



The Exodus

Lesson 16: Wandering In The Wilderness, Part 2

(Numbers 21:1-24:25, 31)

After Edom said the Israelites could not travel through their land, they traveled from Mount Hor by way of the Red Sea. Again, the people of Israel began to complain about God and Moses, saying that they should never have been brought out of Egypt! Then, God sent burning snakes to the people who complained and bit them so that many Israelites died.

When the Israelites saw this, they told Moses that they had sinned and asked him to talk with God so He would take the snakes away. God told Moses to make the image of a snake and put it on a pole so that whenever anyone was bitten and looks at it, that person would get better. Then, Moses obeyed God and put a bronze snake on a pole for the Israelites to look at.

As the people continued to wander in the wilderness, they camped many places between Kadesh and Mount Pisgah. At Pisgah, the Israelites asked the king of the Amorites to let them travel through their land. But, the king would not allow it. Instead, his army fought against Israel. The Israelites won the battle and took the cities. Then, they also fought against King Og of Bashan and God gave them another victory.

The Israelites kept traveling and came to the plains of Moab near the Jordan river, across from Jericho. Balak, the king of Moab, saw what the Israelites had done and was afraid of them. So, Balak sent messengers to Balaam and wanted Balaam to come back with them and put a curse on the Israelites so that Balak could defeat them.

These messengers took money to Balaam and told him what Balak had said. Balaam told them to spend the night and he would give them the answer God would give him. But, God told Balaam not to go with them and not to curse the Israelites

because they were blessed by God. So, Balaam told them the words of God and refused to go with them. The messengers then told the king what happened.

But, Balak sent even more and greater officials to Balaam to ask him the same thing, promising Balaam great things for coming and putting a curse on the Israelites. Although Balaam said he would not go against the command of God, he was not satisfied with God's first answer and wanted another one. So, God told Balaam at night to go with the people, but that he must do what God said.

The next morning, Balaam saddled his donkey and went with the officials of Moab. But, God was angry that Balaam did not listen to His first answer and went with them. So, the angel of the Lord stood on the path Balaam was riding on. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord with a sword drawn, the donkey went off the path into a field – and Balaam hit the donkey. Then, the donkey saw the angel in the road again and she pressed herself against a wall and squeezed Balaam's foot against it – and Balaam hit the donkey again. Finally, when the angel appeared in front of the donkey again and there was no room to turn, the donkey laid down under Balaam – and Balaam hit her again.

Then, God opened the donkey's mouth so she could talk. She asked Balaam why he was hitting her. He said he would kill her if he had a sword. But, when God let Balaam see the angel, the angel said that the donkey had saved his life three times. Later, the angel told Balaam to go to Balak, but only to speak God's words to him. When he went, he continued to bless the Israelites and even said that Moab would be destroyed in the future, even though he was greedy and wanted what the king offered (see Numbers 31).

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Written by Eric Krieg

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Study Questions:

- 1) Why did the people complain against God and Moses?

- 2) What did God send to the Israelites for complaining?

- 3) What did Moses make so that the people who were bit could get better?

- 4) Who was the king of Moab?

- 5) What did this king want Balaam to do?

- 6) What did Balaam's donkey do to save him?

- 7) What did the donkey say? What did Balaam tell the donkey?

- 8) Did Balaam bless or curse the Israelites? Why?

Memory Verse:

“You will bear the consequences of your iniquities forty years based on the number of the forty days that you scouted the land, a year for each day. You will know my displeasure” (Numbers 14:34).

Draw a picture of the lesson you learned about: