



MOSAIC Gospel Project

Volume 3, Unit 7, Lesson 2: The Bronze Snake

Bible Passage: Numbers 20-21

Personal Preparation

The Israelites had been wandering in the wilderness when they complained to Moses and to God. God had done some pretty amazing things for the Israelites—he rescued them from the hand of Pharaoh, he parted the Red Sea so they could safely cross, and he provided manna for them to eat. But to the Israelites, this wasn't enough.

God disciplined them because he knew their dissatisfaction was a sign of a bigger issue: a heart problem—a sin problem. They stopped believing that God is good. In their hearts, the Israelites believed the same lie that rattled Eve in the garden. Maybe God isn't interested in giving us what is best. Maybe he is holding out on us.

God sent venomous snakes that bit the people and killed many of them. The Israelites repented. They wanted Moses to ask God to take away the snakes.

God provided a solution. He told Moses, “Make a snake image out of bronze and mount it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will recover.”

In John 3:14, Jesus said, “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up.” What was Jesus talking about? Second Corinthians 5:21 says, “He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” So Jesus invites us, “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth. For I am God, and there is no other” (Isa. 45:22).

As you lead the individuals this week, help them understand the problem: we all have sinned and deserve death. Then lead them to rejoice because Jesus, the sinless Savior, became sin for us and was lifted up on the cross in our place. We must look to and trust in him to be saved.

Memory Verse

Start the lesson by sharing the memory verse with the group.

Proverbs 3:5-6

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.”

Points of Emphasis

1. God told his people to look at the bronze snake to be healed.
2. To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God and his commands.

Activity #1

Guide the group to begin working on the activity sheet. Feel free to let them continue as you teach the lesson.

Video

Last week, we talked about the people of Israel as they drew near to the promised land. God wanted them to trust him and move into the land. Joshua and Caleb trusted God to give his people the promised land, but 10 of the scouts sent into the land did not trust God, and as a result, the people were afraid to

obey God’s command to enter the land. This week, we will learn about another time when God’s people did not trust him. As usual, the results of their sin were disastrous. Our story is called “The Bronze Snake.”

Play the video for today’s lesson titled “The Bronze Snake.”

Bible Lesson

It’s interesting that the Israelites, who refused to enter the good land God promised, were blaming God and Moses for leading them aimlessly through the wilderness. The people had a chance to move out of the wilderness and into the land with good food to eat, but they were too afraid! Their wandering in the wilderness was their own fault—a direct result of their previous sin.

It was wrong for them to say and think the things they did. The Israelites grumbled that they did not have water to drink. They complained that the food they had was no good. They accused Moses of leading them out of Egypt to die in the wilderness.

The Israelites sinned by complaining to God. They did not trust him to take care of them. What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God or his commands.

God disciplined his people for their sin by sending snakes into the camp to bite them. But God didn’t just discipline them, he also provided a way for them to be saved. God told his people to look at the bronze snake to be healed. Even when giving them the hard consequences they deserved, God also showed them mercy by giving them a way to be healed. This story is a clear reminder of the way God showed us mercy through Jesus.

Activity #2

Lead the group to finish working on the activity sheet. Review the memory verse with the group, and help them learn it. Encourage the individuals to write the verse using the Velcro pictures.

Christ Connection

The Israelites faced a huge problem because of their sin. God sent snakes to punish Israel, but anyone who was bitten could look at the bronze snake on the pole and live. Because of our sin, we also face a huge problem: we are separated from God. We deserve to die, but anyone who looks to Jesus, who was hung on the cross, and trusts in him will live forever with God.

Review Questions

(Optional: Watch the Questions from Kids (QFK) video as a part of the discussion on the bronze snake. Today’s episode asks why God doesn’t heal all of our illnesses.)

Group A

Early Learner

Encourage the individuals to point to the pictures provided or to draw in order to answer these questions.

1. **Point to who the Israelites were complaining about.** God
2. **Point to who punished the people for their sin.** God
3. **Point to what God sent as a punishment.** Snakes
4. **Point to what God told Moses to make to let the people be healed.** Bronze snake
5. **Point to who provided a way for the people to be healed.** God

Group B

1. **What were the Israelites complaining about?** The food that God had provided them
2. **What did God do to punish his people for their sin?** Sent snakes to bite them

3. **What did God tell Moses to do when the people repented of their sin?** Make a bronze snake and put it on a pole
4. **Why was it sin to complain against God?** God had proven himself faithful time and time again. God had promised good things to his people and met all their physical needs. Complaining against God was the same as accusing him of being unfaithful or uncaring.
5. **When do we grumble or complain against God?** There are many ways we express ungratefulness toward God or distrust of God. Whenever we grumble or complain, it's like saying "God isn't doing the right things in my life" or "I know what is best for me better than God does."
6. **How is the bronze snake a picture of God's mercy?** People bitten by the venomous snakes did not have to do anything to be saved; when they looked at the bronze snake, it showed they trusted God to save them. This is a picture that points us to Jesus, who was hung on a cross to take the punishment we deserved. When we trust in him, God saves us.

Group C

1. **Why did God send snakes to bite the Israelites?** The snakes were how God disciplined his people. He loved them and wanted to lead them to repent and turn back to him. When God's people realized they had sinned by complaining, God told Moses to make a snake image and put it on a pole. God told his people to look at the bronze snake to be healed.
2. **How does the bronze snake remind us of Jesus?** Jesus was lifted up on a cross to die for our sins. On the third day, he rose again and provides the cure for sin.
3. **How are we like the Israelites who were bitten by snakes?** Sin is deadly like a snakebite. We are all dead in our sin, and we can't do anything to rescue ourselves. As Savior, Jesus calls us to look to him and live. He gives us life and freedom from sin forever.

Group D

Advanced Learner

1. **What does this story teach us about God?** God told his people to look at the bronze snake to be healed. God punished the Israelites by sending venomous snakes, but he did not stop loving them. God showed them mercy and provided the way for the people to be healed.
2. **What did the Israelites complain about? How did that show what they believed about God?** The Israelites grumbled that they did not have water to drink. They complained that the food they had was no good. The Israelites sinned by complaining to God. They did not trust him to take care of them.
3. **Why might God not heal every illness?**
4. **How can we show others that our faith is in Jesus?**

Prayer

Lord, you are good and you are merciful to us. We know that we deserve punishment for sin, but you sent Jesus to make the way for us to be forgiven. Thank you for sending Jesus to die for us. Help us trust you and lovingly obey your good commands. Amen.

