

# “Training Exercises”

## Numbers Chapter 21

From Chapter 14 to Chapter 20 the children of Israel were on the Wilderness Wandering. These seven chapters cover the 38 years of wandering.

From Numbers 20 to Deuteronomy 34 is only one year. Chapter 20 recorded Miriam’s death, Moses Mistake and Aaron’s death.

Moses was 120 years old.

### Num 21:1 1) Victory in Devotion vs 1-3

When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negev, heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim, then he fought against Israel and took some of them captive.

Num 21:2 So Israel made a vow to the LORD and said, "If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities."

Num 21:3 The LORD heard the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites; then they utterly destroyed them and their cities. Thus the name of the place was called Hormah.

- A southern Canaanite king heard that Israel would be coming. Arad was the southern area of Canaan. This king went out and fought with Israel and captured some of them.
- 38 years earlier, this is what the spies feared. This time Israel is schooled by the wilderness to put their trust in the Lord.
- Israel vows to the Lord if He gives them victory over the Canaanites that they would destroy their cities.
- **Genesis 15:16** "Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." Back in Genesis God already knew the Canaanites and their iniquity. But it was not full to the extent that judgment was justified. God waited 400 years to bring Israel back to bring judgment to the wicked people of the land.
- God heard their vow and honored it and Israel destroyed the cities. The place was called "Hormah" or "Devotion"
  - As a coincidence (??) in numbers 14 when the sons of Israel tried to go into Canaan after God told them to wander for 38 year they were met with a defeat The place they were defeated was "Hormah". God doesn't forget the lessons we are to learn. Here Israel was brought right back to the same place they failed last time and this time they found victory in trusting and being devoted to the Lord.

### Num 21:4 2) Healing by a Cursed Thing vs 4-9

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.

- Remember in the last chapter Israel’s brother would not let Israel pass through their land to Canaan and that they had to go around Edom.
- After 38 years of wandering, then this, a long way around the mountain to get to Canaan. The people became impatient.
- Sometimes keeping your word or your integrity forces us to go the long way around. If we are not careful it can cause us to grumble or worse to fault God.
- **Matthew 5:14-17 + 41** "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. **Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.... Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two."**

Num 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."

- This sounds just like their fathers who died in the wilderness because of their disbelief.
- But actually it is worse. Their fathers grumbled against Moses (**Exodus 15:24, 16:2, 17:3; Numbers**

12:1, 14:2, 16:3, 16:41 and 20:2) Now Moses and God both know they were really grumbling against God. But in this instance this next generation specifically spoke against God.

- They lied. There was bread (Manna). There was water (from the rock) The issue is that they loathe it.

Num 21:6 The LORD sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.

- Fiery serpents give most the picture of snakes that have some supernatural flame upon them. What is more probably the case is that these were either poisonous snakes that were red in color or that the poisons from the snake bites created an deadly burning sensation in its victim.

Num 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.

Num 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."

Num 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.

- While this generation may seem to be more sinful in directly grumbling against God, it also seems that they are more quick in repentance than their fathers.
  - "We Have Sinned" was an acknowledgement of their responsibility before the Lord God for their actions.
- As Moses intercedes for Israel, God instructs Moses to make a fiery (bronze) serpent and set it on a pole. By this those who were bitten will find their healing/deliverance.
- It may seem an odd method of deliverance. But God doesn't waste any opportunity to point to the work of His Son Jesus on Calvary.
- John 3:14-17 "*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.*"
- How are the stories of Moses and the Bronze Serpent and Jesus on the Cross similar?

<u>MOSES</u>	<u>JESUS</u>
Israel Bitten by Sin	The world Bitten by Sin
God designed the plan of deliverance	God gave His only Son
Serpent (Evil) on the pole	Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree
Hung on a Pole	Hung on a Cross
Bronze (judgment)	Bore our judgment / penalty
Lifted Up	Lifted Up
To be looked upon for deliverance	To be looked upon for salvation
- Isaiah 45:22 (NKJV) "*Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.*"
  - The contrast is obvious that when Israel complained they were looking unto themselves. Their salvation is found not in looking to themselves but looking unto the Lord.
- Wasn't Israel forbidden to make idols?
  - YES in Exodus 20:4. But in reality this was not an idol to bow down to it was an symbol for this one time use to refocus the people.
  - In 2 Kings 18:4 King Hezekiah dealt with this same item that was being misused. "*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.*"

Num 21:10 **3) Moving from Provision to Provision** vs 10-20

Now the sons of Israel moved out and camped in Oboth.

- Israel is still outside Canaan in the wilderness. There are still lessons the Lord needs Israel to grasp before entering the land.
- Here they come to Oboth. Oboth = Hebrew "*waterskins*"

- Num 21:11 They journeyed from Oboth and camped at Iye-abarim, in the wilderness which is opposite Moab, to the east.
- They moved from Oboth to Iye-abarim. Iye-abrim = Hebrew "destroyed bank of a stream"
- Num 21:12 From there they set out and camped in Wadi Zered.
- Wadi Zered = Hebrew wadi = "stream bed" zered = "willow brook"
- Num 21:13 From there they journeyed and camped on the other side of the Arnon, which is in the wilderness that comes out of the border of the Amorites, for the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.
- Arnon = Hebrew "rushing stream"
- Num 21:14 Therefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the LORD, "Waheb in Suphah, And the wadis of the Arnon,
- Num 21:15 And the slope of the wadis That extends to the site of Ar, And leans to the border of Moab."
- "The Book of Wars of the Lord" is a book that has not survived history. Just because this book is mentioned in the Bible does not mean that it is part of scripture that is missing. It is just simply quoted. Much like Satan is mentioned in the Bible but his mention does not make him good and holy.
  - "Waheb in Suphah" has no known meaning. The King James editors did translate it to say "What He did in the Red Sea" but that is not verifiable.
    - In this "Book of Wars of the Lord" it is interesting that what is quoted may equate the battles at the Red Sea with Canaanite battles in the wadis of Arnon. The Lord God is ALL knowing and is very much a part of world affairs. Secular and Religious.
  - Interesting, the passage is still referring to water
    - "Wadis (stream bed) of Arnon"
    - "Wadis that extend to Ar" Ar means city
- Num 21:16 From there *they continued* to Beer, that is the well where the LORD said to Moses, "Assemble the people, that I may give them water."
- Beer = Hebrew "a well" or "a fountain"
  - Somewhere in their wanderings the Lord provided water for Israel. This doesn't seem to be a rock striking experience but some place where a well is dug by the people. (see verse 18)
  - The Lord is trying to teach the sons of Israel something by the path which they have taken. The Lord has taken them
    - to Waterskins,
    - to the bank of a stream,
    - to a stream bed,
    - to a willow brook,
    - to a rushing stream,
    - to the stream bed of a rushing stream,
    - to stream beds that extend all the way to the city.
    - And finally to the well
  - Back in verse 5 the sons of Israel complained that there was no water.
- Num 21:17 Then Israel sang this song: "Spring up, O well! Sing to it!
- Num 21:18 "The well, which the leaders sank, Which the nobles of the people dug, With the scepter *and with their staffs.*"
- This new generation knew how to repent. The Lord's lesson was learned. Instead of complaining they learned to trust the Lord and sing.
- And from the wilderness *they continued* to Mattanah,
- Num 21:19 and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth,
- Num 21:20 and from Bamoth to the valley that is in the land of Moab, at the top of Pisgah which overlooks the wasteland.
- Israel journeyed more until they reached the top of the mount Pisgah.
  - Pisgah was the just outside the Promised Land. From the top you can look into the land and see what God had promised.

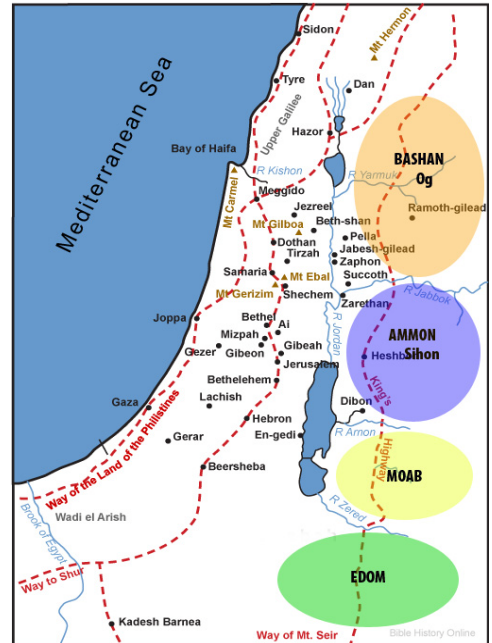
- It was here that in Deuteronomy 34 Moses was allowed to see the Promised Land but not enter. It was also this mount upon which Moses died.
- "wasteland" is the Hebrew word "Jeshimon" more likely a name of a place rather than a type of place.

Num 21:21 **4) Battle Training with Sihon and Og** vs 21-35

Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon, king of the Amorites, saying,

Num 21:22 "Let me pass through your land. We will not turn off into field or vineyard; we will not drink water from wells. We will go by the king's highway until we have passed through your border."

- Sihon, the King of the Amorites were one of the greater Canaanite kings on the east side of the Jordan.
- Israel is moving northward and are about to enter the Promised Land. Again we see a common principal that as God's people are about to realize the blessing of God there will be obstacles and battles we must face.
- Israel's posture is not to engage in battle with Sihon but to pass through. The message sent to King Sihon was not one of aggression. It is the same message that was sent to Edom who refused.
- The Kings Highway was a trade route used to pass through the land. It was the custom of respect to acknowledge the king in that area that what your intentions were in their territory.
  - This statement provides us with a beautiful picture of the believer's journey in this world. We are just passing through. We will stay on OUR King's Highway and not turn to the left or the right.



Num 21:23 But Sihon would not permit Israel to pass through his border. So Sihon gathered all his people and went out against Israel in the wilderness, and came to Jahaz and fought against Israel.

- Sihon, like Edom refuses Israel passage but unlike Edom, actually comes out to conquer Israel.
- The Amorites are not the brother of Israel. So Israel fights back. With Edom Moses said to go around Edom and not to battle them or think ill of them.
  - Deuteronomy 23:7 "You shall not detest an Edomite, for **he is your brother**;
- But for the Amorite it is a different story.

Num 21:24 Then Israel struck him with the edge of the sword, and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the sons of Ammon; for the border of the sons of Ammon was Jazer.

Num 21:25 Israel took all these cities and Israel lived in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all her villages.

Num 21:26 For Heshbon was the city of Sihon, king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken all his land out of his hand, as far as the Arnon.

- Israel whoops Sihon and the Amorites in this area. - completely

- So the Israelites sing a song. It is an old song. An old Amorite song but they just re-wrote the last line.
- Num 21:27 Therefore those who use proverbs say, "Come to Heshbon! Let it be built! So let the city of Sihon be established.
- Num 21:28 "For a fire went forth from Heshbon, A flame from the town of Sihon; It devoured Ar of Moab, The dominant heights of the Arnon.
- Num 21:29 "Woe to you, O Moab! You are ruined, O people of Chemosh! He has given his sons as fugitives, And his daughters into captivity, To an Amorite king, Sihon.
- This was the song the Amorites would sing. But the ending wasn't very good so Israel finished it for them.
- Num 21:30 "But we have cast them down, Heshbon is ruined as far as Dibon, Then we have laid waste even to Nophah, Which *reaches* to Medeba."
- So the song basically goes "The Amorites seriously whooped the Moabites. But we seriously whooped the Amorites!"
- Num 21:31 Thus Israel lived in the land of the Amorites.
- Num 21:32 Moses sent to spy out Jazer, and they captured its villages and dispossessed the Amorites who *were* there.
- Num 21:33 Then they turned and went up by the way of Bashan, and Og the king of Bashan went out with all his people, for battle at Edrei.
- Num 21:34 But the LORD said to Moses, "Do not fear him, for I have given him into your hand, and all his people and his land; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon, king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon."
- Num 21:35 So they killed him and his sons and all his people, until there was no remnant left him; and they possessed his land.
- Og was considered another king of the Amorites but over a territory of Bashan. Og was the last of the giants. Jewish folklore says that he had clung onto Noah's ark and was over 3000 years old.
    - Deuteronomy 3:11 "*For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead [was] a bedstead of iron; [is] it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits [was] the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man.*"
    - 9 x 4 Cubits - 13 ½ x 6 was his bedstead
  - This time there was no message of respect sent to Og. Og, went out against Israel.
  - The Lord told Israel "Remember your training. Don't fear. I am fighting for you. Go get him"
  - Israel has no problem defeating Og, his people. It says "until there was no remnant left."
  - Again, Israel is learning the victory the Lord leads us in.

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