

Key Statements

- 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:
 - 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.
 - In Matthew 12:34 the Lord Jesus called the Pharisees the "offspring of vipers"; in 23:33 He called them "Serpents! Brood of vipers!"
 - 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.
 - 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- When we repent and admit that we are serpentine, we are qualified to experience Christ as the eternal life and enjoy Him:
 - 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.
 - 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).
- 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.

● 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:

- 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.
- 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.

● 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.

● 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.

● 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.

● 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.

● 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.

● We may say that, considered as a whole, the Bible unveils the matter of the serpent and the bride.