

Group Study Outline

Numbers 21:4-9 Theme Sentence

Rebels need to look at God's solution in faith and repentance to live.

Launch Questions

How do we feel when somebody moans to us? Or *about* us?
Why is ingratitude so bad? (And why do we do it ourselves?!)

READ Numbers 21:4-9

Why were the people of Israel wandering in the desert?
Where had they been? Where were they going?

Why did they complain? (4-5)
What made this grumbling so bad?
What did it show about their attitude to God and the rescue from Egypt?
Can we identify with some of their frustrations?

What was God's response? (6)
Was He right to do this?
Why do you think He did it?

How do the people react to these poisonous snakes? (7)
What do they acknowledge?
How might Moses point forward to Jesus in his role in approaching God?

How does God respond to their repentance? (8)
What do the people have to do to survive? (9)
Why do this rather than just heal them on the spot or kill the snakes? What might God be looking for from the bitten people?
How does the bronze serpent show God's mercy and grace to them?

READ John 3:14-15

How does Jesus put Himself into our story from Numbers?
What does it mean for Jesus to be 'lifted up'? (see John 12:32-33)

Who are we in the Numbers story?
What should *our* response be to Jesus?
How does this relate to how the Israelites needed to relate to the serpent? And to God in Num 21:7?

What is the result of 'looking at' Jesus?
How does Jesus being 'lifted up' on the cross lead to this?

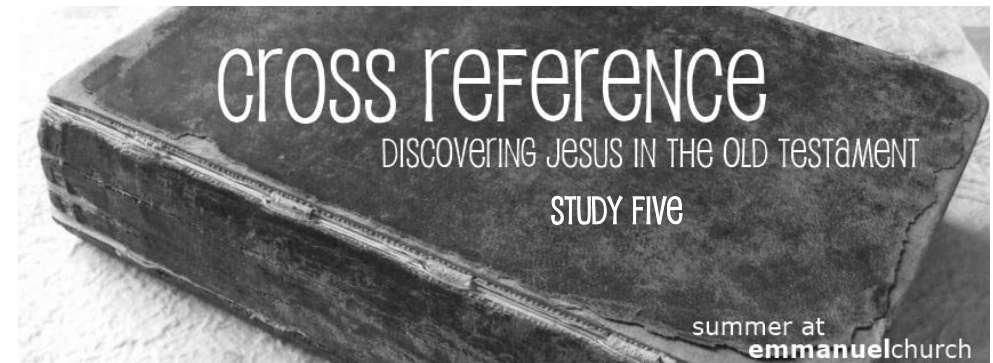
Summing up & applying it

How does the story of the bronze serpent help us understand more about what Jesus has come to do?
How are you challenged by the sin of the Israelites? What should we repent of?
How are you encouraged by how simple salvation is? (*i.e. just look at the snake and live!*)

How has this series helped you to know, love and serve Jesus more?

PRAY

Numbers 21:4-9



It's all about Jesus

In this series of sermons and midweek Bible studies, we hope to discover more about how the whole Bible is a story about Jesus. Our aim is to see more about Him, who He is and what He came to do, especially in His work on the cross, so that we would know, love and serve Him more.

The bronze snake

God's people were wandering in the desert, yet to enter the Promised Land. Aaron had just died and they had finally had their first victory over the Canaanites. It was a new day for the Israelites... but the same old problem cropped up – moaning! Since the day God brought them out of Egypt they had grumbled about how it was better when they were slaves, and God had heard enough of it! He sent fiery (or 'poisonous') snakes to bite them and many died.

The people respond properly to the outbreak by repenting of their griping. Moses, as their representative before the Lord, asked for the snakes to go. Doing more than that, God instructed that a metal snake be put on a pole; if you looked at that serpent, your bite would be healed and you would live.

Jesus said this was a picture of Himself as the one people must 'look at' in faith to be forgiven; not just getting to live, but getting eternal life. Jesus first needed to be 'lifted up'. That could refer to being exalted as in His resurrection, but more strongly refers to being hung on a cross (John 12:32f).

[NB]

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Application

- Repent of sin, especially that of grumbling.
- 'Look at' Jesus on the cross in faith to receive eternal life.
- Praise God for saving us, and for pointing to this salvation throughout the entire Bible.