



## The Serpent Lifted Up

February 9, 2020

*And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:27*

So far in our study of various portraits of Christ we've seen Him as the Second Adam, Prophet, Priest, King and the Passover Lamb. This week, we'll look at the picture of Christ as the bronze serpent lifted up in the wilderness. A snake seems a strange way to picture Christ. One normally thinks of a serpent as indicative of Satan, but this serpent is different and Jesus Himself draws this portrait for us.

### The Serpent Lifted Up

Read Numbers 21:4–9.

Notice:

- Where the snakes came from? (v. 6)
- Why He sent them? (v. 4-5)
- Who the serpent on the pole was for? (v. 8)
- What the people have to do to be saved? (v. 9)

### The Son of Man Lifted Up

Jesus referred to the event from Numbers 21 when He described His mission to Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin.

Read John 3:1–3, 9–15:

<sup>1</sup> Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

<sup>9</sup> Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? <sup>11</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. <sup>12</sup> If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

[Q] List the parallels between

- the Israelites' poison problem and our sin problem
- the Israelites' cure and ours

[Q] How might the Israelites have been skeptical of the cure? What might they have been tempted to do with the snakes or the poisoning instead of looking up at the bronze serpent?

How might people today be skeptical of the sin cure? (See also 1 Corinthians 1:18.)

[Q] Why would Jesus be pictured as a curse? Read the following:

2 Corinthians 5:21

Galatians 3:13

### Looking to Jesus

[Q] How does looking to Jesus solve our sin (poison) and death problem?

Read Hebrews 12:1–3:

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup>

looking to Jesus,

the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

[Q] How does *looking to Jesus* solve our lack of endurance problem?

[Q] What will you do to *look to Jesus* this week?

"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." John 12:32 (ESV)

**Pray.**

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