

The Brazen Serpent**INTRODUCTION**

TEXT: Numbers 21:4-9

STORY ELEMENTS:

- **Setting:** approx. 1405 B.C., near Elath.
- **Main Characters:** God and Moses
- **Plot:** A detour brings rebellious murmuring and punishment in the form of fiery serpents.
- **Key word(s):** “ _____ ”; “ _____ ”
- **Climax:** “And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.” (21:6)

BACKGROUND

1. The Hebrews were forced to travel around Edom instead of entering Canaan through it (Num. 20:20-21). The lengthened journey gave rise to complaining and other expressions of _____.

Num 21:5 *And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.*

→ “Light bread” was a reference to manna; the phrase could also be translated “ _____ ” or “insubstantial.”

THE BRAZEN SERPENT

2. In response to Israel’s faithlessness, the LORD sent fiery serpents into the camp – “fiery” as in the wound they inflicted not in their _____.
3. Immediately the people confess their sinfulness and Moses _____ for them. The LORD instructs Moses to affix a brass serpent to a pole and elevate it so that all the people could see. All of who look upon the brazen serpent would be healed of the fiery snake bites.

APPLICATION

Joh 3:14 *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:*

Joh 3:15 *That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

4. The brazen serpent is a wonderful picture of redemption. When explaining the new birth to nicodemus, the Savior compared His ministry to the brazen serpent. Albert Barnes make notice of these four parallels in his commentary:
 - a. In each case those who are to be benefited can be aided in no other way. The bite of the serpent was _____, and could be healed only by looking on the brass serpent; and sin is _____ in its nature, and can be removed only by looking on the cross.
 - b. The mode of their being lifted up. The brass serpent was in the sight of the people. So Jesus was exalted from the earth _____ on a tree or cross.
 - c. The design was similar. The one was to save the _____, the other the _____; the one to save from temporal, the other from eternal death.
 - d. The manner of the cure was similar. The people of Israel were to look on the serpent and be healed, and so sinners are to _____ on the Lord Jesus that they may be saved.
5. Sadly, the Hebrews began to worship the symbol of the Savior instead of the Savior.

2Ki 18:4 *He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it*

_____.