

Katy First Ward Spiritual Message # 44

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You knew what I was when you picked me up

By Elder Robert B. Harbertson
Of the Second Quorum of the Seventy

Let me conclude with an old Indian legend. Many years ago, Indian youths would go away in solitude to prepare for manhood. One such youth hiked into a beautiful valley. There he fasted, and on the third day he decided to test himself against the mountain. He put on his buffalo-hide shirt, threw his blanket over his shoulders, and set off to climb the peak.

When he reached the top, he could see forever, and his heart swelled with joy. Then he heard a rustle at his feet. Looking down, he saw a snake. Before he could move, the snake spoke: “I am about to die. It is too cold for me up here, and I am freezing. There is no food, and I am starving. Put me under your shirt and take me down to the valley.”

“Oh, no,” said the youth. “I know your kind. You are a rattlesnake. If I pick you up, you will bite me, and I will die.”

“Not so,” said the snake. “I will treat you differently. If you do this for me, you will be special. I will not harm you.”

The youth withstood for a while, but this was a very persuasive snake with beautiful markings. At last the youth tucked it under his shirt and carried it down to the valley. There he laid it gently on the grass. Suddenly, the snake coiled, rattled, and struck, biting him on the leg.

“But you promised—” cried the youth.

“You knew what I was when you picked me up,” said the snake as it slithered away.

As a worthy bearer of the Aaronic Priesthood, you will always be warned when danger is near. The Lord cannot make your decisions for you, but he will always allow you to be aware of what is right when a decision or action is about to be made. Don’t allow yourself to ever believe that you are “different” in that you can participate in unrighteous activities—even just once—and not be hurt. Remember, “you knew what I was when you picked me up.”

[Talk on the Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood - lds.org](https://www.lds.org/study/ensign/1989/07/restoration-of-the-aaronic-priesthood?lang=eng)
("Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood," Ensign, July 1989, 77).

<https://www.lds.org/study/ensign/1989/07/restoration-of-the-aaronic-priesthood?lang=eng>

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### **Your Greatest Challenge - By - Gordon B. Hinckley**

I have never forgotten a story that Elder Robert Harbertson told at this Tabernacle pulpit. He spoke of an Indian boy who climbed a high mountain. It was cold up there. At his feet was a snake, a rattlesnake. The snake was cold and pleaded with the young man to pick it up and take it down where it was warmer.

The Indian boy listened to the enticings of the serpent. He gave in. He gathered it up into his arms and covered it with his shirt. He carried it down the mountain to where it was warm. He gently put it on the grass. When the snake was warm it raised its head and struck the boy with its poisonous fangs.

The boy cursed at the snake for striking him as an answer to his kindness. The snake replied, "You knew what I was when you picked me up"  
("Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood," *Ensign*, July 1989, 77).

Warn your children against those with poisonous fangs who will entice them, seduce them with easy talk, then injure and possibly destroy them.

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2000/10/your-greatest-challenge-mother?lang=eng>

[Go Back to MAIN PAGE](#)