



## 2016: Week 5

Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup> 2016

*“Traveling Through the Wilderness:  
The Way of the Pilgrim”*

### John 16:33

<sup>33</sup> Jesus: *“In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”* (NASB)

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On Sunday, John preached from **Numbers 20:14–21:9**, a passage in which we find Israel journeying through the wilderness, experiencing trials at every turn. Israel was a group of God’s people obeying His instructions; and yet, they still experienced trials and opposition. Israel’s wanderings in the wilderness provide lessons for the believer in his/her journey of life.

#### 1. Read **Numbers 20:14–22**.

- Because of Edom’s refusal to allow the people to pass through, Israel was forced to take a detour adding about 150 more miles through the desert. If you were one of the Israelites and you just learned about the detour, you’d probably be pretty upset. *What might be some of the thoughts running through your mind?*
- Scripture attests that God is both compassionate and all-powerful. If that is true, *why* would allow the Israelites to experience opposition at the time they were obeying Him (by heading towards the Promised Land as He had instructed)?

#### 2. Read **Numbers 21:4–9**

- Here we find Israel grumbling against God and Moses because they didn’t like the food God had given them. Again the Israelites experience a trial. *How is this trial different than the previous trial (regarding the Edomites)?*
- Scripture states that a believer will experience difficulties in life. The following references include a few possible explanations:
  - a) **James 1:2–4, 12** and **Romans 5:2–5** demonstrate that God allows trials to mature our faith
  - b) **Hebrews 12:4–11** explains that God disciplines us for our good *because we are His own*
  - c) **Galatians 6:7–8** states that God may discipline us in response to our own sin
  - d) **Book of Job** reveals that God may use our trials for His glory and a greater good even when we can’t understand how or why (see also **Romans 8:28**)
- What trials are you experiencing today? What might be some reasons for them (see a, b, c, & d above)?

3. In Numbers 21:7 the people responded to God’s discipline with repentance (“we have sinned”), but they still needed God’s provision to deliver them. Out of His grace God made a way of deliverance, but the people needed to respond in faith: by **looking** to the snake on a pole (21:8–9). God has made a provision for the consequences of your sin. God sent forth His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and pay for your sins once for all time. *Have you **looked** to Jesus in faith? When you experience trials, do you still look to Him in faith?*

**FAMILY PRAYER:** Thank God today the provision He has made for you in the person of Jesus. Pray that you will trust God in the midst of your trials. Remember that God did not design this world to be your home. If you are a believer, you have hope for a new life in a new world yet to come!