



WEEK 2

STUDY GUIDE

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APRIL 15-19, 2024

Monday, April 15, 2024

Read: Numbers 21:8-9

Scripture Verse: *“Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And 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 takes away the serpents from us.” So, Moses prayed for the people.” Numbers 21:6-7.*

Today’s Thought:

Before approaching verses 8 and 9 of Numbers 21 which speak of the bronze serpent, let us place the text in context. Through its context, we can better understand its foreshadowing and symbolism in the New Testament. It will also help us see clearly that these two Old Testament verses foreshadow Jesus in the New Testament as the only way of salvation. Therefore, to be saved, someone must have faith in Jesus, obey Him, and focus on him for spiritual healing. So, for a better understanding of God’s plan of redemption, let’s look at Exodus chapter 12-15. These chapters tell us a little about the history of the Jewish people. This book tells us that the Israelites, led by Moses, left Egypt after the ten plagues. They crossed the Red Sea on dry land. Leaving Egypt and reaching the desert was not a simple matter; they had to overcome a lot of obstacles. During their journey, the Lord always asks them through his servant Moses, to have faith in him and to obey him in all circumstances, and then he will provide for their needs. All things are possible by the mighty hands of the Almighty God if they place their trust in him.

However, throughout this journey they demonstrated a mixture of faith and disobedience. They often complained, doubting God’s providence. We read: “Then the people murmured against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” Exodus 15:24. While in Exodus 15:26 the Lord said to them, “If you will diligently listen to the voice of the LORD your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, your healer.” Despite the decree and the law that God gave them, they continue to offend God. We read: “In the desert, the whole community murmured against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them: “If only we died by the hand of the LORD in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you brought us into this wilderness to starve all this congregation to

death." Exodus 16:2-3.

In the desert, the Israelites express their frustration and displeasure with God and Moses and even want to stone Moses. As a result, God sends poisonous serpents among them (Numbers 21:6). Despite all these challenges, God remained faithful and continued to guide them. So, in the desert, facing challenges such as lack of water and food, God provided them with manna, quails and water from a rock. The verses we have mentioned above have clearly shown us that the Lord's main problems with His people and with humanity are disobedience, lack of faith and respect for him. Lack of respect and faith in God provokes God's wrath. However, God still has compassion for humanity. In the case of the Israelites, as soon as they sought God and turned from their evil ways, God made provision for them. Look at verse 7 of Numbers 21: "The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned in speaking against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the serpents away from us. So, Moses prayed for the people. What was God's response to their prayer? In fact, God asked Moses to make a bronze serpent and place it on a pole. Anyone who looked at the bronze serpent after being bitten would be healed. It symbolized faith and obedience to God's command for healing. It is this symbolism that we will study in Numbers 21:8 and 9 in comparison with Jesus' statement in John 3:14-15. May this study be a catalyst that propels you closer to the cross of Jesus every day.

Lord, thank you for your word. This study really helps me understand that you are a compassionate God. Despite the people's rebellion, protest, and discontent against you, you still showed your love for them to the point of asking Moses to do a strange thing, which was to erect a bronze serpent, and whoever was bitten by the poisonous serpent as soon as they look at the bronze serpent on the pole, they will be able to be healed. Thank you for this great provision that you have made for us today in your Son Jesus.

- How did the Israelites travel from Egypt to the desert?
- What was the behavior of the Israelites?
- Why did God send the poisonous serpent to bite them?
- What did God ask Moses to do?
- What did God require of the Israelite people?
- What does God require of us?
- What is the foreshadowing of the bronze serpent?

Further Reading: Acts 13:25-26

Tuesday, April 16, 2024

Read: Numbers 21:8-9

Scripture Verse: *“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.’” Numbers 21:8a.*

Today’s Thought:

From our previous study, we saw why God asked Moses to make a bronze serpent and place it on a pole. Before diving deeper into verses 8 and 9, we can notice that God always uses faithful, obedient, and available servants to carry out his plan. In terms of examples, let’s choose some servants of God in the Old and New Testaments who were faithful, obedient, and available to God and see how their faithfulness, obedience and availability can inspire us today to be more devoted, faithful, obedient and available to serve as a useful instrument in the hands of God to accomplish His purpose.

In the Old Testament, as an example, we can cite Abraham. The word of God presents Abraham as the father of faith and the one who decided to obey God to the point of voluntarily sacrificing his son to God. When God ordered him to sacrifice his son as a test of devotion, without complaint or hesitation, he submitted his will to the will of God and offered his son as a burnt offering to God. Through his faithfulness, his obedience, and his willingness to submit his will to that of God, the Lord showed him what he did not expect. We read: “Then he stretched out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven: “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. “Don’t lay your hand on the boy,” he said. “Don’t do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld your son from me, your only son.” Genesis 22:10-12. In fact, Abraham’s obedience teaches us to be an available and obedient servant of God and ready to listen to him.

Next, we can consider Moses whom we find in verse 8 of our study. Despite his weakness, he is one of the main characters of the Old Testament who accomplished a vital mission in the liberation of God’s children from slavery. Moses illustrated faith and obedience. God called him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt under his leadership; despite initial hesitation, he became a steadfast servant and crossed the Red Sea to facilitate the escape of God’s people (Exodus 14:21-22). When it comes to hearing and submitting to God, he never asks, “Why?” In Numbers 21:8 as we study, we see that God asked him to do something weird. God asked

him to make a bronze serpent and place it on a pole so that anyone who looked at the bronze serpent after being bitten by the poisonous serpent in the desert would be healed. In fact, he didn't ask God, "What do you mean by that?" On the contrary, he obeyed God to the letter. We can notice that Moses, just like Abraham, is a symbol of faith and obedience to God's command. He is also a figure for us today to imitate.

So, let's move on to the New Testament and consider Mary, the mother of our Savior Jesus. She was a woman of faith, obedience and good will whom God used to carry out his redemptive plan for humanity. Mary's unwavering faith and desire to fulfill God's plan was evident as she humbly accepted the angel Gabriel's message regarding the conception of God's Son. Her response: "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38), shows her availability and submission to the will of God. In summary, throughout the Bible, our greatest model of faith, humility, submission, and obedience is "Jesus." We read of him, "Having been found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient unto death, even death on a cross!" Philippians 2:8. It is this character that Moses described in Numbers 21:8 who will defeat the ancient serpent and give us access to the kingdom of God.

Heavenly Father, thank you so much for providing me with models of faithful, obedient, and available servants who willingly followed you wholeheartedly. Father, above all, you gave me your Son Jesus as a perfect model of faithfulness, obedience, and selflessness to follow. Lord, for your name's sake, help me to follow him relentlessly to the end.

- What kind of people did God use to carry out his plan?
- In the Old Testament, how does the Bible describe Abraham?
- What did Abraham do to give him this credit?
- What mission did God entrust to Moses?
- In the desert, what did God ask him to do?
- What was Moses' reaction?
- Who is our ultimate model of faith, humility, submission, selflessness, and obedience?
- How would this study seem useful to you?

Further Reading: Colossians 2:13-15

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Read: Numbers 21:8-9

Scripture Verse: *“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.’” Numbers 21:8b.*

Today’s Thought:

In our previous studies in the book of Numbers, we saw that throughout the Israelites' journey from Egypt to the desert, they demonstrated a mixture of faith and disobedience to God. They often complained, doubting God's providence. We saw in the desert that the whole community murmured against Moses and Aaron. They lacked confidence in God's providence. When problems arise, instead of relying on God and seeking God's favor, they instead complain, are displeased, show their frustration, and speak foolishly against God and his servant Moses. We saw, as a result, that God sent poisonous serpents among them (Numbers 21:6). They have always provoked God to anger, but God, in his compassion, does not always remain angry. We read in Micah 7:18, “Who is a God like you, who forgives sin and forgives the transgression of the remainder of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever, but you delight in showing mercy.”

When they were bitten by the poisonous snake, God, in his mercy, asked Moses, his servant, to make a bronze snake and place it on a pole. Why did God ask Moses to make a bronze serpent and not a clay serpent? In ancient civilization, bronze had considerable importance before Christ due to its versatility and durability. It was an important material for various tools and weapons. Its widespread use in ancient civilizations marked a crucial technological advance in metallurgy.

In fact, God asked Moses to make a bronze serpent to help the Israelite people understand that the serpent with venom is powerless. The venom-crawling serpent that bit them in the desert is a symbol of the ancient serpent that bit Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden by which all human beings become guilty before God. Therefore, the bronze serpent that God commanded Moses to make and place on a stake foreshadows Jesus' resilience, authority, and power to resist the attacks of the devil in his mission to redeem humanity. It also shows that salvation is found only in Jesus. The New Testament tells us very clearly in Acts 4:12: “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

In the desert, God provided a bronze serpent to the Israelites who were

bitten by the poisonous serpent, but now God provides his Son Jesus as an antidote to the venom of sin that Satan had injected into us. Jesus is the only antidote, the only cure for sin. Anyone who has been bitten by the snake, just look at Jesus with an eye of faith and you will experience his spiritual healing.

I remember that the snake bite ruined my life, I was about to die, I had no hope of getting out of the quagmire I found myself in, and I felt hopeless, depressed, powerless, alone in my journey, but the day I looked to Jesus, he took me out of the swamp, washed me with his cleansing blood and made me a new creation. Like I told you, I just believed in Jesus and he healed me. Now I believe he saved my soul. Hallelujah to Jesus, the man on the cross, the man of suffering and familiar with pain who saved my soul!

Lord Jesus, thank you so much for all that you endured on the cross for me. You agreed to suffer suffering, humiliation, and insults just for me. Thank you for your resilience, and you did not decide to abandon the way of the Cross because of me.

- What was the importance of bronze in ancient civilizations?
- Why did God ask Moses to use this symbol?
- Who does this symbol foreshadow?
- What deadly venom has the devil injected into us?
- What should you do to be immune to such a virus?

Further Reading: Isaiah 53:3-5

Thursday, April 18, 2024

Read: Numbers 21:8-9

Scripture Verse: *“So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.” Numbers 21:9a*

Today’s Thought:

Through our previous studies in the book of Numbers, we have seen God’s compassion toward His people despite their wrongdoing toward him. When things presented themselves to the Israelites in a way they did not expect, they expressed their displeasure with God by speaking foolishly against God and His servant Moses, without thinking that they themselves were the main source of their misfortune. While God demands loyalty and obedience from them. Notice that when the Israelite people were stubborn towards God, they paid the consequences. In the book of Numbers, we see the presence of venomous snakes in the desert. What we can emphasize, the main reason for the presence of venomous snakes in the desert, is the stubbornness of the people against God. Instead of taking as an example the faithfulness and obedience of their ancestor Abraham and their closest Moses, they preferred to act differently towards God, their creator.

Verses 8 and 9 of Numbers 21 speak of the bronze serpent. This bronze serpent expresses the mercy of God linked to verse 7 of the same chapter which states: “The people came to Moses and said: “We have sinned in speaking against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the serpents away from us. So, Moses prayed for the people. Notice that the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned against the Lord.” In fact, this is the fundamental statement that God expected them to make the necessary arrangements for them. Indeed, they recognized that they were in rebellion against God and his servant Moses. Immediately, the Lord provided them with a way out of their swamp.

This prompt provision of God to his people reminds us of his love, compassion, and mercy expressed by the psalmist in Psalms 103:8-10: “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities” The people turned to God, and God disregarded their actions but showed them favor. He asked Moses to make a bronze snake and put it on a pole and whoever is bitten by the poisonous snakes, just

look at the bronze snake on the pole and they will be healed from the venom that the snakes injected into them. As we said before, this bronze serpent that God provided for his people in the desert after being bitten by the poisonous serpents, foreshadowed the greatest provision God ever made for mankind in the New Testament, in occurrence, his Son, "Jesus." The disobedience and stubbornness of the Israelites in the desert symbolize humanity's rebellion against God.

Therefore, God provided Jesus as the unique solution to the venom of sin that the ancient serpent injected into the world. As verse 7 of Numbers 21 states, the people asked Moses, "Pray that the Lord would take away the serpents from us." The same is true for all those who sin against God today. The only thing is that we don't need to ask anyone to pray for us to find God's goodness, compassion, and forgiveness. We can approach God with all our hearts to ask for forgiveness. We read about this, "If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9. Therefore, whoever looks to Jesus will never be ashamed because that is why he took the way of the cross. Brothers and sisters, when you offend God, do not let remorse and shame lead you astray. Rather, simply draw closer to God by confessing your wrongdoings to Jesus, for He is our advocate with the Father.

Heavenly Father, I know that I am a sinner. I have sinned against you, as the Israelites did in the desert. In your compassion, you provided them with the necessary provisions. Lord, thank you for allowing Jesus to die in my place to cleanse me of my sins with his blood shed on the cross. Help me draw closer to you every day. Lord don't let remorse and shame keep me from the true path.

- What did the Israelites do when things turned out the way they didn't expect?
- What caused the presence of venomous snakes in the desert?
- After becoming aware of their rebellion, what did the Israelites ask Moses?
- What was God's response to Moses?
- What is the greatest provision God has ever made for humanity?
- What should your reaction be when you offend God?
- What would your prayer be today?

Further Reading: Isaiah 57:15-18

Friday, April 19, 2024

Read: Numbers 21:8-9

Scripture Verse: *“So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.” Numbers 21:9b*

Today's Thought:

Throughout our study above, we have seen that God condemned the Israelites' attitude in the desert by allowing poisonous snakes to attack them in the desert. All this happened because of their disobedience and stubbornness against God. They refused to believe in God's providence. As we said before, God did not consider their bad attitude towards him in refusing to forgive them. Rather, God provided them with a bronze serpent. The bronze serpent that God provided them is a kind of representation of God's healing power and mercy. So, looking at the bronze serpent on the stake is an act of repentance and trust in God's power to deliver and forgive them from the consequences of their sins. In the desert, through an act of obedience and faith in God, those who looked at the bronze serpent on the stake were healed of the snakes' venom.

As we said before, this bronze serpent that God provided for his people in the desert after being bitten by the poisonous serpents of the desert, foreshadowed the greatest provision God had ever made for humanity in the New Testament, namely “Jesus”. This is why, in the New Testament, in the book of John, Jesus mentions the event of the bronze serpent on the stake in the desert to allude to his mission to save humanity. Through these studies we can discover that there is a perfect interconnection between the books of the Old Testament and those of the New Testament. In one sense or another, Jesus is everywhere in the Bible. Speaking of his own crucifixion for the deliverance of mankind, Jesus said, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.” John 3:14-15.

Here Jesus draws a parallel between the bronze serpent and his own crucifixion for humanity. The raised serpent foreshadows the elevation of Jesus on the cross, signifying salvation for those who believe in him. We read: “This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant. The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always

lives to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 7:22-25.

Thus, the bronze serpent becomes a powerful metaphor for Christ's atoning sacrifice. Just as the Israelites were saved by looking at the bronze serpent, believers are saved by looking at Jesus on the cross in faith. The serpent on the stake, once a symbol of physical healing, but now the crucifixion of Jesus is the reality of Christ's redemptive work. This perfect connection between the Old and New Testaments underlines the coherence of the Bible, and Jesus is truly the fulfillment of all that was foretold in the Old Testament. Regarding this, Jesus said: “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.” Luke 24:44-45. May, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus open your mind to understand that he is in all the Bible and that the salvation of your soul is possible simply by believing only in Him.

Lord Jesus, thank you so much for your own crucifixion for my sins. Now I am saved by considering you as my only Savior. Help me each day to understand the value and importance of your blood shed on the cross. May my eyes be on you for the rest of my life.

- Why did God allow the poisonous serpent to attack the Israelites in the desert?
- What does God's love and compassion prompt him to do?
- What is Jesus talking about in John 3:14?
- What message did Jesus teach his disciples?
- How do you understand this parallel that Jesus himself made between the bronze serpent and his own life?

Further Reading: Hebrews 3:1

Today is Friday. Saturday and Sunday are on the way. “Oh come, let us sing to the LORD. Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! For the LORD is a great God.” Psalms 95:1-3.



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