

Truth For The Final Generation

Chapter 12

The True Gospel of Jesus the Messiah The Art of Believing Part 2

Scripture Reading: John 3:14-18 (KJV)

¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: ¹⁵ That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. ¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

As we continue in our study of the true gospel of Jesus the Messiah we shall discover that which the Apostles taught was taught by the Messiah Himself in very a simple yet powerful way. In our study for today, He calls our attention to His saving power by way of the story of Israel under Moses in the wilderness of Sin. This story teaches us that the Old Testament the only scriptures which He had is to be rightly divided, as all scripture, and believed in for in them He is revealed who is life eternal.

Eternal life by believing/faith

John 3:14, 15 (NLT) “And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.” These two verses of scripture teaches us in a very cogent way all the teachings of the Apostles on both the humanity and the divinity of the Messiah, both of which natures are essential to the plan of salvation, which plan cannot be complete if either is missing. Further, if a person does not believe both of these facts he/she does and cannot have salvation. Let us therefore look closely at what our Saviour is saying to us here. Firstly, in the same way that Moses made a snake of brass for the people to look at when they were bitten of the deadly snakes in the wilderness for them to be saved from death, so likewise also, all who will be saved

from the deadly bite of the “snake” of sin must look to the “spiritual bronze snake” that God made for our bite, Jesus the Messiah. This imagery of the bronze/brass snake being lifted up by Moses, and the people looking at it to be saved from death teaches us important lessons of our salvation which we shall explore. Remember that “By beholding/looking we shall be changed.”

The bronze snake was made in the likeness/shape/form of the real snakes which bit the people in the wilderness. This was teaching that the saviour from sin was to be in the likeness of the “bronze snake” of sin, that those who look to him would be saved from the bite of the snake of sin. The bronze snake was like the deadly snakes of the wilderness, but only in shape, it was not real, hence not of the same nature. The “spiritual bronze snake” the Saviour from the bite of sin, was also in likeness as to shape of the “snake of sin” which has bitten humanity. He was made sin for us. **2 Cor. 5:21 (KJV)** first part “For God **made** Him to be sin for us.” Remember He was made in the likeness of sin, He was not always so, he was made/constructed this way for our sakes. Paul declares in Heb. 10:5, “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:” Also in **Romans 6:6**, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed.” To crucify our old man, the body of sin, our wicked self as to the flesh, He had to take it on just as we and put to death all of its clamouring of sin, and this He did.

So like those of Israel who looked to the bronze snake and lived, all who now look to the “spiritual bronze snake” will live. But more, our “spiritual bronze snake” was not only in the likeness of those who were bitten by the “snake of sin,” he was also of the nature of them whom the “snake” of sin bitten. **Philippians 2:5-7 (KJV)** “**5** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: **6** Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: **7** But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of

men:” Here we are introduced to Messiah the Saviour from the bite of the serpent of sin in His form/shape as a man. Remember a thing can be in the form/shape of a man and still not be a man. We all know this too well, for as children, we made, and still make shapes of men from dirt or play dough, but they were and are not men. But it was more than the mere form/shape as to resemblance of man in which Messiah came, for if He was only in our form/shape, we would have grounds on which to stand and say “He does not understand what I am going through”, but thanks be to God, He was not only in our form, He was also in our nature. **Heb. 2:14-18 (NLT)** “**14** Because God’s children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. **15** Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying. **16** We also know that the Son did not come to help angels; he came to help the descendants of Abraham. **17** Therefore, **it was necessary for him to be made in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters**, so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. Then he could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of the people. **18** Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested.” For emphasis bear in mind that **“For only as a human being could he die.”**

GCB p. 232 A.T. Jones, “Now, do not get a wrong idea of that word “likeness.” It is not the shape; it is not the photograph; it is not the likeness in the sense of an image; but it is likeness in sense of being like indeed. The word “likeness” here is not the thought that is in the second chapter of Philippians, where it is shape, the form, or likeness as to form; but here, in the book of Hebrews, it is likeness in nature, likeness to the flesh as it is in itself, God sending his own Son in that which is just like sinful flesh. And in order to be just like sinful flesh, it would have to be sinful flesh; in order to be made flesh at all, as it is in this world, he would have to be just such flesh as it is in this world, - just such as we have, and that is sinful flesh. This is what is said in the words “likeness of sinful flesh.”

Here then is the secret of our salvation, one who was not only like us in form, but also like us in our sinful fallen flesh and blood human nature, one who was able to die, this is the difference between Him and the bronze serpent in the wilderness. To re-emphasize, he was not only like us in form, but like us also in nature, our fallen flesh and human blood nature. Only those who believe this fact have eternal life. It then is no mystery that Christ and the Apostles laboured to get people to understand that by believing on Messiah as God’s answer to the sin problem is there eternal life. The words of the Paul to the Philippian jailer is instructive here, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house.” **Acts 16:31**. But believe what you may ask? Believe like the Ethiopian eunuch, “that Jesus Christ is the son of God,” as saith the scriptures. Remember that “*Genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures.*” The Son of God is therefore both the promise and the provision of the Scriptures. He is the God-man, both human and divine in one person. Herein lies the salvation, the redemption of humanity. Oh praise the Lord!

DA 174, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

Here was ground with which Nicodemus was familiar. The symbol of the uplifted serpent made plain to him the Saviour’s mission. When the people of Israel were dying from the sting of the fiery serpents, God directed Moses to make a serpent of brass, and place it on high in the midst of the congregation. Then the word was sounded throughout the encampment that all who would look upon the serpent should live. The people well knew that in itself the serpent had no power to help them. It was a symbol of Christ. As the image made in the likeness of the destroying serpents was lifted up for their healing, so One made “in the likeness of sinful flesh” was to be their Redeemer. **Romans 8:3**. Many of the Israelites regarded the sacrificial service as having in itself virtue to set them free from sin. God desired to teach them that it had no more value than that serpent of brass. It was to lead their minds to the Saviour. Whether for the healing of their wounds or the pardon of their sins, they could do nothing for themselves but show their faith in the Gift of God. They were to look and live.

Those who had been bitten by the serpents might have delayed to look. They might have questioned how there could be efficacy in that brazen symbol. They might have demanded a scientific explanation. But no explanation was given. They must accept the word of God to them through Moses. To refuse to look was to perish.

Not through controversy and discussion is the soul enlightened. We must look and live.” Truly by “beholding/looking we are changed.” To look and live really means to believe the facts of the gospel i.e. to surrender to them. The fact of all facts of the gospel is that God has purchased our salvation/redemption through the death of His one and only Son, and the second fact of facts is whoever believes, that is, surrender to Him has eternal life, i.e. the life that God lives with, here and now (John 3:15) and everlasting life (John 3:16) in the world to come, i.e. life without perishing, going to sleep just like God.

In Luke 3:7-13, the lesson of not only believing for our initial conversion, i.e. being born again, but after initial conversion we must bring forth the fruits of righteousness, and this also by believing. ⁷Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. ⁹And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. ¹⁰And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? ¹¹He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. ¹²Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? ¹³And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. ¹⁴And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.” Consider this illustration, a man and woman are joined together in holy matrimony. Evidence of their oneness is the fruit brought forth by their union, i. e. the production of

offspring. Likewise evidence of genuine belief is its offspring, even righteousness/love. Isaiah 32:17, ¹⁷And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

It is surely by believing

²²The next day the crowd that had stayed on the far shore saw that the disciples had taken the only boat, and they realized Jesus had not gone with them. ²³Several boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the Lord had blessed the bread and the people had eaten. ²⁴So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went across to Capernaum to look for him. ²⁵They found him on the other side of the lake and asked, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” ²⁶Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. ²⁷But don’t be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval.” ²⁸They replied, “We want to perform God’s works, too. What should we do?” ²⁹Jesus told them, **“This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent.”** ³⁰They answered, “Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do? ³¹After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, ‘Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” ³²Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, Moses didn’t give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. ³³The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴“Sir,” they said, “give us that bread every day.” ³⁵Jesus replied, “I am the bread of life. Whoever **comes to me** will never be hungry again. **Whoever believes in me** will never be thirsty. ³⁶But you haven’t believed in me even though you have seen me. ³⁷However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will. ³⁹And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰For it is my Father’s will that all who see his Son and **believe in him should have eternal life.** I will

raise them up at the last day.”⁴¹ Then the people^h began to murmur in disagreement because he had said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.”⁴² They said, “Isn’t this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and mother. How can he say, ‘I came down from heaven?’”⁴³ But Jesus replied, “Stop complaining about what I said.”⁴⁴ For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up. ⁴⁵ As it is written in the Scriptures, ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. ⁴⁶ (Not that anyone has ever seen the Father; only I, who was sent from God, have seen him.)⁴⁷ **I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life.** ⁴⁸ Yes, I am the bread of life! ⁴⁹ Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died. ⁵⁰ Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh.”

Closing thoughts

Rev. 2: 2-4 “I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: ³ And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. ⁴ Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

EW page 55, 56, “A light would come from the Father to the Son and from the Son to the praying company. Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from the Father to the Son, and from the Son it waved over the people before the throne. But few would receive this great light. Many came out from under it and immediately resisted it; others were careless and did not cherish the light, and it moved off from them. Some cherished it, and went and bowed down with the little praying company. This company all received the light and rejoiced in it, and their countenances shone with its glory.

“I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and sit down. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and the

most of those who were bowed down arose with Him. I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after He arose, and they were left in perfect darkness. Those who arose when Jesus did, kept their eyes fixed on Him as He left the throne and led them out a little way. Then He raised His right arm, and we heard His lovely voice saying, “Wait here; I am going to My Father to receive the kingdom; keep your garments spotless, and in a little while I will return from the wedding and receive you to Myself.” Then a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat. There I beheld Jesus, a great High Priest, standing before the Father. On the hem of His garment was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate. “Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, “My Father, give us Thy Spirit.” Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. **In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace.**

I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne, and pray, “Father, give us Thy Spirit.” Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; **in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace.** Satan’s object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God’s children.”

Yours in the true Gospel of the Messiah
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June 14, 2014