

Session 06

The Bronze **SNAKE**

CENTRAL TRUTH | God is the eternal King who provides the way of salvation.

Many cultures worship many different gods, each of whom gives his or her followers a set of standards for living. However, the God of the Bible is the one true God who determines good and bad, holy and unholy, righteous and sinful. Almost everyone can understand the anger of a god who punishes those who disobey, but the God of the Bible is different: He also provides salvation for those who have fallen short of His holy standards. This week's teaching explores passages in Numbers and Psalms, which show us that God is righteous in His dealing with sin and He provides salvation for His people, even in their sin. Together, we'll discover that God is the eternal King who provides the way of salvation.

REFLECT

What questions do I have about God?

What questions do I have about myself?

What questions do I have about the world and those around me?

NUMBERS 21:4-9

⁴ Then they set out from Mount Hor by way of the Red Sea to bypass the land of Edom, but the people became impatient because of the journey. ⁵ The people spoke against God and Moses: “Why have you led us up from Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread or water, and we detest this wretched food!” ⁶ Then the LORD sent poisonous snakes among the people, and they bit them so that many Israelites died. ⁷ The people then came to Moses and said, “We have sinned

by speaking against the LORD and against you. Intercede with the LORD so that he will take the snakes away from us.” And Moses interceded for the people. ⁸ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Make a snake image and mount it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will recover.” ⁹ So Moses made a bronze snake and mounted it on a pole. Whenever someone was bitten, and he looked at the bronze snake, he recovered.

PSALM 90:1-6

A prayer of Moses, the man of God. ¹ Lord, you have been our refuge in every generation. ² Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity, you are God. ³ You return mankind to the dust, saying, “Return, descendants of Adam.” ⁴ For in your sight

a thousand years are like yesterday that passes by, like a few hours of the night. ⁵ You end their lives; they sleep. They are like grass that grows in the morning — ⁶ in the morning it sprouts and grows; by evening it withers and dries up.

PSALM 90:11-17

¹¹ Who understands the power of your anger? Your wrath matches the fear that is due you. ¹² Teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop wisdom in our hearts. ¹³ LORD — how long? Turn and have compassion on your servants. ¹⁴ Satisfy us in the morning with your faithful love so that we may shout with joy and be

glad all our days. ¹⁵ Make us rejoice for as many days as you have humbled us, for as many years as we have seen adversity. ¹⁶ Let your work be seen by your servants, and your splendor by their children. ¹⁷ Let the favor of the Lord our God be on us; establish for us the work of our hands — establish the work of our hands!

Day01

NUMBERS 21:4-9



Refer to page 5 for a description of the 7 Arrows of Bible Reading.

READ & RESPOND

As the Israelites continued in the wilderness, they complained *again*, asking Moses why he led them from Egypt just to die in the desert. Sound familiar? They were sick of the food God had graciously provided for forty years! Their hearts were full of rebellion. In response, God sent poisonous snakes that killed many people. This painful lesson taught them about their sinfulness, and they confessed their rebellion to Moses. God then instructed Moses to put a bronze snake on a pole. Whenever someone bitten looked at it, he or she was healed. This required an act of faith in God. The serpent reminded them of the sin that caused their suffering, but the cure taught them that healing comes only through believing in God.

↑ The Israelites deserved death, but God gave them a chance for life. What does this reveal about God, specifically His justice and His mercy?

↓ Even after forty years of seeing God's miracles, the Israelites complained and doubted again. What does this tell us about our tendency toward rebellion and discontentment?

→ What wrong attitude or sin do you need to confess and turn away from this week by looking to Jesus for help?

MEMORIZE

On a piece of paper, write down **Psalm 90:12** five times. Doing this makes all the different parts of your brain turn on at the same time, which forces you to think about the information in a much deeper way.

PRAY

Lord, like the Israelites, I need Your healing and forgiveness. Let me not take Your goodness and provision for granted. Help me to remain content in You.

Day02

PSALM 90:1-6

📍 READ & RESPOND

Written by Moses, Psalm 90 is considered the oldest psalm in the Bible. He begins by praising God for His eternalness. He existed before everything. But in the second part of today's passage, Moses describes how fragile humans are—like grass that grows in the morning and is withered by the end of the day. Because life is so delicate, we must find our refuge in the Lord. He never changes. He is the same forever. And yet, He chooses to be with us. He sent His Son to die for us so that we could return to Him. The absolute undeservedness of this relationship should knock us to the floor in humility. And we should respond with complete trust in and total dependence on Him.

← How would hearing this psalm have comforted or challenged the new, young generation about to enter the promised land?

↑ What does this passage teach you about God's relationship with us?

↓ What does this passage teach you about our dependence on God?

📍 MEMORIZE

Using your phone, tablet, or computer, write out **Psalm 90:12** in a notes app using emojis. Be creative! Send the emojis to a few friends or family members and see if they can decipher the verse.

📍 PRAY

God, from eternity to eternity, You are God. I am completely helpless without You. Help me honor You with trust and dependence.

Day 03

PSALM 90:11-17

READ & RESPOND

Moses experienced the sting of God's punishment for his sin and yearned to help others avoid it. He witnessed God punish the Israelites again and again as they sinned against Him in the wilderness. Moses asked God to "teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop wisdom in our hearts." We need wisdom because the choices that we make in our brief lives have eternal consequences, and a life without a right relationship with God is meaningless. Moses understood that only God could make our lives meaningful. What does a meaningful life look like? Spending our days pursuing the things that matter to Him, for only God can make what we do significant and lasting.

← How did you think Moses's own experiences informed the writing of this psalm?

↓ What happens to our lives when we don't have God's wisdom?

→ What is one thing you need to stop doing this week so you can use your time pursuing the things that matter to God?

MEMORIZE

Let's map out this week's verse. Write out **Psalms 90:12**. Underline the important nouns in the verse. Circle the important verbs. Put an appropriate symbol next to any word that might be important.

PRAY

Father, life is short, and I often waste my time on things that don't last. Please teach me to number my days, giving me the wisdom to make choices that honor You.

Day04

JOHN 3:14-17

📍 READ & RESPOND

In this passage, Jesus was talking to a Pharisee named Nicodemus. Like most of the Pharisees, he was struggling to understand Jesus's true identity, so Jesus used an Old Testament symbol of faith to explain His mission—to save those who would believe in Him. Because of God's great love, Jesus came to the world and sacrificed Himself so that we could be eternally reunited with God. Jesus used the story of Moses holding up the bronze snake (see Num. 21:4-9) to illustrate this necessary act of faith. When the Israelites looked up at the bronze snake, they received physical healing. But, when we look at the cross and believe that Jesus saves us from sin, we receive spiritual healing and eternal life.

🔄 What does God promise will happen to everyone who believes in His Son (see v. 16)?

↑ What reason did God give His Son to the world (see vv. 16-17)? What does this passage tell you about God's desire for a relationship with us?

↔ How can you share the message of God's love and the need to believe in Jesus with a friend who doesn't know it?

📍 MEMORIZE

Go for a walk! Recite **Psalms 90:12** aloud while walking. Assign one phrase to a set number of steps (for instance, walk five steps while saying the first phrase).

📍 PRAY

Lord, thank You for Your Word and the clear path of salvation through faith in Jesus. Help me share Your great love with everyone I meet this week.

Day 05

ROMANS 5:6-8

📍 READ & RESPOND

Think about how difficult it is to be kind to someone who is mean to you. Now, imagine dying for that person! Paul, in Romans 5:8, says that God demonstrated His amazing love to us while we were still sinners—while we were still His enemies. We didn't deserve His sacrificial love or His saving grace, yet God acted. He sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue us from the consequences of our sin. On the cross, Jesus took the punishment that God's perfect justice required, reuniting us with Him. God's great love transformed us from His enemy to His family. Because of His love, we can live confidently, knowing that nothing can ever separate us from Him.

🔄 How does Paul describe us before God showed His love?

↑ What have you learned about God's love today? How is His sacrificial love unique?

→ You were God's enemy, but now you are His child. What does this massive change in your identity mean to you personally?

📍 MEMORIZE

Once you know **Psalms 90:12**, teach it to someone else—a sibling, a parent, or a friend. Explain what it means and why it's important.

📍 PRAY

Lord, thank You for saving me while I was still Your enemy. Help me to confidently remember that I am Your child and to honor You with my life.