

## The Burden We Used To Bear Isn't The Burden We Need To Bear

**Isaiah 46:1 (KJV)** Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast.

At first, the gods were small, handheld statues that could easily be hidden in clothing. In Genesis 31:34, for example, we know that Rachel had taken her father's idols and hidden them in the saddle of her camel.

Over time, however, the gods began to get bigger and bigger. Before long, the statues were so large that the people couldn't carry them, so they put them on the backs of animals.

**Isaiah 46:2 (KJV)** They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.

The animals couldn't carry them either. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, a golden Buddha was made out of 11,000 pounds of gold. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Thai king ordered it covered in plaster so that the Burmese invaders wouldn't steal it. But they forgot about it. In the 1950's, some monks were trying to move this worthless plaster Buddha and accidentally dropped it into some mud. The next morning, they found that some of the plaster had dissolved.

Left to our devices, humans make gods that are huge and need to be carried around. However, they don't help us; they burden us and make us grow weary with their weight.

**Isaiah 46:3-4 (KJV)**

**3** Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: **4** And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.

Our God isn't one that needs us to carry Him. In fact, He carries us. He treats us as though we are the god.

One of the things that's different about Christianity is that the weak don't exist to serve the strong. Rather it's the strong that are required to serve the weak. This structure begins at the top, where God carries us rather than us carrying Him.

**Isaiah 53:4-6 (KJV)**

**4** Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. **5** But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. **6** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

God carries us. He carries our sickness. He carries our sorrows. He carries our sins. The story talks about the burden of the statues as they were carried on the backs of the men, but those burdens were not just heavy statues, but also of our sins and diseases. We tried to carry our sins on our own backs, but they were too heavy. We tried to fight our diseases on our own, but we couldn't.

When the sins became too great, we turned to animals. The animal sacrifice was an attempt to put the burden of our sins onto the backs of the animals. When the only payment that is proper for a sin is death, we couldn't bear that burden on our own. We cried out to God and He allowed animals to be put to death in our place. But when we no longer had to bear the weight of our own sins, the sins became greater. More and more animals were required for sacrifice. Eventually not even the animals were able to bear the weight of the sins that we had created.

Jesus explains to us what happened in the parable of the Good Samaritan:

**Luke 10:30 (KJV)** And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

In this story, we're the man on the side of the road. We've been beaten up by sin. This sin has taken everything that we have and has left us on the side of the road for dead.

Sin will beat you up and leave you for dead. It will take everything that you have and leave you with nothing.

**Luke 10:31 (KJV)** And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

The Priest represents the prophets; the word of God in third person. God gave His word to the prophets and they were responsible for delivering it to the people. Priests entered the Holy of Holies and brought back to the people the Word of God.

But the priests were not permitted to touch a dead body. The Law of Moses forbids a priest from touching or even coming near a dead body. The high priest was not permitted to attend the funeral of his own family while serving in the temple.

When the priest passed by the man on the road, he was obeying the Law of Moses. But the Law didn't help the man. Ultimately, the job of the priest is to help God's people, but the Law prevented him from helping a man who was half dead. The role of the Priest didn't help people escape from their sin.

**Luke 10:32 (KJV)** And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

Just like the Priest, the Levite passed by the man. The Levite represents the Law of God. Just like the priest, the Levite had to pass by the man in need. The Law had to be kept Holy, which meant that there had to be a separation of the Law from the sins of man. This means that the Law doesn't help the sinner.

**Luke 10:33-34 (KJV)**

**33** But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, **34** And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

Jesus is the Samaritan. Jesus is the man who takes compassion on the man and pours in oil and wine. Now the wine represents the blood of Jesus that's shed for

our sins. The oil represents the Holy Ghost. Together, they anoint the wounds that have been caused by sin and start the healing process.

Then Jesus takes the man and carries him on His own body. He picks up the man and places him on the beast. Both the Samaritan and the beast are the body of Jesus. Just like how our sins were carried on our bodies and then carried by the sacrifice of animals, so the man wounded by sin is carried by Jesus.

But the oil and the wine don't entirely heal the man. Rather, the Samaritan takes the man to the inn. The inn is the church. Jesus anoints the man and begins the healing process, but He leaves him with the church.

As the church, it's our job to care for the wounded souls that Jesus brings to us. When they first come to the church, they're weak from their ordeal with sin. We must help them recover. As they begin to gain strength in the Lord, they can begin to help in the church. They don't take on the role as Pastor the first day, but they begin to take on larger roles. We can even begin to help care for the others that Jesus continues to bring to the door of the church.

**Luke 10:35 (KJV) And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.**

Jesus gives two pence to the host of the inn. This is the pastor of the church. To the Pastor is given the instruction to take care of the wounded man. But hotels have many people in them. There are people in charge of the front desk; people in charge of the restaurant; people in charge of housekeeping. Under each of those people are others who do that work. Many people each having a specific job in the inn.

Likewise, there are many people and departments in the church. There are those who care for the children, care for the sick, and clean the restrooms. Each person has a specific job they do for the church.

**“Whatever though spendest more...”**

Jesus assumes that working in the church is going to cost you something. He's given you a down payment, but the cost of caring for the lost and dying world is going to cost us something as well. Working in the church is going to cost us something of our own. It may cost us time, money, pride; whatever it is, it's going to cost us something.

If you're in church, be aware that someone gave up something so that you could be saved. Someone has paid for you and you must pay for someone else. But we also know that Jesus said that He will come again. He will return to the inn; to the church. He will come to us and reimburse us for whatever we have paid. We know that others will be paid for what they lost to make us strong. We will be paid for what we must give up to help others.

Jesus doesn't ask us if we're willing to give up something to help others. Rather, we're ordered to do so. It's the burden we bear that replaces the burden of our sin. Our sins were the burden that held us down, but the obligation of the church is the burden that lifts others up.

**Matthew 11:28-30 (KJV)**

**28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

As you come to the church, the Lord asks that we take the time to rest in the church and allow the damage that sin has done to us to heal. But eventually we should take on the burden of the Lord to help with others that he brings to us.