

The Power of the Cross
THE CROSS AND THE SERPENT

Num.21:6-9

INTRODUCTION:

I. Relate background and read text. **Num. 21:6-9-** *“And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. 7 So the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and you; intercede with the LORD, that He may remove the serpents from us.” And Moses interceded for the people. 8 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he shall live.” 9 And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived.”*

There are some things we notice about the brass serpent...

- A. It was prescribed by God. **It was the DIVINELY APPOINTED means of HEALING!**
 - B. It was the **ONLY DESIGNATED REMEDY** for the condition they were afflicted with!
 - C. **THE BRASS SERPENT HEALED:** whoever the bitten person was -- young, old, rich, poor, priest, slave. Just as the condition (being bitten) was no respecter of persons; neither was the healing.
 - D. **THE BRASS SERPENT HEALED:** wherever the man was bitten. Made no difference where the man was or what part of the man was adversely affected, the brass serpent was the answer!
 - E. **THE BRASS SERPENT HEALED:** however many times a man might be bitten.
 - F. **THE BRASS SERPENT HEALED:** however serious a man's condition
 - G. **SO, we have noticed two remarkable things about this wonderful display of God's POWER and CONCERN:**
 - 1. **The plan was SIMPLE.** Healing was easy to find ... life came by a look.
 - 2. **The plan NEVER FAILED.** The cure was instantaneous and complete. You didn't look to the brass serpent only to walk away and die....
- II. **The apostle John, in relating the story of God's love in the cross, likens THE CROSS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST to this Old Testament event... John 3:14-16-** *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; 15 that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life. 16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”*
- III. **As we look at the cross of Jesus, the lessons should be too obvious to miss...**

I. THE CROSS OF CHRIST IS GOD'S PLAN TO SAVE MAN...

- A. It didn't originate within the mind of man but from the wisdom of God. In fact, man often thinks that the implementing of God's Salvation is foolishness. **1 Cor. 1:18-23-** *“For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, “I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE.” 20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness,”*
- B. Yet, the focal point of history is God reaching out to mankind with the ultimate sacrifice for humanity's salvation, and then REVEALING the achieving of it **TO EVERYONE OF US!** **1 Cor.15:1-4.**
 - 1. God's plan for man is understandable, rational, effective, rewarding, **and all of it is from God!**
 - 2. Can you understand that God wants you to believe in His Son, repent, and be baptized?

II. THE CROSS OF CHRIST IS GOD'S ONLY MEANS OF SALVATION...John 14:6

- A. **The cross of Christ is the only way man can be cleansed of all his sins!**
 - 1. **2 Cor.5:14-15-** *“For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.”*
 - 2. **Heb.2:9-** *“But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.”*
 - 3. The cross of Christ is no respecter of persons ... young or old, rich or poor, black or white, executive or ditch-digger ... **JESUS CHRIST IS THE ANSWER, BECAUSE HE DIED FOR EVERYONE OF US!**

4. A lot of doors in this life are closed to people, for one reason or another!
 - a) **Some doors are closed to us** because we're *NOT IMPORTANT ENOUGH*; others perhaps because we're *NOT RICH ENOUGH*; others maybe because we're *NOT SMART ENOUGH*!
 - b) **BUT NOT THIS DOOR THAT ALLOWS US ENTRANCE INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD!...Acts 10:34-35-** "And opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, 35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him."
 - 1) God *loves* YOU! God will *welcome* YOU! God will *infol*d YOU in His arms of CARE!
 - 2) No matter **WHO YOU HAVE BEEN, OR WHO YOU ARE, OR HOW TERRIBLE YOU THINK YOU ARE!**

B. The cross of Christ cleanses no matter what the sin...

1. There is a tendency for guilt-ridden man to think that God could not forgive their sin. "Forgive the sins of others? Yes? But forgive what I have done? How could He?" (Somehow, we often seem to think that **OUR SINS** are **WORSE** than others.)
2. But the blood of Christ can cleanse even the vilest of sins... **1 Cor. 6:9-11-** "Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."

C. The cross of Christ cleanses no matter how many times a man has sinned... Matt.18:21-35 (Always keep in mind that **GOD** is not the one who limits forgiveness)...

D. The cross of Christ cleanses no matter how terrible the situation of sin in our lives!

1. The cross saves the worst of sinners. **1 Tim. 1:15-16:** "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that IN ME JC might demonstrate His perfect patience!"
2. **NO MATTER how terrible a situation of sin exists in your life, if you want the salvation of the Lord you can reach it!**

CONCLUSION:

I. It is important that you realize, even as in the story of the brass serpent, two very important lessons regarding the cross of Jesus Christ...

A. THE PLAN OF GOD IS SIMPLE...

1. Healing is easy to find **at the foot of the cross...** **Matt.7:7-** "Ask, & it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you!" **Matt.11:28-30**
2. **Instead of a look**, though, **it comes by obedience to simple commands...** **Mark 16:16;** **Acts 2:38**

B. THE PLAN OF GOD NEVER FAILS. Sometimes, as in the case with the brass serpent, men may fail to follow the plan and die, but the plan never fails.

C. No matter who you are, no matter where you're from, no matter what you've done, if you'll look to the cross, you can be cleansed.

II. What about you? Are you heavily burdened with a load of sin? Why not let Jesus remove that burden?

- A. **He can't take away** all of your problems. **He won't take away** all your temptations?
- B. JUST LIKE God didn't take away the serpents that bit the people, **but provided a MEANS of healing.**
- C. And that's what He provides for us today! Why not look at the cross? Why not come to Jesus for cleansing...**B+R+C+B=Rof S.**