

## “AS MOSES LIFTED UP THE SERPENT...”

By Keith Greer

*“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* {John 3:14-16} John was making an analogy between the lifting up of the bronze serpent in Numbers 21 and the lifting up of Christ on Calvary’s cross. Let’s examine some lessons we can learn from these two separate events.

**Serpent bite—man’s helplessness!** *“So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.”* {Numbers 21:6} The Jews could do nothing about the problem they had after being bitten. Unable to help themselves God stepped in. Mankind has a similar problem. *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* {Romans 6;23} Alone, we can do absolutely nothing about our sin problem. In a similar way, those who were bitten by the fiery serpents, and those who are guilty of sin, show helplessness. Both need help!

**Lifted bronze serpent—lifted Christ?** *“Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, we have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us. So Moses prayed for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.’”* {Numbers 21:7,8} Those who were bitten by the snakes needed a REMEDY. God, by way of the bronze serpent, gracefully provided one. People who sin also need A DIVINE REMEDY. *“This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* {Acts 4:11,12} In each case, there was need for a remedy. And in each case, God’s grace, mercy, and love provided the remedy for those who most needed it.

**Believe and behold—Believe and be baptized?** *“So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.”* {Numbers 21:9} God provided the remedy for those who were bitten, but to receive the remedy, they had to look at the bronze serpent! What about those who are dead in sin? *“Then Peter said to them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* {Acts 2:38} In order to receive the blessings of the provided remedy, one must act in faith and obedience—now, just as the Jews did then.

**They lived—were saved.** *“So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.”* {Numbers 21:9} Every bitten person who met God’s terms lived. What about alien sinners who accept Christ? *“Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”* {Acts 2:47} Following their acceptance of and obedience to God’s terms, the Lord added them to His church, thereby saving them. In each case, God provided the blessing. Each of us needs

to believe in the simplicity of God's word. We can read about the fiery serpents and see that God saved those people but that they had to act to receive His blessing. In the case of lost sinners, the premise is the same. God did for people what they could not do for themselves—provide a divine remedy for sin. Did he die in vain for you? \*\*\*