



Week 4

Numbers 21:4-9

21:4 Nm 20:22;
Jgs 11:18

The bronze snake's healing power

21:5 Ex 14:11,
Ex 15:24,
Ex 16:2, Ex 17:3;
Ps 78:19

⁴They marched from Mount Hor on the Reed Sea^e road around the land of Edom. The people became impatient on the road. ⁵The people spoke against God and Moses: "Why did you bring us up from Egypt to kill us in the desert, where there is no food or water. And we detest this miserable bread!" ⁶So the LORD sent poisonous^f snakes among the people and they bit the people. Many of the Israelites died.

21:6 Nm 21:7;
Dt 8:15; Is 30:6;
Jer 8:17;
1Co 10:9

⁷The people went to Moses and said, "We've sinned, for we spoke against the LORD and you. Pray to the LORD so that he will send the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

21:7 Ex 8:8;
Nm 11:2;
1Sa 12:19;
Ps 78:34;
Ac 8:24

⁸The LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous snake and place it on a pole. Whoever is bitten can look at it and live." ⁹Moses made a bronze snake and placed it on a pole. If a snake bit someone, that person could look at the bronze snake and live.

21:8 Nm 21:9;
Jn 3:14

21:9 Nm 21:8;
2Ki 18:4; Jn 3:14,
Jn 3:15

^eOr *Red Sea* ^fHeb uncertain

21:4–25:18 Characterizes the double nature of the new generation. Unlike the exodus generation, they confidently carry out God's plan for claiming the promised land (21:21–31, 32, 33–35). On the other hand, they behave like the exodus generation by complaining of hardships (21:4–9) and following other gods (25:1–18). Despite their ambivalent character, God intends to bring them into the promised land. God is faithful to keep the promise of land to Abraham (Gen 12:2; 15:7). God fulfills it not because of the obedience of the new generation but because of God's own faithfulness to the promise.

21:4 *Mount Hor*: See note on Numbers 20:22.

21:5 The contents of their complaint are similar to those of earlier events (Exod 17:2–3; Num 11:4–35; 16:13–14; 20:4–5).

21:6 *poisonous*: The Hebrew can also mean "burning," perhaps describing the effect of the poison.

21:7 The Israelites admit their sin honestly for the first time.

21:9 The *bronze snake . . . on a pole* is later placed in the temple and treated as an object of worship. Hezekiah finally removes it from the temple (2 Kgs 18:4). Jesus mentions this episode in John 3:14.

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Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

107:1

1Ch 16:34;
2Ch 5:13;
2Ch 7:3;
Ps 106:1,
Ps 136:1

Psalm 107

¹“Give thanks to the LORD because he is good,
because his faithful love lasts forever!”

²That’s what those who are redeemed by the LORD say,
the ones God redeemed from the power of their enemies,

³the ones God gathered from various countries,
from east and west, north and south.

¹⁷Some of the redeemed were fools because of their sinful ways.

They suffered because of their wickedness.

¹⁸They had absolutely no appetite for food;
they had arrived at death’s gates.

¹⁹So they cried out to the LORD in their distress,
and God saved them from their desperate circumstances.

²⁰God gave the order and healed them;
he rescued them from their pit.

²¹Let them thank the LORD for his faithful love
and his wondrous works for all people.

²²Let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices
and declare what God has done in songs of joy!

107:17

Lv 26:16;
Job 15:20;
Prv 1:7;
Jer 30:14,
Jer 30:15

107:20

Ps 30:2, Ps 30:3,
Ps 147:15,
Ps 147:18; Mt 8:8

107:1-43 Psalm 107 is usually considered a psalm of thanks (see Ps 30), but it’s like a sermon on the subject of God’s faithful love. After the opening invitation and introduction of the *redeemed* (107:1-3), the psalm consists of four illustrations of God’s redemptive work (107:4-9, 10-16, 17-22, 23-32), followed by a summary description of God’s activity (107:33-41) and a suggested invitation to depend upon God’s faithful love (107:42-43). Each of the four illustrative sections contains identical descriptions of the request for divine help (107:6, 13, 19, 28) and the invitation to give thanks for God’s faithful love and redeeming work (107:8, 15, 21, 31). Psalm 107 opens Book V, which continues the response to the crisis articulated at the end of Book III (see sidebar, “Book V” at Ps 107).

107:1 See Psalms 106:1; 118:1. Even though they are in different books of the Psalter,

the identical beginnings of Psalms 106 and 107 suggest that they are related. Psalm 107 shows what Psalm 106:44-46 affirms. *faithful love*: See Psalms 107:8, 15, 21, 31, 43; 5:7; 106:45. This fundamental quality of God is the keyword in the psalm and one of the most important words in the Psalter and the entire OT (see sidebar, “God’s Faithful Love” at Ps 6).

107:2-3 *redeemed*: See Psalm 19:14. *gathered*: See Psalm 106:47. Psalm 107 and Book V continue the response to the crisis seen in Psalm 89:38-51, suggesting that God has already been at work gathering the exiles (see sidebar, “Book V” at Ps 107).

107:17-22 As in Psalm 107:10-16, the suffering results from sinfulness.

107:20 *healed*: See Psalm 6:2.

107:22 *thanksgiving sacrifices*: See Psalm 50:14, 23.

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Ephesians 2:1-10

2:1 Eph 2:5;
Col 2:13, Col 3:1
2:2 Jn 12:31;
Ac 5:3; 1Co 6:11;
Eph 2:3, Eph 5:6
2:3 Ro 5:12;
Ga 5:16
2:4 Jn 3:16
2:5 Ac 15:11;
Ro 5:8; Eph 2:1,
Eph 2:8; Col 2:13
2:6 Eph 1:3,
Eph 1:20;
Col 2:12, Col 3:1
2:7 Ro 2:4;
Eph 1:7, Eph 2:4;
Ti 3:4
2:8 Jn 4:10;
Eph 2:5; 2Ti 1:9;
1Pt 1:5
2:9 Ro 3:20,
Ro 3:28; 1Co
1:29;
2Ti 1:9; Ti 3:5
2:10 2Co 5:17;
Ga 6:15; Eph
4:24;
Col 3:10; Ti 2:14

Saved from sin to life

2 At one time you were like a dead person because of the things you did wrong and your offenses against God. ²You used to live like people of this world. You followed the rule of a destructive spiritual power. This is the spirit of disobedience to God's will that is now at work in persons whose lives are characterized by disobedience. ³At one time you were like those persons. All of you used to do whatever felt good and whatever you thought you wanted so that you were children headed for punishment just like everyone else.

^{4,5}However, God is rich in mercy. He brought us to life with Christ while we were dead as a result of those things that we did wrong. He did this because of the great love that he has for us. You are saved by God's grace! ⁶And God raised us up and seated us in the heavens with Christ Jesus. ⁷God did this to show future generations the greatness of his grace by the goodness that God has shown us in Christ Jesus.

⁸You are saved by God's grace because of your faith. ^dThis salvation is God's gift. It's not something you possessed. ⁹It's not something you did that you can be proud of. ¹⁰Instead, we are God's accomplishment, created in Christ Jesus to do good things. God planned for these good things to be the way that we live our lives.

^dOr *through his faithfulness*

2:1 *dead person*: This is spiritual death. People fail to respond to God because they're trapped in repeated patterns of disobedience. They're unable to live rightly.

2:2 *destructive . . . power*: Paul refers to the devil (see Eph 6:11-12), sometimes known as Satan, God's chief spiritual enemy and agent of evil who's trying to destroy humanity and creation. *spirit of disobedience*: People are responsible for their choices, but evil powers have taken control of creation. An evil spirit is at work among humans to draw their wills away from God and doing what's right.

2:6 *with Christ*: Believers are with Christ, so that what God has done to Christ (brought him to life, raised him up, and seated him) God has also done to believers.

2:8-9 *possessed . . . proud of*: Nothing that we possess or don't possess, nothing that we do or don't do moves God to save people. God saves because of God's love.

2:10 *God planned*: Paul reminds his readers that they can't brag about the good things they do. God planned for them to do those things. Therefore, if they do good things, that doesn't make them any better than anyone else. God saves people, and God saves them so that they will do good things to others.

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John 3:14-21

3:14 Nm 21:8,
Nm 21:9;
Jn 8:28, Jn 12:32;
Jn 12:34

3:15 Jn 3:36,
Jn 5:24, Jn 6:40,
Jn 20:31

3:16 Jn 6:40;
Ro 5:8, Ro 8:32;
1Jn 4:9, 1Jn 4:10

3:17 Lk 2:11,
Lk 19:10;
Jn 6:57, Jn 12:47;
1Jn 4:14

3:18 Mk 16:16;
Jn 1:18, Jn 3:36,
Jn 5:24; 1Jn 4:9

3:19 Jn 1:4,
Jn 1:5, Jn 7:7,
Jn 8:12

3:20 Job 24:13;
Eph 5:11,
Eph 5:13

3:21 1Jn 1:6

14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so must the Human Oneⁱ be lifted up **15** so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. **16** God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won't perish but will have eternal life. **17** God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him. **18** Whoever believes in him isn't judged; whoever doesn't believe in him is already judged, because they don't believe in the name of God's only Son.

19 "This is the basis for judgment: The light came into the world, and people loved darkness more than the light, for their actions are evil. **20** All who do wicked things hate the light and don't come to the light for fear that their actions will be exposed to the light. **21** Whoever does the truth comes to the light so that it can be seen that their actions were done in God."

ⁱOr *Son of Man*

3:1-21 Nicodemus comes to Jesus but is baffled by the necessity of having to be *born anew* (3:3), or "from above" (see translation note). All that comes out of Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus is a series of impossibilities (3:3, 4, 5, 9, 12). Only when Nicodemus has left the scene does Jesus go on to explain how this new birth is possible (3:13-21).

3:14 *Just as Moses lifted up the snake*: See Numbers 21:8-9. The reference is to Jesus' crucifixion (John 12:33).

3:16 *gave his only Son*: in death on the cross (John 3:14). The traditional rendering

"only begotten Son" is based on the Greek having both the word for "Son" and the word for "one and only," where either by itself would be enough.

3:19 *The light came into the world*: Jesus reverts to the image of light (cf. John 1:4-11). Here, too, as in John 1:10-11, *the world prefers darkness to the light*.

3:21 *does the truth*: lives in obedience to God. *comes to the light*: Those who *come to the light* (i.e., come to Jesus in faith) are those who don't fear exposure. By coming, they prove their faithful obedience.

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