

# 4. The Death of Moses

*Quote:*

*“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*

## Why the Rock Should Not Have Been Smitten Twice

(Mark above or below Numbers 20)

At Rephidim, shortly after leaving Egypt (Exodus 17), Israel had lacked water, and complained to God. Moses had been told to smite the rock with the rod that had turned into a serpent before Pharaoh (Exodus 7:9). This was typical of the death of Christ (The antitypical rock (1 Corinthians 10:4 and the source of the water of life - Jn 4:14) at the hands of the seed of the serpent (Matthew 23:33). His offering was 'once for all.' Having been smitten once, he rose from the dead to life eternal. The rod that budded spoke of that, for it symbolised the resurrection, and it was that rod which Moses was now told to take with him, (Numbers 17:10; 20:8-9) and speak to the rock – not smite it. We speak to the Rock when we go to God in prayer, through the risen Christ. By smiting the rock the second time Moses destroyed the type (Note Hebrews 6:6).

## The Significance of the Serpent on the Pole

(Mark below Numbers 21)

As the brazen serpent was impaled and "lifted up" on a stake (Numbers 21:6-9), so was Jesus (John 12:33-35).

Brass is used in scripture to represent the origin of sin - that is sin's flesh (Psalm 78:18; 1 Corinthians 10:9; James 1:14; 3:5-6; Galatians 5:17).

As the impaled brazen serpent was a harmless symbol of Sin, so the crucified Jesus was a sinless bearer of our serpent-nature.

Being impaled it was a public exhibition of sin's flesh silenced, conquered and crucified, and was typical of the way Yahweh delivers man from the consequence of sin (John 3:14-15). As those mortally bitten in the wilderness, beholding the serpent on the pole, were saved from death, so those mortally bitten by Sin, beholding the Cross, are saved from perishing.

## Bible Marking

Numbers 21:5 - **“the people spake against God, and against Moses”** - See: Exodus 14:11; 15:24; 16:2,3,7,8; 17:2-3; Numbers 11:1-6; 14:1-4; 16:13-14,41; 17:12; Psalm 78:19; James 3:5-6. The tongue has power for good or evil, but is mostly used in the cause of evil. Complaining, discouraging words depress others, causing a negative influence to penetrate an ecclesia or a nation, spelling failure for any enterprise.

**Numbers 21:6** - "**fiery serpents**" - Flesh is mortal and sin-proned as a result of sin induced by the serpent in Eden. It was appropriate, therefore, that the people be punished by snake-bite for it reminded them of the source of sin.

**Numbers 21:8** - "**fiery serpent**" - this brazen serpent looked like those on the ground, but it lacked their poisonous venom. The brazen serpent typed the sacrifice of the Lord (**John 3:14-15**, also **John 12:32,33**). Christ came in "the likeness of sinful flesh" (**Romans 8:3**), but he conquered its power. The brazen serpent on the pole, therefore, represented flesh crucified. It testified to the Israelites that they had to figuratively crucify the flesh if they would be saved from the death that was even then working through their members (**Galatians 5:24**).

**"set it on a pole"** - Heb 'nes' - used to describe an ensign (**Isaiah 11:12**). The serpent on the pole, therefore, represented a public exhibition of sin's flesh silenced, conquered and crucified. (**Galatians 3:1**).

**Numbers 21:9** - "**when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived**" - The Hebrew word "beheld" is nabat and signifies "to scan, to look intently at". A deliberate seeking of the serpent was required, not an accidental glance at it. So with redemption in Christ. Christ is powerless to heal stricken humanity in the absence of a personal faith in the means Yahweh has provided (**Hebrews 11:6**).

## Numbers 20 - The Fortieth Year: From Kadesh to Hor

**wv1** - Death of Miriam

**wv2-13** - Moses Provoked at the Waters of Strife

**wv14-21** - Edom's Insolence: Passage Refused

**wv22-29** - At Hor: Death of Aaron

## Numbers 21:I-22:I - To Moab via Ezion-Geber

**wv1-3** - Defeat at Arad: Vengeance Promised

**wv4-9** - The Fiery Serpents and Brazen Serpent

**wv10-13** - On to the Border of Moab

**wv14-15** - The Song of Triumph at Arnon

**wv16-20** - The Joyful Song of the Well

**wv21-32** - Decisive Defeat of Sihon of the Amorites

**wv33-35** - Defeat of Og, King of Bashan

**ch 22:1** - Encampment on the Plains of Moab