

{7} The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people. {8} The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." {9} So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.

Here we find the Israelites journeying from Mount Hor by Kadesh-Barnea all the way southward to the Red Sea, and then east and north around the border of Edom. The way was so long and difficult and the water so scarce that the people became utterly discouraged and spoke out bitterly and presumptuously against the Lord and against Moses and against the despised manna. The Lord sent judgment in the form of serpents whose fiery, deadly bites killed a number of people, until God in His mercy provided the brass serpent that brought life for a look.

Of course, this would never have happened if the Israelites had maintained trust in the living God, had prayed for grace to bear the difficulties and hardships of life, had focussed on the blessings instead of the trials, had received with a sweet submissiveness whatever God had for them, and had taken one day at a time (after all, each day has enough evil of its own; we don't need to borrow any more from tomorrow!).