

# Parashah Chukat

## פרשה חקת

Shabbat Tammuz 7, 5770, June 19, 2010

32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d

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### The Son of Man Lifted Up.

#### השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Numbers 19:1-22:1

הפטרה: Judges 11:1-33

הברית: Hebrews 9:11-28

החדשה

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In this week's Parsha (*Bamidbar / Numbers 20:22-22:1*) we read that "*Moshe made a bronze serpent and placed it on the pole; so that if a fiery serpent bit a man, he would stare at the bronze serpent and live.*" Now this statement in the Torah is very simple, some of the people of Yisrael spoke against G-d and against Moshe. They said "*Why have you brought us up out of Mitzrayim (Egypt) to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food.*" The people slandered the name of the Lord, Moshe, and the provision (food) G-d has given to them. As a result, HaShem sent fiery serpents causing the people to die. It is interesting that here G-d could have healed all of Yisrael by a simple word, however, He commanded Moshe to construct an image of the serpent, place it upon a pole and cause the people who are bitten to stand and look at the image in order to be healed. Have you ever wondered why, after all of the mitzvot (commandments) against constructing a graven image that HaShem instructed Moshe to make an image and use it to heal the people?

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### במדבר 21:4-9

4 וַיִּסְעוּ מֵהַר הַהָרִי יַסְסוּף לְסַבֵּב אֶת־אֶרֶץ אֲדוּם  
 5 וַתִּקְצַר נַפְשֵׁיהֶם בְּדַרְדָּר; וַיְדַבֵּר הָעָם בְּאֱלֹהִים וּבְמֹשֶׁה  
 לְמַה הֵעֲלִיתֵנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם לָמוֹת בְּמִדְבָּר כִּי אֵין לָחֶם  
 6 וְאֵין מַיִם וְנַפְשֵׁנוּ קָצָה בְּלָחֶם הַקָּלָקָל; וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה  
 בָּעָם אֶת הַנְּחָשִׁים הַשָּׂרְפִים וַיִּנְשְׁכוּ אֶת־הָעָם וַיָּמָת עִם־  
 7 רַב מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל; וַיָּבֹא הָעָם אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמְרוּ חֲטָאנוּ כִּי־  
 דִּבַּרְנוּ בַיהוָה וּבְךָ הַתְּפַלֵּל אֶל־יְהוָה וַיִּסַּר מֵעֲלֵינוּ אֶת־  
 8 הַנְּחָשׁ וַיִּתְּפַלֵּל מֹשֶׁה בְּעַד הָעָם; וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־  
 מֹשֶׁה עֲשֵׂה לָּךְ שָׂרָף וְשִׂים אֹתוֹ עַל־נֹסֶה וְהָיָה כִּלְהִנְשׂוֹךְ  
 9 וְרָאָה אֹתוֹ וְחָי; וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה נְחָשׁ נְחָשֶׁת וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ עַל־  
 הַנֹּסֶה וְהָיָה אִם־נָשָׁךְ הַנְּחָשׁ אֶת־אִישׁ וְהִבִּיט אֶל־נְחָשׁ  
 10 הַנְּחָשֶׁת וְחָי; וַיִּסְעוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיָּחֲנוּ בְּאֶבְתָּ: וַיִּסְעוּ  
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#### Bamidbar / Numbers 21:4-9

21:4 Then they set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient because of the journey. 21:5 The people spoke against God and 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 miserable food.' 21:6 The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. 21:7 So the people came to Moses and said, 'We have sinned, because we have spoken against the Lord and you; intercede with the Lord, that He may remove the serpents from us.' And Moses interceded for the people. 21:8 Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live.' 21:9 And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived. (NASB)

I believe the construction of the bronze serpent on the pole had two important points, (i) to acknowledge sin and repent (perform teshuva) before G-d by causing the people to approach the image and (ii) acceptance (have faith) of the healing provided by G-d. In order to be healed the second action was required, it was a matter of faith, to look up towards the heavens, view the bronze serpent and live.

Later on in Yisrael's history we learn in *2 Kings 18:1-7* that the people of Yisrael made offerings and worshiped before the image of the serpent burning incense. The image of the bronze snake was used as an idol. According to the Scriptures, Hezekiah did right in the eyes of the Lord as his father David had done and he broke the bronze image of the serpent into pieces so the people would not sin before the Lord.

### ***2 Kings 18:1-7***

*18:1 Now it came about in the third year of Hoshea, the son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah became king. 18:2 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah. 18:3 He did right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done. 18:4 He removed the high places and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah. He also broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the sons of Israel burned incense to it; and it was called Nehushtan. 18:5 He trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel; so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among those who were before him. 18:6 For he clung to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses. 18:7 And the Lord was with him; wherever he went he prospered. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. (NASB)*

The Torah portion for this week finds its connection to the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) when Yeshua used this portion of scripture on the bronze snake as a metaphor on how he will die.

### ***John 8:28***

*8:28 So Jesus said, 'When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. (NASB)*

### ***John 12:32***

*12:32 'And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.' (NASB)*

The usage of metaphor is a very Hebraic concept. Take for example that throughout the Torah (see sefer *Bereshit / Genesis*) the names given to people and places were done so as a metaphor to set forth the qualities, strengths, and weaknesses, and spiritual insights using language as a tool to impart spiritual truth

75 (i.e. bethel [house of G-d], Yitzchak [Isaac], Yaacob [Jacob], and the changing of  
Yaakov's name to Yisrael). Basically, the Semitic use of one's name is that it  
represents the sum of one's attributes. In similar fashion, Yeshua used metaphor  
(in a very Hebraic way) while teaching Nicodemous about the Kingdom of  
80 Heaven. He said that unless a person is born new he cannot even see the  
Kingdom of Heaven (See *John 3:1-6*). Yeshua gave Nicodemous metaphorical  
words whereby he might understand the essence of the teaching better than by  
using abstract words. Yeshua talked to him about the things of the spirit (*John*  
*3:4-6*) and the change of heart (*John 3:3*). Concerning the spirit, Yeshua used the  
85 metaphor of "*The wind blows where it lists*" in order to help Nicodemous to have  
a concept of the things of the spirit. Similarly, in *John 12:32*, Yeshua said "*Like*  
*Moshe lifted up the serpent in the wilderness*" in order to help the disciples, you,  
and I to understand the subject of faith whereby men are saved. The foundation  
and the primary message being explained here by Yeshua is that the eternal  
salvation of sinners is possible only through Him if he is lifted up symbolizing his  
90 death upon the cross. And according to the Gospels (as history tells us) the  
"Word became flesh" (*John 1:14*) Yeshua, offered the payment of our sin in His  
own blood in that very same manner, being raised up upon the cross. The  
mystery of the incarnation, the One who always existed in the very nature of G-d  
yet became man (*Philippians 2:5*) is G-d's solution to the dilemma of how sinful  
man can commune with G-d who is Holy. The salvation G-d has accomplished in  
95 His Son is indeed a salvation that can only be described as very great for it alone  
satisfies the infinite holiness of the Father in Heaven. Therefore, all who are in  
Yeshua by faith have His infinite holiness accredited to their account. What a  
wonderful salvation we have.

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**Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!**

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,

"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever

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