

# The Bronze Serpent in the Wilderness

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

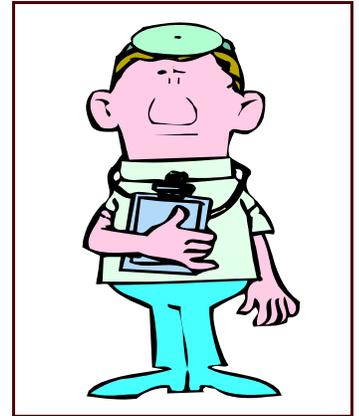
If you were sick, you might go to this man for help.

What other kind of sickness do people have besides bodily sickness?

To where do we turn for the cure of soul sickness?

## Prayer

Create in me a clean heart, Lord,  
That gladly I obey Thy Word  
And naught but what Thou wilt desire,  
With such new life my soul inspire. 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} Then 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.

Record Any Notes Here:

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

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## **What the Story Tells Us** - Answer these questions from the Bible lesson.

1. What land were the Israelites not allowed to pass through?
2. Who died at the top of Mount Hor?
3. Who was appointed the next High Priest?
4. Whom did the Lord deliver to the Israelites?
5. As the Israelites were going around Edom, how did they begin feeling?
6. What did the people complain about?
7. To whom did they complain?
8. What did the Lord send to the people?
9. What began to happen to many of the people?
10. What did the people say in their requests to Moses?
11. What did the Lord tell Moses to do?
12. How were the people cured?

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

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## **What God Tells Us** - Read and discuss the following.

1. Read I Corinthians 10:5-11. These verses speak of the many chastisements God sent His people.
  - a. Why did God send the serpents to the Israelites?
  - b. How are we often like the children of Israel in this lesson?
  - c. Why does God often send chastisements to His children?
  - d. What will God do if we confess our sins and repent of them?

2. The bronze serpent is a type, or picture, of our Savior Jesus Christ. For each of the following statements from the lesson, explain what they are a picture of regarding us and our Savior.
  - a. The Children of Israel were infected by a poisonous venom:
  - b. If left to run its course, the snakebite would result in death:
  - c. The bronze serpent was raised up on a pole:
  - d. Those who looked at the bronze serpent would be cured of the snakebite and live:
  
3. Read John 3:14-16 (see passages section). From this passage and from your previous answers, explain why the Israelites with the bronze serpent, and we with our Savior, must by faith, not reason, receive the cure and live.

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

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**Passages** - Discuss together how these passages apply to our lesson today.

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."

Lamentations 3:22-24 Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!"

**Hymn** - TLH #171, v. 1, 3, 4, 6, 7. Read these verses and discuss them.

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.

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.

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.

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**

Thy cross I'll place before me,  
Its saving power be o'er me,  
Wherever I may be;  
Thine innocence revealing,  
Thy love and mercy sealing,  
The pledge of truth and constancy.