

LOOK AND LIVE

Numbers 21:1- 9; II Kings 18:1-17; John 3:14-16

When the king of Arad the Canaanite, which lived in the south, heard that Israel was coming by the same route that the spies had taken almost forty years before, he fought against Israel and took some of the people prisoners.

Then Israel vowed to the Lord, saying, "If you will deliver these people into our hands, we will completely destroy their cities."

The Lord listened to Israel and he defeated the Canaanites, so that Israel completely destroyed them and their cities. He called that place Hormah.

From there the children of Israel traveled from mount Hor, by the way of the Red sea, to go around the land of Edom. The people were so discouraged because of the way that they went, and they began to speak against God, and against Moses, saying, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in this wilderness? There is no food, or any water, and we hate this manna that we have to eat!"

The people complained not only against Moses this time, but also against the Lord. They blamed him for all their unhappiness, rather than remembering their own refusal to enter the good land that the Lord had given them. It was their own fault that they had had to wander in the wilderness for these forty years. Their rebellion was the cause of their trouble, not Moses, and certainly not the Lord! As if that wasn't enough, they were unthankful for all that the Lord had provided through the years, and grumbled about the manna that he had given to them for their food.

The Lord disciplined them for their rebellion by sending fiery serpents among them. The venomous serpents bit the Israelites with a burning bite and many of them died. When this calamity came upon them, the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned. Pray to the Lord that he will take away the serpents from us.

Immediately Moses prayed for his people. And the Lord answered Moses' prayer. He told him to make a fiery serpent and set it high upon a pole. Whoever was bitten and looked at the serpent would live.

Moses made a brass serpent just as the Lord told him, and put it up on a pole so that all who wanted to look would be able to see the serpent and would live.

In the book of John, Jesus talks about the serpent that Moses made in the wilderness. It was God's provision for those who would believe what he said, to be saved from dying of the serpent's bite. Only those who looked at the brass serpent could live. If a person refused to look at the brass serpent, even though it was right in the camp, that person would die.

Jesus said that just as that brass serpent was lifted up for all to see and be healed, so he Jesus, would be lifted up on the cross, so that all who would look to him, could be saved from eternal death. And, just as the Israelites needed to look at that brass serpent in order to be saved, in the same way a person must look to the Lord Jesus and believe him in order to be saved from their sin. For even though Jesus died so that all might be saved, each individual person must claim what Jesus has done for them, or the death that Jesus died will have no power to save them. A person must believe on Jesus and accept his free gift to be saved. All those people who refuse to believe on Jesus will be lost for ever.

Let us also notice from this lesson that the brass serpent was made as a symbol to point the people to their need for God. The serpent itself had no power to help them. It was given at this particular time in order to remind the people of their sin, and their need for God's salvation. Sad to say, it didn't take the people long to make to forget all that happened and why the Lord had Moses make the brass serpent. They made an idol of the serpent and turned their back on God. They worshipped the brass serpent rather than the Lord. We can understand then, why the Lord gives us the commandment not to make any graven image or idol. He knows our nature and our natural tendency to worship the image rather than God. At the time of king Hezekiah the brass serpent had to be destroyed because the people of Israel worshipped it along with other idols that they had made.

It is good to remind ourselves from time to time that the stories in the Bible are given to teach us the lessons that we need to learn in order to walk with God in obedience.

LEARN: And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:
That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

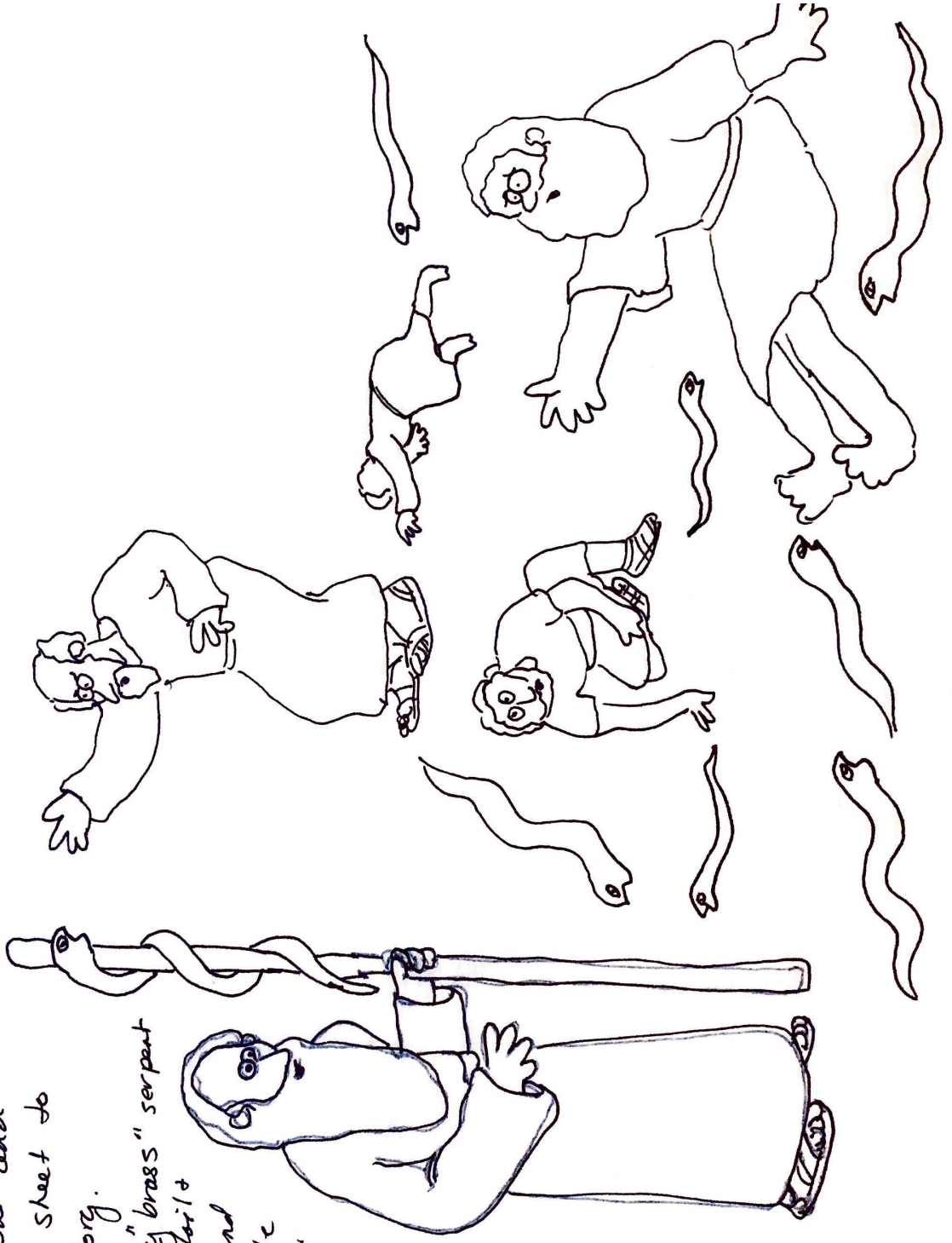
John 3:14,15

1. Color Moses with the Brass serpent.
Color other people.

Color "fiery" serpents.

2. Cut all out and
paste on sheet to
tell story.

3. Make a "fiery" brass
serpent
of copper foil +
wire around
Moses' pole
as shown.



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That whosoever believeth in him should not perish,
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