

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life (Jn 3:14,15)

Context (Jn 3:14-18)

- 1] Jesus is on his first visit to Jerusalem during his public ministry (chs 2&3)
- 2] He is addressing Nicodemus, a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews (a member of Sanhedrin), who has come to him secretly by night
- 3] Having told him he must be born again to see the Kingdom of God (3), he goes on to make a reference to himself in the Old Testament (14)

Context (Nu 21:4-9)

- 1] Having been delivered from slavery in Egypt, the Israelites wandered for 40 years in the wilderness due to their disbelief & grumbling, they were approaching Canaan again .
- 2] They again disbelieved God's love for them and promise of Canaan and complained about his provision of food.

? Nu 21:6 *Look to a serpent? - They are not positive – in the fall (Gen 3:1) or by Jesus (Mt 23:33)*
 ? *Jesus' id in OT - Either this is a rare illustration of Jesus in the OT OR the OT is packed with hidden allusions to the person of Jesus – (Luke 24:27,44,45) points to the latter being the truth?*

Intro

- 1] I wonder if you will go for a vaccine when offered one? It is claimed that this will open up our society, this may extend your own life – I wonder?
- 2] I wonder if you believe in Jesus. It is claimed that this will give you freedom and lead to eternal life. I wonder what you will do with Jesus.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (14a, Nu 21:4-9)

- 1] The people had rebelled (5)
 - a) they disbelieved God's promise to take them to Canaan (5a)
 - b) they rejected His provision of food to sustain them (5b)*cf Grumbling against God's gift of manna (Ex 6:7,8,9,12)*
- 2] God sent fiery serpents causing death (6)
- 3] 'we have sinned as we have spoken against the Lord and against you'. (7)
I.e. The people repented
- 4] God commanded
 - a) make a fiery serpent and put it on a pole
 - b) any one bitten when he sees it, will live*cf We must not put Christ to the test as some did and were destroyed (1 Cor 10:9)*
? cf Golden calves (Ex 32)?!
God's plan was to foreshadow Jesus' work in the NT through a glimpse in the OT
In this light, read the OT asking God to reveal Jesus

so must the son of man be lifted up, (14b)

- 1] ***son of man***

Nb Term stressing Jesus humanity (cf Ezekiel)

2] **must**

Nb this was inevitable as the Son in love came to save the world (16)

cf At birth he was given the name of Jesus because he would save his people from their sins (Mt 1:21)

Predicted his death (Lk 9:21f, 43-45; 18:31-34)

Grasped his destiny the night before he was crucified (Lk22:42)

3] **be lifted up**

i.e. be crucified

Cf this is the will of my Father that everyone who looks on the son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day (John 6:40)

Cf And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” He said this to show what kind of death he was going to die (Jn12:32,33)

Acknowledge that Jesus had to be crucified to give you eternal life

that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life (15)

1] **whoever believes in Him**

Nb repeated phrase (6:35,47; 7:38; 11:25; 12:44,46; 14:12)

i.e. ... everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sin through his name (Acts 10:43)

Nb I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me (Jn 14:6)

GRACE - God's gift **only requires faith to receive it**

We are saved only by grace through faith in Jesus (Eph.2:8,9)

Believe in Jesus

2] **may**

Nb God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that he might save the world through him (17)

I.e. God's desire is to save but it is conditional on believing in him. All are not saved – there is condemnation for those who do not believe in Jesus (18)

3] **have eternal life**

Nb ‘eternal life’ major theme in John's Gospel – 16 references (8 in total in other 3)

Nb opposite of perishing’ (16) = being saved (Matt 1:21; 2:10,11; Jn 1:29)

I.e. They will never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand (10:28)

It is better for you that one man should die than the whole nation should perish (11:50)

Cf I am the resurrection and the life.. Whoever believes in me though he die, yet shall he live and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. (John 11:25)

Conclusion

1] Vaccination from Covid may be important. Life may open up giving us freedom to go out and possibly extending lives.

2] Faith in Jesus is essential –

a) it gives total freedom – if the son sets you free you will be free indeed (Jn8:36)

b) it gives life – whoever believes in Him (looks to him) may have eternal life (Jn3:15)

MP *Jesus must be crucified so that, by sharing in this by faith, any might have eternal life*

KV *The son of man must be lifted up that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life (Jn3:14b, 15)*