

Crucified With Christ

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1 Cor 1:22-23: 22. *For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 1 Cor 2:2:* *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* What was Paul teaching about the cross that we need to know today? Whatever it was had brought him to believe that the Son of God loved him and gave himself for him, and resulted in Paul living by the faith of Christ (Gal 2:20).

The Serpent: **Gen 3:1:** *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* The serpent is more subtle, crafty, and sly than any beast of the field and Eve's mind was corrupted by the craftiness of the serpent (2 Cor 11:3). Beasts of the field are used to describe the nature of mankind, or their thoughts (cp Ps 73:22; Ecl 3:18; 2 Pet 2:12; Jude 10). Why is the serpent said to be more subtle than any of the beasts? It has to do with the visibility of our own SELF!

Many of the characteristics of a serpent fit the human nature: A snake makes itself crooked to move on the earth - mankind's iniquity is his crooked, twisted thinking about God; their dens are in holes in the earth - earth is humanity's way of thinking; most have excellent eye sight, but not ears to hear - i.e. they understand, but will not accept the truth; they kill prey by poison or suffocation - false doctrines poison our thinking about God's ways, and squeezes spiritual life from us.

Jesus referred to the religious leaders of his day as *serpents, a generation of vipers* (Mt 23:33). Notice how this Psalm describes the wicked: **Ps 58:1-5:** 1. *Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?* 2. *Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.* 3. *The wicked are estranged (become strangers to God) from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.* 4. *Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stops her ear;* 5. *Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.* (Cf Ps 140:1-5). So the serpent is a figure, or type of something very deadly. When discussing this topic at a church meeting, someone suggested that it represented all evil. Defining it more closely, it is the nature of a humanity separated from God. **Jer 17:9-10:** 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?* 10. *I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*

Jesus said: *Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:* (Mt 23:34). The righteous are always persecuted by the spiritually dead. **Mk 16:18:** *They (the righteous) shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them...* Because truth seekers will not accept poisonous doctrines based on traditions of man, nor will they allow religions to squeeze out of them (suffocate) the Spirit of God, they become targets of character assassination, and even physical harm.

Jer 46:20, 22: 20 *Egypt is like a very fair heifer, but destruction comes; it comes out of the north.* 22 *The voice thereof shall go like a serpent; for they shall march with an army, and come against her with axes, as hewers of wood.* Egypt, a type for the world, is like a *fair heifer* compared to the corrupt understanding of Babylon, today, a type of corrupt religious thinking. **Pr 23:31-32:** *Look not thou upon the wine when it is*

red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moves itself aright. 32 At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder. The stinging poison of the serpent is a type of the wine (teachings) of Babylon Her confused teachings are like the voice of the serpent, full of poison, which destroy the soul. **Rev 18:3:** *For all nations have drunk of the wine (doctrine) of the wrath of her fornication (adultery against God), and the kings of the earth (those following their own way) have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth (spiritual teachers with human understanding) are waxed rich (in self's knowledge, not God's) through the abundance of her delicacies.* The great city, Babylon, is a woman (Rev 17:5), or a mind-set of evil. We were born with a sin nature, so all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God (Rom 3:23). However, God made a way into the Kingdom through His only-begotten son.

The Brass Serpent: The way God has provided is presented with a positive aspect of a serpent in an experience of Israel while in the wilderness. The people were complaining against Moses and God about their way of travel (Num 21:4-6), and the Lord sent fiery serpents among them, so that many died from snake-bite. When the people began to repent, God instructed Moses to, *8. ...Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looks upon it, shall live. 9. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.* Now, if the serpent represents a certain fallen angelic being, why would God instruct His people to “look at a replica of him for life?”

Copper is molted out of rock and mixed with other metals to make brass, or bronze as it is often called today. This impure metal is a type of impure thoughts derived from earthly concepts (rocks). Impure thoughts bring us into bondage to sin which war against the soul, and manifest conflict with others, even literal war, all of which bring much suffering. Thus we have chains for binding and implements of war made from brass, which were literally used, but indicative of something spiritual. It was called a *fiery serpent* by God. Notice how James refers to the tongue: **Jam 3:6:** *And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.* If a serpent is a type for evil and brass is impure thoughts, of what is the brass serpent on a pole a symbol?

Jn 12:31-33: *31. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33. This he said, signifying what death he should die. **Jn 3:14:** *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:* The prince of the world about to be cast out was the ‘old man’, the sin nature Jesus carried. The serpent is very crafty, which makes a perfect picture of the self of a person. Others can see our faults, but we rarely see them, unless pointed out. Jesus carried the sin nature of humanity (Rom 8:3; Heb 2:14-18), yet without sin, and he put it to death on the cross. At the cross, Jesus became author and finisher of our faith (Heb 12:2; 5:8-9), and figuratively, the brass was polished (Dan 10:6; Rev 1:15), or cleaned up.*

Take Up Your Cross: Lk 9:23: *And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take ⁽¹⁴²⁾ up his cross daily, and follow me.* From the Greek Interlinear: *...If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and let him lift ⁽¹⁴²⁾ up the cross of him daily, and let him follow me.* All humanity has been ‘snake-bit’, and by looking at, and considering the cross we can live. In type, we lift the Son of man into the heavens and look at his sacrifice from the Father’s perspective. How does this help? By realizing that the Father loves us as much as His son, and has never condemned us (Jn 3:16; 2 Cor 5:19). The Son gave his own life in our behalf because of the joy set before him (Heb 12:2). What was that joy? Jesus understood from his Father that by his sacrifice all humanity would have opportunity to see and experience the Father’s love as did he. *By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities (crookedness) (Isa 53:11), and with his stripes we are healed (Ibid verse 5).*

How serious was Jesus about us lifting up the cross? **Lk 14:27:** *And whosoever does not bear (or, carry away) his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. **Mt 10:38:** *And he that taketh not his cross, and follows after me, is not worthy of me.* That brass serpent was a type of my 'old man', and I am to look at, not only the fact that Jesus put it to death, but that what I see at the cross is my darkness, nakedness, a crown of thorns, strips, suffering, shame and miserableness, all of which reveal my sin nature. Now I have a choice - I can seek the Lord for strength to put away sin by letting go of resentment, anger, envy and whatever else that contributes to my separation from God. Is it instant? No, but as things come up seek the Lord for help. THIS is the process of being delivered from sin today and forever!*

Jesus intimated such an idea when advising the rich young man who approached him: **Mark 10:21:** *Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.* Nothing outward happens without the inward happening first. To have treasure in heaven is to have the mind of Christ, as we must get rid of our own ideas and receive his. But, what does it mean to give to the poor? **Pr 10:15:** *The rich man's wealth is his strong city...* The type city, Babylon or new Jerusalem (mind sets), determines the type riches. Riches are spiritual understanding, and so, a poor person is one without God's understanding. This young man had just stated that he kept the law from his youth up. He impressed Jesus as being sincere. So, Jesus told him to give his ideas of law keeping to those without understanding, which is a foundation through which we all process. It is the law that brings us to Christ (Gal 3:24). This is a major part of denying self that brings true riches. **Pr 28:27:** *He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack...*

Summery: 1 Cor 1:18: *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. **Rom 1:16:** *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth...* The preaching of the cross is the power of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ. We cannot preach what we have not experienced. **1 Cor 2:1-5:** *1. And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. 2. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power: 5. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.* What we need is God's wisdom!*

Mk 16:17-18: *17. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils (unclean spirits); they shall speak with new tongues (God's language); 18. They shall take (lift) up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands (works) on the sick, and they shall recover.* When we have understood the cross and applied it in our own lives it is because we will have stopped drinking the poison of the pseudo religious organizations of the world. Then, having the character of Jesus, we will be able to help others cast out the prince of their world, their unclean spirit, by helping them lift up the serpent (understand their sin nature from the heavens). Physical healing is the outward sign of the inward healing of the spiritually sick. **Lk 21:36:** *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things ... **Gal 2:20:** *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me ... Amen.**