

Lifting Up Christ

Text: John 3:14-17

Introduction

1. The comparison Jesus makes in the text teaches a great truth about Himself.
2. He refers to an incident that took place in the wilderness as Israel journeyed from Egypt to Canaan.

I. The Lifting Up of the Serpent (Numbers 21:4-9)

- A. The Israelites were again murmuring and speaking against God and Moses. (v. 5)
- B. The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and many of them died. (v. 6)
- C. The people confessed their sin and begged Moses to pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from among them. (v. 7)
 1. After praying, Moses was instructed to make a serpent of brass and put it upon a pole.
 2. If one who had been bitten by a serpent looked upon the serpent of brass, he lived. (v. 9)
- D. A bitten Israelite was required to have enough faith to look upon the brass serpent that had been lifted up in order to be healed.
 1. His saving was by faith—God having been gracious in providing his salvation.
 2. The fact that salvation was by faith did not preclude the fact that the Israelite had to do something—in this case, look upon the brass serpent.

II. The Lifting Up of Jesus on the Cross (John 3:14-15)

- A. Jesus establishes a link between the serpent in the wilderness and His death upon the cross.
 1. The world has been “bitten” by sin as the Israelites were bitten by the fiery serpents.
 2. Whoever looks upon the lifted Christ shall not perish but have eternal life.
- B. As the Israelites had to have more than faith, they had to do something—look upon the serpent, people today must have more than faith to be healed by Christ.
 1. They must have a faith that manifests itself in obedience to Christ—looking to Him. (Heb. 5:8-9)

2. This analogy is the best commentary available to show that John 3:16 does not refer to belief alone but a faith that is manifested in obedience to the commands of Christ, looking to Him as Savior. (John 3:36)

III. The Lifting Up of Jesus by the Christian

- A. This is something each Christian must do as a "light in the world." (Matt. 5:14-16)
- B. Lifting up Christ is done by:
 1. Preaching Christ crucified. (Gal. 3:1; 1 Cor. 1:18-23; 2:1-5; 2 Tim. 4:2; Rom. 6:17-18)
 2. Faithfully observing the Lord's Supper. (1 Cor. 11:23-26)
 3. Living Christlike every day. (Gal. 6:14; Col. 3:17; 3:1-3; Rom. 12:1-2)
 4. Possessing the mind of Christ. (Phil. 2:3-5; 1 Pet. 4:1)
 5. Suffering as a Christian. (1 Pet. 4:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:21-24)
 6. Looking for His glorious appearing. (Titus 2:11-14; Matt. 24:42-44)

Conclusion

As Christ had to be lifted up on the cross and shed His blood for our sins, we need to lift Him up every day in our lives.