

# THE STORY OF A SERPENT

by John Osteen

When I was in Africa a few years ago, I had the privilege of visiting in the home of two of God's great missionaries. Their names are Brother and Sister J. R. Gschwend. They have done a mighty work over the past fifty years in Africa. He tells of an experience that he had in the early days of his ministry in Africa. It is as follows:

"It was on a hot Sunday afternoon that I was riding on horseback along a narrow winding path lined by large boulders to visit a certain outstation. Suddenly my horse stopped and refused to proceed. It seemed as if he scented something strange. It was at a place where the narrow path turned at a right angle behind one of the huge boulders that had long ago rolled down from the high mountains. I alighted from my horse to see what could be the cause of my horse's strange behavior. Looking around the corner of the huge rock I saw a big snake lying in the middle of the path curled up, with its head under a loose flat stone.

Being still a newcomer to Africa, and without any experience of snakes, I was puzzled to know what to do. The gruesome stories I had heard in the past about these dangerous and poisonous reptiles were enough to inspire fear in me. Since there was no other way to proceed on my journey, I had to make a plan to remove this snake, but did not know how, since I had no stick or weapon with me.

It was a hot day and I presumed that the snake had placed its head underneath the flat stone for protection against the sun. The thought struck me that if I should cast a big stone and strike it with force upon the flat stone under which the snake's head lay, it would bruise its head and kill it. I picked up a heavy rock and moved towards the snake, almost

trembling with fear, and wondering what would happen if I did not succeed in killing it on the spot.

With all my strength I brought the big stone down upon the flat stone which broke in pieces, but to my surprise there was no movement in the snake, and I began to realize that the reptile had been dead for some time. Somebody else passing that way had bruised its head with the flat stone and left it there. I could not help but laugh over my foolishness and to think how I had been afraid of a dead snake, and on the other hand how courageous I had felt killing my first snake in Africa!

While I was still half ashamed of showing such fear and excitement over a dead snake, the still small voice of our Lord Jesus began to speak to me. "Have I not long ago bruised the serpent's head on Calvary? Why then hast thou been so afraid, shaking and trembling over an enemy already conquered?"

"Yes, Lord Jesus, you have conquered sin, death and the grave and bruised the serpent's head, and I thank you for delivering us from the fear of death and hell," I said. "I shall henceforth fear no longer, but believe Your Word and let Your love which casts out all fear rule in my heart." Yes, Another One has passed through this world. His Name is Jesus. When He came, He bruised the serpent's head. We do not have to do it again. IT IS ALREADY DONE! We do not have to fear a totally defeated enemy! We have been given the right to use the mighty Name of the Lord Jesus Christ against the enemy. I believe that the body of Christ is coming to understand their place of power and authority. You are a member of that body, so arise without fear and drive satan and demonic forces away from you! Now go forth and deliver others as Jesus has commanded you to do!

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