

## HWMR - CRYSTALLIZATION STUDY OF NUMBERS, Book 3, Week 18

**Christ as Typified by the Bronze Serpent**

EM Hymns: 1089, 493

Scripture Reading: Num. 21:4-9; John 3:14, 29-30; Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21

**Speaking against God and Moses — 21:4-9**

- Num 21:4 - Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient on the way.
- Num 21:5 - And the people spoke against God and against Moses, Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and there is no water; and our soul loathes this light bread.
- Num 21:6 - Then Jehovah sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.
- Num 21:7 - And the people came to Moses and said, We have sinned, because we have spoken against Jehovah and against you; pray to Jehovah, that He may take away the serpents from us. So Moses prayed for the people.
- Num 21:8 - 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.
- Num 21:9 - 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 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
- John 3:29 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.
- John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.
- Romans 8:3 For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,
- 2 Cor. 5:21 Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

The bronze serpent had the form of the fiery serpent but was without the fiery serpent's poison. When the children of Israel were bitten by the fiery serpents, they became serpents in the eyes of God and deserved God's judgment unto death. However, according to God's saving way, when the bronze serpent, which had only the form but not the poison of a serpent, was lifted up on the pole, it became their replacement to suffer the judgment of God. They lived by looking at the bronze serpent. This is a type of Christ being made sin on our behalf to be the same as a sinful man but having only the form of the flesh of sin and not the poison of sin. Through Christ's crucifixion in the flesh, God condemned sin in the flesh, judged sin for us, and dealt with the sin in our nature and the sinful nature to which it belongs. Furthermore, He annulled Satan in us that we may have eternal life by believing in Christ.

The one hanging on a tree is a type of Christ, who was hanged on the tree as the replacement for us, who have sinned and deserve death. He bore up our sins on the cross that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness. Moreover, He suffered the curse of death for us sinners, who deserve death, and thus redeemed us out of the curse of the law that we may receive the Spirit promised by God. (Truth Lessons, Level 3, Vol. 2, Chapter 12, Section 4)

**Obtaining the Church as the Bride**

John 3:29 says, "He who has the bride is the bridegroom." Christ, who is the Bridegroom, has the divine life and nature. Through His resurrection He produced the church that the church may have His divine life and nature and be qualified to match Him, that is, to become His bride to match Him, the Bridegroom. Now we need to live with Christ and live to Christ (2 Cor. 5:15), taking Him as our person that we may grow and become His satisfaction. Then at the end of this age, Christ will come to marry His bride and enjoy a married life together with His bride for eternity (Rev. 19:7; 21:9). (Truth Lessons, Level 3, Vol. 2, Chapter 12, Section 4)

## Day 1

**I. When the children of Israel sinned against God, they were bitten by serpents (Num. 21:4-9); 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:**

- A. The **bronze serpent** typifies **Christ** (John 3:14), and the **pole** typifies the **cross** (1 Pet. 2:24); 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** (John 8:28) in the **likeness of the flesh of sin** (Rom. 8:3), without participating in any way in the poisonous sin of the flesh (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15).
- 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—1 John 3:10.
  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 (Rev. 12:9; 20:2), 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 (v. 11), and it can dwell in people and cause them to do things against their will (vv. 17, 20); it is quite alive (v. 9) and exceedingly active, so it must be the evil nature of Satan, the evil one, dwelling, acting, and working in fallen mankind.

## Day 2

- 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—John 12:31-34.
- 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—Heb. 2:14; John 12:32-33.
- 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**—3:14-16; 12:24.

### Becoming the Son of Man

This **great I Am**, God Himself in relation to man, **became** the **Son of Man**. This is very meaningful. For **Jehovah** to **become** the Son of Man means that **He had to humble Himself**, to **lower Himself**. This was more than necessary due to all the negative problems that are in man. **Sin is in man. The serpent, the devil, is also in man.** Man is the focus of every problem. If God was going to solve all the basic problems of man, **He had to become a man Himself**. Satan knows the importance of this. Satan was **not afraid** of the Lord Jesus being the **Son of God**. He **was afraid** of the Lord Jesus **being a man**. Therefore, Jehovah God became a man.

### Lifted Up on the Cross for Man to Cast Out the Devil

**As a man**, He was willing to be **lifted up** (3:14) **as** was the **brass serpent** in the wilderness (Num. 21:4-9). When we say that the Lord Jesus was **crucified on the cross**, we **mean** primarily that **He died there for our redemption and removed our sin**. But what does the Bible mean when it says that **Christ was lifted up**? It mainly **refers** to **His dealing with the serpent**, the devil. When most people read the words "lifted up," they lack the understanding of them. **The Son of Man was lifted up as was the brass serpent not only to deal with sin, but also to deal with the serpent.** John 12:31-32 indicates that when the Son of Man was **lifted up**, the ruler of this world, the devil, was **judged** and **cast out**. **Christ was not only crucified—He was lifted up.** In His being lifted up, the serpent was exposed, judged, and cast out. The serpent, the devil, was judged and cast out by Jesus' being lifted up. **Who was there on the pole?** The **serpent**. In the flesh of Jesus, **God put the serpent on the pole** and made a **universal display** that all the universe might see that His enemy, the serpent, **was on the pole**. Thus, **Jesus was lifted up for the judging and casting out of the devil.** (Life-Study of John, Chapter 19, Section 2)

- 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—Acts 26:20; 14:15b; 1 Thes. 1:9b.

2. In our experience, this is not a once-for-all matter but a daily experience; John the Baptist preached **repentance** (Matt. 3:2; Mark 1:4), and in the seven epistles to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, the Lord Jesus tells us again and again to **repent** (2:5, 16, 21-22; 3:3, 19).
- 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.**

### Day 3

#### II. John 3 speaks of the **serpent** and the **bride**—vv. 14, 29-30:

- 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:
  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 (Eph. 2:1, 5), 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—vv. 29-30; Gen. 2:21-22.
- 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—John 3:29-30.
- 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—vv. 29-36.
- G. We may say that, considered as a whole, the Bible unveils the matter of the **serpent** and the **bride**:

John 1:29 speaks of Christ as the **Lamb of God**. But if we go deeper into the Word, we will see that the Lamb of God in 1:29 is the **bronze serpent** in 3:14. The **Lamb satisfies** the requirements of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory, for the Lamb is pure, perfect, and without blemish. The **bronze serpent represents** us, for we are serpentine people, not lambs. As the Lord was speaking to Nicodemus, He indicated to him that He Himself would be **lifted up** as the bronze serpent to be Nicodemus's **Substitute**. Therefore, **the Lamb of God satisfies God's requirements**, and **the bronze serpent represents us**. Because we are serpentine and are not lambs, we need Christ as the bronze serpent to be our Substitute. This bronze serpent is the real sin offering. (The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John, Chapter 10, Section 1)

### Day 4

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 (v. 15); furthermore, the seed of the woman would also **become righteousness** to the very ones who were poisoned by the serpent (v. 21).
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—2 Cor. 11:2-3; cf. Rev. 12:9; 1 Thes. 3:5; 1 Tim. 2:14; 4:1; 2 Pet. 3:17.
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**—v. 7.
  - 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—vv. 11-16, 19-21; 20:1-3.
  - c. Following that, Satan will rebel once more and will ultimately be cast into the lake of fire—vv. 7-10.
  - 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**—21:1-2, 9-10.

## Day 5

**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 4:14; 7:37-39.
- 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**—v. 6.
  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** (Gal. 2:20; 4:19; John 15:5)—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—Rev. 21:3, 9-10.
  5. May the Lord have mercy on us that **we may learn to live by our regenerated being**—Rom. 8:4; Phil. 4:11-13.

## Day 6

- 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—v. 31.
  2. The unlimited Christ is **above all** (v. 31); because Christ is all-inclusive, unlimited, and universal, while He was on earth, He was still in the heavens (v. 13).
  3. The unlimited Christ is **loved** by the Father; only in Christ can we enjoy the love of God the Father—v. 35.
  4. The unlimited Christ has **been given** all things; the Father has given all things, including us, into the Son's hand—v. 35; 1 Cor. 3:21-23.
  5. The unlimited Christ was **sent** by God—John 3:34; 6:46.
  6. The unlimited Christ **speaks** the words of God—3:34; 6:63.
    7. The unlimited Christ **gives** the Spirit not by measure—3:34.
  8. The unlimited Christ **gives** eternal life to His believers—vv. 15-16, 36; 6:63.
  9. The unlimited Christ **has** the bride as His **universal increase**—3:29-30.

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**. (The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John, Chapter 13, Section 1)

- D. The **immeasurable Spirit** is the all-inclusive compound Spirit typified by the compound ointment—Exo. 30:23-25; Phil. 1:19:
1. The **immeasurable Spirit** is the **life-giving Spirit**—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:6.
  2. The **immeasurable Spirit** is also the **pneumatic Christ**; the term pneumatic Christ **refers** to **Christ as the Spirit**—vv. 6, 17-18; Rom. 8:9-11.

**THE IMMEASURABLE SPIRIT****The All-inclusive Compound Spirit  
Typified by the Compound Ointment**

Let us now consider the **immeasurable Spirit**. The word immeasurable not only **denotes** the **sphere** of the Spirit but also **denotes** the **contents** and **nature** of the Spirit. The immeasurable Spirit is immeasurable in sphere. It is immeasurable also in contents and in nature, that is, in what the Spirit is. The immeasurable Spirit is **actually** the **all-inclusive compound Spirit** **typified** by the **compound ointment** in Exodus 30:23-25. (For the details concerning this, see Life-study of Exodus, Messages 157 to 166.) The immeasurable Spirit as the all-inclusive compound Spirit is not simply the Spirit of power or the Spirit of life. This immeasurable Spirit is actually the **consummate expression** of the Triune God.

**The Life-giving Spirit**

The immeasurable Spirit is the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). In **resurrection** Christ **became** a **life-giving Spirit** for **imparting life**. As the life-giving Spirit, He is ready to be **received** by those who believe into Him. When **we believe into Him, He enters our spirit, and we are joined to Him** as the life-giving Spirit. In this way **we become one spirit with Him** (1 Cor. 6:17).

E. The eternal life is mentioned three times in John 3—vv. 15-16, 36:

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**.

## THE BRONZE SERPENT

### A. The Need for the Bronze Serpent

In Numbers 21 the people of Israel became **impatient** because the way in the wilderness was very difficult, and the people spoke against God and Moses. Then God **sent fiery serpents** among the people, and the people were **bitten** by the fiery serpents so that many of them **died**. When the people **repented** and **confessed** their sins, God commanded Moses to **make a fiery serpent** and **set it on a pole, lifting it up**, to suffer God's judgment as a replacement for the people and to redeem them from their sins. When they would **look at** the bronze serpent, they would live and not die (vv. 4-9).

### B. The Form of the Bronze Serpent

The bronze serpent had the **form** of the fiery serpent but was **without** the fiery serpent's **poison**. When the children of Israel were **bitten** by the fiery serpents, they **became** serpents in the eyes of God. They were serpentine and had the **serpentine nature**. The **bronze serpent**, however, had only the form of a serpent, not the nature of a serpent. Hence, it was qualified to suffer God's judgment as a **replacement** for the people of Israel, who had the serpentine nature.

### C. The Bronze Serpent Being Lifted Up on a Pole

The bronze serpent was **lifted up on a pole** so that the people could **look at it** and **live**. The people of Israel, who had become serpentine, should have suffered God's judgment unto death. However, according to God's saving way, when the bronze serpent, which had only the form but not the poison of a serpent, was **lifted up** on the pole, it became their replacement to suffer the judgment of God. They **lived by looking at the bronze serpent**.

### D. The Bronze Serpent Typifying Christ

#### 1. Being Made Sin on Our Behalf

In John 3:14 the Lord said, "*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up.*" This shows that the **bronze serpent lifted up** by Moses in the wilderness **typifies Christ**, who was **made sin on our behalf** so that He might deliver us out of death into life (2 Cor. 5:21). We were bitten by the old serpent and have the poisonous element of sin. Sin came from Satan, who rebelled against God (Isa. 14:12-14). This sin, which came out of the evil one, entered into man and made man not only a sinner but also sin itself under God's judgment; hence, when **Christ became a man in the flesh** (Rom. 5:12; John 1:14), **He was made sin** (not sinful) **on our behalf to be judged by God** (Rom. 8:3).

#### 2. Having Only the Likeness of the Flesh of Sin but Not the Poisonous Element of Sin

The bronze serpent had the form of a serpent but not the poisonous element of a serpent. This is a **full type** of Christ coming in the **likeness of the flesh of sin** to be our **replacement** (v. 3). The **flesh is of sin**, yet Christ became flesh (John 1:14; Heb. 2:14). However, He was only in the **likeness of the flesh**; He did not have the sin of the flesh (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15). He was the same as a sinful man in His outward form, but He did **not have the nature of sin within Him**. This is like the bronze serpent, which had the form, the likeness, of a serpent but not the poison of a serpent. Only such a Christ, who did not know sin, could bear God's judgment on behalf of us sinners, who were poisoned by sin, and could deal with Satan, who poisoned us.

#### 3. Condemning Sin through His Crucifixion in the Flesh

Christ **became flesh for us**, and in the flesh He was **judged by God on behalf of us** who have the sinful nature. In Christ's crucifixion God caused Him who knew no sin to **become sin on our behalf** (2 Cor. 5:21). **Through this**, God **condemned** sin in the flesh, **judged** sin for us, and **dealt** with the sin in our nature and the sinful nature to which it belongs (Rom. 8:3). As a **result**, **we have the eternal life by believing in Him** (John 3:15). This can be compared to the people of Israel, who were poisoned by the serpents and lived by looking at the bronze serpent on the pole. **Our sins have been taken away**, our serpentine nature has been dealt with, and Satan has been destroyed in us; thus, **we have the life of God**. (Truth Lessons, Level 3, Vol. 2, Chapter 12, Section 2)