

## A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

John 3:14-16

Introduction/Context: Jesus is teaching Nicodemus about what is necessary to enter the kingdom of God.

Jesus is confronting Nicodemus – the teacher of Israel, for not knowing, not receiving, and not believing the signs and message of Jesus and John.

In verse 14 Jesus – the TEACHER, points to a vivid Old Testament picture to help Nicodemus understand the gospel.

### 1. The Illustration (John 3:14a)

A) The story is found in Numbers 21:4-9 / Context

> The circumstances behind Israel's sin

B) Israel's sin (Numbers 21:5)

> Murmuring against God and Moses

> They are rejecting God's provision – the “bread from heaven”

C) God's judgment – swarms of poisonous serpents or snakes (Numbers 21:6)

> I can't imagine a judgment that could be much worse – snakes everywhere

D) Israel's repentance (Numbers 21:7)

> Israel recognizes God's judgment and asks Moses to intercede for them.

E) God's gracious provision (Numbers 21:8-9)

> A bronze serpent set upon a pole to provide Divine healing

> The serpents aren't removed and they don't stop biting

But God provided a remedy that demanded faith – belief revealed through obedience

### 2. The Application of this Story (John 3:14b-15)

A) Why does Jesus refer to this story to help Nicodemus understand the gospel?

> Nicodemus does not understand his need for God's intervention (Isaiah 53:6; Rom 3:23; 6:23)

B) Jesus, the Son of Man must be lifted up (John 3:14b)

- > Why does Jesus say, “must?”
- > What does “lifted up” mean?

Crucifixion (John 8:28; 12:32, 34)

The crucifixion includes the exaltation of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:32-33; 5:29-32)

C) The Son of Man must be believed in (John 3:15)

- > We must believe that God’s provision alone will save those who are perishing (1 Corinthians 15:55-57)

### 3. The Explanation (John 3:16)

A) God’s Love for the World (John 3:16a)

- > For God so loved
- > The world

B) God’s Gift to the World (John 3:16b)

- > His ‘only begotten, unique, one of a kind’ son
- > His Son who came down from heaven to make salvation possible

C) God’s Promise to Us (John 3:16c)

- > Whosoever believes in Him – Jesus
- > Will not perish
- > Will have everlasting life

## **INVITATION AND APPLICATION**

1. Have you looked to Jesus Christ to be saved from the curse of sin?

2. Are you continuing to walk in faith as those who have been saved by grace through faith? (Romans 6:2-6; 1 Corinthians 15:58)