

Snakes on a Pole

Sermon Title: Snakes on a Pole
Sermon Number: 5474
Speaker: Nathaniel Bronner

Links to sermon–Windows Media Version is fastest download, MP3 is best audio quality:
Windows Media Version <http://www.theonlineword.com/s/5474.wma>
MP3 Version <http://www.theonlineword.com/mp3/5474.mp3>



AirJesus.com
and
TheOnLineWord.com

[AirJesus.com](http://www.AirJesus.com)

[TheOnLineWord.com](http://www.TheOnLineWord.com)

Welcome to Brothers of the Word because, brother, you need the Word!

And today, we will be studying from the book of Numbers 21:1-9. I'll be reading from the New King James Version. It is a story that you have heard before and it reads, thus:

“The king of Arad, the Canaanite, who dwelt in the South, heard that Israel was coming on the road to Atharim. Then he fought against Israel and took some of them prisoners. So Israel made a vow to the LORD, and said, “If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities.” And the LORD listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites, and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. So the name of that place was called Hormah.

Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses: “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.” So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.” So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.”

And I want to talk to you today for a few minutes from the serpent and from this: “Snakes on a Pole”. Now, Numbers 21:1, 2, 3 talks about the King of Arad, he fought against Israel and took of them prisoners. You see, they were in trouble, they were in deep trouble. They had been defeated in war, they had been taken captive, and, in trouble, they made a vow unto God and they said, “Lord, if you get us out of this situation, if you just deliver us, we'll make a vow unto You.”

And then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses saying, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.”

Now, when the people had been defeated and taken prisoner, they prayed unto God, made a vow, God gave them the victory. And immediately after God gave them the victory, as they continued on in their travels, they, again, said their soul became

discouraged and they began to whine and mealy-mouth and belly-ache and complain unto God again. You all say “again”.

Have you all ever been in trouble and you prayed unto God and God brought you out of the thing? But the problem with life is that even when we run into trouble and God brings us out of the thing, it's not long often times when we have another situation.

And the minute they ran into another situation, they began to complain and fuss and gripe and grumble. And the Bible just calls it murmuring... They began to murmur unto God again. And you will notice that with the children of Israel, over and over and over again, they complain, they grumbled, they fussed unto God over and over and over again.

My father used to have a statement. And he said, “Some people you cannot please riding or walking.” And my daddy had these old-fashioned country statements that were, perhaps, passed down from his parents. And he said, “Some people you can't please riding or walking.”

And as you live, you'll understand what was meant by that old statement. If they're riding, they'll complain about the car, they'll complain about the air-condition, they'll complain about how far they have to ride, they'll complain about how much gas is used, they'll complain about one thing after another. Then if they start walking, they'll complain about “My feet hurt! My shoes are too tight! It's too far to walk! It's going uphill!”

Daddy says some people you cannot please riding or walking. No matter what situation they are in, they will find something and something about that situation to complain about. And, you see, there are always two ways of looking at circumstances. And even with the children of Israel, they said, “Lord, you sent this enemy in the first place! Lord, you allowed me to be in slavery in the first place.”

And they were correct. See, they had been enslaved over 400 years. So, that means all those people, they were born in the slavery. It wasn't anything that they had done directly themselves, they were born into the slavery. It wasn't really their fault.

And they could've said to God, which they did, “You sent this same old bread, taste the same, no flavor, over and over and over again. Lord, you've sent this enemy, you've had me in slavery, and you're sending me this dough, tasteless bread over and over and over and over.

And with all of your situations, where you had enemies, where you had oppression, and where you do not have all of the physical comforts that you want, there are

always two ways to look at it. You can look at it like the murmuring children of Israel. Or there's the other way to look at it.

And the other way to look at it is say, "Lord, you have delivered me from my enemy. Lord, you have brought me out of the house of bondage and out of slavery. Lord, you have provided me with food to eat every single day."

You see, there's two ways to look at it. You can always complain or you can praise. No matter what your situation is, you can always complain or you can always praise. And, you see, there's no situation that's really so good that you can't find something wrong with it.

There's no situation so good that you cannot find something wrong with it and there is no situation so bad that you can't find a bright spot in it. That all depends upon, whether your orientation is geared toward murmuring and complaining, or, whether it is geared toward praising.

But I can tell you, people: It'll be like – and I can understand how God felt. How many of you all had parents and you've heard your parents make this statement when you were whining, crying, belly-aching, and you've heard your parents make this statement: "If you don't shut up, I'm going to give you something to cry about!"

Now, many of you had heard your natural parents make this statement: "If you don't shut up, I'm going to give you something to cry about!" See, the children of Israel were crying. "Lord, you had me in the slavery. Lord, you're giving me all this—They didn't tell God that while they ate the Manna, none of them ever got sick... didn't mention that to God.

They said, "Look, I want something. I want some barbecued Manna! I don't want all these dough, tasteless. You've given me..." You see, they were just – and I guess God felt like some of your parents have felt this. And some of you had told your children that. "If you don't shut up, I'm going to give you something to cry about!"

And the Bible says after the children of Israel had done all these whining, all these belly-aching, all these crying about their situation, in Verse 6,

"So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died."

God sent this to them. God says, "Some of you, if you see snakes coming into your camp, some of you say that's the devil. No, no, no, no! God sent a whole bunch of this stuff!" When you really read your Bible and read it carefully, and read it carefully, God sent a lot of this tragedy and a lot of these calamities. God killed a whole lot more folks than the devil ever did.

This is the Ark of Salvation! Who do you think sent the flood? Killed more folks than the Devil ever did? Who do you think sent the flood? So, when you really know your Word, you understand... That's why the Bible says, "Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." See, if you don't fear the Lord, you're stupid! It's the beginning of wisdom.

So, the Bible says that the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people and the people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

Now, this is the interesting point: God did not give the people what they asked for. Because... You know what they asked for? They said, "Tell God to take these serpents away from us." That's what they asked for. See, often times, God don't give you especially what you got messed up, He's not going to give you what you asked for."

See, they said, "Tell God." Some of you all are trying to tell God some stuff. He said, "Tell God to take these serpents away from us." The Bible never said God took the serpents away, what God did... He said, "Moses, tell the people when they get bit by these serpents I've sent, look at the pole." He didn't take the serpents away. He gave them the pole to look at.

It wasn't what they wanted. But, often times, we will ask ourselves and we ask God, "Lord, why don't You take my pain away? Why don't You take this hard situation that I've gotten myself in away? Why don't You make it smooth? Yeah, I know, I messed up, I've gone against Your will – Look, why don't You just take all this mess out of my life!? Why don't You heal me? Why don't You make it smooth? Why don't You just give me the lotto numbers instead of sending me to all this financial headache? Why don't You just make it easy for me?"

And God did not take away the serpents. He sent a cure for the serpents' bite. And with so many of you, He has not taken away your rough circumstance. He sent you a comforter for your rough circumstance. He didn't take away the snakes, He said, "Everybody who looks on the pole will not die."

And I had an experience recently as God had directed me with this message. I had an experience that confirmed the message. My son, Christian, who sang with me earlier today, I take him to karate class every week and we had gotten back from the class, and as we were walking into the house from the garage, Christian

stopped. And he start shaking his head, he said, "I'm not going in! I'm not going in!" I said, "What's wrong, Christian?" He said, "There is a lizard at the door!"

Now, a lizard is not a serpent but it is a member of the reptilian family. So, it's just like a serpent, it's a miniature dragon. And I said, "Christian, the lizard is not going to bother you! Go on inside!" And he was just adamant and he wouldn't move. He said, "I am not going past that lizard!"

Now, as a father, and as a man, it was my responsibility to get fear out of the child on some things that was not going to harm him. I had to do that as Daddy. Momma couldn't do that because Momma's scared of lizards. So, you can't anoint somebody with something what you don't have. So, I had to work with my son to try to get him to, first of all, understand that the lizard was not going to bother him, and don't go up being scared of stuff that's not going to hurt or bother you.

So, I tried to say, "Look, the lizard is not going to bother you, let's just go and pass the lizard, he won't hurt you!" And then he said something, he said, "But Daddy, that lizard has a red head." And when he said that, I looked over what he was pointing and at the lizard and, sure enough – and I've seen lizards where I went to my school in Florida was on the ocean and they had lizards all over the place, but all the lizards were fundamentally green – and I looked at this lizard and, sure enough, this lizard had a bright red head.

And normally with lizards, whenever my wife sees a lizard on the house, we stay on the lake, and sometimes, lizards sometimes, they'll get in the house. And my wife will come say, "Come here, there's a lizard in the house!"

So, I'll go and catch the lizard in my hand, pick it – because I don't like to kill stuff if it's unnecessary. So I'll pick the lizard up, take him outside, and let him go. But they're all gray lizards. And I looked at this lizard. Now, I was, first of all, I want to assure you that I was not afraid of the lizard. But when I looked at this lizard, this lizard was unlike any other lizard I had ever seen in my life. This lizard had a bright red head.

And I looked at the lizard, and the lizard looked at me. And I was not afraid of the lizard. But I respected the lizard. And, you see, there are some things in life, they are a little bit scarier than other things. There are some things easier for you to pick up in your hand and to handle than some other things. And especially when you run across something and you're unfamiliar with.

And I had never seen a red-headed lizard in my life. And this lizard was a fiery serpent. So as I looked at this lizard, and I didn't know whether was the lizard was poisonous or not, but it looked like if it was ever a poisonous lizard, that was it. So, I told Christian, I said, Christian you cannot grow up being afraid of lizards. So I had

to grab him by the hand and we walked on in the house and I left the lizard where he was. And I didn't bother that lizard.

But we have to understand, people, that lizard represented something. There are some things in your world that are lizards standing at the door. They're red-headed serpents, and there are opportunities you won't even go towards because you're scared to go past a lizard.

And God told the people "Look at the lizard, and anyone who looks at this red-headed fiery serpent, will not die even though you had been bitten." There are some things, people, you've just got to face. You've just got to face some stuff.

And, often times, we can never get in the door of opportunity and we can never get in the door of destiny because we just refuse to look at some stuff dead in the eye. And God says, "Yes, I sent this serpent. But you're going to need to look at this stuff because it represents a lot of stuff."

See, first of all, the serpent represented — and the children of Israel knew — it represented their sin. They knew what it represented. God said, "You look up at this thing, and I want you to look at it dead in the eye on this pole." And they knew what it meant. They knew that their murmuring and their grumbling and their griping had brought this thing on them.

So, when they looked at it and when they faced it — and sometimes, you've just got to admit some stuff, that's why sometimes, in alcohol, it's anonymous, which has a very good track record of healing the folk. First thing they make them do is admit they were alcoholic because you can't even conquer a problem 'til you admit it. You have to, at some time, just flat out admit it. "I've got a problem!"

And you hear some people, they just go out riding a bush. "No, I'm just a social drinker. I don't have a problem." You can never fix anything until you, first of all, admit you've got a problem. I have seen the serpents would have been biting and killing the people and they would have been blaming the serpents.

What we do in our society, we blame it on everybody else. The least of people had sense enough and said, "Look, we don't sin. We sin against you and we sin against God. Pray to God." So they, at least, understood, and then God could deal with and rectify but he still didn't take those serpents. He made them look at that pole, and when they looked at the pole, everyone who had been bitten lived.

The problem is, even with that, over in II Kings 18, and it's talking about Hezekiah, the 4th Verse, it says,

“He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.”

They made a god out of the snake on the pole. Sometimes, the thing that God will send, and even the thing He ordains for your deliverance, you make a god out of the thing. “Lord, get me out of this financial situation, I don’t have a job.” So God gives you a job and you make a god out of the thing. “Lord, I need a husband, I need a wife.” So God gives you a husband or wife, and you make a god out of the thing. “Lord, I can’t get it. I need a car. Lord, give me a car.” God gives you a car and you make a god out of the thing.

The very thing that God sent for your deliverance and to get you through and to keep you from dying, once you get the thing, you start worshipping the thing instead of God who sent you the thing.

So the people of Israel, the pole was sent to stave them and to keep them from dying, and the children of Israel began to worship the pole! Riding or walking... God says, He had a hard time with these people keeping His commands, worshipping Him, following Him, riding or walking, no matter what He did, He had a problem with the people doing the right thing.

And God wants you, today, to understand that some of this stuff in your life, God has destined and ordained and He has sent for purpose that’s absolutely necessary. But there are serpents at some of your doors, and you’re scared to go by because you won’t even look at the stuff.

That’s one of the things of why we have instituted private talk. You need to just talk about some of this stuff, face it, deal with it, and get on by it.

And there is only one thing that God has sent that you are to look up to, to save you. Only one... And that was Jesus. Only one... Snakes on a Pole... What’s in your world right now that’s stopping you at the door that you need to look at it in the face? And you won’t go pass because it looks mean and it looks scary.

There’s some stuff in our past that we just don’t want to deal with. We don’t want to face, we ignore it, we blame it on everybody else, but we just don’t want to face it. You don’t have to put that stuff on the pole, look at it, but once you look at it, you might tear it down so you don’t end up worshipping the thing.

And, often times, the thing that God will send to take you out and to take you through and to take you through destiny. You’ve got to learn how to deal with some things in truth, in honesty, and face it. We’re too politically correct these days. Sometimes, you even need to call this stuff like it is.

And because we're too politically correct, we won't even say what it is. Some stuff in your world, you need to just call this stuff what it is. "Lord, I just messed up, I just sinned, I just messed UP."

And do you know, sometimes, when you get on your knees and just tell God that, it'll set you straight? But we rationalize it all day long. Don't worry about the other fellows because many of you, right now, say "Yeah, they need you dude." No, no, not they, not they. See, some of you "They!?" No not they, YOU!

When we can do this, and just admit unto God, "Lord, I have sinned." Greatest prayer ever prayed: "Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner." And He has sent His Son not as a snake on a pole, but as a savior on a cross. Cross is a pole but there's a difference between the old and the new. When we can accept the savior who was sent on the cross, and when we can accept and say that, "Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner," then we can move on to the Promised Land.

For those of you, because I hear God speaking, and you've got lizards or serpents, let me tell you what mine was, or is: We have been trying to figure out why we cannot see the manifestation of the real overt healing miracles in the world today. And has God has spoken to me years ago, "You'll have the ability to raise the dead but the problem is not in the power because that's from me." He said, "The problem is, your pride can't handle it."

That's a lizard. And you've got to have the ability, and often times, we've been focusing on how we get the power to do all this. God has told you what's wrong. He said your pride can't handle it. So he cannot give you some things without destroying you 'til you have gotten some lizards of the way. And we're worrying about where is the power and God is trying to tell us, "My child, you won't get rid of the thing that's blocking you, the blessing."

So for those of you right now, and you've got what I call lizards or serpents, whatever its head is, and you are willing... And the reason I believe God had the people put it on a pole because when you're struggling with some stuff that you have to put away, you got to keep looking at the thing. To deal with it, you have to keep looking at it, you have to focus on it. If you want to get rid of pride and get more humble where God can pour stuff on you, you have to focus on being more humble. You have to focus on it. And if, today, you are willing to focus on the thing that you know, and this is you not anybody else so don't come up at me and tell me, "Look, I want somebody else to –" No, this is you!

So, if you have some stuff that you know you need to put on a pole and focus on these things so this thing does not kill you or block you from divine destiny, I want you to come up here right now. For those of you, and you just got things that you

know you need to put on that pole, look at that pole and focus on that pole to get rid of that thing.

For those of you, if you're listening electronically, you stand up and you follow the same procedures. Just lift your hands up, you know, everyone knows, what their own serpent is. They are custom-made for you.

And I just want you to repeat after me as we pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, in the name of Your Son Jesus, I stand before you today, a sinner. Lord, I know I've got faults, I know I have not done some of the things that you have told me to do, but Lord, today, right now, I make a new commitment. Lord, this thing that I know I have that blocks me, I set it in front of me right now, not that it shall lead me, not that it shall guide me, but so that I can keep my eye on it until I kill it. So, right now, I declare by the power of Jesus that this thing that has hindered me for so long, I pronounce its funeral today. And I declare that it shall die but yet I shall live and I shall serve you from this day for the rest of my life. In Thy Son Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Thank you for joining us today at Brothers of the Word because, brother, you need the Word!