



Lectionary Bible Study Our Savior Lutheran, Vero Beach

Lent 4B – March 14, 2021

Live Bible Studies Hosted on Zoom
Wednesdays @ 10:00 AM

More Info & Link at

www.OurSaviorELCA.com/BibleStudy

During the season of Lent we will be invited to look at both the appointed Sunday Old Testament readings (always about a covenant relationship between God and God's chosen people) and the appointed Gospel (where Jesus is establishing a new covenant between God and all God's beloved people).

The story of how God's people came to be God's people is the story of the first five books of the Old Testament, much of it revolving around the journey, led by Moses, of God's people escaping slavery and journeying toward the promised land. The journey from slavery to freedom took 40 years. This passage from Numbers relays the frustration of the God's people and also the faithfulness of God.

Numbers 21:4-9

⁴ From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵ 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 detest this miserable food." ⁶ Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷ The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." ⁹ So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

1. What do you find most surprising in this passage... that people complained, that God responded by sending snakes, or something else?
2. Where else do we find the number 40 in scripture? What do you think the number suggest?

3. Can you identify with the pattern of sin and consequences, repentance and saving grace (forgiveness and restored relationship)?

John 3:14-21

The connection between Jesus being lifted up on the cross and Moses lifting up the bronze snake in the wilderness is obvious. Both the cross and snake are symbols of fear and death, but God has the power to transform them into symbols of hope and salvation.

¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

1. Look up John chapter 3 for context. Who is Jesus addressing in these verses?
2. Most New Testament biblical scholars suggest that John 3:16 may have been likely inserted into this story as an editorial comment. True or not true, what is the message of John 3:16 and why does it fit in making the connection between the Old Testament reading and this appointed Gospel?
3. What does it mean to you to love light rather than darkness and to “come to the light” each day?