



Sermon Discussion Questions
October 20, 2024
In the Wilderness

FROM REGRET TO REDEMPTION: LOOKING TO JESUS

Numbers 21:4-9

1. **Opening Discussion Questions:** (in a group setting you may not want to use all of these)
 - a. Have you ever expected a quick solution to a problem only to learn that instead, you were facing a long hard road? How did you feel? What did you do?
 - b. Have you ever made a hasty decision and then later regretted it? This is often experienced in our society as “buyer's remorse”. Can you share a time when you experience it? Did it change your shopping habits?
 - c. Our culture is one where instant gratification has come to be expected. Describe a time when you had to be patient.
2. **Sermon Outline/Key Points**
 - a. Introduction
 - i. My medical school story
 - ii. Struggling with Regret and God’s Plan.
 - b. Identify with the Congregation
 - i. Common Experiences of Frustration and Delays in Life.
 - ii. Israel’s Discouragement leads to Rebellion.
 - c. Review Passage
 - i. The Israelites’ Struggle (Numbers 21:4-9)
 1. Impatience and Complaint (verses 4-5).
 2. God’s Response: Fiery Serpents (verse 6).
 3. Repentance and God’s Remedy (verses 7-9)
 - ii. The Deeper Meaning of the Bronze Serpent
 1. Faith, Not Works.
 2. Jesus as the Fulfillment.
 - d. Application
 - i. Looking to Jesus for Salvation
 - ii. Responding to God’s Discipline
 - iii. Invitation to Trust in Jesus.
 - e. Conclusion
 - i. Power of Redemption and Faith in Christ

- ii. Personal Testimony of Rescue (redemption)
- f. Invitation
 - i. Invitation to Unbelievers
 - ii. Invitation to Believers.
- 3. Study/Discussion Points:**
 - a. *Sunday Afternoon*
 - i. As soon as possible after listening to the sermon set aside some time to ponder these questions prayerfully:
 - ii. What one thing most stood out to you in this sermon?
 - iii. What new truth did you learn or of what truth were you reminded?
 - iv. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?
 - v. What is one thing you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
 - vi. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?
 - b. *Monday:*
 - i. Read Numbers 21:1-9.
 - ii. The Israelites are nearing the end of their journey. See Numbers 33: 3-48 for a summary of their wandering in the wilderness. According to verse 38 how many years have gone by when we get to this week's focal passage?
 - iii. Focusing on Numbers 21:1-3, what did God do that showed the Israelites that He was still watching over them? How do you think the people probably felt following such an overwhelming military victory?
 - iv. When the Israelites finished mourning for Aaron (see 20:22-29) what route did they take and why?
 - 1. Look at a Bible Atlas to locate the Kingdom of Edom, which was located south of the Dead Sea and extended to the Gulf of Acaba, about 100 miles. How do you think they may have felt about the prospect of walking a couple of hundred miles to get around Edom following a great military victory?
 - 2. Why do we frequently become impatient or discouraged following a spiritual victory? What does it suggest about where we are placing our trust?
 - c. *Tuesday:*
 - i. Read Numbers 21:4-5.

- ii. What was the nature of their complaint? When had it been raised before (e.g., see Exodus 14:11, Numbers 11:1-3, 14:2-3, and 20:2-5)? What does this suggest about the “new generation” growing up during the 40 years in the wilderness?
- iii. Read Numbers 20:1-13. Why would the Israelite’s complaint about a lack of water have been particularly troubling to Moses? How do you think you would have reacted if you were in Moses’ position?
- iv. What does 1 Corinthians 10:9 tell us about how God viewed their complaining? When does genuine concern about a situation in which we find ourselves turn into a testing of God? What are some ways in which we test God in our present age?

d. Wednesday:

- i. Read Numbers 21:6-7.
- ii. How did God respond to the Israelite’s sin this time? In what ways does this punishment differ from previous times when they complained?
- iii. There has been much speculation about the nature of the “fiery serpents”, especially since there are several types of highly poisonous snakes in this area. What indication do we get in verse 7 that this was probably more than just random encounters with indigenous snakes? How does Jeremiah 8:13 show us that this would not be the only time God uses poisonous snakes to perform His justice?
- iv. What important step did the people take in verse 7 once they recognized their mistake? What does John tell us in 1 John 1:8-9 that we must do when we find ourselves in similar situations?
- v. What does it say about the character of Moses that he prayed for the people despite the events at Meribah? What lessons can we learn from his behavior and apply to our lives?

e. Thursday:

- i. Read Numbers 21:8-9.
- ii. In what important way did God not answer the request that the people had asked Moses to pray? In what manner was God’s answer far better than what the people thought God should do? If God had just removed the snakes what would have happened?
- iii. In John 3:14-15 while talking with Nicodemus Jesus provided a confirmation of the symbolism of what Moses was commanded to do. In what ways do you see Christ’s forgiveness symbolized?
 1. Although the bronze serpent looked like the real thing it was not poisonous. In what way is this a representation of Christ (Romans 8:3, 2 Corinthians 5:21, and 1 Peter 2:22-24)?

2. The bronze snake was not placed in the Tabernacle but was lifted up for all to see. How is this a representation of Christ (Colossians 2:14-15 and John 3:14-15)?
3. To be saved from the effects of the poison the individual bitten had to look at the bronze serpent. What is the parallel with the way a sinner must come to Christ to be saved (John 5:24, Acts 16:31, and Romans 10:9-10)?

f. **Friday:**

- i. Read the entire focal passage: Numbers 21:4-9.
- ii. What did a bitten person have to do to avoid dying? Remembering that there were probably over a million Israelites in the camp, that the hastily prepared snake that was lifted up on the pole could not have been too big, and that there were no PA systems or social media accounts, what can we conclude must have taken place? How would someone have known they needed to look (see Romans 10:14 for a hint)?
- iii. In what ways is our responsibility to take seriously the commands of passages like Romans 10:14-15 and Matthew 28:18-20 even more important than what Israelites must have done for those bitten?
- iv. Mankind has an uncanny ability to take the good God gives and turn it to evil. Read 2 Kings 18:4 to see the eventual fate of the bronze snake. Can you think of any ways in which people have done the same thing with respect to Christ's gift (i.e., worship an artifact)? How do you think this relates to the second Commandment (Exodus 20:4)?

g. **Saturday:**

- i. Read Numbers 21:4-9 and John 3:1-21, meditating on what the Holy Spirit puts on your heart regarding each passage – particularly any areas in which your Christian Walk needs to change.

4. Application:

- a. Christ was “lifted up” to pay the penalty for our sins. There are still over 3 billion people in the world who have never heard that fact and therefore cannot look to Him for salvation. Pray about what you can do – and then do whatever it is the Holy Spirit lays on your heart.
- b. Pray that God will give you at least one individual with whom you can share this Good News.

5. Prayer Points:

- a. Adoration – Psalms 8:1 and 29:1-2
- b. Confession – Proverbs 28:13 and 1 John 1:8-10
- c. Thanksgiving – Psalms 95:1-2 and 100:4-5
- d. Supplications –Matthew 21:22 and John 16:19