

Numbers 21- Learning to Take The Land

By this time - roughly 38 years had gone by and the first generation had largely died off

- Aaron and Miriam died in the last chapter - new phase for Israel, preparing to take the land

Taking a new course in life is exciting...BUT there will be obstacles

We have to learn how to adjust to the new reality (*from being a wanderer to becoming a warrior*)

There Are OBSTACLES To Overcome

Num 21:1-35 ESV When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negeb, heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim, **he fought against Israel, and took some of them captive.** 2 And Israel vowed a vow to the LORD and said, "**If you will indeed give this people into my hand, then I will devote their cities to destruction.**" 3 And the **LORD heeded the voice of Israel** and gave over the Canaanites, and they devoted them and their cities to destruction. So the name of the place was called **Hormah**.

Hormah was a bad memory for Israel

- 38 years before - they **refused** to go into the promised land because of **giants**
- The LORD judged them and said they would spend **40 years in the wilderness**
- **They didn't want that** so they decided to march into the promised land **on their own strength**
- They were beaten down **all the way to Hormah (Num 14:45) = devoted to destruction**

OBSTACLE - Canaan fought against Israel, he took captives - what are you going to do? - Past failures do not have to dictate what you will do now

- 1) They **Chose NOT to run** - When the going gets tough the tough get going...stay in the game
- 2) They **Committed to do something** - VOWED to destroy the city with the LORD's help
- 3) They **Called on the LORD for help...sometimes we don't have victory because we never ask for it**
 - a) The LORD heeded their voice - You have not because you ask not...

There is DISCOURAGEMENT That Must Be Dealt With

4 From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became **impatient on the way.** 5 And the people **spoke against God and against 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 worthless food.**"

Hebrew for **impatient** is DISCOURAGED [*cut down, like a plant at harvest*]

Discouragement can come at the strangest times

1. God just answered their prayer - **he HEEDED them**
2. **They had just experienced a VICTORY** in the battle against the Canaanites

3. They were setting out on a new direction, a new goal, a fulfillment of a promise

Discouragement led to worse things - like **COMPLAINING**

- When you complain, reason and rationality go out the door - they just asked the LORD for help to defeat the Canaanites...now they are speaking against Him
- **The Reality is --- for forty years**, they had food and water
- **The Reality is --- the food was NOT worthless**, it kept them in good health all this time

They were different from their parents in that they were willing to FIGHT, but they were JUST LIKE THEIR PARENTS when it came to complaining...

Parents you carry a great deal of influence in the lives of your children

There Are Time We Will Need to Be Forgiven

6 Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. 7 And the people came to Moses and said, "**We have sinned**, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. **Pray to the LORD, *that he take away*** the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. 8 And the LORD said to Moses, "**Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole**, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." 9 So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

- 1) **Acknowledge your sin** - "We have sinned"
- 2) **Ask for the LORD's help** - Pray to the LORD
- 3) **Listen to his counsel** - even if it sounds FOOLISH

AMAZINGLY HE GAVE THEM WATER - EVEN THOUGH THEY COMPLAINED

Vs 10-15 - describes the journey and some of the regions they passed through

16 And from there they continued to Beer; that is the well of which the LORD said to Moses, "**Gather the people together, so that I may give them water.**" 17 **Then Israel sang this song: "Spring up, O well!--Sing to it!--"**

There Are FEARS You Must Face

Vs 21-32 They defeated Sihon33 Then they turned and went up by the way to Bashan. **And Og the king of Bashan came out against them, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei.** 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."

Face your fears, don't let them paralyze you - the first generation ran from giants

- Deu 3:11 ESV (For only Og the king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaim. Behold, his bed was a bed of iron. Is it not in Rabbah of the Ammonites? Nine cubits was its

length, and four cubits its breadth, according to the common cubit.) [13.5 ft. long and 6 ft. wide]

God WANTS to give us victory - we just have to be willing to get up and fight and not run

- In the past they ran because there were giants in the land...DON'T BE AFRAID - **I HAVE GIVEN THEM INTO YOUR HAND**
- **We have victory, because of the LORD...PERIOD**

There Are Things You May Not Understand

35 So they defeated him and his sons and all his people, until he had no survivor left. And they possessed his land.

How do you deal with the concept that the LORD had Israel wipe out the nations? Men, women and children?

What we can't do

- We can't say it didn't happen
- We can't go along with those who say "**My God will never do something like that!**"
- We can't say, "**That is the God of the OT, but the God of the NT is different**"
- We can't treat the bible like a **smorgasbord** and pick only what appeals to us

You may never get an answer that will satisfy the concerns or questions of every person, and maybe even those you struggle with...**It is something you must come to grips with in some way**

For me...

1) I know I don't fully understand the judgment of God

- Rom 11:33 ESV Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! **How unsearchable are his judgments** and how **inscrutable his ways!**
- Unsearchable / Inscrutable - Not able to explore it or find the point of its origins (untraceable)

2) Abraham - "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" ...at Sodom and Gomorrah

3) In another way I am like the apostles "Where else can I go"

4) So I am OK with the idea that I do not fully grasp or understanding everything,

- If I understood everything about Him, then maybe he is not so great
- The things I DO grasp about him convince me of his love, his mercy and his forgiveness and ***run to him...***

The Serpent on the Pole - God's means of salvation from the SERPENT

- John 3:14-17 ESV And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.