

Nehushtan

“He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: **and he called it Nehushtan.**”

II Kings 18:4

Introduction:

1. God told Moses to make a brazen serpent to protect the living from fiery serpents (Numbers 21:1-9).
2. Jesus referred His hearers to this historical event to describe His death of crucifixion (John 3:14-15).
3. While considering this comparison, it is important to remember a few facts that tell the whole story.
 - a. God had already made choice who would die by the serpents, and there were many (Num 21:6).
 - b. God told Moses to make a brazen for the repentant living, so they could stay alive (Num 21:7-9).
 - c. The brazen serpent did not do any good for those already dead and judged by God (Num 21:6).
 - d. Our Lord’s use showed (1) the means of death on a tree and (2) faith to lay hold of eternal life.
4. What happened to the brazen serpent after it was used to save the living? We are not told in Numbers.
 - a. We are told in II Kings 18:4. Hezekiah destroyed it after about 800 years for its use for idolatry!
 - b. In contempt of this idolatrous abuse and corruption of something good, he called it, “Nehushtan!”
 - c. This contemptuous name means, “A thing of brass.” He mocked those who thought it had power.
5. We want to identify any idols in our lives and break them in pieces (Genesis 35:2; Ezekiel 14:1-11).
6. We want to hate superstition in any form, where we exalt anything out of its proper place before God.
7. Walking with God and serving Him correctly, worshipping in truth, includes using things correctly.
 - a. We want to make sure that our use of each aspect of Jesus Christ’s religion is done appropriately.
 - b. We do not want to confuse priorities, miss the object or intent of a thing, or make sacred cows.
 - c. We do not want to put confidence in things, facts, or tradition, rather than the living God Himself.
 - d. We do not want to become out of balance, where we abuse any doctrine by exaltation or neglect.
 - e. We do not have a known problem, but we do not want one, and we want to know the lesson well.

The Bible Examples of *Nehushtan!*

- A. Israel took the Ark of the Covenant into battle, but without fear of God, repentance, and prayer (I Sam 4:1-11); they not only lost the battle, but the Philistines stole the Ark!
- B. Judah thought they could live any way they chose by having God’s temple (Jeremiah 7:1-15).
- C. God buried Moses away from Israel to avoid worship of relics or saints (De 34:6; Jude 1:9).
- D. Jesus was not impressed by worship in Mt. Gerizim or Jerusalem (Jn 4:20-24; Gal 4:25-26).
- E. Paul dealt with Jews adoring the OT rite of circumcision (Phil 3:1-3). *Nehushtan! Concision!*
- F. God does not care what you eat under New Testament liberty (Romans 14:1-3; I Tim 4:1-5).
- G. God gave His scriptures to the Jews, but they missed its purpose (Ps 147:19-20; Rom 3:2).
 1. They exalted its letter, paper and words, rather than its righteousness (Romans 2:17-29).
 2. They trusted in the pages and writing, rather than the Jesus Christ it revealed (John 5:39).
 3. They attached it literally to their foreheads and arms, but did not obey it (Matthew 23:5).

Common Examples of *Nehushtan!*

- A. Some churches, like the RCC, kiss the Bible rather than obey its teachings; we love our King James Bibles, and we are Bible Christians, but study and obedience is by far most important.
- B. Formal and revered confessions may have value, but they must not compete with Scripture.
- C. Most “Bibles” used today are not Bibles in the sense of Holy Scripture, for they dynamic equivalent translations or paraphrases ... novels written by men about the Bible. *Nehushtan!*
- D. What is the value of a WWJD bracelet, when the wearer does not know the Bible for WWJD!
- E. Sabbatarians for the last 2000 years have created a sacred cow from the O.T. *Nehushtan!*
- F. Many revere “Jews” and the “Holy Land,” when the N.T. teaches plainly enough that there is no such distinction left, and we are the true Jews (Eph 2:11-22; Rom 2:28-29; Rev 2:9; 3:9).

- G. Many churches and so-called Christians exalt crosses and crucifixes, both large and small.
- H. The RCC worships and eats a cracker god that they make from wheat and water. *Nehushtan!*
- I. The RCC adores relics and other objects and prays with beads that have no value or power.
- J. We do not anoint with oil, for that was a sign gift to the Jews (James 5:14-15; Mark 6:13).
- K. For the recent viewing and funeral, a church's doors and windows were anointed with oil!
- L. We cannot think and worry about the communion elements over the Christ of communion, though the elements are clearly stated or implied, making them essential to worship in truth!
- M. Some that hold similar beliefs to us exalt "the doctrine" over Jesus Christ Himself – there is no value in believing election or sovereign regeneration by itself – the devils believe it well.
- N. Calling a meeting place the "sanctuary" requires care; the "stand" is nothing but a platform!
- O. Some are superstitious of footwashing, ceremonially washing clean feet in services, though Jesus' example was a custom of His day, and I Timothy 5:10 proves it not church related.
- P. Why in the world do many churches have flags ... American ... and Christian? *Nehushtan!*
- Q. Some write -od to be reverent with God, while others are superstitious about "Yahweh."
- R. Most churches can hardly imagine worshipping without musical instruments. *Nehushtan!*
- S. There is no man you should ever fear – no pope, cardinal, bishop, priest, pastor, ThD., etc.

Practical Applications of *Nehushtan!*

- A. The Bible can do you no good ... well cared for ... carried to church ... even read ... obey it!
- B. Your parents cannot save you or help you by their righteousness, if you rebel (Ezek 18:5-13).
- C. Things not clearly condemned or required are issues of liberty. Do not exalt any. *Nehushtan!*
- D. Asa was faithful in spite of high places for his zeal and oversight (I Kgs 15:14), which you cannot presume on, if you know the truth and do not match him in zeal (Luke 12:48; 4:12)!
- E. Arminians are ignorant of their ignorance, error, and heresy ... but you are not, so any mercy or forbearance we allow them does not apply to you, for you know far better. Though they are worshipping another Jesus, they do not know that as we do (II Cor 11:3-4; Gal 5:1-4).
- F. Some make *family* greater than Christ, contrary to Christ (Matt 10:34-37; Luke 14:25-33).
- G. Wise men recognize incidental contact with the world (II Kgs 5:18-19; I Cor 5:9-10; 10:27).
- H. God made Eve to be a wife – motherhood is second and temporary (Gen 2:18; I Cor 11:9).
- I. God made women to be wives and mothers over Bible studies, conferences, and seminars.
- J. We need not fear certain words that have changed meanings ... *potluck, Sunday, pride*, etc.
- K. We need not fear our money with the all-seeing eye of Horus over a pyramid! I Cor 8:4-6!
- L. We need not fear IRS 501(c)3 rulings, as some do, for there is no effect against the gospel.
- M. What about your television? Has it claimed a privileged position in your life? *Nehushtan!*
- N. What about houses and cars? Do you understand their future is to be burned? *Nehushtan!*

Conclusion:

1. Once we know truth, we are responsible for it and for those we associate with (Lu 12:48; Gal 1:6-9).
2. Let us learn the Bible carefully ... the sense, not sound, of words ... and the proper use of each thing.
3. Let us be faithful with every aspect of the gospel, but let us not abuse any by neglect or superstition.
4. Hezekiah's descendants married a woman a few years later with the name, Nehushta (II Kings 24:8)!

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, "Christian Liberty," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/christian-liberty.pdf>.
2. The sermon outline, "The Bible Cannot Profit," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/bible-cannot-profit.pdf>.
3. The sermon outline, "John 3:16 Revisited," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/john-3-16-revisited.pdf>.
4. The sermon outline, "God Bless the IRS," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/god-bless-the-irs.pdf>.
5. The web document, "What about WWJD?" ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/bible/heresies/wwjd.pdf>.