

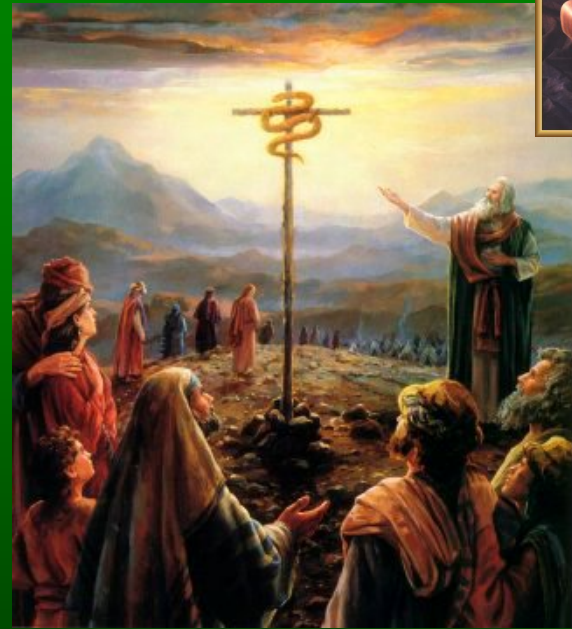


Notes

If you have questions during the week, please drop us an e-mail at jim@calvaryroswell.com or phil@calvaryroswell.com



Thru the Scriptures 2006-08



Numbers 16-24
 May 4th – 10th, 2006

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Ti 3:16-17)

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Numbers—Wanderings

It is a sad but very real picture of the possibility of being rescued from the world (the Exodus), but not entering into the promised land of God's blessings.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-11:1 often in this study.

Other Helpful links

Matthew Henry's Commentary

<http://www.ccel.org/h/henry/mhc2/MHC04000.HTM>

David Guzik's Commentary on

<http://enduringword.com/commentaries/04.html>

Daily Bible Study

Thursday, May 4, 2006



Passage for today: **Numbers 16**

Quick Notes

- The “rebellion” (saying against) of Korah” is mentioned in Jude 11 as one of the marks of false teachers in the last days.
- A successful leader is often accused of exalting himself.
- It is good to desire spiritual growth and progress, but we must beware selfish ambition that glorifies the servant and not the Master (Phil. 2:3–4). “Selfish ambition” is one of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:20), and it brings destruction.

Questions to Ponder

As we look at this rebellion—what is the warning to us, esp. in this democratic country and way of handling things in this rebellion?

What was the complaints of the leaders of the rebellion?

What might this look like in the church today?

Is the majority always right? How do we know right?

How does God deal with this rebellion? Lessons for us?

Daily Bible Study

Friday, May 5, 2006



Passage for today: **Numbers 17**

Quick Notes

- God vindicated His servants by bringing death to some of their opponents and by giving life to Aaron's rod. By the power of God, the dead rod produced beauty and fruit.
- Spiritual leadership will be recognized by its life and fruitfulness, which come from being in the Holy of Holies with God.

Questions to Ponder

Who initiates this "proof" before the people? Why?

What does God seek to get rid of by this? What does this mean to you and me?

How is the rod a good picture of us determining God's call on His leaders lives? How should we put this in practice in our lives?

At the end of this chapter, how do the children of Israel go to the opposite extreme to where they were in the last chapter? Lessons?

Daily Bible Study

Saturday, May 6, 2006



Passage for today: **Numbers 18**

Quick Notes

The emphasis in this chapter is on gifts.

- God gives helpers (v. 6)
- God gives us work to do (v. 7).
- God gives us what we need (v. 8ff.).
- God gives us Himself (v. 20).

Questions to Ponder

As you consider the context of this chapter—how does it fit with the events of the last two chapters?

What is the theme of this chapter? Who is God addressing now? Why?

Why might this group be feeling uncomfortable?

This chapter addresses this groups authority, responsibility and blessing.

As you read this chapter—how does it do this?

Daily Bible Study

Sunday, May 7, 2006



Passage for today: **Numbers 19**

Quick Notes

- God tells Moses & Aaron to prepare ‘water of cleansing’. This water is to be sprinkled on anyone who has contact with death.
- Water for washing is a picture of the Word of God (Jn 15:3; Ep 5:25-27)
- The Word promises us cleansing because the blood of God’s Son
- The Word provides cleansing for the inner person. (Heb 4:17)

Questions to Ponder

As you think of the context of this chapter with the last three chapters—what is the significance of these instructions here?

As you consider this sacrifice of the Red Heifer—compare it to the sacrifice of Christ for our sins. What comparisons can you find?

The supply for purification was available, but not all applied it. What were the consequences for those who did not apply this? Lessons?

Daily Bible Study

Monday, May 8, 2006



Passage for today: **Numbers 20-21**

Quick Notes

Water for drinking is a picture of the Holy Spirit (John 7:37–39), and the rock is a symbol of Christ (1 Cor. 10:4). Christ was smitten on the cross for us that we might receive the gift of the Spirit. He died but once, so Moses should not have smitten the rock again. Instead, he should have spoken to the rock.

Questions to Ponder

What did Moses do wrong in this chapter? Why was it so serious?

What was the reason Aaron had to die here?

How does chapter 21 fit in the context for the last four chapters?

Why did the people become discouraged? What was the horrible result?

What is the cure? Where is this referred to in the NT?

Daily Bible Study

Tuesday, May 9, 2006



Passage for today: **Numbers 22**

Quick Notes

For other verses on Balaam and his character and deeds—read these passages? What do these verses show us about Balaam?

- 2 Peter 2:15
- Jude 11
- Rev 2:14

Questions to Ponder

What does Balaak want to put on the children of Israel? Why?

Why does God tell Balaam that he is not to curse Israel? Lessons?

What are the lessons for us in the episode of Balaam and his donkey?

Why would God be seeking to kill him? What must have been taking place in Balaam's heart? What can we apply for the difficulty Balaam had with his donkey?

Daily Bible Study

Wednesday, May 10, 2006



Passage for today: **Numbers 23-24**

Quick Notes

Balaam wanted very much to die the death of the righteous (v. 10), but he did not want to live the life of the righteous. Read Psalm 37:37, Proverbs 14:32, and Revelation 14:13, and contrast Paul's testimony in Philippians 1:19-23.

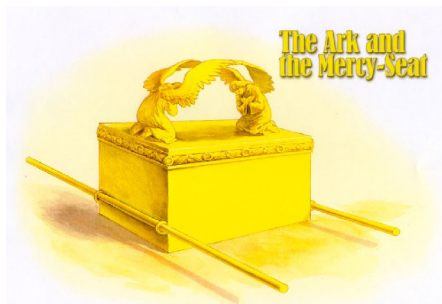
Questions to Ponder

What is Balaam unable to do? Why? What lessons should we take home from this in our lives today?

What does Balaak try to do with Balaam? How is this a good picture of how people try to handle God's declarations?

How does what we see here in these chapters correspond to what God tells us about Balaam in the rest of the Bible?

In the Ark of the Covenant...



The Ten Commandments (Ex 25:21)



A jar of Manna (Ex 16:33)



Aaron's Budded Rod (Num 17)

How are each of these a picture of Jesus

Ten Commandments	
Jar of manna	
Aaron's Rod	

How are each of these a picture of what Jesus "covers" for us

Ten Commandments	
Jar of manna	
Aaron's Rod	

CLIMBING THE LADDER?

Moses told Korah and his coup, “You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi!” It’s sad- God allowed the Levites to help the priests in the ministry of the Tabernacle – now they want to take over.

Guys, it’s easy to start out just wanting to help – thankful for an opportunity to serve - but over time you forget your place, and want to take over.

Korah had taken on a few duties, now he wants to take over the ministry.

The next day – we’re not told, but it must’ve been at high noon – the showdown took place. Moses drew a line in the sand, and told the people to distance themselves from Korah, Dathan, and Abiram –the rebel leaders.

Then he says in verse 28, "By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will. If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me. But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD."

And that’s exactly what happens... Korah hoped to climb the ladder of success, but he and his buddies end up headed in the opposite direction. When the 250 leaders who sided with Korah try to escape, verse 35 says a fire from God consumed them. Korah discovered the attitude that works in business, has no place in the family of God. Ministry is not a ladder to climb. Position and authority are not gained by power-plays and take-overs - they’re handed out by God.

You’ll be happy and successful in ministry when you are content serving the Lord in the place He puts you.

AARON'S BUD

In chapter 17 God sees fit to settle the issue of the rod once and for all. All 12 leaders of each of the 12 tribes submit their staffs to Moses. Each man's name is written on his rod, then the rods are laid before God in the Tabernacle.

In verse 5 God says, "And it shall be that the rod of the man whom I choose will blossom; thus I will rid Myself of the complaints of the children of Israel, which they make against you."

You might say God goes out on a limb to decide this question once and for all. :)

The next day, Moses enters the Tabernacle, and discovers only Aaron's rod has budded. It is alive...it has life

According to verse 10, Aaron's rod was kept "as a sign against the rebels". Hebrews 9:4 tells us that along with the two tablets of the Ten Commandments, and a jar of manna – Aaron's rod was kept in the Ark of the Covenant as a perpetual reminder that the priesthood belonged to the family of Aaron.

There's another interesting point about Aaron's rod. A rod or staff was a former branch, or tree trunk. It was once alive, but is now dead. And in essence, what God did to Aaron's rod was to bring it back to life, so it could bud almonds. God resurrected Aaron's rod to prove he was the chosen intercessor.

And it was all a type of Jesus. Jesus died, and was brought back to life – and His resurrection was proof that He was God's chosen intercessor for mankind.

Hey, the graveyard is full of dead rods – Buddha, Mohammed, and every other false Messiah lie there dead with no life. But Jesus is alive - His work blossoms all over the world. Jesus is the only Man whom God has authorized to intercede for you and me. He is the only means by which a man can be saved.

Ashes of the Red Heifer

Chapter 19 discusses the mysterious ritual of the ashes of the red heifer - a ritual that's puzzled the rabbis for centuries. It was unique and varied greatly from the other sacrifices. I believe it paints a brilliant picture of the sacrifice of Jesus.

The heifer was to be without blemish - never yoked, or innocent. Just like Jesus.

It was sacrificed before the High Priest. Jesus was tried before the Priest before He was crucified.

The heifer was burned outside the camp, and likewise, Jesus was sacrificed outside the gates of Jerusalem.

Verse 6 tells us the heifer was burned along with three items. A stick of cedar wood - Jesus was sacrificed on a wooden cross. A piece of hyssop - hyssop held the potion that moistened Jesus' lips. And a strip of scarlet - which symbolized the scarlet blood spilt from Jesus' precious side.

When a person was deemed unclean, he was sprinkled with the ashes of the red heifer. This is how it worked - the ashes were mixed with running water. Then a branch of hyssop - a spongy plant - was dipped into the solution and the ashes were sprinkled on the unclean person.

This is a powerful picture of the work of Jesus. How does the work of a man 2000 years ago, effect a person today? The answer is symbolized in this ritual. First, it was done by the directions of the Word. Second, water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Hyssop seems to be a type of repentance. Thus, the effects of the cross are carried by the water of the Holy Spirit, which is applied to the heart when a person puts their faith in the Word of God through the means of repentance.

The ritual produced a ceremonial cleansing, but the reality it represents effects a spiritual cleansing in the heart of the believer. (Hebrews 9:13-14)

The ashes of the red heifer also relate to end times events. Since the rebuilt Temple will be purified with this ritual, there are rabbis today who are trying to breed an actual red heifer. According to rabbinical tradition, a heifer does not qualify if just two of its hairs are red, so it's taking some time – but it's interesting that the work is underway to prepare for a rebuilt Temple. It's all a definite precursor to the last days event described in the Bible.

Numbers 16 - Korah's Rebellion

David Guzik

A. The battle lines are drawn: Korah and his followers oppose Moses' leadership.

1. (1-3) The accusation against Moses and Aaron.

Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown. They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?"

a. Now Korah the son of Izhar: This rebellion, like all, had a leader and followers. This leader was Korah, descended from Kohath. Both Moses and Korah were descended from Kohath, but by different sons (Moses through Amram [Numbers 26:58-59], and Korah through Izhar).

i. The Kohathites had the most exalted duty among the Levites; their charge was to carry the most holy things of the temple, after Aaron and his sons had covered them with the specially prepared coverings (Numbers 4:15).

ii. The name Korah means "baldness." Old baldy was going to give Moses a tough time!

b. You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy: Korah was not content with what the Lord had called him to do in serving with the other Levites of the family of Kohath. He accused Moses of pride and exclusionary leadership.

i. It was significant this accusation was made publicly, in front of two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation . . . men of renown. Men like Korah are always playing to an audience, always trying to draw a following after themselves - after Moses has already gathered the nation and led them this far, of course!

c. You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: This was a clever attack. Korah acted as if he is represented the people and fought for their interests. The truth was that he desired a following and a position for himself.

i. "Moses, you shouldn't be the leader. Let everyone be a leader. God can speak to everyone." Rebels and divisive persons have always used such words for their cause.

ii. Significantly, Korah proclaimed the holiness of the people (all the congregation is holy) and regarded strong leadership as unnecessary (You take too much . . .) at the very time when the nation was not holy and desperately needed strong leadership! Korah, like many rebels and divisive persons, completely misread the state of the "flock" - because he was not a true shepherd.

d. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the congregation of the Lord? Korah accused Moses (and Aaron) of pride and self-seeking. The truth was that Moses had not aspired to his position, that God had indeed called him, and Moses did not in fact see himself as above the congregation.

e. Two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown: On a human level, Korah was successful because these followed him. The "Korahs" of the ministry are difficult enough to deal with, but the people who follow them - the two hundred and fifty leaders . . . representatives . . . men of renown - who lack the discernment to oppose the "Korahs" can be even more painful.

2. (4-11) The response of Moses to Korah and his company.

So when Moses heard it, he fell on his face; and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, "Tomorrow morning the Lord will show who is His and who is holy, and will cause him to come near to Him. That one whom He chooses He will cause to come near to Him. Do this: Take censers, Korah and all your company; put fire in them and put incense in them before the Lord tomorrow, and it shall be that the man whom the Lord chooses is the holy one. You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi!" Then Moses

said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi: Is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to serve them; and that He has brought you near to Himself, you and all your brethren, the sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking the priesthood also? Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the Lord. And what is Aaron that you complain against him?"

a. When Moses heard it, he fell on his face: Moses first prayed. Being a humble man, he probably asked God if his critics were right or had something to teach him. He probably asked God what should be done in the situation. He certainly asked God to spare the nation and he asked God to not allow these divisive men to bring permanent harm to the people of God.

b. And he spoke to Korah and all his company: We don't know how long Moses prayed, but after prayer he had a sense of God's direction for this crisis. He issued a challenge whereby Korah and his followers would come before the Lord, and Moses and Aaron would also come, so that the Lord would choose His leaders.

c. You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi! This shows that Moses did not doubt the outcome of the test. He knew that God would prove him right and Korah wrong. Therefore, Moses was unafraid to put it to the test.

d. Is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel: Moses knew that the rebellion of Korah was rooted in ingratitude. They were not thankful for the wonderful ministry God gave them to do. He rebuked the pride and self-seeking that prompted their challenge.

i. Even if Korah was right, this was the wrong way to approach the problem. A power play like this was the wrong way to remove a leader like Moses. The methods of Korah (his use of accusation, intimidation, the gathering of a rival following) revealed his rebellious, divisive heart.

3. (12-14) Dathan and Abiram speak for the rebels.

And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, but they said, "We will not come up! "Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you should keep acting like a prince over us? Moreover you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!"

a. Dathan and Abiram: These were co-conspirators with Korah (16:1). They would not even meet with Moses, nor answer his challenge. They chose to accuse Moses instead.

b. Out of a land of milk and honey: This shows that Dathan and Abiram colored the past. They thought of Egypt as a land of milk and honey, even for the Hebrew slaves. Rebels and divisive people commonly create a past of their own preference, a past that puts leaders like Moses in the worst possible light.

c. To kill us in the wilderness: This shows that Dathan and Abiram assigned an evil heart to Moses. They spoke as if they had discovered the plot of Moses and Aaron: To lead the nation into the wilderness and then kill them. The foolishness of this shows how, against all reason, rebels and divisive people often assign every evil intention to the heart of leaders like Moses.

d. That you should keep acting like a prince over us: This shows that Dathan and Abiram refused to acknowledge growth in Moses. It was true that Moses was at one time a prince, a self-confident man who thought he could deliver and lead Israel with his own hand. God broke him of that with forty years of leading another man's flock in the wilderness. Yet Dathan and Abiram threw it back in his face, as if God had never dealt with Moses in these areas.

e. You have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey: This shows that Dathan and Abiram had unfair expectation of Moses. It was true that Moses had not yet brought them to the Promised Land, and it was true that some of the blame must lay at the feet of Moses because he agreed to the demand of the people to

send spies into the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 1:19-23). Yet, it is wrong to wholly blame Moses for this, or to think that Korah could have done any better.

i. It is unbelievably easy for the Korahs of this world to sit back and say, “If I was leading the nation at Kadesh Barnea, I would have done thus and so.” But Korah was not leading the nation, and men of his type rarely do. God rarely puts the Monday-morning quarterbacks, the backseat drivers, in positions of real leadership - except as a chastisement, to show them just how difficult leadership really is - and that perfect leadership, like perfect anything, is impossible.

ii. Leaders should expect to be held to a higher standard; but it is patently unfair to hold a leader to a perfect standard.

f. We will not come up! This shows that Dathan and Abiram considered themselves under no authority. It said, loud and clear: “Moses, we have no respect for your authority. We will listen to God, but not to you. Your word means nothing to us.” They simply would not submit.

g. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up! Perhaps Dathan and Abiram did not speak for all of the 250 leaders, representatives, and men of renown. Yet none of those 250 were heard to raise an opposing voice to their harsh accusations.

i. Some of the 250 thought that maybe Dathan and Abiram were going a little far; but they did not have their courage to speak up. They were wrong because they allowed Moses be accused this way with no one to defend him.

ii. It was easy for them to stand back and say, “Well, I won’t take sides. I can be friends to both groups.” But here and in many subsequent conflicts, silence is taken as agreement. If a godly man or woman - especially a leader - is being falsely accused, and you say nothing, you have sinned, because your silence is received as agreement.

4. (15-19a) Moses restates his challenge.

Then Moses was very angry, and said to the Lord, "Do not respect their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them, nor have I hurt one of them." And Moses said to Korah, "Tomorrow, you and all your company be present before the Lord; you and they, as well as Aaron. Let each take his censer and put incense in it, and each of you bring his censer before the Lord, two hundred and fifty censers; both you and Aaron, each with his censer." So every man took his censer, put fire in it, laid incense on it, and stood at the door of the tabernacle of meeting with Moses and Aaron. And Korah gathered all the congregation against them at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

a. Then Moses was very angry, and said to the Lord: After the words of Dathan and Abiram, Moses was angry - very angry. He knew he has done nothing to deserve such an accusation, and he did the right thing - he left the situation to God.

i. Remember that Moses was, after all, a man of political power; it was certainly within his capability to have Korah and his followers (like Dathan and Abiram) arrested and/or executed. Instead, he left the situation to God.

ii. Sometimes people are offended that a man like Moses was angry with men like Dathan and Abiram. They think a gentle, easy love is the proper response. Such thinking is understandable, but wrong. Shepherds are gentle with wayward sheep who might injure themselves, but they are passionate against wolves who would injure the flock.

b. I have not taken one donkey from them, nor have I hurt one of them: This shows that Moses was a man of integrity and service to the people. Moses could rest in his clean conscience before God.

i. This reminds us of Paul's testimony before the Ephesian elders in Acts 20: Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God . . . I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel . . . I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak (Acts 20:26-27, 33, 35). When a leader is troubled by rebellious and divisive persons, there is something glorious about a clean conscience.

c. Let each take his censer and put incense in it, and each of you bring his censer before the Lord: This specified the challenge. God would approve or disapprove of these 250 men gathered with censers of incense before the door of the tabernacle.

i. God used the censers with fire and incense in this test for a good reason. A censer is a metal pot used to burn incense, and they were used in the priestly worship of God. Since Korah and his companions questioned Moses and Aaron's right to lead the nation and conduct the priesthood, each group would come to the Lord as worshipping priests - and God would show which group He accepted.

ii. Moses made the rebels take the position they desired - the position of priest. Often the best judgment on the divisive and rebellious is to let them lead.

iii. Humanly speaking, the odds were not good. It was Moses and Aaron stand alone against all the congregation. Yet God would make this choice, and not popular opinion.

B. God affirms Moses' leadership over the nation of Israel.

1. (19b-21) God announces judgment on the rebels.

Then the glory of the Lord appeared to all the congregation. And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment."

a. Separate yourselves: It is as if God said, "Moses and Aaron, will you please move away? I'm going to destroy all these rebels in an instant, and I don't want you to get hurt."

b. That I may consume them in a moment: God decided to make His choice immediately evident. Sometimes this is not the case when God deals with modern Korahs and their followers.

2. (22) The intercession of Moses and Aaron for Korah and the rebels.

Then they fell on their faces, and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and You be angry with all the congregation?"

a. Then they fell on their faces: This was amazing love from Moses and Aaron. Undoubtedly, one of God's reasons for allowing such a painful event in the life of Moses was that God wanted to see this kind love drawn out of Moses. Perhaps it was only the prayer of Moses and Aaron can spare the lives of these men who have tried to bring them down. Such love for the undeserving shows that Moses and Aaron were growing in love, and being transformed into the image of Jesus - before Jesus ever walked the earth.

i. Again, the importance of prayer is emphasized. It seems as if there were no prayer, then the rebellious congregation would be destroyed. We should think that Moses' prayer was essential.

b. Shall one man sin, and You be angry with all the congregation: Moses and Aaron saw right through it. Though many were involved (at least more than 250), one man was at the center of it all - Korah. His sin, his drawing of a group after himself, was the cause of all this mess.

3. (23-35) God's judgment on the rebels.

So the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the congregation, saying, 'Get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.'" Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart now from the tents of these wicked men! Touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins." So they got away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, with their wives, their sons, and their little children. And Moses said: "By this you shall know that the Lord has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will. If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the Lord has not sent me. But if the Lord creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the Lord." Now it came to

pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly. Then all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up also!" And a fire came out from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense.

a. The elders of Israel followed him: This was glorious. God had appointed elders back in Numbers 10:16-30, in response to another attack on Moses' leadership. There, the elders were to be men with the same spirit and vision as Moses, men to help him bear the burden, men to stand with Moses. Here they did exactly what God appointed them to do.

b. Lest you should be consumed in all their sins: Moses, in response to God's command to get away from the tents of the leaders of the rebellion (Korah, Dathan, and Abiram), plead with the people to separate themselves from the divisive persons.

i. The same attitude should be among God's people today. They should stay away from divisive, argumentative, contentious people in the body of Christ. You don't want to be close to them if God should deal with them. A divisive, contentious man will influence you, and you do not want to be consumed in their sins.

ii. The New Testament also speaks along this same principle: Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned. (Titus 3:10-11) Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. (Romans 16:17-18)

iii. Remember a divisive, contentious person will never claim to be divisive and contentious - they always consider their work a noble cause. Therefore Christians need some discernment and to look at

what others do, not only at what they say.

c. By this you shall know: God gave Moses supernatural insight to know some special judgment (a new thing) was going to come upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. The earth would swallow them up, as evidence that these men have rejected the Lord.

d. The ground split apart under them, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up: This was just the way Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were destroyed - along with their families.

i. We may be uneasy seeing the families destroyed also, but it clearly shows that the families of the rebellious, divisive, contentious people suffer also - often greatly.

e. A fire came out from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men: God had judgment reserved for those who walked in agreement with Korah, though not as horrific as the judgment Korah himself received. Their worship was not received.

Lifting Up the Brazen Serpent

October 19th, 1879

by

C. H. Spurgeon

(1834-1892)

“And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it come to pass, that if the serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he shall live.”--Numbers 21:9.

This discourse when it shall be printed will make 1,500 of my sermons which have been published regularly week by week. This is certainly a remarkable fact. I do not know of any instance in modern times in which 1,500 sermons have thus followed each other from the press from one person, and have continued to command a large circle of readers. I desire to utter most hearty thanksgivings to God for divine help in thinking out and uttering these sermons--sermons which have not merely been printed, but have been read with eagerness, and have also been translated into foreign tongues; sermons which are publicly read on this very Sabbath day in hundred of places where a minister cannot be found; sermons which God has blessed to the conversion of multitudes of souls. I may and I must joy and rejoice in this great blessing which I most heartily ascribe to the undeserved favor of the Lord.

I thought the best way in which I could express my thankfulness would be to preach Jesus Christ again, and set Him forth in a sermon in which the simple gospel should be made as clear as a child's alphabet. I hope that in closing the list of 1,500 discourses the Lord will give me a word which will be blessed more than any which have preceded it, to the conversion of those who hear it or read it.

May those who sit in darkness because they do not understand the freeness of salvation and the easy method by which it may be obtained, be brought into the light by discovering the way of peace through believing in Christ Jesus. Forgive this prelude; my thankfulness would not permit me to withhold it.

Concerning our text and the serpent of brass. If you turn to John's gospel you will notice that its commencement contains a sort or orderly list of types taken from Holy Scripture. It begins with the Creation. God said, "Let there be light," and John begins by declaring that Jesus, the eternal Word, is "the true light," and lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Before he closes his first chapter John has introduced a type supplied by Abel, for when the Baptist saw Jesus coming to him he said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Nor is the first chapter finished before we are reminded of Jacob's ladder, for we find our Lord declaring to Nathanael, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of men." By the time we have reached the third chapter we have come as far as Israel in the wilderness, and we read the joyful words, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, and even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

We are going to speak of this act of Moses this morning, that we may all of us behold the brazen serpent and find the promise true, "every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon the brazen serpent, shall live." It may be that you who have looked before will derive fresh benefit from looking again, while some who have never turned their eyes in that direction may gaze upon the uplifted Savior, and this morning be saved from the burning venom of the serpent, that deadly poison of sin which now lurks in their nature, and breeds death to their souls. May the Holy Spirit make the word effectual to that gracious end.

I. I shall invite you to consider the subject first by noticing **THE PERSON IN MORTAL PERIL** for whom the brazen serpent was made and lifted up. Our text saith, "It came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the fiery serpent of brass, he lived."

Let us notice that the fiery serpents first of all came among the people because they had despised God's way and God's bread. "The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way." It was God's way, He had chosen it for them, and He had chosen it in wisdom and mercy, but they murmured at it. An old divine says, "It was lonesome and longsomed," but still it was God's way, and therefore it ought not to have been loathsome.

His pillar of fire and cloud went before them and His servants Moses and Aaron led them like a flock, and they ought to have followed cheerfully. Every step of their previous journey had been rightly ordered, and they ought to have been quite sure that this compassing of the land of Edom was rightly ordered, too. But, no; they quarreled with God's way, and wanted to have their own way. This is one of the great standing follies of men; they cannot be content to wait on the Lord and keep His way, but they prefer a will and way of their own.

The people, also, quarreled with God's food. He gave them the best of the best, for "men did eat angels' food"; but they called the manna by an opprobrious title, which in the Hebrew has a sound of ridicule about it, and even in our translation conveys the idea of contempt. They said, "Our soul loatheth this light bread," as if they thought it unsubstantial, and only fitted to [puff them out, because it was easy of digestion, and did not breed in them that heat of blood and tendency to disease which a heavier diet would have brought with it. Being discontented with their God they quarreled with the bread which He set upon their table, though it surpassed any that mortal man has ever eaten before or since.

This is another of man's follies; his heart refuses to feed upon God's Word or believe God's truth. He craves for the flesh-meat of carnal reason, the leeks and the garlic of superstitious tradition, and the cucumbers of speculation; he cannot bring his mind down to believe the Word of God, or to accept truth so simple, so fitted to the capacity of a child. Many demand something deeper than the divine, more profound than the infinite, more liberal than free grace. They quarrel with God's way, and with God's bread, and hence there comes among them the fiery serpents of evil lusting, pride and sin. I may be speaking to some who have up to this moment quarreled with the precepts and the doctrines of the Lord, and I would affectionately warn them that their disobedience and presumption will lead to sin and misery. Rebels against God are apt to wax worse and worse. The world's fashions and modes of thought lead on to the world's vices and crimes. If we long for the fruits of Egypt we shall soon feel the serpent of Egypt. The natural consequence of turning against God like serpents is to find serpents waylaying our path. If we forsake the Lord in spirit, or in doctrine, temptation will lurk in our path and sin will sting our feet.

I beg you carefully to observe concerning those persons for whom the brazen serpent was especially lifted up that they had been actually bitten by the serpents. The Lord sent fiery serpents among them, but it was not the serpents being among them that involved the lifting up of a brazen serpent, it was the serpents having actually poisoned them which led to the provision of a remedy. "It shall come to pass that everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." The only people who did look and derive benefit from the wonderful cure uplifted in the midst of the camp, were those who had been stung by the vipers. The common notion is that salvation is for good people, salvation is for those who fight against temptation, salvation it for the spiritually healthy; but how different is God's Word. God's medicine is for the sick, and His healing is for the diseased. The grace of God through the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ is for men who are actually and really guilty. We do not preach a sentimental salvation from fancied guilt, but real and true pardon for actual offenses. I care nothing for the sham sinners: you who never did anything wrong, you are so good in yourselves that you are all right--I leave you, for I am sent to preach Christ to those who are full of sin, and worthy of eternal wrath. The serpent of brass was a remedy for those who had been bitten.

What an awful thing it is to be bitten by a serpent! I dare say some of you recollect that case of Gurling, one of the keepers of the reptiles in the Zoological Gardens. It happened in October 1852, and therefore some of you will remember it. This unhappy man was about to part with a friend who was going to Australia, and according to the wont of many he must needs drink with him. He drank considerable quantities of gin, and though he would probably have been in a great passion if anyone had called him drunk, yet reason and common sense had evidently become over-powered. He went back to his post at the gardens in an excited state. He had some months before seen an exhibition of snake-charming, and this was on his poor muddled brain. He must emulate the Egyptians, and play with serpents. First he took out of its cage a Morocco venom-snake, put it round his neck, twisted it about, and whirled it round about him. Happily for him it did not arouse itself so as to bite. The assistant-keeper cried out, "For God's sake put back the snake," but the foolish man replied, "I am inspired." Putting back the venom-snake, he exclaimed, "Now for the cobra."

This deadly serpent was somewhat torpid with the cold of the previous night, and therefore the rash man placed it in his bosom till it revived, and glided downward till its head appeared below the back of his waistcoat. He took it by the body, about a foot from the head, and then seized it lower down by the other hand, intending to hold it by the tail and swing it around his head. He held it for an instant opposite to his face, and like a flash of lightning the serpent struck him between the eyes. The blood streamed down his face, and he called for help, but his companion fled in horror; and, as he told the jury, he did not know how long he was gone, for he was “in a maze.” When assistance arrived Gurling was sitting on a chair, having restored the cobra to its place. He said, “I am a dead man.” They put him in a cab and took him to the hospital. First his speech went, he could only point to his poor throat and moan; then his vision failed him, and lastly his hearing. His pulse gradually sank, and in one hour from the time at which he had been struck he was a corpse. There was only a little mark upon the bridge of his nose, but the poison spread over the body; and he was a dead man.

I tell you that story that you may use it as a parable and learn never to play with sin, and also in order to bring vividly before you what it is to be bitten by a serpent. Suppose that Gurling could have been cured by looking at a piece of brass, would it not have been good news for him? There was no remedy for that poor infatuated creature, but there is remedy for you. For men who have been bitten by the fiery serpents of sin Jesus Christ is lifted up: not for you only who are as yet playing with the serpent, not for you only who have warmed it in your bosom, and felt it creeping over your flesh, but for you who are actually bitten, and are mortally wounded. If any man be bitten so that he has become diseased with sin, and feels the deadly venom in his blood, it is for him that Jesus is set forth today. Though he may think himself to an extreme case, it is for such that sovereign grace provides a remedy.

The bite of the serpent was very painful. We are told in the text that these serpents were “fiery” serpents, which may perhaps refer to their color, but more probably has the reference to the burning effects of their venom. It heated and inflamed the blood so that every vein became a boiling river, swollen with anguish. They write their own damnation, they are sure that they are lost, they refuse all tidings of hope. You cannot get them to give a cool and sober hearing to the message of grace. Sin works in them such

terror that they give themselves over as dead men. They are in their own apprehension, as David says, “free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom God remembers no more.” It was for men bitten by the fiery serpents that the brazen serpent was lifted up, and it is for men actually envenomed by sin that Jesus is preached. Jesus died for such as are at their wits’ end: for such as cannot think straight, for those who are tumbled up and down in their minds, for those who are condemned already--for such was the Son of man lifted up upon the cross. What a comfortable thing that we are able to tell you this.

The bite of these serpents was, as I have told you, mortal. The Israelites could have no question about that, because in their own presence “much people of Israel died.” They saw their own friends die of the snakebite, and they helped to bury them. They knew why they died, and were sure that it was because the venom of the fiery serpents was in their veins. They were left without an excuse for imagining that they could be bitten and yet live.

Now, we know that many have perished as the result of sin. We are not in doubt as to what sin will do, for we are told by the infallible Word, that “the wages of sin is death,” and, yet again, “Sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death.” We know, also, that this death is endless misery, for the Scripture describes the lost as being cast into outer darkness, “where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.” Our Lord Jesus speaks of the condemned going away into everlasting punishment, where there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. We ought to have no doubt about this, and the most of those who profess to doubt it are those who fear that it will be their own portion, who know that they are going down to eternal woe themselves, and therefore try to shut their eyes to their inevitable doom. Alas, that they should find flatterers in the pulpit who pander to their love of sin by piping to the same tune. We are not of their order. We believe in what the Lord has said in all its solemnity of dread, and, knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men to escape therefrom. But it was for men who had endured the mortal bite, for men upon whose pallid faces death began to set his seal, for men whose veins were burning with the awful poison of the serpent within them--for them it was that God said to Moses, “Make three fiery serpents, and set them upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.”

There is no limit set to the stage of poisoning, however far gone, the remedy still had power. If a person had been bitten a moment before, though he only saw a few drops of blood oozing forth, and only felt a little smart, he might look and live, and if he had waited, unhappily waited, even for half an hour, and speech failed him, and the pulse grew feeble, yet if he could but look he would live at once. No bound was ever set to the virtue of this divinely ordained remedy, or to the freedom of its application to those who needed it. The promise had no qualifying clause-- "It shall come to pass that everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live," and our text tells us that God's promise came to pass in every case, without exception, for we read-- "It came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." Thus, then, I have described the person who was in mortal peril.

II. Secondly, let us consider **THE REMEDY PROVIDED FOR HIM.**

This was as singular as it was effectual. It was purely of divine origin, and it is clear that the invention of it, and the putting of power into it, was entirely of God.

Men have proscribed several fomentations, concoctions, and operations for serpent bites: I do not know how far any of them may be depended upon, but this I know--I would rather not be bitten in order to try any of them, even those that are most in vogue.

For the bites of the fiery serpents in the wilderness there was no remedy whatever, except this which God had provided, and at first sight that remedy must have seemed to be a very unlikely one. A simple look to the figure of a serpent on a pole--how unlikely to avail! How and by what means could a cure be wrought through merely looking at twisted brass? It seemed, indeed, to be almost a mockery to bid men look at the very thing which had caused their misery. Shall the bite of a serpent be cured by looking at a serpent? Shall that which brings death also bring life?

But herein lay the excellency of the remedy, that it was of divine origin; for when God ordains a cure He is by that very fact bound to put potency into it. He will devise a failure, nor prescribe a mockery. It should always be enough for us to know that God

ordains a way of blessing us, for if He ordains, it must accomplish the promised result. We need not know how it will work, it is quite sufficient for us that God's mighty grace is pledged to make it bring forth good to our souls.

This particular remedy of a serpent lifted on a pole was exceedingly instructive, though I do not suppose that Israel understood it.

We have been taught by our Lord and know the meaning. It was a serpent impaled upon a pole. As you would take a sharp pole and drive it through a serpent's head to kill it, so this brazen serpent was exhibited as killed, and hung up as dead before all eyes. It was the image of a dead snake. Wonder of wonders that our Lord Jesus should condescend to be symbolized by a dead serpent. The instruction to its after reading John's gospel is this: our Lord Jesus Christ, in infinite humiliation, deigned to come into the world, and to be made a curse for us. 'The brazen serpent had no venom of itself, but it took the form of a fiery serpent. Christ is no sinner, and in Him is no sin. But the brazen serpent was in the form of a serpent; and so was Jesus sent forth by God "in the likeness of sinful flesh." He came under the law, and sin was imputed to Him, and therefore He came under the wrath and curse of God for our sakes. In Christ Jesus, if you will look at Him upon the cross, you will see that sin is slain and hung up as a dead serpent: there too is death put to death, for "He hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light": and there also is the curse forever ended because He has endured it, being "made a curse for us, as it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Thus are these serpents hung up upon the cross a spectacle to all beholders, all slain by our dying Lord. Sin, death, and the curse are as dead serpents now. Oh, what a sight! If you can see it what joy it will give you. Had the Hebrews understood it, that dead serpent, dangling from a pole, would have prophesied to them the glorious sight which this day our faith gazes upon--Jesus slain, and sin, death, and hell slain in Him. The remedy, then, to be looked to was exceedingly instructive, and we know the instruction it was intended to convey to us.

Please to recollect that in all the camp of Israel there was but one remedy for serpent-bite, and that was the brazen serpent; and there was but one brazen serpent, not two. Israel might not make another.

If they had made a second it would have had no effect: there was one, and only one, and that was lifted high in the center of the camp, that if any man was bitten by a serpent he might look to it and live. There is one Savior, and only one. There is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved. All grace is concentrated in Jesus, of whom we read, "It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." Christ's bearing the curse and ending the curse, Christ's being slain by sin and destroying sin, Christ bruised as to His heel by the old serpent, but breaking the serpent's head--it is Christ alone that we must look to if we would live. O sinner, look to Jesus on the cross, for He is the one rem-edy for all forms of sin's poisoned wounds.

There was but one healing serpent, and that one was bright and lustrous.

It was a serpent of brass, and brass is a shining metal. This was newly-made brass, and there-fore not dimmed, and whenever the sun shone, there flashed forth a brightness, from this brazen serpent. It might have been a serpent of wood or of any other metal, if God had so ordained it; but He commanded that it must be of brass, that it might have a brightness about it. What a brightness there is about our Lord Jesus Christ! If we do but exhibit Him in His own true metal He is lustrous in the eyes of men. If we will but preach the gospel simply, and never think to adorn it with our philosophical thought, there is enough brightness in Christ to catch a sinner's eye, aye, and it does catch the eyes of thousands. From afar the everlasting gospel gleams in the person of Christ. As the brazen standard reflected the beams of the sun, so Jesus re-flects the love of God to sinners, and seeing it they look by faith and live.

Once more, this remedy was an enduring one.

It was a serpent of brass, and I suppose it remained in the midst of the camp from that day forward. There was no use for it after Israel entered Canaan, but, as long as they were in the wilderness, it was probably exhibited in the center of the camp, hard by the tabernacle door, upon a lofty standard. Aloft and open to the gaze of all hung this image of a dead snake---the perpetual cure for serpent venom. Had it been made of other materials it might have been broken, or have decayed, but a serpent of brass would last as long as fiery

serpents pestered the desert camp. As long as there was a man bitten there was the serpent of brass to heal him. What a comfort is this, that Jesus is still able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make inter-cession for them. The dying thief beheld the brightness of that serpent of brass as he saw Jesus hanging at his side, and it saved him; and so may you and I took and live, for He is “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

*Faint my head, and sick my heart,
Wounded, bruised, in every part,
Satan's fiery sting I feel
Poisoned with the pride of hell:
But if at the point to die,
Upward I direct mine eye,
Jesus lifted up I see,
Live by him who died for me.*

I hope I do not overlay my subject by these figures. I wish not to do so, but to make it very plain to you. All you that are really guilty, all you who are bitten by the serpent, the sure remedy for you is to look to Jesus Christ, who took our sin upon Himself, and died in the sinner's stead, “being made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Your only remedy lies in Christ, and nowhere else. Look unto Him and be ye saved.

III. This brings us, in the third place, to consider **THE APPLICATION OF THE, REMEDY**, or the link between the serpent-bitten man and the brass serpent which was to heal him.

What was the link?--It was of the most simple kind imaginable. The brazen serpent might have been, if God had so ordered it, carried into the house where the sick man was, but it was not so. It might have been applied to him by rubbing: he might have been expected to repeat a certain form of prayer, or to have a priest present to perform a ceremony, but there was nothing of the kind; he had only to look. It was well that the cure was so simple for the danger was so frequent. Bites of the serpent came in many ways; a man might be gathering sticks, or merely walking along, and be bitten. Even now in the desert serpents are a danger. Mr. Sibree says that on one occasion he saw what he thought to be a round

stone, beautifully marked. He put forth his hand to take it up, when to his horror he discovered that it was a coiled-up living serpent. All the daylong when fiery serpents were sent among them the Israelites must have been in danger. In their beds and at their meals, in their houses and when they went abroad, they were in danger. These serpents are called by Isaiah "flying serpents," not because they do fly, but because they contract themselves and then suddenly spring up, so as to reach to a considerable height, and a man might be well buskined and yet not be beyond the reach of one of these malignant reptiles. What was a man to do? He had nothing to do but to stand outside his tent door, and look to the place where gleamed afar the brightness of the serpent of brass, and the moment he looked he was healed. He had nothing to do but to look--no priest was wanted, no holy water, no hocus pocus, no mass-book, nothing but a look. a Roman Catholic bishop said to one of the early Reformers, when he preached salvation by simple faith, "O Mr. Doctor, open that gap to the people and we are undone." And so indeed they are, for the business and trade of priestcraft are ended forever if men may simply trust Jesus and live. Yet it is even so. Believe in Him, ye sinners, for this is the spiritual meaning of looking, and at once your sin is forgiven, and what perhaps is more, its deadly power ceases to operate within your spirit. There is life in a look at Jesus; is not this simple enough?

But please to notice how very personal it was.

A man could not be cured by any-thing anybody else could do for him. If he had been bitten by the serpent and had refused to look to the serpent of brass, and had gone to his bed, no physician could help him. A pious mother might kneel down and pray for him, but it would be of no use. Sisters might come in and plead, ministers might be called in to pray that the man might live; but he must die despite their prayers if he did not look. There was only one hope for his life--he must look to that serpent of brass.

It is just so with you. Some of you have written to me begging tire to pray for you: so I have, but it avails nothing unless you yourselves believe in Jesus Christ. There is not beneath the copes of heaven, nor in heaven, for any one of you unless you will believe in Jesus Christ. Whoever you may be, however much bitten of the serpent, and however near to die, if you will look to The Savior you

shall live; but if you will not do this you must be damned, as surely as you live. At the last great day I must bear witness against you that I have told you this straight out and plainly. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: he that believeth not shall be damned." There is no help for it; you may do what you will, join what church you please, take the Lord's Supper, be baptized, go through severe penances, or give all your goods to feed the poor, but you are a lost man unless you look to Jesus, for this is the one remedy; and even Jesus Christ Himself cannot, will not, save you unless you look to Him. There is nothing in His death to save you, there is nothing in His life to save you, unless you will trust Him. It has come to this, you must look, and look for yourself.

And then, again, it is very instructive. This looking, what did it mean? It meant this--self-help must be abandoned, and God must be trusted. The wounded man would say, "I must not sit here and look at my wound, for that will not save me. See there where the serpent struck me, the blood is oozing forth, black with the venom! How it burns and swells! My very heart is failing. But all these reflections will not ease me. I must look away from this to the uplifted serpent of brass." It is idle to look anywhere except to God's one ordained remedy. The Israelites must have understood as much as this, that God requires us to trust Him, and to use His means of salvation. We must do as He bids us, and trust in Him to work our cure; and if we will not do this we shall die eternally.

This way of caring was intended that they might magnify the love of God, and attribute their healing entirely to divine grace. The brazen serpent was not merely a picture, as I have shown you, of God's putting away sin by spending His wrath upon His Son, but it was a display of divine love. And this I know because Jesus Himself said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up. For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son": plainly saying that the death of Christ upon the cross was an exhibition of God's love to men; and whosoever looks to that grandest display of God's love to man, namely, His giving His only-begotten Son to become a curse for us, shall surely live. Now, when a man was healed by looking at the serpent he could not say that he healed him-self, for he only looked, and there is no virtue in a look, a believer never claims merit or honor on account of his faith. Faith is a self-denying

grace, and never dares to boast. Where is the great credit of simple believing the truth, and humbly trusting Christ to save you? Faith glorifies God, and so our Lord has chosen it as the means of our salvation. If a priest had come and touched the bitten man he might have ascribed some honor to the priest; but when there was no priest in the case, when there was nothing except looking to that brazen serpent, the man was driven to the conclusion that God's love and power had healed him. I am not saved by anything that I have done, but by what the Lord has done. To that conclusion God will have us all come; we must all confess that if saved it is by His free, rich, sovereign, undeserved grace displayed in the person of His dear Son.

IV. Allow me one moment before the fourth head, which is **THE CURE EFFECTED.**

We are told in the text that "if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived"; that is to say, he was healed at once. He had not to wait five minutes, nor five seconds. Dear hearer, did you ever hear this before? If you have not, it may startle you, but it is true. If you have lived in the blackest sin that is possible up to this very moment, yet if you will now believe in Jesus Christ you shall be saved before the clock ticks another time. It is done like a flash of lightning; pardon is not a work of time. Sanctification needs a lifetime, but justification needs no more than a moment. Thou believest, thou livest. Thou dost trust to Christ, thy sins are gone, thou art a saved man the instant thou believest. "Oh," saith one, "that is a wonder." It is a wonder, and will remain a wonder to all eternity. Our Lord's miracles when He was on earth were mostly instantaneous. He touched them and the fevered ones were able to sit up and minister to Him. No doctor can cure a fever in that fashion, for there is a resultant weakness left after the heat of the fever is abated. Jesus works perfect cures, and whosoever believeth in Him, though he hath only believed one minute, is justified from all his sins. Oh, the matchless grace of God!

This remedy healed again and again. Very possibly after a man had been healed he might go back to his work, and be attacked by a second serpent, for there were broods of them about. What had he to do? Why, to look again, and if he was wounded a thousand times he must look a thousand times. You, dear child of God, if

you have sin on your conscience, look to Jesus, The healthiest way of living where serpents swarm is never to take your eye off the brazen serpent at all. Ah, ye vipers, ye may bite if ye will; as long as my eye is upon the brazen serpent I defy your fangs and poison-bags, for I have a continual remedy at work within me. Temptation is overcome by the blood of Jesus. "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith."

This cure was of universal efficacy to all who used it.

There was not one case in all the camp of a man that looked to the serpent of brass and yet died, and there never will be a case of a man that looks to Jesus who remains under condemnation. The believer must be saved. Some of the people had to look from a long distance. The pole could not be equally near to everybody, but so long as they could see the serpent it healed those that were afar off as well as those who were nigh. Nor did it matter if their eyes were feeble. All eyes were not alike keen; and some may have had a squint, or a dimness of vision, or only one eye, but if they did but look they lived. Perhaps the man could hardly make out the shape of the serpent as he looked. "Ah", he said to himself, "I cannot discern the coils of the brazen snake, but I can see the shining of the brass"; and he lived. Oh, poor soul, if thou canst not see the whole of Christ nor all His beauties, nor all the riches of His grace, yet if thou canst but see Him who was made sin for us thou shalt live. If thou sayest, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief," thy faith will save thee; a little faith will give thee a great Christ, and thou shalt find eternal life in Him.

Thus I have tried to describe the cure. Oh, that the Lord would work that cure in every sinner here at this moment. I do pray he may. It is a pleasant thought that if they looked to that brazen serpent by any kind of life they lived. Many beheld it in the glare of noon, and saw its shining coils, and lived; but I should not wonder that some were bitten at night, and by the moonlight they drew near and looked up and lived. Perhaps it was a dark and stormy night, and not a star was visible. The tempest crashed overhead, and from the murky cloud out flashed the lightning, cleaving the rocks asunder. By the glare of that sudden flame the dying man made out the brazen serpent, and though he saw but for moment yet he lived. So, sinner, if your soul is wrapped in

tempest, and if from out the cloud there comes but one single flash of light, look to Jesus Christ by it and you shall live.

V. I close with this last matter of consideration: here is a **LESSON FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THEIR LORD**. What ought we to do?

We should imitate Moses, whose business it was to set the brazen serpent upon a pole. It is your business and mine to lift up the gospel of Christ Jesus, so that all may see it. All Moses had to do was to hang up the brazen serpent in the sight of all. He did not say, "Aaron, bring your censer, and bring with you a score of priests, and make a perfumed cloud." Nor did he say, "I myself will go forth in my robes as lawgiver, and stand there." No, he had nothing to do that was pompous or ceremonial, he had but to exhibit the brass serpent and leave it naked and open to the gaze of all. He did not say, "Aaron, bring hither a cloth of gold, wrap up the serpent in blue and scarlet and fine linen." Such an act would have been clean contrary to his orders. He was to keep the serpent unveiled. Its power lay in itself, and not in its surroundings. The Lord did not tell him to paint the pole, or to deck it with the colors of the rainbow. Oh, no. Any pole would do, The dying ones did not want to see the pole, they only needed to behold the serpent. I dare say he would make a neat pole, for God's work should be done decently, but still the serpent was the sole thing to look at. This is what we have to do with our Lord. We must preach Him, teach Him, and make Him visible to all. We must not conceal Him by our attempts at eloquence and learning. We must have done with the polished lancewood pole of fine speech, and those bits of scarlet and blue, in the form of grand sentences the poetic periods. Everything must be done that Christ may be seen, and nothing must be allowed which hides Him. Moses may go home and go to bed when the serpent is once uplifted. All that is wanted is that the brazen serpent should be within view both by day and night. The preacher may hide himself, so that no-body may know who he is, for if he has set forth Christ is he is best out of the way.

Now, you teachers, teach your children Jesus. Show them Christ crucified. Keep Christ before them. The young men that try to preach, do not attempt to do it grandly. The true grandeur of preaching is for Christ to be grandly displayed in it. No other

grandeur is wanted. Keep self in the background, but set forth Jesus Christ among the people, evidently crucified among them. None but Jesus, none but Jesus. Let Him be sum and substance of all your teaching.

Some of you have looked to the brazen serpent, I know, and you have been healed, but what have you done with the brazen serpent since? You have not come forward to confess your faith and join the church. You have not spoken to anyone about his soul. You put the brazen serpent into a chest and hide it away. Is this right? Bring it out, and set it on a pole. Publish Christ and His salvation. He was never meant to be treated as a curiosity in a museum; He is intended to be exhibited in the highways that those who are sin-bitten may look at Him. "But, I have no proper pole," says one. The best sort of pole to exhibit Christ upon is a high one, so that He may be seen the further. Exalt Jesus. Speak well of His name. I do not know any other virtue that there can be in the pole but its height. The more you can speak in your Lord's praise, the higher you can lift Him up the better, but for all other styles of speech there is nothing to be said. Do lift Christ up. "Oh," says one, "but I have not a long standard." Then lift Him up on such as you have, for there are short people about who will be able to see by your means.

I think I told you once of a picture which I saw of the brazen serpent. I want the Sunday-school teachers to listen to this. The artist represented all sorts of people clustering round the pole, and as they looked the horrible snakes dropped off their arms, and they lived. There was such a crowd around the pole that a mother could not get near it. She carried a little babe, which a serpent had bitten. You could see the blue marks of the venom. As she could get no nearer, the mother held her child aloft, and turned its little head that it might gaze with its infant eye upon the brazen serpent and live. Do this with your little children, you Sunday school teachers. Even while they are yet little, pray that they may look to Jesus Christ and live; for there is no bound set to their age.

Old men snake-bitten came hobbling on their crutches. "Eighty years old am I," saith one, "but I have looked to the brazen serpent, and I am healed." Little boys were brought out by their mothers, though as yet they could hardly speak plainly, and they cried in

child language, "I look at the great snake and it bless me." All ranks, and sexes, and characters, and dispositions looked and lived,

Who will look to Jesus at this good hour? O dear souls, will you have life or no? Will you despise Christ and perish? If so, your blood be on your own skirts. I have told you God's way of salvation, lay hold on it. Look to Jesus at once. May His Spirit gently lead you so to do. Amen.