

# TRUTH & RIGHT

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**WELLSBURG**  
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## AS MOSES LIFTED UP THE SERPENT

“Then they set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient because of the journey. The people spoke against God and Moses, ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food.’ The LORD sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. 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. 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

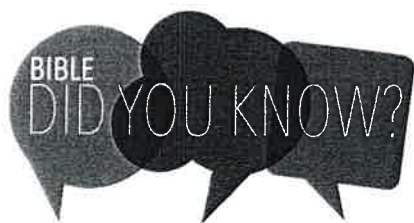
bitten, when he looks at it, he will live.’ And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived,” (Num. 21:4-9). Jesus later makes a reference to this incident, stating that the way God provided a cure for those dying by the serpents that bit them foreshadowed the way God would provide a cure for those dying in sin. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him,” (Jn.

3:14-17). While we can see the parallel between raising up a serpent on a pole and raising up Jesus on a cross, there still is often a little bit of confusion as to how these two incidents can be linked together as a lesson in redemption. Looking at the incident in the wilderness with the fiery serpents a bit more closely, we begin to see just how much it truly does foreshadow the way Christ would offer redemption on the cross. What is so striking about the way God saved the Israelites who had been bitten by the fiery serpents is that the source of healing was the very image of the curse itself. This certainly would have pricked the hearts of those who had realized the gravity of their sin as they were dying from lethal snake bites. As they looked to the serpent raised up, there would have been a humbling confession within their soul, acknowledging they deserved to be bitten as just punishment for their sinful heart and being reminded of this as they looked at the bronze serpent. This would have served as a vivid image stuck in their minds, as God commanded they must look at it. By looking at it, they must face the reality of their sins, confessing them, and seeing the very image of the curse God brought upon them. This would have no doubt left a

sense of God's great mercy in their hearts, looking at the very curse they justly deserved to be punished by, yet being healed in the process. We have been bitten by the curse of death as just punishment for our sins. "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Rom. 6:23). Jesus became the embodiment of that curse, a sinless sacrifice, yet taking on the curse of death which we all have justly been bitten by. "The person who sins will die," (Ezek. 18:20). "For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.' Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, 'The righteous man shall live by faith.' However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, 'He who practices them shall live by them.' Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us – for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree' – in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith," (Gal. 3:10-14). As we must look to Christ, the only source of our redemption, we must see the curse we have

been bitten by, death, becoming the very source of our healing through the death of Christ. There also is the sense of humble shame and confession of our sins as we must acknowledge how deserving we are to justly die for our sinful offenses against God, and yet look to the death Jesus went through on the cross and become overwhelmed with the sense of God's mercy and love to save us through Him. In another way, by also looking to Jesus, we see another element of the source of our curse. As Jesus stated even when our spirit desires to obey God, it is our flesh which prevents us from being fully obedient. "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please," (Gal. 5:17). Since it is our flesh, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life, which justly brings the curse of death from God upon us, when we look to the Son of God, God in human flesh being crucified, we see an answer to the problem in our flesh which provides our cure – crucifying the flesh. "Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires," (Gal. 5:24). When we see our curse and the initial

cause of that curse becoming the very source of our healing in Christ dying on the cross, we truly see an amazing parallel in the experience the Israelites would have had in their humility turning and looking upon the very curse they had been bitten by in looking upon the bronze serpent. Let us all in humble confession see our great need for redemption and forgiveness and turn to the Savior who was lifted up for our healing. – Daniel Ruegg



***"The soul of the wicked desires evil; his neighbor finds no favor in his eyes. When the scoffer is punished, the naïve becomes wise; but when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge. The righteous one considers the house of the wicked, turning the wicked to ruin."***

***Prov. 21:10-12***

# BIBLE TRIVIA

C H A L L E N G E

**DIRECTIONS:** After searching through your Bible, circle which answer is correct.

1. Jesus said, "Blessed are the \_\_\_ in spirit."

- a) Full
- b) Poor
- c) Wise
- d) Discreet

2. Jesus said, "If the salt has become \_\_\_, how can it be made salty again?"

- a) Coarse
- b) Bunched
- c) Gross
- d) Tasteless

3. Jesus said He did not come to abolish the Law but to \_\_\_.

- a) Fulfill
- b) Enforce
- c) Ignore
- d) Mock

4. Jesus said if we practice our righteousness to be noticed by \_\_\_ we have no reward in heaven.

- a) God
- b) Angels
- c) Tax Collectors
- d) Men

5. Jesus said if we do not \_\_\_ then our Father will not forgive us.

- a) Forgive
- b) Beg
- c) Live perfectly
- d) Succeed

6. Jesus said if our eye is bad our whole body will be full of \_\_\_.

- a) Tumors
- b) Ticks
- c) Measles
- d) Darkness

7. Jesus asked if we could add a single \_\_\_ to life by worrying.

- a) Day
- b) Year
- c) Hour
- d) Month

8. There are \_\_\_ who find the narrow gate.

- a) Many
- b) Few
- c) Tall
- d) Short

9. Jesus said he who does the \_\_\_ of His Father will enter the kingdom of heaven.

- a) Laundry
- b) Cleaning
- c) Will
- d) Shopping

10. When Jesus finished the Sermon on the Mount, the crowds were \_\_\_.

- a) Bored
- b) Exhausted
- c) Unimpressed
- d) Amazed

ANSWERS & REFERENCES

- 1) B. Reference: Mt. 5:3
- 2) D. Reference: Mt. 5:13
- 3) A. Reference: Mt. 5:17
- 4) D. Reference: Mt. 6:1
- 5) A. Reference: Mt. 6:15
- 6) D. Reference: Mt. 6:23
- 7) C. Mt. 6:27
- 8) B. Mt. 7:14
- 9) C. Mt. 7:21
- 10) D. Mt. 7:28