

The Gospel of John 3:11-16

Satan's Evil Nature in Man's Flesh Being Judged on the Cross through the Death of Christ

- I Regeneration, on one hand, brings the divine life with the divine nature into us. On the other hand, regeneration terminates the evil nature of Satan in our flesh. When the children of Israel sinned against God, they were bitten by serpents (**Num. 21:4-9, Rom.7:18, Jer.13:23**) God told Moses to lift up a brass serpent on their behalf for God's judgment, that by looking upon that brass serpent all might live. That was a type.
- II Here, in this verse, the Lord Jesus applied that type to Himself, indicating that when He was in the flesh, He was in "the likeness of the flesh of sin" (**Rom.8:3**), which likeness is equal to the form of the brass serpent. The brass serpent had the form of the serpent but was without the serpent's poison. Christ was made in "the likeness of the flesh of sin," but was without the serpent's poison. Christ was made in "the likeness of the flesh of sin," but He did not participate in any way in the sin of the flesh (**2Cor.5:21; Heb. 4:15**). When a man is regenerated within fallen man has been dealt with. When a man is regenerated with the divine life in Christ, his satanic nature is annulled. Because of this, in this portion of the Word, when the Lord revealed the matter of regeneration to Nicodemus, He specifically mentioned this point.
- III As a descendant of Adam, Nicodemus had been poisoned by the old serpent, and the serpent's nature was within him. He needed the Lord in two aspects. He needed the Lord as the Lamb of God to take away his sin (**John1:29**). He also needed the Lord to be in the form of the serpent that his serpentine nature might be dealt with on the cross and that he might have eternal life. (**3:14, 19:39**) In the principle set forth in John 2, this is the changing of death into life. This is the divine life, the uncreated life of God, which not only is everlasting, with respect to time, but also is eternal and divine in nature. (**3:16, 36**)
- IV The world here refers to sinful, fallen people, who constitute the world. They not only have sin but, also the poisonous element of the devil, the ancient serpent. Hence, they have become serpents. They need Christ, in the form of a serpent, to die for them and be judged, as their substitute, by God (v.14); otherwise, they will perish (v.16). Although men are utterly fallen, God still loves them with His divine love, which is Himself (**1John 4:8, 16**), because they are vessels created by God according to His own image to contain Himself (**Gen.1:26; Rom. 9:21a, 23**).
- V Moreover, He so loves them that He gave them His only begotten Son, His expression, that they might obtain His eternal life to become His expression, that they might obtain His eternal life to become His many sons and be His corporate expression for the fulfillment of His eternal New Testament economy. Hence, God first regenerates them by His Spirit (**John 3:3-6**) that they may have His eternal life (**vv.15-16,36a**). Then He fills them with His unlimited Spirit (v.34) that they may become the bride of Christ, who is above all and is all-inclusive (**vv.31-35**), to be His increase and fullness (**vv.28-30**).
- VI Believing into the Lord is not the same as believing Him (**6:30**). To believe Him is to believe that He is true and real, but to believe into Him is to receive Him and be united with Him as one. The former is to acknowledge a fact objectively; the latter is to receive a life subjectively.