

Into the Promised Land - Joshua's Story
Lesson #20 - A Time for Mourning
· H A N D O U T ·

▶ Israel is almost at the end of their sentence of wandering. The next generation of Israelites must now prepare to take their place in Israel's new beginning. From Kadesh, they moved north and east which took them to Mount Hor. Once they had set up camp, the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them that "the time had come..." The Lord is about to begin fulfilling what He had declared at the waters of Meribah when Moses and Aaron rebelliously disobeyed the Lord.

Numbers 20:22-24 · The whole community of Israel left Kadesh and arrived at Mount Hor. There, on the border of the land of Edom, the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "The time has come for Aaron to join his ancestors in death. He will not enter the land I am giving the people of Israel, because the two of you rebelled against my instructions concerning the water at Meribah.

Q: Where is Mount Hor?



Numbers 20:25-29 · "Now take Aaron and his son Eleazar up Mount Hor. There you will remove Aaron's priestly garments and put them on Eleazar, his son. Aaron will die there and join his ancestors."
So Moses did as the Lord commanded. The three of them went up Mount Hor together, as the whole community watched. At the summit, Moses removed the priestly garments from Aaron and put them on Eleazar, Aaron's son. Then Aaron died there on top of the mountain, and Moses and Eleazar went back down.

When the people realized that Aaron had died, all Israel mourned for him thirty days.

Q: For what purpose would God instruct Moses to take Eleazar, Aaron's son, to the top of the mountain where Aaron was to die?

Q: What is significant about how Moses and Aaron acted upon the instruction of God?

Q: Why did Israel take Aaron's death so hard, causing them to mourn for such a long period of time? It isn't like no one had died before. They were in the last stages of the last year of their wandering, which meant death had become common; everyone 20 years and older had been regularly dying during their 40-year journey.

Following the death of Aaron and their time of mourning,
Israel continues their way around Edom.
That is when they encounter King Arad, the Canaanite . . .

Numbers 21:1-3· When the Canaanite King of Arad, who lived in the Negev, heard that Israel was coming along the road to Atharim, he attacked the Israelites and captured some of them. Then Israel made this vow to the LORD: "If you will deliver these people into our hands, we will totally destroy their cities."

The LORD listened to Israel's plea and gave the Canaanites over to them. They completely destroyed them and their towns; so the place was named Hormah.

Q: What is the key statement in this narrative and why is it so significant?

► **The Key Statement:**

► **Significance:**

After their successful encounter against the Canaanite King of Arad
they, once again, restarted their journey . . .

Numbers 21:4-5· They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!"

Q: After their success against Arad, why did the people, once again, grow impatient and fall back into their old ways?

Q: Even though we had seen this same rebellion and complaints before, what was worse about what they were saying now compared to before?

► **"Miserable" in Hebrew:**

The Lord responds to Israel's vile complaints by bringing judgement down on their heads . . .

Numbers 21:6-9· Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died.

The people came to Moses and said, “We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us.”

So Moses prayed for the people. The Lord said to Moses, “Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.” So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole.

Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.

Q: What is ironic and significant about God using poisonous snakes to respond to Israel's vile complaints?

[Additional references: Isaiah 45:22; John 3:14-15; Revelation 20:2]

Q: Why did God change the serpents He had sent to be instruments of death into instruments of life?

Q: If someone was in the “20 and older group” who were destined to die in the wilderness but was still alive during the 40th year and were bitten by a snake, if that person looked upon the bronze snake and was healed of the snake bite, would that healing transcend the original death sentence?

Q: What happened to the snake that Moses fashioned out of bronze and put on a pole?

► Israel restarts their journey once again. They begin to travel toward Moab. This is where we will pick up the story next time.



Next Time - Lesson #21

“Significant Encounters During the Journey”

