

The Bronze Serpent in the Wilderness

Numbers 20:14 - 21:9 & Deuteronomy 2:1-9

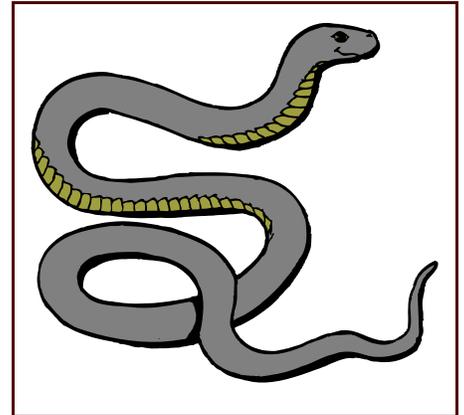
How could this animal be dangerous?

What do you think would be a cure for a snake bite?

What would happen if you didn't get a cure for the bite?

Prayer

Dear Lord, As I study Your Word today, send Your Holy Spirit to open my heart to learn and believe Your message. Teach me to obey Your commands and to realize that Jesus Christ is the only remedy for my sin. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



The Story - Numbers 20:14 - 21:9

Now Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom. "Thus says your brother Israel:

'You know all the hardship that has befallen us, {15} 'how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we dwelt in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians afflicted us and our fathers. {16} 'When we cried out to the LORD, He heard our voice and sent the Angel and brought us up out of Egypt; now here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your border. {17} 'Please let us pass through your country. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from wells; we will go along the King's Highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.'

{18} Then Edom said to him, "You shall not pass through my land, lest I come out against you with the sword."

{19} So the children of Israel said to him, "We will go by the Highway, and if I

or my livestock drink any of your water, then I will pay for it; let me only pass through on foot, nothing more."

{20} Then he said, "You shall not pass through." So Edom came out against them with many men and with a strong hand. {21} Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory; so Israel turned away from him.

{22} Now the children of Israel, the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor. {23} And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying: {24} "Aaron shall be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because you rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah. {25} "Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up to Mount Hor; {26} "and



strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; for Aaron shall be gathered to his people and die there."

{27} So Moses did just as the LORD commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. {28} Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. {29} Now when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, all the house of Israel mourned for Aaron thirty days.

The king of Arad, the Canaanite, who dwelt in the South, heard that Israel was coming on the road to Atharim, then he fought against Israel and took some of them prisoners. {2} So Israel made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities." {3} And the LORD listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites, and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. So the name of that place was called Hormah.

{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. {5} And 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."

{6} So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. {7} 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.

{8} 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." {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.

Outer Aim - When the children of Israel turned away from God, He chastised them and lovingly brought them back.

What the Story Tells Us - Fill in the blank with the correct word or words.

1. The king of _____ would not let the children of Israel pass through his land.
2. When Aaron died, his son _____ became the new _____.
3. On the way around Edom, the children of Israel became very _____.
4. They spoke against _____ and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to _____ in the _____?"
5. The Lord sent fiery _____, and they bit the people and many of them _____.
6. The people confessed to Moses that they had _____ and Moses _____ for the people.
7. The Lord told Moses to put a _____ serpent on a pole.
8. Everyone who looked at the serpent _____.

Inner Aim 1 - Although God deals severely with sinfulness, He deals graciously with repentant sinners.

What God Tells Us - Mark each statement (T)rue or (F)alse.

1. _____ God sent the fiery serpents in order to teach the Israelites a lesson.
2. _____ When problems come to us, they are God's way of punishing us for our sins.
3. _____ We should try to solve our problems on our own.
4. _____ The only way our sin problem can be cured is to look to God in faith and repentance.

What God's Word Also Tells Us - The bronze serpent is a type or picture of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Match the statements from the story with the statements about Jesus.

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| 1. _____ The children of Israel were infected by poisonous venom. | A. All who believe in Jesus as their Savior will be saved. |
| 2. _____ The snake bite resulted in death. | B. We are all sinful. |
| 3. _____ The bronze serpent was raised up on a pole. | C. Jesus was raised up on a cross. |
| 4. _____ All who looked at the serpent would live. | D. The punishment for sin is eternal death. |

Inner Aim 2 - The bronze serpent is a picture of Christ on the cross, the cure for our souls.

Your Turn - Use the messages from the story, passages, and hymn to complete the following activities.

1. Someone you know is feeling extremely guilty about something she has done. What could you tell her to comfort her?
2. You have been talking to your friend about Jesus and the Bible. Your friend says, "I believe in God, but there are just some things in the Bible that I can't believe because they don't make sense to me." What could you say to him?

Passages

John 3:14-16 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

John 12:32 "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."

1 Corinthians 1:18 "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

Hymn - TLH 171, v. 1, 3, 4, 6, 7. Choose one verse that explains our problem and one verse that gives the cure.

Upon the cross extended,
See, world, thy Lord suspended,
Thy Savior yields His breath.
The Prince of Life from heaven
Himself hath freely given
To shame and blows and bitter death.

I caused Thy grief and sighing
By evils multiplying
As countless as the sands.
I caused the woes unnumbered
With which Thy soul is cumbered,
Thy sorrows raised by wicked hands.

Who is it that hath bruised Thee?
Who hath so sore abused Thee
And caused Thee all Thy woe?
While we must make confession
Of sin and dire transgression,
Thou deeds of evil dost not know.

The load Thou takest on Thee,
That pressed so sorely on me,
It crushed me to the ground,
The cross for me enduring,
The crown for me securing,
My healing in Thy wounds is found.

A crown of thorns Thou wearest,
My shame and scorn Thou bearest,
That I might ransomed be.
My Bondsman, ever willing,
My place with patience filling,
From sin and guilt hast made me free.

Prayer

Dear Jesus,

When problems occur in my life, show me that these are intended to turn me to You. When I remember what You have done to cure me of my sin sickness, I realize how greatly You have blessed me. Help me to remember this all my life and to share it with others. In Your name I pray. Amen.