

Jesus' Personal Passion Prophecies Connect with O.T. Prophecies

INTRO: Tonight's sermon will show that this prophecy to Nicodemus teaches that even God's O.T. prophecies show that we are saved by the grace of God through faith in Jesus.

I. SOME BACKGROUND OF THIS PROPHECY BY JESUS

A. Jesus

1. Son of God incarnate, in state of humiliation
2. had just begun teaching; a few miracles
3. had called some disciples; a few followers
4. first trip to Jerusalem; had cleansed temple
5. more vague than later personal passion prophecies (why vague?)

B. Nicodemus

1. Jew of the Sanhedrin; a learned leader
2. taught salvation by keeping Laws and traditions
3. student, always seeking inquiring
4. yet came by night for fear of his standing, reputation

C. The issue/question: ...teacher come from God...signs...

1. beating around the bush; Jesus says, "Except a man be born of..."
2. most important issue: kingdom, eternal life
3. born of water & Word confuses Nicodemus (and many today)
4. born of flesh is flesh; dead in trespasses and sins

D. Jesus goes back to Moses, the Old Testament scriptures

- 1...as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness...
2. Jesus doesn't appeal to Decalogue as did the Pharisees
3. Who'd apply O.T. 'serpent' story to Jesus?!

II. BACKGROUND OF SERPENT STORY AS A TYPE OF CHRIST

A. From Abraham to Sinai

1. Abraham chosen by God's grace; promised a Seed, great nation
2. Joseph story; called out of Egyptian captivity
3. Red Sea deliverance; Decalogue; Golden Calf
4. 40 years wandering because they doubted reports of spies

B. Poisonous serpents from God as punishment

1. manna, water from rock; yet complained about God's food
2. bite caused inflammation, pain, swelling, death
3. "We have sinned" (asked Moses to intercede for them)

C. God's means of healing, saving them

1. told Moses to make bronze serpent on a pole
2. "...when he sees it, he shall live."

(continued)

3. odd snakebite remedy; contrary to reason. experience
4. look is easy, belief is difficult; reason says shot of whisky and suck out the poison; ER for serum
5. bronze serpent had God's promise of saving (word + means)
6. so also with absolution, sacraments, benediction today
7. actual O.T. serpent idolized; destroyed by King Hezekiah
8. Jesus here interprets O.T.; it's about Him!

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ANTITYPE (Jesus on cross)

A. Point of comparison is 'lifting up'

1. "must be lifted up" = God's plan; **must** be lifted up
2. lifting up = crucifixion (describe)
3. Jesus knew, and He prophesied, His manner of death

B. The result of being lifted up

1. divine punishment for sins of the whole world (not just griping)
2. fiery hell (not merely snake bite) averted
3. everlasting life assured now; our possession later
4. God's promise, just like snakebite promise to Israel
5. takes effect as we believe, trust His word
6. blessings attend His promises, in abundance

C. Other incidental comparisons here

1. Adam and all mankind 'poisoned' by a serpent in Eden
2. poison permeates the whole body of mankind; spreads
3. Christ w/o sin on a pole, yet the image of each of us sinners
4. looking with trust to Christ, saves

III. FURTHER APPLICATIONS TO US INDIVIDUALLY

A. "Whosoever" shows universality

1. like IRS refund check; write in your own name
2. no strings, fine print; it's the real deal

B. "Believe in Him..." means:

1. be born of water and word by work of Holy Spirit
2. nothing dead can give itself life, be born
3. admit "we have sinned" like the Israelites
4. trust Him who was lifted up for us all

C. The effect of God's word and promise in our lives

1. quit sneaking around in the dark, hiding our discipleship
2. come forward as did Nicodemus at Jesus' burial

CONCLUSION: God's whole Bible, O.T. and N.T., is about Jesus and what He has done. Look to Him in faith with sins forgiven and eternal life waiting for you in His promised land called heaven. Amen.