



BIBLE STUDY

MAJOR CHARACTERS OF THE BIBLE



<https://campus.cru.org/college/bsu/community-group-material/>

STUDY **07**

MOSES

MOSES

OVERVIEW

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

NUMBERS 21: 4-9

“Numbers 21:4-9 is about the Israelites grumbling against God and being punished with fiery serpents, but when they repented and looked upon a bronze serpent lifted up by Moses, they were saved, serving as a symbolic foreshadowing of humanity’s need for repentance and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.”

– Rev Michael Johnson godblessing

In Numbers 21, the people again got discouraged, and in their unbelief they murmured against Moses for bringing them into the wilderness. They had already forgotten that it was their own sin that caused them to be there, and they tried to blame Moses for it. As a judgment against the people for their sin, God sent poisonous serpents into the camp, and people began to die. This showed the people that they were the ones in sin, and they came to Moses to confess that sin and ask for God’s mercy. When Moses prayed for the people, God instructed him to make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole so the people could be healed (Numbers 21:5-7).- gotquestions.org

After the people turned against God and Moses, a plague of serpents swept through the camp. God instructed Moses to make a bronze serpent and lift it high, so that anyone who looked at it would live. The story reveals themes of repentance, judgment, grace, and trust. Later biblical writers reflect on the serpent’s meaning, and Jesus himself draws on the image in John 3:14–15. This article explores the story, its symbolism, and what became of the bronze serpent, drawing on biblical scholarship and the insights of commentators like J. Gordon Wenham. – Pastor Jason Elder

Group Context Questions

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY AND HOW?

Who: is Moses in the Bible?

What: did Moses do in the Bible?

When: is Moses first seen in the Bible?

Where: is Moses at in the Bible?

Why: should we know about Moses?

How: does Moses and his story impact us?

VOCABULARY WORDS

“Lifted Up”

- less of a vocab word and more of a term or idea. The same term is used in Ezra 6:11 (Aramaic), Isaiah 52:13 (Hebrew) and John 8:28 (Greek). All of which point to the idea of Christ being raised up on the cross.

“Serpent”

- again, less of a word and more an idea. The presence of serpents, in this passage especially, are a sign of judgment and would cause the Israelites to think of the serpent from Genesis 3:15.

CONTEXT QUESTIONS

Allow your group to share some of their prior knowledge of who this character is and their significance. Familiarize yourself with this character so you can also answer. Make sure to do this in a way that is inclusive of those who may not have any prior knowledge.

CONTINUE ONTO NEXT PAGE ►

Watch This Video With Your Group**VIDEO LINK HERE: [MOSES VIDEO](#)****VIDEO**

- **Feel free to share these videos with your group so they can also watch. You may also find any other outside sources that you might think to be valuable to their understanding of the Word.**



This video is a general overview of the entire book of Numbers.

Allow your group to discuss what they gathered from the video. What stuck out to them? Eg. “If you were to take notes over this video what would be some of the main ideas you write down?”

What Are the Questions?**NUMBERS 21: 4-9****LAUNCH**

Has there ever been an instance in your life where you tried to fix something by yourself, but ultimately had to ask for help? What was that like?

NUMBERS 21: 4-9

1. What sticks out to you? What are some repeated words or ideas?
2. What route were the Israelites taking in verse 4? Why were they taking that route?
3. What attitude do the Israelites display toward this route in verses 4 and 5?
4. How does God respond to their attitude in verse 6?
5. How do the Israelites respond to God in verse 7?
6. What do the Israelites have to do to receive healing?
7. What do the complaints of Israel reveal about their hearts in the wilderness?
8. Why does God send fiery serpents to the disgruntled Israelites? What is the significance of it being serpents?
9. Why does God choose the serpent to heal them?

MOSES

QUESTIONS

What Are the Questions? (Continued)

JOHN 3:1-16

NEW TESTAMENT CORRELATION

In light of this passage, how can we look at John 3: 1-16 and better understand the character of Christ? How can we use these passages and interpret scripture using other scripture?

JOHN 3: 1-16

10. What sticks out to you?
11. Why does Nicodemus come to Jesus?
12. How does Jesus respond to Nicodemus statement?
13. What is Nicodemus hesitancy with Jesus' response?
14. How does Jesus respond to these hesitancy's
15. Why is it significant that Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night?
16. Why does Christ respond to Nicodemus with the explanation of being born again?
17. Why might Nicodemus be confused about the concept of being born again?
18. Why does Jesus pull from the Numbers passage in this conversation with Nicodemus? In what ways does Jesus represent the Bronze Serpent?
19. How does this New Testament passage aid our understanding of the entire story?

APPLICATION

20. How does the Israelites' heart reflect your own at times?
21. Are their areas of rebellion, ingratitude, and unbelief that you need to confess and repent of?
22. How can we look to Christ for saving from our sin in our daily life?
23. How might the story of the Bronze Serpent invite you to share the saving work of Christ with others?

FALLEN CONDITION

“What do these passages reveal about our fallen condition?”

- Help your group understand and identify the broken state of humanity due to our sin and where we see that evident in these passages.

CHRIST CENTERED SOLUTION

“What do these passages tell us about Christ's response?”

- Amidst our broken, sinful nature, what does Jesus offer as a solution? Where do we see a solution in these passages?

GRACE ENABLED RESPONSE

“What do these passages teach us about how we should live?”

- How should we live now with these two truths in mind? Develop a one or two sentence long summary of each section to form a summary of what you can learn from these passages.

What Are the Answers?

1. Allow your group to discuss.
2. From Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea to go around Edom (600 to 700 miles in total in the wilderness – Biblehub.com)
IMAGE HERE TO SHOW GROUP
3. The people grew impatient and spoke against God complaining and blaming God for their struggle
4. God sends fiery serpents amongst the people that bite them killing many
5. The people see their sin, repent, and ask Moses to pray for them.
6. The people have to look upon the serpent and be healed.
7. Their complaints reveal rebellion, ingratitude, and disbelief in God and his provision for them, similar to the first time they came close to the promise land
8. Serpents are a symbol of deception, sin and rebellion against God, mirror their present reality.
9. This highlights God's tendency to use inglorious glories to reveal his Glory to his people, using a symbol of death to bring healing.
10. Allow group to discuss.
11. Nicodemus has witnessed Jesus' divine signs and comes to investigate (v. 2).
12. Jesus responds by giving the requirements for eternal life (v. 3).
13. Nicodemus' hesitancy is with his worldly thinking, that man cannot physically be born again (v. 4).
14. Jesus responds by first explaining more in depth than exposing Nicodemus' limitations as a human by the explanation of his glory. (vv. 5-13)
15. Nicodemus was a high ranking official of the Sanhedrin so coming to him at night might of saved him embarrassment amongst his peers or simply to gain an uninterrupted conversation with Jesus.
16. Christ recognizes Nicodemus' heart in this moment and that he had a fundamental misunderstanding of salvation, which leads Jesus to explain being "born again."
17. Nicodemus a pious Jew would have been entrenched in the Law and the upholding of it therefore generating a reliance of self for salvation, which as we know is not possible.
18. Jesus uses the bronze serpent to illustrate that first he will too be lifted up to be accursed (Galatians 3:13) and save mankind, secondly to point to that salvation is simply by looking to Jesus to save you just as the Israelites looked to the bronze serpent to save them.
19. John 3:16 wraps this conversation up with the point that God loved the world by sending Christ himself to save those who look to him. Help your group understand different themes that connect these passages.
- 20-23. Allow your group to discuss.

MOSES

NEXT STEPS

What's Next?

DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP:

Should we continue discussion on this passage or move on through the text next week?

Do you guys feel confident in your understanding of what was discussed tonight?

Any questions? (Allow anyone to come to you in private if needed)

Announcements

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Where is Cru at this week?

What upcoming events do we have?

Any other announcements? Should be in the slack.

Prayer

BREAK OFF AND PRAY

Take this time as an opportunity to model prayer to those who are younger in their faith.

Provide opportunities for those who wish to pray.

Model different types of prayer like the ACTS model.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Why a Bronze Serpent?](#)
- [The Bronze Serpent and Jesus](#)
- [Jesus as a Serpent?](#)