

## NEXT STEP: STUDY &amp; SHARE

## READINGS

Numbers 21:4-9

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

*You deliver your people from their distress. (v19)*

Ephesians 2:1-10

John 3:14-21

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, rich in mercy, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world & rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Lead us into your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior & Lord, who lives & reigns with you & the Holy Spirit, one God, now & forever. Amen.

## SERMON TEXT- Numbers 21:4-9

<sup>4</sup>From Mount Hor [the Israelites] set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. <sup>5</sup>The people spoke against God & against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food & no water, & we detest this miserable food.” <sup>6</sup>Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, & they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. <sup>7</sup>The people came to Moses & said, “We have sinned by speaking against the Lord & against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. <sup>8</sup>And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, & set it on a pole; & everyone who is bitten shall look at it & live.” <sup>9</sup>So Moses made a serpent of bronze, & put it upon a pole; & whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze & live.

## LISTENING TO . . .

**GOD-** *Christian life is rooted in the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*

1. What connections do you find between the *Numbers* reading & each of the others? Give attention to the comparison that looking at the raised serpent for healing (v8) is like looking up at the cross for healing. *Hint: look for themes, parallel ideas, inversions, reversals, similarities, extensions, metaphors, actions, vocabulary, grammar, etc.*
2. The serpent (“snake” v6; cf. Hebrew *seraphs* or *seraphim*, v8) is a rich image in human history. How is it fitting for this episode as the Israelites violate God’s holiness & long for Pharaoh’s tyranny? See *Isaiah 6:1-8*; [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uraeus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uraeus) | [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seraph](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seraph)

**EACH OTHER-** *Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ*

3. Practice memorizing this week 1) John 3:16 (if you haven’t yet) & 2) Ephesians 2:8-9. How do these few verses help keep you on the straight & narrow of grace & faith, not good behavior, as your “ticket to heaven”? How do they keep you on the straight & narrow of a holy, godly life of good works/acts/“behavior” as the way to live as an already saved person? See *Ephesians 2:10*
4. In *Numbers 14:40* the people also pray, “We have sinned!” following God’s punishment that they will not enter the Promised Land for 40 more years. Compare & contrast the people’s reactions in both instances. How have they learned or changed yet? See *Numbers (13:1-33) 14:(1-38) 39-45*

**NEIGHBORS-** *Bearing fruit for those not yet our brothers & sisters*

5. How do you explain to someone that prayer bears more fruit & is more satisfying before trouble comes rather than only when it arrives? See *Small & Large Catechisms: Creed, Lord’s Prayer; Luke 18:1-8; Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; SC, LC available [bookofconcord.org](https://bookofconcord.org)*
6. Eventually King Hezekiah must destroy the bronze serpent because the people turned it into an idol (2 *Kings 18:4*), confusing the gift for the giver, as they say. This is such a common, easy thing for people to do. Building on #5, how can you help someone else keep their focus on God beyond the concrete gifts he gives to help/rescue/deliver/enlighten etc. them at a specific time?

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Fourth Sunday in Lent

03.10.24

Series: Guaranteed!

Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

*God doesn't go back on his word*

Take as Prescribed

*Ignoring things or hiding doesn't make them go away*

-Notes-

**KEY VERSE:** & the Lord said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, & set it on a pole; & everyone who is bitten shall look at it & live.” (v8)

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-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. (*John 3:16*)

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