

Numbers 21: 4-9



The Text – Numbers 21:4-9

1. Have a flick back through the book of Numbers or even just over chapter 20. What are some of the troubles Israel have encountered in the wilderness journey? How was God provided for them?
2. Read the text. In verses 4 and 5, how would you describe Israel's emotional state? What are some of the factors that might have contributed to this?
3. In verse 6, God sends 'fiery snakes' into their camp that cause the deaths of many Israelites. What would snakes have symbolised for the Israelites?
4. How do the people respond and what do they pray for?
5. How is God's response surprising? What do you find startling or confusing about God's response?
6. Why do you think God uses a snake symbol as a means of healing and salvation? How would this have challenged the Israelite understanding of death and life?

The Scriptures – Numbers 21:4-9 as a portion of the Scriptures

1. Read 2 Kings 18:1-8. What is the fate of the bronze snake and how is it misused? What does this suggest about human tendencies?
2. Read John 3:1-18. How does Jesus use the story of the bronze snake? In what ways are Jesus and the bronze snake similar and different?

Our lives – walking the way of Jesus in response to Numbers 21:4-9 as a portion of the Scriptures

1. Can you think of times when you have felt overwhelmed by life's circumstances? How have you responded to God in those times?
2. Can you think of ways in which you have seen God use difficult times to bring about surprising grace?
3. What things make it hard to trust God during wilderness times? How could we encourage each other to trust God?