

# Numbers 21:1-9

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's go. Today, we end the Old Testament this evening. Book of Numbers.

Numbers chapter 21. Listen, some of your passages, most, if not all of us, this is the passage where Moses is commanded of God to make a serpent to lift it up into your lives and murmured against God, murmured against Moses, and God sent fiery serpents into the camp of the Israelites.

This passage is popular, if you want to call it that, but well known to us, mainly because Jesus speaks of this very passage in John chapter 3, when he's preaching to Nicodemus.

That's really what makes this passage so familiar to us. We'll begin in verse 1, chapter 21 in the Book of Numbers says that when King Erath the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, her king that Israel came by the way of the spies, then he fought against Israel and took some of them prisoners.

And Israel bowed a bow unto the Lord and said that thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, that I will utterly destroy their cities. And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites, and they utterly destroyed them and their cities.

[ 1 : 44 ] And he called the name of the place Hormah. 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.

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.

And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died. 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. And the Lord sent unto Moses, make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole, and it shall come to pass, that everyone that is bitten when he looketh upon it shall live.

And Moses made the serpent a brass and put it upon a pole, and came to pass, that a serpent had bitten any man, when he had been held the serpent a brass, he lived.

[ 2 : 50 ] And we'll end our reading of that passage there, those first nine verses of the 21st chapter of the Book of Numbers. And I said this is somewhat a familiar passage of Scripture to us, man that be called Jesus Christ speaks of this very thing, in the New Testament, in the Book of John chapter number three.

But if we back back up to verse number one, talking about how the king, King Erath, who was a king tonight, heard tell that Israel came by way of the spies, and he fought against Israel, and he took some of the Israelites captive, or he took them prisoner, and Israel bowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, if thou wilt indeed deliver this people in the land, hand then, I will utterly destroy their city.

So Israel is making their way toward the promised land, the land that God had promised them, they're making their way, they're going the route that God is leading, and this can of not come out, and he fights against the Israelites, takes some of them prisoner, and the Israelites bow a vow unto God, and say, if you'll do this for us, then we will do this for you, we'll destroy these people, we'll destroy their cities, and God hears their cry, and God delivers these can of not unto the Israelites, and just a verse or two later, it says, and they journeyed from Mount Hor, by way of the Red Sea to come past the land of Edom, and the soul of the people was much discouraged, because of the way that it says that the soul of these Israelites, the soul of the children of Jacob, it was vexed, it was discouraged, they had become sad, they had become depressed, they were weary of anything outside of the way, as the scripture says, they were weary of the way that they were having to go, the way unto the promised land, Christian friend,

I'm here to tell you now that sometimes we get weary in this way that we travel sometimes, it's not a straight shot from point A to point B like we think that it might be, sometimes God will lead us in these directions, much the same way that Jesus Christ in John chapter 4, he could have taken us shorter away, but he knew there was a woman there in Samaria that was going to be it that well, he knew that this woman was in need of salvation, she was in need of a Savior, and he took that long way, he took away into Samaria there, sometimes God may send you on the way that you think is unfit, on the way that you don't think that you need to go, but rest assured there Christian, if you are living for God, and you are working for God, and you are praying up with God, and doing the things of God, that God will not lead you astray, God will lead you in the way that he intends for you to go, he will lead you in the way that he wants you to go, and when you get there, God will rebuild you, exactly what it is that he was wanting you to do, and why he puts you in that place at that time, and the purpose for what it was for, hallelujah!

God will not lead his people astray, and God will go with you, God will go with you, these people that says they were discouraged because of the way, remember folks, remember they had just made a vow to God, this Canaanite King had come out, and he had taken some of these, some of the Israelite's brethren prisoner, and they had made a vow and said, if you work for us, we will work for you, and here they are, just a verse or two later, murmuring and complaining they're discouraged because of the way that they're heading to take, folks, don't get discouraged in the way, don't get discouraged with the work of God, we not get weary in this way, folks, it's a tiring way, it's a busy way, and it's a working way, but I promise you, if you lay up for yourself, treasures in heaven, and no treasures here on earth, God will reward you exceedingly with the end of the road come!

[ 7 : 08 ] Hallelujah! They were discouraged because of the way, and the people spoke against God, and against Moses, when they spoke against Moses, folks, they spoke against God, because Moses relayed the message of God to the people, and he didn't leave out one jot and there were one tittle from what God had said, so anytime you read in the Scripture that the people murmured against Moses, they were murmuring against God, they were murmuring against him, he says, the people spoke against God and against Moses, therefore have you brought us up out of Egypt to die on the wilderness, for there is no bread, neither is there any water, and our soul loatheth this lot bread, oh God had just delivered these Canaanites into their hands, he had just delivered the Canaanite cities into their hands, and they were murmuring, they were complaining, they were uncomfited with what God had done for them, they were discomfited with what God had done for these people, they were unhappy, they were upset, they were wanting more and more and more, dear Christian, don't let yourself get this attitude, you be content with the things that Almighty God does for you, you be content with your home, be content with your finances, be content with your food, be content with everything that Almighty God has blessed you with, and a PC's fit to give you more than God blessed, a PC's fit to leave you out of our head, then God bless it just as God will lead you in the way,

He will be with you in the way, and He will comfort you and sustain you in the way. There is no need, no need in asking for more and more and more from God, does God want to hear from His people, yes, is there anything wrong with asking God for things, no, no there's not, but these people, it was a constant thing with them, you read it in Exodus, you read it in Numbers, you read it in Deuteronomy, you read it that is prophesied by Joshua that these things will happen, you read in the book of Deuteronomy it's prophesied that they will do these things, that they will go to God, and they will murmur against God, and they will turn from God, and that scripture came true over and over, those prophecies came to be over and over throughout the scriptures Christian brand, don't let yourself get the attitude that these Israelites had, they were complaining about the white bread that they had, they were complaining about the miraculous way that Almighty God was sustaining them in the wilderness, and they were wanting to go back to Egypt, they were wanting to go back to where God had delivered them from to begin with, they said, why have you brought us up into this wilderness, we'd be better off back where we came from, don't let yourself get caught up in an attitude such as this, oh it's dangerous, it's dangerous, and it's easy to do, it's easy to do, and the Lord sent fiery sermons, it's upset God, and rightfully so, rightfully so, and the Lord sent fiery sermons among the people, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died, the Lord sent these fiery sermons, the Lord sent these sermons, they didn't just appear out of the wilderness,

Almighty God sent these sermons upon His own people, upon His chosen people, upon the people that He had sent Moses into Egypt to go before Pharaoh, and say, let my people go, He sent these fiery sermons upon His own people, and why, because of the murmuring, because of the complaining against God, and against Moses, and it says that they bit the people, and much people of Israel died, therefore the people came to Moses and said, we have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against the prayer unto the Lord, that He take away the sermons from us, and Moses prayed, hey, this done exactly what God wanted it to do, He sent the fiery sermons into the camp, the fiery sermons had bit the people, and much people of Israel had died, but it caused the remainder of the people, it caused the remnant to admit their sin under God, they said, we have sinned against God, and we have come against you, pray unto God for us, Moses being on top of Christ in the Old Testament, many different ways, but he was on top of Christ, and they come unto Moses now, and said, pray unto God for us, that He take away these fiery sermons, that He take away this judgment, that He take away this wrath, that He is unleashed upon us.

Pray unto God for us, intercess for us, immediate for us, is what these Israelites were requesting, because they knew they couldn't do it, they knew that Moses was God's man.

Folks, if we go to anybody outside of Jesus Christ, who is our intercessor, who is our mediator, that He won't do us much good, I'm not saying you can't ask other people to pray for you, that's not what I'm saying at all, I ask people to pray for me quite often, but that ending off itself is intercessory prayer, but if those people aren't going to Christ, it ain't going to do me any good, if I don't go to Christ, it's not going to do me any good, it must end up with Christ, and Christ will breathe it into the ears of the Almighty.

[ 12 : 42 ] Christ is our mediator between God and man, He is the only mediator between God and man, He is the only intercessor that we can rely on. Moses here was the only one between God and the Israelites, that the Israelites had, that's why they came unto Moses, and they said, pray unto God that He take away these fiery serpents from us.

Folks, we have got to go through Christ, we have got to go through Christ, and anyone that prays for us has got to go through Christ, and says, and the Lord said unto Moses, Moses prayed for the people, and the Lord said unto Moses, make me 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 him, shall live.

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 held the serpent of brass, he lived. So Moses prayed unto God, and this was the response that Almighty God had.

God didn't just remove the fiery serpents as the people wanted. He didn't do it in that manner, folks. God doesn't just remove your sin the way that you want it done. God will remove your sin, and God removes my sin through the blood of Jesus Christ.

And that is the only way that our sin can be removed. And these people asked Moses to pray that he removed, that God removed the fiery serpents, and the Lord said unto Moses, make thee a fiery serpent, set it upon a pole, and it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

[ 14 : 18 ] He didn't tell Moses to tell the people, tell him to look unto you, Moses, hey, that wouldn't have done those people a bit of good. Moses is the very one that broke the law down off of Mount Sinai to these people.

Moses is the one that delivered the law. Moses is the one that told these people of the 10 commandments, which showed the holiness of God, and showed the unrighteousness of the people.

They would have done no good for these people to have looked to Moses, and he didn't say Moses, tell the people to take care of one another. He didn't say tell those that are bitten to go to others that are bitten, and to nurse one another, and to come to one another, and to aid one another.

Folks, one sinner cannot save another sinner. It cannot and does not work like that. God told Moses, you make a brazen serpent, you make it, you put it on the pole, and you raise it up, that whosoever looks upon it, they can be healed, they can live, they can be saved.

In Hallelui, that's why Jesus told Nicodemus, that's why Christ told Nicodemus in John chapter 3. He said, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so shall the snowman be lifted up in the very next verse, that whosoever believeth on him shall have everlasting life.

[ 15 : 47 ] That was the purpose. We have to look on across them faith. These people here, I understand that the Scripture, I understand that it says that whosoever looks upon it, shall live.

I understand the Scripture says that. How many people, I can't help but wonder, how many people were out in that band of Israelites that day? How many people were out there, folks? We were not talking about a couple of hundreds.

We're talking about hundreds of thousands, millions of people, enough people to where they would have to shout it to one group, and somebody was assigned in another group, to shout it back to another group.

Exactly what it was that Moses was relaying to these people from God. But how many people in this group were depending upon themselves? Or how many people said, well, Grandpa told me all I had to do for a snake bite was to rub this point when on it, or to rub that element when on it.

Hey, I ain't gonna listen to Moses. I ain't gonna listen to God. Churches are full of people this day and time. They are depending on Grandpa's way of salvation, which was not through the blood of Jesus Christ.

[ 17 : 00 ] They're saying all I had to do is go to church. All I had to do is pay tithes. All I had to do is spit a prayer out once in a while, and the Bible says to repent and believe the gospel.

I wonder how many people disobeyed Moses this day, and in so doing disobeyed God. Or I wonder how many people that we were.

But these fiery serpents, it says they came into the camp and they bit the Israelites. And many of the Israelites died. Many people of Israel died. I wonder how many people were laying on the ground, possibly really in pain, taking their last breaths, and word got to them.

If you just look up at that serpent that Moses is holding, if you just look up that way, they're fading out. Maybe their sock was going to, hey, maybe they were young and they had good vision.

Maybe they were old and their vision was dead. Also, it didn't matter how strong the vision was. It didn't matter how intelligent the sign was. It didn't matter any of these things.

[ 18 : 11 ] What mattered was that God told Moses to tell the people, if you just look upon this serpent, you can and will live. It doesn't matter your mitigating circumstances.

It doesn't matter how far under this pen you are. It doesn't matter how thin your side is. It doesn't matter how old you are. It doesn't matter how young you are. It doesn't matter once again, folks.

This would have been a couple of million people that we're talking about here. It didn't matter if they were on the very front row, right there where Moses was, or if they were 50 rows back. God didn't say you had to be close to it.

He just said to look upon it. Hey, if we looked across, we can't live. It doesn't matter how we look. It doesn't matter if we can actually see it with physical eyes.

God can save the blind just as much as He can save those with sign. It is belief and belief only. There's so many people out there.

[ 19 : 12 ] So many people think they've seen too much. They've gone too far. How many people? How many people in this circumstance here thought, I'm too far gone.

I'm too far gone under this venom. There's no hope for me now. And all Moses said was look to the serpent. Look to this brazen serpent that has been said upon a pole.

It was raised upon a pole. It was raised way up so that everybody could get a glance at it. Anyone in Israel that wanted to live, anyone in Israel that wanted to be healed, and said every man that was bitten, folks, from what I understand in this scripture, God had released these fiery serpents.

They had gone all throughout the camp of Israel. I doubt seriously there were many, if any, that had not been bitten. And if we're going to use this as a top of judgment and a top of God's righteous judgment towards sin, everybody in that camp would have been bitten.

Everyone was underneath the same condemnation and the same judgment, but everyone had the exact same way of salvation. They had the exact same way that they could be saved and that they could live.

[ 20 : 24 ] It is the same way in the New Covenant with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Everyone is granted the same way. Everyone has the same way and the salvation through the blood that cross shed for you and for me.

Amen. I might have been another chapter in numbers, just on the side. I believe it's number nine.

It's talking about the Passover. They're going to keep the Passover. They've been in the wilderness for a while. They're going to keep the Passover. It says there were some men that were working because they've been defiled by a dead body.

They couldn't keep the Passover. If they were defiled, they couldn't participate in such things. They were defiled according to what they understood. So they go to Moses and present him with this problem.

Moses goes to God. Moses comes back and says, okay, you're still going to keep the Passover. You'll just do it next month. Same type of feast, same type of sacrifice, same type of everything.

- [ 21 : 33 ] Everything was the same. It was just at a different time because they were defiled. They couldn't take part in that. I said this is number nine if you want to look it up for yourself. But it was the same sacrifice, the same type of blood.

And it was for the same reasons because it was a commandment of God that the Jews keep the Passover. Infolchance is a commandment of God. Now, one time God winked at this here, but now commandment everywhere to repent.

He commands everyone to repent. And if we repent and we believe upon Jesus Christ, then we can and we will be saved according to what I read in my Bible.

If I repent of my ways and I believe in Christ to wash me clean of my sin and to make me wise as the new fallen snow, I will be saved per the Word of God.

Amen. What it takes is belief. How many of these folks had so many thoughts going through their minds? How many were thinking, I can't do this?

- [ 22 : 37 ] How many people were laying back on one side of the server and was up on one side and they say, maybe. And this is kind of like a last thought that someone might have.

When someone throughout the break of salvation, throughout the break of being forgiven of all their sins, Satan's little minions, my brain is in their mind, they're not doing it right. You're not doing it correctly.

And then they'll think, how can I do it right? What if I'm laying this way? Now I'm supposed to lay that way. What if I'm looking this way, but it's this way? What if I'm doing it wrong? Folks, God does not command intelligence.

And God does not command perfection by us. God commands belief. God commands belief and repentance. Our perfection will come in the future after we've been saved.

I'm still not perfect in this life and you ain't either. None of us are the perfection. We'll come, God does not require our perfection here. He doesn't require perfection to be saved.

- [ 23 : 39 ] There's a lot of people out there that say, I can't get saved because I've been too imperfect. I've been too sinful. I've been too wicked. Hey, that's the type of person that God specializes in saving.

Those that don't believe that they can be saved. Those that believe that they don't too far. God can save those souls just like he can any other.

He can save anybody. He can save any of these Israelites. But they had to do one thing. They had to look in belief. They had to look upon this way that God had made.

Once again, how many of them were dependent on ways that they had been taught? Ways that weren't scriptural. And there wasn't a whole lot of scriptural at this point, granted.

But fast forward to New Testament church time. How many people look on ways that aren't scriptural for salvation? When God simply says, look.

- [ 24 : 37 ] Look here. What does it say in the book of Hebrews? It says, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith. Now listen, that's exclusively towards people that have been saved when it says it because it's talking about to run the race.

It's something that's been said before us. And you ain't running the race if you ain't been saved. It says, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith. But we looked to Jesus for salvation.

We looked to Him to be saved. And we look at Him how we are saved. And folks, even when we get to heaven, what are we going to be doing? We're going to be looking on Jesus Christ who saved our unworthy souls.

So from the beginning of this thing, all the way through this thing, to the very end of this thing, it requires looking at Jesus Christ. We must look towards Christ to receive salvation.

We must look to the way of salvation to receive salvation. We must look to the way of redemption to receive that redemption. If we look anywhere else, we will receive nothing.

[ 25 : 36 ] Oh, Almighty God. We can't receive it. It begins with looking. It goes all the way through this thing here in this life and looking. And it ends with looking at Christ.

On the flip side of that coin, seeing the fall in the garden, it began with a look. What's the first thing you record?

As far as the fall goes, says, Dee looked on the tree and saw the river, and she saw that it was good for food. She saw that it was good, so she looked upon it.

So be careful where you're looking to. Be careful where we look to for salvation. Be careful where we look to for forgiveness. Be careful where we look to for anything. You look on where the Scripture tells us to look to.

You look unto Christ. You look to God for salvation that comes through Jesus Christ. And you look no other place. Don't be like these Israelites. And once God takes us up, and once God gets us out and sets us on our way, don't start murmuring about the way.

[ 26 : 44 ] Don't start complaining about the way. It says that they were discouraged because of the way. This reminds me of Scripture over in the Gospels. Hey, when Jesus Christ, right after he had fed the 5,000 plus people, it says that he sent the disciples on their way.

They went down and they got into a boat. And Jesus Christ disappeared up into a mountain to pray. And those disciples, they got out on the sea of Galilee, and they started to cross the way. And it says that a storm rose up, that a tempest rose up, and the winds that were tossing the boat all around, and Christ had not yet come to them at that point.

But it says in the Gospel of Mark in chapter 6, it says that Jesus Christ saw them in their toiling. He saw them in their rowing, and in the Gospel of John, it says that they went ahead and they rolled another five or 20 or 30 furlongs on them in the water.

Even after this storm rose up, they continued their rowing. They continued going. Christian friend, I encourage you now, regardless how tough the way it gets, regardless how hard it gets, you continue rowing.

You continue going. God sees your toiling and rowing, and God's gonna reward for you in the future. Hallelujah. Praise God.

[ 28 : 05 ] Don't give up. Amen. Don't give up. Don't be like this old chair. Don't wind over the way. Don't wind over the sustenance that God has given. Don't complain about these things.

You be grateful to God for what he's done. But God is not required. God is not required to give us those things. If God wants us to work for him, he must sustain us.

He's got to keep us alive in these physical bodies. So, and that should be very comforting to every one of us as a Christian, that God will provide what we need.

If God's got a plan for us, God's got a purpose for us, he's got somewhere for us to go, or somewhere for us to be, God will sustain what we need to get there and to do what he wants us to accomplish for him.

That's right. That's the message for the season. God bless you all. Amen.