

**FIRST READING: Numbers 21: 4-9** (*Common English Bible*)

<sup>4</sup> They marched from Mount Hor on the Reed Sea road around the land of Edom. The people became impatient on the road. <sup>5</sup> The people spoke against God and Moses: "Why did you bring us up from Egypt to kill us in the desert, where there is no food or water. And we detest this miserable bread!" <sup>6</sup> So the LORD sent poisonous snakes among the people and they bit the people. Many of the Israelites died.

<sup>7</sup> The people went to Moses and said, "We've sinned, for we spoke against the LORD and you. Pray to the LORD so that he will send the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous snake and place it on a pole. Whoever is bitten can look at it and live." <sup>9</sup> Moses made a bronze snake and placed it on a pole. If a snake bit someone, that person could look at the bronze snake and live.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**SECOND READING: Ephesians 2: 1-10** (*Common English Bible*)

At one time you were like a dead person because of the things you did wrong and your offenses against God. <sup>2</sup> You used to live like people of this world. You followed the rule of a destructive spiritual power. This is the spirit of disobedience to God's will that is now at work in persons whose lives are characterized by disobedience. <sup>3</sup> At one time you were like those persons. All of you used to do whatever felt good and whatever you thought you wanted so that you were children headed for punishment just like everyone else.

<sup>4-5</sup> However, God is rich in mercy. He brought us to life with Christ while we were dead as a result of those things that we did wrong. He did this because of the great love that he has for us. You are saved by God's grace! <sup>6</sup> And God raised us up and seated us in the heavens with Christ Jesus. <sup>7</sup> God did this to show future generations the greatness of his grace by the goodness that God has shown us in Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup> You are saved by God's grace because of your faith. This salvation is God's gift. It's not something you possessed. <sup>9</sup> It's not something you did that you can be proud of. <sup>10</sup> Instead, we are God's accomplishment, created in Christ Jesus to do good things. God planned for these good things to be the way that we live our lives.

**GOSPEL: John 3:14–21** (NRSV)

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

<sup>16</sup>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.

<sup>17</sup>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. <sup>18</sup>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. <sup>19</sup>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. <sup>20</sup>For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. <sup>21</sup>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."