

**THE SERPENT OF BRASS**



**Passages to Study:** Numbers 21:4-9; Num. 20:14-21; Deut. 2:1-8.

**Read with the class:** Numbers 21:4-9.

**Texts for memorization:**

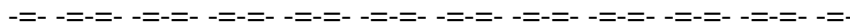
**Younger:** John 3:14.

**Older:** John 3:14.



**OBJECTIVES:** To teach that:

- 1 God’s patience has its limits.
- 2. When God speaks by way of judgment, He ensures that His voice is clearly heard.
- 3. Sin, when committed, must be punished.
- 4. The serpent lifted up on a pole speaks of Christ, lifted up on the cross.
- 5. The essence of faith is 1) Hearing; 2) Believing, and 3) Acting upon what was heard.



**SCENE No. 1. VISUAL AIDS:** A desert scene in which the Israelites are being attacked by poisonous serpents.

**DEVELOPMENT:**

- It is 40 years since the Israelites left Egypt and 38 years have been spent wandering in the desert
- The children of Israel have come back to Kadesh, the place from which they had sent out spies to inspect the Promised Land many years before.
- Moses now sends messengers to ask permission of the Edomites to pass through their land by the most direct route, the “king’s high way”. (Num. 20:14-21).
- Permission is denied and Israel has to go around the land of Edom. From Kadesh they head south, reaching Elath and Ezion-gaber on the eastern arm of the Red Sea before turning North. (Deut.2:8).
- To the east of Edom, on the route they take, lies the desolate valley of Acaba that extends from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea. (See Bible map).
- The route is long, indirect and dangerous.
- This trip is described in Deut. 1 and 2, where it refers to “all that great and terrible wilderness.”
- They are obliged to go this way because God has forbidden them to fight against the Edomites.
- This difficult trip produces impatience amongst the Israelites.

**Apl.** There are events in the lives of children and young people, which cause discouragement. Ask the students to relate events in their lives when they have felt frustrated and needed to be patient.

**Lxn.** Instead of complaining, we should ask the Lord to give us understanding about why He has permitted these difficulties in our lives, what His solution is and what we can learn from the experience.

- When they complain, the people speak against God and against Moses, blaming Moses for having taken them out of Egypt.

**Cns.** Those who now murmur were children of the Israelites who came out of Egypt.

**Apl.** The human heart does not change. Successive generations commit the same sin as their forefathers.

- They complain yet again of the lack of water and the bread with which God has fed them freely throughout all these years.

**Cmt.** They are ungrateful and do not appreciate that which has its source in heaven.

- They despise the bread from heaven calling it “light bread”.

**Cns.** One who does not appreciate the manna will not know how to value that which is heavenly.

- Punished by the fiery serpents, the people realize they have sinned.

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**SCENE No. 2. VISUAL AID:** In their camp, the Israelites look towards the serpent of brass, raised high on a pole.

**DEVELOPMENT:**

- With the serpent of brass lifted up as God commanded, the Israelite that believes His word looks toward it. The result is that they no longer face immediate death. To look is to live.

**Apl.** Stress that the message of God transmitted by Moses was:

**1) SIMPLE; 2) EXPLICIT; 3) OF DIVINE ORIGIN; and 4) COMMUNICATED.**

- In order to have an effect upon the people, their response required a:

**A) RECOGNITION** of their **NEED**;

**B) ACCEPTANCE** of the **REMEDY**; and

**C) EXERCISE OF FAITH** to **CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED ACTION.**

**Sug.** After you have broken down each part of the message given the Israelites, show that the gospel given to us requires the same elements be present.

Both are:

**1. SIMPLE.** Look and live.

**2. EXPLICIT.** COME, is a word simple and easy to understand. Even the smallest child can take it in.

**3. OF DIVINE ORIGIN.** It was not a “solution” suggested by Moses but was an explicit instruction given by God Himself.

**4. COMMUNICATED.** It would have been of no use had it been kept secret.

**Cmt.** The message was probably passed along from one to another.

**Cns.** Those who had proved its worth would be the most enthusiastic in proclaiming it.

The Three “**R**”s:

**A. RECOGNITION.** It is useless for the needy person to deny his urgent need.

**B. REMEDY.** To doubt the efficacy of the remedy would result in not making use of it.

**C. REACTION.** It was not enough to recognize the need and to have a remedy in existence if the affected person did not exercise faith and look at the serpent.

**Cmt.** The teacher should have no problem in presenting the gospel, pointing to Christ as the Object of faith.

