

## LOOK AND LIVE

**Text: Numbers 21:4-9**

**Key Word:** Looks

**Key Thought:** It Is Very Important Which Direction We Look in Life

From the time we grow old enough to focus our sight and be able to clearly see things for a change. We find that there are many things to captivate our attention. We live in a world of bright colours and constant movement. There is so much to see that we could spend our entire life trying to witness all that is in this world and still have much more to see.

The children of Israel had witnessed a number of amazing miracles as well as many new places in their trek to the land of milk and honey. They had to watch carefully which way God was leading them. He led them by a pillar of cloud by day (Exodus 14:20) and the pillar of fire by night.

The children of Israel found it very difficult to understand God's choices for their lives. They continued to rebel against Moses who was God's spokesman. **They had to learn that after the greatest victories comes the greatest lessons.** They had just gained a victory over the Canaanite king of Arad. But God did not want them to attack Edom.

They had a desire in their heart that soon worked its way into what they were seeing. God had to refocus their sight. It didn't happen instantly. There were three ways they had to look.

### **I. THE DOWNWARD LOOK (Numbers 21:4-5)**

#### **II. THE INWARD LOOK (Numbers 21:6-7a)**

#### **III. THE UPWARD LOOK (Numbers 21:7b-9)**

### **I. THE DOWNWARD LOOK (Numbers 21:4-5)**

Anyone who focuses upon the temporal things of life soon find themselves walking a path that leads downward. It has been described by some as a downward spiral that gains momentum as time goes on. It also increases its grip upon a person's life.

Certain characteristics of our nature soon find their way to the surface.

#### **A. Impatience (vs. 4) (discouragement [KJV] depressed [Amp])**

If you have ever questioned God's timing you will know what this condition feels like. People in this state are not very contented with themselves or others. They are restless and lacking in self-control. It doesn't take much for them to "fly off the handle."

## I. THE DOWNWARD LOOK (Numbers 21:4-5) (Contd.)

### A. Impatience (vs. 4) discouragement [KJV] depressed [Amp] (Contd.)

"Patience is letting your motor idle when you feel like stripping the gears."

#948  
Michael Green

The people were frustrated that God was not coming to them faster than they expected. They would have done well to learn the lesson that James shared with his generation.

*"Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains.*

*8. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.*

*9. Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!"*

*James 5:7-9*

### B. Complaining (vs 5)

It didn't take long for their impatience to grow into complaining. An impatient person often becomes a complainer because his vision of God becomes marred. He gets his eyes off of Jesus.

"I complained because I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet."

Arab Proverb

We must be very careful what we are complaining about - God could take our problem from us (wife, children, job, etc). Sometimes we don't realize how good we have it until we don't have it.

## I. THE DOWNWARD LOOK (Numbers 21:4-5) (Contd.)

### B. Complaining (vs 5) (Contd.)

#### # 742 BACK TO RATIONING FOR DAUGHTER

\*\*\* When she got fed up with the frequent complaints of her 14 year old daughter at the dining table, Mrs. Fay Young decided to do something about it.

She went down to the library to see what she as a girl had eaten during the London blitz at the Second WW. She put her daughter Janet on the same diet.

It consisted of a week's ration of 14 ounces of meat, 3 eggs, 3 lbs of potatoes, and 12 ounces of cheese. Sunday dinner was bread and butter and a hardboiled egg.

"It was good lesson," Janet decided. "I'll never complain again." \*\*\*

### C. Rebellion Against God and His Anointed (vs. 5)

The final result of looking and heading down the wrong way is rebellion.

*"they spoke against God and against Moses."*

*Numbers 21:5*

This is a very destructive tool in the hands of our enemy. This is why rebellion is considered as treason in the army and punished by death. It is a leaven that soon spreads in order to destroy God's purpose for our lives. It is one thing that must be stopped.

*"the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgement, while continuing their punishment. 10. This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings (dignities - KJV).*

*II Peter 2:9,10*

Those who are willing to learn from their mistakes begin to look in a different direction.

## II. THE INWARD LOOK (Numbers 21:6-7a)

God has often used judgement to get our attention. It didn't take too long after the people were bitten and many died from venomous snakes to recognize that they had done wrong. The beginning of any change comes when we are willing to admit we've been wrong.

**1<sup>st</sup> Golfer:** How many strokes did it take you to get out of that sand trap?

**2<sup>nd</sup> Golfer:** Three.

**1<sup>st</sup> Golfer:** But I heard six strokes.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Golfer:** Three were echoes.

David looked inwardly after Nathan the prophet turned on God's spotlight. He was willing to admit.

*"I have sinned against the LORD."*

*II Samuel 12:13*

When Balaam tried to force himself past the angel of the LORD that the donkey could see, he cried out to God,

*"I have sinned. I did not realize you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now if you are displeased I will go back."*

*Numbers 22:34*

After being bitten by the snakes the people cried out to the LORD

*"We have sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you."*

*Numbers 21:7*

It won't hurt us one bit to admit that we have sinned against God. **An inward look can cause a lot of house cleaning to go on.** In the spring of the year we always seem to go into our clothes closets and remove all the things we no longer wear or have use of. The same principle should be used spiritually so we don't become cluttered with things that are useless to our Christian walk. **But don't wait for spring - do it now!**

### III. THE UPWARD LOOK (Numbers 21:7b-9)

Hopefully any Inward Look will lead us to an Upward Look. Moses turned his face toward heaven and began to pray for the LORD to remove the serpents from their midst.

The word from heaven was quick and sure.

*"Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live."*

*Numbers 21:8*

The Hebrew language tells us that God was not asking for a casual glance at this serpent on the pole. The word "look" means "to look attentively, expectantly, and with a steady absorbing gaze."

God is not interested in seekers who are only willing to "try Him out." Jesus made the same truth clear when He said,

*"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of man must be lifted up,  
15. that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life . . .  
36. Whoever believes in (has faith in, clings to, relies on - AMP) the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."*

*John 3:14,15, 36*

The kind of look that will save is one that is God-honouring and God-absorbing.

"Salvation used to happen to people from the outside when they became Christians. They were invaded from above. Now we try to work up something from the inside with a do-it-yourself religion."

Vance Havner  
p. 200

God wants us to look to Him and live. **We are not to look upon the pastor, the church, or the movement but rather on Jesus. Only Jesus can bring life.** The choice is left to us to look to Him and live. Will we accept His attempt to rescue us from death?

### III. THE UPWARD LOOK (Numbers 21:7b-9) (Contd.)

#### 5345 RINGO THE DUCK DIDN'T UNDERSTAND

\*\*\* Poor Ringo the duck! While grubbing for food at Grenadier Pond, in Toronto's High Park, the duck got a pull ring from a beverage can clamped around her beak.

As a result the duck could not feed properly and faced starvation. Concerned people saw her plight and set in motion various attempts to capture the bird and remove the ring.

First, a cannon which fires a large net was set up on the shores of the pond. But no success! Then a skindiver tried to snare Ringo out of the bulrushes. Again, no success!

The Toronto Humane Society tried to allure Ringo with bread and corn, but that only attracted seagulls from miles around.

Finally, Canada's champion duck caller was summoned, but although he got the attention of nearly every duck in the pond, Ringo did not respond.

All for the sake of a duck! Ringo did not understand that all these attempts were not designed to frighten her, but to free her from her plight. \*\*\*

God used the serpent on the pole to get the attention of the people and tell a spiritual truth at the same time.

*"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."*

*John 12:32*

Many have looked and lived. Others have found it difficult to understand how a crucified LORD can offer salvation just as some of the children of Israel couldn't understand how a serpent on a pole could destroy the sting of death. There are times to question and there are times to act. The time is ripe to LOOK TO GOD AND LIVE. It has been said that "if looks could kill we would have dead many times over."

**Looks can kill if we look in the wrong direction for our salvation.** Follow the direction that leads to life. Get a proper understanding of where this world is (**Looking Downward**); then get a good look at yourself (**Looking Inward**); and then finally, take a long, attentive, absorbing gaze at God (**Looking Upward**).

A casual glance will not do. It is time to fix our eyes upon He who is able and willing to save us to the uttermost. Cast a dim eye to the world so that your focus will be on God. You will be amazed at His beauty.

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Date: Dec 4/16 (Communion)

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: When I Look into Your Holiness - D

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**B. Complaining (vs 5) - *Numbers 21:5; II Peter 2:9,10***

**II. THE INWARD LOOK (Numbers 21:6-7a) - *II Samuel 12:13; Numbers 22:34; Numbers 21:7***

**III. THE UPWARD LOOK (Numbers 21:7b-9) - *Numbers 21:8; John 3:14,15, 36; John 12:32***