

## The Solution to the Problem Num. 21:4-9

*Thesis: To learn from the example of Israel.*

### Introduction:

#### I. Remember the history of Israel up to this point.

- A. Israel had complained several different times.
  - 1. Complaints of Israel throughout Exodus.
    - a. Ex. 5:1-21 – Pharaoh makes the work more difficult.
    - b. Ex. 15:22-27 – Lack of water
    - c. Ex. 17:1-7 – Lack of water
    - d. Ex. 20:18-21 – Presence of God
  - 2. They had also complained throughout Numbers.
    - a. Num. 11:1-15
      - 1) The complaint is about a lack of food.
      - 2) God sends fire to destroy some of the people of Israel.
      - 3) He also sends manna and quail to the people.
    - b. Num. 13-14
      - 1) Spies are sent into the land of Canaan.
      - 2) The people refused to enter the land.
      - 3) God punishes them by not allowing that generation to enter the land of Canaan.
    - c. Num. 16:1-50
      - 1) Korah and 250 leaders of Israel try to overtake Moses and Aaron.
      - 2) God destroys these people by causing them to fall into a crack in the ground.
      - 3) The people complained to Moses about the way that they died.
      - 4) God then sent a plague into the camp to destroy 14,700.
    - d. Num. 20:1-13
      - 1) Israel complains again about a lack of water.
      - 2) Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it the way God told him to.
- B. This time is a little different because they are complaining directly about what God had given them (manna) (21:4-9).
  - 1. Remember, when they complained about a lack of food, God gave them manna (Num. 11:1-15).
  - 2. Now Israel has complained because they were discouraged.
  - 3. God sends fiery serpents to punish the people.
  - 4. The people cry out to God to save them.
  - 5. God commands Moses to create a bronze serpent and put it in the middle of the camp.

- a. Anyone who is bitten by one of these serpents can look at this bronze serpent and be healed.
- b. The people had to make some sort of effort if they wanted to be healed.

### Practical Application

#### II. From the example of Israel, we learn that we need to be careful about our complaints.

- A. God punished Israel because they complained about Him and Moses (God's chosen leader).
  1. In their complaint to God, they actually say that their "soul loathes this worthless bread."
  2. They were not happy with what God had given them.
    - a. God had provided them with food, water, and a leader to the Promised Land.
    - b. Deut. 8:4 (Moses speaking to Israel) - Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.
    - c. Deut. 29:5 (Moses speaking to Israel) - And I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn out on your feet.
  3. I Cor. 10:1-11
- B. Today, we need to remember what God has given us, and be thankful for it.
  1. God has given us things that we need for this life.
  2. Most of all, God has given us that which we need for eternal life.
  3. We need to remember what God has given us, and be thankful for it.

#### III. God did not take away the serpents, but He did give them a way to deal with the serpents.

- A. The cause of the serpents was the complaints and unbelief of Israel.
  1. God sent the serpents to punish the people.
  2. When the people cried out to God, He did not take away the problem.
  3. He did, however, give them a solution to their problem.
- B. Today, God does not take away our problem (sin), but He does give us a way to deal with our problems.
  1. God will not take sin out of this world.
  2. He wants us to choose to follow Him.
  3. Jn. 3:14-17 - And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, {15} that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. {16} For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. {17} For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.
  4. Christ is the only solution to our problem.

**Conclusion:**