



Lesson 41 – The Journey Around Edom

based on Numbers 20:14-29; 21:1-9

Forty years of wandering had passed with a very sad ending. Moses had struck the Rock and second time as the waters had stopped and sinned. He was told he would not lead the tribes into the Promised Land.

The encampment of Israel at Kadesh was but a short distance from the borders of Edom, and both Moses and the people greatly desired to follow the route through this country to the Promised Land; accordingly, they sent a message, as God had directed them, to the Edomite king

- 1) What message did they send to the King of Edom?

Numbers 20:14-15 And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy _____ Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us: How our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians _____ us, and our fathers:

Numbers 20:16-17 And when we cried unto the LORD, he heard our voice, and sent an _____, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt: and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border: Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's high way, we will not _____ to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders.

- 2) Was the King eager to let them through?

Numbers 20:18 And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the _____.

- 3) What did they ask a second time?

Numbers 20:19 And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the high way: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will _____ for it: I will only, without doing any thing else, go through on my feet.

- 4) How resolute was Edom?

Numbers 20:20 And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a _____ hand.

Had the people, when brought into trial, trusted in God, the Captain of the Lord's host would have led them through Edom, and the fear of them would have rested upon the inhabitants of the land, so that, instead of manifesting hostility, they would have shown them favor. But the Israelites did not act promptly upon God's word, and while they were complaining and murmuring, the golden opportunity passed. When they were at last ready to present their request to the king, it was refused. Ever since they left Egypt, Satan had been steadily at work to throw hindrances and temptations in their way, that they might not inherit Canaan. And by their own unbelief they had repeatedly opened the door for him to resist the purpose of God.

- 5) How were the Israelites to treat the Edomites?

Deuteronomy 2:4-5 And command thou the people, saying, Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir; and they shall be afraid of you: take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore: _____ with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth; because I have given mount Seir unto _____ for a possession.

The Edomites were descendants of Abraham and Isaac, and for the sake of these His servants, God had shown favor to the children of Esau. He had given them Mount Seir for a possession, and they were not to be disturbed unless by their sins they should place themselves beyond the reach of His mercy. The Hebrews were to dispossess and utterly destroy the inhabitants of Canaan, who had filled up the measure of their iniquity, but the Edomites were still probationers, and as such were to be mercifully dealt with.



6) What did God remind them?

Deuteronomy 2:7 For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee; thou hast _____ nothing.

They were not dependent upon the Edomites, for they had a God rich in resources. They must not by force or fraud seek to obtain anything pertaining to them; but in all their intercourse they should exemplify the principle of the divine law.

7) Which law?

Leviticus 19:18 ...thou shalt love thy neighbour as _____....

Had they in this manner passed through Edom, as God had purposed, the passage would have proved a blessing, not only to themselves, but to the inhabitants of the land; for it would have given them an opportunity to become acquainted with God's people and His worship and to witness how the God of Jacob prospered those who loved and feared Him. But all this the unbelief of Israel had prevented.

8) Leaving Edom behind, where did they go next?

Deuteronomy 2:8 And when we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, through the way of the plain from Elath, and from Eziongaber, we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of _____.

Accordingly, the hosts of Israel again turned toward the south, and made their way over sterile wastes, that seemed even more dreary after a glimpse of the green spots among the hills and valleys of Edom.

9) What were Moses Aaron and Eliazer to do?

Numbers 20:23-24 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount _____, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying, Aaron shall be _____ unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah.

Numbers 20:25-26 Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor: And strip Aaron of his _____, and put them upon _____ his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there.

Many years Moses and Aaron had stood side by side in their cares and labors. Together they had breasted unnumbered dangers and had shared together the signal blessing of God; but the time was at hand when they must be separated. They moved on very slowly, for every moment in each other's society was precious. The ascent was steep and toilsome; and as they often paused to rest, they communed together of the past and the future. Before them, as far as the eye could reach, was spread out the scene of their desert wanderings. In the plain below were encamped the vast hosts of Israel, for whom these chosen men had spent the best portion of their lives; for whose welfare they had felt so deep an interest and made so great sacrifices. Somewhere beyond the mountains of Edom was the path leading to the Promised Land, that land whose blessings Moses and Aaron were not to enjoy. No rebellious feelings found a place in their hearts, no expression of murmuring escaped their lips; yet a solemn sadness rested upon their countenances as they remembered what had debarred them from the inheritance of their fathers.

10) Scripture says...

Numbers 20:27-29 And Moses did as the LORD commanded: and they went up into mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon _____ his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron _____ days, even all the house of Israel.



God intended that these great leaders of His people should be representatives of Christ. Aaron bore the names of Israel upon his breast. He communicated to the people the will of God. He entered the most holy place on the Day of Atonement as a mediator for all Israel. He came forth from that work to bless the congregation, as Christ will come forth to bless His waiting people when His work of atonement in their behalf shall be ended. It was the exalted character of that sacred office as representative of our great High Priest that made Aaron's sin at Kadesh of so great magnitude.

Moses was to continue to bear his burden in leading the people to the very borders of Canaan. He was to come within sight of the Promised Land but was not to enter it. Had these servants of God, when they stood before the rock at Kadesh, borne uncomplainingly the test there brought upon them, how different would have been their future! A wrong act can never be undone. It may be that the work of a lifetime will not recover what has been lost in a single moment of temptation or even thoughtlessness.

The forms of Moses and Eleazar were at last discerned, slowly descending the mountainside, but Aaron was not with them. Upon Eleazar were the sacerdotal garments, showing that he had succeeded his father in the sacred office. As the people with heavy hearts gathered about their leader, Moses told them that Aaron had died in his arms upon Mount Hor, and that they there buried him.

11) What happened as they traveled?

Numbers 21:1 And when king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies; then he _____ against Israel, and took some of them prisoners.

Numbers 21:2-3 And Israel vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. And the LORD _____ to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly _____ them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hormah.

As they earnestly sought help from God, divine aid was granted them, and their enemies were routed. This victory, instead of inspiring gratitude and leading the people to feel their dependence upon God, made them boastful and self-confident. Soon they fell into the old habit of murmuring. They were now dissatisfied because the armies of Israel had not been permitted to advance upon Canaan immediately after their rebellion at the report of the spies nearly forty years before.

12) What happened AGAIN?

Numbers 21:4-5 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 _____ because of the way. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to _____ in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

The way seemed long and difficult, and they suffered from weariness and thirst. Again, they failed to endure the test of their faith and patience. By continually dwelling on the dark side of their experiences, they separated themselves further and further from God. They lost sight of the fact that but for their murmuring when the water ceased at Kadesh, they would have been spared the journey around Edom. God had purposed better things for them. Their hearts should have been filled with gratitude to Him that He had punished their sin so lightly.

13) What had God been protecting them from all along?

Deuteronomy 8:15 Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery _____, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no _____; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;



Every day of their travels they had been kept by a miracle of divine mercy. In all the way of God's leading they had found water to refresh the thirsty, bread from heaven to satisfy their hunger, and peace and safety under the shadowy cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. Angels had ministered to them as they climbed the rocky heights or threaded the rugged paths of the wilderness. Notwithstanding the hardships they had endured, there was not a feeble one in all their ranks.

14) What happened there?

Numbers 21:6 And the LORD sent _____ serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

15) Did they repent?

Numbers 21:7-9 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have _____, 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 said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a _____; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he _____ upon it, 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 beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

Moses was divinely commanded to make a serpent of brass resembling the living ones, and to elevate it among the people. To this, all who had been bitten were to look, and they would find relief. He did so, and the joyful news was sounded throughout the encampment that all who had been bitten might look upon the brazen serpent and live. Many had already died, and when Moses raised the serpent upon the pole, some would not believe that merely gazing upon that metallic image would heal them; these perished in their unbelief. Yet there were many who had faith in the provision which God had made.

By this simple means the people were made to realize that this affliction had been brought upon them by their sins. They were also assured that while obeying God they had no reason to fear, for He would preserve them.

16) What did Jesus have to say about this on a much later date?

John 3:14-15 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the _____ of _____ be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

17) Who has afflicted and hurt us?

Revelation 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and _____, which deceiveth the whole world...

The fatal effects of sin can be removed only by the provision that God has made. The Israelites saved their lives by looking upon the uplifted serpent. That look implied faith. They lived because they believed God's word and trusted in the means provided for their recovery. So, the sinner may look to Christ, and live. He receives pardon through faith in the atoning sacrifice. Unlike the inert and lifeless symbol, Christ has power and virtue in Himself to heal the repenting sinner.

18) What was Jesus' promise to them and us?

John 6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise _____.

We must come to Him; and when we repent of our sins, we must believe that He accepts and pardons us. Faith is the gift of God, but the power to exercise it is ours. Faith is the hand by which the soul takes hold upon the divine offers of grace and mercy.

Can you see how close we are to our Promised Land?

Would you like to be successful on your journey?

When is it time to humbly seek our God?