

The Bronze Serpent in the Wilderness

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



The Story

The people of Israel had been camping in the desert for 40 years. Does anyone remember why they had to spend 40 years in the desert? (They had shown distrust in the Lord when the twelve spies gave their report. They didn't trust God to help them fight their enemies.) The people of Israel were tired of living in the desert and were eager to get to their new land.

Moses asked the King of Edom if they could take a short cut through his country. Moses promised the king, "We will not go into any of your fields or eat any of your food. We will not take any water from your wells unless we pay for it. We will only stay on the road."

But the King of Edom said, "No, you may not come through my country." Then he sent his soldiers to make sure the Israelites did not come into his country.

The people of Israel were discouraged. Now they would have to walk hundreds of miles around the country of Edom. That would take a long time. What a long, hot walk that would be!

The people were so unhappy they started to complain against God and against Moses. "Why did you make us leave Egypt to die in the desert?" (They were forgetting that many years before they had prayed to God to help them get free from slavery in Egypt.) The people cried, "There is no bread or water, and we're sick of this miserable food!"

In all of their grumbling and complaining they were forgetting how God had miraculously given them water from a rock, and that God sent them manna every morning. They were in no danger of

dying in the desert from lack of food or water with their loving heavenly Father providing for all their needs.

This was a sin not to thank God for His blessings, but to complain instead. They were showing that they were not trusting God to provide for them.

So the Lord sent poisonous snakes among the people. They bit the people, and many in Israel died. The people came to Moses. "We've sinned," they said, "by talking against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord to take the snakes away from us."

Moses prayed for the people. God would show His love for His people by saving them.

"Make a snake," the Lord told Moses, "and put it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will live."

Moses made a bronze snake (out of metal) and put it on a pole. When a snake bit a man, he looked at the bronze snake and stayed alive.

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

The bronze serpent is a picture of Christ on the cross,

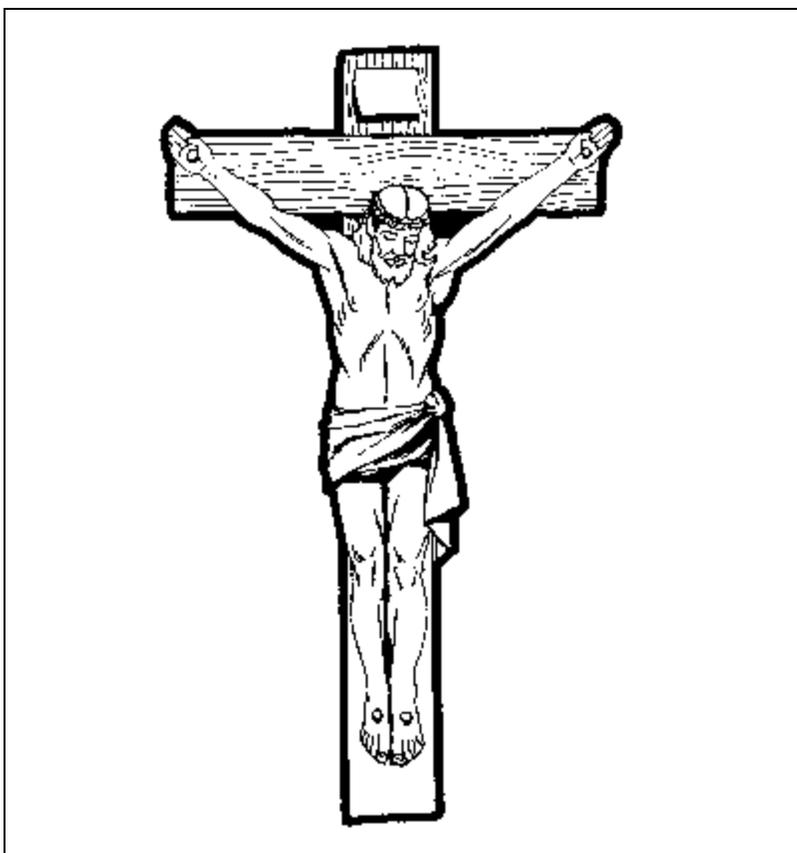
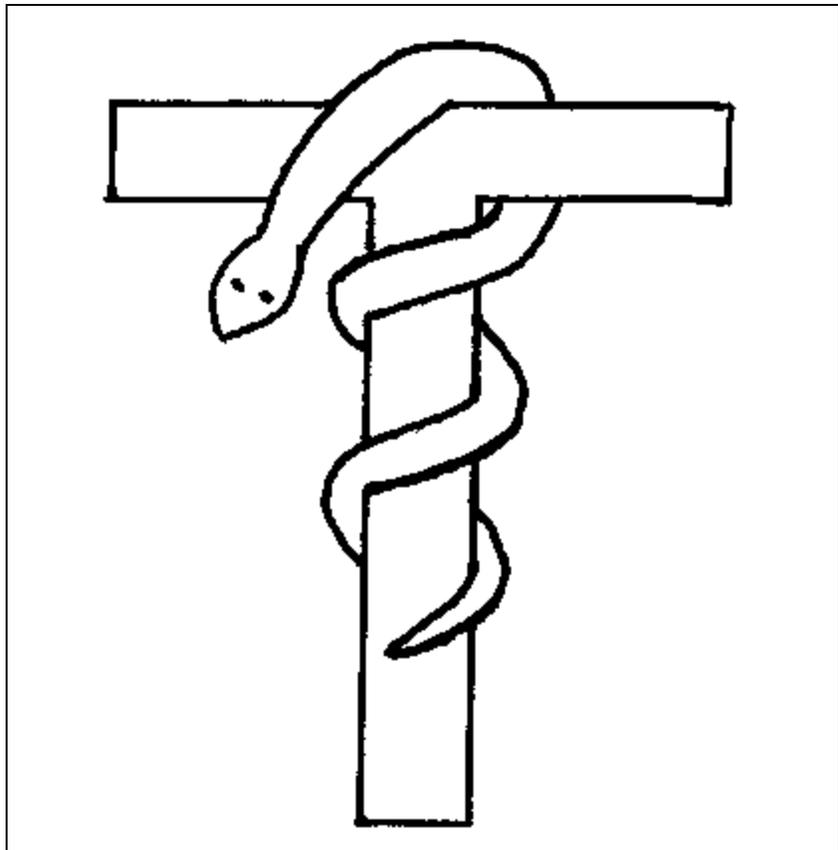
the cure for our souls.

Activity One & Passages

- Color the pictures as you review the Bible passages.

"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."

John 3:14-15



"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 3:16

Activity Two

- Circle T if the sentence is TRUE or F if the sentence is FALSE.

1. T F The people of Israel thanked God for their food.
2. T F The complaining of the people was a sin.
3. T F God sent harmless snakes to bite them.
4. T F The people were not sorry for their sins.
5. T F They asked Moses to pray for them.
6. T F God told Moses to put a bronze snake on a dish.
7. T F Everyone who looked at the snake lived.
8. T F God showed His love for them by saving them.
9. T F God forgave their sins.

Hymn

- TLH #394 v. 1

My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine.
Now hear me while I pray;
Take all my guilt away;
Oh, let me from this day be wholly Thine!

Prayer

Dear Father in heaven, we admit that we sin against You every day when we complain and don't obey our parents and teachers. We are sorry for our sins and ask that You forgive us for Jesus' sake. We know that You will save us because You love us. We pray that You will help us to always trust that Jesus paid for all our sins on the cross. Help us to trust in Your promise of eternal life. We thank You for Your love and mercy. Amen.