

## Nehushtan

Numbers 21:4-9; 2 Kings 18:1-4

## Brazen Serpent

Text – Numbers 21:4-9

- People complain (verses 4-5)
- God sent fiery serpents among them (verse 6)
- The people cry out and repent (verse 7)
- Moses makes a serpent of brass; all who look on it are saved (verses 8-9)

## Nehushtan

Text – 2 Kings 18:1-4

- The brazen serpent was kept in Jerusalem (verse 4)
- The Israelites burned incense to it (verse 4)
- It was called Nehushtan
  - “a thing of brass”; a name by which the brazen serpent was worshipped in the days of Hezekiah (Brown-Driver-Briggs)
- Hezekiah’s first reforms involved destroying it

## The Lesson of Nehushtan

- At one time the brazen serpent held great significance
- After the events of the fiery serpents, the brazen serpent was not significant
- Israel later attached a significance to it which God did not!
- Today man does the same thing!

## Tithing

- What is it? A tenth
- Maasrah - “tenth part, tithing: – tenth (4), tenth part (1), tithing (17), tithes (9), tithing (1)” (New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries)
- It was a tenth of your income or increase

## Tithing

- Practiced in the OT
- Patriarchal Period – Abraham paid a tenth to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-20; Hebrews 7:2)
- Mosaic Period – Israelites commanded to tithe (Deuteronomy 12:1-7)

## Tithing

- The purpose for it?
- It belonged to the Lord (Leviticus 27:30)
- Supported the priesthood (Numbers 18:21-32)
- Every third year tithes given to many (Deuteronomy 26:12)
  - Levite, sojourner, fatherless, widow

## Tithing

In practice today

- Denominations practice tithing
  - “Tithing plate”
- What does the gospel teach?
- Giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)
  - From the heart (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)

## Tithing

Conclusion?

- Nowhere does the gospel direct us to give a specific amount or percentage.
- If our heart is right, giving will not be a problem.
- To bind tithing today is, in principle, to make something significant that is no longer significant!

## Temple Worship

What was the Temple? A place of worship

- What was its purpose?
- God would dwell there (1 Kings 8:10-13; 9:1-3)
  - God was not confined to it (1 Kings 8:27)
- Prayer (Matthew 21:12-13)
- Sacrifice (2 Chronicles 7:12)
- Holiness (Hebrews 9:1-3)

## Temple Worship

- Temple worship today?



## Temple Worship

What does the NT teach?

- God does not dwell in the physical (Acts 17:22-25)
- The church is the temple of God today (Hebrews 3:3-6)
- We worship in spirit and truth (John 4:21-24)
- The NT does not place any emphasis on luxury or architectural appreciation!

## Circumcision

What was it? Circumcision in the flesh

- Given to Abraham (Genesis 17:9-14)
- Grafted into the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 12:3)

What was its purpose?

- A token or sign of the covenant (Genesis 17:11)

## Circumcision

A problem for the NT church

- Men from Judea attempted to bind it at Antioch (Acts 15:1, 5)
- Men attempted to bind it in Galatia (Galatians 5:6; 6:15-16)
- Apostles clearly refuted this idea (Acts 15:24)

## Circumcision

What about today?

- Neither one matters (Galatians 5:6)
- For reasons of family tradition, health/cleanliness is appropriate; it cannot be bound as a condition of salvation!
- They were attempting to make circumcision significant (Ephesians 2:14-15)

## The Opposite of Nehushtan

- If we learn the lesson of Nehushtan, there is another problem, related to and similar to the issue of binding things no longer significant.
- Many today take what God has bound and attempt to minimize or eliminate them all together!
- This is just as wrong!

## The Church

What is it?

- Ekklesia – “a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly” – Thayer
- Called out of darkness by the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9-10)
- We are called out of the world into the light; the assembly of God

## The Church

Why is it significant?

- Christ died for it (Acts 20:28)
- Christ purchased it with His blood (Acts 20:28)
- All spiritual blessings are found in it (Ephesians 1:3ff)
  - Every spiritual blessing in heavenly places
  - Foreordained, adopted, redemption, forgiveness

## The Church

What is its purpose?

- Separates us from the world (1 Peter 2:9-10)
- A new purpose in life (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

Many today attempt to minimize it

- Cheapen it, treating it as a secular club
- Even teach you do not need to be a member of it
- Salvation and church membership are linked!

## Baptism

What is it?

- Baptizo – “1) to dip repeatedly; immerse; submerge. 2) to cleanse by dipping or submerging.” – Thayer
- NT baptism is a dipping, immersion, or plunging of a sinner into the waters of baptism to reach the blood of Christ in His death.

## Baptism

What is its purpose?

- Saves us (Mark 16:15-16)
- Gives remission of sins (Acts 2:38)
- Wash away our sins (Acts 22:16)
- To add us, one-by-one, to His church (Acts 2:47)
- Bring us into Christ (Romans 6:1-4)
- Walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4)

## Baptism

Many today deny its significance

- Change the practice – Infant baptism, sprinkling, and pouring
- For denominational membership
- Outward sign of an inward faith
- The ultimate end – Sinners are robbed of their salvation!

## Faithfulness

What does it mean to be faithful?

- “Trusty, faithful a) of persons who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of faithful duties” – Thayer
- Obey His commands (Galatians 5:16-18, 22-24)
- Deny sin (Galatians 5:19-21)

## Faithfulness

What is its purpose?

- To achieve a crown (Revelation 2:10)
- To be fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:57-62)
- To encourage and build up our brethren (Hebrews 10:24-25)

## Faithfulness

Many attempt to diminish or eliminate it

- Once saved, always saved
- Security of the believer
- Cannot sin so as to be lost
- This deceit causes souls to be lost. Faithfulness cannot be minimized!

## Conclusion

- Nehushtan teaches a powerful lesson
- The OT scriptures lay important groundwork and principles (Romans 15:4)
- We cannot bind things which are no longer significant
- We cannot diminish or eliminate things God has deemed important in the NT
- We must handle the scripture rightly (2 Timothy 3:15)

## Obey the Gospel

Not a Christian? Become one today!

- **Hear** (Romans 10:17)
  - “So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”
- **Believe** (Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16)
  - “And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him.”

## Obey the Gospel

- **Repent** (Luke 13:3)
  - “I tell you, Nay: but, except you repent ye shall all in like manner perish.”
- **Confess** (Romans 10:10)
  - “for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

## Obey the Gospel

- **Be Baptized** (Mark 16:16)
  - “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.”

You cannot minimize or diminish this process!

## Obey the Gospel

Have you fallen? Fix it!

- **Repent** (Acts 8:22ff)
- **Confess** to God in **prayer**, asking for forgiveness (1 John 1:6-8)

You cannot minimize or eliminate this process!