

Numbers 20:13-21: The Bronze Serpent & Conquests.

I. The Bronze Serpent.

i. (14-21) Edomites deny the Israelites passage.

At this stage of the Exodus, they had been in the wilderness for over 30 years; they are now approaching the Promised Land. So they requested their brother, a descendant of Ishmael, to allow them passage through their land, even promising to compensate any damage, in vain.

Deuteronomy 23:7 - “You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land.

Romans 12:18 - If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

ii. (22-29) Aaron’s Death.

Numbers 33:38 tells us Aaron died there in the fortieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, just a few weeks to enter the Promised Land.

Aaron is a significant character Aaron in the history of Israel, he was of much support to Moses and the first high priest of the nation.

iii. (21:1-3) Victory over the Canaanites.

It was at Hormah at the end of Numbers 14 that Israel was defeated in their ill-advised attempt to enter the Promised Land by force after rejecting it by faith. Now God has brought them back to the same place, and given them the victory. A real turning point for the nation!

iv. (21:4-9) Israel discouraged.

They were discouraged partly because the Edomites denied them passage, also because the final part of the journey was bloody, probably frustrated that they were so close, but not yet in. They were fed up of everything God was doing in blessing them towards the Promised Land.

Five major causes of discouragement; fear, exhaustion, loss, rejection and apparent stagnation.

Discouragement brings a feeling of hopelessness and worthlessness.

Discouragement is dissatisfaction with the past, distaste for the present, and distrust of the future. It is ingratitude for the blessings of yesterday, indifference to the opportunities of today, and insecurity regarding strength for tomorrow. It is unawareness of the presence of beauty, unconcern for the needs of our fellowman, and unbelief in the promises of old. It is impatience with time, immaturity of thought, and impoliteness to God. William Ward.

God commanded Moses to make a serpent (and Moses makes it out of bronze), to set it on pole, so that those who looked upon it could be saved - and they were.

John 3:13-17 - "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but[fn] have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Isaiah 45:22 - "Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.

Acts 4:12 - "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

"So, a bronze serpent does speak of evil; but evil having been judged - just as Jesus, who knew no sin, became sin for us on the cross, and our sin was judged in Jesus."

II. Conquests.

v. (21:10-31) Victory over the Amorites.

In response to a kind request, the Amorites attacked Israel and king Sihon led the battle. Then Israel defeated him with the edge of the sword, and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the people of Ammon; for the border of the people of Ammon was fortified.

vi. (21:33-35) The defeat of king Og and the land of Bashan.

This was another battle that Israel did not even start. Yet, Israel was more than up to the challenge, and sees God win a glorious victory, victory after victory.

Three major and strategic victories over the Cannanites, the Amorites and the Bashanites.

Psalm 98:1- Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.

Romans 8:37-39 - Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 John 5:4 - For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

**Hallelujah, Christ the Conqueror,
Every day we're one with Him,
Walking in Him constantly,
Living Christ our victory.**