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| **A Seemingly Bizarre Salvation**  *Promise: looking to the One who died for us results in life* Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg Numbers 21:4-9; Psa 107:1-9; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21 (Fourth Sunday in Lent), 3/10/24)  *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.* – John 3:14-15  **Lead In –** In Isaiah 55 we read, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (v. 8-9). God’s ways often seem counterintuitive, even foolish to us. Joshua is instructed by God to march around the well-fortified walls of Jericho blowing trumpets in order to breach the walls. Gideon went into battle as instructed and defeated the Midianites with 300 soldiers equipped with trumpets and torches hidden in clay jars. The Syrian Commander, Naaman, was told to dip himself seven times into the muddy Jordan River to be healed and cleansed of leprosy. This is to mention but a few. And God’s remedy in our first reading for the lethal bites of the fiery serpents has to rank right up there with one of the most unusual. What’s going on there?...   1. **A Reminder of Sin And Sin’s Penalty**    1. They had spoken against God and His servant!    2. Admission of sin and calling on the Name of the Lord…    3. The work of the Spirit to convict us of sin… 2. **Lifted Up! Our Help Comes From Heaven Above**    1. Looking for help in all the wrong places…    2. The cursed object is lifted up on a pole…    3. Mysteriously, on the Cross Christ draws people… 3. **Death On A Pole Brings Life**    1. The Holy One’s death overcomes death…    2. With sins atoned for and washed away…    3. Where there is forgiveness of sins there is also…   **Final Word –** *Whoever believes in Him.* **Whoever!** Such a great word. There are two things you need to know about this believing that receives the gift of eternal life. And this is especially good news. The first is, this faith to see in Christ and His death on the Cross as the means of salvation is a gift. Apart from this gift we would remain dead in our trespasses and blind to Christ and His benefits. And the second is, faith is not a work we do. It is a surrender. It is to desist from trying to rescue ourselves, which is nothing less than continuing to be lord of our own lives. It is nothing other than looking up, looking up to the One lifted up on the pole of the Cross for our salvation.  **Lk 10:16** “The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”  **Jl 2:32a** And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Ac 2:21; Ro 10:13)  **Jn 16:8** And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.  **Ps 121:1-2** I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. | **Numbers 21:4-9 ESV**  *The Bronze Serpent*  4From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. 5And the people spoke against God and against 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 worthless food.” 6Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. 7And the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. 8And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.” 9So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.  **John 3:14-21 ESV**  *For God So Loved the World*  14And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15that **whoever** believes in him may have eternal life.  16“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that **whoever** believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. 20For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. 21But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”  **Ga 3:13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”.  **1Pe 2:24** He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.  **Jn 12:32** “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”  **1Co 15:24-26** Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. |