

100 Bible Stories
28. The Bronze Serpent

Numbers 13-14; 21 (NKJV)

^{13.1}And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel. . . .” ³So Moses sent them from the Wilderness of Paran according to the command of the Lord. . . . ²⁷Then they [returned and] told him, and said: “We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. ²⁸Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; . . . ³²all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature, ³³. . . . and we were like grasshoppers in their sight.”

^{14.2}And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! ³Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?” ⁴So they said to one another, “Let us select a leader and return to Egypt. . . .” ⁶But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; ⁷and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: “The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. ⁸If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, ‘a land which flows with milk and honey.’ ⁹Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for the . . . Lord is with us. Do not fear them. . . .”

^{14.11}Then the Lord said to Moses: “How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me?”

^{14.19}And Moses said: “Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. . . .”

²⁰Then the Lord said: “I have pardoned, according to your word;. . . ²⁸As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: ²⁹The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. ³⁰Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. ³¹But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. . . .”

³⁹Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly. . . . ^{21.6}So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. ⁷Therefore 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. ⁸Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.” ⁹So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

God wants them to go take the land.

What do they find?

What do they do? What’s their problem?

How long would they wander and die in the wilderness?

Dot dot dot.. To another period of complaint and dissatisfaction of Israel with God...

Cf. John 3.14f.