



**“FINDING CHRIST IN THE SHADOWS”**  
*Col 2:17* “Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”  
A SERIES BY DR. EDGAR PIERCE- PASTOR  
PARIS FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH



## SHADOW: The Serpent Lifted Up- Moving Past the Past

*Num 21:9*

As brother Mike Taylor was teaching us on the Holy Spirit and praying in the Spirit the Lord impressed on my heart that the focus of those who prayed in the Spirit was forward not back. One examples that he gave was the disciples, after Peter and John were released from prison. They had been threatened and then told to not speak in Jesus name. The disciples prayed in *Acts 4:29* ***And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.*** They did not dwell in the past but embraced the future. I have entitled our messages today, the serpent lifted up-moving past the past.

I knew about and accepted the risk of the potential that some will misunderstand the title of this message. In fact if truth be known I hoped the title would be misunderstood for the dramatic impact. Most of the time when we talk about the serpent in scriptures we are making an illusion to Satan. But now that you might suspect that this is not what today’s sermon is about.

### I- Casting The Shadow:

The story today that gives us our shadow is found in a very small portion of the Bible. It is spoken of in a matter of fact and frank way. The entire unfolding of the event is from in only five verses, *Numbers 21:5-9* ***“And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. <sup>6</sup> And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. <sup>7</sup> Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. <sup>8</sup> And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. <sup>9</sup> And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”*** Our focus verse is the last one.

This serpent that was lifted up is without a doubt a foreshadow of the Lord Jesus. We go into the New Testament and see it clearly is identified as one. *John 3:14-15* ***“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: <sup>15</sup> That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”*** Wow! This clearly shows that the serpent on the stick being lifted up had pictured the lifting up of Jesus on the cross. We also see addition comments that are important concerning this although the serpent being lifted up is not mentioned in *John 12:32* ***“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”***



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## **II- Other Shadow Lurking:**

I chose to title this “Other shadow lurking” or we could say “Type within Types.” Within this section of Scripture we have another type that pictures for us sin. The serpents that bit the Israelites. These serpents with their poisonous fangs inflicted wounds and caused misery. They could not be charmed nor escaped from. They bit and the people died. This pictures the destruction of sin in the life of others.

The people cried out and the remedy was given to Moses. Make a serpent and put it on the stick and all who look will live. Christ pictured by the serpent on the stick gave the solution to the sin pictured by the serpent. What if someone refused to look? They died. It tell us in *James 1:13-14 NASB* ***Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.***

If someone today refuses to move past the past sin and embrace the future forgiveness with Christ there is no hope for eternity.

## **III- The Picture of the Shadow:**

With the fact established, that the serpent lifted up in the wilderness is clearly a type of Christ, let us look now at the lessons we need to learn from it. Before we go any farther lets establish a couple of critical facts.

**1- Shadow is never to be object of worship-** We find there came a time in the life of Israel that they began to worship the serpent. During the time of Hezekiah’s reign we find recorded an event that reminds us that the cross is not object of worship no more than the serpent was.

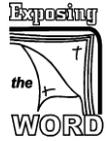
The Ten Commandments clearly teach us that there should be no other gods before our God. *Exo 20:3-4* ***“Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.”***

We go forward many years in the history of Israel. The One nation have become two, Israel and Judah. It is almost to the end of the Northern Kingdom. The two kingdoms had fought wars at times but now they come together to observe Passover. Temple worship had been restored under King Hezekiah. Notice what had become of the brazen serpent of Moses *2 Kings 18:4* ***“He (Hezekiah) 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.”*** (*nekh-oosh-tawn*) The shadow had become a grave image that they worshipped. We as Christians need to be reminded that we do not worship the cross but the Savior on the cross. We do not worship the religion called Christianity but the Savior who wants a personal relationship with us. This serpent was a think in the past of their nation that they had to move past.

**2- There is no Drawing Power spoken of the serpent but it is about Christ.**



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We are not told that the serpent had a magnetism that drew people. It held no special power to make them turn. May I say that Christ certainly has. *John 12:32 “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”*

There is an attraction to the Savior on the cross. The love is seen, the redemption is seen. Men know within their being that they have a need and Christ is both a great attraction as well as a great repulsion to those who refuse to believe.

#### **IV- Remedy of the Shadow**

There are several things that the shadow of the serpent lifted up tells us about Jesus, or perhaps we should say that Jesus tells us about the shadow.

**1- Only Remedy-** It is not without major significance that the only cure for the venom of the serpent was to look at the brazen serpent on the stick. There was not other way to bargain with God in order that those bitten could be cured. They were not told to make their own serpents, even of brass, and that would be sufficient.

My, what a picture. Christ and Christ alone is the remedy for the sins of men. *Acts 4:12 “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”* There is not way to move past the past sins of our life but by Christ.

**2- God Provided Remedy-** We saw before in another shadow that God provided the first sacrifice for sin when He killed the animal and used the skins for a covering for Adam and Eve. In the days of Moses, we see that God provided the remedy for the serpent bites. Did you notice that no one helped Moses make the serpent? Moses did not invite the people to bring their brass and other things to make it. God provided the remedy without any help from the people.

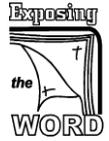
May I say that God provided the remedy for sin and does not need any help from men? Man need not do anything but accept what God provides. *Ephesians 2:8-9 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: <sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast.”* No man today can boast and say I did such and such and therefore I am accepted by God apart from placing his faith in Christ. God provided the remedy, the only remedy.

**3- Infallible Remedy-** Imagine if you would another scenario. Moses had the serpent on the pole and a few people who looked were healed but many others were not. Many were healed but if they fell asleep or closed their eyes the healing stopped and they began to die again. There was no such event that occurred. Why? The look at the serpent was infallible. It worked every time without fail and it did the work of healing completely. You did not have to come back again and again.

God has provided an infallible remedy for the sins of men. Men do not have to go back and get resaved over and over. They need only look and live. Remember *John 3:14-15 “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man*



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be lifted up: <sup>15</sup> ***That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.***”

***Joh 17:12 “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.”***

The Apostle Paul gave a great testimony at the end of his life that shows the infallible remedy in Christ that has never failed nor will ever failed. ***2Ti 1:12 “For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”***

***Tit 1:2 “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.”***

The infallible remedy is bound up in the fact that we have an infallible God. The hope of moving past the past for us is rooted in God.

**4- Remedy offered to all- *2Pe 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”*** Just as the remedy was offered to all who would look at the serpent and live the remedy is offered to all who would look at Christ and live. God is not willing that any perish. He wants all to be saved. He in fact sent the remedy for all. I wish to quote from a man who was originally published in 1888 called *Tiles and Symbols of Christ* by James Large. I think this quote sums up for us a great truth about humanity.

“All mankind are ruined by sin. This fatal poison has spread itself through their whole nature and corrupted all its streams. It has not the same effects in all. Some are excited by it, and evil passions and deeds of violence are the modes in which it displays its malignity. Some are filled with anguish, by which their lives are made bitter unto them. Others are lulled to sleep and cannot be awakened, or persuaded that there is anything the matter with them. Nevertheless, all are badly, fatally wounded, and from the sole of the foot to the head there is no soundness, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores.” (p 78)

***Romans 3:23*** simply says, ***“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”*** The great thing is that the remedy is offered to all. The great Physician stands willing ready and able to cure the sin sickness if we will only come to Him. Christ stands ready to help us move past the past in our lives and embrace the future that is glorious in Christ