can become open to the Lord and tell Him what you wish to tell. The Lord will be sympathetic to listen to your prayer and take care of you. And then the Lord provides you His presence and strength.

Once you are empowered by the presence of the Lord, you realize the God's economy. God has His heart desire and His economy. In order to carrying out of His economy on the earth, He needs a group of people formed into an army. Those people are also the bride of Christ who love the Lord

passionately. They are a bride-army. They have Christ as their life, and are corporately coordinated and built together so that they magnify the unlimited Christ, fight against Satan to terminate the kingdom of Satan and bring the kingdom of God. For entering into this practice, pray-read the Word every day by exercising your spirit and pray with rhema, the sense you received during pray-reading, and do prayer at the incense altar by praying with your vital partners for carrying out of God's economy. Then the Lord will supply you the immeasurable Spirit.

Prayer: "O Lord Jesus, to become the bride-army, every day I open to the Lord, exercise my spirit and pray-read your Word to touch the life-giving spirit. Then I will be able to receive the immeasurable Spirit and be empowered by your presence to know God's economy. I do the prayer at the incense altar with my vital partners for carrying out of God's economy and for growing up of the six-kinds of new ones."

The Mystery of Human Life(2) Grace and blessing from God: "New"

A. Eccl. 1:10 A Is there anything of which one can say, See, this is new?

B. Eccl. 1:8-9 All things are wearisome; No one is able to tell it; The eye is not satisfied with seeing, Nor is the ear filled with hearing. What has been is what will be, And what has been done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun.

C. Rom. 6:4 We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life.—After baptism we become a new person in resurrection. Resurrection is not only a future state; it is also a present process. To walk in newness of life means to live today in the realm of resurrection and to reign in life. This kind of living deals with all that is of Adam in us until we are fully transformed and conformed to the image of Christ. (FN4)

D. 2 Cor. 4:16 Therefore, we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. —By being nourished with the fresh supply of the resurrection life. ...our inner man, that is, our regenerated spirit with the inward parts of our being, is being metabolically renewed day by day with the supply of the resurrection life. (FN3)

E. Rom. 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect. —Our mind is the leading part of our soul, and as it is renewed, our will and emotion automatically follow to be renewed also. To be renewed means that a new element is wrought into our being. This produces an inward metabolic transformation, making us suitable for the building up of the Body of Christ, which is the practice of the church life. (FN4)