

## **LIFTING UP CHRIST**

### **John 3:14-18**

#### **Introduction:**

- 1. The forty years of wandering in the wilderness were nearly over (Num. 21:4-9).**
  - a. Israel was making the final leg of the journey to Canaan.**
  - b. The way was very difficult and the people began to speak against God and against Moses.**
  - c. They complained about the manna: “Our soul loathes this worthless bread.”**
  
- 2. God sent fiery serpents among the people to punish them.**
  - a. Many were bitten and died.**
  - b. The people confessed to Moses: “We have sinned...ask the Lord to take away the serpents.”**
  
- 3. The Lord did not take away the fiery serpents.**
  - a. Instead, He told Moses to make a serpent of bronze and lift it up on a pole in the midst of the camp.**
  - b. Whenever anyone was bitten, if he looked upon the bronze serpent, he would live.**
  - c. God tested their faith by this means.**
  
- 4. Jesus said: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:14,15).**

#### **Discussion:**

- I. CHRIST WAS LIFTED UP ON THE CROSS FOR OUR SINS.**
  - A. Jesus’ death was not merely the death of a martyr.**
    - 1. A martyr is one who dies for a good cause.**
    - 2. Stephen was the first of thousands of Christian martyrs (Acts 6:8- 8:1).**
    - 3. A martyr inspires others by his dedication.**
  
  - B. Jesus’ death was not merely to provide an example of love.**
    - 1. He demonstrated His great love by dying for His friends (John 15:13).**
    - 2. He demonstrated even greater love by dying for His enemies (Rom. 5:6-8).**
    - 3. His great love inspires us to love others:**

**“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we ought also to lay down our lives for the**

brethren” (1 John 3:16).

- C. The death of Jesus on the cross was a sacrifice for our sins.
  - 1. Paul wrote: “For He (God) made Him (Christ) who knew no sin to be sin (the sin offering) for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).
  - 2. Peter wrote of Christ, “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness - by whose stripes you were healed” (1 Pet. 2:24).

## II. CHRIST WAS LIFTED UP FROM THE GRAVE TO GUARANTEE HOPE.

- A. The body of Jesus was laid in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38-42).
  - 1. Joseph requested the body of Jesus from Pilate.
  - 2. Nicodemus brought spices to anoint the body of Jesus.
  - 3. The body was placed in the tomb on Friday afternoon.
- B. On the first day of the week, the tomb was empty.
  - 1. The women came to the tomb and found it empty (Luke 24:1-3).
  - 2. Peter and John entered the empty tomb (John 20:1-10).
  - 3. The Jews had tried to prevent any deceit in the matter (Matt. 27:62-66).
- C. There were many witnesses of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-8).
  - 1. The apostles died rather than deny it.
    - a. They boldly preached the resurrection to the very people who killed Jesus (Acts 2:32).
    - b. One had to be a witness to be an apostle (Acts 1:21,22).
  - 2. Mary Magdalene and the women were the first witnesses.
  - 3. Five hundred saw the resurrected Lord at one time.
  - 4. James, brother of Jesus, became a believer (John 7:5).
  - 5. Saul, persecutor of the church, saw the Lord (Acts 26:16).
- D. The bodily resurrection of Jesus is fundamental to the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:1- 4).

## III. CHRIST MUST BE LIFTED UP BEFORE THE WORLD.

- A. He is lifted up by the preaching of the Gospel.
  - 1. Jesus said: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself” (John 12:32).
  - 2. Paul wrote: “For Jews request a sign and Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, but to

those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:22-24).

**B. Christ is lifted up by the good lives of Christians.**

1. Christians strive to follow in His steps: “For to this (suffering) you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps...” (1 Pet. 2:21).
2. Paul wrote: “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21).
3. Paul also admonished Christians” “Only let your conduct be worthy of the Gospel of Christ ...” (Phil. 1:27).

**Conclusion:**

1. Jesus was lifted up for the salvation of the world:

It was not as a martyr He died,  
The Christ of Calvary,  
It was as a willing sacrifice  
He made for you and me.

Wicked hands with force laid hold  
Upon our Saviour dear.  
Mockery filled heart and tongue  
Without a trace of fear.

Christ died a death before ordained...  
In God’s eternal plan.  
He did not hang upon the cross  
To please the will of man!

He could have summoned ten thousand angels  
The wicked hands to stay,  
But He knew redemption’s plan  
Depended upon what He did that day.

Not as a martyr did Christ hang upon the tree,  
But He died for sin in the place of you and me.  
His terrible suffering upon the cross  
Alone can set lost men free!

2. Salvation in Christ “has now been revealed by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel” (2 Tim. 1:10).
3. Come to Jesus that you may have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10; Mark 16:16).

