

Look and Live

Scripture Reading — Numbers 21:4-9

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. — Numbers 21:8

Not many people like snakes. Very few people would choose a snake as their favorite animal. Snakes slither. They're sneaky. Some of them have deadly, venomous bites.

Israel complained against God in the wilderness. The wilderness was barren, hot, and empty. It seemed to them that God had taken them to the desert to die. In response to their complaints, God sent snakes, which bit the people—and many died.

But it was a snake on a pole that brought healing. The very thing that caused people death gave life. First, Israel confessed their sin. Then God told Moses to make a bronze snake and put it on a pole, and everyone who looked at it would live. They weren't told to make medicine, to educate themselves about venom, or to pray to the snake. All they needed to do was look. They needed to look away from themselves and to believe in God's promise.

Jesus told Nicodemus that just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man would be lifted up so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life (John 3:14-15). Jesus took on our sin. In fact, he became “sin for us” (2 Corinthians 5:21). He identified with our sin and was lifted up on the cross to pay for it.

God invites us to look to Jesus and live. Have you done that?

Prayer

Saving God, thank you that Jesus was lifted up in our place so that by faith in him we may be for-given, be healed, and live. In his name we pray. Amen.

Written by Tom Groelsema — <https://today.reframemedia.com/authors/tom-groelsema>

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