

THE BRONZE SNAKE

“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.” —JOHN 3:14-15

After the release of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, they were journeying through the desert and continuously growing impatient. They complained bitterly against God and Moses, saying, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!” (Numbers 21:5)

Once again the Israelites had forgotten the miraculous hand of God that had freed them from captivity. They had trusted God walking out into freedom, but as soon as things got tough, they griped and complained, preferring a life of slavery over a God who had proved totally sufficient in every circumstance. The people then encountered venomous snakes and many were bitten and died. They came to Moses and said, “We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take the snakes away from us. So Moses prayed for the people” (21:6-7).

“The LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.’ So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived” (Numbers 21:8-9). How do we put that into logic? They were to look and believe and they would live.

In the Old Testament there are many foreshadowings of Christ. It is as we look to the cross of Christ and believe in Him we are cleansed of our

sin, because it was on the cross, Jesus, sinless as He was, became sin for us, paying the penalty for sin and died as our substitute.

This is the same principle, based on faith, that if we look to Jesus, placing our faith in Him, we will receive the life of God and live. “Anyone,” says Jesus, “who believes in me will have eternal life” (John 3:16). Do not think of eternal life merely in terms of its length. The word eternal is different from everlasting. Eternal is to have no beginning and no end. It is not a time-measured thing. The word everlasting means to have no end but it presupposes a beginning. There is only one eternal life; the life of God. Like the people with venom in their veins who looked up to the bronze snake and lived, those who look to the cross of Christ will live. It does not need human logic or reasoning, but is a supernatural work of God that is received by faith.

PRAYER: Thank You Jesus, for giving me a clear and obvious choice of who I am to look to in our often challenging world, Amen.

TO REFLECT UPON: Do I understand how some things require ‘blind’ faith and not always conscious reasoning?