

Look up and live

Dear friend,

We at the Agape Christian Church pray you are enjoying this beautiful autumn season and that this letter meets you hale and hearty. Regardless of the challenges life may pose, we always want you to remember that there is a God who loves you dearly and is not far from you. In fact, He is closer to you than the very air you breathe, although you may not know it. This God wants to have fellowship with you and will reveal Himself to you if you are willing to respond to His invitation.

How would you react if you were told of a stranger who was in the throes of death and was given a lifeline which he declined. This stranger was told that all he had to do to cheat death and live, was to simply look up at a bronze statue of a fiery serpent on a pole. In other words, he was asked to look up and live. I bet; you would consider the decision by this stranger to die rather than looking up at the fiery serpent, a great and regrettable mistake.

This scenario I have just described to you concerning this stranger is sadly, the case with humanity today as you will discover by reading along. Numbers 9:8-9 **“Then the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.” So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.**

The Children of Israel as they journeyed to the promised land were in the habit of complaining against God and His servant Moses, which displeased God. God understands the difficulties that everyday living on this planet presents to you and me, but instead of complaining He wants us to present our needs to Him in prayer. When we do so, it shows that we respect Him and acknowledge His ability to take care of any difficult situation we might be facing. Unfortunately,

the Children of Israel instead of presenting their needs to God complained against Him, which attracted His judgement by way of fiery serpents which killed many of them.

They were however quick to repent of this evil deed of complaining and came back to Moses asking Him to intercede on their behalf with God, which he did. The erection of the statue of a fiery serpent on a pole was God's offer of a way to escape death from His judgement for rebellion. Those who looked up lived regardless of the poisonous snake bites, while those who refused to look up out of unbelief died.

John 3:14-15 NKJV "And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life" Just like the Children of Israel in the wilderness, the entire human race which includes you and I, is guilty of rebellion before a Holy and perfect God. You might be a morally decent person, kind and even religious by being an active church member but this does not exonerate you from the judgement of God. The word of God declares you just as guilty of rebellion as the prostitute, gang-member, or idolater. We are deemed rebellious by God, because of the sin-nature which has been passed down to us from Adam when he sinned in the garden of Eden. **Romans 5:12 NLT** "When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

It may not make sense to you and I, but a Holy, just and perfect God has declared every human being descended from Adam, guilty of the same act of rebellion since we were in Adam's loins when he sinned against God. The word of God prescribes eternal separation from God, also known as death as the due reward or penalty for rebellion in **Romans 6:23 NLT** "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

The great news in this same scripture is that God has provided a sure way to escape this sentence of death on the human race in the person of His Son Jesus

Christ, who was lifted up on that Roman cross a little over 2000 years ago. All you and I need to do, is to look up at Jesus and live. We look up at Jesus Christ by accepting that we are guilty of sin (rebellion) before God, deserving of eternal separation from Him and believe that the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ at the cross was full payment for our sins. When we simply believe this good news also called the gospel, we are declared righteous “not guilty” by a judicious act of God also known as justification and can now start a relationship with Him which will transcend time into eternity. Sadly, the vast majority of humanity today have refused to simply look up and live.

Friend, will you look up at the cross today and live?

May God bless you.