



MAYFAIRKIDS

JESUS IS THE ONE WHO IS LIFTED UP



“WHO IS JESUS?” FAMILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE - Week 14, November 19



JESUS IS THE ONE WHO IS LIFTED UP

“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

By now you know that the Israelites weren't perfect. They struggled to trust this God they could not see, and they complained—a lot. God sent them sweet bread from heaven every day, and instead of thanking him, they wailed for meat. In fact, they wailed so hard that Moses asked God why he had made him in charge of this group of babies, and requested that God put him to death if he was going to have to put up with them any longer (Numbers 11:10-15)! God answered by giving Moses elders to help him carry the burden, and giving the people quail to eat.

Not long after, the Israelites made another big mistake. They didn't trust God to help them take possession of the land. They were too scared! The cities were too big, and the people too powerful! They must have forgotten how big their God was. And so God made the people wander for forty years in the desert. He continued to feed them their manna and quail, and miraculously kept their clothes and shoes from wearing out. God was still saving and sanctifying his people in spite of their disobedience.

But then, you guessed it, they started to complain

again. They spoke against God and against Moses, saying, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!” (Numbers 21:5).

Their problem wasn’t just chronic grumbling. They were rejecting Moses and rejecting God.

So God punished them. He sent venomous snakes to the camp. The snakes bit the people, and some of them died. Immediately they knew their sin.

“Pray to the Lord that he will take the snakes away from us!” they cried. So Moses prayed.

God then did something surprising. He didn’t take the snakes away, like you might expect. Instead, the snakes stayed around, but God provided a way for healing. He told Moses to make a snake and put it on a pole. Anyone who was bitten could look at the snake on the pole and live.

Moses did as he was instructed, making the snake out of bronze. He lifted the snake up in the desert, and anyone who looked at it lived.

Was the snake magic? No. Rather, when the people looked upward to the snake, they were demonstrating their trust in God to save them.

Jesus reminded Nicodemus of this story in the book of John. He said, “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).

It seems strange at first to think that Jesus would compare himself to a snake. After all, Satan came as a serpent in the garden. But think about it this way: the bites the people experienced from the snakes were like bites of sin—poisonous sin that leads to death. Jesus, being fully God, stepped into our sinful world and became human. He was a man, but without sin, just as the bronze snake was a snake, but without poison. And Jesus, being totally perfect, was raised on a cross, much like that pole, that we who are facing death may look to him and be saved.

An unlikely method of saving, for sure, but all part of God’s plan. What direction are you looking today?



REFLECT

1. Why did God send venomous snakes into the Israelite camp? Do we act the same way?
2. How were the people saved? How are we saved?
3. What was Jesus talking about when he told Nicodemus “the Son of Man must be lifted up”? What famous verse comes right after this statement? How is this story a picture of God’s love?

BIBLE REFERENCE NUMBERS 21:4–9

KEY VERSE JOHN 3:14–15