

# Look and Live

A Series on the Cross

Leading to Easter Sunday

April 8, 2012

## PART II: THE N. T. APPLICATION OF THE TYPE (JOHN 3)

THE TEXTS: Num. 21:4-9; John 3:12-21

### INTRODUCTION

THE MANNA (ABOUT WHICH ISRAEL'S COMPLAINTS CAME) WAS THE FOCUS OF OUR STUDY IN NUMBERS.

- A bountiful supply of manna had been sent from heaven each morning since shortly after the Exodus ([Ex. 16:1-22](#)), so for forty years, God had been feeding His people the nourishment they needed.
- Manna was "angels' food" ([Ps. 78:25](#)), but the people had gotten so accustomed to their blessings that they detested it and called it "this good-for-nothing bread." (See [Num. 11:4-6](#).)
- According to [John 6](#), the manna was much more than daily food for Israel: it was a type of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the "Bread of Life" ([vv. 32-40](#)).
- The manna came only to Israel, but Jesus came to be the Savior of the world.
- All the manna could do was to sustain life, but Jesus Christ gives life.
- When the Jews despised the manna, they were actually rejecting the Son of God.

- Once more, God had tested His people, and they had failed the test ([Deut. 8:15-16](#)).
- The Word of God is the "bread of heaven" that God's people must feed on daily if they're going to succeed in their pilgrim journey ([Matt. 4:4](#)).
- The way we treat His Word at the beginning of each day reveals whether or not we are yielded to Him and want to obey Him.
- To enter a new day without first feeding on the heavenly manna is to invite disappointment and defeat. *BEC*

### OPENING GENERAL INFORMATION ON THIS SECTION

Israelites	Christians
Bitten by snakes	Bitten by sin
Little initial pain, then intense suffering	Little initial pain, then intense suffering
Physical death from snakes' poison	Spiritual death from sin's poison
Bronze snake lifted up in the desert	Christ lifted up on the cross
Looking to the snake spared one's life	Looking to Christ saves from eternal death <i>LAB</i>

- The comparisons between the bronze serpent in Moses' day and the cross of Christ help us better understand the meaning of God's grace in salvation.
- All people have been infected by sin and will one day die and face judgment ([Heb. 9:27](#)), but if they look by faith to Christ, He will save them and give them eternal life.

- Looking to the bronze serpent saved people from physical death, but looking to Christ saves us from eternal death.  
*BEC*
- Now, we don't have to guess at the meaning of this and the lesson for us.
- When our Lord was talking to Nicodemus on that dark night, He said, "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" ([John 3:14-16](#)). *Thru the Bible*

## **THE PICTURES OF SALVATION: THE PARALLELS BETWEEN NUMBERS 21 AND JESUS' SACRIFICE IN JOHN 3**

### **I. MAN UNDER GOD'S JUDGMENT (Num. 21:5; Jn. 3:19; Rom. 3:23)**

- The children of Israel fell under that wrath of God when they despised the manna.
- All mankind is under the judgment of God.

### **II. "LIFTED UP" (Num. 21:9; Jn. 3:14; 8:28; 12:32-34)**

**QUOTE:** Jesus used the bronze serpent to illustrate His own death on the cross ([John 3:14](#)). ("Lifted up" was a phrase used in that day to refer to crucifixion.) *BEC*

### **III. THE LIKENESS OF THE REMEDY TO THE SICKNESS (Num. 21:9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:22-24)**

**QUOTE:** But why should Moses make a model of a *serpent*, the very creature that was causing the people to die? Because on the cross, Jesus became sin for us—the very thing that condemns people—and bore in His body that which brings

spiritual death ([2 Cor. 5:21](#); [Rom. 8:3](#); [Gal. 3:13](#); [1 Peter 2:22-24](#)). *BEC*

#### **IV. THE PLACEMENT CONCEPT (Rom. 10:13; Acts 4:12; Jn. 14:6)**

**QUOTE:** Moses didn't hide the bronze serpent; he lifted it up on a pole and put the pole where everybody could see it! So our Lord was crucified publicly, outside the city of Jerusalem, and those who hear the Gospel can "look to Him" and be saved. ([Rom. 10:13](#)). *BEC*

**QUOTE:** Moses didn't stick the pole inside the tabernacle or even in the tabernacle court, because nobody is saved by keeping the law. The uplifted serpent was the only cure in the camp, just as Jesus Christ is the only Savior of sinners in the world ([Acts 4:12](#); [John 14:6](#)). *BEC*

#### **V. THE FAITH CONCEPT (Num. 21:9; Jn. 3:16; Eph. 2:8)**

**QUOTE:** Jesus explained that just as the Israelites were healed of their sickness by looking at the snake on the pole, all believers today can be saved from the sickness of sin by looking to Jesus' death on the cross. It was not the snake that healed the people, but their belief that God could heal them. This belief was demonstrated by their obedience to God's instructions. *Life Application Bible*

There was no healing power in the image. Clearly the healing was from God—and any individual who trusted God enough to seek out what must have seemed a ridiculous remedy actually was healed. Individuals as well as the nation had the power to choose. *Teacher's Commentary*

#### **VI. THE INDIVIDUAL CONCEPT: EACH INDIVIDUAL HAD TO LOOK FOR HIMSELF (Ps. 34:8; Rom. 14:12)**

**QUOTE:** Nobody could look at the bronze serpent for another person; each dying sinner had to look for himself or herself. The salvation Christ offers is personal and individual, and each of us must look to Christ by faith. No matter how hard they tried, no dying Jew could save himself or herself. The only salvation available was what God had graciously provided, and if you rejected it, you died. *BEC*

## **VII. CONFESSION (ADMISSION) OF SIN (Num. 21:7)**

**QUOTE:** "We have sinned" Now, that is a problem with many folk today. They want to begin with God as a church member, as a nice little girl or boy. We all must begin with God as sinners. The only way that God will begin with us is as sinners. You see, Christ died for sinners, and He loves sinners. If you can't come in under that category, then Christ is not for you. He came for sinners. *Thru the Bible*

## **VIII. THE LOOK CONCEPT (Gen. 3:6; Isa. 45:22; Eph. 2:8-19; 1 Cor. 1:18-25)**

**QUOTE:** There is a marvelous lesson here, you see. They are to look at the brazen serpent, and they are to look in faith. In fact, they would not look if it were not in faith. I can well imagine some of the folk saying that this was just nonsense. They would want something else, something more tangible than just turning around to look at a serpent of brass. But, of course, if a man would not turn to look at the serpent of brass, he would die. *Thru the Bible*

**QUOTE:** Sin and death came into this world through a look ([Gen. 3:6](#)), and the only deliverance from sin and eternal death is by a look of faith: "Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth" ([Isa. 45:22](#), NKJV). To look means to exercise faith, and the only way to be saved is by faith ([EPH. 2:8-19](#)). A dying Jew might argue, "It's a foolish remedy," but it still worked ([1](#)

[Cor. 1:18-25](#)). Or the dying Israelite might say, "It's too simple," but the remedy still worked. *BEC*

**QUOTE:** Those who **looked at** it were healed. This involved a look of faith (cf. [John 3:14-15](#)). *BKC*

**QUOTE (From McGee):** How was the Son of man lifted up? You say, on a cross. Yes, but He was dying on the cross of Barabbas, and **Barabbas** was a thief and a murderer. Barabbas was guilty and was worthy of death. Jesus was not. Our Lord was made sin for us. On that cross, He not only has taken the place of Barabbas but also your place and my place. God permitted this and did this because He loves us.

But God cannot save us by His love. **It doesn't say that God so loved the world that He saved the world.** Not at all. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Now what God asks you to do, my friend, is to look and live. Look to Christ! He is taking your place there. You are a sinner and it is you who deserves to die. Christ did not deserve to die. He died for you.

We read here that this serpent of brass was made, and those who looked to it lived. Those who did not look to it -- died. It is just that simple today. Either you are looking to Christ as your Savior because you are a sinner, or you are not doing it. If you are not doing it, I don't care how many times you have been baptized, how many ceremonies you have been through, how many churches you have joined, or who your father and mother happened to be, you are a lost, hell-doomed sinner. You must look to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is just as simple as that. And by the way, it is just as complicated as that. What a problem people have today. They would rather look to themselves and to their own good works, trusting that somehow their own good works might save them. It is a problem for people to admit they are sinners and to look to Christ and trust Him. *Thru the Bible*

**IX. THE NECESSITY OF SPREADING THE WORD (1 Tim. 1:15; Mt. 28:18)**

Imagine the joy in the camp of Israel when the word got out that there was a cure available for everybody! The only people who couldn't be delivered from death were those who for some reason wouldn't look by faith, *or those who didn't know that a remedy was available*. How important it is for us to get the good news out that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" ([1 Tim. 1:15](#)). *BEC*

**X. WE NEED TO KEEP LOOKING TO CHRIST (Heb. 12:2)**

When the bronze snake was hung on the pole, the Israelites didn't know the fuller meaning Jesus Christ would bring to this event (see [John 3:14,15](#)). Jesus explained that just as the Israelites were healed of their sickness by looking at the snake on the pole, all believers today can be saved from the sickness of sin by looking to Jesus' death on the cross. It was not the snake that healed the people, but their belief that God could heal them. This belief was demonstrated by their obedience to God's instructions. In the same way, we should continue to look to Christ (see [Hebrews 12:2](#)). *Life Application Bible*

**FINAL THOUGHTS FROM JOHN 3**

**QUOTE:** Jesus Christ identified the copper serpent as a type of Himself ([John 3:14](#)). Like Christ someone lifted this serpent up from the earth on a pole. Both Christ and this serpent were completely harmless as they hung on their poles. Furthermore if a fatally wounded person wanted deliverance, he or she had simply to look on the serpent or on Christ in faith relying on God's promise of salvation.

"If ever there were a less expected pairing of types, this would be it. The **manna** was an altogether gracious gift of God, which the people turned against with stomach revulsion. The **snakes**

were an instrument of God's judgment because of the peoples' ingratitude and rebellious spirits; yet it was a metal copy of just such a snake that became the means for their deliverance.

"The bread is a picture of Jesus; as the Bread of Heaven he is the proper nourisher of his people. The bronze snake is a picture of Jesus, who became sin for us as he hung on that awful tree. The manna had to be eaten. The snake had to be seen. The commands of Scripture are for **doing**. The manna was no good if left to rot. The metal snake would not avail if none looked at it. The manna and the snake are twin aspects of the grace of God." *Tom Constable's Notes on the Bible*