

Christ In The Wilderness
“Lifted Up”
Numbers 21:4-9

Introduction:

1. Tonight - We're Going To:
 - Look At Another:
 - “Type And Shadow” Of Christ:
 - That Appears To Us:
 - As The Children Of Israel:
 - Were Wandering Through The Wilderness!
2. This Time:
 - We Move From:
 - The First Years Of Their Journey:
 - To The Promise Land:
 - To The Final Years!
 - So - Let's Head In Our Bibles:
 - To Numbers 21!
 - But - Before We Look At This New Type:
 - Let's Review Where We Have Already:
 - Found Christ In The Wilderness!
 - First - We Saw Christ:
 - In The Passover Lamb:
 - Who Brings Redemption:
 - To Everyone Who Trusts In His Body & His Blood:
 - For Their Salvation!
 - Then - We Saw Christ:
 - In The Manna That Rained From Heaven:
 - Because Christ Brings Relief:
 - To Those Who Hunger After Truth And Righteousness!
 - Christ Is The Bread Of Life!
 - Last Week - We Saw Christ:
 - In The Rock Of Horeb:
 - That Brought Forth Streams & Rivers Of Water:
 - When Moses Struck *It* With The Rod Of God's Judgment:
 - Instead Of The Murmuring And Unbelieving Israelites!
 - And - Jesus Is Still:
 - Our “Rock In A Weary Land!”
 - Who Will Revive & Refresh Us:
 - From Spiritual Drought:
 - When We Trust In Him!
3. Tonight - We Will See Christ:
 - In A Very Unusual Way:
 - As We Read About A New Generation Of Israel:
 - Following In The Same Old Spiritual Footsteps Of Their Ancestors - In:
 - Numbers 21:4-9 - “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. / 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. / And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. / 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. And Moses prayed for the people. / 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. / 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!”
 - Now - If You Keep Your Finger Here:
 - And Turn With Me To John 3:
 - We Find That Jesus Himself Had This Episode:
 - In Mind - When He Is Talked With:

- Nicodemus - About The Necessity Of Being “Born Again!”

- And - In John 3:13-15:

- Jesus Tells Nicodemus That:

- The Bronze Serpent Made By Moses In The Wilderness:

- To Rescue The Children Of Israel:

- Was A Type & A Picture Of Him & What He Came To Do!

- “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. / And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: / That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life!”

4. Now - With This In Mind:

- Let’s Go Back To Numbers 21:

- And See How Christ Not Only:

- Rescued His People:

- In The Past - But Also How:

- Christ Continues To Rescue His People - *Us* - Today!

- So That:

- In All The Times Of Our Lives:

- We Can Keep Looking To Christ:

- For Life - In The Wilderness Of This World!

- So - As We See From Numbers 21:4:

- We Need To Keep Looking To Christ:

1. ***In Times Of Discouragement!***

- Just Like The Children Of Israel Faced:

- When We Are Told:

- 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 Discouragement Felt:

- By The People Of Israel:

- Reached Down To Their “Soul!”

- So Much So That:

- It Was Robbing Them Of Any Strength They Had!

- Whether It Was Physical, Emotional, Or Spiritual Strength!

- They Were Spent!

- Any Encouragement They Had:

- From The Previous Victory God Had Given Them:

- In 21:1-3 - When He Delivered Them:

- Arad The Canaanite:

- Had Run Its Course!

- And They Became - Once Again:

- “Much Discouraged” - Disheartened & Even Grieved:

- “Because Of The Way!”

- And - The Reasons Why:

- They Became Discouraged:

- Were Many! They Became Discouraged:

- Because Of:

- The Direction Of The Way!

- They Had Been Moving ***Forward***:

- In Their Journey:

- Toward The Promised Land!

- But - Now - The Way:

- Led Them ***Backward*** - Even All The Way Back Toward:

- The Red Sea!

- And - “The People Was Much Discouraged Because Of The Way!”

- They Were Also Discouraged Because Of:

- The Distance Of The Way!

- Not Only Did The Way:

- Seem To Be The ***Wrong*** Way:

- It Also Was:
 - The **Long** Way!
 - It Was Completely **Out** Of Their Way!
- **IE:** How Frustrating This Is! Want To Go One Way, But All The Detours Take You Further Than You Ever Intended To Go! Wednesday Night - Accident! And With Gas Prices This High!
 - And So - “The People Was Much Discouraged Because Of The Way!”
- But - In Addition To The Direction & Distance:
 - They Were Also Discouraged Because Of:
 - The Dearth Of The Way!
 - As We Find In 21:5:
 - Their Water Had Once Again Ran Out!
 - The Streams Of Water God Had Provided For Them:
 - Did Not Reach *This* Part Of The Wilderness!
 - And So - God Tested:
 - This New Generation Of Israelites:
 - As He Had Tested Their Fathers!
 - But - All Of These Challenges Together Compounded:
- The Difficulty Of The Way!
 - Whatever Road They Were On:
 - Was Probably Hard & Dry & Dusty:
 - And Made It Very Difficult For The People:
 - With Their Children & Their Animals!
- Is It Any Wonder:
 - 21:4 - “The Soul Of The People Was Much Discouraged Because Of The Way!”
 - To Them - It Felt Like:
 - The Wrong Way! The Long Way! The Hard Way!
- And - This Is Something That:
 - Can Easily Happen To Us:
 - In The Wilderness Of This World!
 - It Is So Easy To Get Discouraged:
 - When We Focus More On:
 - The Difficulties - Than On:
 - The One Who Has Redeemed Us & Relieved Us & Revived Us:
 - May Times Already!
 - However - Even Though The Children Of Israel:
 - Felt That The Way They Were Going Was:
 - The **Wrong** Way - It Was Actually:
 - The **Right** Way - Because:
 - It Was **God's** Way!
 - In Psalm 107:7 - We Are Told:
 - “And he led them forth by *the right way*, that they might go to a city of habitation!”
- So - In Times Of Discouragement:
 - We Need To Learn:
 - How To Deal With It!
 - In Times Of Discouragement:
 - We Need To Keep Looking To Jesus:
 - For Life In The Wilderness Of This World!
- Even As We Are Told In:
 - Hebrews 12:1-2 - “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, / Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God!”
- In Times Of Discouragement:
 - We Need To Keep Turning To & Trusting In:
 - Christ! Because:
 - His Way Is The Right Way!
 - His Way Is The Best Way!
 - And - We Need to Deal With Our Discouragement:

- In This Way - Before:
 - It Turns Into A Temptation To Us, Like It Did For The Children Of Israel!
- Because - In 21:5 - We Find Them Next:

2. *In Times Of Dissatisfaction!*

- Where We Are Told:
 - “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!”
 - God Brought His People:
 - On This Difficult Path:
 - To Test Them!
 - And - When They:
 - “Spoke Against God & Against Moses” - They Showed That:
 - Their Hearts Were No Different Than The Hearts Of Their Fathers!
 - Because - Their Complaint:
 - Was Even The Same Complaint:
 - As Their Fathers!
 - No Bread To Eat!
 - No Water To Drink!
 - And You Brought Us Here To Kill Us!
 - But - Even In Their Complaint:
 - They Reveal The Truth:
 - About God’s Redemption & Relief!
 - Wasn’t It God Who:
 - “Brought (Them) Out Of Egypt!”
 - Wasn’t It God Who:
 - Sent Them - Every Day:
 - The Bread Of Heaven - About Which They Now Said:
 - “Our Soul Loatheth This Light Bread!”
 - They Forgot About The Grace Of God:
 - Behind Their Redemption & Relief & Refreshment!
 - They Forgot About Christ:
 - In That Wilderness!
 - In Psalm 78:40-42 - We Hear These Words:
 - “How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! / Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. / **They remembered not** his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy!”
 - The Children Of Israel Were Dissatisfied:
 - Because - “They Remembered Not!”
 - That Is - They Forgot:
- The Gracious Pity Of The Lord:
 - Over Their Plight!
 - They Forgot That Even When They Were In Bondage In Egypt:
 - The Lord Said To Moses - In Exodus 3:8 - “And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians!”
 - The People “Remembered Not”:
 - The Pity Of The Lord - So They:
 - “Spoke Against God & Against Moses!
 - The Children Of Israel Were Also Dissatisfied:
 - Because They Forgot:
- The Gracious Promise Of The Lord!
 - They Forgot That He Promised To Them:
 - In Exodus 3:17 - “I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt!”
 - And - The People “Remembered Not”:
 - The Promise Of The Lord - So They:
 - “Spoke Against God & Against Moses!”
 - The Children Of Israel Were Also Dissatisfied:
 - Because They Forgot:

- The Gracious Provision Of The Lord!
 - They Forgot That He Provided For Them:
 - Over & Over Again!
 - With Meat & Manna & Water!
 - So - The People Once Again - "Remembered Not":
 - The Provision Of The Lord - And That's Why:
 - They "Spoke Against God & Against Moses!"
 - But - The Children Of Israel Were Mostly Dissatisfied:
 - Because They Forgot:
- The Gracious Person Of The Lord!
 - Even At The Foot Of Mount Sinai:
 - They Urged Aaron To Make Them A Golden Calf:
 - And - When He Did So - He Told Them:
 - Exodus 32:4 - "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt!"
- Sadly - Though - The Children Of Israel:
 - Did Not Just **Forget** About The Grace Of The Lord:
 - They Even **Forsook**:
 - The Grace Of The Lord!
 - But - How Often Do We:
 - Do The Same Thing - When We Face:
 - Trials & Temptations:
 - In The Wilderness Of This World?
 - How Soon Do We Forget:
 - The Lord's Gracious Pity & Promises & Provision & Even Person!
 - We "Remember Not!"
 - So - In Times Of Dissatisfaction:
 - We Need To Remember:
 - What The Children Of Israel Forgot!
 - Even - Ask God To Remind You:
 - So You *Won't* Forget!
 - After All - Christ Himself:
 - Is The Very Embodiment:
 - Of God's Grace To Us!
 - The Full Display Of:
 - His Pity & Promise & Provision & Person:
 - Is Found In Him!
 - So - In Times Of Dissatisfaction:
 - Keep Looking To Christ:
 - For Life In The Wilderness Of This World!
 - Because - When You Don't:
 - It May Be That You Will Have To Find Him:

3. ***In Times Of Discipline!***

- Which Is What We Find Next In:
 - 21:6 - "And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died!"
 - Even Though We Know That:
 - God Is "A God Ready To Pardon, Gracious And Merciful, Slow To Anger, And Of Great Kindness!" (Nehemiah 9:17)
 - Yet - He Is Also Holy & Just!
 - And - Sometimes - He Displays His Love Through Judgment & Chastening As Well!
 - And So - We See:
- The Sovereign Nature:
 - Of God's Discipline In This Verse!
 - The "Fiery Serpents" That Bit The People:
 - We Are Told - "The Lord Sent!"
 - In Deuteronomy 8:15 - We Are Even Told That:

- The Wilderness Was Full Of These “Fiery Serpents!”
 - And - Up Until This Time:
 - God Protected & Preserved His People From Them!
- But - God Took Off His Hand Of Protection:
 - In Order To Discipline & Refine His People:
 - From Those Who Were Unbelieving:
 - In Their Midst! We Also See:
- The Severe Nature:
 - Of God’s Discipline In This Verse!
 - “Fiery” - Can Mean That:
 - The Serpents Themselves Were:
 - Of A Reddish, Fiery Color! Or:
 - It Refers To:
 - The Venom That Caused:
 - “Fiery” Sores When A Serpent Bit The People!
 - Either Way - God’s Judgment:
 - Corresponds To The Severe Nature:
 - Of Sin Itself! Which Shows Us Also:
- The Symbolic Nature:
 - Of God’s Discipline!
 - God Meant This Judgment:
 - To Teach His People:
 - About The Source Of Their Sin!
 - Those Serpents In The Wilderness:
 - Pointed Back To:
 - The Devilish Serpent:
 - In The Garden Of Eden!
 - The Devil Was The Ultimate Source:
 - Of Their Complaints & Charges:
 - Against The Lord!
 - And - The Bites Of Those Serpents:
 - Were Meant To Show Them & Us:
 - Just How Serious & Deadly:
 - Sin Is!
- And - This Is Why:
 - Even In Times Of Discipline:
 - We Need To Keep Looking To Christ!
 - Because - He Is The Only One:
 - Who Can Bring Us:
 - The Deliverance We Need! And So:

4. ***In Times Of Deliverance:***

- We Must Look To Christ - Even As:
 - The Children Of Israel Had To Look To:
 - The Type Of Christ - Which God Told Moses To Make:
 - In 21:7-9!
 - When The Lord Confronted His People:
 - With Their Sin - Through His Judgment & Discipline:
 - We Find The People Offering:
- Specific Confession:
 - For Their Sin!
 - 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. And Moses prayed for the people!”
 - Now - How Often Do Even We:
 - Ask God For Relief From Discipline:
 - When We Experience The Consequences:
 - Of Our Sin!
 - So - Was The Repentance:
 - Of The People Real?

- Was It A “Godly Sorrow” That Was Working Repentance In Them?
- Or - Were They Just Sorry:
 - They Got Caught?
 - Well - God Devised A Plan To Determine If Their Confession Was:
- Sincere Confession:
 - Or Not! So:
 - 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!”
 - And In 21:9 - That’s What Moses Did!
 - “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!”
 - So - God Was True To His Promise Of Deliverance!
- And - It Is This Bronze Serpent:
 - That Jesus Himself Said:
 - Pointed To Him - In John 3!
 - Because That Bronze Serpent:
 - Lifted Up In The Wilderness By Moses:
 - Became The Pledge Of Deliverance & Life!
 - But - What A Surprising Picture!
 - The Object Of Deliverance:
 - Looked An Awful Lot Like:
 - The Object Of Their Discipline!
 - But - Even Though:
 - It Was In The Same Form:
 - It Had An Entirely Different Function!
 - The Bronze Serpent:
 - Portrayed To The People:
 - God’s Purity!
 - The Devil’s Persistence! And Even:
 - Their Final Punishment!
 - Yet - To Just Look Upon It:
 - As Moses Lifted It High Up On A Pole:
 - Was Their Deliverance & Salvation!
 - And - This Is What Jesus Christ Himself:
 - Came To Do! When He Was Lifted Upon:
 - On That Old Rugged Cross:
 - He Displayed The Purity Of God!
 - He Conquered The Persistence Of The Devil! And:
 - He Took Upon Himself:
 - The Final Punishment:
 - Of Our Sin!
 - But - When He Was Lifted Up:
 - On The Cross - It Wasn’t Just:
 - To Be Displayed To Men:
 - It Was So That He Might Even Draw Men To Himself!
 - As Jesus Said In:
 - John 12:32 - “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me!”

Conclusion:

1. And This Is Why:
 - In All Of These Times:
 - You Can & You Must:
 - Keep Your Eyes Upon Jesus Christ!
 - Because - He Is Your Only Hope:
 - In The Wilderness Of This World!
2. When Moses Set The Bronze Serpent:
 - On A Pole - It Was So That:
 - All Israel Might See It - And Live!
 - And Yet - Some Still Died:

- From The Bites Of Those Fiery Serpents!
 - But - Why? What Would Prevent Someone:
 - Who Was Bit By A Serpent:
 - From Looking Upon The Brazen Serpent?
 - Perhaps It Was Their Stubbornness:
 - And Pride!
 - Doesn't This Still Keep Us From:
 - Looking To Christ:
 - When We Are Discouraged Or Dissatisfied?
 - We Won't Look Because:
 - We Don't Want To Look!
 - We Don't Think We Need:
 - The Lord To Help Us With Our:
 - Weaknesses & Sins!
 - This Is Still A Problem For Us!
 - When We Think That:
 - The Counsel Of Men:
 - Can Help Us More:
 - Than The Counsel Of God!
 - Who To We Turn To First?
 - Who Do We Trust In Most?
 - Why Else Would Someone:
 - Not Take Up God's Offer:
 - To Just Look Upon The Brazen Serpent:
 - And Live?
 - Perhaps It Was Their Shame!
 - Shame For Their Sin!
 - Doesn't This Also Keep Us From:
 - Looking To Christ:
 - For Deliverance From Temptation And Sin?
 - We Don't Look Because:
 - We Are Too Ashamed To Look!
 - We Don't Think The Lord:
 - Wants To Help Us With Our:
 - Weakness & Sins!
3. But - Wasn't That The Whole Point:
- Of The Bronze Serpent:
 - Being Lifted Up By Moses In The Wilderness?
 - And - Isn't That The Whole Point:
 - Of Jesus Christ:
 - Being Lifted Up On The Cross?
 - Because - When He Was Lifted Up:
 - The Discipline Of God:
 - Fell On Christ - So That:
 - With Just A Look Of Faith Upon Jesus:
 - The Deliverance Of God:
 - Can Be Freely Bestowed Upon Us!
4. So Now - In All The Times Of Your Life:
- Keep Looking To Christ:
 - For Life - In The Wilderness Of This World!

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