

Destroying National Relics

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The decision to keep or remove a national relic is not a new discussion. Presently, our country is divided over what to do with the Confederate flag. But, did you know that a similar situation is actually recorded in the Bible? Read on...

As you may remember, while wandering in the wilderness, the children of Israel murmured, complained, and spoke against God. In response, God sent poisonous serpents among them as a form of discipline (Numbers 21:4). Israel quickly confessed their sin and pleaded with Moses to make intercession with God on their behalf. Moses did intercede for the people and God instructed him to make a brazen serpent, set it on a pole, and those who would look at this brazen serpent would be healed (Numbers 21:8).

Fast forward approximately 600 years and we are now in the days of King Hezekiah while he is trying to reform Israel. Hezekiah had been tearing down the altars to pagan gods, and then he commanded the unthinkable. He commanded that the brazen serpent that Moses made in the wilderness be destroyed (2 Kings 18:4).

How could he command such a thing? Did he not know the history and significance of this object? This brazen serpent was a national relic. In terms of comparison, it has been preserved twice as long as our "Declaration of Independence."

Hezekiah hadn't lost his mind, rather he took note of the fact that the people had begun worshiping this object. It had become an idol, so he called it "Nehushtan" which means, "a thing of brass." In other words, Hezekiah justified his decision to destroy it by reminding the people that they had allowed this object (merely a thing of brass) to come between them and God, so he destroyed it.

Question: Do you have any "Nehushtans" in your life? Have you allowed anything to come between you and your God? Jobs are good, but not if they rival your devotion to God. Sports are good, but not if you are more faithful to them than to God? You get the idea. Maybe it's time we come to the realization to which Hezekiah came. Some things may need to be seen for what they are (e.g. just a thing of brass) and not be allowed to get between us and what is of real value. Give us some thought.

By Steve Higginbotham, 2015. Permission is granted to copy these articles.