



68TH YEAR SEPTEMBER 13 2020 PAMPHLET # 37 (3511)

THE SNAKE AND THE CROSS

With a foreshadowing of the Cross of Christ in the Old Testament, the Church prepares us to celebrate the great feast of the Elevation of the Precious Cross, on the Sunday which precedes it. The Evangelist John reminds of the Lord's saying that "as Moses lifted up the copper snake in the wilderness, so must the Son of man had to be lifted up on the Cross" (John 3:14).

The event is familiar. An invasion of snakes in the desert of Sinai, and the Jews were dying from their bites. And Moses following God's command, lifted up a copper snake, so that whoever would receive the snake bite could gaze at it and the activity of the poison in his body could be recalled, avoiding death in this way. The copper snake and gazing at it saved the Jews, allowing them to continue their journey to the land of Promise.

Spiritual snakes

Christ transfers the event from the Old to the New Testament. Just that here it is not a copper snake, which will be elevated, but the Son of man himself on the Cross. The world is the spiritual wilderness. Just as the Jews were seeking their survival, but also the path for the Land of Promise, thus also all people are seeking their survival, that is, to be able to find the meaning and goal in their life, and the path for the

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 2020, SUNDAY BEFORE HOLY CROSS

Forefeast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross, The Consecration of the Church of the Holy Resurrection (Holy Sepulchre), *The Consecration of the Church of the Holy Resurrection (Holy Sepulchre), Cornelius the Centurion & Martyr, Aristides the Philosopher, Hierotheos the Righteous of Iveron Monastery, Mount Athos.*

-tone of the week : First Plagal Tone

EOTHINON : Third Eothinon

EPISTLE READING : *St. Paul's Letter to Galatians 6:11-18*

GOSPEL READING : *John 3:13-17*

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 2020, SUNDAY AFTER HOLY CROSS

fterfeast of the Holy Cross, *Eustathius the Great Martyr, his wife and two children , Our Righteous Father Eustathius, Archbishop of Thessalonica, Hilarion the New Martyr of Crete, John the Foreigner*

EPISTLE READING : *St. Paul's Letter to Galatians 2:12-20*

GOSPEL READING : *Mark 8:34-38; 9:1*

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THE SUNDAY GOSPEL JOHN 3:13-17

The Lord said, "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

Land of Promise. That way which will surpass time and the separation from their neighbor and from life. This way, even for those who do not know it, is the kingdom of God. Material snakes take life away from the Jews. Spiritual snakes take eternal life away from each one of us. There, the poisonous bite has death as a direct result. To us, the bites, the bites of sin, of egotism of passions which the snakes of demons, the snakes of self-deification, the snakes of indifference offer "in abundance" in our life, have as a result, spiritual death. We see our relationships with the others through the prism of interest, of satisfaction of our desires, without caring about our spiritual benefit, we entrust only our own powers, science, medicine, technology, which are not able however, to help us to defeat even physical death.

The elevation of Christ

In the Sinai desert, the Jews feel God's presence, but they are not able to submit their will to trusting in Him. In the desert of the contemporary world, usually we are completely indifferent to God's presence, or also again we do not trust Him. In the Old Testament, Moses was obedient to all that God asked him, and he elevated the copper snake. In the New Testament, the Son of man, Christ, is

obedient to the will of the Father and allows Himself to be elevated. Life in the Old Testament is given with gazing at the snake. In the New Testament, life is given by gazing at the one elevated on the Cross, the Son of man. There, life was temporary. It is not able to defeat either time or the breaking up which our will causes. In the New Testament, life is eternal. It defeats time because Christ "trampled upon death by death" upon the cross. It defeats the breakup because Christ is the God of love and is crucified out of love. Only whoever loves Christ is able to truly defeat the will that separates him from fellow man and to show love which does not discriminate against anyone.

We carry our cross

Just that now we do not remain simply at gazing. Christ from the Cross, stretches His hands out and embraces us, seeking from us to receive Him within our being, by communing Him. That each of us carry his own cross, in other words, that we hold a struggle for forgiveness and big-heartedness, for love and offering, for speech and silence, for prayer and patience, in our rejection by the world, to not allow the passions and the wickedness of sin to subject us. Because the snakes threaten us at every moment in a world that at all the times speaks of a communication, but closes the hearts in their "ego". The Church showing the Cross of Christ, reminds us that in the desert of the world, there is that which preserves communion with God. Only through the Church and her life, is there hope of victory against time, death and the breakup, this truly worldwide opening of victory and salvation from the snakes which continue seeking to swallow us. And here lies the free decision of each one of us. To see, to trust and to carry his own cross.

Fr. T. M