

GOD HEALED ISRAEL WITH A BRONZE SNAKE

God saves His people individually.



THE STORY: NUMBERS 21:1-3

MONDAY

God delivered Israel in response to their faith

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TALK ABOUT IT:

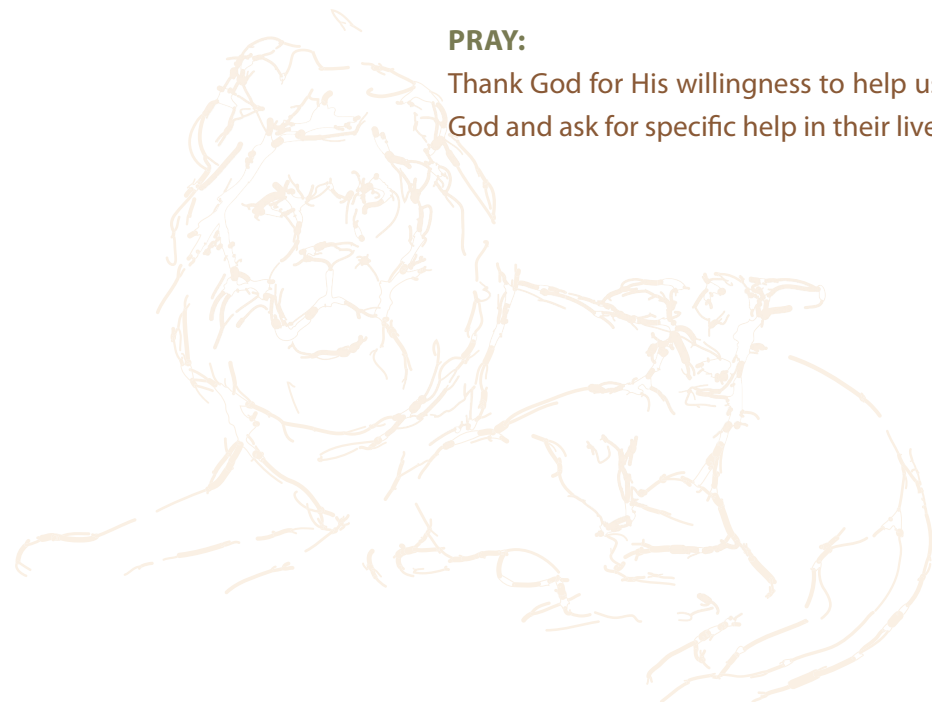
What did Israel do correctly in this story? (*Israel trusted God and asked for His help.*)

How were Israel's actions different here than when Joshua and Caleb first brought back news of the people of Canaan? (*When the spies brought back their report, Israel became afraid and did not believe that God could deliver them from the "giants" in the land. Here, Israel approached God and asked for His help to defeat those same "giants."*)

How did Israel's prayers and plan honor God? (*Israel was willing to destroy the canaanites and their cities if God delivered them. This would have included the Canaanite stone and wood false gods and high places of false worship.*)

PRAY:

Thank God for His willingness to help us to follow Him. Have your children pray to God and ask for specific help in their lives to obey God.





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Israel begin to trust in God again then they began to complain about a lack of water as well as food that they didn't like. Because of their sin, God sent a judgment of venomous snakes to bite the people, and many died. It is particularly sad to read of how Israel fell back into sin so quickly because they had just seen God deliver them from the Canaanite king of Arad.

TALK ABOUT IT:

How does this story illustrate our need for a Savior? *(Apart from God's saving plan for our lives, we are bound in sin and bound to fail. Israel trusted God in their battle with Arad but very quickly fell back into unbelief afterwards. The account shows us that Israel needed a Savior and that nobody can be righteous apart from God's saving work.)*

In our daily lives we fall repeatedly into the same patterns of sin just like Israel did. What is the solution that can give us hope when we make the same wrong choices again and again? *(We have this hope: that Jesus came to break the power of sin over us and that one day we as believers will be completely free of sin (in heaven) and that now we can say "no" to sin and "yes" to righteousness.)*

PRAY:

Ask God to help you overcome the patterns of sin in your own life, thanking Him for sending Jesus to set us free from sin's grip.





Where is Jesus?

The Old Testament is filled with stories that point to Jesus and the account of Moses lifting up the snake in the desert is one that is referenced in the Gospel of John. When Israel complained, God sent the judgment of death upon them through the venomous snakes; however, those same sinners were saved from death when they looked to the remedy God provided. Remember, it was God who told Moses to put the bronze snake up on a pole.

The entire scenario of Israel's disobedience and ensuing judgment reminded God the Father of His plan to send Jesus, who would one day be lifted up on the cross for the forgiveness of people's sins. Mindful of the mercy to come at the cross, God showed mercy to Israel, healed the people, and did not count their sins against them. Isn't it interesting that the recount of this Old Testament story in John precedes the most quoted verse of the entire New Testament (John 3:16)? When we read of the bronze snake being lifted up we should think of Christ, who alone can deliver us from eternal death.

TALK ABOUT IT:

How does the bronze snake point to Jesus? *(Just like the bronze snake, Jesus was lifted up on the cross for all to look upon and be saved. It is interesting to note that when the Bible describes "looking upon," there is trust implied on the part of the people.)*

How do Jesus' death and his being "lifted up" on the cross save us? *(Jesus took the penalty we deserved while he was lifted up on the cross. If we believe (place our trust) in the work of Christ, the Bible tells us that we can have eternal life.)*

PRAY:

Ask God to help you believe and place your trust in Jesus who was lifted up on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins.





Moses disobeyed God raised up salvation for Israel.

God raised up salvation for Israel. The people of Israel realized their mistake and asked Moses to mediate for them by praying to the Lord and asking him to take the snakes away. Rather than take them away, God instructed Moses to make a similar snake out of bronze and put it on a pole. If anyone was bitten they were to look upon the snake on the pole and they would be saved from death. Here, God provided a glimpse of how salvation would come in the future: each person would need to look to the source of salvation individually, not as a group. This was a change because prior to this, God dealt with Israel as a nation. The principle extends to us even today: to be saved from eternal death, each person must look upon Jesus Christ in faith, for himself or herself.

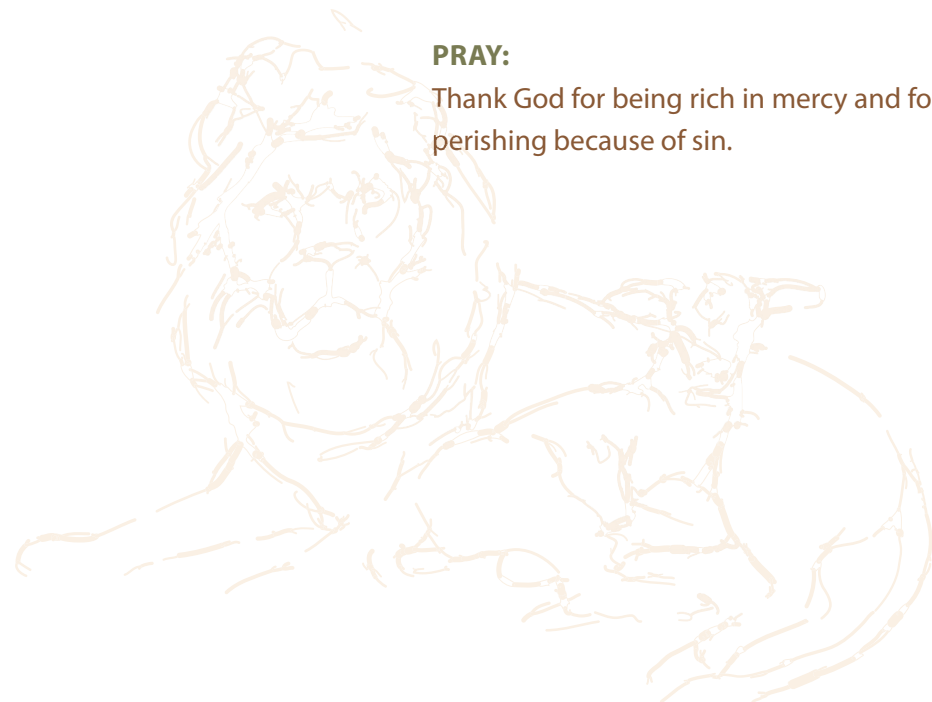
TALK ABOUT IT:

A person's shadow can give you a good hint of what he or she looks like but it won't show you exactly what he looks like. Shadows mark the outline of a person but do not have variances in color or show detailed features that we see on one another. How is the snake being lifted up on the pole a shadow of Christ? *(We could call the snake on the pole a shadow of Christ because the people who looked upon it and trusted God for healing were delivered from death. When we look to Jesus and trust in His death on the cross for our salvation, we are also delivered from death—eternal death—due to the bonds of sin. The bronze serpent gives us a shadow or hint of God's plan.)*

What does God tell us about Himself in this story? *(God shows us that He is a holy God who brings consequences for sin; however, He is also a merciful God who is willing to make a way to save His people from the consequences of their sin.)*

PRAY:

Thank God for being rich in mercy and for his willingness to go after those who are perishing because of sin.





On the road to Emmaus.

Jesus is the cornerstone described in the passage. A cornerstone is the stone from which all the other stones in a house take their lead and position. 1 Peter 2:5-9 directly connects this passage to Christ by stating that all believers are like living stones that are being built together into a spiritual house, with Jesus as the cornerstone.

TALK ABOUT IT:

How is Jesus a precious cornerstone for us? *(Just as all stones in a building are in line with the cornerstone, so all Christians follow the lead of Christ. Jesus is the head of the church of which all believers are a part. If we want to see whether we are correctly "in place" as living stones and lining up with God's purpose for our lives, we must look to the life of Jesus as recorded in scripture. If our lives are in line with Christ's qualities then we are correctly in place.)*

What do we do to become a part of the house that Jesus is building? *(We participate in the house of God by our faith in Christ. According to both Isaiah and Peter, the act of believing is the way to become a part of the spiritual house of God.)*

PRAY:

Ask God to touch your heart and help you believe and completely trust in Jesus, the precious cornerstone.

