

LIFT HIM UP

Numbers 21:4-9 And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

- they are forced to go around Edom – their enemy is fighting fiercely
- much discouraged – literally “impatient” (discouragement = impatience)
- murmured against God and Moses (God sees it the same anyway!)
- loathed manna – they had what they needed, but not what they wanted

God told Moses to make a brass SERPENT and LIFT IT UP on a pole!

But this is not the first time we see the SERPENT in the Scriptures ...

Genesis 3:14-15 And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

God curses the SYMBOL of evil, and then gives a prophetic announcement.

Exodus 4:1-4 And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, Jehovah hath not appeared unto thee. And Jehovah said unto him, What is that in thy hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Put forth thy hand, and take it by the tail: (and he put forth his hand, and laid hold of it, and it became a rod in his hand:)

Moses flees because the serpent is a symbol of EVIL, not because he is afraid of snakes! This tension between the SNAKE and the STICK runs through the Word of God until Jesus has a conversation with Nicodemus:

John 3:14-16 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

It was the lifting up of the serpent that was the antidote to death. God told Moses to beat some brass into the shape of the serpent that bit the people. The judgment of God came on Jesus Christ and He was lifted up on the cross in the “shape” of sin! He didn’t die on the whipping post, because then He wouldn’t have been “lifted up” – He died on the cross for our salvation!

2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

JESUS BECAME SIN WITHOUT BECOMING A SINNER!

- The brass serpent was made like a real serpent, but had no venom.
- Jesus was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, but was without sin.

1 Corinthians 15:45-47 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.

Romans 8:1-3 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

You can’t try a man again for the same crime once you have executed judgment on him! Jesus became my sin and took my judgment on Himself. That’s why God won’t judge me – because I was judged 2000 years ago!

- **In the wilderness the serpent was lifted up and became a Saviour.**
- **At Calvary, the Saviour was lifted up and became a serpent!**

The earth quakes and the sun refuses to shine, because they have never seen so much sin in one place. God literally turns His face from Calvary!

In the OT, an innocent lamb took the guilt of the man so the man could take the innocence of the lamb. That’s exactly what happened on Calvary!

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.
The verb “lifted up” has a dual meaning – to be crucified and to be glorified. Jesus pointed out that crucifixion would be the means of His glorification:

John 12:23-24 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

The task of evangelism is to turn people’s gaze to Jesus! The best sort of pole to exhibit Christ upon is a high one, so He can be seen further away!

The only virtue in the pole is its height! The higher it is, the better it is!
This is the reason for worship! This is the reason for holiness!

**LIFT HIM UP, LIFT HIM UP
STILL HE SPEAKS FROM ETERNITY
“AND I, IF I BE LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH
WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME”**