

## 4. THE BRASS SERPENT ON A POLE (NM 21:4-9). AN EXEGETICAL STUDY IN A CHRISTOLOGICAL KEY

### Abstract

The paper proposes a Christological reading of the brass serpent episode in Numbers 21:4-9 in an anastasic perspective. The story records another moment of discontent in Israel regarding their “worthless” food, discontent which determines a revolt against Moses and, by him, against God Himself. This revolt will call for divine wrath, but God will also be the Healer of His own people (Ex 15:25), through the brass serpent erected by Moses in the desert. The paper focuses on the significance of this brass serpent in the light of John 3:14, trying to distinguish the nuances of patristic Christological interpretation of the episode.



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The human being lets herself, or so it would seem, dominated constantly by a tendency to emphasize the negative side of an event, of a person, of a thing, no matter what this would be. Such an attitude does not build, but dig, slowly but surely, to the foundation of the being, wasting it. That is why I chose this time a theme that offers on the one hand the image of a general pessimistic attitude, and on the other hand it reinforces the image of our faith in God's care and mercy towards us. Therefore, the episode I intend to approach is part of a series of moments that present a lack of trust manifested by the Jewish people towards Moses and, by him, towards God Himself, a series that started right after the exit from Egypt by the by the discontent which was followed closely by the receiving of the manna (Ex 16:2-3). Firstly, I would remark on the fact that the repeated state of revolt and lack of measure of the people, their continuous tendency to rise against Moses, especially on the theme of the frugal food, launches a

series of moments with a Christological prefigurative character: sweetening the waters of Mara (Ex 15:23-25), manna (Ex 16:3-35), water from the rock (Ex 17:1-7, Num 20:2-11) and the episode of the brass serpent (Ex 21:4-9). The patristic interpretation of this last fragment is unanimously Christologic (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses, Homily on the Song of Songs*; St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Gospel of John, Glaphyra to Numbers*; St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses*; St. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*; St. Ephrem the Syrian, *Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron*, St. John Damascene, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*; St. Macarius of Egypt, *Spiritual Homilies*; St. Isaiah the Anachorite, *29 Texts*; St. Basil the Great, *Letters*; St. Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms*), but the nuances are different, as we will observe during the course of this study. Before we take a look at these interpretations, I consider important to make an incursion in the targumic tradition. This can reveal to us inedited meanings of the biblical text; from which we may easily deduct the Jewish perspective on the event.

### **The targumic tradition**

A first addition that we can remark is the mentioning of a direct intervention of God through His voice – כֹּל כֹּל (bat-kol)/ כֹּל כֹּל (kol Yahweh) –, that reminds the people of the serpent from genesis, that God Himself cursed to eat dust all the days of his life (Gn 3:14) and which, despite of this situation, did not have the courage to ever rebel against God. By contrast with this unreasoning being which is considered to be one of the most unimportant beings, man, who is above all creation, is asked for a complete faith and dedication to the True God. However, he is the one who rebels against God and against His providence, a situation in which God, through the memento of the serpent, almost offers him a model of assuming the divine judgement and decision: “Come, all men, and see all the benefits which I have done to the people whom I brought up free out of Mizraim. I made manna come down for them from heaven, yet now turn they and murmur against Me. Yet, behold, the serpent, whom, in the days of the beginning of the world, I doomed to have dust for his food, hath not murmured against me: but My people are murmuring about their food” (*Targum of Palestine*).

Hence, the discontent of the people of Israel enkindles the divine wrath, and the punishment came through the serpents that did not rebelled against God, that is why they are called to bite the unfaithful and the discontent: “Now shall the serpents who have not complained of their food come and bite the people who complain. Therefore did the Word of the Lord send the basilisk serpents, and they bit the people, and a great

multitude of the people of Israel died" (*Targum of Palestine*). Since they were so harshly punished, the Jewish assume their sin and in the same time ask Moses to pray to the Lord for them: "And the people came to Mosheh, and said: We have sinned, in thinking and speaking against the glory of the Lord's Shekinah, and in contending with thee. Pray before the Lord to remove the plague of serpents from us. And Mosheh prayed for the people" (*Targum of Palestine*). Being aware of the sin, sincere repentance for it and the prayer for forgiveness is the first step in man's return to God. I would like to observe here one last thing that is a specific expression of the targum: "we have sinned against the glory of the Lord's Shekinah" (Abelson 2006, 77-93).

The targumic discourse offers a new perspective on the manner of healing of the terrible plague. While the biblical text presents a sole condition of healing a look to the serpent on the pole: *...whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live* (Nm 21:9), the Targum of Palestine introduces here a remarkable element: the person bit by serpent lived not only by looking at the brass serpent, but also by *directing his heart to the name* (Sf. Dionisie Areopagitul 1993, 45-68; Jacob 1955, 33-50; Chirilă 2003, 87-113) *of the Word of the Lord*: "And the Lord said to Mosheh, Make thee a serpent of brass, and set it upon a place aloft; and it shall be that when a serpent hath bitten any one, if he behold it, then shall he live, if his heart be directed to the Name of the Word of the Lord" (*Targum of Palestine*).

The Jerusalem Targum is even more interesting when it mentions the fact that the one bit by serpent had to turn his face to God in prayer to be healed ("...his face was uplifted in prayer to his Father who is in heaven" (*Targum of Palestine*). The paraphrasing puts an emphasis on the idea that healing can come only from God. It is what prophet Hosea will express clearly and I hereby introduce the passage with an obvious anastasic message: Come, let us return to the Lord. *He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence*" (Hos 6:1-2). This fragment is essential for the manner in which I understand the episode of the brass serpent, and I would even say that it can be regarded as a synthesis of the entire development I intend to make. This despite of the fact that the patristic Tradition, as well as the new biblical commentaries do not emphasize especially the anastasic dimension of the event, for there is not a consensus regarding the possibility of its interpretation in the light of the Cross (*crux interpretum*) nor is there an explicit anastasic discourse in the Old Testament (Chirilă 1999, 160). However, we will see, in the thinking of the Fathers, that the mount

of the brass serpent is a prefiguration of the Crucifixion of Christ, but this Crucifixion does not symbolize other than the victory over death through death. Thus, naturally, the episode is a prefiguration of the Resurrection of our Lord and of our resurrection. We will see, by analyzing several exegetical fragments, that the Fathers speak simultaneously of the healing and the life of the body that the brass serpent brought to Israel, but they also speak of the healing and life of the soul brought by Christ Himself through His sacrifice on the Cross, a healing that is synonymous to a real resurrection of the human being.

### **A Christian reading**

Hence, the passage we focus on, which is not very large, registers the last episode of discontent of the people that occurs in the book of *Numbers*, but it is one of the most severe. If the people murmured often against Moses and even against Aaron, still there are few moments when they rebel against God Himself (Olson 1996, 135). Some even consider that, for the Jewish tradition, this was the last and the most serious apostasy of Israel while he wandered through the desert (Riggans 2001, 157). The content of the passage may be structured as follows: (1) historical frame (v. 4a); (2) the sin of the people (vv. 4b-5); (3) the judgement of the Lord (v. 6); (4) the answer of the people (v. 7a); (5) Moses' prayer (v. 7b); (6) God's answer to His righteous – healing (vv. 8-9) (Cole 2001, 346). I decided to structure my study using as subtitles the verses of the fragment, because this allows me a brief and clear presentation of the results of a modest approach that I intend to fill out subsequently. Verse 8, however, will have a privileged status in the economy of this paper because of its prefigurative Christological character.

### ***We detest this miserable food (21:5)***

The main cause for which the people “grew impatient” (21:4) was, without a doubt, the frugally meals they had since they left Egypt. Now, they saw Egypt as a land of earthly pleasures. How many times do the Jewish remember nostalgically of the Egyptian pots of meat (Ex 16:3; Nm 11:4,18), that their souls dwelled on for sure?! (Chirilă 2003, 93) But the people was called to find from now on his pleasure in the Lord (Is 58:14). In the Hebrew text (BHS) we read בָּלֶחֶם הַקֶּלֶקֶל, (*balehem haqloqel*) and the synodal edition chose to translate the expression with “miserable food”. Indeed, the word הַקֶּלֶקֶל (*haqloqel*) is based on a root that can be translated with *simple, unsatisfying* (Harris 1980, 800) (2 Sam 19:44; Is 8:23; 23:9; Ez 22:7) (Budd 2002, 234). In fact, it seems that any calumnious word referring to the manna could have been used as long

as it could express the inconsistency of such a diet (Budd 2002, 234), lacking a real nutritional value and which did nothing else but stay their hunger (Clarke 1999). However, this food was not really miserable, but was considered to be so because the people did not look to stay their hunger, but to satisfy their appetency: “Again the pleasures of the table enslaved them, and their desires led them to gluttony. Although they lacked none of the necessities of life, disorderly youths were dreaming of the Egyptian plenty. They were disciplined by very severe scourges: Serpents within the encampment as they bit them injected deadly poison in them” (Sf. Grigorie de Nyssa 1982, 36).

The gift of manna supplies food in an extreme situation, it should have been received by the chosen people as a great blessing from God, Who feeds His people with “bread from heaven” (Ex 16:4). On the one hand, the episode is a testimony of the divine providence, on the other hand, it prefigures the real bread from heaven “that gives life to the world” (Jn 6:33), Christ – “the bread of life” – that God the Father gives to the world (Jn 6:32). Manna as the Eucharistic prefiguration feeds the soul and strengthens the body, but does not incite and it does not satisfy desire, it is the reason for which the Israelites disregard it, since they were still very fond of the worldly pleasures (Ex 16:3; Nm 21:5). And the punishment for the correction of the people was not late in coming, and it was sent by God so that “those who were held by earthly cares, and the worship of idols, and the pleasures of Satan, and all manner of ungodliness, might by this means to some extent look upward to things above, and gaining a respite from things below, might give heed to higher things; and thus advancing, might learn to know that there is a Most Highest surpassing all the creation” (Sf. Macarie Egipteanul 1992, 138).

### ***The Lord sent venomous serpents among them (21:6)***

The interpretations offered by the biblical commentaries to these “venomous snakes” are multiple, and they start from the Hebrew original, where we identify the expression הַנְּחָשִׁים הַשֵּׂרָפִים (*hanehashim haserafim*). The first word is a form of articulated plural of the noun נָחָשׁ (*nahash*) (TWOT 1980, 571), a polysemantic noun for which it is hard to identify the precise meaning, here and in Genesis 3 (Clarke 1999). An interesting detail is the flagrant closeness between the words “serpent” (נָחָשׁ – *nahash*) (TWOT 1980, 571), “spell” (שִׁבְחָה – *nahash*) (TWOT 1980, 572) and brass (נְחֹשֶׁת – *nahosheth*) (TWOT 1980, 572), which determined some of the supporters of a critical school to affirm the etiological character of this fragment (Budd 2002, 233; Gray 1903, 274-5; Riggans 2001, 274; Joines 1968: 245-56).

The second word of the expression, הַשֵּׂרָפִים (*haserafim*) derives from the root שָׂרַף (*saraf*) which means *to burn* (TWOT 1980, 856-7), but the words deriving from this root may be translated with *serpents*, *seraphs*. A possible interpretation would be that the introduction of a word deriving from the root *saraf*, expresses the feeling of terrible burn produced in the body by the bite of a reptile (Gray 1903, 277). But, as we may see in Isaiah 6:2-6, the seraphs are a category of angels, servants that stay around the throne of the Lord: *Above him were seraphim... And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory!"* (Is 6:2-3). What could be the connection between these servants of the Lord and the serpents sent among the people? It was said that the fragment that we study is not about reptiles, but about the messengers/servants of the Lord: who, if in Isaiah 6 they have a doxological service, in Numbers 21 their service is to fulfill the divine punishment over the people. To this respect we may understand the statement of the psalmist: *He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire His servants* (Ps 104:4) (Riggans 2001, 157). Their intervention is followed right after by the admittance of the sin and the return to God in repentance (v. 7), the people asking Moses to pray for them before the Lord: "We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us. So Moses prayed for the people" (Nm 21:7). Last, but not least. In a spiritual perspective, the reptiles that the biblical text speaks of are understood as synonymous to the passionate movements of the soul: "by beasts I mean desires..." (Sf. Grigorie de Nyssa 1982, 97-8).

The episode is also interpreted in relation to the sin of our proto-parents, to whom the people of Israel resembled and suffered the same as them through the work of the serpents: "For YHWH engaged every kind of viper to bite them so they died. Since Eve transgressed by means of the viper, he reckoned he might convince them that through their transgression they too could be delivered from the spasms of death" (Barnaba 1979, 129). The punishment that came of the Israelites for these sinful acts is the one that determines them, as I have already mentioned, to become aware of their sin and to return to God in prayer. Moses' intervention for the forgiveness of the people receives an answer from God, Who reveals to him the possibility of salvation/healing.

***Make a brass serpent and put it on a pole... anyone who is bitten can look at it and live (21:8)***

This is the main point of the fragment, the one that enjoyed a great deal of attention in the patristic literature; I will linger on this verse premeditated. Its importance



is determined by its prefigurative Christological character, expressed explicitly by our Savior in John 3:14-15: “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in Him.” The patristic discourse is built on this fundamental idea, but with emphasis on various aspects, which I intend to present here briefly (Sf. Grigorie de Nyssa 1982, 127).

### ***Representation of the mystery of Incarnation***

We find this singular interpretation in the commentary of St. Cyril of Alexandria to the Gospel of John (Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei 2000, 123). There are a few elements that deserve special attention. Within the dialogue between Jesus Christ and Nicodemus (Jn 3:1-11), Saint Cyril observes that Christ invokes several moments from the Old Testament that are representations of high truths, hard to understand by the human mind. It is the reason for which Christ “His Word of teaching does not run forth into the boundless and supernatural [...] knowing that he could by leadings by means of figures scarce arrive at knowledge of the truth, rather than by the exactitude of spiritual inspirations” (Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei 2000, 123-4). The Savior’s habit to use examples from the Old Testament to express high spiritual realities is, in St. Cyril’s perspective, also a confirmation of the necessity and benefit that the search of history brings, according to Christ’s advice: *Study the Scriptures [...] these are the very Scriptures that testify about Me* (Jn 5:39). Then, coming back to the biblical episode, Saint Cyril states that healing was determined by two elements that is by looking at the one lifted up together with faith. He says trenchantly: “So much for the history. But it represents in act as it were in a type, the whole Mystery of the Incarnation” (Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei 2000, 124), proving through this type of affirmation, that he distinguishes between the multiple meanings/levels of the biblical text. This is the only patristic fragment that interprets in detail the episode as a prefiguration of the Incarnation, associating the serpent to the sin that brings perdition of men and identifying in it the cause for the Incarnation of the Son of God: “For the serpent signifies the bitter and manslaying sin, which was devouring the whole race upon the earth, manifoldly biting the soul of man, and infusing the varied poison of wickedness. And no otherwise could we escape it thus conquering us, save by the succor alone which is from heaven. The Word of God then was made *in the likeness of sinful flesh*, that He might *condemn sin in the flesh*, as it is written (Rom 8:3) and to those who gaze on Him with more steadfast faith, or by search into the Divine doctrines, might become the Giver of unending salvation.” (Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei 2000, 124).

***Image of the redeeming Passion on the Cross***

The most frequent interpretation of the lifting of the brass serpent sees in this episode the prefiguration of the passions through which the Son of God brought salvation to the fallen human being: "The serpent on the standard is a type of the passion of salvation accomplished by means of the cross, wherefore they who even looked thereon were preserved" (Sf. Vasile cel Mare 1988, 46). Jesus Christ is the first to interpret this episode as an image of His passion in John 3:14: "...the voice of the Lord teaches clearly that the serpent lifted up in the desert is a symbol of the mystery of the cross (Jn 3:14)" (Sf. Grigorie de Nyssa 1982, 127). By the sacrifice of the Lord, the fallen human being is redeemed from death, just as the people was redeemed from venomous snakes "...through the serpent lifted up, which was the medicine for the death bearing bites..." and which prefigured "*the economy accomplished for us on the Cross*" (Sf. Grigorie de Nyssa 1982, 115).

The bites of the venomous serpents are understood as bites of the desires, as consequences of the reckless passions, and the healing of these passions is only possible if the man directs his sight towards the Passion of Jesus Christ, because "the person who looks to the One lifted up on the wood rejects passion, diluting the poison with the fear of the commandment as with a medicine. For the serpent lifted up in the desert is *a symbol of the mystery of the Cross...*" (Sf. Grigorie de Nyssa 1982, 97-8). If the Jewish people was healed through the faith into the brass serpent, the faith into the Crucified Christ is self-healing: "This was the figure which Moses completed by fixing the serpent to a cross, that whoever had been bitten by the living serpent, and looked to the brazen serpent, might be saved by believing. Does then the brazen serpent save when crucified, and shall not the Son of God incarnate save when crucified also?" (Sf. Chiril al Ierusalimului 2003, 204).

***Sign of salvation***

The episode is wonderfully synthesized in the Book of Wisdom of Solomon, where said about the serpent lifted by Moses that it is *συμβολον σωτηριας* (see also Heb.), *sign of salvation*: "For when the horrible fierceness of beasts came upon these, and they perished with the stings of crooked serpents, thy wrath endured not for ever; But they were troubled for a small season, that they might be admonished, having a sign of salvation, to put them in remembrance of the commandment of thy law. For he that turned himself toward it was not saved by the thing that he saw, but by thee, that art the Saviour of all (Sol 16:5-7).



The healing power did not come from the serpent especially that the Jewish had already received the interdiction to make any graven image or an image in the form of anything created (Ex 20:4). For that matter, the discourse of the Old Testament presents God as the sole healer, which He Himself acknowledges: *I am the Lord, who heals you* (Ex 15:26). In my opinion, in this healing we find the anastasic dimension of the episode, because healing comes from the One who “trampled down death by death, giving the world eternal life” (Olson 1996, 135). Hence, God Himself works through the image of the serpent to heal His people, but, the important thing is the mystery preached to the people through this healing: “Was it not God [...] who caused the brazen serpent to be made by Moses in the wilderness, and set it up for a sign by which those bitten by serpents were saved? [...], *by this He proclaimed the mystery*, by which He declared that He would break the power of the serpent...” (Sf. Iustin Martirul și Filozoful 1997, 269). Christ’s victory over the serpent as “spokesperson” of evil is complete, He will crush his head (which is synonymous for a complete defeat), a truth announced in the Proto-gospel (Gn 3:15). That is why the episode is also seen as a confirmation of Christ’s complete victory: “...it seems that the type and sign, which was erected to counteract the serpents which bit Israel, was indeed for the salvation of those who believe that death was declared to come thereafter on the serpent through Him that would be crucified” (Sf. Iustin Martirul și Filozoful 1997, 269).

Lifting of the brass serpent was not perceived as a sign of salvation by all the people, which is explained by Saint Basil the Great, showing that in order to have such a perception it is necessary to have a spiritual thinking, the only one that can lift a person to another level of understanding, surpassing the strict plane of history: “Moses, the Scripture says, made a serpent and put it on a sign that is on a cross. Here we have a sign that shows us something unforeseen and invisible: it was seen by the Jewish, but only those with acute minds understood it” (Sf. Vasile cel Mare 1988, 536). Hence, if the look at the brass serpent brought physical life to the Jewish, only those who direct their look towards the crucified Christ will have spiritual life: “Just as those who looked with their physical eyes to the sign lifted by Moses on the cross lived with their bodies, so do those who look with their spiritual eyes to the body of Christ crucified and believe in Him will live (with their souls)” (Commentary on Tatian’s Diatessaron 16.15).

### ***The serpent – image of Christ***

To what respect can the serpent be a prefiguration of Christ is, in the text of the Old Testament, it is the image of the enemy (Gn 3:15) and the origin of sin? Firstly,

“Christ is a serpent, as the one who took the resemblance of sin, when He became human” (Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei 1992). Hence, the assumption of a mortal body is considered to be the assumption of a sinful nature. The serpent is the image of Christ because *Christ became sin for us*, it is just another way of expressing the fallen human nature: “He took the image of the serpent for us, or He became sin for us, once the father of sin and the sin born from him is represented by the serpent. Christ took the image of the serpent, for He took our nature that had become sinful...” (Cuv. Isaia Pustnicul 1991). However, The Holy Fathers mention the fact that Christ took this entire nature but “without the sin, hence without the venom of the serpent. And by being a serpent that is not poisonous, even a serpent that, because of the lack of sin, worked the divine power through our nature, the one that looked like a serpent, he ate and destroyed with His greater power the poisonous serpents, defeating the devil, the origin of poison, and overwhelming the poison of sin within people...” (Cuv. Isaia Pustnicul 1991, 210).

Secondly, the serpent is the enemy of man, and it is also the one that makes man an enemy of God, and Jesus Christ assumes this image of the serpent, but without “the evil thought, without poison, or wickedness, he does not bow, he does not breathe, he doesn’t have the breath of enemy”, until the moment when he “*stifles the poison*, that Adam received from the mouth of the serpent and the nature, that became against nature, will return to the natural existence” (Cuv. Isaia Pustnicul 1991, 210). It is a temporary healing assumption of the human nature, and the healing comes, for Israel, through the image of a *dead serpent*, an idea that the patristic discourse insists upon greatly.

How can a dead serpent bring healing? (Joines 1968: 251) “The serpent lifted in triumph on a tree as though it were dead, the tree bringing salvation to those who in faith saw their enemy dead, just as Christ was nailed to the tree in the flesh of sin which yet knew no sin” (Sf. Ioan Damaschin 2004, 141). The dead serpent is, in the opinion of Saint Macarius the Egyptian, the very body of Christ, who while crucified will heal the soul enveloped in passions: “What, however, is the dead serpent? The dead serpent overcame the live ones. Thus it is *a figure of the body of the Lord*. The body which He took of the ever Virgin Mary, He offered it up upon the cross, and hung it there, and fastened it upon the tree; and the dead body overcame and slew the live serpent creeping in the heart...” (Sf. Macarie Egipteanul 1992, 138). The body of Christ crucified brings healing because “In the dead body is life. Here is redemption; here is light. Here the Lord comes to death, and discourses with him, and bids him bring the souls out of hell and death, and give them back to Him” (Sf. Macarie Egipteanul 1992, 138). In the same idea, Augustine asks himself: “What is it to be made whole of a serpent by looking upon

a serpent? It is to be made whole of death by believing in one dead” (St. Augustin 1997, 47) and identifies the latter with Christ Himself Who “trampled death by death”.

On the other side of these presentations we find the discourse of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus who considers that the serpent is not at all the image of Christ (Clarke 1990), but a contrasting image: by looking at the serpent one receives healing precisely because the serpent and the evil that it represents is killed, it is defeated by the work of Christ the Life Giver.

### Conclusions

A descending reading of the text of the Old Testament offers a great liberty of interpretation, it allows the association of several moments mentioned by the Old Testament with truths revealed only in the New Testament. From this perspective, the key of the interpretation is the Christological one. The Old Testament prepares the coming of Christ and, to a certain extent, it confirms his Messianic identity, He Himself interprets several episodes as referring to Him. It is also the case of the episode I approached (Nm 21:4-9). For a Christian reading, the event announces the work of salvation achieved, partially, on the Cross from Golgotha. Obviously, this interpretation goes beyond the strictly literal, historical meaning of the text, as the patristic discourse has proved. But, maybe more surprising is the targumic tradition, partly because of the fact that it is less known. And in the bibliographical area we saw that the strictly literal interpretation of the text is surpassed. I think it is important, and I would like to emphasize here, the fact that the possibility of a magical interpretation of the episode is canceled testifying explicitly the necessity of prayer in order to obtain healing.

My approach only wishes to be a starting point for a more profound research of the text, offering the introduction into a varied bibliographical area, which includes the patristic tradition, the Judaic tradition and the modern and contemporary Christian exegesis. I would conclude, in this phase of the research, that the episode is, according to the interpretation of the gospel (Jn 3:14), a prefiguration of the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. But this annunciation is made in the perspective of the Resurrection, through which the Lord will offer healing to the human nature and eternal life to all those who will turn their faces and their hearts in prayer towards the Lord, Healer – Raphael.

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