

be lifted up on the cross, in order that the sins of His people might be laid upon Him (Jn.iii.14). Our Lord's reference to this incident was particularly appropriate since He was stressing not only the objective fact that He would bear the sins of His people (cf. 2 Cor.v.21), but also the vital point that a personal relationship of placing faith in Him is necessary for salvation (cf. esp. Jn.iii.15,16 and 36). The Israelite in the wilderness was not benefited by the serpent on the pole unless he looked toward it (Nu.xxi.8,9). Later on the brazen serpent itself became an object of worship, just as any symbol of God's truth can become harmful if it assumes a primary place itself, instead of simply pointing us to God and the various aspects of the truth which He has revealed. It was therefore necessary for the good king Hezekiah to break it in pieces (2 Ki.xviii.4) since it had become a snare and a cause of injury, instead of a useful symbol which would fulfill its purpose of pointing forward to the Saviour who was to come.

g. The march around Moab (xxi.10-20)

After going south and east around Edom, the people marched further east and north around Moab (11), which was east of the southern part of the Dead Sea. This was a very dry region, in which the passing of even a small stream or brook was a memorable event (14-15). The book of the wars of the Lord (14). This was probably a poetical book glorifying the acts of God in protecting His people in the wilderness and in bringing them safely toward Canaan. Nothing is known about it apart from the allusion here. Perhaps it was written by Moses himself.

Verses 16-18 tell in rather condensed form of an incident which evidently made quite an impression upon the people. It would seem that, as the long trek was approaching its end, a region was entered where water flowed only a short distance below the surface. Here the Lord told Moses to gather the people together in order that He might give them water (16). Under Moses' direction the leaders of the tribes proceeded to dig into the dry earth with their staves and soon the water