

## God Healed the People (Numbers 21)



Dear families,

If there was one thing the Israelites were good at, it was grumbling. They weren't just good; they were experts: "We have no food. We have no water. Why are we in the wilderness left to die? The land has big people in it." And on and on and on. We have to wonder how Moses put up with it all.

In Numbers 21, we encounter another time when the people grumbled—once again about food and water. Each time they doubted God's goodness and truthfulness, God had shown them mercy and grace. But on this day, He sent serpents into the Israelites' camp to strike them for their unfaithfulness. Many people died.

We might not like to think of it, but this is what the Israelites deserved all along. Their sin earned them judgment and death. God was perfectly just and righteous to give His people what they deserved.

Yet, as we have seen so often in the Old Testament and will continue to see throughout the rest of Scripture, God extends grace and mercy along with judgment. When the people pleaded for Moses to intercede on their behalf, God instructed Moses to make a bronze serpent and lift it on a pole. Whoever looked upon it would be healed.

Notice two things. First, God's response was not to remove judgment but to provide salvation through judgment. This is another theme we have seen throughout the Scriptures (e.g. Noah, the plagues).

Second, God's instructions made little to no sense. Imagine you are an Israelite and were just bitten by a serpent. Although other serpents are all around still, you are to take your eyes off of that threat and turn them upward to look at a bronze serpent on a pole—an image of the very thing that has brought death to your door?

This detail in the story is a foreshadowing of what God has called us to do in Christ. While our faith is far from blind, it always has an aspect of not making sense, at least to the world around us. But this is how we are saved too: by taking our eyes off of the sin in and around us, and looking upon Christ lifted up on the cross—He who became sin (2 Cor. 5:21). We too are saved through judgment, for our judgment has been placed on Christ.

Check out *The Gospel Project At Home* for resources designed to help you lead a family worship experience as well as suggestions for morning and evening prayer times and family activities.

## **FAMILY TALKING POINTS**

### **CHRIST CONNECTION**

*This is the big idea of how this week's Bible story points to Jesus.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** We look to Jesus to be saved from sin.
- **Younger Preschool:** God sent snakes to punish the people. but anyone who was bitten could look at the snake on the pole and live. We can look to Jesus to be saved from our sin.
- **Older Preschool:** God sent snakes to punish the people, but anyone who was bitten could look at the snake on the pole and live. We sin, too. We can look to Jesus and trust in Him to be saved from our sin.
- **Kids:** God sent snakes to punish the people, but anyone who was bitten could look at the snake on the pole and live. We deserve to die because of our sin, but anyone who looks to Jesus on the cross and trusts in Him will live forever with God.

### **BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER**

*This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Younger Preschool:** What is God like? There is no one like God. He is perfect, good, and loving.
- **Older Preschool:** What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.
- **Kids:** What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.

### **KEY PASSAGE**

*This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** We praise God; He does wonderful things. — Exodus 15:11
- **Younger Preschool:** We praise the one true God. He does wonderful things. — Exodus 15:11
- **Older Preschool:** LORD, who is like you ... glorious in holiness, revered with praises, performing wonders? — Exodus 15:11
- **Kids:** LORD, who is like you among the gods? Who is like you, glorious in holiness, revered with praises, performing wonders? — Exodus 15:11

**\*\* Next week:** No One Is Like God (1 Peter 1:13-25)