

LESSONS FROM NUMBERS

Lesson #4 -The Bronze Serpent
Scripture Reading: Numbers 21:4-9

06/16/19

Introduction:

1. We are to learn from the examples of the OT -1Co 10:11
2. The people tempted Christ and they complained and were destroyed -1Co 10:9, 10

Proposition: God's mercy is displayed through Israel's sin.

Interrogative: How is God's mercy reflected?

Transition: In this lesson, we examine Israel's sin and God's mercy.

I. ISRAEL'S SIN

A. THEIR SIN BEGAN WITH DISCOURAGEMENT

1. They became discouraged along the way around Edom -vs. 4
2. The heart of a discouraged Christian becomes a breeding ground for sin.

B. THEY LOST FAITH

1. God had proved Himself time and again to provide for His people.
2. The people were stiff-necked believing they were brought out to the wilderness to die.

C. THEY COMPLAINED

1. They were not brought out of Egypt to die in the wilderness -vs. 5
 - a. They were going to die in the wildness because they did not have the faith to take the land of Canaan -cf. Nu 13, 14
 - b. However, they were brought out of Egypt to conquer Canaan (originally speaking).
2. Their complaint: no food, no water, and they were loathing the manna.

D. THEY WERE PUNISHED

1. The Lord sent fiery serpents into the camp.

The exact species of serpents that caused so great mortality among the Israelites cannot be ascertained. They are said to have been "fiery," an epithet applied to them either from their bright, vivid color, or the violent inflammation their bite occasioned.
—Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

2. Many of them died as a result.
3. They cried out to God: they confessed sin and pleaded for mercy.

II. GOD'S MERCY

A. THE SERPENT POLE

1. God did not take away the fiery serpents.
2. Instead, He provided a way for them to be healed.

B. JESUS' DISCOURSE WITH NICODEMUS -Jn 3:14, 15

1. Jesus made a comparison to Moses lifting the serpent up in the wilderness to Himself being lifted up on the cross.
 - a. Those who believe in Jesus should not perish.
 - b. This involves faith and obedience unto God
2. Our view of sin today
 - a. The Israelites would certainly be careful around the fiery serpents. Although they could easily be cured, no one wanted to be bitten by one.
 - b. Jesus is our cure for sin today. We should view sin the same way the Israelites viewed the fiery serpents; avoid them at all cost.

C. THE REST OF THE STORY

1. King Hezekiah destroyed the bronze serpent years later -2Ki 18:4
2. It had become one of the instruments of idol worship.
3. The application:
 - a. When Hezekiah was making reforms in Judah, he had to eliminate all obstacles.
 - b. When we desire to follow Jesus, we must eliminate all obstacles of sin and temptation.

Conclusion:

1. Discouragement is a breeding ground for sin
2. God provides a way to overcome sin.
3. We must never toy with sin
4. Always look unto Jesus for our salvation -He 5:9