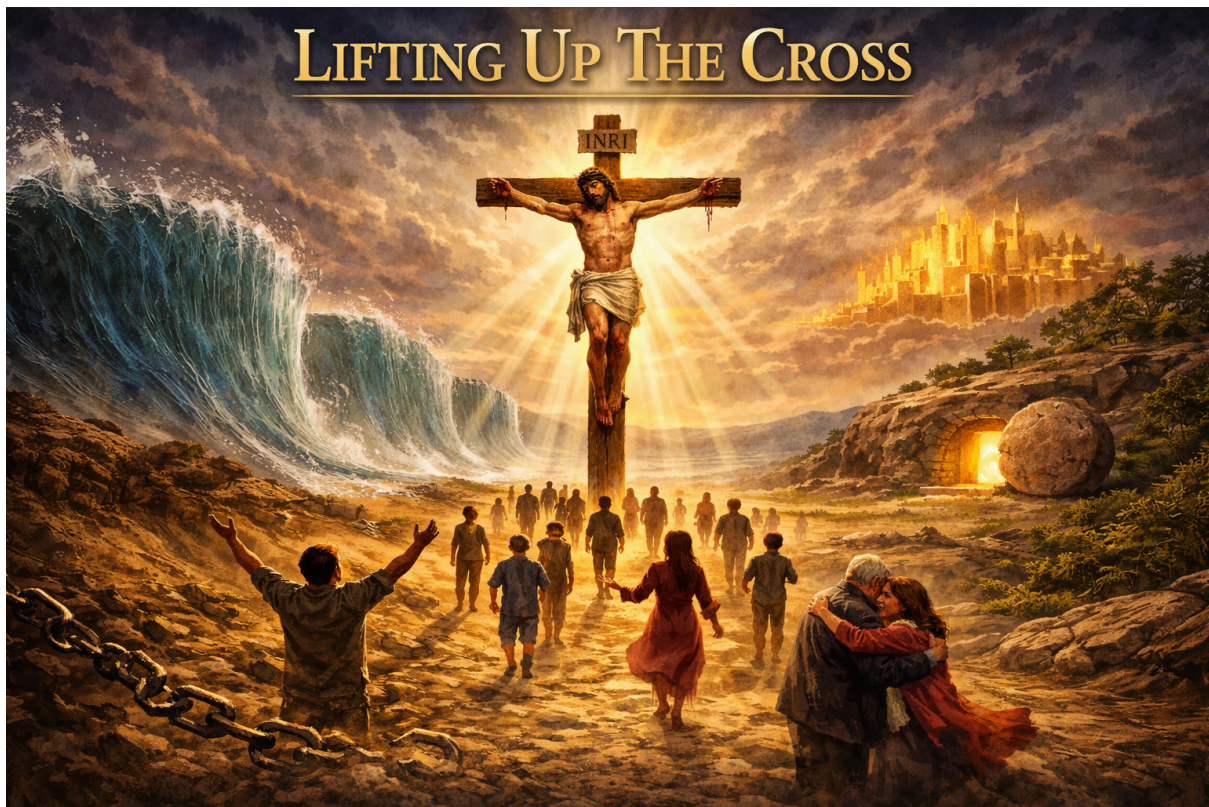


Lifting Up the Cross



Like the people of Israel in the wilderness, we also live in times where we easily become discouraged, frustrated, and quick to complain about the difficulties of life. Even in a modern world with technology, comfort, and many provisions, the heart can still become restless and ungrateful.

In the following passage we will see how the people spoke against God when the journey became hard. Yet we will also see God's mercy, because when they recognised their sin and turned back, the Lord provided a way for them to live.

Number 21.4 Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. 5And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." 6So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

8Then 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." 9 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.]

Short Memory

The people forgot what the Lord had saved them from when He set them free from the bondage and slavery of Pharaoh

What God did for them

- He Judged the gods of Egypt one by one through the plagues
- He Brought all of Israel out of slavery
- He parted the Red Sea so they could pass through -
- He Led them toward the Promised Land (new life)

God rescued about 600,000 men, not counting women and children. The estimate is around 2 million people delivered from slavery under Pharaoh through the leadership of Moses. They all witnessed God's power and deliverance firsthand.

Yet within 40 years, many forgot and began to moan, wail, and complain, saying, "our soul loathes this worthless bread." The manna sent down from heaven was a foreshadowing of Christ who was to come for the whole world.

And just as the antidote for their sin was lifted up in the wilderness — when Moses was told to make a bronze serpent and place it on a pole, so that if anyone was bitten and looked at it, they lived — this pointed forward to Jesus Christ, who would be lifted up to bring life to all who look to Him in faith. Where we can continue to read.

The Son of Man Lifted Up

John 3.13 **No one has ascended to heaven** but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. 14And as **Moses lifted up the serpent** in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 16For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17For God did not send His Son into the **world to condemn the world**, but that the world through Him might be saved.

18"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he **who does the truth comes to the light**, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."]

He Who Does The Truth.

When God appeared to Moses He said, "I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians." Through His mighty power He set millions free from slavery under Pharaoh.

In the fullness of time, God came down again in the person of Jesus Christ. This time the deliverance was even greater — not just from earthly bondage, but from sin and death — setting millions, and now billions, free as Christ was lifted up. Just as God sent manna down from heaven so the people would not starve in the wilderness — the manna they later grew tired of and rebelled against — Christ gives us His flesh and blood so that we may remember Him and be fed spiritually.

John 6.28 says this [Then they said to Him, "**What shall we do**, that we may work the works of God?" 29Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you **believe in Him** whom He sent." 30Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? 31Our **fathers ate the manna** in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' "

32Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the **true bread from heaven**. 33For the bread of God is **He** who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always."

35And Jesus said to them, "**I am the bread of life**. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. 36But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet **do not believe**. 37All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. 38For I have **come down from heaven**, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. 40And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day"]

Lifting Up The Cross

For us today how do we put to action the things that Christ demonstrated and taught us? How do we lift up the cross personally?

Firstly, **Do not forget-** Christ does not want us to forget, moan or get complacent like those we've just read about. Instead to remember Him, not only in this season of Easter but daily. How He the Son of Man was lifted up, suffered and gave His life a ransom for many. We are those many today

Baptism – When Israel passed through the Red Sea, they were completely separated from Egypt. Pharaoh and his army were destroyed behind them, and their life of slavery was finished. In the same way, when a person is baptised into Jesus Christ, it represents leaving the old life of sin behind and beginning a new life under Christ's rule.

Live in Freedom – Just as Israel came out from the bondage of Egypt, believers are brought out from the slavery of sin and from the power of Satan. The chains of old habits,

strongholds, and ways of thinking no longer have to rule us. Instead, we are called to walk in the freedom Christ gives, living the abundant life He promises as we journey toward our eternal home with God.

Communion – Spiritual Nourishment The Lord has given us a powerful source of spiritual nourishment and remembrance. In communion we pause to remember what Christ has done for us. It is a time to reflect on His suffering and the price He paid so that we might have life.

Just as the cross was lifted up, and Christ gave Himself for the world, we remember His body and His blood given for us. Through this remembrance we are spiritually strengthened, never forgetting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the power of His crucifixion in our lives today.

Finally John 15:26 “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”

Let us pray that we will listen to the Holy Spirit as He testifies to Jesus to Us in our hearts.