

**DARLING DOWNS PARISH OF THE AELC**  
**TRINITY OAKLEY, ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,**  
**BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA**

11 March 2018

Bulletin for the Fourth Sunday in Lent

**HYMNS:** 791 852 441 368

**INTROIT:** Give thanks to the LORD! For He is good. For His mercy endures for ever.

Let the people whom the LORD has redeemed proclaim that He has redeemed them from the hand of the oppressor, and has gathered them from the other lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south! They wandered around the desolate wilderness without finding a city where they could live.

They were hungry and thirsty. Their souls grew faint inside them.

When they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, He used to deliver them from their afflictions.

He led them on a straight road that they might go to a city where they could live.

Let them give thanks to the LORD for His mercy, and for His wonderful deeds to the descendants of Adam!

For He satisfied their withered souls and **filled their hungry souls with good things.**

Psalm 107:1-9

**COLLECT:** Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and although we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**READINGS:** Numbers 21:4-9 Moses and the bronze snake.

Ephesians 2:1-10 God raised us with Him.

John 3:14-21 The Son of Man must be lifted up.

**SERMON:** Numbers 21:4-9 Look and Live

<sup>4</sup> Then they journeyed from Mount Hor on the road to the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom, but the people grew impatient on the way. <sup>5</sup> The people spoke against God and against Moses: “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread or water, and we detest this wretched food.”

<sup>6</sup> Then the LORD sent poisonous snakes among the people. They bit the people, and many of the people of Israel died. <sup>7</sup> Then the people came to Moses, and said: “We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that He may take the snakes away from us!”

So Moses prayed for the people. <sup>8</sup> The LORD told Moses: “Make a fiery snake and put it on a pole! Anyone who has been bitten should look at it! Then he will live.”

<sup>9</sup> Therefore Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then, when anyone who had been bitten by a snake looked at the bronze snake, he lived.

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### Martin Luther on John 3

Today’s Gospel reading from John gives the account of Jesus speaking with Nicodemus. The following is an interesting insight by Martin Luther upon our text in his sermon on John 3:

But now let us meditate on the story. The Lord delivers an excellent sermon to Nicodemus, a Jew, who supposed that keeping the Law of Moses offered him a way to heaven and that his own ascension into heaven depended on his fasting, his praying, and his ascetic life. Now Christ interprets and unravels Moses to him correctly and says to him: “That will never do it. Your mode of ascension is not the way, but you must be born anew. Therefore listen to what I tell you. You are a Jew. I shall take your Moses and cite from him passages which you have not understood until now.” Who else would have interpreted Moses in this way before?

He says, “In Num. 21 you read that the Lord our God sent fiery serpents among the children of Israel when they murmured because the Lord did not do what they wanted Him to do.” In that country, where the heat is so intense, such serpents are called asps. When they bite a man, he swells, turns red, and his whole body becomes so feverish that he is soon past help unless the bitten member is amputated at once. For if such a serpent bites into a finger or a foot, the limb must be amputated immediately. Otherwise the fire or fever will

penetrate the whole body and affect all its parts, and death will be inevitable. In his song in Deut. 32:33 Moses sings of “the incurable venom of asps.” They are called “fiery serpents” because they inflame the body with their sting so that the affected member must be cut off at once, or death will result. These serpents were not actually fiery; but when they bit a man, his flesh grew so fiery red and feverish that he died of thirst. This thirst suggested the name *dipsades* to the Greeks. For heat induces thirst, and one reads that the angry breath of these serpents is so intensely hot that the very air becomes fiery as though it were aflame. That is why they were called “fiery serpents.” We Germans have no descriptive name for them, since these serpents are unknown in our lands, although I am told that they have been seen out there in our Speck . . .

In this story many were undoubtedly offended because it was all so unpretentious. None but the believers understood Moses’ words and recovered through their faith in the Word. But who would have had the boldness to refer this story to Christ? I would never have ventured to interpret this story as Christ Himself did when He plainly related it to Himself, saying: “This is the bronze serpent; I, however, am the Son of man. Those people were asked to look at the serpent physically, but you must look at Me spiritually and in faith. Those people were cured of bodily poisoning; but you, through Me, will be delivered from eternal poison. They recovered from a physical ailment, but I bestow eternal life on those who believe in Me.” These are very strange statements and sayings.

In this way the Lord shows us the proper method of interpreting Moses and all the prophets. He teaches us that Moses points and refers to Christ in all his stories and illustrations. His purpose is to show that Christ is the point at the centre of a circle, with all eyes inside the circle focused on Him. Whoever turns his eyes on Him finds his proper place in the circle of which Christ is the centre. All the stories of Holy Writ, if viewed aright, point to Christ. (AE 22:337–39)

*Welcome to all with us today! May God bless our worship of Him by His serving of us!*

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Weekly sermons and bulletins are available at [www.aelc.org.au](http://www.aelc.org.au).

**Please notify pastor of anyone who is unwell or in need of a visit.**

## COMING SERVICES

14 March 5 <sup>th</sup> mid-week Lenten Service	18 March 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent	21 March 6 <sup>th</sup> mid-week Lenten Service
7.30pm GRN Vespers	8.30am OAK HC 8.30am TMBALR 9.30am AUB LR 10.00am GRN HC	7.30pm OAK Vespers
<b>Wednesday, 14 March</b>		
READINGS: Hebrews 13:10-16; John 18:28-32, Luke 23:2, John 18:33-38, Mark 15:3-5, Luke 23:4, Luke 23:5-16, Matthew 27:15-16, Mark 15:7, Matthew 27:17-18, Mark 15:11, Matthew 27:21, Luke 23:18, Matthew 27:19, Luke 23:20, Mark 15:12-13, Luke 23:22, Mark 15:14, John 19:1, Mark 15:16-19, John 19:4-15, Matthew 27:24-25, Mark 15:15, Matthew 27:31.		
HYMNS: 71 356 66 48 v.3		
<b>Sunday, 18 March</b>		
READINGS: Jeremiah 31:31-34;	Hebrews 5:1-10;	Mark 10:32-45
HYMNS: 755 62 (169 170) 349		

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wednesday, 13 March, 7.30pm. Men's Fellowship at Oakey. Opening devotion: Barry.