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THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

– *AUG. 11. – NUM. 21:4-9. –*

**Golden Text – "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
even so must the Son of man be lifted up."**

– *John 3:14. –*

THE incident of this lesson needs no additional words of explanation. Its full import is brought before us in the *Golden Text*. The fiery serpents represented sin, whose bite is deadly. "The sting of death is sin;" and "the wages of sin is death." In sending Israel relief, God foreshadowed the greater relief he would afterward send to mankind in general, – Christ the sinners' ransom-price.

The serpent was of brass (literally, copper), which is a type of the human nature.* God thus declared in type that the man Christ Jesus would be lifted up upon the cross as our sin-offering, as it is written, "He [Jehovah, the heavenly Father] made him who knew no sin to be a sin-offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5:21.) "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.) As Israel looked to the brazen serpent for healing, so must all the sin-bitten children of men look to Christ, the sin-offering, for healing from sin and death. Christ took the sinners place; he bore the full penalty of our sins; his flesh (his humanity) he gave for the life of the world. Wherefore, he was also highly exalted to a nature superior to the human which he had sacrificed, even to the divine nature, and given a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. (John 6:51; Isa. 53:5,6; Phil. 2:7-11.) Thus we view him, not only as our Redeemer, but also as our exalted Lord with power and authority not only to deliver us from the sleep of death but also to train and discipline all the willing and obedient up to perfection of character and fitness for eternal life.

See TABERNACLE SHADOWS.

The result of the lifting up of Christ will eventually be the drawing of all men unto him. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said signifying what death he should die." (John 12:32,33.) Yes; it will be the power of the cross of Christ, it will be the love of Christ and of God there manifested, that will be the drawing power upon the hearts of men when, by and by in his glorious reign, and after the great tribulation of this evil day shall have sealed its instruction upon the hearts of men, making them more humble and teachable, all his goodness and grace shall be brought into effectual operation.

It would be a great mistake, however, to confound this drawing power of the cross of Christ which will by and by be realized by all men, with the statement of John 6:37,44,45 – "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out....No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

The class here referred to is not the whole world drawn by the power of the cross in the age to come, but a special class now being selected out from among the world by the Spirit of God through his word of truth and given to Christ as his peculiar treasure – his bride and joint-heir. In the provisions of his wonderful plan God has thus given to Christ all the loyal, consecrated, faithful ones of the Gospel age. They are his, his jewels, called of God to be joint-heirs with him of his glory and kingdom. Had they not been thus called of God and in his plan given to Christ, they could not of themselves have grasped such an honor. To have done so would have been the height of presumption. Their exaltation is therefore of God's own appointment: "they are called and faithful and chosen;" and they are all taught of God – led by his spirit through his word of truth.

And Christ here expresses his pleasure to receive all such according to the divine appointment; and he will raise them up at the last day – the glorious day of his return and the setting up of his Kingdom in the earth – the day, thank God, which even now begins to dawn.
