

**Announcements**

- We are two-thirds of the way toward meeting our financial goal to support the London training center, which is crucial for Lord's move to Europe. We want to meet our goal in a timely way.
- The remaining schedule for the webcast training is:
  - Message 9, Lord's day (12/30), 6:00 pm, OPEN MEETING
  - Message 10, Monday (12/31), 7:00 pm
  - Message 11, Tuesday (1/1), 9:00 am
  - Message 12, Tuesday (1/1), 10:30 am
- The ushers will meet together for extended fellowship and prayer after the Lord's day meeting on January 6th. Lunch will be provided.
- The saints serving with the piano service will meet together for lunch and fellowship after the meeting on January 13<sup>th</sup>. Lunch will be provided.
- We are covering week 5 for the Holy Word for Morning Revival on "Propagating the Resurrected, Ascended, and All-Inclusive Christ as the Development of the Kingdom of God".
- No parking is permitted at the Presbyterian church parking lot. A map of available parking is on the tables.
- We are reading messages 31 and 32 from the Life-Study of Numbers. The reading schedule is on the table and posted on the church website.
- There will be no ministry meeting until the full-time training resumes in February.

**Burdens for Prayer**

- England Training Center
- Germany
- Meeting hall modifications (parking)
- Prayer meeting
- Winter Training
- Northwest localities

**This Week: December 24 – December 30**

**Morning Revival:** *Propagating the Resurrected, Ascended, and All-inclusive Christ as the Development of the Kingdom of God,* week 5

**Hall Cleaning:** Downstairs – Redmond  
Upstairs – Hall Team

**Saturday**                      8:30am                      Breakfast

**Lord's Day**                      9:30 am                      Lord's Table

**2018 Winter Training Webcast Schedule**

Lord's Day, December 30 <sup>th</sup>	Msg. 8	10:30 am
	Msg. 9	6:00 pm (open meeting)

Monday, December 31 <sup>st</sup>	Msg. 10	7:00 pm
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Tuesday, January 1 <sup>st</sup>	Msg. 11	9:00 am
	Msg. 12	10:30 am

**LIFE-STUDY OF NUMBERS**

**MESSAGE THIRTY-ONE**

**JOURNEYING (16)**

B. Speaking against God and Moses

1. Because the Way Was Hard, the People Being Impatient and Speaking against God and Moses, Mainly concerning the Food Supply

It is enlightening to compare Numbers 20 and 21. Both chapters speak of the people's contending. In Numbers 20 the children of Israel were contending for water. This contending was fair because it came from the people's thirst. In Numbers 21 the children contended again, but this time their contending was not fair, because it came from the people's impatience. God did not punish the people for their contending in chapter twenty, but He did punish them for their contending in chapter twenty-one.

God had brought the children of Israel out of Egypt and had brought them into the wilderness, where the way was rough and very difficult. "The soul of the people became impatient because of the way"

(21:4b). The way was harsh, and their patience was exhausted. In their impatience they "spoke against God and against Moses, Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread and no water, and we loathe this contemptible bread" (v. 5). From God's point of view, this contending, unlike the contending for water, was not fair. God had not promised that the way through the wilderness would be easy. They should have anticipated a difficult journey. Therefore, God was not happy with them and He punished them.

## 2. Jehovah Sending Fiery Serpents to Bite the People, so that Many of Them Died

In chapter twenty Moses was angry with the people, but God was not angry with them. In chapter twenty-one Moses was not angry with them, but God was angry. "Jehovah sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died" (21:6). This was a serious punishment, a punishment that caused death to the contending people.

## 3. The People Repenting to Moses and Asking Him to Pray That God Would Take Away the Serpents from Them

"The people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against Jehovah and against you. Pray to Jehovah, that He take away the serpents from us" (v. 7). In all their journeying, this is the first time the children of Israel confessed their sins. Having confessed their sin in speaking against God and Moses, they asked Moses to pray for them, and he did so.

## 4. Jehovah Commanding Moses to Make a Fiery Serpent and Set It on a Pole That Everyone Who Was Bitten Might Look at It and Live

"Jehovah said to Moses, Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and every one who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live. So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived" (vv. 8-9). This bronze serpent typifies Christ (John 3:14), and the pole typifies the cross (1 Pet. 2:24). In typology bronze, or brass, signifies judgment. The Hebrew word translated "looked at" in Numbers 21:9 may also be rendered "regarded," or "looked intently at."

The bronze serpent is a type, and in John 3:14 the Lord Jesus applies this type to Himself. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." The bronze

serpent had the form of a serpent but not the poisonous nature of a serpent. This is a full type of Christ coming in the likeness of the flesh of sin (Rom. 8:3) to be our replacement. In Numbers 20 we have a type of Christ as the crucified and resurrected One flowing out the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit, but in Numbers 21 we have a type of Christ as our replacement and substitute.

When the children of Israel were bitten by the fiery serpents, they became serpents in the eyes of God. They were serpentine and had the serpentine nature. The bronze serpent, however, had only the form of a serpent but not the nature of a serpent. Therefore, the bronze serpent could be a type of Christ, who had the form, the likeness, of the flesh of sin but not the sinful nature of the flesh of sin. The bronze serpent was put on a pole, which signifies the cross. Thus, in the wilderness there was a bronze serpent on a pole, portraying, in type, a replacement on a cross. The bronze serpent on the pole indicated that the children of Israel, who had become serpentine, were put on the pole where they were replaced by something that had the form but not the nature of a serpent.

Long after Numbers 21 was written, Christ came, and in His conversation with Nicodemus He referred to the type of the bronze serpent. The Lord Jesus seemed to be saying to him, "Nicodemus, the picture of the bronze serpent on a pole signifies what I will be for you. That serpent was the replacement of your forefathers so that they could be saved from death and have life. I will do the same for you. I will die on the cross as your replacement so that you may have eternal life."

At the time the Lord Jesus spoke this word to Nicodemus, it is not likely that he understood it. Nicodemus surely did not regard himself as a serpent but as an ethical gentleman who came to the Lord Jesus for the purpose of receiving teachings about his behavior. However, in His word concerning the bronze serpent, the Lord Jesus appeared to be saying to Nicodemus, "You should not consider yourself a gentleman but realize instead that you are a serpent. You became a serpent when in the garden Adam was bitten by the serpent. Because you have a serpentine nature, I have come not to teach you but to be your replacement. In the eyes of God, you are a serpent. As your replacement, I will be lifted up in the form of a serpent." It is a great blessing for us to know that, as the fulfillment of the type of the bronze serpent, Christ came in the likeness of the flesh of sin to die on the cross as our replacement and substitute.

When Adam was bitten by the serpent, we all became serpents. Christ

has come to be our replacement, and we have believed into Him. At this point we need to ask an interesting question: Are we who believe in Christ still serpents? The answer to this question depends on whether, in our experience, we are in John 3, which speaks of the bronze serpent, or in John 7, which speaks of coming to the Lord and drinking (vv. 37-39). If we are drinking of the living water, then we are no longer serpents. But if we are short of the living water, then we are contending serpents.

Christ today is no longer the bronze serpent—He is the life-giving Spirit. The One who died for us on the cross in the form of a serpent, in the likeness of the flesh of sin, has passed through death and resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). This means that He has changed His form. When He died on the cross, as indicated in John 3, He was in the form of a serpent, but when He came back to His disciples, as revealed in John 20, He was the life-giving Spirit. What kind of Christ is He to you today? Is He a bronze serpent or the life-giving Spirit?

As a believer in Christ, are you still a serpent? The answer depends on whether you are dry, lacking the life-giving Spirit, or are drinking of the Spirit. Apart from the life-giving Spirit, we are contending serpents. In the church life we may be either contending serpents or life-giving-Spirit drinkers. May we all be those who drink of the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit!

Witness Lee, *Life-Study of Leviticus*, Published by Living Stream Ministry.  
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<b>Bible Reading Schedule with Footnotes</b>	
Lord's Day, December 30 <sup>th</sup>	1 Cor. 1:5-9
Monday, December 31 <sup>st</sup>	1 Cor. 1:10-17
Tuesday, January 1 <sup>st</sup>	1 Cor. 2:18-31
Wednesday, January 2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 Cor. 2:1-5
Thursday, January 3 <sup>rd</sup>	1 Cor. 2:6-10
Friday, January 4 <sup>th</sup>	1 Cor. 2:11-16
Saturday, January 5 <sup>th</sup>	1 Cor. 3:1-9