INTRODUCTION:

In the Hebrew Bible, Numbers is entitled “In the Wilderness.” It is the Book of Wanderings. The lesson is clear, it may be necessary to pass through wilderness experiences, however, you do not have to live there. For Israel, an eleven day journey became a forty year agony.

Numbers takes its name from the two numberings of the Israelites - the generation of Exodus (taken at Mount Sinai in preparation for the wilderness) and the generation that grew up in the wilderness and conquered Canaan (taken near the Jordan, almost 40 years later in preparation for entering the Promise Land). The name ‘numbers” comes from the Greek translation of the Old Testament and refers specifically to the census figures given in two census reports (Num. 1-21 wilderness years) and (Num. 26-36 before entering Canaan). The content of the Book of Numbers moves back and forth between lists of laws and narratives and begins in the same manner as Leviticus, with more Divine instructions from Mount Sinai, and still dressing priestly matters. It should be studied with Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy.

After Mount Sinai (receiving specific instructions), a census was taken and the second Passover was celebrated (first in Egypt, when they had to eat the lamb in their homes and the death angel passed over) marking one year of freedom from slavery. Preparation was the main key now, for Israel needed organization in order to reach that land flowing with milk and honey.

In the 10th Chapter of Numbers, Moses was told how to summon the people, go to war, in times of gladness, annual festivals, and at the beginning of each month blow the trumpet with a certain blast. Each blast had a different meaning in summoning and breaking camp. Only the priests were permitted to blow the trumpet. This is where God would be reminded of His Covenant with them. This was also a permanent instruction to be followed from generation to generation. God showed up for Moses in the burning bush. He showed up at the Red Sea, and He’s showing up in the Wilderness for the Israelites. They moved with the cloud of the Lord by day and a pillar of fire by night.

SYNOPSIS:

11:1-6 After the three-day journey in the wilderness on their way to Canaan, the Israelites grew tired and the vast desolate desert before them must have frightened them. They grumbled, murmured, and complained about their hardships and the Lord heard them.

NOTE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complaint</th>
<th>Sin</th>
<th>Result</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About their misfortunes.</td>
<td>Complained about their problems</td>
<td>Thousands of people were destroyed</td>
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This made the Lord very angry. (After all God had just delivered them from the bondage of slavery in Egypt and was living among them and bringing them into the Promised-Land). Shouldn't they have been filled with hope and gratitude?

God’s reaction to their complaints was swift. He sent fire to burn among them. The angry fire from the Lord consumed some people in the outskirts of the camp. When the people understood the power of the fire, they panicked and cried out to Moses. Moses immediately prayed to God and God heard Moses' prayer and responded by quenching the fire.

**POINT:**

Every time you turn around, Moses is having to pray to God not to give the Israelites what they deserved, but to give them what they don’t deserve. Moses served as intercessor for the Israelites in the text, but Jesus Christ serves as our intercessor today! Moses was temporary intercessor, while Jesus is eternal intercessor between God and man!

They memorialized the place where God punished them for their complaints by naming it Taberah, which means burning.

The gift of manna, their food, (their daily bread) would rain down from God every morning. The manna looked like coriander seed but was white. The people would gather it from the ground in the morning and they would grind it and cook it. The prepared manna tasted like bread made with olive oil. Nevertheless, the people grew tired of eating manna.*

**NOTE:**

It is interesting to note that the first complaints about the manna began with the mixed multitude, that is, the Egyptians who traveled with them. This mixed multitude experienced intense cravings for meat. Soon the children of Israel followed their lead and began to crave meat. The children of Israel complained to God that they wanted meat. They actually said, that in Egypt they had fish and meat and cucumbers and melons and leeks and garlic. They complained in a manner that indicated they lived in luxury in Egypt instead of as what they actually were—slaves, being brutally whipped. Had they so quickly forgotten all that God had done for them? Like Freedom? God didn’t just move them from Egypt, from oppression, but God moved them to a place of responsibility, from servitude to service.

**POINT:**

Proof of the prosperity of a country was building monumental buildings like pyramids and tombs. The Egyptians were proud of their ability to organize work. The Israelites had known the city of Ramses, for it was one of the store cities they had built while being slaves.

**NOTE:**

*The Word of God is our gift from God. Like the manna, we must receive it by gathering it, grinding it and cooking it. We gather it by reading it, we grind it by thinking about it, and we cook it by making it part of ourselves. Although God’s Word is a gift, we must accept it, ponder it, and unlike the children of Israel, we must be on guard not to be tempted by the things of the world and grow tired of it.

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Be careful who you mix with, because when encountering with unsatisfied people, that same grumbling complaining spirit will rub off on you as it did Moses and will cause displeasure to the Lord. People gravitate to the thing they’re not suppose to have, not suppose to do, not suppose to include on their plate, not suppose to inquire about; instead they’re looking at the other small part they don’t have, don’t need, that won’t fit, or God didn’t say to have. “Do not complain, brethren, against one another, that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door” (James 5:9, NASB). Gratefulness is an attitude of thanks from the heart.

11:7-9 The manna was as coriander seed, and the color of bdellium. **Manna** means “whatness”, or “what is it.” It was like bread made with honey. And it appears, the manna did not have much color, or much flavor except the taste of fresh oil. The people gathered it from the ground and was pounded into flour, boiled and baked into cakes. When the dew fell, the manna fell.

11:10-15 Moses, heard the people from every family crying from their own tent and Moses was troubled. These cries of complaint angered God as well as Moses. Moses spoke to God in what must have been exhausted frustration. Moses asked God, “Why have you placed this burden on me? What have I done to displease you, did I give birth to all of these people? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries a baby, to the Promised Land? Where can I get meat for these people? This burden you have placed on me is too heavy for me! If this is how you are going to treat me, put me to death right now! If you favor me at all, please put me to death and do not allow me to see my own wretchedness (miserableness, unclean)!"

POINT:

Moses is upset, asking the Lord, “what is he to do? I can’t handle this! Just kill me NOW! If I have found favour in Your sight...? When we complain, it may not be the problem but only a symptom of a problem.

11:16-25 Complaining didn’t sit well with God, Moses interceded for the people by going to God, and God dealt with the people by sending a burning fire, and consumed some of them in the outskirts of the camp. He could have consumed all, but he didn’t. Since Moses had interceded, God now puts a new instruction in place, seventy men of the elders of Israel (leaders) that are true to stand with Moses, will have Moses’ Spirit (God’s Spirit, The Holy Spirit), to help bear the burden of the people, for he was not to bear it alone. What an awesome God! And He still sends provisions, meat (quail). However, He wasn’t through with His people yet! God lets Moses know to gather the seventy men of the elders of Israel and bring them into the tabernacle of the congregation that they may stand with him. God will come down and talk with him. They had to sanctify themselves before the Lord and eat the flesh they had cried for in the ears of the Lord. They cried, “Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt.” Yes, God was sending the meat, but it became a very great “Plaque”. It would be so bad that they would vomit it through their noses not just for one, or two, or five, or ten, or even twenty. But it would be for one whole month. Moses had addressed God’s power of keeping His promise to supply the food for the people. The Plaque was sent because the people despised the Lord when they said, “Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt.” Moses even complained about having enough food to feed everyone, until God answered Moses, “Has God’s arm been shortened? You will now see whether or not what I say will come true.” Moses entrusted himself to God, knowing that everything that happens is totally up to God. Moses did as the Lord commanded. The seventy men and elders were set around the tabernacle, and the Lord came down
in a cloud, speaking to Moses, and the Spirit that was upon Moses was given to the seventy elders, and they began to prophesy, and did not cease

11:26-35 Two of the seventy—Elidad and Medad—begin to receive the Spirit resting upon them, and they prophesied in the camp. Moses was told of this and Joshua wanted them to stop prophesying. And Moses asked Joshua if he was jealous, for Moses wished that all the Lord’s people would be prophets; that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them all. Moses returned to the camp with the elders. The Lord sent a wind that brought quail from the sea. Quail began to fall all over the camp and the people caught and killed quail all day and through the night, and all the next day. And as they began to eat the meat, the anger of the Lord rose against the people and He killed large numbers of them with a plague. The name of the place was called Kibroth-hattaavah because there they buried the people that lusted; meaning graves of greediness. And the people journeyed from Kibroth-hattaavah to Hazeroth, where they stayed awhile.

SUMMARY:
The wilderness is that place where you aren't where you were, nor are you where you’re going to stay. We sort of lose our identity out there in the wilderness. We forget who we are and whose bringing us out. The Israelites were no longer slaves in Egypt nor were they yet residents of the Promised Land. They're somewhere in between. Yet even in the wilderness God is responsive to the needs of these complaining people. God provides what they cannot.

Deliverance comes, but not in being removed from the wilderness. There is a gift of food where the resources are only temporary and momentary. There is a gift of water where only rocks abound. There is a gift of healing if needed. Death is transformed into life from within a death-filled surrounding of conditions. A sanctuary is provided, in the wilderness by God.

Moses was displeased (the people complained); he was distressed (the people harassed him), and he was defiant (anger made him disobedient). If all these negative feelings are not the root of the problem, what was? Well, Moses expected the people to be grateful because of what God had done for them; and doubting your ability to lead keeps lurking in those low moments that brings up your wretchedness. We let ourselves be distracted by the disappointments and deprivations that God allows for our spiritual good.

However, in his despair he took his complaint to God. You can ask God questions, but be careful when you complain. It's easy to say God did not bring this upon Moses - a carnal and ungrateful people did! Yet, though God did not directly afflict Moses with this, He ultimately allowed it. If we’re burdened, we must share it, first of all with God. He can’t handle it until you’ve given it to Him. We can leave our Egypt, our places of oppression, and we can move toward our Promised Land, that place of healing and wholeness, if we don’t complain, don’t have the negative spirit, and don’t allow the issues to cling to you. Elijah was one to allow the issue to cling to him, who also wanted to die after demonstrating a great feat for God. Trust and believe that you have a Covenant keeping God working on your behalf. The reason God allows any affliction in our lives is to compel us to trust Him in all things. Maturity comes in the mist of trials. So whenever we are tempted to grumble, let’s remember, “When the people complained, it displeased the Lord” 11:1.

Every time you want to grumble,
Think of others who have less;
Ask the Lord to keep you humble,
Grateful for each happiness. —Marye

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Numbers 12, Moses’ sister and brother (Miriam and Aaron) began to speak against Moses, their brother. Speaking against Moses because he had married an Ethiopian woman and saying, “Has the Lord spoken only by Moses? has He not spoken also by us?” And God heard them. The bible says, “Then the anger of the Lord grew hot against them, and He departed.” (TLB) God calls all three of them to the Tabernacle, striking Miriam with leprosy, Aaron cries out for forgiveness to Moses (acknowledging Moses’ superior position) saying, “we have done foolishly”, and Moses intercedes for them to God to heal Miriam. God considered this a serious sin and compared this to a father spitting in her face, which was the ultimate insult. Miriam had attempted to embarrass Moses publicly; in turn God embarrassed her publicly with leprosy for seven days and putting her outside the camp. Once again God was lenient, it could have been more.

Numbers 13, Moses sent twelve spies to search the land of Canaan, “The Promised Land!” to see what the land was like, what the people were like, whether they were strong or weak, whether there be few or many, whether the land was good or bad, what the cities were like, if the dwelt in tents (villages) or in strongholds (fortified), whether the land is fat (rich) or lean (poor), whether there is wood (trees) or not and lastly bring back a sample of the crops. After spying out the land for forty days, they came back with one cluster of grapes which took two men to carry on a pole, pomegranates, and figs. The report was that, the land did flow with milk and honey, exactly what God had promised! However, hear comes the “But”, the people living there is strong and powerful, the cities are fortified and very large, what’s more Anakim giants live there. At this time Caleb, one of the spies reassured the people that they were well able to possess the land. But the other spies told the people, we are not able, for they are stronger, and we felt like grasshoppers in their sight. Faith and trust went out the window as they spoke. And the words they spoke did not have God in it anywhere. It was all about what they could not do, and doubt, disbelief, and rebellion wreaked among the people at the Promised door and caused them to have what they spoke as did before.
**SYNOPSIS:**

14:1-4 The Israelite people began to grumble out loud. They cried and complained at the spies report.

They moaned at Moses and Aaron asking them, “Why did you take us out of Egypt? Why couldn't we just die in the desert? You have brought us out of Egypt to go and fight a people stronger than we are. Why did GOD bring us to this land to die by the sword? Our wives and our children will be taken as the plunder of war. We would be better off back in Egypt.”

Then they said amongst themselves, 'We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.' (From Nehemiah 9:17, it appears that they actually did choose a leader).

**POINT:**

The Israelites are at the door of opportunity but won’t go through! The spies have seen the land but won’t possess it! Bottom line, they did not trust God, they trusted in self.

One key portion of this generation’s judgment came from their own lips. They fretted over the fact that their wives and children would fall prey to their enemies and God had brought them to the edge of Canaan only to let them die. They accepted the ten spies’ negative opinion as truth.

14:5-9 Hearing the bitter ingratitude towards God, Moses and Aaron fell face down in front of the Israelite assembly. Joshua and Caleb were so upset with the complaints of the Israelites that they tore their clothes.

Caleb and Joshua spoke to the people with faith in God and said, “The land we explored is good land, flowing with milk and honey. If God is pleased with us He will lead us and give us that land. Do not rebel against the Lord. Do not be afraid of the inhabitants of the Promised Land because the Lord, God has promised we will swallow them up in war. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them.”

**NOTE:**

Moses and Aaron falling face down to the ground was not to make intercession for them this time, but mostly for the severity of the sin, and what they knew would follow. The tearing of the clothes was meant to serve as a symbol to the people of the extremity of the situation, hoping to turn the people around.

14:10-12 But the Israelite community did not believe Joshua and Caleb. Their fear and unbelief caused them to discuss stoning Joshua and Caleb. Then the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle in front of

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all of the Israelites. The Lord said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? Why won't they believe in me? I have shown them so many miraculous signs and still they don't believe. I will strike all the Israelites down with a plague and they will all die. I will disinherit and destroy them all. But Moses, I will make you a great nation, greater and stronger than they could ever be."

NOTE:

Only two men spoke up against a crowd of unbelievers! Only two men heard what God had said and believed! Rejecting the men or women of God is the same as rejecting God! Being tested in a battle, should always call for God's direction!

SUMMARY:

How quickly the people of Israel had forgotten God’s hand of mercy time and time again. How quickly they had forgotten crying out to God to come and rescue them from the Egyptian bondage. Although the wilderness lack many things, it was never without the Lord’s presence.

In an effort to escape personal responsibility, they hid behind their families, using them as an excuse for their own unbelief. And the ultimate in their sin and rebellion was to want another leader from the one God had chosen. Unbelief was at the base of Israel’s fear of entering the land God had promised. Not only would Israel not go into the Promised Land, but they would murder anyone who dared to go in. A similar situation is seen in John 11:47-53; 12:10-11.

There were two positive reactions following Israel’s revolt: Moses and Aaron humbled themselves before the Lord, and Joshua and Caleb gave earnest advice to the people about the Lord’s plan of provision and protection to hopefully turn them around.

Instead of trusting God to deliver them, they turned on Joshua and Caleb. Stoning was the customary punishment for some crimes under the Levitical Law (Lev.24:16) and was also practiced in Egypt (Ex. 8:26). Like a bolt of lightning visible to all, God’s glory appeared in the tabernacle to confront their unbelief. A time will come not unlike this scene, when God’s glory will fill the holy New Jerusalem, but the unbelievers will have no inheritance there (Rev.21:1-11). Do not allow your dissatisfaction in your circumstances limit your focus of trust in God. It will always lead to rebellion towards God, the only one to deliver you out of obviously impossible circumstances.

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INTRODUCTION:

At the end of Numbers Chapter 14, God condemns the Israelites to wander in the wilderness for forty years. Not anyone that was twenty and older entered the Promised Land. God says, “they will pay for their faithlessness, until every last one lies dead in the desert.” Since the spies were in the land for forty days, they must wander in the wilderness for forty years, a year for each day. Then the ten spies who had incited the people to rebel against the Lord were struck dead before the Lord. Caleb, Joshua, and those below the age of twenty were the only ones to go into the Promised Land.

When the Israelites realized the severity of this they said, “we have sinned” and tried to enter the Promised Land on their own, while Moses is telling them “it’s too late, and the Lord will not to be with you.” God didn’t confuse their admission of guilt with true repentance, because He knew their hearts. They were attacked by the Amalekites and the Canaanites and chased them as far as Hormah.

Rebellion and complaints are still going on in the camp against Moses and Aaron. And God is still punishing, instructing about His ordinances and rituals.

POINT:

God honored the faith of Caleb, because he had another spirit and followed Him fully. God with them, they could not be defeated. Without God, they were already defeated.

SYNOPSIS:

20:1-6 The Bible skips to the first month of the 40th year after they had come out of Egypt; from the time of the spies until the occurrences of this chapter was 38 years, of which nothing is recorded. This tells us that unbelief is a cause of delay.

Moses told of the death of his sister Miriam but did not say when during the 38 years that Miriam died, so we don’t know how old she was when she died. We do know that sometime during the 38 year period in the desert Miriam died in Kadesh and was buried in Kadesh.

This is a new generation and we find them thirsty and unable to find water. The children were crying because they were thirsty. The animals were tired and desperately needed water. They were frightened that they might quickly die in the desert with no water.

So the Israelites gathered together against Moses and Aaron. Interestingly, 38 years later they are still moaning and complaining and saying the same kinds of things to Moses, ‘Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die of thirst in the desert? If only we had died when our brothers died, we would have been better off. Why did you bring us to this horrible place where there is no water to drink. Surely you brought us here to kill us.’

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Imagine how many times Moses heard these words and he must have been exhausted. Nevertheless, Moses and Aaron left the assembly and went to the door of the tabernacle and fell on their faces before God. The glory of the Lord appeared to them.

**NOTE:**

*When we are outside the will of God, it will be many days, weeks, months, or even years of our lives wasted. The Lord had led them here because He loved them and desired to reveal to them His inexhaustible resources, that is, if they would only believe. It is the same with us, ‘Believe: Everything is A Test!’ How will we respond?*

God instructed Moses to gather the Israelite congregation together and right before their eyes Moses was to take the rod and gather the people and speak to the rock and it would yield water for the entire congregation and their animals.

Moses took the rod, Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation before the rock, and Moses said to the Israelite people, "You rebels have sinned by complaining that the Lord would not provide for you. Hasn't God provided for all of your needs so far? Hasn't the Lord been faithful to us? Hasn't the Lord performed many miracles right before your eyes and yet you had no faith that the Lord would provide water for you to drink; so you complained and moaned. Must we bring you water out of this rock. Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his rod and water abundantly gushed out of the rock. The entire Israelite community had plenty of water to drink."

God had instructed Moses to speak to the rock*, but Moses hit the rock. Moses disobeyed God’s instructions. God spoke to Moses and said, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow My name before the eyes of the children of Israel, you will not bring this people into the Promised Land, which I have given them."

This place was called the waters of Meribah. Meribah means quarreling.

**NOTE:**

*The rock represents Jesus Christ, who only needed to be struck once for our sins once and for ALL time. And Moses broke the resemblance or parallel by striking the rock twice.*

**POINT:**

*The Character of Moses’ Sin.*

1. Anger. "Hear now, ye rebels..." v10
2. Unbelief. "Because ye believed me not..." v12
3. Pride. "Must we fetch..." v10 Perhaps Moses thought if they saw him as the supplier they would quit complaining.

God presents three indictments of Moses and Aaron.

1. Moses did not do what God told him to do. And anytime we disobey the Lord we imply that our way is better. We make it seem that God’s way is inferior to us. We make it appear that God is incompetent and needs our correction. That’s not just true with Moses; it’s true in our lives too. Disobedience is an act of arrogant defiance.

2. He did not honor God as holy. Moses said to the people, “Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?” Did you get that? It wasn’t, “Must GOD bring water from the rock again, it was, must WE bring water from the rock. Not only did Moses disobey God, He took

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20:21-29 And Edom refused to allow Israel to pass through his country, so Israel had to turn away from him and go in another direction; from that country and go another way. All the Israelites went from Kadesh and arrived at Mt. Hor (near the border of Edom) where the Lord began to speak to Moses and Aaron saying that it was time for Aaron to die; he would not enter into the land the Lord had given the children of Israel because Aaron the priest and Moses the lawgiver rebelled against the Word of the Lord at the water of Meribah (when Moses was to speak to the rock instead of hitting the rock) (20:11). God tells Moses to take Aaron and his son Eleazar to Mt. Hor and there he began to strip Aaron of his priestly garments and put them upon his son Eleazar. This is where Aaron will die. We have read in Numbers 20:1 Miriam had died. And now the brother (Aaron) dies in the same chapter. Moses did as the Lord commanded. The three went up to Mt. Hor and Aaron’s priestly garments were removed and placed upon his son Eleazar in the sight of all of the congregation, and Aaron died there on top of the mountain. This now made Eleazar the “High Priest.” Then Moses and Eleazar came down the mountain. And the people seeing that Aaron was dead, for Eleazar was wearing the clothing of the “High Priest.” And all of Israel began to mourn Aaron’s death for 30 days.

SUMMARY:

God is faithful even when we are not. He blessed the end even though He did not approve of the means when Moses struck the rock. Moses’ error at Kadesh (the site of the first spy mission that ended in disaster) brought a failed and lost opportunity for Moses to enter the Promised Land at that time, but God did not forget His promise to Israel (with a New Generation). The promise was fulfilled! However, Moses only saw the Promised Land from a distance and even visited it fourteen centuries after his death (Mat.17:3); but would not see the promise fulfilled at that time.

Moses was a great man. Leaders pass away but the Lord’s work advances. Often our troubles result from our own disobedience or lack of faith. God is not the blame and God did not let Moses off lightly because of this great responsibility to His people. Disobeying God’s direct command and dishonoring Him in the presence of His people was not to be taken lightly. He calls us to be obedient. Any compromise with sin is an erosion of character.

Although Moses had committed a sin that cost him to suffer consequences in this life, he still avoided eternal consequences through his faithfulness to God (Hebrews 11:23-29). If you have sin stirring in your emotions, or if you have not yet become a child of God, will you not do so before it is too late? Great sins can be forgiven, and we can still enter heaven, if we repent.

APPLICATION:

When you don’t do what God say do or when you don’t ask God what to do and He tells you and you still don’t do what He said do, then you’re being God, you’ve taken the place of God. The thing God said in the 12th verse was: ‘you didn’t believe or trust me enough to sanctify, honor, hallow me in the eyes of, in the

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sight of the congregation. That’s very important to God. You can’t share His Glory. Glory only goes to Him. If it’s not in His Word, if it’s not in his Law, you’re fulfilling your own word, law, or rule, and God is not in it. “If God be for you, who can be against you!” (Rom.8:31)

Whatever God is doing in your life, remember, it is God working through you. And if it were not you, He would work through someone else. The lessons God teaches us are to impel, thrust, and compel us to the True Savior where there are no regrets.
21:1 And when king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies; then he fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners. ¹This chapter starts the third part of the Book of Numbers. The events in this part happened when the Israelites were preparing to enter the Promised Land. The king of Arad lived in the southern part of the country called Canaan. "Arad" was a town in the country called Canaan. The king heard that the Israelite were approaching in the manner of spies were travelling towards the village called Atharim. King Arad attacked them and took some of them away as his prisoners.

21:2 And Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. The Israelites pledged a vow; an oath to the Lord, that if He delivered king Arad and his people into their hand, they would utterly destroy; annihilate their cities. This will show that their towns and everything in their towns belong to God. ²They couldn’t even gain any money or possessions as a result of this battle. The Israelites had to defeat these nations before they could live in the Promised Land.

21:3 And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hormah. The Lord heard and answered the overwhelming voices of Israel. He helped them to defeat the Canaanites and they utterly destroyed; annihilated their cities. The Israelites then called that place “Hormah”, which meant “destruction.”

21:4 And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. Even after a victory with king Arad, discouragement can creep in. And since the king of Edom would not allow them to enter or pass through their country, the Israelites had a rough going as they traveled from Mt. Hor (near the border of Edom), by the Red Sea which is going around Edom. This reminds me of our roadways or highways when the traffic is horrendous and you are detoured another way that’s unfamiliar and trying to get to an appointment. When looking at the point that when we are detoured, it means to trust God, be anxious for nothing; God is fulfilling His attitude in us. However, that was something the Israelites had to learn, for it says “the soul of the people was much discouraged.”This meant they were in their feelings. They were by the Red Sea again and it seemed like they were going backwards.

21:5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. The people had got so angry that they began to speak against God and Moses. They blamed them for bringing them into the wilderness to die. We will always go back to what’s familiar in our lives (mentally or physically). We go back to things that made us comfortable and complacent (that was Egypt for them). What is it for you? But they have to remember that they prayed and asked for

¹ https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/numbers-21-36-lbw.htm
² https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/numbers-21-36-lbw.htm
http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html
God’s help. The people began to bring up not having bread or water, and their soul disliked the light bread they had (the manna from God). Do we grumble and complain when God is showing us something new; stretching us? And the supply of food, even clothing we do have, we get fed up with them? We have to be careful what we speak against, especially if it’s God!

21:6 And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Do you think they got the message then? They grumbled and complained at the wrong One! God was not standing for this. He sent fiery serpents (poisonous snakes) among the people of Israel, that bit them, causing death among many of them.

21:7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. They surely knew how to right the wrong by coming to Moses and repenting, saying that they had sinned by speaking against the Lord and against him. They needed Moses to pray to the Lord who had sent the fiery serpents upon them, and how they want Him to take them away. And Moses did pray for the people.

21:8 And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. The Lord heard the people’s repentance and Moses’ prayer. The Lord was specific in answering Moses’ prayer. He didn’t just take the snakes away, but He also required that the people also do something. Those that had been bitten were to look at the pole of the fiery serpent (a replica of a brass (bronze) snake on a pole). Then they would live.

21:9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived. Without questions, Moses did just as the Lord instructed him to do: make a serpent of brass and put it on a pole. The person who had been bitten by a serpent would live, just by looking upon the brass serpent on the pole. This was a simple test of faith. God did not remove the snakes; just as He does not remove all sin from the world. They just had to play their part: remember who God was. He provided a way to cure every person from the results of sin. Just as the Israelites were healed of the serpents by looking at the snake on the pole, all believers today can be saved from the sickness of sin by looking to Jesus’ death on the cross. It was not the snake that healed the people, but it’s their belief; their trust; their obedience in God that He could heal them. This belief was demonstrated by following God’s instructions.

SUMMARY:

This chapter begins with king Arad the Canaanite who heard that Israel was coming in the manner of spies or by the way of spies. He dwelt in the south, which caused him to fight against Israel, and take some of them prisoners. Israel pledged a vow; an oath to the Lord, that if He delivered king Arad and his people into their hand, they would utterly destroy and annihilate their cities. The Lord heard and answered the overwhelming voices of Israel. And Israel utterly destroyed them and their cities. They called that place “Hormah”, which meant “destruction.”(21:1-3).

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Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to the border of the land of Edom, and the soul of the people was very discouraged because of the way they had to go. The people had gotten so angry that they began to speak against God and Moses. They blamed them for bringing them into the wilderness to die; not having bread or water, and their soul disliked eating the light bread God supplied (the manna). The Lord answered their grumbling and complaining very quickly by sending fiery serpents (poisonous snakes) among them, biting them and causing death to many (21:4-6).

The people went to Moses and repented, saying that they had sinned by speaking against the Lord and against him. They needed Moses to pray to the Lord who had sent the fiery serpents upon them, to now take them away. And Moses did pray for the people. The Lord heard the people’s repentance and Moses’ prayer. God was specific in answering Moses’ prayer. He didn’t just take the snakes away, but He also required that the people also do something. They that had been bitten had to look at the pole of the fiery serpent (a replica of a brass (bronze) snake on the pole). Moses did just what the Lord had told him to do: make a serpent of brass and put it on a pole. The person who had been bitten by a serpent would live, just by looking upon the brass serpent on the pole. It is in their belief; their trust; their obedience in God that they would be healed. This belief was demonstrated by following God’s instructions (21:7-9).
25:1-3 While Israel was camped at Shittim (Acacia Grove), the men began to have sex with the Moabite women. It started when the women invited the men to their sex-and-religion worship. They ate together and then worshiped their gods. Israel ended up joining in the worship of the Baal of Peor. God was furious, his anger blazing out against Israel.

25:4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take up the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun,, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel. God said to Moses, “Take all the leaders of Israel and kill them by hanging, leaving them publicly exposed in order to turn God’s anger away from Israel.”

25:5 And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baalpeor. Moses issued orders to the judges of Israel: “Each of you must execute the men under your jurisdiction who joined in the worship of Baalpeor.”

25:6-9 Just then, while everyone was weeping in penitence at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, an Israelite man, flaunting his behavior in front of Moses and the whole assembly, paraded a Midianite woman into his family tent. Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw what he was doing, grabbed his spear, and followed them into the tent. With one thrust he drove the spear through the two of them, the man of Israel and the woman, right through their private parts. That stopped the plague from continuing among the People of Israel. But 24,000 had already died (MSG).

25:10 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,—God speaks clear instructions to Moses on the matter.

25:11 Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Phinehas was the son of Eleazar. Eleazar was the third son of Aaron the priest. This makes Phinehas the grandson of Aaron. God is giving a grand introduction to Phinehas’ lineage. Phinehas was the one who stopped God’s anger against His people (the People of Israel), because he was as zealous for God’s honor as He Himself is. Therefore, God didn’t kill all the People of Israel in His zeal.

25:12 Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace;—So Moses is to announce that God is making a Covenant of Peace with Phinehas.

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* 3 https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers+25&version=MSG
   http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html
25:13 And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel. Phinehas and his descendants are joined in a Covenant of Eternal Priesthood, because he was zealous for his God and made atonement for the People of Israel.

25:14-15 The name of the man of Israel who was killed with the Midianite woman was Zimri son of Salu, the head of the Simeonite family. And the name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi daughter of Zur, a tribal chief of a Midianite family.

25:16-18 God spoke to Moses: “From here on make the Midianites your enemies. Fight them tooth and nail. They turned out to be your enemies when they seduced you in the business of Peor and that woman Cozbi, daughter of a Midianite leader, the woman who was killed at the time of the plague in the matter of Peor”

**SUMMARY:**

It is clear from Phinehas’ story that some anger is proper and justified. Phinehas was angry because of his zeal for the Lord (25:10-11). If we are becoming more like God, we should be angered by sin. Phinehas’ act made atonement for the nation of Israel, and in effect, what he did averted God’s judgment. Because of this, his descendants became high priests (25:12-13)

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