

The FIERY SERPENTS

in Numbers 21:4-9 **were** / are ...

"Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. 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 our soul loathes this worthless bread. So the LORD sent **fiery serpents** among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. Therefore 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. Then 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. So 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." (Numbers 21:4-9)

* * *

about the

seriousness of unbelief

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

also in

Deut. 8:15 & 1 Cor. 10:9

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

an important part

of Jewish history (Deut. 8:15)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* *

both

natural & miraculous

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

causing

fiery inflammation

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* *

closely linked to

the bronze serpent (John 3:14)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

deadly but

overcome by faith (Jn. 3:15)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* *

in line with

the point of 2 Cor. 5:21

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* *

not quickly

removed as requested

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

obviously

significant (John 3:14-15)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

probably difficult

to detect and avoid

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

ready to

strike quickly (Isaiah 14:29)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

reminiscent of

the serpent in Genesis 3

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

reported

mostly in just five verses

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

to show that

God is just AND gracious

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

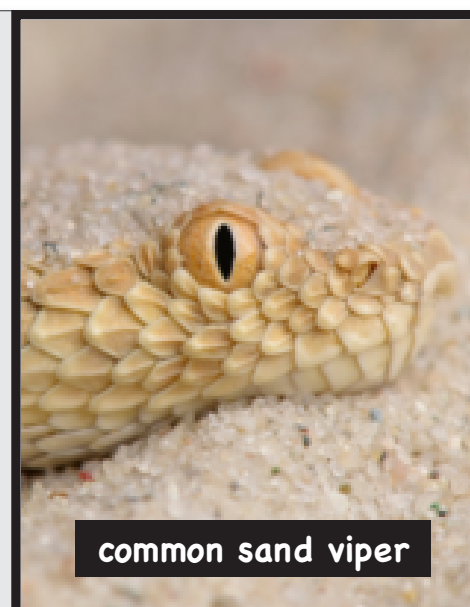
* * *

unusually

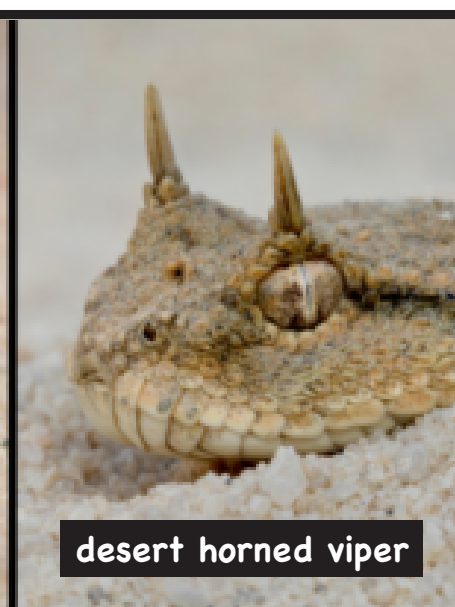
abundant and/or active

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

Descriptive



common sand viper



desert horned viper

Meditation

probably vipers like these

Directions: after reading through **Numbers 21:4-9**, John 3:14-16, and some quality articles on venomous snakes in the Sinai, Egypt, and Arabia, consider and discuss how the fiery serpents are described above. **Do you agree with the various points made? Would you change them in some ways? At the end, discuss the most important descriptive phrases and make applications.** In this, think about why God chose to use poisonous snakes and a bronze serpent. Obviously, we each should believe in the One foreshadowed by the bronze serpent (John 3:14), and, of course, we should not complain about God like the Israelites did (21:5). — © 2022 by Jon F. Mahar, Hakusan City, Japan and Alexander, Maine, U.S.A.