

The snake and the staff

by

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“Then the Lord said to him (Moses), ‘What is that in your hand?’ ‘A staff,’ he replied. The Lord said, ‘Throw it on the ground.’ Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. Then the Lord said to him, ‘Reach out your hand and take it by the tail.’ So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand.” Exodus 4:2ff

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.” John 3:14f

The staff in Moses’ hand is a symbol of the word of God. Jesus is the Word of God. The snake is a symbol of Satan, of sin, of disease and of the curse that came into the world through Adam.

Moses threw the staff onto the ground and the staff became a snake. Later he took hold of the snake again and the snake became a staff once more. That is a picture of what happened on the cross and in the resurrection. How can a staff turn into a snake and then back into a staff? How can the Son of God become sin and then become the Son again after three days and nights? Adam was without sin and became sin when he violated God’s command. He lost his sonship. Jesus, the last Adam, was without sin and was made to be sin when he took Adam’s sin on himself at the cross.

For three days and three nights Jesus was in the prison of death. Then the Father received him again, raised him from the dead and established him as the Son again, just as Moses took up the snake and it turned back into a staff. Jesus, the Word of God, became sin on the cross (with our sins, 2 Cor 5:21), he became sickness (with our sicknesses, Isa 53:10), he became a curse (Gal 3:13) and he became poor (2 Cor 8:9). God forsook him. Jesus was a lost son on the cross. He lost his sonship for three days and three nights. Jesus became everything we were so that we can become what he is. When our guilt was atoned for and the price was paid, God raised Jesus from the dead and established him as the Son again.

When God raised Jesus from the dead, he said, *“You are my son; today I have become your father.”* Acts 13:33. *“I will be his Father, and he will be my Son.”* Heb 1:5. Jesus was fathered by the Father just as we are. Except that he was the firstborn from the dead (the spiritually dead). *“For you have been born again (fathered), not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.”* 1 Pet 1:23.

We have received new life in the spirit, since we were spiritually dead, separated from God. Jesus delivered us from spiritual death, not from physical death. We will still have to die physically if Jesus does not return first. We were dead (spiritually dead) in transgressions and sins and Jesus bore our transgressions and sins and therefore our death. He also raised us up, who *“were dead in [our] transgressions and sins”*. Eph 2:1. Jesus was the firstborn from among the dead, Col 1:18. He was the first who was spiritually dead and made alive again. Therefore now every sinner, every spiritually dead person, can receive new life. *“Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.”* John 5:25.

Jesus died the death of a sinner. He received God’s judgement for our sin. The punishment for sin is eternal death, or hell. When the rich man from Luke 16:19 died, he found himself in hell. Jesus spent three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, in hell, and suffered for us. When God raised him from the dead, Jesus rose as a victor. He defeated hell, sin, sickness, death and the devil. Our sins and sicknesses, which Jesus had been loaded down with, were left in hell. We are now as free and righteous as Jesus.

“As he is, so also are we.” 1 Joh 4:17. Everyone who looked at the raised up snake was healed and set free from the snakes. Everyone who in faith looks at Jesus’ work of redemption on the cross becomes free from sin, free from sickness, free from curses, free from poverty and free from every power of the devil. See it in faith and confess it in faith. In Jesus you are saved, blessed, healed, made righteousness, loved, cleansed, sanctified, anointed and sent out.

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