

The Mind of Christ - Lesson 29

September 18, 2019

Last week we talked quite a bit about a phrase that's found in **John 3:13**, where Jesus said, "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man."

We talked a lot about 'ascending and descending' and it is used quite often in scripture. The conclusion that I have drawn from this is that ascending back to heaven for Jesus was not merely a transportation issue where He just left earth and transported Himself back to heaven. I believe that when we see the word 'ascension', that it really **is** part of the Gospel. It is part of our theological understanding and that it represents His going back to be crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and going back to the right hand of God. It is not merely transporting himself back to heaven; it is that; but it is transporting Himself back into the right hand of God, the place of Authority, from which He sent, obviously the Holy Spirit, and He rules and reigns over His Kingdom.

That whole idea gives, I think, for me more emphasis to the idea of ascension than just merely 'going back to heaven'. It 'fills out' from Jesus coming to earth, descending into this part of the world, then living a sinless life, dying, being buried, being raised from the dead, and then ascending back to the Father, first appearing to witnesses, and then ascending back to the Father being crowned and coronated.

So with that backdrop, we're moving into verse 14. "¹⁴ As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." So we are going to tackle that idea tonight. Remember, the "lifted up" part here, is directly after the discussion about ascension. We can see the correlation there between *ascending* and *lifting up*. They are the same type of movement that is involved. Let's see what we can get out of this. I am reading from my journals written about the Mind of Christ. This is from Sept. 29, 2010.

Before we talk of Moses' snake, let's consider the term "**lifted up**". The word in Greek is "*hupsos*" (ὕψος). The meaning of the word is "heights" as in **Eph. 3:18** – about how long and deep and **high** is the love of Christ... The word for 'high' is used for *lifted up*, but also means exultation or dignity or eminence. **James 1:9** talks about a person who glories in his **high** or lifted up position. That is the same Greek word. Zacharias, John's father, prophesied in **Luke 1:78** "Because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise from **on high** will visit us". The on high part is the lifted up, or *hupsos*. The sunrise that is **lifted up** will visit us... obviously a reference to Jesus, and that sunrise shines upon those who sit in darkness. In **Luke 24:49** "you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from **on high**." This is power from a lifted up position. In **Ephesians 4:8** says, "When He ascended **on high**, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men." Jesus ascended "on high". So I am asking, "Is there a connection between **ascension** and **lifted up**?" Jesus was **ascended** to a "**lifted up**" position.

In **Matthew 4:8** "the devil took Him to a very **high** (lifted up) mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory." In **Matthew 17:1** Jesus took Peter, James and John and "led them up on a **high** (lifted up) mountain by themselves."

And then, in **Hebrews 1:3** Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Majesty “on **high**”... the majesty that is **lifted up**. He is sitting down at the right hand of the **Majesty on high**, and in **Acts 13:17** ...God led His people with an uplifted (lifted high) arm. He {God} led them {His people} out from it. He led them out of Egypt. **Luke 16:15** says, “You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is **highly esteemed** {lifted up} among men is **detestable** in the sight of God.” The things that **men** lift up are the things that **God** detests. They are an abomination to Him, they have a foul odor to them; they are disgusting.

In **Romans 12:16**, it talks about a **haughty mind** or a **lifted up** mind. All of these are the *same word* about the Son of man being **lifted up**. In **Matthew 21:9** during the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and the crowds shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna **in the highest**, or Hosanna that is **lifted up**. In **Mark 5:7** the demon begged Jesus, “**Son of the Most High**, or the **lifted up God**, do not torment me!”

In **John 8:28** Jesus said, “When you **lift up** the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He.” But notice the phrase here; this is when **men** have men lift up the Son of man. Men lift Him up to *crucify* Him, but God, also, lifts Him up to exalt Him. Get those two ideas in your head. There is a dual “lifting up” here. Men hoisted Jesus up on the cross to *humiliate* Him, but God lifted Him up to *exalt* Him.

In **Matthew 11:23**, “And you, Capernaum, will you be **lifted** {exalted} to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades.” They did not believe in Jesus. Those in Capernaum did not have faith in Jesus. Should they be exalted or lifted up to the heavens? The answer is, “For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day.” You didn’t believe in Jesus, so the answer is no! They shall go down to the depths of Hades... or down to the grave. They will **not** be lifted up ... they won’t **ascend**; they will **descend** because of their unbelief! Again, we get this picture of ascending and descending in these different contexts.

In **Matthew 23:12** Jesus says, “For those who **exalt** themselves {lift themselves up} will be **humbled**, and those who **humble** themselves will be **exalted** {lifted up}.” Mary says to Elizabeth in **Luke 1:52** that “God has **brought down** rulers from their thrones, and has **exalted** those who were humble.” Again, the ascension and the descension ... what is **brought down** is a humbling, and then, what is brought up is an **exultation**; an exalting.

When Jesus says He must be lifted up, **I** believe He speaks a **double meaning**. When **men** lifted Him up (on the cross) He was humbled ... He was made detestable. Read **Isaiah 53:3**, “He was despised and {forsaken} rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him...” He was marred beyond all human resemblance.

So, when **men lifted Him up**, it was to humble Him or embarrass Him. So **they** thought that in lifting Him up they were humiliating Him, but when **God** lifts Him up He lifts Him up to the highest place; to the right hand of the Father, gives him the place of honor and crowns Him King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

When men lifted Him up on the cross He was humbled and because he was humbled, God lifted Him up to the highest place of honor – at His right hand. Because Satan remained *proud* in order to lift himself up, God will bring him down all the way into the pit. He’s going to descend down to the deepest pit. And it truly is a matter of descending and ascending.

I think there’s a whole lot more, because I’ve often read this scripture and just let it go – that when Jesus was lifted up on the cross, then people would see Him, and be drawn to Him, but I believe there is a little bit more, theologically going on here than simply hoisting Him up on a cross. There is something that we need to understand about that whole process of what really happens.

If you go to **1 Corinthians 1** it talks about the ‘idea of the cross is detestable ... it’s foolishness to man. But what man deems as being foolishness, God uses as wisdom! It is to be honored.

Now, let’s talk a little bit about Moses’ snake.

Well, **Numbers 21** is the context of the snake in the Old Testament. God had given Israel victory over the Canaanites who were utterly destroyed. And then they continued their journey around Edom and they began to complain of impatience, and because of the manna they had (which it says ‘they loathed’). Then they began to speak against God and Moses.

Numbers 21: ⁶ 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 will 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.

This isn’t the first time they complained with God. So this is why God sent the snakes; He sent them “fiery serpents”. The word “fiery” is ‘saraph’ meaning burning; it could mean poisonous. The reference, some believe, is to the color of the snake’s copper color. I don’t know if they were copperheads. We know that they were poisonous because they were killing people. We know it from the outcome ... people were dying after they were bitten.

Brian: It feels like fire if they bite you.

Rod: It feels like fire when they bite you? Is that what they say?

So this word “serpent” is in a couple of places. In **Isaiah 14:29** and **Isaiah 30:6** it’s translated “dragon” in the **NASB** and “flying serpent” in the **NIV**. The word comes from a word in Hebrew which means “to hiss”. The word “snake” comes from the idea of hissing.

So when the Israelites were bitten they died, and others seeing this, began to confess their sins. There nothing like seeing your fellow citizens dying from snake bites to bring you to repentance.

So they pleaded with Moses to intercede for them. The word for “intercede” means to judge, to pray, and to entreat. It is the most common Hebrew word for “prayer”. They are asking Moses to pray for them. It is especially used in times of distress for both oneself and for one another or for other people. So you can pray for yourself in times of stress and you can pray for others.

Of course, in the New Testament, Jesus is our intercessor, along with the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:26 says, “...but the **Spirit Himself intercedes for us** with groanings too deep for words.” In **Romans 8:34** Paul says, “Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, **who also intercedes for us.**” NASB It’s interesting to me that immediately, in **John 3:14**, we not only have the idea of being lifted up in the story, but the whole idea of intercession is on behalf of the ones being bitten by snakes.

Jesus is, of course, the serpent who is being lifted up, and we’ll get into that, but there is an intercessory role that is played by Jesus in our salvation or the Holy Spirit in our salvation.

Romans 11:2 it mentions intercessions or pleading **against** Israel by Elijah. “God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?” But God shows Elijah that there are many left who are faithful.

As a High Priest, Jesus also lives to make intercession for us. But note in Hebrews **7:25-26** where it says Jesus was exalted (or lifted up) **above the heavens**. ²⁵ Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. ²⁶ For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and **exalted above the heavens**... And in that role, He is interceding for us exalted above the heavens.

In numbers 21, God told Moses to make a snake of bronze and place it on a standard. “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.” {The NIV says a pole}. We’re not sure what that “standard” is but some make a case that it **has** to be a cross for the snake to ‘loop around’ as opposed to a straight pole from which the snake would slide. I am not sure that that’s a good argument. If it is made out of bronze, you could weld it to a bronze pole and it wouldn’t necessarily slide off. Being forged it could be welded on there. (We think about all these things and wonder about them...)

So, I need to reflect on the **mind of Christ** in all of this.

Hebrews 12:2 says Jesus **despised the shame**, “... fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before **Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**”

Jesus is called the author and perfecter of our faith. Looking at this passage we have Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, He is the author and perfecter of our faith (which we will look at a little bit more, because what comes next is – you consider Jesus; you keep your eyes on Jesus).

So, here's the first observation:

Jesus **never lost sight** of the glory that was to come at the end of the road. This is important, here, to understand this idea of this serpent that is "lifted up". And the idea is, going back to **Numbers 21**, those who **focused** on that serpent, who **looked to** the serpent, would not die. There was a **concentration** on the keeping your eye on that serpent so you would not die. Okay. It is the serpent that's **lifted up**. If you look at the "**lifted up**" one, you won't die. So, here we have Jesus is the **lifted up One** ... if we look to Him we will not die.

Let's go back to Jesus, first. How did Jesus keep His focus? My first observation is that Jesus never lost sight of the glory that was to come at the end of the road. It was in His mind. And since He **had been** there, (at the right hand of God or in the presence of God) He **knew** what intimacy with the Father was and He was longing to be there again. But **this time**, it seems, it would be a little different.

Now, again, you may agree or disagree with me about this, but I think I can make the case. When Jesus returned to Heaven after He sojourned here on earth, and then He died, and was raised from the dead, when He returned to Heaven there was something different about **that** than it was before He **came** here. So, there is a clear transfer, or difference of authority, in sitting at the right hand of God on the throne. A new phase or eon was coming in which we now live.

Revelation 12 clearly indicates that age old struggle with the great dragon Satan. (It's interesting that we have the dragon here...which is the serpent). And Satan is continuing the struggle, and the fight was taken right to the door of Heaven.

Satan's failure to prevent Jesus from sitting on the throne so enraged him, that **his anger is being directed toward the rest of her offspring**. **Rev. 12:3-4**, "Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. ⁴ And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth **he might devour her child.**"

So, how do we fight against this serpent, because **the serpent on the pole** has been **lifted up** and is sitting at the right hand of God? And the serpent that is attacking **us** is as mad as he can be. How do we fight this **new** serpent?

Hebrews 12:3 tells us to, "Consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." We are to consider Jesus' sojourn, He lived here for a while...consider how **He** lived in hostile territory, and the many fights that **He** endured, even to death, so that we will not grown weary and we will not lose heart. In other words, Jesus battled with Satan while he was on earth, and He was victorious in His battle while on earth, and if we observe that, **we are really observing the right serpent**.

See – we have **two** serpents! We have one lifted up, and we have the other one who **wanted** to be lifted up but he will be thrown down to the pit. We have two serpents fighting each other, and **we** are supposed to keep our eye on, or consider, the One who won. Keep our eye on **Him**.

The second observation is that Jesus knew He had to have a person's undivided attention. **Fix** your eyes on Jesus. **Consider** Him. Look at the one who has been lifted up who can cause you to **live**. ★ **This is the prerequisite to sustained faith.**

I think we need to think in terms of faith, not just simply of 'coming to faith and believing in Christ'. We need to think of **faith as "sustained faith"**. I think in any particular moment, for an example, that would be Peter walking on the water. Peter had faith, but it wasn't a **sustained** faith. He began to sink. He didn't have enough faith, enough juice in his battery to keep him on top of the water. He could have charged that up before he stepped out but he began to sink. So, **don't take your eyes off Jesus**. Keep Him before your face. Gaze upon the beauty of the Lord.

What follows in John is that three times He talks about "believing". He talks about coming out of darkness and into the light so that you can see. So, if we have this idea of **keeping our eyes focused on Jesus**, we have to be able to have an understanding of what that means. It really is a **sustained faith**, and you do it in the light so you can **see** what you are looking at, because if He is in the light, then you have to be in the light to see Him.

Of all the images in our mind that will **keep** us in **His** mindset, it's **Jesus!** It's **look**. It's **Behold**. **All testimony points to Him**. The emphasis of faith in Jesus, in His ministry, was devoted to the essential, for faith, for salvation, for perseverance. It's all one thing...it's keep your eyes on Jesus. Look at the One **lifted up**. Don't take your eyes off of Him – because there are other snakes out there. There are **bad** ones. There is **the** bad snake. He'll bit you. He will kill you. He came to steal, kill and destroy you.

Joyce: Jesus is creator. He is the Author and Perfecter of our faith. The problem is that **we** try to increase our faith ... **we** try to improve our faith. We need to be looking at **Him**; not ourselves.

Rod: Exactly. This idea of Him being the Author and Perfecter of our faith is it's something that happens. It's what Paul describes in **2 Corinthians 3:4-6**, that if we keep our eyes on Jesus we are changed from one degree of glory to another. The process of the change that occurs in us is "**don't take your eyes off Jesus**. "Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. ⁵ Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, ⁶ who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

Verse 18 says, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image **from glory to glory**, just as from the Lord, the Spirit."

I think sometimes, that the effort that we make, or **try** to make, in order to sustain our faith, is really a man-centered effort! It's more, "I need to look at me; I need to look at myself". And Jesus says, "Well, no. You've probably spent too much time in your life looking at yourself. You need to look at **Me**. You need to keep your eyes on **Me**." **That** will sustain your faith.

I went to lunch today with some pastors in the area and there were a couple of youth ministers there and we were chatting. I asked, “What’s the new thing among youth ministers today?” I didn’t know how they’d answer. I asked, “What’s going on out there?”

They told me a few things, and they brought up suicide, social media, and all that. But one of the things underneath all of that was that our kids today (and probably a lot of adults, too) are spending a lot of time comparing themselves with each other. They are looking at themselves and they’re looking at each other and they’re trying to find out how they rate, what their worth is, based on the people around them ... both their outward looks and how they stack up against everybody else.

They are spending so much time looking at themselves, and looking at the people around them, that they are ending up taking their own lives. That is some of what our youth ministers are dealing with today. The kids come to the conclusion that ‘looking at me and looking at you, I get really depressed.’

Carole: I'm sure a lot of that has to do with Facebook and the pictures they see and they wish they could be like that. There’s instant beauty wherever you look because people post only their best pictures.

Rod: Well it goes even further than this. The ministers were talking about how all these kids, and the stuff they post on Facebook has all been photo-shopped. They photo-shop themselves to give themselves the best image they can, and many of them come to the conclusion that no matter how much they photo-shop themselves, they’ll never look as good as this person over there.

Someone commented: And that person has also photo-shopped themselves over there.

Rod: Exactly ... Who has **also** photo-shopped themselves over there. In other words, “I can’t photo-shop me enough to look better than this person over there who photo-shops himself.”

How crazy is that? It’s a convoluted way of thinking that says, “What are we looking at? Where is our gaze? Where is our vision? What do we see?” Jesus’ answer for it is to “quit looking at one another and quit looking at yourself and start looking at **Me**.” And **that** is going to change you. **That** is what is going to change your mind and change the way you think and act...it’s by keeping your eyes on Me.

Obviously I've gotten off my notes, but that is the essence of where we’re going here with this idea of Jesus being lifted up – **He’s** exalted. **He’s** the exalted One. And He’s not photo-shopped either; it’s all real. It’s all just the raw natural beauty of the Lord.

Jean: What do we get by looking at Him?

Rod: What do we get? Number one, *we get out of ourselves*. When we stop looking at us for a while and we begin to gaze at His beauty, there’s a transformation that takes place inside of us when I reflect on the glory of the Lord and see how beautiful he is.

It's like what happens in the natural realm when we see a beautiful scene, sunset, sunrise, or mountain scene. It's so serene. For a few moments, when we are in that setting completely we're focused on the beauty, we're soaking in the beauty, it does something to our soul. It lifts us up. It elevates us. We're **not** thinking about "am I good enough or am I this or that."

Jean: I feel like when we look at Him, we look at what He is *like*, not His look but His character. We are to imitate Him. When we look at Him we can see how we need to imitate Him.

Rod: Oh, absolutely. But it's more than that. It's more than just seeing him and saying, "Well, okay. He's got all the right moves so if I move this way I'll be like Him." I think sometimes it's just sitting back and just *being still*. Instead of trying to just make the same moves He made, just **admire** the moves he's made. Just fall down and worship Him because of how and Who He is. And I think **that** does something inside of us.

Brian: If you look at Jesus because **He is** God's message, it shows the vastness of God's love. When we see Jesus we see how **tremendous** His love is for us. But also, like Paul said in Athens, we see the world and see the **beauty** of what He has made. We see wonder and vastness, beauty and love that called us to be His children. There is so much to see and be able to grasp that He has that love for us, it just merits love.

Rod: Yes.

Joyce: And we see our place. We see *our* place in His creation and we see how much *more* we can be physically, mentally and spiritually, and we see more plainly what His plan is for us. And we want more and more to seek Him for that plan. We have a mind. We have a plan. But God has the *ultimate* plan that is perfection of His desires for us. That beauty takes us out of the mundane and raises us.

Rod: Absolutely. We get swept into the wind of the Spirit. He said earlier in Chapter 3:8, "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." So it is with the Spirit of God and when **we** are in the Spirit, walking **in** the Spirit, walking **with** the Spirit walking **by** the Spirit, and we are swept up **in** that life. It becomes a supernatural moving of us along, instead of us having to put in all the effort and **make it my** effort of being 'what I should be' it's letting **Him** move me along.

It is like the prophets of the Old Testament who were **moved along by the Spirit**. And when they wrote the New Testament and the Old Testament, they were being **carried along** by Him. They weren't just sitting down and saying, "I have to write Isaiah tonight. What am I going to write?" They just flowed along. They were just moved along, in the river of **His** thought and they flowed along with that. I don't think we have experienced that enough in our lives to really surrender ourselves and we just simply say, "You lead me, You guide me. You pull me along and you take me where you want me to go" instead of, "Okay. Give me the notes here of what You want me to do today and I'll do all those things and I might do them, maybe halfway right..." We need to ask God where **He'll** lead us today, "I'm riding in *Your* car. *You're* driving. Let's go. And He says, "Hold on."

Jean: I think everything we do in life, it's God at the steering wheel. It's not me. It's not anybody else. It's the Spirit and Jesus doing it **through** us.

Rod: Absolutely.

Jean: I read something in facebook that said, "What is your purpose in life? What if I told you that you fulfilled it when you talked to that kid about his life?" said the voice. "Or when you paid for that young couple in the restaurant; or when you saved that dog in traffic or when you tied your father's shoes for him?" "That's your purpose in life" said the voice.

Rod: But see, if we start looking at ourselves about "that cup of cold water that we gave in Jesus' name, wasn't nearly as important as what this person over **here** did..." well... Now we're looking at us, we're looking at ourselves and looking at other people, comparing ourselves with each other, and Paul says, "That's not wise to do." That gets the focus off the One we're supposed to be looking at.

Ruth: This discussion of the Son of Man being **lifted up**, you said it also refers to His being lifted up as being exalted by God, but if you take into context what happened with Moses, the lifting up of the snake had everything to do with being saved from death by snake bite. So the correlation of what happens with Moses with the snake, and with Jesus as the snake is that we don't **only** get saved from snake bites, but we get eternal life ... that whatever horrible thing is in our life is **not** the thing we should look at. We look at how that can be **overcome** ... **or not**. We might **die** looking at Jesus. But we will have **eternal life** which is better than the alternative which is death by snakebite.

Rod: That's the ultimate of salvation ... that we enjoy, not just simply the forgiveness of sins, but it's **entering into his glory**. We enter into His glory. **We** sit **with** Him in the heavenly places. We are exalted **with** Him. And that is as much a part of our salvation than just simply the canceling of our debt. It's now that we have been **elevated**, we've been put into a new place, we **reign** with Him, as the Bible says (2 Timothy 2:12) etc.

Jesus looked toward to the glory that would be revealed. He didn't just focus on the shame of the cross, but He saw **through** it to the glory that was going to be revealed. We **lock** onto Him by faith, and victoriously, with Him, we will make it to the Father. So the One who locks onto the glory knows where He is going, He sees the light and is heading toward the light, the glorious celebration, but we don't know where we're going. We don't know where that glory is. We don't know how to get there. We've never been there before. He is the only One who knows where the Father is, so we hook onto Him because He's headed toward glory, and we get to victoriously share in that glory with Him in the fullest sense.

So the outcome for each person who fixes his eyes on Jesus should be **belief** resulting in **eternal life**. That's the **nature** and the **essence** of **eternal life**. So faith and eternal life are both huge ideas.

Believe is the word "pistuo" (πιστευω). It means to have faith, to credit, to entrust oneself or wellbeing to Christ. It indicates **persuasion**. What **persuaded** the person in Moses' day to look on the bronze snake with the expectation of healing? What **persuaded** that person

to stop looking around and beating all the snakes off of him and to lift up his head to look at the snake on the pole? What **persuaded** that person to do it? I'd have a hard time looking at a snake on a pole if I had snakes crawling up my legs! I don't know about you, but I would tend to be trying to pull those snakes off of me and get rid of them. It reminds me of an old Indiana Jones movie ... I hate snakes. They were all over the place and had fire in them and they were trying to beat them back. What would cause the Israelites stop fighting the snakes and look at the pole? **That's** the essence of **faith!**

1. One answer that I give is **desperation...**

Desperation caused by being bitten by a deadly snake knowing that from past and current experience – their bites are **fatal!** Knowing that once I'm bitten, there's probably not much I can do about it.

2. **Not having any viable alternatives**

Based on no previous experience of surviving these bites might persuade me. It is not 'just knowing' that these snakes can kill you, but **I don't have any other alternative.** I don't have any other place to turn to save myself from that snakebite. Now, we're getting to the essence of faith. Snake bites kill you, and I don't have any other solution than the one that Moses just gave me.

3. **Confidence**

There has to be **some** degree of confidence that Moses' words and actions were true, or authoritative, leading to the desired outcome of healing.

4. **Conviction of guilt or crime of murmuring and complaining**

There has to be some conviction that the person was guilty of the crime that led to the bites in the first place. It's not like the snakes just started springing up and biting people. The whole reason the snakes were there in the first place is that the people were guilty of complaining and murmuring against God. They did not *believe* in Him. Their sin was **unbelief.** I think Hebrews 4:2 uses the same Greek word. Why did they die in the desert; because of unbelief.

So what was Moses trying to do by putting a snake on a pole? Moses was trying to bring them back to **belief.** How did he do it ... by those 4 things: **desperation** that the bite will kill me, no **alternative** that I am aware of, some degree of **confidence** that Moses' words will come true, (they did have a little bit of experience with that – crossing the Red Sea – when Moses speaks, things happen), but then there's that **conviction** – Man, I'm guilty and what I am going through here is just a consequence of my own actions.

Isn't that the story of salvation? Isn't that the story of conversion?

Just as the outcomes of the Israelites was life, the extension of their physical life, so the outcome for those who trust in the **lifted up** Jesus, the exalted Jesus, the crucified and resurrected, ascended, and crowned Jesus, they shall experience eternal life. So, just as they were terminal without the **look, we** are terminal without the **look.** We're terminal, too. Eternal life means perpetual, everlasting life. In the context of Zoe life, it means **entrance** into the **Kingdom,** it means **new birth;** this is a new type of *existence* or *quality* of life.

It is unlike life here in the temporal realm. But it's not the mere **extension** of life, but a new **kind** of life which we share in now, and going forward we will learn to experience it in its fullness. When you've been given new life, you have to learn to live in it. It's like when you "get married" you have to learn to "be married". You can "be" something that you don't know how to exactly "be". You have to learn how to act in it. It's all new.

So, the solution of the snake on the pole or standard, was God's idea. Moses did not suggest it. Later it was turned into something unintended by God ... in 2 Kings 18:4 the bronze snake on the pole (someone took that thing, carried it around, and one day someone made an idol of it). **He {King Hezekiah} broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called Nehushtan.)** They made it into something false.

You can explore this idea of what happens when our look becomes an idol. I'll give you a suggestion. Instead of seeing Jesus high and lifted up, is when we begin to make an idol out of the church, and we depend on the church to save us instead of Jesus to save us.

It should be noted that Jesus says our belief is in **Him**, which implies that we set Jesus apart in His unique place in our lives. **No one else should occupy that place.** Just as there was only one **approved, unduplicatable** snake on a pole to which they were to look, so **no one** or **no 'thing'** can stand in for Jesus. I wonder what would have happened if some enterprising guy had decided (if he had time to get away from the snakes that were biting him) to build another snake or two and put **them** on poles and start charging people to look at it. Don't think that people don't **do** things like that. People can make a business out of anything. (That's just a new twist on snake oil.)

So, without Him, the show will not go on. But **in** Him also implies that "we believe what He says is authoritative for our lives.

Verse 15 says, "**so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.**" This life is only in the Son. 1 John 5:11 says, "**And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.**"

The exclusive nature of faith in Jesus is found everywhere in the New Testament and it reflects the Mind of Christ.