



Way Point Chronicles

Traveling through the Old Testament by Chronological Stories

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Way Point 41

A Look for Life

Story of Serpent Lifted Up

Travel Log

Personal Notes

The children of Israel spent 40 years in the desert wandering until the generation has passed that would not enter the Promised Land. All from 20 years and up except Joshua and Caleb did not survive these 40 years.

There are a couple of loose ends we need to tie up to advance our story to the end of the wandering. What about Moses? The one who has been leading the people. He had not been involved with the rebellion and certainly would have led them across the river into the Promised Land. Why would not Moses be allowed to enter. Moses will not be allowed to enter the land for a very different reason.

I- Striking the Rock:

Moses we know was instructed by God to strike the rock for water to ensue that we looked at in Way Point 34. *Exodus 17:5-6 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.*

We discussed that this Rock was a type of Christ that needed not be struck but one time. We move forward to the wilderness wandering. After the death of Miriam (*Reese's Chronological Bible* dates it April 1423 BC) we find the people murmuring again against Moses. Notice the story in the Word in *Numbers 20:2ff And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. ... 6 And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them. 7 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 8 Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. 9 And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. 10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? 11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.*

Lined area for personal notes



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We cannot begin to imagine the discouragement that Moses must have felt. He was giving all he had to take care of the people and they constantly complained and murmured against him. Moses instead of speaking to the Rock struck it in disobedience to God. This was probably due to frustration on the part of Moses. The repercussion of this was that Moses was not allowed to lead the people into Canaan. Notice *Numbers 20:12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.* Moses will be permitted to see the land from across the river but not allowed to go into it. This shows there is a cost for disobedience, even with God's servants. We see these events recorded for us in *Numbers 27:12-14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. 13 And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered. 14 For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.*

They are almost at this point at the end of their wilderness wandering. Miriam, Aaron and ultimately Moses will all pass away within months of each other.

II- Access Denied:

As the children of Israel, travel in an effort to go north in preparation to cross the Jordan River one of the events that took place was that they were denied passage through the land of Edom. Remember that the Edomites were the descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother. Moses pleads on the basis of their near kinship. Notice the narrative in *Numbers 20:14-21 And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us: ...17 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 turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders. 18 And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword. 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 pay for it: I will only, without doing any thing else, go through on my feet. 20 And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand. 21 Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him.*

Easton Bible Dictionary says the following about this nation's final state.



Coordinates:

Numbers 20:1-21:9

Sights to See:

- 1- When we are physically tired we must be on higher alert to recognize the potential for bad decisions.
- 2- The easy way, i.e. the route through Edom, is not always the way that we are allowed to travel. We need to keep our eyes on God and not the circumstances we find ourselves in hard time.
- 3- Even as God allowed them to purchase meat from the Edomites they continued to complain about the manna as a pattern of behavior that had not saw the whole story. They were blinded by their murmuring.
- 4- The serpent lifted up brought healing physically with only a look for life.
- 5- Christ lifted up on the cross, as pictured by the serpent, give spiritual life to those who will look to Him.



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There are many prophecies concerning Edom (Isa 34:5, Isa 34:6; Jer 49:7-18; Eze 25:13; Eze 35:1-15; Joe 3:19; Amo 1:11; Obad.; Mal 1:3, Mal 1:4) which have been remarkably fulfilled. The present desolate condition of that land is a standing testimony to the inspiration of these prophecies. After an existence as a people for above seventeen hundred years, they have utterly disappeared, and their language even is forgotten for ever.

III- Serpent of Brass:

They have moved from Kadesh to the plains of Moab where they were denied the easy route north through Edom. While they are camped at Mount Hor Aaron dies. They mourn for him for 30 days after which they move around Edom toward the south. *Deuteronomy 2:1 Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea, as the LORD spake unto me: and we compassed mount Seir many days.* We see the discouragement of the people in *Numbers 21:4 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.*

The same pattern of the past almost 40 years continues. We pick up the story in *Numbers 21:5-9 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.*

Let us back up just a bit chronologically and see the rest of the story so to speak. Moses you will recall recounts the events of the wilderness wandering for the next generation in preparation for them to enter the Promised Land. The event I want us to notice of the journey they are on now is recorded for us in *Deuteronomy 2:6 Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink.* Apparently, they had gotten so used to murmuring that nothing was ever going to satisfy them. The statement they made was not accurate. They were painting a negative picture from habit.

Numbers 21:6 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. God sends a judgment this time in the form of poisonous snakes. Many of them die from this.

Numbers 21:7 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..... The very one who they were quick to criticize they wanted to again intercede for them.

...And Moses prayed for the people.

God's instructions to Moses was to make a brass serpent and put it on a pole and raise it in the air. *Numbers 21:8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee 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 it, shall live. 9 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.*

This is one of the important symbols of Christ being lifted up. Notice *John 3:14-15 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

Just as the children of Israel were given physically healing from the ravages of sin by looking at the serpent we now have spiritual healing from the ravages of sin by looking toward the Savior when He is lifted up.