

I. The God-Opposing Attitude of the People (4-6)

- A. Impatient wanderers (4) - “From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way.”
- B. Inverted warfare (5) - “And the people spoke against God and against Moses, Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.”
- C. Instructional wounding (6) - “Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.”

II. The God-Fearing Response of Moses (7-9)

- A. Moses was patient (7) - “And the people came to Moses and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. So Moses prayed for the people.”
- B. Moses was obedient (8-9a) - “And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.” 9 So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole...”
- C. Moses was effective (9a) - “And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.”

III. The God-Forsaking Ignorance of Religion (2 Kings 18:1-5)

- A. A clear need for reformation (1-2) - “In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. 2 He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem...”
- B. A strong commitment to consecration (3) - “3 And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done. 4a He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah...”

Reno begins with demo. Before what is best can be built up, what is waste must be torn down and removed. Hezekiah went sacred cow-tipping!

- C. A daring, risky plan of action (4b) - “And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was called Nehushtan).”

* God had mightily used the bronze serpent in Israel’s history with Him

* God had not continued to use the bronze serpent with Israel for nearly 775 years. It had no present purpose, necessity or benefit.

* The people made an ongoing relic out of something that God once blessed, but was no longer blessing

* Hezekiah viewed this once precious part of their religious history as a present day impediment...so he had it destroyed

God does not obligate Himself to bless in the present day what He once blessed in the past.

- D. A commitment to striving for excellence (5) - “He trusted in the Lord the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him.” **Hezekiah had a testimony that left him in a class of his own. Peerless!**

There is a danger of us clinging to the “sentimental sameness” of our own Bronze Serpent, which God is neither commanding nor blessing anymore:

“For the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: “This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me; in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” - Matthew 15:6-9