**BALAAM & BLESSED ISRAEL**

Sunday School Lesson 19

*Wandering in the Wilderness*

Numbers 22

5/18/2025

**Lesson Review:** In our previous lesson, we observed God’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ being carried out on Israel in the wilderness. They had complained against Moses, and God dealt swiftly and strongly with them by sending \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The serpents were a display of what the Israelites had allowed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to do. Notice that Satan loves to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ our view and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ toward God’s plan and provision. Notice that the people were \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by God’s plan, even though God had provided them with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and provision. The serpents were also a demonstration of how Israel’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, venomous \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ would keep them from moving forward to the Promised Land. Notice that like a serpent, Israel’s bite pushed them \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the land of Egypt. Notice that like a serpent, the venomous bit of Israel’s words quickly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the whole body of Israel and led to much death and destruction. The serpents were devices used by God to bring out the sting of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Notice that the literal \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and punishment from the serpent s prompted a reaction. Notice that the people did not wait long to go, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and repent of their sins against God and Moses. The brazen serpent was a dedication to the One who would \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ above all of the fiery darts of Satan, defeat death and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and offer \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to all. Notice that the solution was for them to look at the very things that had caused their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Notice that they only needed to look at the lifted up serpent to be saved. This provides us with a beautiful picture of salvation. We will continue our lesson series today by looking at Balaam and his donkey!

1. **THE SERPENTS WERE A DISPLAY OF WHAT THE ISRAELITES HAD ALLOWED SATAN TO DO.**
2. **Notice that Satan loves to sour our view and attitude toward God’s plan and provision.** *Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* *5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* Just as Satan deceived Eve in the garden by twisting God’s words and intentions, so too had the Israelites allowed discouragement and distrust to sour their view of God’s plan. Satan loves to convince God’s people that God’s provision is insufficient and that His leadership is faulty. The Israelites had repeatedly failed when Satan tempted their hearts against the Lord. While we know Satan’s overall goal is for us to rebel against God, he is often very subtle in how he attacks us. If he can sour our attitude toward God, he can do great damage. Murmuring and complaining are behaviors that do the opposite of fostering thanksgiving in our hearts toward the Lord. If you find a disgruntled Christian, you have likely found a disobedient and backslidden one as well.
3. **Notice that the people were discouraged by God’s plan, even though God had provided them with protection and provision.** *Numbers 21:3b and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hormah. 4 And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.* After a miraculous victory, Israel became discouraged “because of the way.” Instead of rejoicing in what God had just done, they complained about what God was still doing. Satan’s strategy is often not to attack God’s miracles, but to make people weary of God’s methods. The fiery serpents mirrored the spiritual danger Israel had embraced by following discouragement and distrust rather than faith and obedience. Their discouragement revealed a deeper problem: they still didn’t trust the heart of the God who had delivered them. T
4. **THE SERPENTS WERE A DEMONSTRATION OF HOW ISRAEL’S BITING, VENOMOUS WORDS WOULD KEEP THEM FROM MOVING FORWARD TO THE PROMISED LAND.**
5. **Notice that like a serpent, Israel’s bite pushed them backward to the land of Egypt.** *Genesis 49:17 Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. Numbers 21:5b Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.* Israel had developed a habit of turning their words into weapons—biting against God’s leaders and purposes. Their longing for Egypt wasn’t just nostalgia; it was rebellion. Just like a serpent striking the heel, their words destabilized their forward momentum and exposed their lack of trust in the path that God had set. This longing to go back revealed an unwillingness to go forward by faith, even when God’s hand was leading them clearly.
6. **Notice that like a serpent, the venomous bite of Israel’s words quickly spread to the whole body of Israel and led to much death and destruction.** *Numbers 21:5a And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Exodus 16:2 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: Numbers 14:2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!* Israel’s murmuring was rarely isolated. It spread through the congregation like venom through the bloodstream. This pattern of complaining had deadly consequences every time. The fiery serpents were a physical manifestation of what their mouths had spiritually unleashed. Their sin was not merely personal. It infected the entire body of Israel and invited judgment. This is why the Bible warns the church about backbiting, gossip, and just generally bad conversation. It can be very infectious in the church.
7. **THE SERPENTS WERE DEVICES USED BY GOD TO BRING OUT THE STING OF CONVICTION.**
8. **Notice that the literal pain and punishment from the serpents prompted a reaction.** *Numbers 21:6 And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Proverbs 23:32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Jeremiah 8:17 For, behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the Lord.* God sent fiery serpents not simply as punishment but as a wake-up call. The pain from the bites mirrored the spiritual sting of their rebellion. Could you imagine the reaction of the people as these serpents began to bite their family and friends. It must have been horribly terrifying and bitterly painful. These certainly weren’t random acts of nature. They were specific, painful reminders that sin brings suffering. God sometimes allows physical consequences to stir spiritual awareness and bring sinners to the end of themselves.
9. **Notice that the people did not wait long to go, confess, and repent of their sins against God and Moses.** *Numbers 21:7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. 2 Corinthians 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.* To their credit, Israel quickly acknowledged their wrongdoing. They confessed both their rebellion against God and their disrespect toward Moses. This kind of godly sorrow is what leads to real repentance. Pain led to prayer, and guilt led to intercession. The serpents brought conviction, and conviction led to a plea for mercy. The people didn’t try to justify or shift blame on anyone else.
10. **THE BRAZEN SERPENT WAS A DEDICATION TO THE ONE WHO WOULD RISE ABOVE THE FIERY DARTS OF SATAN, DEFEAT DEATH & HELL, AND OFFER SALVATION TO ALL.**
11. **Notice that the solution was for them to look at the very thing that was the problem. Likewise, man’s problem is death, yet Christ’s death brought mankind a solution.** *Numbers 21:8 And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:* God told Moses to craft a brass serpent—the very image of the judgment they had received. He was to raise it up on a pole. It was a strange command, but deeply symbolic. Just as the serpent had brought death, now a raised serpent would bring life. In the same way, Christ—who knew no sin—became sin for us and was lifted up on the cross. Death became the means of life. The same object that symbolized the curse became the instrument of healing, just as Christ bore our curse that we might be healed.
12. **Notice that they only needed to look to the brazen serpent to be saved. Likewise, man needs only to look to the risen Saviour to be saved.** *Numbers 21:9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived. John 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.* The message was simple: look and live. No ceremony, no offering, no achievement—just faith. That message echoes in the Gospel. We don’t work for salvation; we look to Christ. The brazen serpent was not just a remedy—it was a preview of redemption. Christ was lifted up so that all who look to Him might live forever. Even today, the Gospel call is simple and clear. Thank God that we must only call upon Jesus Christ in faith to receive salvation!