

John 3:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

Analysis

Jesus connects His coming crucifixion to Numbers 21:4-9 where a bronze serpent on a pole brought healing to snake-bitten Israelites who looked in faith. The typology is precise: the serpent (symbol of sin) was lifted up, as Christ became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). Looking to Christ crucified brings spiritual healing. The word 'must' indicates divine necessity—the cross was no accident but God's sovereign plan.

Historical Context

Jesus spoke to Nicodemus at night, and this reference to a wilderness event resonated with Jewish teachers who studied these types. The bronze serpent was later destroyed by Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:4) when Israelites began worshiping it, showing even legitimate religious symbols can become idols.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does understanding the cross as God's appointed remedy for sin deepen your appreciation of Christ's sacrifice?
2. What keeps people from 'looking' to Christ in faith for salvation?

Interlinear Text

καὶ καθὼς Μωσῆς ὑψωθῆναι τὸν ὄφιν ἐν τῇ
And as Moses be lifted up G3588 the serpent in G3588
G2532 G2531 G3475 G5312 G3789 G1722

ἐρήμῳ οὕτως ὑψωθῆναι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ
the wilderness even so be lifted up must the Son G3588
G2048 G3779 G5312 G1163 G5207 G3588

ἀνθρώπου
of man
G444

Additional Cross-References

John 8:28 (Parallel theme): Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

Matthew 26:54 (Parallel theme): But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

Acts 2:23 (Parallel theme): Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Psalms 22:16 (Parallel theme): For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

2 Kings 18:4 (References Moses): He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that

Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.

Luke 24:20 (Parallel theme): And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

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