



CHAYAT HASHAVUA: SNAKE

CAN ANYONE TEACH US THE HEBREW NAME FOR THE SNAKE?

- It's *nakhash*, from the root נחש.
- The basic meaning of the Hebrew word *nakhash* is to be able to tell what's going to happen in the future.

TO BE ABLE TO TELL THE FUTURE IS A WAY OF SAYING THAT THE SNAKE IS VERY CLEVER.

- Does anyone remember how a snake was very clever with Eve, the first woman, in the Garden of Eden? (It talked her into eating fruit from the tree that God had forbidden to her and Adam.)
- Does anyone know how the snake talked her into doing the wrong thing?
- He knew she was tempted to eat the fruit because it looked so delicious, so he told her that nothing bad would happen if she did it?
- Have you ever been tempted to do something you knew was wrong, and someone else told you that nothing bad would happen if you did it?

BUT IT ISN'T TRUE—BAD THINGS DO HAPPEN WHEN WE DO THE WRONG THING.

- Not only did bad things happen to Eve and Adam—they could no longer live in the Garden of Eden where life was beautiful—but also to the snake.
- That snake and every snake that came after it was to be punished.
- The punishment was that most people would not like them and make friends with them, as we do with other animals.
- Who here likes snakes or has had a snake for a pet?
- What do you like or dislike about them?

IF YOU LIKE SNAKES A LOT, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE IDEA OF WORSHIPPING THEM?

- There was a time, almost three thousand years ago, when Jews were burning incense—a form of worship—to a copper snake that Moses had made.
- This was happening after the people had entered into the land of Israel but before they all began to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem.
- At that time, people would go up on high places and make sacrifices, and sometimes they would worship idols.

- The king then, Hezekiah was his name, stopped the people from worshipping idols.

IT'S TIME FOR THE SNAKE QUIZ!

- What kind of animal is a snake? (Reptile.)
- What are some of its closest reptilian “cousins”? (Lizards, turtles, and crocodiles.)
- What does it mean that snakes are cold-blooded? (They don't rely on food for the energy to maintain their body heat.)
- What's unusual about a snake's eating habits? (They consume their prey whole instead of biting off small pieces.)
- How big an animal can a snake eat whole? (The African rock python, have been observed eating animals as large as an antelope or a small cow!)
- How many different kinds of snakes exist in the world? (About 2500 species.)
- How short and the shortest and long are the longest snakes? (Five inches and 33 feet.)

IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE IN AN AREA WHERE THERE ARE SNAKES, WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF?

- Wear high boots and heavy, long pants, like jeans.
- Carry and know how to use a snake-bite kit.
- Look ahead for snakes where you're walking.
- Keep a safe distance from a snake unless you know for sure that it's not poisonous.

THERE'S A PROVERB—A WISE OLD SAYING—THAT SAYS: “NO ONE CAN LIVE WITH A SNAKE IN THE SAME BASKET.”

- What do you think that means?
- How does it apply to us?



Gather the People

© 2003-2022 Moshe ben Asher & Khulda Bat Sarah