

----- "BRONZE SERPENT" POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

Scripture Word Study of the term "Bronze Serpent"

(1) Why did the people become impatient? "because of the journey" Nm 21:4

(2) What were their specific complaints? They did not like the food Nm 21:5

God was providing for them, but they thought they deserved better.

(3) Who sent fiery serpents to punish the people? The Lord Nm 21:6

(4) How did the people respond to being punished?

They repented and asked Moses to pray for them Nm 21:7

(5) What did God tell Moses to do? God told Moses to make an image of a serpent and put it on a tall pole so people could see it. Nm 21:8 This seems bizarre, but Jesus tells us how it makes sense.

(6) What happened when people who had been bitten looked at the image? They lived Nm 21:9

(7) What is necessary to see the Kingdom of God? You must be born again. Jn 3:3

(8) What is necessary to enter the Kingdom of God? Being born of water and the Spirit Jn 3:5

(9) What is the same about the serpent in the wilderness and the Son of Man?

They must both be lifted up to give life to people Jn 3:14

(10) Why did God send His son? Love Jn 3:16

(11) Who hates the light? Those who do evil Jn 3:20

(12) Jesus does not explicitly explain why He chose this story from Numbers as an illustration of His coming crucifixion. There are similarities, but also differences. Of course, no symbol can agree in all particulars or else it ceases being a symbol and becomes the thing itself. Both He and the bronze serpent would be lifted up for all to see, but the serpent was evil and Jesus was good. However, Colossians 2:14 tells us that it was sin that was nailed to the cross. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." That is what sin looks like in its raw form -- an innocent man being tortured to death. We were bitten by sin and dying, we looked at Jesus Christ on the cross and understood the cost of our salvation.

For further thought:

[13] In Numbers 21:7 the people repented of their sinfulness and begged Moses to intercede for them with God. Some would say that since Jesus referred to this Numbers story in John 3:14 that what He was trying to get across is that we need to repent of our sins and ask Him to intercede with the Father to forgive our sins. What do you think about this idea and why?

[14] Read 2 Kings 18:4. What does this add to our understanding of this passage in Numbers?

[15] The fiery serpents were in response to the rebellion and grumbling of the Israelites. Do you grumble and complain about your church leadership? How does God deal with you when you do that?

[16] Who are you most like in these stories? Moses, the Israelites, Nicodemus, Jesus, or the serpents? Of course, we all want to be like Jesus, but are we?

[17] Are you content with your circumstances or do you think you deserve better? (Num 21:5) You may be thinking there is a third choice here. You may think that it is possible to be discontented without believing you deserve better. How could that be possible? (Philippians 4:11)