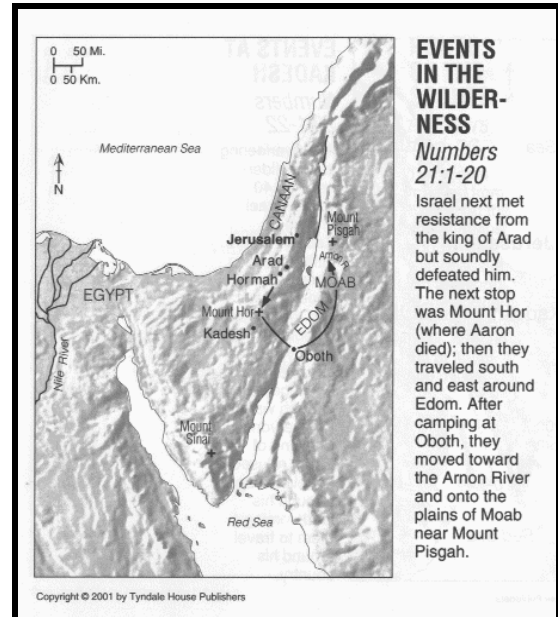


Approaching Canaan

This chapter begins the story of the Israelites journey up in preparation for entering the land of Canaan. Along the way, it was necessary for them to defeat the current inhabitants of the land, but this was all part of God's plan and He would give His people victory over their enemies.



Arad Destroyed (21:1-3)

They first encountered the Canaanite king of Arad. He heard that Israel was planning on coming into Canaan so he sent troops down to attack. Israel did exactly the right thing in responding to the attack. They went to the LORD with confidence and said, "If you will deliver these people into our hands, we will totally destroy their cities." They exhibited faith in the LORD and a will do what He had wanted them to do 40 years earlier– to drive out the Canaanites. Israel successfully defeated Arad and the place where they won their victory was named Hormah (Hormah means *destruction*).

The Bronze Snake (21:4-8)

The lesson of the bronze serpent is a familiar one. Consider these things as you hear it again:

- The people brought back the same old complaints
- Their sin led to consequences
- Moses again acted as mediator and prayed for the people
- It was not the bronze snake that healed, but those who were connected to God by faith in His word were healed by Him

The bronze serpent is a beautiful picture of Jesus Christ— perhaps one of the clearest in the whole Old Testament. Use the chart below and compare John 3:13-16.

THE SNAKE IN THE WILDERNESS / Numbers 21:7-9		
Compare the texts for yourself: Numbers 21:7-9 and John 3:14-15.	Israelites	Christians
	Bitten by snakes	Bitten by sin
	Little initial pain, then intense suffering	Little initial pain, then intense suffering
	Physical death from snakes' poison	Spiritual death from sin's poison
	Bronze snake lifted up in the wilderness. . .	Christ lifted up on the cross
	Looking to the snake spared one's life. . . .	Looking to Christ saves from eternal death

The Journey to Moab (21:10-20)

Because the Edomites had refused passage to the Israelites, Israel found it necessary to go around their country. These verses describe that journey in some geographical detail. The people now would have been starting to get a taste of the land they were going to inherit. The area they were in now was not such a desert region. God continued to lead them, providing water for the people when it was necessary (at Beer which means *water well*). The people's spirits were generally high.

Sihon and Og (21:21-35)

Israel begins to undertake what they had been afraid to before— go to war with the people of Canaan.

Jahaz – Here God directed them to attack Sihon, king of the Amorites. They conquered the territory from the Arnon to the Jabbok River including Heshbon, the capital city.

Edrei – The Israelites kept moving north and at Edrei they attacked Og the king of Bashan. The LORD promised victory and directed that there should be no Canaanite survivors.

God gave the Israelites complete victory in both these major battles. They now controlled a large chunk of land east of the Jordan River. God was giving them exactly what He had promised. With Him on their side to fight their battles for them, they should have no trouble in future campaigns.

