

Week 8—Numbers 21:4-9

Begin each day of your study by asking the LORD to speak to you through His Word.

Day 1

1. In order to understand the situation in this story, first read Numbers 20:14-21. What happened in those verses? What did this mean for the Israelite's travel? See the map below and notice how much more this added to their journey.



2. Now read Numbers 21:4. Does their situation explain their “impatience”? What might God have wanted them to learn through this setback? How would you have responded to this situation? Why?

3. Read Numbers 21:4-5. How do the Israelites respond in their impatience?

How do the following verses speak to the importance of patience in our journey?

Proverbs 14:29—

Romans 28:22-24—

Romans 12:11-12—

James 5:7-8—

What does God want you to know about having patience through your own journey through the wilderness times? Take time to repent of impatience and ask the Spirit to help you be patient on your journey, even when it isn't going the way you want it to.

Day 2

1. Read Numbers 21:4-6. What is the LORD's response to the people's impatience and complaining? How would you compare it to previous complaints as noted below?

Numbers 11:4-5—

Numbers 14:2—

Numbers 20:5—

2. Before reading the note below, answer why this complaint is so serious to the LORD? Now read the note. Do you agree with what it says? What does it mean to blaspheme God?

We detest...—The people's impatience led them to blaspheme God, to reject His servant Moses and to despise the "bread from heaven" (Ex 16:4). This is the most bitter of their complaints, as the people spurn God's grace.

3. Read Matthew 12:30-32. V. 32 is one of the most misunderstood verses in Scripture and has caused many followers of Jesus to needlessly fear. *Before* reading the note below, what do you think Jesus means? Now read the note and record your thoughts. You may want to read John 16:8-14 and take note of all the Holy Spirit does.

Speaks against the Holy Spirit—"Speaks against" is the same word as blaspheme. According to Jesus in John 16:8-14, it is the Holy Spirit who calls a person to salvation, so to "blaspheme" the Holy Spirit most likely means rejecting God's gift of grace of salvation, similar to how the Israelites reject God's grace to them with the manna.

Day 3

1. Read Numbers 21:7. How is this response by the Israelites different than any other response they have made thus far? Why is this response so important?

2. What do the following verses say about the importance of *and* God's response to *repentance*:

Jeremiah 15:19—

Ezekiel 18:32—

Matthew 11:10—

Luke 5:32—

Luke 15:7—

Acts 2:38—

Acts 3:19—

Romans 2:4—

2 Corinthians 7:10—

2 Peter 3:9—

3. Do you view repentance as a negative or a positive? Why? How do the verses above affect you?

Day 4

1. Read Numbers 21:8-9. How does the LORD respond to the people's repentance? What can that teach us about Him?

Bronze snake—The Hebrew term “bronze” can also be translated as “copper,” and according to the *ESV Study Bible*, “The area through which the Israelites were traveling had copper mines and archaeologists have found a 5-inch long copper snake in a Midianite shrine at Timna, so it seems likely that copper is meant here.” This is significant because it has a red color, so perhaps it is symbolically chosen as the instrument for atonement on this occasion to represent blood.

2. Jesus refers to this incident in John 3:14-17. Read it and answer how the bronze serpent foreshadows Christ and His cross.

3. John 3:16 is perhaps the most famous verse in the Bible but notice how Jesus connects His words to this story in Numbers 21:4-9. What insight does this give you about the Bible? About Jesus?

Day 5

1. Read John 3:14-17 again today. When did you repent and “look up to Jesus” to be saved? If you haven’t yet, why not? Be prepared to share your story of when you looked to Jesus with your group this week. Write it out below:

2. Read 1 Corinthians 15:54-57 and spend the rest of today simply by praising Jesus for being “lifted up” for us so we might be saved from the “bite” of sin and death!

Conclusion

1. What most stood out to you as you studied Numbers 21:4-9 this week? *Why* do you think this was the case?

2. What is the Holy Spirit prompting you to *do* as a result of this? Be prepared to share with your group!