

Snake Bite!

Numbers 21:4-9; Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 428-432

Have your parents ever asked you to do something that you didn't want to do? Maybe you couldn't understand why they wanted you to do it. But you obeyed them because you have faith in them. You believe they want what's best for you.

Something like that happened to the Israelites. Let's read more.

God's people had been wandering in the desert for forty years. The Israelites had once been on the edge of the Promised Land. But God sent them back into the desert because of their unbelief and disobedience. But He didn't abandon them. Every day of those forty years they had manna to eat. They had water to drink.

Their shoes and clothes didn't wear out. Their feet didn't get sore or swollen. And the diseases, scorpions, and snakes of the desert didn't bother them.

Now, once again, the Israelites were near the Promised Land. So near that they could see the cool valleys and green fields. And they thought it unfair that they had spent forty years in the desert. They grumbled to one another. Then they began to grumble to Moses.

"Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in this wilderness?" they complained. "There's no water! There's no bread! And we're tired of eating manna!"

They didn't appreciate what God had done to keep them safe. They didn't care that He had kept their clothes from wearing

out. They weren't happy about spending all that time in the hot, dusty desert. And they accused God of causing their hardships.

Poor Moses. He had heard it all before. He tried to point out God's leading. He tried to show them the many ways God had cared for them. But they wouldn't listen. It seemed that all they could do was complain. Finally God decided to take away His protection and let them see



The Message

We worship God when we have faith in Him.

Memory Verse

“‘Have faith in God’ ”

(Mark 11:22, NIV).

what happened.

The poisonous snakes that lived in the desert soon overran the camp. And many of the Israelites were bitten. In almost every tent someone was dead or dying. No one was safe from the fiery snake venom. Once bitten, they soon died.

It didn't take the people long to see how wrong they had been. "We sinned when we grumbled about you and God," they told Moses. "Please," they begged, "pray that God will take away the snakes."

Moses prayed, and the Lord heard him. God told him to make a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. If those who had been bitten would look at the bronze snake, they would live. Moses made the snake just as he was told. And the people who looked at it were healed by God.

But some people couldn't believe that looking at a snake on a pole would heal them. They didn't have faith in God. They chose not to follow His directions, not to look at the pole. Because they had no faith, because they didn't trust God, He could not heal them, so they died.

The snake in the desert was a symbol of Jesus dying for our sins. The metal snake itself had no power to heal. It was faith in God that led Him to heal them.

Years later Jesus referred to His death. The Bible tells us what He said. "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man [Jesus] must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life" (John 3:14, 15, NIV). Our faith in Jesus lifted up on the cross helps us

know that Jesus died so we can live with Him forever. So, have faith in God. And believe what the Bible says.





S A B B A T H

READ With your family, read this week's lesson story. Why did God tell the people to look at the serpent? Did looking at the snake heal the people? How do you know?

DO Teach your memory verse to your family. Ask them what it means to them.

SING Sing some praise songs before prayer. Thank God for His healing power.

S U N D A Y

DO If possible, go with your family to visit a zoo or other place to see snakes. Or look in books to learn more about them. How do you feel about snakes? Why?

DRAW Draw a picture of Moses putting up the snake on a pole for the people to look at. Include some people who have been bitten.

DO Look for ways to obey your parents quickly this week, even if you don't understand why they ask you to do something.

M O N D A Y

READ With your family, read and discuss Numbers 21:4-9. Why did the Israelites grumble? What happened because they grumbled so much? What did God tell them to do to be healed? How did they show their faith? How do you know if you have faith in God?

DO Review the memory verse together. Ask your family members to tell about a time their faith was strengthened. Pray that you and your family will always have faith in God.

T U E S D A Y

READ During family worship read and discuss John 3:14, 15 and John 12:32, 33. Who did the metal serpent on the pole represent? What is Jesus called in verse 14? Why was Jesus lifted up on a cross? If you love Jesus for dying on the cross to save you from sin, write your name here.

PRAY Thank Jesus for dying to save you.

W E D N E S D A Y

DO Have your own quiet time with Jesus. Find a place where you can be alone. Thank Jesus for three things and sing your favorite song for Him. Tell Him why you believe in Him.

DO Show your family the snake on the cross that you made in Sabbath School. Tell them what it teaches about Jesus.



THURSDAY

ASK Ask your family to help you look for the medical symbol with a snake on a pole. Where will you look? (Hint: medical book or magazine, on an ambulance, at a hospital, doctor's office, pharmacy, etc.) Tell someone about it. Ask your family: Why is it a symbol for healing today?

PRAY Pray for God's blessing on someone who is sick.



There are 35 different kinds of snakes in Palestine. Some are extremely poisonous.

FRIDAY

DO For worship tonight act out the Bible story with your family. Who will be Moses? Who will be the voice of God? Who will be bitten by snakes?

THINK Read John 3:14, 15 together again. When was Jesus lifted up while on this earth? What does it mean to lift up Jesus today? How can you and your family lift Him up?

SING Before prayer, sing "Trust and Obey" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 113) or "Philippians 4:4" ("Rejoice in the Lord") (*Sing for Joy*, No. 23). Thank Jesus for dying on the cross for you and your family. Pray that your faith will always be strong.

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PUZZLE

Directions: Unscramble the letters to find out the lesson that the Israelites needed to learn.

--- aHev --- tahfi --- ni --- dGo.

