

JESUS CHRIST, ETERNITY, And YOU

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.

John 3:14-15 NKJV



The Snake on the Pole

A 2021 Gallup Poll asked Americans their greatest fears. 51% listed snakes as their #1 fear. Similar polls across the world have produced similar results. Far ahead of the fear of death, drowning, and disease comes the fear of snakes. Perhaps it is because more than 100,000 people each year die from snake bites. Perhaps it is because snakes are fast, easily camouflaged, and difficult to eradicate. The more venomous snakes can cause a man to die in minutes from a single bite. Yet with all the fears associated with snakes, when a person is injured and in need of medical attention, the vehicle that comes to his aid has a picture of the feared snake on a pole.



Some refer to this symbol as the Rod of Asclepius after a mythical Greek god of healing. However, its origin dates to a much older account of true healing.

Numbers, the fourth book of the Bible gives the account of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness after God graciously

brought them out of slavery in Egypt. As they wandered in the wilderness they were prone to sin against God. One of their frequent sins was complaining against God who had been so gracious to them.

On one occasion in Numbers 21 when the people complained, the Lord sent fiery serpents into the camp who bit the people so that they died. The people repented for their sin and cried out to Moses to pray to the Lord for deliverance. Moses prayed, and God told Moses to build a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. When anyone who had been bitten by a snake looked at the bronze serpent they lived.

The fame of the bronze serpent endured for hundreds of years. King Hezekiah destroyed the bronze serpent (II Kings 18:4) because the people had turned it into an idol and worshipped it.

Three thousand four hundred years after Moses, the snake on the pole remains a symbol of hope for the injured and dying.

The Snake's Limitations

The snake was a great help. Everyone who had been bitten, was provided a way of deliverance.

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)

The life they received from looking at the bronze snake was specifically related to the cure of the venomous bite. It did not go beyond that. Scripture does not tell us that any other type of ailment was cured by looking at that bronze serpent. Presumably someone dying of cancer in the camp continued to die.

Furthermore, the life that the bitten received was temporary. Eventually, all would die in the wilderness or later in the Promised Land. God used the bronze serpent to give temporary life to all those who listened and looked at the serpent.

The limitations of cures are the same today. Anti-venom for snake bites can cure from the effects of the poison, but the person bitten will one

day die from any number of other ailments. Even when the best medicine is applied, death still eventually finds all men. Why?

The world tells us that death comes because of the evolutionary decay on the species of humans. Our biological clocks run out on average between 70-80 years old and we die.

The Bible tells us that death comes upon all men because of sin. The reason for death is grounded in history and the sin of one man. Adam disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. In the day he ate of it, he died and all men after him died with him.

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.

(Romans 5:12)

Since that first sin, every person has been born with a sinful nature, committed their own sins, and have been subject then to the payment and curse of sin, which is death itself.

Sin and Its Wages

Ordinarily, people do not think of themselves as sinners. We may think of ourselves as imperfect, but when the bad is weighed against the good, we think the good will win. A foreign president once summarized the prevailing worldview this way, “*Man’s goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished.*”

The problem with the worldview of goodness is that when weighed against our own life, we see something entirely different.

Who reading this would be so bold as to say they never used God’s name in a negligent or vain way? Who could say truthfully that they never stole even a small item from an individual or business? Who has never thought lustfully or had sinful imaginations? Who has not looked at something they did not own and desired it for themselves? Who has not spoken deceitfully or gossiped? These things happen in our hearts and actions every day. God calls these things sins. They are violations of His holy, righteous, moral law summarized in the Ten Commandments (**Exodus 20:1-17**).

In light of our daily sin, God tells us that all have sinned and none are righteous or good. Rather than the worldview that calls men basically good, God says we are all sinners and wicked by nature.

There is none righteous no, not one... There is none who does good, no, not one... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
(Romans 3: 10,12,23)

God is just and will not let the guilty go unpunished. According to God’s justice, all who sin are under the curse of death (Colossians 2:13) and will suffer the pains of Hell forever for the evil they have done.

The world tells us to look to ourselves for help. But there is nothing we can find to help us in our plight. Looking to a serpent on a pole did not deliver ancient people from eternity in hellfire and it will not deliver us. We must look outside of ourselves for help and salvation. There is hope for dead sinners from one person, **Jesus Christ the Lord**.

The Bible on Sin

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

Genesis 2:17

*Behold, all souls are Mine;
The soul of the father
As well as the soul of the son is Mine;
The soul who sins shall die.*

Ezekiel 18:4

*There is a way that seems right
to a man,
But its end is the way of death.*

Proverbs 14:12

*But the cowardly, unbelieving,
abominable, murderers,
sexually immoral, sorcerers,
idolaters, and all liars shall
have their part in the lake
which burns with fire and
brimstone, which is the second
death.*

Revelation 21:8

*For the wages of sin is death, but
the gift of God is eternal life in
Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 6:23

*But God demonstrates His
own love toward us, in that
while we were still sinners,
Christ died for us.*

Romans 5:8

*But God, who is rich in mercy,
because of His great love with
which He loved us, even when we
were dead in trespasses, made us
alive together with Christ (by
grace you have been saved), and
raised us up together, and made
us sit together in the heavenly
places in Christ Jesus.*

Ephesians 2:4-6

*Christ has redeemed us from the
curse of the law, having become
a curse for us (for it is written,
“Cursed is everyone who hangs
on a tree”).*

Galatians 3:13

*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the
righteousness of God in Him.*

II Corinthians 5:21

You Must Be Born Again!

About 1,400 years after Moses lifted up the bronze serpent in the wilderness, God sent His Son into the world, born of the virgin Mary. He was given the name Jesus because He would save His people from their sins.

One night early in Jesus's ministry a Pharisee named Nicodemus came to talk with Jesus. Jesus told him, "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Nicodemus went on to ask Jesus how this would be possible seeing he was already born. Jesus answered with two parts: first, the power that gives new birth; and second, the means that gives new birth.

The power of the new birth is the Holy Spirit. "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Dead sinners cannot help themselves, they cannot even lift a single finger to do it. The help for sinners comes from the Holy Spirit who alone works new birth in the sinner.

How is the Spirit able to give a new birth? By what means can He do it?

The answer to the question brings into focus the primary message of the whole Bible. God tells us in the Bible exactly how He saves and will save all that come to Him by faith and repentance.

How can a dead sinner bound for hell fire be saved? How can a man be born again? To answer the questions, Jesus takes us back to the bronze serpent in the wilderness.

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.

(John 3:14-15)

To escape perishing in the fires of hell and to gain eternal life, the Son of Man must be lifted up.

Who is the Son of Man? Why was He lifted up?

The Son of Man Lifted Up

Jesus used the title “Son of Man,” more than 75 times in the gospels. Jesus said the Son of Man will suffer (Mark 8:31); has power to forgive sins (Mark 2:10); and will return in glory (Matthew 25:31). As to the Son of Man’s identity, Jesus was always speaking of Himself.

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”

Matthew 16:13

The title “Son of Man” reminds us that Jesus is God and also man. At His conception, Jesus did not cease to be God and switch to be man but He who is God became man as well. Jesus is fully God and fully Man in one person. Further the title teaches us that Jesus has all power and authority. He is King.

And behold, one like the Son of Man... to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom...

Daniel 7:13-14

Why would God the Son come into the world of sinners, experience humiliation, to the point of being murdered on the cross, given that He had all power in heaven and earth?

For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Luke 19:10

The fact that Jesus is the Son of Man and came to Earth is not sufficient to save sinners from their sins. He must be lifted up.

Jesus reminds us of the bronze serpent from the wilderness. For the stricken people to survive their poisonous snake bites, the bronze serpent had to be lifted up in the camp. Without the bronze serpent being lifted up, none would live. In a similar manner, Jesus must be lifted up that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have everlasting life.

Jesus uses the same figure of speech a second time later in John.

“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

John 12:32-33

By *lifting up* Jesus described His death on the cross where He was physically lifted up on that hill outside Jerusalem named Calvary. What is it about the cross that has impacted all of history?

The Cross of Christ

Many in the world have heard of Jesus dying on the cross. It is perhaps the best-known event of history and the most agreed upon event by historians. People who rarely go to church will wear cross necklaces, be tattooed with cross images, have crosses dangling from their car mirrors, and decorate their homes with cross art. Much show is made of the cross but little is known about the meaning of the cross. What happened at the cross?

That day on Calvary's hill, Jesus was nailed to the cross and hung there until He was dead. He did not die for His own sin as He had no sin. Rather, He died for the sins of others.

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

(I Timothy 1:15)

It was for sinners Jesus came to Earth, for sinners He took on flesh, and for sinners that Jesus died on the cross.

On the cross, Christ secured **pardon** for sins, by substituting Himself and becoming a curse for His people

(Galatians 3:13). The curse of sin is death. On the cross Christ pardoned the sin of His people by dying in their place. Pardon for sin took place on the cross of Christ.

Pardon was accomplished by Jesus through His making full **payment** on the cross. As He gave His life, as His blood was shed, He paid the ransom for sinners. It was not a

partial payment but a full payment. Jesus did not save "almost" but saved to the "uttermost" all those who come to Him by faith

(Hebrews 7:25). For those for whom Jesus died, there is nothing more that can possibly be done for their salvation. Christ has already accomplished salvation freely and by His grace alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). The complete debt of sin has been fully paid by Jesus Christ for all who come to Him by faith.

Finally, at the cross Jesus brought **peace** between God and men. The curse was satisfied. The whole debt was paid. Jesus finished the work He came to do. He rose from the dead on the third day just as He said. In doing this, men and women washed in His blood have peace with God. No longer are they enemies, now children of God (Romans 8:16-17).



The Bible on Salvation

“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

Matthew 1:21

“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

Mark 2:17

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9

“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 4:12

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Romans 5:7-10

*Ho! Everyone who thirsts,
Come to the waters;
And you who have no money,
Come, buy and eat.
Yes, come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without price.
Why do you spend money for what
is not bread, And your wages for
what does not satisfy? Listen
carefully to Me, and eat what is
good,
And let your soul delight itself in
abundance. Incline your ear, and
come to Me.
Hear, and your soul shall live.*

Isaiah 55:1-3

“I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.”

John 10:14-15

He *MUST*

Jesus told Nicodemus that He **must** be lifted up on the cross. By this single word, “must,” Jesus teaches us that there was no other way that men might have eternal life. The only way to salvation is for the Son of Man to be lifted up on the cross.

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

John 14:6

Back in the wilderness with the snake bites, the only way one could be delivered from the poisonous venom was by the bronze serpent being lifted up according to God’s Word. If the bronze serpent had not been lifted up then the people would not have been saved. So Jesus must be lifted up on the cross that sinners might have eternal life through Him. Without the cross there is no life.

While the world considers the cross utter folly, to those who are being saved, the cross is the power of God (I Corinthians 1:18). There is no hope apart from the cross.

Many people are looking for salvation in other places today. Some look for it in their works, others in money, idols, identity,

family, etc. The message of Jesus and Christianity is that none of those can help. People may cry out to their gods, but they cannot answer. The only one who can save us from our sins is Christ who died and rose from the dead.

If a dying Israelite in the wilderness looked for help from herbs, medicine, or anything else, he would die. The only remedy in that camp for the dying was the bronze serpent. The cry would have gone out, “Look! Look! Look and live!”

2,000 years after Christ was lifted up on the cross, the only remedy for death is still presented to sinners. The cry goes out again, “Look! Look! Look to Jesus and live!”

*Look to Me, and be saved,
All you ends of the earth!*

For I am God, and there is no other.

Isaiah 45:22

Christ lifted up is the Christian’s greatest joy. Christ must be lifted up. Christ was lifted up on the cross. Christ died on that cross. Christ rose from the dead the 3rd day. Christ lives forevermore. Because He lives, all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ will not perish but have everlasting life.

YOU MUST

Nicodemus learned that Jesus must be lifted up that we might be saved. What must you do to be saved?

Can the salvation that Jesus gained by His life and death on the cross be yours? Yes! **Repent** of your sins and **believe** in the Lord Jesus Christ and **you shall be saved!** (Acts 2:38; 16:31; Romans 10:9-13).

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”
(Acts 3:19)

At the time the Holy Spirit changes your heart of stone into a living heart and gives you the gift of faith, all things become new and all the old ways pass away. The power, curse, and even the guilt of sin will be taken away by Christ who made payment with His own blood. The forgiveness of sins is not for all men everywhere but only for those who repent and believe in Christ Jesus alone for salvation.

Therefore, you **must** repent and believe in Jesus Christ.

Do you desire freedom from all sins that you have been doing and promoting? Do you desire deliverance from the fires of hell reserved for sinners? Salvation is still offered today through Jesus Christ who has “*by Himself purged our sins*” (Hebrews 1:3).

Repent of the sin you have committed. Turn away from sin. Cry out to God in prayer for mercy. Ask Christ to help you hate your sin more. Believe that Jesus Christ alone saves you from your sin through His perfect life, death on the cross, and resurrection. Rest in Christ alone for salvation. Join with a Bible believing Christ centered church. Come to our church, we would love to have you with us.

I plead with you, look to the Lord Jesus Christ today! Why? Because all who look to the Lord Jesus Christ with faith will not perish but have **eternal life**.

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.

We have given you this pamphlet today that you might be reconciled to God through the blood of Jesus Christ His Son. Through Christ alone sinners may be set free from the curse, guilt, and power of sin that will lead only to destruction. We are not ashamed to proclaim Jesus Christ, for His gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

Throughout the history of the Bible and our own experience, death comes upon all men for all have sinned. The wrath of God is revealed in the very fact of death as God said, *the wages of sin is death*. That same wrath is revealed in the unrighteous and ungodly deeds of men today who mock God and worship the creature rather than the Creator. There is only one way to escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, and it is through *Christ Jesus our Lord*. Repent therefore, for the kingdom of God is at hand!

Please join with us in the worship of God at church each Sunday. You may also connect with us through any of the ways listed below.

*Seek the LORD while He may
be found, call upon Him while
He is near. Let the wicked
forsake his way. And the
unrighteous man his thoughts:
Let him return to the LORD,
and He will have mercy on
him; and to our God, for He
will abundantly pardon*
Isaiah 55: 6-7



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